

Institute for Infectious Animal Diseases Strategic Plan for 2025-2030



Introduction

The Institute for Infectious Animal Diseases (IIAD) is a globally recognized Department of Homeland Security (DHS) emeritus Center of Excellence (COE) and World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) Collaborating Centre (CC) that is dedicated to advancing animal health, food security, and public health through innovative research, education, and collaboration. Founded in 2004, IIAD has established itself as a leader in the field, working closely with government agencies, international organizations, academic institutions, and industry partners to address the complex challenges posed by infectious animal diseases.

Director's Message

As Director of the Institute, I am honored to present our comprehensive strategic plan, which outlines our vision, mission, core values, strategic intents, and initiatives for the coming years. This plan is the result of extensive collaboration and input from our dedicated staff, sponsors, internal collaborators, and external partners. Together, we have crafted a roadmap that not only addresses current challenges but also positions IIAD to anticipate and respond to future threats.

Our commitment to excellence, innovation, and collaboration is unwavering. This strategic plan reflects our dedication to leveraging our expertise, expanding our partnerships, and enhancing our impact on a global scale. As we move forward, we will continue to uphold the highest standards of integrity, service, and respect in all our endeavors.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Together, we will advance the frontiers of animal health, strengthen our food supply chain, and safeguard public and environmental health for future generations.

Warm regards,



Heather Simmons, DVM, MSVPH
Director

IIAD Core Values

- Collaboration
- Service-Minded
- Visionary/Innovative
- Resilience
- Respect
- Passionate
- Excellence
- Integrity

These core values are the foundation of our strategic plan and drive our efforts to achieve measurable results that will have positive impacts on animal and public health worldwide.

1. Collaboration

- **Definition:** Working together across disciplines, sectors, and borders to achieve common goals.
- **Rationale:** IIAD recognizes that collaboration is key to advancing our mission and the greater public good. We foster partnerships with government agencies, international organizations, academic institutions, and private industry. This collective approach allows us to plan together, pool resources, share knowledge, and address complex animal health challenges through collective ownership.

2. Service-Minded

- **Definition:** Prioritizing the needs of stakeholders and communities in all activities.
- **Rationale:** Our commitment to service is reflected in our dedication to consult with stakeholders in the agricultural community, public health and environmental health sectors global partners, and consumers. By being service-minded, we ensure that our research and initiatives are aligned with the specific needs and priorities of those we serve.

3. Visionary/Innovative

- **Definition:** Embracing forward-thinking approaches and pioneering new solutions.
- **Rationale:** IIAD strives to challenge the status quo through innovative and visionary thinking. We continuously seek to push the boundaries of current assumptions and knowledge, integrating emerging technologies and novel methodologies to be ahead of evolving infectious disease threats.

4. Resilience

- **Definition:** Building the capacity to withstand and recover quickly from difficulties and adapt to change.
- **Rationale:** Resilience is crucial in the way we work. We develop robust systems using holistic strategies that enhance the ability of human, animal, and environmental health systems to withstand and recover from disease outbreaks and other challenges.

5. Respect

- **Definition:** Valuing diverse perspectives and treating individuals and communities with dignity.
- **Rationale:** Respect underpins our motivation, interactions and collaborations. We recognize the importance of seeking diverse viewpoints and experiences, fostering an inclusive environment where all contributions are valued.

6. Excellence

- **Definition:** Striving for the highest standards in all endeavors.
- **Rationale:** Excellence is at the core of IIAD's mission. We are committed to delivering top-quality research, training, and solutions that meet the highest scientific and ethical standards.

7. Integrity

- **Definition:** Upholding ethical principles and transparency in all actions.
- **Rationale:** Integrity is fundamental to our credibility and trustworthiness. We conduct our work with honesty, accountability, and a strong ethical foundation, ensuring that our actions and decisions are transparent and principled.

8. Passionate

- **Definition:** Demonstrating enthusiasm and dedication in pursuing our mission.
- **Rationale:** Passion drives our efforts at IIAD. We are deeply committed to improving animal health and public safety, and this dedication fuels our relentless pursuit of innovative solutions and impactful outcomes.

IIAD Mission Statement

The Institute for Infectious Animal Diseases creates collaborative and innovative solutions to promote the resiliency of human, animal, and environmental health systems through the development and implementation of proportionate and effective mitigation actions in the management of infectious animal and zoonotic diseases.

IIAD Vision Statement

To be a preeminent global provider of infectious animal disease research and solutions.

IIAD Strategic Intents and Initiatives

1. Evidence-based Research and Innovation

- **Utilizing Emerging Technologies**
 - **Initiative:** Understand how artificial intelligence (AI) can be used in recovery or sustainability of an “event” to sustain agriculture.
 - **Detail:** We explore the application of AI to predict, detect, manage, and mitigate the impacts of infectious disease outbreaks on agricultural systems. This includes developing AI models for early detection, response planning, and long-

term sustainability.

- **Initiative:** Implementation of dashboard technologies and tools.
 - **Detail:** IIAD invests in advanced dashboard technologies that provide real-time data and analytics for monitoring disease outbreaks, tracking intervention efficacy, and supporting decision-making processes.
- **Epidemiology, Economic, and Risk-based Assessment and Analysis**
 - **Initiative:** Conduct comprehensive epidemiological and economic studies to understand disease dynamics.
 - **Detail:** Our research focuses on identifying risk factors, transmission pathways, and epidemiological patterns of infectious diseases, that support targeted interventions and effective disease management.
- **Expand Monitoring and Evaluation Methods**
 - **Initiative:** Enhance the scope and effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities.
 - **Detail:** We aim to include new metrics and methodologies to better assess the impact and efficiency of our programs, particularly in areas like antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and pathogen chain identification.

2. Engagement and Partnership

- **Local Engagement**
 - **Initiative:** Maintain productive relationships with current local partners.
 - **Detail:** We actively engage with local agricultural and health communities to ensure our research and initiatives leverage local expertise needed to address local needs.
 - **Initiative:** Develop partnerships with different units across the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS).
 - **Detail:** Collaborate within the TAMUS to enhance our multidisciplinary approach, fostering innovation and resource sharing.
 - **Initiative:** Collaborate with Texas Livestock Commodities, Texas Poultry Federation (TPF), Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TECQ), Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), and Texas Cattle Feeders Association (TCFA).

- **Detail:** State partnerships ensure a comprehensive approach to addressing animal health issues, integrating environmental, public health, and industry perspectives.
- **National Engagement**
 - **Initiative:** Maintain relationships with current national partners.
 - **Detail:** Sustained engagement with national partners like the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and DHS ensures alignment with national priorities and access to critical resources.
 - **Initiative:** Secure National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) grants.
 - **Detail:** We pursue funding opportunities to support innovative research and capacity-building projects.
 - **Initiative:** Advocacy at national meetings.
 - **Detail:** Active participation in national conferences and workshops allows us to share our findings, influence policy, and stay informed about industry advancements.
- **Global Engagement**
 - **Initiative:** Maintain relationships with current global partners.
 - **Detail:** IIAD maintains strong ties with international organizations to facilitate knowledge exchange and collaborative projects.
 - **Initiative:** Build strong working relationships with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) collaborating centres and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Reference Centres.
 - **Detail:** These relationships enhance our ability to contribute to global animal health initiatives and leverage international expertise.
 - **Initiative:** Build relationships with the Pan American Center for Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Veterinary Public Health (PANAFTOSA) and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Animal Production and Health Section.
 - **Detail:** Collaborating with these organizations helps us address transboundary animal diseases and enhances our capabilities in disease detection and control.
 - **Initiative:** Explore World Bank funding opportunities.

- **Detail:** We seek funding from international financial institutions to support large-scale, impactful projects.
- **Initiative:** Establish IIAD as a FAO Reference Centre.
 - **Detail:** Becoming an FAO Reference Centre will bolster our role in global animal health governance and provide new avenues for collaboration and impact.

3. Sustainable Solutions

- **Maintain Current Funding Sources**
 - **Initiative:** Ensure continued financial support for existing programs.
 - **Detail:** We prioritize securing and maintaining funding from current sponsors and partners to ensure the sustainability of ongoing research and initiatives.
- **Explore New Funding Opportunities**
 - **Initiative:** Identify and pursue new funding sources such as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), and Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA).
 - **Detail:** Diversifying our funding portfolio is critical to expanding our research capabilities and ensuring long-term sustainability.
- **Diversify Funding**
 - **Initiative:** Engage with Texas A&M Foundation for endowments, chairs, project support, financial support, and gifts.
 - **Detail:** We aim to build a diverse funding base through philanthropic support, enhancing our financial stability and capacity for innovation.
- **Transition Plans**
 - **Initiative:** Address changes in TAMUS and Texas A&M AgriLife administration.
 - **Detail:** Proactively planning for leadership transitions ensures continuity and stability in our operations.
 - **Initiative:** Implement internal succession plans.
 - **Detail:** Developing and mentoring future leaders within IIAD prepares us for seamless transitions and sustained organizational growth.
 - **Initiative:** Develop learning and development (L&D) programs with credentialing.

- **Detail:** Implementing robust learning and development programs with certification opportunities enhances staff skills and professional growth.
- **Initiative:** Create a marketing and communications plan (outreach, resources, manpower, social media, podcast, promotion).
 - **Detail:** A comprehensive marketing and communications strategy will increase our visibility, engage stakeholders, and promote our achievements and initiatives.

4. Assessment and Consultation

- **Maintain Relationships for Assessments and Consultations**
 - **Initiative:** Foster ongoing collaborations with assessment and consultation partners.
 - **Detail:** Strengthening these relationships ensures we can provide high-quality, relevant assessments and consultation services.
- **Develop Assessment Plans**
 - **Initiative:** VIP services for exercises, epidemiology, M&E requests, disaster management, risk analysis, universities, animal health, agro-crime, agroterrorism, and welfare.
 - **Detail:** We offer specialized assessment services to a wide range of clients, helping them enhance their preparedness and response capabilities.
- **Center Development and Sustainability**
 - **Initiative:** Ensure the growth and sustainability of IIAD.
 - **Detail:** Strategic development plans focus on expanding our capabilities and ensuring long-term viability.
- **Grant Writing**
 - **Initiative:** Enhance grant writing capabilities to secure additional funding.
 - **Detail:** Developing strong grant proposals is essential for securing funding for new projects and sustaining ongoing initiatives.
- **National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) Partnerships**
 - **Initiative:** Develop university foreign animal disease (FAD) response plans with the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC), National Future Farmers of America (FFA), and 4-H.

- **Detail:** Collaborative response plans with educational and agricultural organizations enhance our preparedness for foreign animal disease outbreaks.
- **Vulnerability Assessment**
 - **Initiative:** Conduct assessments of academic institutions related to infectious diseases, disasters, agro-crime, and agroterrorism, including a risk and readiness rating.
 - **Detail:** We evaluate the vulnerability of academic institutions to various infectious disease threats and disasters. Our assessments help institutions identify weaknesses and develop strategies to enhance their resilience and preparedness.

5. Capacity Development

- **Continuing Current Programs**
 - **Initiative:** Sustain and enhance existing capacity development initiatives.
 - **Detail:** We continue to build on our successful capacity development programs, ensuring they remain relevant and effective in addressing current and emerging opportunities and challenges.
- **Develop Educational Training Programs**
 - **Initiative:** Create specialized training programs tailored to diverse client needs.
 - **Detail:** Developing and delivering training programs for veterinarians, animal health professionals, and other stakeholders, focusing on emergency preparedness, disease surveillance, and response.
- **Conduct L&D Portfolio Landscape Analysis**
 - **Initiative:** Regularly evaluate our learning and development offerings.
 - **Detail:** An annual analysis of our L&D portfolio ensures our training programs remain cutting-edge and meet the evolving needs of the animal health community.
- **Credentialing/Continuing Education**
 - **Initiative:** Offer certification and continuing education opportunities.
 - **Detail:** Credentialing programs provide recognition for expertise and commitment to continuous professional development, enhancing the skills and knowledge of animal health professionals.

- **Developing a National Short Course**
 - **Initiative:** Launch a rotating national short course on key topics based on stakeholder needs assessments.
 - **Detail:** Each year, we offer a short course focusing on critical areas such as biosecurity, disaster management, risk assessment, responder health, safety, and mental health. These courses aim to build competencies and enhance preparedness across the industry.
- **Expanding Mentorship Programs**
 - **Initiative:** Incorporate IIAD certified mentors into all programs.
 - **Detail:** Our mentorship programs pair experienced professionals with emerging leaders to foster skill development, knowledge transfer, and career growth.
- **Add M&E Component to Each Program**
 - **Initiative:** Integrate monitoring and evaluation components into all programs.
 - **Detail:** Every capacity development program includes robust M&E elements to measure effectiveness, provide feedback, and drive continuous improvement.

Contact Information

For more information about our strategic plan, ongoing projects, or opportunities for collaboration, please contact:

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