

## NABC Animal Disease Response Training Course

When thinking of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, most probably envision the FEMA jackets and trailers seen at the aftermath of natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina.

But emergency preparedness encompasses agricultural disasters, too, including disease outbreaks such as this year's wave of avian influenza. Kansas State University's [National Agricultural Biosecurity Center](#), or NABC, is helping FEMA provide training to ensure state and local first responders are adequately prepared.

NABC's Animal Disease Response Training course curriculum for awareness-level training of agricultural emergency first responders has been approved for inclusion in FEMA's National Preparedness Directorate, National Training and Education Division course catalog. This catalog provides high-quality training to equip first responders to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from both manmade and natural catastrophic events.

Animal Disease Response Training focuses on the best practices and safety issues associated with an agriculture emergency, including quarantine, biosecurity, euthanasia and disposal, use of personal protective equipment, and cleaning and disinfection. The course also helps increase coordination of responders across jurisdictions, lines of authority, and disciplines by examining the integration of response efforts.

Marvin Meinders, chief of the Food, Agriculture, and Veterinary Defense Division of the Department of Homeland Security, sponsored NABC's training for FEMA inclusion. He said that this year's highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreak in the U.S. brought more attention to agricultural emergency preparedness and the necessity of coordinating responders.

"Animal Disease Response Training brings the whole community together," Meinders. "The response isn't just one specialty — you normally need to have a lot of resources that come together. If you're enforcing quarantine, you need law enforcement. You may need the Environmental Protection Agency for disposal or burial. It takes a community, and a lot of courses don't do that."

Targeting local responders rather than national and state authorities is also key. "Our local people are our first level of defense and will be our first responders in a disease outbreak," Meinders said.

[Ken Burton](#), program director at NABC, emphasized the need for local responders to be educated.

"Those responding will be much more effective if they bring with them an awareness level of knowledge concerning why and how things need to be done," Burton said.

"I know from my years in veterinary practice that minimizing the impact from this kind of emergency will require complex coordination between many individuals, organizations and government agencies," he said. "It will be essential that those involved understand and can communicate the basic concepts necessary for an effective response. We're excited to have our training course included in the nation's premier emergency management curriculum."

Animal Disease Response Training will help many responder groups, including emergency medical services, veterinarians, firefighters, law enforcement, producers, environmental agencies, and public health and elected officials. Acceptance in the FEMA National Training and Education Division catalog means that the course meets nationally recognized standards and uses adult learning principles, including problem-based learning. All courses undergo rigorous validation and continuous assessment processes and are tested through state and local exercises that help enhance disaster plans and training course development.

"We hope we never have to see our training put into action, but we feel better knowing our first responders are well trained," Burton said. "We're glad to translate research from K-State and other institutions around the country into training that helps protect our global food systems."