

Talk of moving veterinary testing lab from Iowa to Detrick is 'premature'

WASHINGTON (AP) — An agriculture Department spokesman said today that talk of moving a veterinary

testing laboratory from Ames, Iowa to Ft. Detrick is "premature" and that a final decision is at least a month away.

Dr. E. E. Saulmon, head of veterinary services for the Agricultural Research Services, said Ft. Detrick was proposed as an alternate location but that the plan thus far is only in the talking stage.

"There are no concrete plans to move out of Ames," Saulmon said in response to a query. "I think we would be more than happy to say if we can get space."

Saulmon said the situation

involves the department's Veterinary Biologics Division which tests animal vaccines and similar materials at Ames. The division is located at the National Animal Disease Laboratory.

However, space is so short there that some of division's personnel have had to be located nearby in other locations, Saulmon said.

Recently, Saulmon said the department might be available for the veterinary unit if a decision were made to move.

Ft. Detrick, located near Frederick, Md., has been the Defense Department center

for chemical and biological warfare. Some of its space now is being made available to other federal agencies.

Saulmon said 128 employees comprise the veterinary biologics division, with 107 of them located at Ames. The remainder are at Hyattsville, Md., near Washington.

Saulmon said it will take at least a month to determine whether space at Ft. Detrick will be made available. After that, he said, USDA officials will study the Ames situation further to see if a transfer is warranted.

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