

Kansas to Conduct Agriculture Preparedness Exercise

The Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) will lead an emergency preparedness exercise October 9-10, 2013, in Manhattan, Kan., to practice the state's response plan to a foreign animal disease.

The two-day functional exercise, which will be based out of the Biosecurity Research Institute (BRI) on K-State's main campus, will enable KDA and its partners in neighboring states, other state agencies, federal and local government, industry and universities to practice the state's foreign animal disease response plan. More than 200 individuals will participate in the functional exercise, which will be based on the confirmation of foot-and-mouth disease in the United States. According to Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Dale Rodman, the exercise will provide valuable preparation experience for the agency and all stakeholders as well as identify gaps in the response plan.

The purpose of the exercise is to evaluate plans and procedures that have been developed and revised since the Stop Animal Movement Statewide KS-OK border exercise was conducted with Oklahoma in 2009. The KDA Division of Animal Health has been working with more than 50 stakeholders from a variety of agencies and associations to refine plans and develop Memorandums of Understanding with border-states to ensure collaboration and continuity of business for the livestock industry should a highly contagious disease outbreak occur in the United States. K-State, Riley County and the State of Kansas will activate emergency operations centers as part of the October exercise.

Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) was last identified in the United States in 1929. FMD is a highly contagious disease of cattle, sheep, swine, goats, deer and other cloven-hooved animals. FMD is not a human food safety concern or public health threat. It is a primary concern for animal health officials because it could have potentially devastating economic consequences due to disrupted trade and lost investor confidence.

The exercise has been funded with a grant provided by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Media wishing to monitor the exercise should contact Mary Soukup, KDA communications director, at Mary.Soukup@kda.ks.gov or (785) 431-5049 for more information.