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CONTACT:

Andy Fjeseth, (406) 444-3684

Montana to Exercise Animal Disease Response

Helena, Mont. - The Montana Department of Livestock (MDOL) is collaborating with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and other state and local agencies to conduct an animal disease response exercise, May 8-10, 2018.

The three-day functional exercise will enable MDOL to practice the state's animal disease response plan. Numerous federal, state and local government agencies will participate in the exercise, which will be based around an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in the United States.

“Foot-and-mouth disease would have devastating consequences for Montana’s livestock industry and how we handle the initial response would be crucial,” said State Veterinarian Marty Zaluski. “Testing our response plan in an exercise format will be very beneficial and we look forward to participating in the exercise.”

Foot-and-mouth disease was last identified in the United States in 1929. FMD is a highly contagious disease of cattle, sheep, swine, goats, deer and other cloven-hooved animals. It is not a human food safety concern nor a public health threat; however, it is a major concern for animal health officials because it could have potentially devastating economic consequences due to disrupted trade and lost investor confidence. Montana is home to over 2.5 million head of cattle which bring around \$1 billion each year in cash receipts.

“This exercise will be a positive experience that will make Montana’s livestock industry more resilient and better prepare us for an outbreak,” said MDOL Executive Officer Mike Honeycutt. “The public should not be concerned if they hear anything about foot-and-mouth disease during the days of the exercise.”

The mission of the Montana Department of Livestock is to control and eradicate animal diseases, prevent the transmission of animal diseases to humans, and to protect the livestock industry from theft and predatory animals. For more information on the Montana Department of Livestock, visit www.liv.mt.gov.

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