

## A1.3 Process for Amending the Handbook

- A.** There may be occasions when new discoveries or editorial errors require immediate changes in the handbook. Suggestions for such changes are submitted to the co-chairs of the Revision and Oversight Committee, the President of the Fish Health Section of the AFS, or the USFWS National Fish Health Coordinator. If the Committee co-chairs find that the suggestion clearly indicates that a current Handbook protocol may not produce an accurate result, the co-chairs will convene a meeting of the full committee at the soonest possible date and determine if an immediate correction is warranted. If a change is warranted, the co-chairs will coordinate the revision of the text and have it approved by the full committee. The corrected text will be provided to the USFWS; notification of the change will be included in the FHS newsletter; FHS members holding a current Blue Book subscription will be notified of the change by mail; and the changed text will be provided on the FHS web site until release of the next edition of the Blue Book. If initial review of a suggested change is not deemed urgent by the co-chairs or the Revision and Oversight Committee, it will be deferred and included in the normal revision process detailed below.
- B.** Immediately following publication of a new version of the Handbook, the Revision and Oversight Committee shall, through the committee co-chairs, begin to solicit written requests for changes in the Handbook. Advertisement for changes should be sent to all USFWS Fish Health Center Project leaders, list-server, AFS-FHS website and the annual FHS meeting. Individuals should be encouraged to include any new information that may need to be considered when evaluating their comments and concerns. The committee will continue to accept requests the fall (November) quarterly meeting (approximately 8 months) prior to the scheduled publication of the next version of the Handbook.
- C.** To allow committee members time to review, written requests for changes in the document or for discussion of concerns should be submitted at least thirty (30) days prior to quarterly meetings of the Revision and Oversight Committee. The requests and comments shall be submitted to the committee co-chairs who will then distribute them to the other committee members for their consideration prior to the meeting.
- D.** Committee members shall search the appendix for related issues or position statements that have addressed these concerns or similar concerns. This shall be done to aid in determining the need to address a particular query due to changes in available information.
- E.** At quarterly meetings, the committee will hold discussions on each query to determine whether or not the issue merits further review.
1. If the committee calls for no further review, the committee shall write a position statement to be incorporated with the query and added to Appendix 3. Additionally, the person submitting the query shall also receive a copy of the position statement.
  2. Should the committee decide the matter warrants further discussion a subcommittee shall be formed.

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- a. Subcommittees shall be formed with regard to the chapter under review (i.e. Bacteriology, Virology, and Parasitology), this will ensure consistency within any chapter. Subcommittees formed to deal with issues within Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Chapter 6, or Appendix 1 should focus on how changes will affect all sections of the handbook as these relate to all the other chapters.
  - b. A member of the Revision and Oversight Committee shall chair each subcommittee.
  - c. Each subcommittee will address all the queries regarding their chapter moved forward by the Revision and Oversight Committee.
  - d. The subcommittees shall be composed of 6 to 12 members.
    - i. Members are drawn from both the USFWS and the AFS-FHS.
    - ii. Equal representation is not required on subcommittees; however, there must be at least two representatives of each organization on each subcommittee.
    - iii. The subcommittee chair will invite individuals to participate on the subcommittee.
    - iv. The invitees shall be experts or have extensive experience in the discipline being discussed.
    - v. The invitees shall represent a diverse area of the country and have a broad species interest, to ensure equal consideration of all potential culture situations.
- F.** The subcommittee chair shall assemble the subcommittee, provide them with the queries to be addressed and any other material needed and schedule a meeting within 30 days of the last quarterly meeting.
1. At least 2/3 of the subcommittee must be present to make official decisions. At least a 2/3 of the (10) members present for a vote are required to make a significant change to the handbook. A significant change is defined as a functional change in how a procedure is performed or how the committee functions. Example of a change that could be made without 2/3 vote include correcting formatting or typos.
  2. The subcommittees shall determine again if the query needs to be addressed.
    - a. If it is determined by the subcommittee that the issue does not warrant action:
      - i. The subcommittee shall write a position statement explaining why this decision was made and it will be submitted to the Revision and Oversight Committee for inclusion in Appendix 3.
      - ii. The submitter of the query will also be provided a copy of the position from the subcommittee.
    - b. If the subcommittee finds the query needs to be addressed they shall:

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- i. Determine the most appropriate changes to be made to the document.
  - ii. Submit line-by-line recommendation in a position statement, which is delivered to the Revision and Oversight Committee within ninety (90) days of the subcommittee's first meeting (February).
- G.** At the next quarterly meeting, the Revision and Oversight Committee shall have thirty (30) days (February) to review these changes and determine if they fit with the other parts of the handbook and are in-line with the purpose and intent of the handbook.
  3. If the **committee** accepts them:
    - e. The Revision and Oversight Committee co-chairs make the changes to the handbook.
    - f. The changes as well as the subcommittee position statement are added to Appendix 3.
    - g. The individual submitting the query shall receive a copy of the position statement and notice of the subsequent changes to the handbook.
  2. If the Revision and Oversight Committee rejects the suggested changes, they shall supply a written position statement for these actions to the subcommittee chair, who in turn shall provide it to the subcommittee members.
- H.** The subcommittee shall have an additional sixty (60) days (April) to:
  1. Resubmit their changes by submitting a new position statement to the Revision and Oversight Committee through the subcommittee chair.
  2. Drop the changes and issue a new position statement for inclusion in Appendix 3.
- I.** The revision and oversight committee shall have thirty (30) days (May) to re-review these changes.
  1. If the new submittal is accepted by the Revision and Oversight Committee, they shall:
    - h. Write a position statement.
    - i. Make the changes to the handbook.
    - j. Add the changes well as all position statements to Appendix 3.
    - k. Supply the query submitter a copy of both the position statement and the subsequent changes to the handbook.
  2. If the submission is once again rejected, the Revision and Oversight Committee shall:

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- a. Provide a position statement, which shall be included in Appendix 3 and a copy provided to the individual that made the request.
  - b. The request will then be considered closed and will only be reconsidered if re-submitted in the future.
- J.** Position statements may be written by any member of the subcommittee or Revision and Oversight Committee and signed off on by all committee members before being added to Appendix 3. It is essential that all opinions, including those dissenting from the decision, be included in the position statement.
- K.** The Revision and Oversight Committee shall have thirty (30) days (June) to incorporate all accepted changes, add appropriate information to Appendix 2, add the position statements to Appendix 3, and release the new version of the document.

Figure 1. Flow chart of procedures to handle requests to change the handbook.

