

Objectives and Approaches for the AAAP Committee for Health Economics

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Proposed Objectives:

- 1) To measure the impact, especially the economic impact, of the most important poultry diseases.
- 2) To identify and correlate the interrelationships of the most common poultry diseases.
- 3) To identify the geographical and seasonal differences, as well as other divergent patterns such as state regulations, on the incidence and severity of various poultry diseases.

It is my belief that the overall goal of this committee is to obtain a global picture of the health of the US poultry industry, and to place progressively more accurate financial figures on the impact of certain diseases on the industry, including prevention, treatment, and losses to productivity (and research efforts and investments?).

A task as ambitious as this one is difficult because of its wide ranging and ill-defined parameters, and because of its lack of precedents. I therefore feel that the compilation of opinions of the objectives of the committee is an important method to define the boundries in which we will operate. I also believe that we should accept that our goals will be difficult and slow to acheive. Because of this we should initially focus on a few specific goals, try to obtain some crude data, and refine and expand that information into its final form. As these objectives are met, new ones could be added. It is important that we not get weighed down in too many or too extensive projects.

In order to determine our initial projects, I think it would be helpful to compile a list of of poultry diseases that are important to the various poultry subgroups (turkey, broiler, etc.) for a variety of reasons:

1. diseases that cause high mortality
2. diseases that reduce feed conversion
3. diseases that result in high condemnations
4. diseases that are important because of their interaction with other diseases or because they increase the liklihood of other diseases (Infectious Bursal Disease)
5. diseases that require medication for prevention (coccidiosis)
6. diseases that require medication for treatment
7. diseases that require vigilance or monitoring (breeder titers for Infectious Bursal Disease or Avian Encephalomyelitis)
8. diseases that are exotic to the U.S. (exotic New Castle)
9. diseases that are highly contagious



10. diseases that require prevention through vaccination
11. diseases that require additional biosecurity measures or additional cleaning, disinfection and down time between flocks.

One or more such category can be selected as an initial project. For example, it may be possible to measure the total amount of money spent on medication in the poultry industry. This amount could be broken down by specific medication and whether it is spent on turkey, broiler, layer, breeder, etc. A survey of flocks over the country could then determine when each medication is being used and for what purposes, i.e. growth promotion, high mortality, enteritis, leg problems, respiratory problems, prevention of conditions experienced in previous or neighboring flocks, etc. A similar study could be done for vaccination practices. From the information generated from such general studies, the committee can decide its future direction and focus, and eventually, a major source of information about the entire industry will be available.

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