

Animal Health *Network*

Your Local Information Link for Animal Safety and Security

Introducing the Animal Health Network to Co-Workers in Extension

The following text can be used as a conversation starter when introducing the Animal Health Network to co-workers in Extension.

The Animal Health Network is a state-adaptable, local network concept connecting underserved populations of non-commercial livestock and poultry owners with vital animal disease related alerts and information from the State Veterinarian through their local feed retailer via the existing Extension system for the protection of our food and agriculture infrastructure.

Commercial producers are connected through professional associations -- but the local, non-commercial livestock and poultry owners are the ones that get missed.

Many individuals ASSUME that the system being described is already in place...in fact, in a recent meeting – a state veterinarian was asked, “How do we reach backyard producers” – the vet responded: “Our Extension agents do this.” The Extension agents responded – “We know some backyard producers ...but not all of them.” Thus ...the need for a system was realized.

The goal of the network is to add value – not serve as a news release systemthe goal of the network is to deliver the state veterinarian’s message through the established Extension system at critical times. The message to be delivered MUST be very specific, tell what has happened and tell groups what to do.

Adoption of the Animal Health Network has the potential to reduce the vulnerability of the nation’s food production sector by allowing early detection and rapid response to animal diseases in noncommercial herds and flocks.

For example, if the Animal Health Network were ultimately adopted in all U.S. states and territories with only 70% of all 3,066 U.S. counties participating (2,146 counties), Network messages would have the potential to reach over 1.7 million non-commercial livestock and poultry owners within one week of the message receipt by local feed retailers.

