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

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 (ULFO) communities could significantly have mitigated the resultant damage from this outbreak to the agricultural infrastructure. The purpose of this project was to identify best methods for disseminating foreign animal and zoonotic disease (FAZD) information to ULFO communities. Three targeted teleconference focus groups of rural, rural/urban, and urban county Extension agents (CEAs) were utilized to accomplish the program objectives. Focus group questions were pre-determined and emailed to all participants prior to the teleconferences. Analyses of focus group transcripts were conducted using the constant comparative method to determine themes in CEAs' responses. Analyses indicated that ULFO received their information via word-of-mouth from trusted individuals and feed store personnel and the media. Focus groups indicated informational materials for ULFO should be in both English and Spanish, written at or below the high school level, and contain numerous pictures and illustrations. Analyses also indicated that understanding and following cultural mores in information dissemination determined the level of ULFO acceptance of new information. 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 could be activated to serve and mitigate risks to the nations' agricultural infrastructure.