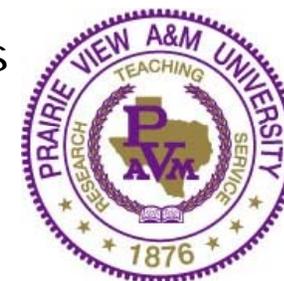


Early Detection/Rapid Response: Connecting Underserved Livestock and Fowl Owners with Veterinary Information



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Introduction

- Historically, FAZD outbreaks in other countries have been responsible for tremendous economic losses to livestock industries, overwhelming health issues in affected human populations, and devastating sociologic and economic effects experienced by communities. To prevent the United States from experiencing similar debilitating losses, early detection and rapid reporting is essential. Individual livestock owners must be our first line of defense against an FAZD outbreak. By implementing biosecurity practices, livestock owners could potentially reduce the threat to the agricultural infrastructure from introduction of an FAZD (F. C. Faries and A. I. Dement, personal communications, May 21, 2007). "They must keep a sharp eye on livestock and promptly report any unusual signs of disease. Early detection and reporting could prevent the loss of billions of dollars for our livestock industries and communities" (Faries and Dement, 2006, p. 1 - 2).
- It is believed that the 2003 Exotic Newcastle Disease (END) outbreak, which decimated California's poultry industry, flourished for nearly six months in backyard flocks before diagnosis and detection occurred. By which time, the depopulation of fowl was entering the millions.
- Early detection and reporting by underserved livestock and fowl owners (ULFO) communities could significantly have mitigated the resultant damage from this outbreak to the agricultural infrastructure.

Purpose and Objectives

- The purpose of this project was to identify best methods for disseminating foreign animal and zoonotic disease (FAZD) information to ULFO communities.
- The objectives used to fulfill the purpose of this project were:
 - Identify key social communication systems and institutions in ULFO communities
 - Identify credible sources of information for ULFO communities
 - Identify key languages and indicators of how to effectively communicate with ULFO communities



Methodology

- In order to identify best-practices for ULFO identification and communication, the National Center for Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense (FAZD) Center, Texas Cooperative Extension (TCE), and Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) an 1894 land grant institution conducted three focus groups consisting of a purposive sample of County Extension Agents (CEAs) and local feed retail owners.
- Three targeted teleconference focus groups of rural, rural/urban, and urban county Extension agents (CEAs) were utilized to accomplish program objectives.
- Focus group questions were predetermined and emailed to all participants prior to the teleconferences.
- Focus groups were each one and a half hours in duration and conducted during a consecutive three day period.
- Transcripts of each teleconference were sent to participants for member-checking.
- Analyses of focus group transcripts were conducted using the constant comparative method to determine themes in focus group responses.

Results

- The primary source of information for ULFO was identified as word of mouth from trusted individuals, feed retail owners, and CEAs.
- Other sources of information were identified as: feed retail businesses, pamphlets, radio, newspapers, TV, libraries, and the internet. The internet was considered to be used primarily by educated retirees just entering livestock practice.
- ULFO literacy levels were at the high school level or below
- Informational materials should be easy to read and include a mix of printed material supplemented with numerous pictures.
- Informational materials should be in both English and Spanish.
- Informational displays and posters should be eye-catching, interesting, and prominently located.
- The best method identified of disseminating information to ULFO was through point-of-purchase materials in feed retail businesses handed directly to ULFO at the sales counter.
- Understanding and following cultural mores in information dissemination determined the level of ULFO acceptance of new information.

Conclusions

- Feed retail businesses have the greatest contact with ULFO communities and greatest likelihood of ULFO trust.
- The most effective means of disseminating educational materials to ULFO is through local feed retail businesses.

Recommendation

- Based on the results of the focus groups, a hypothesis has been formed that a national network linking DHS, USDA, Cooperative Extension, feed retailers, and their customers through the existing Cooperative Extension network could be activated to serve and mitigate risks to the nation's agricultural infrastructure

Literature Cited

Faries, F. C., Jr, & Dement, A. I. (2006). *Foreign and emerging animal diseases handbook: Train-the-trainers curriculum*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University System.

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For More Information

For more information on the National Center for Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense visit our website at <http://fazd.tamu.edu/>

