

III. Goals of the Investigation

The health goals of this investigation are: (1) to identify veteran and active duty individuals with adverse health effects (physical and psychological) if any, which are attributable to herbicide exposure, and (2) to identify other individuals at risk of developing future adverse health effects, if such exist.

Spinoffs from the primary health goals are clearly evident. Increasing media emphasis, in tandem with rising veteran concern and Congressional action, have caused numerous governmental agencies to pursue the issue from several scientific perspectives. The RANCH HAND study is an important part of the overall scientific mosaic, but in itself, may not be definitive in answering the herbicide question. Nevertheless, it is clear that data and conclusions arising from this investigation, whether positive, negative, or indeterminant, will be used as a substantiative data base upon which government can formulate policy decisions. With numerous individual and class action lawsuits pending, currently totaling in excess of \$44 billion, the primary governmental decision will concern compensation for attributable adverse health. As the award of compensation to any veteran is solely controlled by the Veterans Administration, this Air Force study in no way represents a "conflict" but rather constitutes another reaffirmation that "The Air Force cares for its own."