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Planning for Animal Damage Control Programs within the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service'

Philip S. Gipson and Gary P. Combsz

Abstract.--The Animal Damage Control Unit (ADC) and the 10 other units of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) have undergone major reorganization. Emphasis is placed on planning and risk analysis. Four levels of planning have been identified: (1) strategic planning for the Agency, (2) strategic planning for each of the 11 units, (3) program design and risk analysis, and (4) operational planning.

INTRODUCTION

APHIS and the ADC Unit have undergone changes that impact American agriculture and the ways wild animals are managed to reduce conflicts with man. In 1987, an APHIS management review group was formed consisting of 11 members from programs and support areas to review the Agency with emphasis on how the Agency could better service American agriculture and the Nation (Helms, 1988). The leadership of APHIS undertook a reorganization of the Agency based on recommendations from the review group. Personnel were assigned to new units and APHIS started to function under the new organization in October 1988. The publication, APHIS, Changing for the Future (Anonymous, 1988), describes the new organization of APHIS.

In December 1985, ADC was transferred from the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Department of the Interior, to APHIS, Department of Agriculture, by Public Law 99-190. ADC became the third major operational unit in APHIS along with Veterinary Services (VS) and Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ). The fourth unit of APHIS was Management and Budget (MB). At the time of the transfer, APHIS intended to conduct ADC operations that were biologically sound, environmentally acceptable, and economically feasible.

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ADC was placed under the direction of a Deputy Administrator, and the number of ADC regions was reduced from seven that existed under the FWS, to two; one for western States with headquarters at Denver, Colorado, and one for eastern States with headquarters at Brentwood, Tennessee. The Denver Wildlife Research Center (DWRC) and its field stations remained part of ADC and continued to be managed from Denver. At this time, APHIS initiated planning to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for ADC, to provide guidance, and to assure that animal damage control activities were in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Historical reviews of ADC prior to the transfer to APHIS were authored by Wade (1980, 1986).

The purpose of this paper is to explain how planning for new animal damage control programs and revisions of current programs will be conducted in the reorganized APHIS.

THE NEW APHIS

The APHIS reorganization is primarily a headquarters reorganization designed to improve the way decisions are made and to provide better support to operational programs. Emphasis is placed on planning and risk analysis to address concerns about protection of the environment, use of pesticides and other chemicals, animal welfare, and rapidly changing agricultural industries. Multidisciplinary teams of specialists from within APHIS, the academic community, and industry are used to address these complex issues.

Planning and risk analysis are taking place at all levels within APHIS, and they are the focus of this paper. Figure (1) shows the new organization of APHIS. The Agency has gone from 4 major units (PPQ, VS, ADC, and MB) with support from the

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

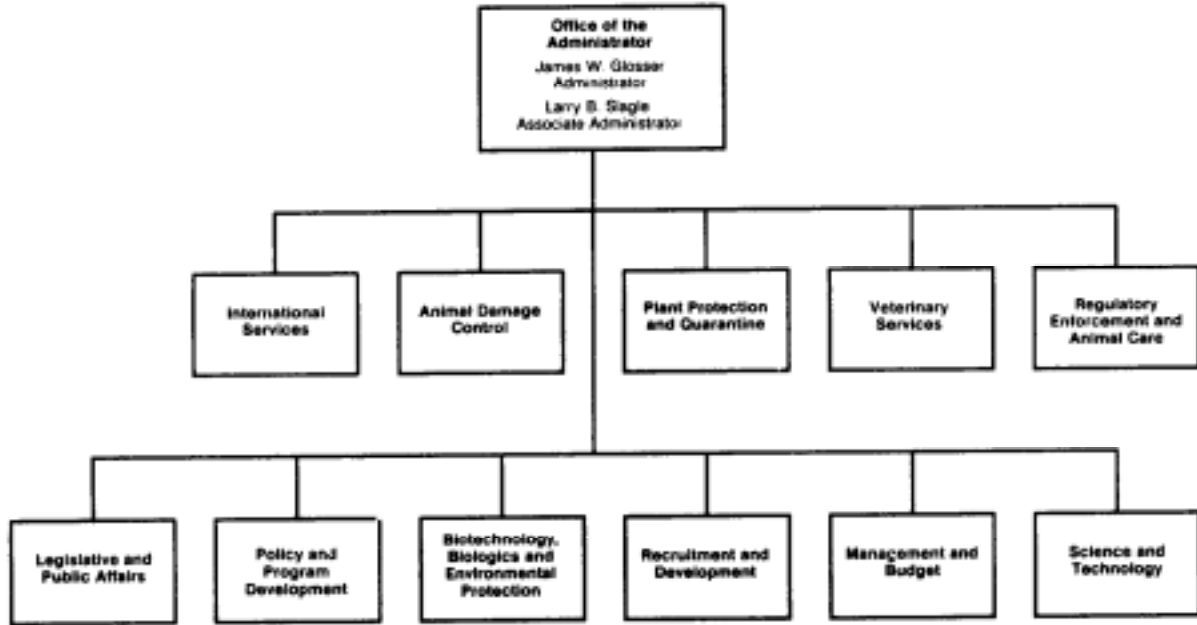


Figure 1. Organizational chart for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Each of the 11 units along the parallel lines has a Deputy Administrator or Director who reports to the Administrator of APHIS.

Legislative and Public Affairs staff and the Biotechnology and Environmental Coordination staff to 11 major units, each with a Deputy Administrator or Director that reports directly to the Administrator of APHIS.

Since the reorganization, ADC includes the office of the Deputy Administrator, Eastern and Western Operational Regions, an Operational Support staff in Hyattsville, Maryland, and a Resource Management staff in Hyattsville.

CHANGES IMPACTING ADC

Two major changes within APHIS have marked impacts upon ADC. First, DWRC and other APHIS laboratories have been assigned to the Science and Technology Unit (ST), and the directors of the laboratories now report to the Director of Science and Technology rather than to the Deputy Administrators of ADC, PPQ and VS, respectively.

DWRC will continue to address needs of ADC, but emphasis must be placed on maintaining communications between researchers at DWRC and ADC operational professionals. DWRC is unique among the APHIS laboratories by having authority to conduct research as well as test and develop tools to serve the ADC Operational Unit. Other APHIS laboratories conduct tests and develop technology to serve the needs of VS and PPQ, but the Agricultural Research Service conducts research for animal and plant pest and disease programs. A formal planning and evaluation process is needed to assure that effective communications occur between

the APHIS laboratories and operational programs, and that researchers at DWRC and the Agricultural Research Service are responsive to current and future APHIS operational needs.

The second major change impacting ADC relates to planning and risk analysis. A new unit, Policy and Program Development (PPD), has been formed within APHIS to conduct and facilitate planning, program evaluations, program design, risk assessment, policy analysis, and regulation development. One section of PPD that directly serves ADC is Animal Health and Depredation Management Systems (AHDMS). This section also coordinates program design, and risk assessment for VS and other units of APHIS concerned with animal health, animal welfare, environmental issues, and management of wild animals.

PLANNING WITHIN APHIS

Planning within APHIS occurs at four levels (Figure 2). The first level of planning, APHIS strategic planning, is being developed by the APHIS Management Team (AMT) composed of Deputy Administrators and Directors of the 11 units of APHIS. APHIS strategic planning is guided by the Planning and Evaluation section (PE) of PPD.

The second planning level is strategic planning for the 11 units. The Deputy Administrator of ADC and the Deputy Administrator or Director of each of the other 10 units of APHIS are developing strategic plans for their respective units.

APHIS PLANNING

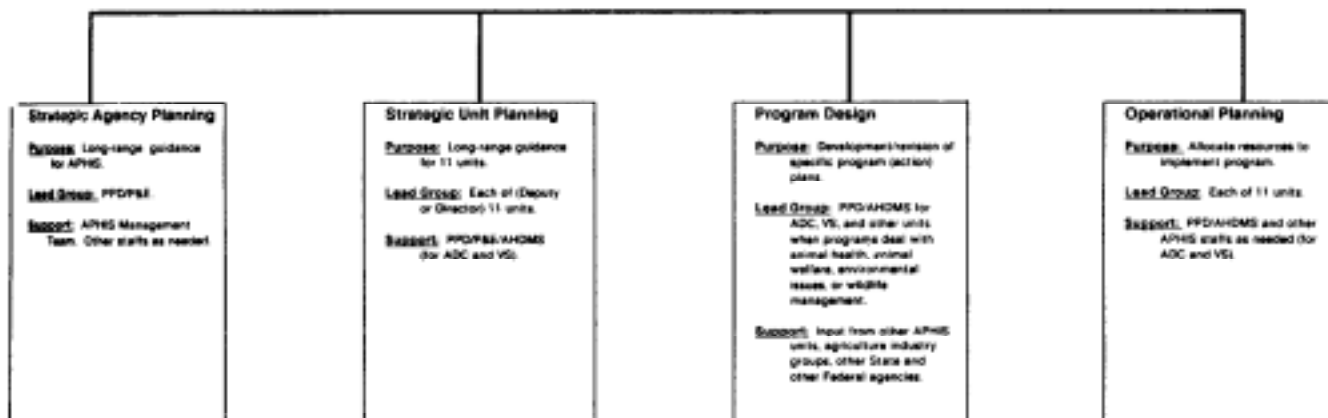


Figure 2. Levels of planning within APHIS.

The third level of planning involves development of long-range goals. Program design is an important part of this process. Design or modification of ADC programs may be needed when new damage threats develop, agricultural production changes, and when technology for controlling damaging animals changes. An example of a new threat to livestock is the recent establishment of wolves in Montana and other States. The rapid expansion of aquaculture, especially in southern States, is an example of a change in agricultural production that calls for ADC planning because of increases in damage from fish-eating birds. An example of a change in animal control technology that should be evaluated for use in ADC programs is refinement of the padded jaw trap.

AHMS will play a lead role working with ADC and VS to design new programs and to revise ongoing programs. The analysis of risks associated with new or current programs will be an integral part of program design. The process used to design a new ADC program is presented in Figure 3.

The fourth level of planning, operational planning, takes place within each unit to set annual program objectives and allocate and manage resources. For example, once a new ADC program is designed, the ADC Unit will develop short-term operational plans to implement the program.

APHIS is trying to avoid pitfalls that other agencies and industries have sometimes encountered



Figure 3. Key steps in review, design, and implementation of ADC programs.

when they hired a consulting firm to do planning or assigned planning to a separate section of the organization. Often this approach resulted in plans not being fully implemented (Below, et al., 1988). APHIS planning involves managers and specialists from all sections of APHIS, as well as specialists from outside the Agency, and interests groups. This involvement should gain acceptance of the processes used in planning and it should gain credibility for the plans produced.

ISSUE MANAGEMENT

An issue management process has been established for APHIS to enable timely identification, assessment, and resolution of emerging threats and opportunities for agricultural protection. When a critical issue is identified, an interdisciplinary analysis team is organized. These teams are composed of specialists from within APHIS and when needed, specialists from the scientific community and interest groups.

Critical issue teams may recommend a variety of actions including a formal program design review as outlined in Figure 3. Such a review could, in turn, lead to a new APHIS program. Other possibilities would be to outline specific steps APHIS should take to solve a crisis, or the committee could conclude that the issue was outside the area of responsibility for APHIS and recommend that APHIS take no action.

An example of a critical issue involving ADC and other units of APHIS is pesticide use. This became a critical issue for ADC when the Environmental Protection Agency announced plans to cancel registrations for products containing compound 1080 and strychnine. A team was established to review pesticide uses in ADC and to recommend actions. However, it was quickly recognized that pesticides, as defined by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (Public Law 100-532, 1988), are also important in animal health and plant protection programs, and a larger committee was established to review the status of pesticide use by all APHIS programs. This committee is composed of specialists from PPD, ST, and a pesticide specialist from private industry. The first action taken by this committee was to prepare an inventory of pesticides used showing the status of each pesticide.

RISK ANALYSIS

Risk analysis is part of the process used to manage critical issues, design new programs, and revise current programs. Risk analysis involves two elements: risk assessment and risk management (Stallones, 1983). Risk assessment is a scientific evaluation of the probability associated with a threat occurring and the magnitude of that threat. Risk management is the design of program strategies to deal with a threat and implementation of the resulting plan.

APHIS units deal with many types of risks. For example, there is a threat of brown tree snakes, Boiga irregularis, becoming established on Hawaiian Islands and other islands, especially in the Pacific Ocean (Fritts, 1988). Experience with brown tree snakes on Guam suggests that the establishment of brown tree snakes on other island would have negative impacts to poultry and small mammals, wild birds, and public electrical service.

A risk analysis of brown tree snakes establishing on Pacific islands would first assess the threat (risk) of brown tree snakes becoming established on key islands. The likelihood of brown tree snakes being introduced and populations established would be assessed as well as the

S magnitude of the threat they would represent to animals and electrical utilities. The second step would be risk management for brown tree snakes, which might involve inspection and treatment of arriving cargos and possibly new regulations controlling importation of snakes.

DISCUSSION

The Animal Damage Control Unit (ADC) and the 10 other units of APHIS have undergone changes associated with reorganization of the Agency. The reorganization was designed to improve support to field program delivery through better planning, analysis, and use of resources. It also creates a stronger APHIS identity through interdependence and cooperation among the 11 units of APHIS.

Emphasis is thus placed on planning and risk analysis in the reorganized APHIS. Four levels of planning have been identified (Figure 2): (1) strategic planning for the Agency, (2) strategic planning for each of the 11 units, (3) program design and risk analysis, and (4) operational planning. Animal Health and Depredation Management Systems (AHDMS), a section of PPD, will work closely with ADC to facilitate planning for new ADC programs and revisions to current programs. AHDMS will also facilitate working linkages between ADC and other units of APHIS.

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