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NBAF Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS NBAF?

The National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) in Manhattan, KS is a state-of-the-art facility operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that is designed to help protect the nation's agriculture, farmers and citizens against the threat and potential impact of serious animal diseases.

NBAF will replace and expand on the mission of the Plum Island Animal Disease Center (PIADC), a biosafety level-3 facility that was established in 1954. Currently, USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) conduct foreign animal disease research, training and diagnostics in this center. ARS and APHIS will transfer their missions from PIADC to NBAF and will operate the facility jointly.

Once fully operational, NBAF will have more than 400 employees. As of March 2024, more than 300 team members support NBAF operations and science. Watch [USAJobs](#) and follow NBAF on [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#) for employment opportunities.



WHY DOES THE U.S. NEED NBAF?

Protecting livestock and agricultural interests also protects the economy. Agriculture, food and food processing contribute more than \$1.1 trillion to the U.S. economy's gross domestic product per year. In addition, 10% of jobs — about 20 million — have some ties to agriculture.

At NBAF, USDA will conduct comprehensive research, develop vaccines and anti-virals, and provide enhanced diagnostic and training capabilities to protect the nation from animal diseases that are:

- **Foreign or transboundary** — could enter the U.S. from another country.
- **Emerging** — are new or not well known.
- **Zoonotic** — normally exist in animals but can infect humans.

According to the World Health Organization, more than 70% of new and emerging infectious diseases in humans are zoonotic. USDA will expand its scientific work at NBAF, which is the first facility in the U.S. to provide maximum biocontainment (biosafety level-4) laboratories capable of housing large livestock for research and diagnostics of zoonotic diseases. NBAF will be a critical component of USDA's priority to develop vaccines and countermeasures for — as well as the early detection of — diseases that threaten livestock, other animals and food from the nation's farms and fields.

WHAT SCIENCE WILL BE DONE AT NBAF?

NBAF is in a unique position to do diagnostics and training, as well as research and veterinary countermeasure development for foreign, emerging and zoonotic diseases in large livestock within the safety and security of this next-generation facility. Before any work with biological select agents and pathogens can begin at NBAF, the facility and personnel are required by law to undergo a series of inspections and reviews by regulatory agencies.

Scientific activities at NBAF are starting in phases, beginning with low-risk, common science practices that don't involve infectious pathogens and moving to more advanced or mission-focused science in later phases. Current scientific activities at NBAF are at a biosafety level-1 and -2 — which includes clean, non-infectious materials as well as moderate-risk microbes. This is similar to science work in most universities, colleges and diagnostic laboratories across the country.

The **Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (FADDL)** and the **Foreign Animal Disease Research Unit (FADRU)** at Plum Island will transfer their science to NBAF. FADDL employees are involved in prevention, surveillance, diagnosis and response to these diseases, including the expertise to manage two vaccine banks. FADRU and two new USDA units — the **Foreign Arthropod-Borne Animal Disease Research Unit (FABADRU)** and the **Zoonotic and Emerging Disease Research Unit (ZEDRU)** — are focused on research and countermeasures for animal diseases that could have devastating economic or public health consequences.

In addition, NBAF has a **Biologics Development Module** that will enhance and expedite the transition of new innovations from research to commercially-viable countermeasures.

HOW DOES NBAF ENGAGE WITH THE COMMUNITY?

NBAF is actively engaged with the local media and community providing updates and representing USDA at various local, state and regional events. In addition, NBAF leaders regularly engage with a Community Liaison Group of local, regional and state leaders to discuss community views and feedback regarding NBAF. All public inquiries and requests can be sent to nbaf@usda.gov.

