



## **CANADIAN ANIMAL HEALTH SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM (CAHSS)**

### **CHARTER**

**(DRAFT, OCTOBER 2024)**

**Proposed revisions March 2025 for Approval**

#### **1. Background**

Canada's social and economic well-being is closely connected to the health and welfare of animal populations. The purpose of the CAHSS is to bring together and use data-driven information to demonstrate animal health, minimize impacts of disease, and guide planning.

CAHSS is a division of Animal Health Canada (AHC), with broad based collaborative support of industry and governments. It is an independent, member-driven "network of networks" for effective, responsive, and integrated animal health surveillance in Canada.

#### **2. Governance Structure**

CAHSS operates as a division and under the oversight of AHC, a federally incorporated not-for-profit association. AHC encompasses a pan-Canadian, public-private collaboration built on the guiding principles of accountability and decision-making open to the participation of federal, provincial and territorial (FPT) governments and all animal agriculture industry sectors.

Established in 2021, AHC evolved from the National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Council (NFAHWC), to provide a formal structure for industry-government collaboration in animal health and welfare. Animal Health Canada is operated and funded jointly by three "partners": Industry and non-government stakeholders; Provincial/territorial governments; and the Federal government.

#### **3. CAHSS Principles, Vision, Mission**

Vision and Mission Statement: That Canada has an effective, responsive, integrated animal health surveillance system leading to improved animal health outcomes, better response to emerging diseases, high consumer and public health confidence in animal agriculture, and improved market access.

Mission/Purpose Statement: To bring together and use data-driven information to demonstrate animal health, minimize impacts of disease, and guide surveillance planning from a national perspective. A diagram of the CAHSS purpose statement is in Appendix A.

#### **4. The key functions of CAHSS are to:**

- ✓ foster open communications within and across the systems and networks;
- ✓ serve as a source of information with a website of catalogued resources, animal health information, and other surveillance infrastructure;
- ✓ facilitate the development of social network groups to share animal and One Health intelligence;
- ✓ encourage and provide expertise and resources to support the network groups; and
- ✓ help develop the ability to quickly activate coordinated surveillance networks in response to animal health emergencies.



## 5. Membership Structure

### Network Members

The Network is comprised of two categories of membership:

- a. **Species Network Members** – These are comprised of individuals and organizations working with various animal populations (including but not limited to aquatic, dairy, beef, poultry, equine, swine, etc.), agrifood industry organizations, practitioners, species surveillance networks, and private industry organizations (e.g. pharmaceutical, etc.).
- b. **Community of Practice Members** – These are comprised of individuals and organizations representing surveillance oversight, best practice, innovation, and emerging trends.

Community of Practice Members may include:

- ✓ Federal, Provincial, Territorial Governments
- ✓ Provincial/Regional Animal Health Networks and Organizations
- ✓ The Council of Chief Veterinary Officers or The Veterinary Surveillance and Epidemiology Network
- ✓ The Community for Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases Network
- ✓ Diagnostic Laboratories
- ✓ Antimicrobial Use and Resistance Surveillance Committees and Organizations
- ✓ Vector-Borne Diseases Organizations
- ✓ Public Health Organizations
- ✓ Universities and Colleges with Veterinary, Agriculture and Health Programs

### Requirements for Membership in the Network

Individuals and organizations wishing to become members of CAHSS must adhere to the Principles of Practice (Appendix B) which describe how members work together to achieve CAHSS' vision of an effective, responsive and integrated animal health surveillance system spanning all of Canada.

Any organization or person that wishes to become a Member must complete an application to CAHSS for approval and meet the CAHSS membership requirements:

- Individuals must work or study within one of the two CAHSS eligible membership categories;
- Individuals must be supportive of CAHSS' Purpose and adhere to its Principles of Practice (Appendix B);
- Organizations must support CAHSS materially, which may include a combination of in kind and financial support such as freeing up the time of its paid employees to serve on the Advisory Council and/or network committees, and
- As applicable and agreed, providing financial resources for CAHSS' activities.

Applications for membership will be reviewed by the Division Director, who will provide a recommendation for approval by the Advisory Council as determined by an approval process established by the Advisory Council.



## **Benefits of Network Membership**

- CAHSS Members have the right to use the name and logo of the Network in their Network reports and other documents to support their Network's surveillance activities, according to the relevant CAHSS policy. The CAHSS name and logo also signifies product quality to vendors and end-users.
- CAHSS Members receive Network reports and any other information which supports their surveillance activities, and which helps in their surveillance learning and growth.
- CAHSS Members have access to expert advice through its Community of Practice and also other surveillance experts within the Network.
- CAHSS Members have the support of the Network during emergency situations/outbreaks.
- CAHSS will provide information and support for research grants and other funding opportunities related to surveillance.
- CAHSS will maintain a website with current information and best practices related to surveillance both in Canada and internationally.
- CAHSS will give Members access to other CAHSS surveillance networks.

## **Responsibilities of Membership in the Network**

- CAHSS Members agree to support the network by participating in network activities, supporting individuals to serve on the Advisory Council and/or committees, and as applicable and agreed, providing financial resources for CAHSS' activities.
- Members will provide direction and support to their appropriate networks through the Network Committee Chairs to provide timely and relevant data and reporting to CAHSS including the reporting of any emergencies related to animal health.
- Members have an obligation to support the decisions and positions of the CAHSS. At all times, Network Members must be respectful of Advisory Council Members and other Network Members.
- Members should attend the meetings well-prepared, having reviewed necessary materials, be ready to engage in informed discussions and share updates during the cross-Canada roundtable
- Members of CAHSS agree to the following Principles of Practice which describe how members work together to achieve CAHSS' vision of an effective, responsive and integrated animal health surveillance system across Canada:
  1. Accept the use of farmed animals in agriculture.
  2. Work to ensure the quality of life for Canadians by protecting animal health and public health and supporting economic prosperity.
  3. Work to ensure scientific rigour and professional and technical competence, acknowledging that real-world factors must be taken into account in decision making.
  4. Encourage practices, behaviours and uses of technology that are consistent with the Purpose and Principles. In particular, encourage openness, collaboration and innovation.
  5. Resolve conflict compassionately, productively, cooperatively and respectfully.



6. Freely and fully exchange information relevant to the Purpose while respecting confidentiality of what is shared within the Network (e.g. during roundtable, email discussion, etc.), respecting any CAHSS policies on confidentiality.
7. Work to ensure clarity in animal health surveillance communications by providing relevant background and contextual information.

## **6. Termination and Resignation from Membership**

### **Termination of Membership**

CAHSS has the right to terminate a membership for good cause. This will be a decision of the CAHSS Advisory Council. Good cause shall include but not be limited to the failure of a Member to adhere to the conditions of membership and the Principles of Practice.

### **Resignation from Membership**

The Member must notify the CAHSS Division Director in writing of their decision to leave the CAHSS Network.

### **Effects of termination or resignation from Membership**

Once a Member has either been terminated or has resigned, they are no longer able to utilize all member benefits. This includes the use Network's name in Member literature and/or advertising.

Also, the member will no longer receive internal CAHSS reports or CAHSS specific-expert or CAHSS network community advice.

## **7. Network: Governance and Management**

The following section sets out the key roles and responsibilities of governance and management of the Network.

### **Animal Health Canada**

Animal Health Canada is the ultimate decision-making body. It is responsible for:

- Final Approval of CAHSS' strategy (strategic plan);
- Final Approval of CAHSS' annual budget;
- Supervision of CAHSS Division Director; and
- Accepting appointment of individuals to the CAHSS Advisory Council, or approving and implementing the appointments process for CAHSS Advisory Council Members.

Animal Health Canada Board will engage with the CAHSS Advisory Council directly and through the CAHSS Division Director, on a regular basis as well as ad hoc when needed in order to ensure the appropriate level of direction and oversight.

### **CAHSS Advisory Council previously known as the Steering Group**

The CAHSS Advisory Council is approved by Animal Health Canada based on recommendation from CAHSS. Advisory Council Members must support the purpose and principles of CAHSS. They



must be willing to attend meetings of the Advisory Council. They must have the support of their own organization/agency to participate, unless they are sole owners of the organization/agency.

The Advisory Council will meet at least quarterly with a target of at least one meeting per year, in person. Advisory Council Members must declare any conflicts of interest with respect to any topic or decision being considered by the Advisory Council.

The Advisory Council serves without compensation, but reasonable expenses (approved by the Division Director and/or the Animal Health Canada Executive Director) will be reimbursed.

An Advisory Council member is not entitled to name a proxy to represent them at any meeting, unless there are extenuating circumstances, and the Division Director has been notified at least three days in advance of the meeting.

### **Key Responsibilities of the Advisory Council**

Among other duties as determined by Animal Health Canada from time to time, the Advisory Council will be responsible for the following:

1. Together with the Division Director, prepare a multi-year strategy for CAHSS, and be a key informant in the strategy formulation and implementation process.
2. Recommend the strategy to Animal Health Canada for approval and, on Animal Health Canada's behalf, monitor the progress of the strategy's implementation.
3. Annually review the strategy and together with the Division Director, determine any needed adjustments to the strategy.
4. Based on the approved strategy, support the Division Director in the development of the annual workplan for the organization, including but not limited to assisting with the prioritizing of activities within the annual work plan,
5. Recommend the annual workplan and budget to Animal Health Canada for approval.
6. Review and approve Network Members of CAHSS based on the recommendations of the Division Director.
7. Appoint new Advisory Council Members when necessary.
8. Assist with funding applications and sourcing of funding.
9. Support the Division Director in the development of an annual report of CAHSS activities and accomplishments.
10. In addition to producing an annual report, report, either directly or through the Division Director, on CAHSS' results and key priorities to Animal Health Canada regularly
11. Together with the Division Director, determine and strike any committees and/or working groups needed to further CAHSS' work.
12. Advisory Council Members will actively share information about CAHSS work areas, projects, and activities with CAHSS networks and partner organizations/agencies they are a part of.

### **Size and Nomination Process:**

The Advisory Council will consist of 12 voting members. Advisory Council Members are appointed as follows:



- Each membership category (Species Network Members and the Community of Practice Members) is entitled to nominate individuals to fill 5 seats, and
- the Advisory Council shall be entitled to fill an additional seat, and any seat not filled by a membership category, and
- One Member shall be appointed by the Animal Health Canada Board.

#### **Terms of office:**

Each Advisory Council Member shall be appointed for a term of up to 3 years and may serve a maximum of 6 years. Advisory Council Members who have served 6 years will be eligible for reappointment after a 1-year absence from the Advisory Council. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Chair and the Vice-Chair may serve out their term of office beyond the 6-year term limit. This ensures that if a Chair is appointed towards the end of their term, they can still serve as Chair for 3 years.

By resolution, the Advisory Council shall approve an initial process to allocate terms of office to existing members of the Advisory Council to facilitate a smooth and effective succession process for the future.

#### **Vacancy of office**

If an Advisory Council Member cannot serve out their term to completion, the Division Director will seek nominations from the appropriate Species/Community of Practice members and recommend a candidate to the CAHSS Advisory Council for approval to fill the vacancy.

If a Member of the Advisory Council is found not to be fulfilling their duties, the Advisory Council or Animal Health Canada has the right to remove the Member and find a replacement based on recommendations from the Division Director. Failure to fulfill duties includes but is not limited to missing at least two meetings in an annual cycle of the Advisory Council.

#### **Advisory Council Observers**

The Advisory Council shall be served by a maximum of four Observers. The Advisory Council shall be entitled to name no more than three Observers, on the recommendation of the Division Director, who shall be entitled to attend all Advisory Council meetings, be provided with all materials, and be expected to provide support and guidance with their knowledge and expertise. The Federal Government shall be entitled to name one Observer.

Advisory Council Observers shall be bound to the same duty of loyalty and confidentiality as Advisory Council Members. Should an Advisory Council Observer be unable to attend a meeting, at the advance consent of the Chair of the meeting, the Observer may send a named representative. The Observer may participate in discussions but will not be entitled to vote on decisions of the Advisory Council.

#### **Chair and Vice-Chair**

The Advisory Council will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair, subject to approval of the appointment by Animal Health Canada. The Chair and the Vice-Chair shall be elected for a term of 3 years.



The Chair will be responsible for setting an annual calendar of meetings, assisting with the development of agendas for each meeting and preside over meetings, leading discussions at meetings and ensuring there is a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the Advisory Council on a regular basis.

In the absence or inability of the Chair to perform, the Vice-Chair shall exercise all the duties of the Chair. The Vice-Chair shall also perform the other duties prescribed from time to time by the Advisory Council or incident to this office.

### **CAHSS Division Director**

The Division Director reports directly to Animal Health Canada's Executive Director, as well as being accountable to the Advisory Council. In addition to the duties delegated from time to time by Animal Health Canada, the Division Director will either act as Secretary to the Advisory Council or appoint another staff member to fulfill these duties. The Division Director will serve as the main point of contact between the Advisory Council and Animal Health Canada Board or other relevant stakeholder groups.

The Advisory Council will annually provide Animal Health Canada's Executive Director with feedback on the performance of the Division Director.

## **8. Meetings of the Advisory Council**

**Date of Meetings.** The Advisory Council shall meet quarterly each fiscal year and at such other times as may be deemed necessary by the Chairs.

**Calling of Meetings.** Meetings of the Advisory Council may be called by the Division Director at the request of the Chair or at the written request of a majority of members of the Advisory Council and such meetings shall be held at such place and such time as designated by the Division Director. Meetings of the Advisory Council or Committees may be held in person or by electronic transmission (e.g. online teleconference) provided that each member of the Advisory Council or Committee is able to communicate adequately with each other.

**Notice of Meetings.** Notice of meetings of the Advisory Council may be transmitted electronically to each member of the Council at least fifteen (15) working days prior to the date named for the holding of the meeting.

**Quorum:** A quorum for a meeting of the Advisory Council shall be a majority of the Advisory Council members. A quorum must be in effect throughout the meeting for any decision to be valid.

**Voting.** While every effort will be made for decisions to be arrived at by consensus, questions arising at any meeting of the Advisory Council shall be decided by the majority of votes from voting members. In case of an equality of votes the decision is deemed not to have been made.

## **9. Committees**

The Advisory Council may appoint standing and/or ad hoc committees to further the work of CAHSS. This may include one or more Network Advisory Committee(s) to engage CAHSS Network



Members and/or other key networks who may not be Advisory Council Members, as well as other committees.

### **Network Advisory Committees**

**Network Advisory Committee Chair:** Each CAHSS species and animal health topic focused network that is recognized by the Advisory Council (a Network Advisory Committee) will appoint a Network Chair and may, if deemed necessary and appropriate, appoint a Network Vice-Chair. The Network Chair will be responsible for leading meetings and reporting to CAHSS on the surveillance activities and practices of their respective Network Advisory Committee on an as needed basis. They will work with the Division Director to develop best surveillance practices within their network and will support the learning and growth of other networks. Network Chairs serve without compensation, but reasonable expenses (approved by the Division Director and Animal Health Canada Executive Director) will be reimbursed. Administrative duties related with surveillance network meetings will be assumed by CAHSS staff and not the Network Chair or Vice Chair. Ideally, the Network Chair shall be from a non-governmental organization such as academia or industry and should be a member of the Network for at least one year prior to appointment/election.

**Meeting with Advisory Council:** At least annually, the Network Chairs will come together jointly with the Advisory Council to:

- ✓ Mutually encourage and support all network groups with expertise and experience where possible;
- ✓ Facilitate communication within and across the systems and networks on topics such as best surveillance practices, surveillance challenges, emerging issues, etc.;
- ✓ Further support the development of the CAHSS website of catalogued resources, and other surveillance infrastructure;
- ✓ Facilitate the development of social networks to share health intelligence with the appropriate stakeholders on a regular basis and;
- ✓ Develop the ability and/or links to quickly activate coordinated surveillance networks in response to animal health emergencies.

The Division Director will develop the agenda for the annual meeting in conjunction with the Advisory Council Chairs and Network Chairs.

### **10. Dispute Resolution Process**

In keeping with CAHSS' Principles, members will resolve conflict compassionately, productively, cooperatively, and respectfully.

Disputes between CAHSS members will be referred to the CAHSS Division Director for mediation. If the matter cannot be solved by the CAHSS Division Director, it will be referred to the Advisory Council for discussion and a recommended solution. If the members in the dispute are not satisfied with the recommendation of the Advisory Council, the matter will be referred to Animal Health Canada Board.

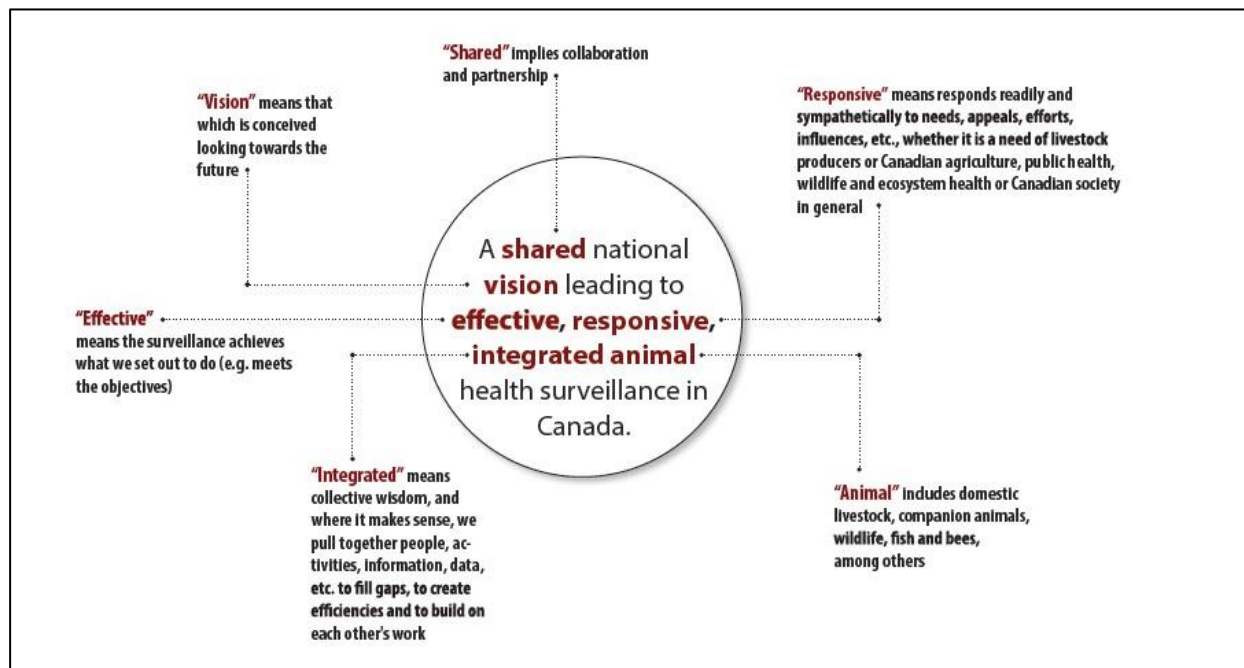


Animal Health Canada will consult with the member(s) who are involved in the dispute, the Division Director and the Chair of the Advisory Council before making a ruling. Animal Health Canada's decision on the matter will be accepted as final by all concerned parties.

#### **11. Charter Amendments and Updates**

The Charter will be reviewed annually by the Advisory Council. The Advisory Council will regularly seek input from Members and all stakeholders on the effectiveness of the Charter and make recommendations to Animal Health Canada regarding any changes to the Charter for approval by Animal Health Canada.

## Appendix A: CAHSS Purpose Statement Illustrated



### Key Stakeholders: A Network of Networks

From meat, milk or egg production statistics to postmortem reports, surveillance data comes in many forms. CAHSS is a "network of networks" proud to work with the following:

- National, Provincial & Regional Producer and Industry Associations
- Provincial, Regional & Species Surveillance Networks
- Federal, Provincial & Territorial Governments
- Council of Chief Veterinary Officers
- Community for Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases
- Veterinary Surveillance & Epidemiology Networks
- Animal Health Laboratories
- Public Health Authorities
- Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative
- Universities and Colleges with Veterinary, Agriculture and Health Programs

## Appendix B: CAHSS Principles of Practice

- Support the protection of animal health, public health, and economic prosperity
- Accept the use of farmed animals in agriculture
- Consider the balance between scientific rigour and the practicality of the real world
- Encourage openness, collaboration and innovation
- Resolve conflict compassionately, productively, cooperatively and respectfully
- Freely and fully exchange information relevant to the Purpose while respecting confidentiality
- Provide clarity in communications by providing relevant background and contextual information