



Canadian Animal Health Surveillance System

Charter

December 1, 2020

Updated July 20, 2022



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Background

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

CAHSS is an initiative of Animal Health Canada, 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.



1. Principles, Vision, Mission, and Key Stakeholders

1.1 Vision and Mission statement

1.1.1 Vision Statement

Our vision is 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.

1.1.2 Mission/Purpose Statement

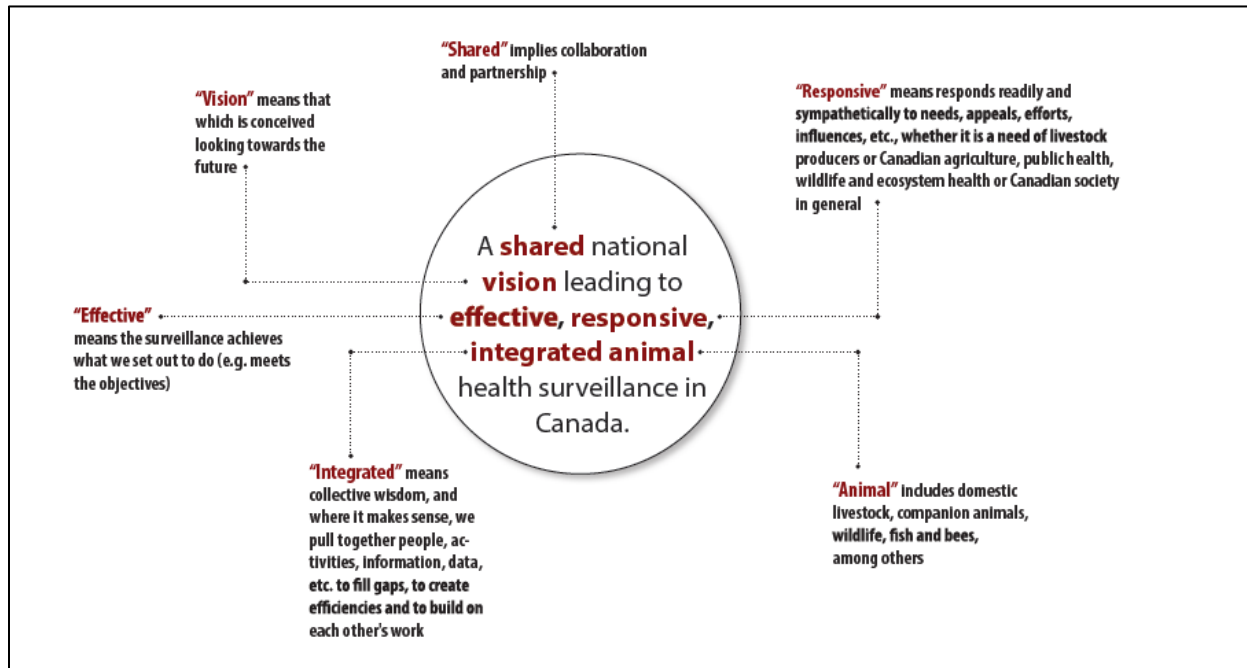
The purpose of CAHSS is to bring together and use data-driven information to demonstrate animal health, minimize impacts of disease, and guide surveillance planning from a national perspective.

The central roles 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 health intelligence;
- encourage and provide expertise and resources to support the network groups; and
- help to develop the ability to quickly activate coordinated surveillance network in response to animal health emergencies.



CAHSS Purpose Statement



1.2 A Network of Networks

From meat, milk or egg production statistics to post mortem 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

1.3 Core Values/Principles

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



1.3.1 CAHSS Principles

Members of CAHSS agree to:

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.
7. Work to ensure clarity in animal health surveillance communications by providing relevant background and contextual information.

2. Governance Model

CAHSS utilizes a “Lead Agency” model of governance. In this case, CAHSS operates as a division under the oversight of Animal Health Canada (AHC), a federally incorporated not-for-profit association. Animal Health Canada (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, to provide a formal structure for industry-government collaboration in the area of animal health and welfare. Animal Health Canada is operated and funded jointly by three “partners”:

- Industry and non-government stakeholders,
- Provincial/territorial governments; and
- Federal government.

2.1 Legal Entities, Structure and Membership

2.1.1 Network Members

These are the entities that jointly make up the Network:

1. **Species Network Members** – These are comprised of individuals and organizations working with various animal populations (dairy, beef, poultry, equine, swine, finfish etc.), agrifood industry organizations and species surveillance networks.



2. **Community of Practice Members** – These are comprised of organizations representing surveillance oversight, best practice, innovation, and emerging trends. Community of Practice Members would include:

- Federal, Provincial, Territorial Governments
- Provincial/Regional Animal Health Networks and Organizations
- The Council of Chief Veterinary Officers
- 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

2.1.2 Requirements for Membership in the Network

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 within one of the two CAHSS eligible categories;
- Individuals must be supportive of CAHSS' Purpose and adhere to its Principles of Practice;
- Organizations must support CAHSS materially, which may include a combination of in kind and financial support such freeing up the time of its paid employees to serve on CAHSS Steering Group, committees, and networks, , and as applicable and agreed, providing financial resources for CAHSS' activities and paying membership fees.

Applications for membership will be reviewed by the Coordinator, who will recommend for approval by the CAHSS Steering Group.

2.1.3 Benefits of Membership of the Network

- 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. 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 from the 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 national surveillance networks.

2.1.4 Responsibilities of Membership in the Network

- CAHSS members agree to support the network by participating in network activities, supporting individuals to serve on CAHSS Steering Group and/or committees, appointing Leads and/or Co-leads for CAHSS networks, and as applicable and agreed, providing financial resources for CAHSS' activities.
- Members will provide direction and support to the Network Leads and Co-Leads to provide timely and relevant data and reporting to CAHSS including the reporting of any emergencies related to animal health.

2.2 Network: Governance and Management

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

2.2.1 Animal Health Canada

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

- Final Approval of CAHSS' strategy;
- Final Approval of CAHSS annual budget;
- Supervision of CAHSS Coordinator; and
- Accepts appointment of individuals to the CAHSS Steering Group, or puts in place the Appointments process for CAHSS Steering Group to be implemented by delegated individuals (such as the Coordinator).

Animal Health Canada will engage with the CAHSS steering group either directly or through the CAHSS Coordinator, on a regular periodic basis as well as ad hoc when needed in order to manage duties.

2.2.2 Steering Group

The CAHSS Steering Group is approved by Animal Health Canada based on recommendation from CAHSS. Steering Group members must support the purpose and principles of CAHSS. They must be willing to attend meetings of the Steering Group. They must have the support of their own organization.



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

The Steering Group serves without compensation, but reasonable expenses (approved by the Coordinator and Animal Health Canada Executive Director) will be reimbursed.

Key Responsibilities of the Steering Group:

Among other duties, the Steering Group will be responsible for the following:

- The Steering Group will together with the Coordinator prepare a multi-year strategy for CAHSS. The Steering Group will be a key informant in the strategy formulation process. They will also recommend the strategy to Animal Health Canada for approval and will on Animal Health Canada's behalf monitor the progress of the strategy's implementation. The Steering Group will annually review the strategy and together with the Coordinator determine any adjustments to CAHSS' strategy.
- Based on the approved strategy, the Steering Group will support the Coordinator in the development of annual workplan for the organization, together with a budget. Once agreed to by the Steering Group, the annual workplan and budget will be recommended to Animal Health Canada for approval.
- The Steering Group will review and approve Members of CAHSS.
- The Steering Group will assist with funding applications and sourcing of funding.
- The Steering Group will support the Coordinator in the development of an annual report of CAHSS activities and accomplishments. In addition to producing an annual report, the Steering Group will briefly report, either directly or through the Coordinator, on CAHSS' results and key priorities to Animal Health Canada regularly as directed by Council.
- Together with the Coordinator, the Steering Group will determine and strike any committees and/or work groups needed to further CAHSS' work.
- Steering group members will actively share information about CAHSS work areas, projects, and activities with CAHSS networks and partner organizations they are a part of.

Size and Nomination Process:

The Steering Group will consist of 12 members.

Members are appointed from the Species Network Members and the Community of Practice Members. Details of the recommended membership structure are provided in Appendix A.

Terms of office:

Each member's term is 3 years and members are only able to serve 2 terms before leaving the Steering Group. Members who have served 2 terms will be eligible for reappointment after a 1-



year absence from the Steering Group, although where there are sufficient other nominees, it is recommended that members wait 1 term (3 years) before reappointment to the steering group. Members' terms will be staggered; to facilitate this, the *initial* Steering Group having the following terms; three members a term of one year; three members a term of two years and four members for a term of three years.

CAHSS will recommend Steering Group members and their associated terms to Animal Health Canada for approval.

If a Steering Group member cannot serve out their term, the Coordinator will seek nominations from the appropriate Network/Community of Practice group to fill the vacancy and recommend a candidate to Animal Health Canada for approval.

If a Steering Group member is found not to be fulfilling their duties, Animal Health Canada has the right to remove them from the Steering Group and find a replacement based on recommendations from the Steering Group.

2.2.3 Chair

The Steering Group will appoint a Steering Group Chair, with approval of the appointment by Animal Health Canada.

The Chair will preside over Steering Group meetings, being responsible for developing a Steering Group workplan, agendas, and recommendations to Animal Health Canada. In addition, the Chair will be responsible for a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the Steering Group. The Steering Group will determine the frequency of this evaluation process.

2.2.4 Vice Chair

The Steering Group will elect from among their members, a Vice Chair. The Vice Chair will support the Chair in their duties and will substitute for the Chair in the Chair's absence.

2.2.5 Committees

The Steering Group may appoint standing and/or ad hoc committees to further the work of CAHSS. This may include one or more broader Network Advisory Committee(s) to engage CAHSS Network Members and/or other key networks who may not be formal Members as well as other committees (e.g. annual meeting, communication, network recruitment, specific project oversight, steering group nominations, sustainability planning, technical data sharing etc.).

2.2.6 CAHSS Coordinator

The CAHSS Coordinator reports directly to Animal Health Canada's Executive Director. In addition to the duties listed in APPENDIX A, the Coordinator will either act as Secretary to the Steering Group or appoint another staff member to fulfill these duties.

The Steering Group will annually provide Animal Health Canada's Executive Director with feedback on the performance of the Coordinator.

2.2.7 Network Leads and Co-leads

Each CAHSS species and animal health topic focused network will appoint a Network Lead and/or Co-lead. The Leads and Co-Leads will be responsible for leading meetings and reporting



to CAHSS on the surveillance activities and practices of their respective network. They will work with the Coordinator to develop best surveillance practices within their network and will support the learning and growth of other networks. Network leads serve without compensation, but reasonable expenses (approved by the Coordinator and Animal Health Canada Executive Director) will be reimbursed.

At least annually the Leads and Co-leads will come together jointly with the Steering Group 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.

CAHSS will develop the agenda for the annual meeting in conjunction with the Steering Group and Network Leads and Co-Leads.

3. 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 Coordinator for mediation. If the matter cannot be solved by the CAHSS Coordinator, it will be referred to the Steering Group for discussion and a recommended solution. If the members in the dispute are not satisfied with the recommendation of the Steering Group, the matter will be referred to Animal Health Canada.

Animal Health Canada will consult with the members who are involved in the dispute, the Coordinator and the Chair of the Steering Group before making a ruling. Animal Health Canada's decision on the matter will be accepted as final by all concerned.

4. Termination and Resignation from Membership

4.1 Termination of Membership

The Network has the right to terminate membership for good cause. This will be a decision of Animal Health Canada based on recommendation of the Steering Group.



4.2 Resignation from Membership

The member must notify the Network in writing of their decision to leave the CAHSS Network.

4.3 The 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 expert advice.

5. Charter Amendments and Updates

The Charter will be reviewed annually by the Steering Group. The Steering Group will seek input from 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.



6. Appendices to the Charter

6.1 Appendix A. CAHSS Steering Group- Membership Details

Steering Group

Members are appointed from Species Networks (individuals and organizations working with various animal populations including farmed animal and agrifood industry organizations) and Community of Practice Members (organizations representing surveillance oversight and practice, and emerging trends, primarily government).

The steering group will include, whenever possible, Species Network and Community of Practice representation as listed in the summary of Steering Group Members below.

Steering Group Membership	
Species Network Representative 1	Provincial Epidemiologist
Species Network Representative 2	Diagnostic Animal Health Laboratory Director or delegate
Species Network Representative 3	Canadian Food Inspection Agency- Science Branch
Species Network Representative 4	Public Health Agency of Canada
Species Network Representative 5	Provincial Chief Veterinary Officer
Species Network Representative 6	Community for Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases

Each CAHSS Species Network, and the Canadian Swine Health Intelligence Network, has the opportunity to nominate and recommend a qualified candidate for Steering Group Membership. If there are sufficient nominees, positions will be filled by random selection of one qualified candidate per network until all four positions are filled. Over time, as vacancies occur according to the terms of office, positions will be filled on a regular rotation between networks. It is recommended that Species Networks nominate industry-employed members.



6.2 Appendix B. CAHSS Coordinator

The CAHSS Coordinator will be hired by Animal Health Canada and recruited jointly by Council and the CAHSS Steering Group. The Coordinator will receive an annual performance review by Animal Health Canada Executive Director with input from the CAHSS Steering Group.

The roles and responsibilities of the CAHSS Coordinator will include:

- Manage CAHSS network and Steering Group coordination.
- Provide training and development on CAHSS for new co-leads and Steering Group members.
- Support CAHSS Steering Group in strategic planning to advance effective, responsive and integrated animal health surveillance.
- Coordinate the development of funding applications and CAHSS network plans, in cooperation with CAHSS Steering Group, Animal Health Canada Executive Director and Network Leads/Co-leads.
- Initiate and coordinate meetings of the CAHSS Steering Group and Network Leads and Co-leads.
- Manage day-to-day operations of CAHSS.
- Report to CAHSS Steering Group and to Animal Health Canada on CAHSS performance and progress.
- Enhance collaboration with networks that are not part of CAHSS, building relationships with regional and species networks to enhance information sharing.
- Ensure effective project management, budget management, network collaboration and co-ordination.
- Ensure oversight of CAHSS governance.
- Responsible for the general and active management of the business of CAHSS, and to facilitate the implementation of the decisions, strategic plans and policies as established by the CAHSS Steering Group and CAHSS network leads.
- Ensure the co-ordination of CAHSS Steering Group and CAHSS network calls.
- Establish new networks when gaps are identified and linking with other CAHSS, regional and sectoral networks, and assisting CAHSS networks in meeting targets and resolving critical issues as needed.
- Develop communication material content and social media content.
- Oversee website content.
- Liaise with external data sources, including laboratories.
- Organize network events.
- Recruit new network members.