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**Department of Livestock Conducts Activities in Preparation for
a Foreign Animal Disease Introduction**

Helena, Mont.— The Montana Department of Livestock (DOL) continues to prepare for a foreign animal disease (FAD) introduction into the state. The Animal Health Bureau (AHB) and the Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (MVDL) were recently awarded funding by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to increase practical livestock biosecurity measures and address needs related to receiving, testing, and reporting diagnostic test results, respectively.

The AHB was awarded over \$29,000 to conduct outreach to Montana cattle producers about biosecurity measures that will be required for permitting movements of agricultural products during an outbreak. In the coming months, the AHB will hold 10 biosecurity tabletop courses around the state, focusing on biosecurity recommendations from the Secure Beef Supply program. The tabletop exercises will serve as a 3D interactive model to help illustrate biosecurity principles and why they are fundamental to decrease the risk of disease introduction. The tabletop activities will be supplemented by on-farm biosecurity assessments for interested participants.

"On-farm biosecurity is a critical management tool for producers to protect livestock from foreign or domestic diseases," said Dr. Anna Forseth, veterinarian with the Department of Livestock.

Additionally, the MVDL has been awarded \$94,500 to progress efficiencies of data entry, and analysis of diagnostic test results.

"Readily available data will be critically important to veterinarians and producers during the event of a foreign animal disease outbreak," said laboratory Director, Gregory Juda, PhD. "Veterinary diagnostic laboratories play a key role in disease surveillance and livestock business continuity, and these activities will be best served by a laboratory information system that can provide State Animal Health Officials with accurate and timely information."

The MVDL partnered with veterinary diagnostic laboratories at South Dakota State University and the University of Illinois as part of a multi-laboratory joint grant submission.

Biosecurity and diagnostic efficiency will be key factors in the success of a FAD response. The DOL is excited about the opportunity to advance its preparedness for a FAD and will look to producers in the coming months to take advantage of these opportunities.

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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