Good afternoon and thanks for joining us from Judy Simpson. No one can predict the future to do know that accidents will happen and emergencies will arise. Whether it's the fire or flood it's always best to be prepared to make plans ahead of time in case what if becomes a reality. This afternoon we're going to learn about an upcoming public issue forum. The form is called a pairing our communities for an animal disease emergency. Joining me are Dr. Julie Smith and Dr. Ellen roe Julie is a veterinarian and Gary specialist with the UVM extension Allen is also with extension in her role as a community and leadership development specialist. Thank you so much for being here. Julie you can start out by framing the issue for us a bit. What is it we should know about animal disease emergency and why is it important for communities to be prepared?

Julie.: Judy and I think this really important because farms play a vital role of the socioeconomic fabric of many communities in Vermont. Given that status any disaster that could affect those farms also affects the communities so it's important for not just the farms to be aware of the issues and what they need to do in the face of disasters to build their resilience but communities also has a role in enhancing the resilience of those farms and the communities themselves. I don't know Judy house a millionaire the viewers are with the cow that stole Christmas. Right before Christmas in 2003 a dairy cow was diagnosed with bovine spongiform encephalopathy BSE also known as mad cow disease. That was diagnosed for the first time in the U.S. at that point. Although it was a dairy cow the major impact was in the beef industry. The beef industry in 2003 had record levels of exports. Three billion dollars of exports that year. With the discovery of the disease that up until that point had been a foreign disease to the U.S. When that disease was discovered the market's access came to an end and the value of exports did not return to that level until 2010. When it finally did reach that level and exceeded reaching four billion dollars but the impact of that one case an entire industry affected beef cattle farmers and dairy farmers who were selling routinely cold cattle dairy calves and that's why it's really important to recognize that the cost is more than just controlling the disease if we face the disease emergency but there's this wider cost that affects the community and the economy at large.

Judy.: You've talked was before about foot and mouth disease. Why is that disease such a concern when we haven't seen it in the U.S. For many years?

Julie.: I think to really answer that question I have to first explain what foot and mouth disease is. Around the world it's one of the most feared diseases because it's so highly contagious and it does cause such socioeconomic damage. It's a viral disease that is highly contagious and affects multiple of stocks species. It affects cattle beef and dairy cattle sheep and goats pigs and it can affect deer. So all the two toed animals are sub set to both the foot and mouth disease. I do want people to realize that it is not at all related to hand foot and mouth disease which is a disease of people. Foot and
mouth disease is not contracted by people but people can play a role in spreading the disease because they can carry on their hair their hands their clothing and footwear the wheels of their vehicles so it's very contagious. Although where we've studied in the disease around the world many upgrades are small easily contained there are others that become very widespread and seemingly out of control. Probably still remember the images from England in 2001 when they had that for a bowl widespread outbreak of foot and mouth disease and there we saw again it took seven months to get the disease under control $13,000,000,000. Disease impact not just on agriculture but on the broader economy specially tourism industries and that's why it's really important that we keep this disease in mind because it circulating in many parts of the world and as long as it is it is a threat to our agriculture here in the U.S. And that's why we're concerned about it and doing this project.

Judy.: You have a map showing where it's found too?

Julie.: If you look at them that you'll see its color coded and it's focusing on one type of foot and mouth disease there's actually several types and subtypes that to circulate but all the countries that are green have not had the disease recently and some have not had it at all and any country that's the color whether it's yellow red blue or some shade of red has had disease activity this was recording activity from the last half of 2010. See you can see much of Asia is yellow that's where this particular form of virus is commonly found and circulating. Africa also has outbreaks. One of the recent outbreaks that is in read is a very small country relatively speaking South Korea faced an outbreak of foot and mouth disease last fall that actually extended through April of this year. It's present in many parts of the world. Outbreaks to pop up the cause problems impact trade in those countries and actually provides some lessons that we can learn from.

Judy.: Get the U.S. Dept. of agriculture stop the disease from entering the country?

Julie.: Certainly the USDA is the authority that's responsible for identifying an outbreak and may have many rules in place to prohibit importation from countries that have the disease so we minimize our chance of bringing here but when I talk to friends and travel and come back through customs you hear stories that raised some concerns about what could be potential for an accidental introduction. Certainly given the fact that we can't seal our borders to all people illegal drug trade illegal exotic animal trade. There's potential for diseases to come with these illegal movements but perhaps a greater threat is the concern about an intentional introduction of disease. All are normal controls work well as long as people are following the rules but if someone wanted to bring a disease in we want to be prepared to have a response that can handle an accidental or intentional introduction.

Judy.: We've been talking about these diseases as far as the impact on the country but what about in Vermont?

Julie.: Certainly like a mentioned a disease that has widespread socioeconomic impact beyond the location of the disease itself is something that we need to be concerned about in Vermont. Given that for months economy depends a lot on agriculture dairy being a major component of that. Vermont contributes or produces about half of the milk process to New England. 300 plus $1,000,000 industry. Even if dizziness was found very far away from Vermont our industry would suffer because our milk prices are timed to the national price which depends right now very much on exports. We export about 10% equivalent of our dairy solids and if we lost access to those export markets our prices would suffer not just our farmers but all of their businesses Allied agriculture businesses and service providers working with those farmers and the communities where those farmers and employees live will suffer the effects.

Judy.: Ellen I want to bring you into our discussion now why did you select a public issue forum as the delivery method for the information on this topic?
Ellen.: An animal disease emergency would affect Vermont Communities and not just the dairy industry as Julie indicated. The solution to the problem should also be an open discussion and involve community members. So the public issue forum allows to provide information and well balanced presentation on the issue. Then we have trained facilitators who follow up and guide that discussion and make it a safe place for all sides of that issue to be shared so there's a lot of learning that goes on. For me participating in public issues forum it's the a-ha moments that work for me. I hear someone share their perspective from their experience and I get a new idea a new perspective on that issue so it's very enlightening.

Judy.: Tell me a little bit about how you prepared for this? You are saying you had conversations that really shocked you to the core basically.

Ellen.: I did. I did in depth interviews 14 of them and we used for scenarios. The first scenario covered 10 days so day one was a confirmed case of foot and mouth in California. Day 10 included two confirmed cases in New York on our Vermont border. So after each scenario I asked the same question. Who would you call for information? What would you do? What would you expect the dairy industry to do to protect the supply? After each of those interviews I would run to find somebody in the office and said you're not going to believe this this is really important. Some folks don't have a clue there going to who do they trust? Are they going to wait for somebody to come up with the answers for them? It shook me.

Judy.: And it's beyond what a farmer would do if he were to discover the disease it really has widespread implications for the community at large. You're talking police department's fire departments school departments.

Ellen.: All.

Judy.: Tell me a little bit about the approach that you're going to use in the forum to presents some of these ideas?

Ellen.: We're going to present three approaches the first one is getting answers to my questions. Who do I Trust? Where do I go? Each of these groups has a different information pipeline. The farm business dairy farmers are going to go to their vets. They have places where they're going to go for information. The emergency management directors and community officials they have an organization created through our state gov't. They have a pipeline of information. The Allied industry people the milk callers feed dealers all of those have their own information pipelines. We need to be sure that all of these groups are going to get the best information possible.

Judy.: What's the second phase?

Ellen.: The second phase is keeping the farm business safe. Here we are dealing with movement. We're dealing with what makes Vermont beautiful is that landscape dotted by those grazing cattle. When an emergency like this hits we have to bring those cows in and keep them on the home farm we have to protect and secure those borders. That's the movement of animals. We also have people that live there we have the farm family a farm labor we have the industry people bringing those resources in and hauling out the milk. All of that is how do we keep that farm business safe.

Judy.: And approach number three?

Ellen.: Approach number three is putting a community plan in place. These farms to sit in a community. Their resources coming into the farm and moving out across neighboring communities. The concept of community is not just the town border it's the neighboring border. So we have regional schools. Kids have to move on school buses to schools and are going to travel the same roads that the farm vehicles travel. Town emergency vehicles travel all of that is shared so the community
needs to have some idea what they're going to do when this disease is identified and certainly as it moves closer to us.

Judy.: This may sound kind of scary to some people but there are some real concerns here.

Julie.: We sure hope it never happens but we certainly want our farms and communities to be prepared in case it does.

Judy.: Talk a little bit about some of the diseases you've addressed already as far as how easy it is for them to spread from animal to animal.

Julie.: We have a number of diseases that exist in this country that are contagious that we have trouble controlling. The difference with a foreign disease is the level of involvement the USDA and the desire for the livestock industries to eradicate that disease so they can get back to business as usual and have access to export markets.

Judy.: Have we learned anything from one other countries have done as far as containing the diseases?

Julie.: I think there are a lot of lessons that we can draw from other countries. Certainly the level of preparedness is one of them. England had had much more recent experience with foot and mouth disease than we've had in this country when they were surprised with it in 2001. They had another smaller outbreak in 2007 that they found themselves much better prepared to deal with because they thought through some additional aspects of response that may dealing with that outbreak a lot easier.

Judy.: Let's go over little bit about the forum again. When is it going to be? And how can people find out more about it?

Ellen.: If it's going to be on Wednesday, September 14 at the American legion in Vergennes. We're going to start about 1130 and there will be lunch so we would really like to know how many people are going to be there. We will be done promptly at two. We're going to begin with an introduction on the issue and then we're going to protect each one of those approaches in depth and follow up with an open discussion. We can get all of the voices heard on all sides of that issue.

Judy.: Who should attend?

Ellen.: People interested in sharing and learning. As I indicated it really is a good learning experience.

Julie.: We want farmers Allied industry folks community members town officers all are welcome.

Judy.: Thank you both for joining me today. That's our program for today I'm Judy Simpson all see you again next time on across the fence.

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