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FAZD Center will introduce a model network for issuing alerts to owners of ‘backyard’ herds and flocks at national conference

EL PASO – The National Center for Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense (the FAZD Center) will introduce a model network for alerting owners of non-commercial livestock and poultry to potential outbreaks of highly contagious and potentially catastrophic animal diseases at a national conference here this week.

The County Animal Security and Health Network (CASHN) is a county-level network of feed retailers established and maintained by county extension agents. The network is activated by the state veterinarian to deliver critical disease alerts and educational material to owners of non-commercial livestock and poultry.

CASHN has been pilot tested in six states.

The FAZD Center will feature CASHN at the National Extension Conference for Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense on Sept. 18-19 at the El Paso Airport Wyndham Hotel. The event is co-sponsored by the FAZD Center and the Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN). The conference will emphasize the risks posed by foreign animal and zoonotic diseases (FAZDs) to the agricultural economy and to human health.

FAZDs (pronounced “FAZ-dees”) are exotic to the United States and in many cases are transmissible from animals to humans. Notable

examples include avian influenza, foot and mouth disease, and Rift Valley fever.

The conference will raise awareness of FAZDs among extension dairy specialists, livestock specialists, veterinary medicine specialists, poultry specialists and county extension agents. Sixteen states will be represented at the conference: Texas, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, Arkansas, Idaho, New Jersey, Maine, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Michigan, New Hampshire, Kansas and Wisconsin.

"It is vital that producers, specialists, agents and non-commercial owners understand the threats posed by FAZD outbreaks," said Dr. Neville P. Clarke, director of the FAZD Center. "Whether the introduction of a FAZD is intentional or unintentional, the results can be devastating to a local, regional or even national economy."

CASHN was developed by Dr. Tom A. "Andy" Vestal, a FAZD Center principal investigator and an extension specialist with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service of the Texas A&M System, and FAZD Center investigator Dr. Shannon H. Degenhart, an extension program specialist.

About the FAZD Center: Founded in April 2004 as a Department of Homeland Security Center of Excellence, the FAZD Center develops products to defend the United States from the introduction of high-consequence foreign animal and zoonotic diseases, or "FAZDs." The FAZD Center focuses on selected FAZDs that pose catastrophic risks to human health, livestock health and the national agricultural economy, which provides about 13 percent of all U.S. jobs as well as \$1 trillion in annual U.S. economic activity. **Web site: fazd.tamu.edu**

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