

## Biosecurity position

Dr. Stephen Higgs, director of the Biosecurity Research Institute at K-State, referred to H.R. 1238 (Public Law 115-43), the Securing Our Agriculture and Food Act. The Congressional Research Service summarizes that law this way:

This bill amends the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to carry out a program to coordinate DHS efforts related to defending the food, agriculture, and veterinary systems of the United States against terrorism and other high-consequence events that pose a high risk to homeland security.

Such program shall:

- provide oversight and management of DHS's responsibilities pursuant to Homeland Security Presidential Directive 9 - Defense of United States Agriculture and Food;
- provide oversight and integration of DHS activities related to veterinary public health, food defense, and agricultural security;
- lead DHS policy initiatives related to food, animal, and agricultural incidents and to overall domestic preparedness for, and collective response to, agricultural terrorism;
- coordinate with other DHS components on activities related to food and agriculture security and screening procedures for domestic and imported products; and
- coordinate with appropriate federal departments and agencies.

Funding for such a position has been requested by the Adjutant General's Department for FY18 and FY19. This language was included in the 2017 Budget Analysis; amounts will increase to address inflation:

**Planner II NBAF.** The agency requests \$80,031, including \$20,007 from the State General Fund, and 1.0 FTE position to hire an additional Kansas Division of Emergency Management (KDEM) Planner II position to provide emergency management planning specific to the new National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) currently under construction near the Kansas State University's Manhattan Campus for FY 2018. The agency states the facility is a biocontainment level-4 laboratory replacing the Plum Island Animal Disease Center in New York and studies high-consequence zoonotic diseases treating both animal agricultural industry and public health, and further states the NBAF will be the nation's only animal BSL-4 (Biosafety Level) facility housing pathogens that do not currently have treatments or countermeasures. The requested planner would be specifically charged with evaluating current local disaster emergency plan standards and adjusting standards as needed to accommodate the arrival of the new facility and large accompanying consequences in the event of an emergency; assist local emergency management with emergency planning preparations and ensure the state disaster emergency plan and resource management plan successfully address the state's needs in relation to the NBAF; and act as the conduit between private sector, local government, and federal entities for all emergency state preparedness efforts to include planning and exercising. The agency states the current KDEM planning section is not adequately staffed to perform the statutorily required state planning tasks in order to accommodate the emergency planning needs of the nation's only BSL-4.