

## Animal Disease Response Training Offered

Local and state emergency responders know what to do in a natural disaster. But what should they do to protect livestock, citizens, and livelihoods during an animal disease outbreak?

The Kansas State University National Agricultural Biosecurity Center is helping state and local emergency management personnel learn more about what actions to take by offering a pilot animal disease response training course at the Kansas Department of Agriculture on May 18 and 19. More than 90 representatives from organizations and agencies, including the Kansas Highway Patrol, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the Kansas Division of Emergency Management, K-State Research and Extension, the Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine, counties in central and eastern Kansas, and livestock and veterinary companies are slated to attend the inaugural offering.

Ken Burton, program director at the National Agricultural Biosecurity Center, says the training fills an important gap.

"We know that high-consequence animal disease response begins at the local level, but first responders at local and county levels often aren't trained in minimizing the impact of animal disease outbreak emergencies," Burton said. "We aim to bring the whole community together — from law enforcement to veterinary and environmental personnel — to ensure a coordinated response."

According to Burton, diseases such as porcine epidemic diarrhea virus, which caused pork producers to lose approximately 10 percent of the newborn pig population in 2014, and highly pathogenic avian influenza, which caused the deaths of 50 million birds nationwide in 2014-2015 and caused losses currently estimated at \$1 billion, highlight the need for organized, efficient response to animal disease outbreaks.

Kansas Department of Agriculture officials agree.

"We have done a lot of outreach within the agricultural community and first responders to build awareness and have engaged in animal disease response exercises and training for

many years," said Sandy Johnson, emergency management coordinator for the department. "We appreciate that this course is designed to delve further into the local emergency management details so that we are all better prepared to respond in the event of animal disease emergency in Kansas."

Future aims are to offer the course nationwide, and online modules are in development.

Curriculum for the eight-hour class is approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The May offering is supported by a grant from the Kansas Bioscience Authority administered through the Center of Excellence for Emerging and Zoonotic Animal Diseases at Kansas State University. For information about the class, contact the National Agricultural Biosecurity Center at 785-532-6193.