National Bio & Agro-Defense Facility
Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS NBAF?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is working with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to open the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF). After a 3-year site selection process, Manhattan, KS was selected in 2009 as the location for NBAF. DHS is building the $1.25 billion, state-of-the-art facility to standards that fulfill the mission of USDA. Once construction and commissioning activities are complete, currently estimated in late summer 2022, USDA will own and operate NBAF.

NBAF will replace the Plum Island Animal Disease Center (PIADC), a biosafety level-3 facility that is more than 65 years old. Currently, USDA’s Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) conduct foreign animal disease research, training and diagnostics at this center. ARS and APHIS will transfer their research and diagnostic missions from PIADC to NBAF and will operate the facility jointly. The science mission transfer from PIADC to NBAF is projected to be complete by the end of 2024.
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, 11 percent of jobs — about 22 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** — those that 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 and be the first in the U.S. to provide maximum biocontainment (biosafety level-4) laboratories capable of housing large livestock to develop vaccines and diagnostics for 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. 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)** — will focus on research and countermeasures for high-consequence animal diseases.

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

HOW MANY USDA EMPLOYEES WILL WORK AT NBAF?

NBAF will eventually have about 400 personnel. As of July 2022, more than 240 team members have been hired to support NBAF operations. About 50 operational positions remain to be hired, and the rest will be part of our science teams. Watch USAJobs (www.usajobs.gov) for position openings and follow NBAF on Twitter (www.twitter.com/USDA_NBAF) and LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/company/usda-nbaf) for updates.

HOW DOES NBAF ENGAGE WITH THE COMMUNITY?

NBAF is actively engaged with the local media and the community providing updates by request and representing USDA NBAF at various local, state and regional events. Please send all questions and requests for NBAF presentations to nbaf@usda.gov.