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Description of document: Department of Agriculture (USDA) Biosafety/Biosecurity Policy Committee (BBPC) Meeting Minutes, 2016-2022

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Department of Agriculture
Office of the General Counsel (OGC)
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1400 Independence Ave, SW.
Washington, D.C. 20250-1400
[USDA PAL web portal](#)
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Office of Information Affairs

August 21, 2025

Delivered via Electronic Mail

**Re: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request No. 2022-DA-02854-F
First Interim Response**

This is the first interim response to the March 25, 2022, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Office of Information Affairs (OIA). The request combined two (2) of your initial FOIA requests (2022-DA-02854-F and 2022-DA-03890-F) under the single tracking number, 2022-DA-02854-F. The combined request sought:

- 1) The meeting minutes for each meeting of the Joint Committee on Biorisk Management Policy between January 1, 2016 and March 25, 2022;
- 2) The meeting minutes from each meeting of the USDA Science Council between January 1, 2017 and March 25, 2022.

Your request is being processed under the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552.

The Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS) completed a search for responsive records. The OCS provides scientific leadership to the Department by ensuring that research supported by and scientific advice provided to the Department and its stakeholders is held to the highest standards of intellectual rigor and scientific integrity. For Part 1 of your request, the OCS search identified eighteen (18) pages of responsive records.

The OIA considered the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing the responsive records and applying any relevant FOIA exemptions and has determined that certain information should be withheld pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(5) (FOIA Exemption 5). Below is an explanation of the information that has been withheld.

FOIA Exemption 5 - Deliberative

FOIA Exemption 5 protects from disclosure those “inter-agency or intra-agency memorandums or letters which would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency.” One of the frequently invoked FOIA Exemption 5 privileges is the deliberative process privilege. To fall within FOIA’s deliberative process privilege, the records must be both

pre-decisional and deliberative; the records must precede the adoption of an agency policy and include the opinions, recommendations, or deliberations on a legal or policy matter.

In this instance, the OIA is withholding, under the deliberative process privilege, pre-decisional, intra-agency discussions and briefings regarding proposed actions of the Office of Homeland Security (OHS), including security classification reviews.

These items are pre-decisional in that they are antecedent to any final agency decision. These items are also deliberative in that they reflect the evolving, back-and-forth process between agency employees that is so integral to the Executive Branch decision-making process; more specifically, the development of potential recommendations made by agency advisors for use in making policy decisions. If these pre-decisional, deliberative communications were released to the public, USDA and other Executive Branch employees would be much more cautious in their discussions with each other, and in candidly discussing and providing all pertinent information and viewpoints in a timely manner to agency decision-makers. This lack of candor would also seriously impair the Department's ability to engage in forthright, internal discussions necessary for efficient and proper agency decision-making.

You have the right to appeal the OIA's determinations. Due to the need to issue more than one determination to fully resolve your request, your appeal rights for all determinations in response to this request will be provided to you in our final response letter.

The OIA continues processing your request and will issue a final response when FOIA processing is completed.

You may seek dispute resolution services by contacting the OIA's FOIA Public Liaison, Melanie Enciso. Ms. Enciso can be reached by telephone at (202) 720-9462, or electronically at Melanie.Enciso@usda.gov or USDAFOIA@usda.gov.

You also have the option to seek assistance from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS). Please visit [Request OGIS Assistance | National Archives](#) for information about how to request OGIS assistance in relation to a FOIA request.

Provisions of the FOIA allow us to recover part of the cost of processing your request. In this instance, no fees will be charged.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Mr. Nicholas Mantzaris at 202-690-5228 or electronically at Nicholas.Mantzaris@usda.gov or USDAFOIA@usda.gov.

For additional information regarding USDA FOIA regulations and processes, please refer to the information available online at [Freedom of Information Act Division | USDA](#).

The OIA appreciates the opportunity to assist you with this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alexis R. Graves".

Alexis R. Graves
Director
Office of Information Affairs

Enclosure: Responsive Records (18 pages)

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National Security Policy Staff *Summary of Conclusions*

Meeting Name:	Biosafety/Biosecurity Policy Committee (BBPC) Meeting
Meeting Date:	February 25, 2016
USDA Attendee(s):	Freeda Isaac, Alan Dowdy: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Steve Kappes, Joe Kozlovac: Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Fan-Li Chou: Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Frankie Beacom, Soumaya Tohamy: Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Gary Sherman: National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Angie Harless: Office of Communications (OC) Neena Anandaraman, Michelle Landes: Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS) Shawn McGruder: Office of General Counsel (OGC) Todd H. Repass, Jr., Josh Bornstein, Lindsey Childers: Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination (OHSEC)
Other Organizations / Entities Represented:	N/A
Speaker/POC	Speakers – Todd H. Repass, Jr., Freeda Isaac, Josh Bornstein, Neena Anandaraman, Lindsey Childers BBPC POC – Lindsey Childers

Background

The technical nature of biosafety and biosecurity issues combined with the national security implications associated with potential threats creates interdependence between scientific expertise and national security policy. To create a more efficient approach to addressing biosafety and biosecurity at USDA, the Science Council and the Security Council established the BBPC to synergize efforts of subject matter experts in science technology and national security to effectively develop biosafety and biosecurity policy. The committee is co-chaired by the Directors of USDA/OHSEC and USDA/OCS, and convenes as needed to address issues related but not limited to the following initiatives/policy topics: Countering Biological Threats (CBT), Biological Select Agents and Toxins (BSAT), Dual Use Research of Concern (DURC), Safety Stand Down, Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and Emerging Infectious Diseases.

Brief Summary of Conclusions

1. FESAP/FTAC Recommendation Implementation Updates

General Update

- The Federal Experts Security Advisory Panel (FESAP) and Fast Track Action Committee on the Select Agent Regulations (FTAC-SAR) recommendations, as well as the U.S. Government (USG) implementation plan was released publicly in October 2015.
- USDA is the designated lead on many of the implementation efforts. For the USDA-led recommendations, working group leads and members have been identified.
- A joint USDA/Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) kick-off meeting was convened in January 2016, at which time each working group was tasked to develop a detailed implementation plan for their specific recommendation.

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- At the BSAT sub-Interagency Policy Committee (sub-IPC) meeting on January 29, Dr. George Korch (HHS) and Dr. Jere Dick (USDA) updated the White House and interagency on our efforts, highlighting that additional funding is needed for us to meet many of the targets defined in the U.S. Government implementation plan.

Action: The next sub-IPC is scheduled to occur on April 5 at 2 p.m. All working groups have been asked to send their implementation plans and their status updates to Lindsey Childers (lindsey.childers@dm.usda.gov) and Theresa Lawrence (theresa.lawrence@hhs.gov) by March 29.

Assessment of High Containment Laboratory (HCL) Needs

- Each Department and Agency (D/A) has been asked to summarize their current and future HCL needs, with a three month timeline for completion. All input should be provided into the same template which has been used over the last few months to summarize D/A needs for the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF).
- In addition to the need for new space, modernization or expansion of laboratory space should also be captured in the needs assessment.
- It was flagged that this information is potentially sensitive, but also noted that much of this information is already publicly available through the BWC reports. It was agreed that the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) and OGC should be involved in this process.

Action: Dr. Freeda Isaac will follow up with the group regarding the HCL assessment template and the timeline/due dates for submission of this data to the working group.

FTAC 2: Public Release of Information on Laboratory Incidents

- The Federal Select Agent Program (FSAP) releases an aggregate report on laboratory incidents annually. These reports cover the previous calendar year, and are not laboratory specific. The next report is expected to be released in June.
- The goal for the FTAC 2 working group is to develop a USG reporting template that is consistent across D/A. This reporting process will be in addition to the FSAP reports.
- D/A have been asked to identify data collection tools/reporting templates that already exist. A sub-working group is cross-walking these various templates to develop a national template. D/A will then be asked to review to ensure that security concerns are addressed prior to finalization.

FTAC 3: Mechanism for Sharing Best Practices among the Regulated Community

- The FTAC 3 working group is discussing possible partners to develop this platform.
- Currently, planning efforts are underway to get a proposal from the American Biological Safety Association (ABSA). The cost is to be determined. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will pay a portion of the cost, but USDA will need to determine how we can support.

FESAP 2.8: Support U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Infectious Disease (ID) Standard

- Mr. Joe Kozlovac flagged that discussions on the OSHA proposed ID rule are centered on the public healthcare environment and has excluded animal health care facilities and veterinary diagnostic labs where people could also come into contact with pathogens. Ms. Frankie Beacorn added food-handling exposes people to agents as well (e.g. food processing facility).

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- A One Health approach is needed. BBPC members are encouraged to advocate for inclusion of animal health care facilities, veterinary diagnostic labs, and food processing facilities in OHSA's proposed rule.
- 2. Status of GAO Final Report** entitled High-Containment Laboratories: Comprehensive and Up-to-Date Policies and Stronger Oversight Mechanisms Needed to Improve Safety (GAO-16-305)
- The Government Accountability Office (GAO) report was shared with D/A on January 13, 2016. APHIS, ARS, and FSIS provided comments, which were summarized in a letter signed by Under Secretary Ed Avalos. This report will not be publicly released until early spring of 2016.
 - Highlighted recommendations for USDA are below. A full report was provided to meeting attendees.
 - Revise existing department policies for managing biological agents [e.g., Departmental Regulation (DR) 4400-007 and agency policies (ARS and APHIS).]
 - Analyze results of reporting to identify trends/recurring laboratory safety/security issues.
 - Require routine reporting of laboratory incidents and inspection results to USDA senior leadership.

Important Take-Away Messages for USDA

- Biosafety/biosecurity policies and procedures should continue to be developed and managed at the agency level. However, we need to standardize our biosafety/biosecurity policies across USDA as much as practicable.
- Furthermore, many USDA procedures and policies (e.g., reporting to senior leadership) are informally being implemented and not well documented.

Proposed revisions to the DR 4400-007 and the BBPC Charter (both were provided as read ahead).

- The BBPC charter will be amended to incorporate DR 4400-007 responsibilities.
- BBPC members will be asked to nominate representatives to serve on a sub-committee implementing the biosafety program. Note this applies only to agencies which have 1.) Employees who handle potentially hazardous biological agents and/or 2.) Equities in biosafety/biosecurity policy. There will be rotating agency chair serving for one (1) year at a time.
- The first tasking of the sub-committee will be to update DR 4400-007 to address GAO's recommendations and revise the components of the program's administration. This will include determining the level of congruence across agencies.
- ARS and APHIS concurred with the plans to revise the DR and BBPC charter.

Action: OHSEC will revise the BBPC charter and will share the draft language with the BBPC for comment/clearance. The timeline to finalize a new charter is the end of March 2016.

Inspection Reports

- Dr. Isaac explained that the FSAP has consistently provided laboratory inspection reports to the Responsible Officials (RO).
- D/A are now being asked to consider if senior leaders within their agencies should receive them, as this would help to increase awareness of noncompliance and performance of USDA labs at the highest levels.
- BBPC members were asked to consider how the committee might be involved in the role of receiving and sharing inspection reports.

Action: Email Freeda Isaac to receive reports.

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3. Safety Stand Down Next Steps

- OCS sent a data call out to agencies' leadership requesting information on agency activities since the 2014 Safety Stand Down, focusing on inventory management, training, and mechanisms that agencies have in place to track these activities.
- This information has been compiled into a spreadsheet which will be used by the proposed BBPC sub-committee to analyze and determine best practices to standardize across the department.

Other Relevant Updates and Closing Remarks

Mr. Todd H. Repass, Jr., provided the following updates:

- OHSEC continues to work with USDA agencies on preparedness initiatives, including active shooter training and awareness.
 - OHSEC has met with employees in Oregon, where USDA facilities were closed during the recent occupation. In general, USDA employees are concerned about an occupation or active shooter situation.
 - The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has mandated that active shooter plans be incorporated into Occupant Emergency Plans.
- OHSEC is continuing to develop (b) (5) Pre-Decisional/Deliberative [REDACTED]
- OHSEC is developing (b) (5) Pre-Decisional/Deliberative [REDACTED]
- (b) (5) Pre-Decisional/Deliberative [REDACTED]

USDA Outstanding Action Items

1. **FESAP/FTAC Recommendations:** For all attendees who are leads of working groups, send implementation plans and status updates to Lindsey Childers (lindsey.childers@dm.usda.gov) and Theresa Lawrence (theresa.lawrence@hhs.gov) by March 29.
2. **HCL Needs Assessment:** Dr. Isaac will follow up with the group regarding the HCL assessment template and the timeline/due dates for submission of this data to the working group.
3. **BBPC Charter:** OHSEC and OCS will revise the BBPC charter and will share the draft language with the BBPC for comment/clearance. The timeline to finalize a new charter is the end of March 2016.
4. **Laboratory Inspection Reports:** Email Dr. Isaac to receive inspection reports (Freda.E.Isaac@aphis.usda.gov).

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National Security Policy Staff Summary of Conclusions

Meeting Name:	Joint Committee on Biorisk Management Policy (JCBMP) Meeting
Meeting Date:	October 30, 2017
USDA Attendee(s):	Beth Lautner, Freeda Isaac, Eilyn Fabregas; Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Joe Kozlovac, Tira Halsey; Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Terri Nintemann, Frankie Beacorn; Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Dionne Toombs; Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS) Shelia Novak, Jeremy Brooks; Office of General Council (OGC) Josh Bornstein, Neena Anandaraman, Scott Linsky, Tyra Taylor, Keith McElfresh, Brodrick Wilcox, Udit Minocha.; Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination (OHSEC)
Other Organizations / Entities Represented:	N/A
Speaker/POC	JCBMP Co-Chairs – Josh Bornstein, Dionne Toombs JCBMP Executive Secretariat/POC – Tyra Taylor

Background

The Science Council and the Security Council established the Joint Committee on Biorisk Management Policy (JCBMP) with the goal to institutionalize a more harmonized USDA approach for informed decision making, policy development, and oversight practices in the areas of biorisk management. The JCBMP oversees biorisk management policy at the department level, provides a forum to discuss best practices, reviews the input for national-level reports, and serves as a conduit for bi-directional information sharing between USDA senior leadership and all other levels of personnel. These efforts lead to more effective biorisk management across USDA through more frequent standardization of department policies, more effective trend identification and analysis, and heightened awareness of critical areas for strategic focus.

Brief Summary of Conclusions

Security Classification Guide Review

- The Secretary determines the classification of documents up to the Secret level. As there is a new Secretary, the Guide is being updated.
- The JCBMP was asked to review (b) (5) Pre-Decisional/Deliberative [REDACTED]
- As several questions were raised during the meeting, a subgroup led by Mr. Broderick Wilcox will work to address concerns and finalize the document within 30 days.

DR-4400-007 Working Group

- To address Government Accountability Office (GAO) audit recommendations regarding federal policies and procedures for biosafety and biosecurity in high containment laboratories, it was agreed that a JCBMP sub-committee would be formed to update and implement the former USDA Biosafety Program [(Departmental Regulation (DR) 4400-007)]. The Sub-committee will include processes to:
 - Routinely analyze incidents
 - Report incidences to senior management

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- An updated draft will be provided to the JCBMP for review with comments due to Sub-committee co-chairs, Mr. Kozlovac and Ms. Fabregas by 12/1/17.

JCBMP Sub-group Chair Rotation

- ARS and APHIS have been co-chairing since the group began in May 2016
- Rotation of co-chairs occurs in May 2018
- FSIS and Forest Service are the other members of the sub-group that would rotate into the co-chair position
- The sub-group needs a NIFA ex-officio member

Federal Experts Security Advisory Panel (FESAP)/ Interagency Biorisk Management Working Group (IBMWG) Recommendation Implementation Updates

- The FESAP has completed 2 of 3 phases of inventorying high containment labs (agency review of needs and federal panel summarizing needs). The FESAP determined that the third phase (outside panel review) will not be necessary.
- Multiple FESAP/IBMWG subgroups continue to complete FESAP recommendations regarding biorisk management including training and awareness campaigns.

Federal Select Agent Program

- APHIS and CDC co-chairs submitted a report last week that summarizes all inspections conducted in 2016 without attribution to address Fast Track Action Committee recommendations for reporting select agent incidences.
- The Select Agent Program implemented a new paperless data system for registered entities to submit data through a secure external portal.
- Next week, the Select Agent Program co-chairs will provide testimony on how the program works to the House Energy and Commerce committees which oversee the program.
- The Select Agent Program co-chairs will develop a joint strategic plan and include a workload review.
- A GAO audit of the program had 5 recommendations, none that were of concern. Though there was earlier recommendations for housing the program with a third party, that is no longer being suggested.

National Biodefense Strategy (NBS)

- The 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) was enacted December 23, 2016. It required Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, and Agriculture to jointly develop a National Biodefense Strategy (NBS) and implementation plan by October 1, 2017.
- The NBS will serve as an oversight mechanism to ensure efficient, effective, and accountable results by providing a mechanism to assess relative risk from bio-threats across all sources and domains to prioritize resources, defense, and countermeasures against the most pressing threats.
- The NSC held a paper PCC approval process a few weeks ago and agencies are awaiting a finalized NBS and NPPM from the NSC. The NSC anticipates an implementation plan to take another 4-6 months after release of the NBS.

USDA Outstanding Action Items

1. Mr. Broderick Wilcox will host a subgroup of the JCBMPM to include a representative from each agency and OCIO to finalize the Security Classification Guide by 12/1/17.
2. The JCBMP will provide comments to the JCBMP Sub-committee co-chairs on draft DR 4400-007 by 12/1/17.

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3. By February 1, 2017, Tyra Taylor will schedule a JCBMP meeting for the JCBMP sub-group to discuss all biosafety incidences for the past year.
4. The JCBMP sub-group should be considering rotation in May 2017 and updating their member roster

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National Security Policy Staff *Summary of Conclusions*

Meeting Name:	Joint Committee on Biorisk Management Policy (JCBMP) Meeting
Meeting Date:	February 20, 2018
USDA Attendee(s):	Eilyn Fabregas, Beth Lautner, Freeda Isaac: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Jeff Silverstein, Steve Kappes, Joe Kozlovac, Tira Halsey, Jeff Hayes: Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Diane Wray-Cahen Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) Terri Nintemann, Kis Robertson-Hale Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Arthur Bryant, Pat Klein Forest Service (FS) Michelle Colby National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Dionne Toombs, Neena Anandaraman Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS) Jeremy Brooks Office of General Council (OGC) Josh Bornstein, Scott Linsky, Keith McElfresh, Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination (OHSEC)
Other Organizations / Entities Represented:	N/A
Speaker/POC	JCBMP Co-Chairs – Josh Bornstein, Dionne Toombs JCBMP Executive Secretariat/POC – Tyra Taylor
Background	
The Science Council and the Security Council established the Joint Committee on Biorisk Management Policy (JCBMP) with the goal to institutionalize a more harmonized USDA approach for informed decision making, policy development, and oversight practices in the areas of biorisk management. The JCBMP oversees biorisk management policy at the department level, provides a forum to discuss best practices, reviews the input for national-level reports, and serves as a conduit for bi-directional information sharing between USDA senior leadership and all other levels of personnel. These efforts lead to more effective biorisk management across USDA through more frequent standardization of department policies, more effective trend identification and analysis, and heightened awareness of critical areas for strategic focus. To address Government Accountability Office (16-305) audit recommendations regarding federal policies and procedures for biosafety and biosecurity in high containment laboratories, it was agreed in 2016 that a JCBMP sub-committee would be formed to update and implement the former USDA Biosafety Program [(Departmental Regulation (DR) 4400-007] to include processes in the DR to develop a consistent policy for notifying department leadership of incidences, evaluating trends, and sharing lessons learned. The purpose of this meeting was for the JCBMP sub-committee to summarize and share with the JCBMP biorisk incidences/events and any resulting lessons learned in 2017.	
Brief Summary of Conclusions	

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Update on DM9610.001/DR 9610.001

- Technical experts from across the Department were solicited for feedback and ARS is completing a final consolidation of comments.
- The DR will be ready to submit for clearance after a final round of comments.

JCBMP Sub Group Agency Summaries on 2017 Biorisk Incidences/Events

- APHIS
 - Incidences with sharps identified the need to identify, procure and provide employees adequate puncture-resistant sharps containers in various sizes, particularly for field operations; the need to reinforce safe techniques for handling of sharps (particularly no recapping of dirty sharps); and the development of a "Safe Handling and Disposal of Sharps" educational video which has been made available in AgLearn to APHIS employees. This educational video has been made mandatory for employees who handle sharps. APHIS is currently pursuing the possibility of making this educational video available to other USDA Agencies.
 - Incidences with animal bites, scratches and contact with body fluid identified the need for additional re-training in proper animal immobilization techniques, which has been addressed in the "Safe Handling and Disposal of Sharps" educational video in AgLearn.
 - Incidences with biological hazards identified the need for additional re-training on use of laboratory equipment and personal protective equipment, as well as notification of shippers of diagnostic specimens to APHIS' facilities to properly package samples per DOT regulations
- ARS
 - Identification of improperly packaged biohazardous waste material resulting in a biohazard spill at a necropsy/incinerator location initiated a comprehensive external assessment of biohazardous and biomedical waste processes and programs Nov 27-Dec 1, 2017.
 - New procedures have been implemented for waste drop off, locks were installed in the affected areas, and the Special (Regulated) Medical Waste SOP was updated and training conducted on the updated SOP by the biosafety officer
- Forest Service
 - Various biological and chemical exposures in outdoor field work conditions such as wildfires and hazmat clean-ups include insect bites, exposure to poison ivy/oak and toxic pesticides, smoke inhalation and potential exposure to biological agents were reported by the Forest Service
 - Some incidences were precautionary reporting and others resulted in a review of PPE and/or hazmat training, review of established safety practice guidelines, and field kit remedies
- FSIS
 - FSIS had no biological incidences to report in 2017 and recently underwent a positive review from the CDC for management of select agents.

Update/Next Steps on Draft DR4400

- After a final adjudication of comments, the draft DR will be ready for clearance.

USDA Outstanding Action Items

1. Draft DM9610.001/DR 9610.001 will be circulated to FS for final comments
2. Comments on draft DR 4400-007 will be adjudicated and the DR will be submitted for clearance

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National Security Division Summary of Conclusions

Meeting Name:	Joint Committee on Biorisk Management Policy (JCBMP) Meeting
Meeting Date:	April 9, 2019
USDA Attendee(s):	Eilyn Fabregas, Beth Lautner, Keith Wiggins, Narda Huyke: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Joe Kozlovac: Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Frankie Beacorn, Emilio Esteban: Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Patty Klein Forest Service (FS) Michelle Colby National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Dionne Toombs, Neena Anandaraman Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS) Christopher Elmore: Office of General Council (OGC) Jessica Fantinato: Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination (OHSEC)
Other Organizations / Entities Represented:	N/A
Speaker/POC	JCBMP Co-Chairs – Jessica Fantinato, Dionne Toombs POC – Neena Anandaraman
Background	
The Science Council and the Security Council established the Joint Committee on Biorisk Management Policy (JCBMP) with the goal to institutionalize a more harmonized USDA approach for informed decision making, policy development, and oversight practices in the areas of biorisk management. The JCBMP oversees biorisk management policy at the department level, provides a forum to discuss best practices, reviews the input for national-level reports, and serves as a conduit for bi-directional information sharing between USDA senior leadership and all other levels of personnel. These efforts lead to more effective biorisk management across USDA through more frequent standardization of department policies, more effective trend identification and analysis, and heightened awareness of critical areas for strategic focus. To address Government Accountability Office (16-305) audit recommendations regarding federal policies and procedures for biosafety and biosecurity in high containment laboratories, it was agreed in 2016 that a JCBMP sub-committee would be formed to update and implement the former USDA Biosafety Program [(Departmental Regulation (DR) 4400-007] to include processes in the DR to develop a consistent policy for notifying department leadership of incidences, evaluating trends, and sharing lessons learned. The purpose of this meeting was for the JCBMP sub-committee to summarize and share with the JCBMP biorisk incidences/events and any resulting lessons learned in 2018.	
Brief Summary of Conclusions	
Update on National Biodefense Strategy - HHS sent a request for information regarding identifying associated activities, budget and resources to which agencies are currently responding. As activities overlap, if agencies have questions, they should feel free to contact Jessica Fantinato. - A biodefense summit will be held April 17 and all are welcome to attend.	

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JCBMP Sub Group Agency Summaries on 2018 Biorisk Incidences/Events

- APHIS
 - While incidences with needle stick injuries from sharps occurred, there were fewer than last year through extensive safety training and outreach; APHIS “Safe Handling and Disposal of Sharps” video was made available to other USDA agencies, per request, through AgLearn.
 - Biohazard incidences included animal bites, explosion of a vial taken out of a liquid nitrogen tank resulting in a puncture wound, and tick bites.
 - Lessons learned included positive results in reduced needle stick injuries from training and outreach, the need to listen to employee concerns resulting in a standard operating procedure for safe practices in responding to rodent exposure being developed and positive results from training on preventing and responding to tick bite exposure
- ARS
 - Movement of a tobacco plant infected with a genetically modified, disarmed, *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* from a green-house to a core imaging facility was not conducted properly resulting in training personnel on the need to follow protocols on moving research plants in co-located facilities
 - Several needle stick injuries were reported involving *Brucella abortus* and one needle stick injury related to avian influenza.
 - A biological waste hauler dropped several containers from his truck as he operated a lift. While no evidence of a spill was found, a disinfectant was applied and an incident report was sent to the contract waste hauling company.
- Forest Service
 - Biological and chemical exposures in outdoor field conditions during wildfires and hazmat clean-ups include insect bites, exposure to mold, exposure to naturally occurring asbestos, smoke inhalation, and potential exposure to biological agents
 - A new and increasing occupational hazard (beyond the scope of JCBMP biological hazards) is unexpected chemical exposure to multiple pesticides (some banned in the U.S.) used in illegal marijuana cultivation sites on federal and state lands subjecting employees to dangers from pesticide toxicity. These pesticides are indiscriminately and intentionally applied around these sites to kill native wildlife and prevent herbivory of marijuana crops. Other public health dangers inherent in this criminal activity are gunfire and stream water chemical contamination.
 - Some incidences were precautionary reporting and others resulted in a review of PPE and/or hazmat training, review of established safety practice guidelines, and field kit remedies.
- FSIS
 - FSIS has had no incidents involving the Federal Select Agent registered spaces, select agents or toxins, breaches of containment, spills, thefts, losses or releases.

Update/Next Steps on Draft DR4400

- The draft DR was submitted to USDA Issuance in 2018
- Due to the shutdown, review was delayed
- USDA Issuance has asked for extensive revisions and the JCBMP Sub-committee will work on those with the aim of having the DR completed this year

Update on USDA Agriculture Biorisk Compendium (ABC)

- This joint publication by ARS and APHIS will cover areas not covered in the Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories such as agriculture containment

2019 ARS Biosafety Symposium

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- ARS held a very-successful, well attended (over 200 attendees), 2.5-day symposium with a host of domestic and international experts covering a wide range of topic areas on biosafety

USDA Outstanding Action Items

1. Comments on draft DR 4400 will be adjudicated and the DR will be re-submitted for clearance

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National Security Division *Summary of Conclusions*

Meeting Name:	Joint Committee on Biorisk Management Policy (JCBMP) Meeting
Meeting Date:	March 11, 2020
USDA Attendee(s):	Eilyn Fabregas, Freeda Isaac, Heather Allen; Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Joe Kozlovac; Tira Halsey, Jeff Silverstein; Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Frankie Beacorn; Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Patty Klein Forest Service (FS) Dionne Toombs, Neena Anandaraman Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS) Jessica Fantinato, Dave Stiefel; Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination (OHSEC)
Other Organizations / Entities Represented:	N/A
Speaker/POC	JCBMP Co-Chairs – Jessica Fantinato, Dionne Toombs POC – Neena Anandaraman
Background	
The Science Council and the Security Council established the Joint Committee on Biorisk Management Policy (JCBMP) with the goal to institutionalize a more harmonized USDA approach for informed decision making, policy development, and oversight practices in the areas of biorisk management. The JCBMP oversees biorisk management policy at the department level, provides a forum to discuss best practices, reviews the input for national-level reports, and serves as a conduit for bi-directional information sharing between USDA senior leadership and all other levels of personnel. These efforts lead to more effective biorisk management across USDA through more frequent standardization of department policies, more effective trend identification and analysis, and heightened awareness of critical areas for strategic focus. To address Government Accountability Office (16-305) audit recommendations regarding federal policies and procedures for biosafety and biosecurity in high containment laboratories, it was agreed in 2016 that a JCBMP sub-committee would be formed to update and implement the former USDA Biosafety Program [(Departmental Regulation (DR) 4400-007] to include processes in the DR to develop a consistent policy for notifying department leadership of incidences, evaluating trends, and sharing lessons learned. The purpose of this meeting was for the JCBMP sub-committee to summarize and share with the JCBMP biorisk incidences/events and any resulting lessons learned in 2019.	
Brief Summary of Conclusions	
JCBMP Sub Group Agency Summaries on 2019 Biorisk Incidences/Events	
• APHIS ○ An incident regarding potential exposure to <i>Brucella</i> species and <i>Mycobacterium</i> species occurred during routine recertification of the HEPA filters in the HVAC servicing one laboratory ○ Liquid waste collection tanks that capture waste from a vivarium (animal BSL-2) did not drain properly and caused a backup of water into the autoclave and cage wash drain pits and some showers in the vivarium	

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- Employee was potentially exposed to vesicular stomatitis virus (VSV)- Indiana strain while examining virus isolation tubes inoculated with samples from suspect horses.
- A wild-caught rabbit became ill with tularemia exposing its handlers who did not anticipate the potential for zoonotic disease
- ARS
 - A plant genetic resource facility caught fire
 - A rabies-suspect stationed overseas did not immediately report the incident to management but received appropriate treatment
 - A student working with E. coli O157:H7 in a lab became ill with that agent. Human factors played a role.
 - Problems with facilities and decreased staff contributed to maintenance problems highlighting the need for “predictive maintenance” and adequate resourcing of containment facilities
- FSIS
 - FSIS has had no incidents involving the Federal Select Agent registered spaces, select agents or toxins, breaches of containment, spills, thefts, losses or releases
 - Injuries at FSIS laboratories consisted of cuts (2), falls in parking lot (2), burn from hot liquid (1) and back injury (1)
- Forest Service
 - Biological and chemical exposures in outdoor field conditions include insect bites, exposure to mold, exposure to naturally occurring asbestos, smoke inhalation (including marijuana smoke inhalation), and exposure to raw sewage. In summary, the number of tick bites reported has increased this past year due to precautionary and proactive reporting by employees in field work situations. However, the number of other biological and/or biochemical risks have significantly decreased due, in large part, to improved employee safety training and stricter policies to minimize employee exposure risk.

USDA Outstanding Action Items

DR4400 is in queue for clearance

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National Security Division Summary of Conclusions

Meeting Name:	Joint Committee on Biorisk Management Policy (JCBMP) Meeting
Meeting Date:	April 23, 2021
USDA Attendee(s):	Eilyn Fabregas, Freeda Isaac; Jacek Taniewski: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Michael Sussman: Agriculture Marketing Service Joe Kozlovac; Tira Halsey, Jeff Silverstein: Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Diane Wray Cahen: Foreign Agriculture Service Frankie Beacorn; Sheryl Shaw; Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Patty Klein: Forest Service (FS) Chris Elmore: Office of Budget and Program Analysis Brian Mabry, Larry Moore: Office of Communications Dionne Toombs, Diane Wray Cahen,, Neena Anandaraman: Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS) Matt Allen, Michelle Colby, Dave Stiefel; Jessica Pulz: Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination (OHSEC)
Other Organizations / Entities Represented:	N/A
Speaker/POC	JCBMP Co-Chairs – Matt Allen, Dionne Toombs POC – Neena Anandaraman
Background	
The Science Council and the Security Council established the Joint Committee on Biorisk Management Policy (JCBMP) with the goal to institutionalize a more harmonized USDA approach for informed decision making, policy development, and oversight practices in the areas of biorisk management. The JCBMP oversees biorisk management policy at the department level, provides a forum to discuss best practices, reviews the input for national-level reports, and serves as a conduit for bi-directional information sharing between USDA senior leadership and all other levels of personnel. These efforts lead to more effective biorisk management across USDA through more frequent standardization of department policies, more effective trend identification and analysis, and heightened awareness of critical areas for strategic focus. To address Government Accountability Office (16-305) audit recommendations regarding federal policies and procedures for biosafety and biosecurity in high containment laboratories, it was agreed in 2016 that a JCBMP sub-committee would be formed to update and implement the former USDA Biosafety Program [(Departmental Regulation (DR) 4400-007] to include processes in the DR to develop a consistent policy for notifying department leadership of incidences, evaluating trends, and sharing lessons learned. The purpose of this meeting was for the JCBMP sub-committee to summarize and share with the JCBMP biorisk incidences/events and any resulting lessons learned in 2020.	
Brief Summary of Conclusions	
DR 4400-007 Biorisk Management Policy- Update	

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APHIS provided an update that DR 4400 was revised by the JCBMP Sub-committee. The decade-old, outdated document was updated and became formally issued in September 2020.

The JCBMP Sub-committee will next consider updating DR9630.

JCBMP Sub Group Agency Summaries on 2020 Biorisk Incidences/Events

- APHIS reported inventory discrepancies, employee exposure to a diagnostic sample which did not result in exposure to a biological agent, physical injury, a wastewater leak, HVAC system failure that did not result in health injury due to continual monitoring and early detection, sharps incidences, and potential occupational exposure to infectious disease. APHIS has also implemented a laboratory ergonomics training readily available in AgLearn.
- ARS reported spillage of nematode-infected water, deviation from an SOP for select agent inactivation, wastewater leaks and associated corrective action program required by a regulatory agency failure of a freezer containing biological agents that did not result in exposure.
- FSIS reported no select agent incidences. Minor physical injuries occurred in the non-select agent space.
- Forest Service reported biological and chemical exposures in outdoor field work conditions included tick bites (with precautionary concerns for tickborne diseases), smoke inhalation including exposure to marijuana smoke at illegal cultivation sites and naturally occurring asbestos exposure during wild fire events, and potential exposure to SARS-COV2 from infected humans during field deployments and potential transmission to native wildlife.

OneHealth –ARS described increased congressional and international interest around the One Health approach due to the SARS-COV2 pandemic. ARS is coordinating a congressional briefing on One Health work at USDA as requested by OBPA.

USDA Outstanding Action Items

None

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National Security Division Summary of Conclusions

Meeting Name:	Joint Committee on Biorisk Management Policy (JCBMP) Meeting
Meeting Date:	February 25, 2022
USDA Attendee(s):	Eilyn Fabregas, Freeda Isaac: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Joe Kozlovac; Tira Halsey, Jeff Silverstein, Jessica Pulz: Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Chris Peterson (FAS) Frankie Beacorn; Kis Robertson: Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Patty Klein: Forest Service (FS) Michelle Colby (NIFA) Neena Anandaraman, Diane Wray-Cahen: Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS) Matt Allen, Heather Allen; Snriti Bhotika: Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination (OHS)
Chairs/POC	JCBMP Co-Chairs – Matt Allen, Dionne Toombs POC – <u>Neena Anandaraman</u>
Background	
The Science Council and the Security Council established the Joint Committee on Biorisk Management Policy (JCBMP) with the goal to institutionalize a more harmonized USDA approach for informed decision making, policy development, and oversight practices in the areas of biorisk management. The JCBMP oversees biorisk management policy at the department level, provides a forum to discuss best practices, reviews the input for national-level reports, and serves as a conduit for bi-directional information sharing between USDA senior leadership and all other levels of personnel. These efforts lead to more effective biorisk management across USDA through more frequent standardization of department policies, more effective trend identification and analysis, and heightened awareness of critical areas for strategic focus. To address Government Accountability Office (16-305) audit recommendations regarding federal policies and procedures for biosafety and biosecurity in high containment laboratories, it was agreed in 2016 that a JCBMP sub-committee would be formed to update and implement the former USDA Biosafety Program [(Departmental Regulation (DR) 4400-007] to include processes in the DR to develop a consistent policy for notifying department leadership of incidences, evaluating trends, and sharing lessons learned. The purpose of this meeting was for the JCBMP sub-committee to summarize and share with the JCBMP biorisk incidences/events and any resulting lessons learned in 2021.	
Brief Summary of Conclusions	
Security Update OHS briefed the group on global geopolitical issues, cybersecurity, and other threats to emphasize the need for personal and professional preparedness and vigilance in times of heightened security concerns. JCBMP Sub Group Agency Summaries on 2020 Biorisk Incidences/Events APHIS reported that a new working group was stood up to promote awareness of biosecurity and Departmental Regulation (DR) 4400. APHIS developed a definition for “exposure” and also featured biorisk management success stories on the APHIS weekly news email on a regular basis. Biosafety incidences included animal bites, puncture wounds, sharps incidences, tick bites and potential exposure to infectious disease through tick bites. APHIS saw a 50% reduction in insect bites through an emphasis on personal protective equipment, including use of “Insect Shield” on field employees uniforms.	

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- ARS updated Dual Use Research of Concern policy and training. Have begun implementation of High Reliability Organization tenets at NBAF and are conducting an ongoing training program, “52 Weeks of Biosafety” at their Wyndmoor, PA facility. Biosafety incidences for 2021 included legacy hazardous chemicals which required evacuation of a building wing, multiple high containment plumbing challenges at a BSL-3 facility necessitating decontamination, an increase in sharps and lacerations injuries some of which were due to unpredictable animal behavior.
- FSIS instituted a working group on DR4400 and released its Biorisk Management Policy in December 2021 closing out GAO recommendations. FSIS reported no select agent incidences and minor physical injuries in the non-select agent space.
- Forest Service reported incidences from its electronic safety database including biological and chemical exposures in outdoor field work conditions. Physical injuries included tick bites (with precautionary concerns for tickborne diseases) and smoke inhalation including exposure to marijuana smoke at illegal cultivation sites during wildfire response events. All bio/chem exposure incidences are trending down with increased vigilance and hazmat awareness training.

Biosafety/Biosecurity Sub IPC

The Federal Experts Security Advisory Panel (FESAP) and Fast Track Action Committee developed a number of recommendations. At the direction/request of the National Security Council, USDA and HHS will co-chair a group to address those recommendations which have yet to be implemented.

USDA Outstanding Action Items

None

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