



Funding Poultry Diagnostic Laboratories

Background

The Texas poultry industry depends on the state's two diagnostic and surveillance laboratories to remain in business, much less continue to expand and thrive.

These laboratories and the Texas Pullorum-Typhoid Program became the responsibility of the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL) in 1992. The annual deficit between the labs' operational expenses and revenues has averaged \$500,000. TVMDL has been supplementing the laboratories' funding, which means that other TVMDL locations must defer their own needs for capital equipment, staffing, and facility improvements.

The potential shutdown of at least one and possibly both of Texas' poultry diagnostic labs would mean the loss of critical diagnostic and surveillance services for the state's poultry industry, threatening both domestic production and export market access.

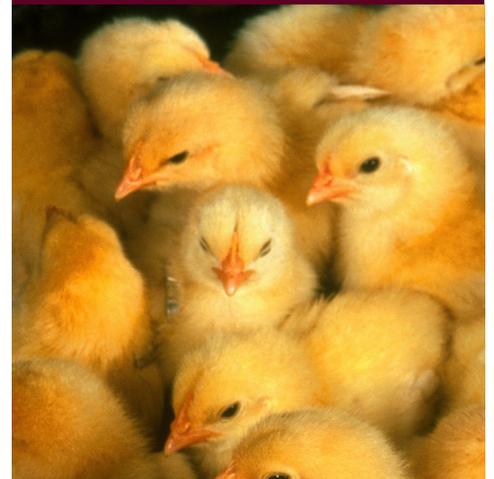
Program Description

The TVMDL poultry diagnostic laboratories provide essential services to the multi-billion-dollar Texas poultry industry and are responsible for surveillance of the six million birds in the state. TVMDL is also the recordkeeping authority for the Pullorum-Typhoid Program, which works to control and eradicate pullorum disease and fowl typhoid from poultry flocks and maintain Texas as a U.S. Pullorum-Typhoid Clean State.

Exceptional Item Request
FY 2020-21
\$1.2 Million
over 2018-19 funding levels

Objectives

Add base funding for the two Texas poultry diagnostic laboratories, in Center and Gonzales, as well as for the Texas Pullorum-Typhoid Program.



In a poultry disease outbreak, even hours can make a difference in stopping the spread of the disease. In 2004, TVMDL played a crucial role in containing and eradicating a highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreak in poultry in Gonzales County, saving the poultry industry from millions of dollars in potential losses.

TVMDL Poultry Diagnostic Laboratories

Strategically located in the heart of poultry-producing regions of Texas, the TVMDL poultry diagnostic laboratories in Center and Gonzales are the first line of defense against poultry disease:

- ▶ Providing test results that help poultry companies make crucial business decisions in a disease outbreak.
- ▶ Being Texas' sole providers of several tests required by national programs and international trade.
- ▶ Preventing the interruption of poultry and egg supply due to disease outbreaks.
- ▶ Safeguarding public health against the spread of avian influenza, salmonella, and other poultry diseases of public health significance.



Pullorum-Typhoid Program

Pullorum disease and fowl typhoid are contagious poultry diseases with high mortality rates. Once common diseases, they have been controlled in commercial poultry flocks by using surveillance and testing to maintain infection-free breeding flocks and by keeping poultry away from infected birds.

- ▶ Outbreaks can still occur, especially in backyard poultry flocks and game birds, and Texas requires ongoing surveillance.
- ▶ Domestic poultry (chicken, guinea, pheasant, quail, peafowl, and turkey) offered for sale, trade, or used to produce offspring for sale or trade must be tested for pullorum and typhoid and found to be free of infection.
- ▶ Poultry going to a public exhibition or public sale must be free of infection or originate from a certified clean flock.



Dr. Bruce L. Akey, Director
483 Agronomy Road, 3040 TAMU
College Station, Texas 77841-3040
Phone: 979-845-3414 **Email:** bakey@tvmdl.tamu.edu
TVMDL.tamu.edu

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