

A3.7 Appendix 1 The Handbook and Oversight Committee Position Statements

A. 2000 – 2002 Position Statements

1. Initial Position Statement

This appendix is truly the heart of this document. It lays out the structure of the handbook and the revision and oversight committee. It explains how the handbook will be maintained and by who. Most importantly, however, this appendix details the manner in which this handbook shall be reviewed and revised. This detailed procedure is what gives this document its advantage over previous documents of its kind. Additionally, these reviews are mandatory on an annual basis, which means the document can be kept current from a technique and pathogen standpoint, such that in the future there should be no need to create any new handbooks or manuals.

B. 2002 – 2003 Position Statements

1. Inserted months into locations that make the timeline for review easier to comprehend.
2. Removed printed document as a means of dissemination.

C. 2006-2007 Position Statements

1. Per a request by USDA-APHIS, Appendix 1 Section 2 was amended to include a representative from USDA-APHIS and a representative from NOAA-Fisheries. It was felt that because these agencies are intimately involved in aquatic animal health their input into the process was necessary and beneficial. Invitations have been extended to each agency for their representatives to begin participating immediately in a non-voting manner, with full voting privileges being instated upon release of the new version of the document in June.

D. 2008-2010 Position Statements

No changes or reviews requested.

E. 2011-2012 Position Statements

1. The Review and Oversight Committee as a whole voted approval for the number of committee members who must be present either by e-mail or conference call to vote on a significant change in procedural matters or how the committee functions. At least 2/3 of the ten members on the committee must be present to make official decisions in regards to significant changes in the Handbook.

Appendix 1.1 was amended by the Review and Oversight Committee to officially adopt a 2- year (even year) revision cycle for the Inspection Manual of the AFS Blue Book. Appendix 1.2 was changed to reflect quarterly conference call meetings (February, May, August, November). Appendix 1.3 was changed to update the locations where the notice to solicit changes to the manual are published for comment and submitted requests for changes to the manual are given a much longer time period for consideration by the committee. The flow chart of procedures to handle requests to change the manual in Appendix 1.3 was adapted to reflect the changes to the update cycle.

2. A subcommittee was formed to review Chapter 2 (Sampling Chapter) of the Inspection Manual to determine if changes should be made to ensure that the chapter stays current, effective and relevant for the intended purpose of conducting a fish health inspection. A proposal was submitted to the Review and Oversight Committee to remove the proscriptive legal-sounding language and replace it with educational material that would assist a fish health inspector to correctly interpret Federal and State fish health policies and regulations. The proposal was voted down by an eleven member subcommittee not to proceed with changes to the Sampling Chapter. The majority felt that the basic quality of the Blue Book is to provide some sort of basic suggested level of sampling (minimum standards) for fish health inspectors. Some feared the changes would only bring about further confusion and perhaps controversy between suppliers, inspectors and regulators. The proposal was formally withdrawn and the subcommittee was dispersed.

F. 2013 – 2014 Position Statements

No changes or reviews requested.

G. 2019-2020 Position Statements

The following has been requested from the 2019-2020 Handbook Revision and Oversight committee:

1. Incorporation of the Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia Virus (VHSV) quantitative polymerase chain reaction (qPCR) assay (Jonstrup et al. 2013) into the Fish Health Section Blue Book.
2. Incorporation of the *Renibacterium salmoninarum* (*R.sal.*) qPCR assay (Chase et al. 2006) into the Fish Health Section Blue Book.

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3. Incorporation of the *Myxobolus cerebralis* (*M.cerebralis*) qPCR assay (Cavender et al. 2004) into the Fish Health Section Blue Book.

Both the VHSV and *R.sal.* qPCR assays have been thoroughly validated and extensively ring tested, so the first task we accomplished was to form two separate subcommittees to address goals 1 and 2. Upon committee formation (table below), the first formal meetings were held. Both committees came to the same conclusions that each respective qPCR assay (VHSV and *R.sal.*) should be adopted in some capacity into the Fish Health Section Blue Book. SOP were developed by the subcommittees and incorporated into the respective sections.

Unfortunately, the two *M. cerebralis* assays (HSP 70 and 18S rDNA) described in Cavender et al. 2004 have not been fully tested to the appropriate level for adoption into the Fish Health Section Blue Book at this time. The committee encouraged conducting a formal ring trial in order to test these two assays across multiple labs. With this information, it appears Goal 3 will have to be addressed in the future upon completion of a formal *M. cerebralis* qPCR ring trial.