

Crisis Communication Plan

Project Name	Board of Animal Health Crisis Communication Plan	Date	Update: 09/19/2019
Contacts	<p>Communications team at the Board of Animal Health</p> <p>Michael Crusan (director) O: 651-201-6815 C: 612-968-7312</p> <p>Erin Crider (specialist) O: 651-201-6839 C: 612-749-9389</p>		
Timeframe	Plan is effective 01/01/2019 to 01/01/2020		
Background	<p>This plan exists to assist the Board with communication objectives during and before an animal disease event or crisis situation. Details of each incident will vary, and this plan provides a groundwork for a consistent message during the emergency. The plan may also be used to supplement outreach efforts in non-emergency times.</p>		
Audience	<p>This plan contains materials targeted at internal stakeholders, media, public, and partner specialists, like veterinarians.</p>		
Objectives	<p>Develop a message.</p> <p>Timely: Communicate as accurately and quickly as reasonable with consistency.</p> <p>Concise: Information should be brief and to the point.</p> <p>Consistent: The same messages should come from all sources.</p> <p>Credible: The message, spokesperson and response must be supported by facts to maintain public confidence.</p> <p>Accurate: Share only confirmed and vetted information from your experts. Address rumors and inaccuracies as quickly as possible.</p> <p>Actionable: Give the public and producers things they can do to mitigate the disease or event in their lives and on their operations.</p>		

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Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and maintain stakeholders and communication channels before an incident or outbreak. • Conduct regular briefings to the media, public, industry, and others during an outbreak to convey the actions being taken to control, contain and eradicate the disease. • Stress the importance of good biosecurity practices and the steps producers can take to safeguard against infection. • Coordinate with local, county, state, federal, industry and public entities to ensure a consistent message during an outbreak. 			
Staff experts	Who	Dr. Beth Thompson, State Vet	What	Swine
		Dr. Linda Glaser, Assistant Director		Cervidae
		Dr. Dale Lauer, Assistant Director		Poultry
		Dr. Shauna Voss, Senior Vet		Poultry
		Dr. Courtney Wheeler, Senior Vet		Companion animals, rabies, welfare
		Dr. Stacey Schwabenlander, Sr. Vet		Cattle, traceability, scrapie
		Dr. Greg Suskovic, Senior Vet		Emergency planning and response
USDA public affairs contacts	Ed Curlett, APHIS public affairs director		301-538-9213, Ed.C.Curlett@aphis.usda.gov	
	Lyndsay Cole, APHIS public affairs		970-494-7410, Lyndsay.M.Cole@aphis.usda.gov	

Initial Response Process

- The event takes place.
- Implement appropriate emergency response plan.

- Establish the Minnesota Board of Animal Health as the official source of information.
- Communications staff are contacted and crisis communication plan is activated.
- Disseminate response team after-hours contact numbers.
- Review internal information verification and approval procedures.
- Written agreements on information release process and how messaging is distributed.
- Designate spokespersons for animal health issues.
- Facts gathered.
- Key messages developed.
- Prepare response statements.
- Develop responses.
- Conference call with producer groups and response officials.
- Announce to the public/media.
- Monitor media response and contact reporters with corrections.
- Update information and respond to media requests.

Specific Action Items

- Develop a draft release with staff expert.
- Develop talking points for staff participating in interviews.
- Partners to consider contacting:
 - USDA Regional Office
 - USDA Office of Public Affairs
 - Department of Agriculture; Communications, Legislative Affairs, Commissioner
 - Governor's Office
 - State agencies involved with the response
 - Board members.
- Forward draft release and talking points to Beth for review.
- Compile additional staff comments into news release.
- Forward release to any external partners for review.
- Forward talking points to external partners for review.
- Contact potential interview candidates, both internal and external.
- Prepare the BAH website for an update.
- Determine if there are any stakeholders to notify prior to release going out.
- Determine if a field staff conference call is needed. If so, develop an email that can be forwarded to staff with call-in information and times.
- Determine if a stakeholder conference call is needed. If so, develop an email that can be forwarded to stakeholders with information on the call. Stakeholders should be directed to contact the Board to get the call-in information. This allows us to know how many participants there will be and verify we have enough lines.

- Determine if a media availability conference call is needed. If so, develop a media advisory on the event with times, phone numbers, and basic information. Media should be directed to contact the Board to get the call-in information. This allows us to know how many participants there will be and verify we have enough lines.
- Compile external partner comments into news release.
- Compile external partner comments into talking points.
- Forward release to the Governor’s office for final review.
- Compile Governor’s office changes into news release.
- Forward final talking points to Governor’s office as an FYI.
- Forward final release for distribution, posting, and to all Board staff as an FYI.
- Distribution of news release and talking points, if applicable, to stakeholders.
- Forward the news release and talking points to USDA Public Affairs for distribution internally at USDA.
- Forward the news release to Department of Agriculture Legislative Affairs representative for distribution to legislators.
- Distribution of news release to media.
 - GovDelivery
 - Press Conference
 - Media Conference Call
 - Website Update
 - Targeted interviews with reporters
 - Public Service Announcement
 - Fact Sheets to stakeholders.
- Organize interviews and conduct interviews when possible.
- Forward reporters’ names, contact information, and interview subject communications staff.
- Monitor news coverage.

Audience	What they need to know	What we need from them	When they need to know	Who sends the communication?
Media	The latest facts and response efforts.	The medium to broadcast our message.	As soon as reasonable.	Communications
Producers	What we need from them/what to expect.	To work with us and share their concerns.	Immediately.	Communications
Veterinarians	If they’re required to assist us responding.	To work with us and maintain messaging.	Immediately.	State Veterinarian
Public	The incident is under control.	Remain calm and trust our response plan.	As soon as reasonable.	Communications

Foreign Animal Disease Notification

The Board of Animal Health is committed to working with stakeholders and producers to protect the state's animal agriculture sector from potentially harmful diseases. We are also dedicated to minimizing the impact disease investigations have on the animal agriculture industry.

The Board has an obligation to inform Minnesotans about animal health situations in the state when they occur. To ensure this is done in a responsible fashion that protects animal health while minimizing the potential for speculation and market overreaction, the Board has developed the following list of communications actions to be taken in the event of a FAD situation.

FAD symptoms reported by a producer, veterinarian, district veterinarian or duty officer; A FAD Diagnostician will be dispatched to examine the animal presenting FAD-like symptoms. The State Veterinarian will alert the Commissioner of Agriculture, the Area Veterinarian In-Charge and internal personnel deemed appropriate.

FAD Diagnostician reports and samples from the animal will be sent to the University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory/ U.S. Department of Agriculture National Veterinary Services Laboratory; If the investigation yields a high or intermediate suspicion of a FAD, the State Veterinarian will alert the Commissioner of Agriculture, the USDA Area Veterinarian In-Charge and appropriate internal personnel.

Preliminary results return as presumptive positive; Once initial test results come back as presumptive positive the Board will alert the Commissioner of Agriculture, internal personnel, the Governor's office, board members, external agency partners, and stakeholder groups. The Communications division will prepare a stakeholder conference call, talking points, a news release and any other outreach materials deemed necessary.

Final results return as positive; Once the final results are returned and are positive the Board will take any additional action that is required to respond to the disease. A news release will be sent out noting the positive results.

Advanced media coverage or public request for information; The Board, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, USDA and the Governor's Office will weigh all options and determine the best course of action if members of the media or public are alerted to a potential FAD situation prior to test results being available.



Foot and Mouth Disease

Issue: Foot and Mouth Disease Discovered on Minnesota farm.

First steps: Receive positive test results from one of Minnesota’s laboratories, which will send the results to Iowa for National Veterinary Services Laboratory confirmation. Notify the USDA’s APHIS communication team, Governor’s communication team, and state agencies’ communication directors. Request activation of the Emergency Operations Center from Department of Public Safety. Organize a press conference from the EOC.

Primary spokeswoman: Dr. Beth Thompson

Secondary: Dr. Linda Glaser

Top media questions:

- What are the dangers to human health?
- Where is the infected farm?
- Where did the disease come from and how were the animals infected?
- What does it mean when the Board quarantines an infected farm?
- Why is FMD so dangerous?
- How can this disease spread?
- How are you safely disposing of carcasses?
- How will you prevent the disease from getting into wild animals?
- Did any of the meat from this animal make it into the food supply?
- Is this the same thing as hand, foot and mouth in infants?
- Beside testing, is there any way to tell if an animal is infected?
- How will you prevent a further outbreak?
- What does this mean for exports and trade?

Public statement: The Minnesota Board of Animal Health has received positive test results for Foot and Mouth Disease from the USDA’s National Veterinary Service Laboratory in Ames, Iowa. This is a highly contagious viral disease that affects cloven-hoofed animals like pigs, cows, sheep, goats and other ruminants. There is no known risk to human health. We are working with federal and state officials to investigate the source of infection and prevent the spread of disease. We are collecting information and will update media as quickly as reasonable.

We ask the media and public to avoid any unnecessary visits to livestock operations in Minnesota. Farmers are asked to adhere to the following biosecurity steps:

- Do not allow unnecessary visitors to come into contact with livestock.

Take steps to reduce cross traffic between delivery/outside vehicles and farm vehicles.

Boots and vehicle tires should be cleaned and disinfected when entering and exiting the farm.

Only allow visitors to enter the farm through one entrance, which should be equipped with cleaning and disinfecting supplies.

Vehicles and farm equipment should be cleaned if it becomes contaminated with manure, dirt, or other materials from the infected animals.

Contaminated clothing should be washed and disinfected.

Control pets and other animals in the livestock buildings.

Review your biosecurity procedures with your veterinarian or contact a Board of Animal Health veterinarian to update as needed.

Key internal people:

Dr. Beth Thompson (State Veterinarian)

Dr. Linda Glaser (Assistant Director)

Dr. Greg Suskovic (Emergency Planner and Incident Commander)

Key external people:

Kristin Beckmann (Governor's Agency Communications Manager)

Dr. Jerry Torrison (University of Minnesota VDL Director)

Dr. Stephan Schaeffbauer (USDA Veterinary Services Assistant Director)

Bruce Gordon (Department of Public Safety Communications Director)

Doug Neville (Department of Public Safety Deputy Communications Director)

Margaret Hart (MDA Communications Director)

Mike Schommer (MDH Communications Director)

Dr. Joni Scheftel (MDH Epidemiologist)

Foot and Mouth Disease – Fact Sheet

What is it? Foot and mouth disease (FMD) is an extremely contagious viral disease. It affects all cloven hoofed mammals like cattle, pigs, sheep and goats, and others. There are seven major types of the virus belonging to the Picornaviridae family. One of the most relevant risks of the disease is its ability to spread rapidly in livestock populations, which leads to increased morbidity, depopulation, and trade restrictions. The disease is regulated and tracked worldwide, and North America remains FMD free for the last six decades. It is endemic in areas of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

How is it transmitted? Disease transmission is what makes FMD such a large concern for animal health officials and the livestock industry. The virus is shed via an infected animal's excretions and secretions including their breath, milk, semen, saliva, urine and feces. The aerosolized virus can travel great distances and survive in the environment and on equipment for weeks and months. The virus is also found in uncooked meat and meat products, which can affect animals like pigs who are fed uncooked food waste.

What are the clinical signs? The seven serotypes of the virus present slightly differently in each species and can range from mild signs to severe infection and mortality. A primary indicator in most species is the formation of vesicles (blisters) on the animal's face or near its hooves. Because the vesicles rupture and are painful, they cause noticeable signs in animals like depression, lameness, and reluctance to stand. Vesicles within the mouth and on the tongue can also cause excessive drooling and some animals will stop eating and drinking. A decline in milk production and mortality in young or weak animals can also indicate a FMD infection.

How is it diagnosed? The most common way to diagnose the disease is for a veterinarian to collect fluid samples from vesicles on a suspect animal. Those samples are then tested in a laboratory to confirm the disease. Samples are collected by trained government veterinarians (Foreign Animal Disease Diagnosticians) and tested at the USDA's Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory.

How is it treated? There is no treatment for FMD. If a case is detected in the U.S. the herd will be quarantined and depopulated to reduce the risk of disease transmission.

Is there a risk to people? The disease is not considered a public health risk. However, caution should always be exercised around suspected cases to prevent transmission of the disease. A similarly named disease (hand, foot and mouth) in people is not related to FMD.

How can it be prevented? Disease surveillance and documented animal movements are the primary ways to identify and subsequently prevent FMD. Animals cannot be imported from known endemic areas. Additionally, with all diseases, producers should have biosecurity practices in place on their property. Veterinarians should monitor for the clinical signs in a herd and immediately report any suspect cases to the Minnesota Board of Animal Health.

Foot and Mouth Disease – Media Advisory

Media Advisory

For Immediate Release:

Foot and Mouth Disease confirmed on Minnesota farm
Disease response plan activated and farm quarantined

The Minnesota Board of Animal Health is responding to a positive test result for Foot and Mouth Disease.

What: (brief background on event and announce press conference)

Where: (location of press conference and call-in information for those unable to attend)

When: (time of press conference)

Who: (Dr. Beth Thompson or secondary speakers)

Contact

Michael Crusan, Communications Director
651-201-6815, michael.crusan@state.mn.us

Foot and Mouth Disease – Press Release

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Date

Testing confirms Foot and Mouth Disease in Minnesota
Farm in _____ County placed under quarantine

ST. PAUL, Minn. – First case summary (Where, condition, what we're doing, control area, biosecurity).

FMD and situation explanation.

Contact: Michael Crusan, Communications Director
651-201-6815, michael.crusan@state.mn.us