



Prepared by the USDA NBAF Office of Communications  
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# NBAF Frequently Asked Questions

## WHAT IS NBAF?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) owns and operates the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) in Manhattan, KS. This state-of-the-art facility 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 December 2024, more than 300 team members support NBAF operations and science. As we work to stand up science, NBAF is striving to become a High-Reliability Organization, or HRO. As an HRO, all staff are committed to and expected to perform in an exceptionally safe, efficient and effective manner. Learn more about our HRO initiative at [usda.gov/nbaf/library](https://usda.gov/nbaf/library).



## 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** — can spread between animals and 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?

USDA's ARS and APHIS are working together to protect our nation by tackling some of the toughest problems facing agriculture. None of these problems can be solved without the unique capabilities of each of NBAF's science units.

The **Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory** is involved in prevention, surveillance, diagnosis and response to these diseases in large livestock, including the expertise to manage two vaccine banks. The **Foreign Animal Disease Research Unit**, the **Foreign Arthropod-Borne Animal Disease Research Unit** and the **Zoonotic and Emerging Disease Research Unit** are focused on research and countermeasures for animal diseases. In addition, NBAF has a **Biologics Development Module** that will enhance and expedite the transition of new innovations from research to commercially-viable countermeasures.

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 have started in phases — initially working at biosafety level-2 and gradually moving into higher levels of biocontainment. The NBAF team continues to work in partnering facilities at higher levels of containment with national and international collaborators to advance the mission until NBAF is fully operational. View NBAF's science achievements for fiscal years 2022 through 2024 at [usda.gov/nbaf/science](https://usda.gov/nbaf/science).



## HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT NBAF?

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](mailto:nbaf@usda.gov).



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