



Fact Sheet; 5/29/2009

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California Animal Health & Food Safety Lab Managed by U.C. to CLOSE

UNIVERSITY
PROFESSIONAL
AND TECHNICAL
EMPLOYEES

CWA Local 9119
AFL-CIO

1. *Brucell*

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- The University of Ca. manages 5 such labs and is planning to close the Fresno Lab on July 19, 2009.
- Lab tests for...
 1. *Brucellosis* (Fresno processes largest number of samples on West Coast)
 2. *Salmonella*
 3. *Newcastle*
 4. *Avian Flu*
 5. *TB* (Fresno tested largest number of TB samples in the 2008 TB outbreak)
 6. *Johnes* (Fresno tests largest number of Johnes samples of all CAHFS labs)
 7. and other diseases which can be transmitted from animals to humans.
- The Fresno lab tests well over 1.4 million samples per year (**over 3000 slaughter samples per day**).
- Food safety is at serious risk.
- The California Food and Agriculture Code Sections 520 to 531, and perhaps others, (<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cacodes/fac.html>) mandates CAHFS Branch Labs to remain open unless closure will not compromise the quality of service.
- *No dairy or beef cattle will be able to enter or leave California* if the Brucellosis testing program is compromised.
- A new lab is being built in Tulare in 2012 at a cost of \$48.9 million but there is no interim plan for testing or *retaining of experienced employees*.
- This closure will save approximately half of the slightly more than \$2 million budget shortfall that UC is claiming.
- UC's inadequate plan is to move some testing to their other 4 labs yet a USDA Market Cattle Investigator, who wishes to remain anonymous, does not believe that these labs can handle such large amounts of work.
- UC also plans to outsource testing to other states. This outsourcing moves *Ca. public money to some other state's economy*, but also *jeopardizes UC's ability to maintain sample integrity and reliability of results*. Turn around time will also be much slower and this is a major industry concern. Often times the Fresno lab receives "stat" samples for a diagnosis of infectious disease (*a truck is loaded and cannot move until it receives test results*).

What should be done?

- Consider restoring and 'earmarking' funds.
- Halt the closure of the Fresno CAHFS lab.
- Schedule a Legislative Hearing *asap* by Assembly Committee of Accountability and Administrative Review, Agriculture, Budget, Higher Education, or Health
- or the Senate Committee of Budget and Fiscal Review, Education, Food and Agriculture, or Health.
- An investigation by the Attorney General into violations of the California Food and Agriculture Code.