

Staying Ahead of the Curve Report: 3rd Annual Meeting of the Ontario Disease Surveillance Plan, October 1st, Guelph

Executive Summary

The 3rd annual meeting of the Disease Surveillance Plan was well attended by 94 delegates. The meeting has grown from 78 attendees last year. The Ontario Animal Health Network, the second pillar of the Disease Surveillance Plan (DSP), has been in operation since July 2014, and the annual meeting this year focused on three goals:

- Evaluate each OAHN network and the overall program (accomplishments, areas of improvement)
- Determine how industry would like to be involved in the next stage of the OAHN program
- Develop an action plan for each network that the OAHN network group and industry agrees with

Official welcomes were provided from OMAFRA, the University of Guelph, and the network coordinator. An overview of the program and progress was given by the network coordinator and project manager.

Participants were grouped by species of interest, and asked to work together on facilitated exercises designed to elicit feedback. The exercises and outcomes are summarized below. Additional information is provided with the detailed report.

1. Value for Money

The first exercise involved asking each table to vote on how much value they had obtained for the “cost” from both the producer perspective and the veterinarian perspective. The results echoed what the program organizers had hypothesized, that the veterinary aspect of OAHN is providing good value for money (with room for improvement), and the producer part has considerable room for growth. Most veterinarians felt there was good value for the “cost” of the program. Producers, in general, felt that the program had not “cost” them very much, but there was also, at this point, lower perceived value. See detailed results in full report. Both perspectives are very important, as the focus of 2014-2015 was on starting the veterinary networks, and beginning discussions with producer groups. As a new program (14 months old), this is an expected outcome, and indicates that the producer aspect should be a true focus for 2015-2016, along with strengthening the veterinary networks.

2. Outside the box

Each table was asked to come up with a “crazy” out of the box idea for their sector that might improve the desired outcomes of OAHN (preparedness, early detection, early warning and response to disease). Detailed ideas are listed in the full report below. Ideas ranged from developing a smart phone application for on-farm or in-clinic use, to subsidized testing plans, to improved communications plans.

3. Developing an Action Plan

The tables were asked to answer the questions:

- a. What accomplishments from your network should other networks know about?
 - b. What actions can you take to improve disease reporting in your sector?
 - c. Identify some first steps to be taken
 - d. What responsibilities should the network should take on?
 - e. What is OAHN's contribution?
4. Each group created an action plan, and then solicited feedback from 2 other groups. Groups started many constructive conversations around their plans for 2015/2016 and several themes emerged. The full action plans are listed by sector in the detailed report. It should be noted that the action plans as presented do not represent fully formed, prescriptive plans, but are starting points for the year ahead and will be developed further in subsequent discussions.

General themes are presented below:

Accomplishment themes:

- a. Integration of data from multiple sources
- b. Positive to have a network assembled to discuss disease surveillance
- c. The development of good communications vehicles has been positive
- d. Establishing a leader for those groups who had attempted this was positive
- e. OAHN information provided a focus for continuing education for veterinarians and/or producers
- f. Ad hoc committees for emerging diseases and issues have benefitted from OAHN information

Actions to improve disease/issue reporting themes

- a. Development of applications to speed and ease disease/issue reporting
- b. Maintain momentum and engagement of networks through projects and other initiatives
- c. Continue to build and customize communications vehicles
- d. Continue to seek quality data (increase use of Premises ID, gain abattoir data were a couple of the ideas presented).

Participants were then asked to endorse some of the proposed operational elements for the networks going forward, using clickers. Should we continue with quarterly meetings?

i. 85% agreed, 15% unsure/disagreed

- a. Should each network have OMAFRA and industry co-leads?
 - i. 81% agreed, 19% were unsure/disagreed
- b. Should we proceed with projects as proposed (\$50,000 per network)?
 - i. 88% agreed, 12% unsure/disagreed

In summary, the feedback received from participants supports the direction OAHN is taking:

1. Develop the networks as communication vehicles to address a multitude of animal health and welfare related issues of importance to network participants, their veterinary colleagues, and industry.
2. Provide the networks with the structure and resources to identify and address their priorities, and to determine the appropriate communication tools to engage veterinarians and producers.

- 3 Continue to develop and strengthen the network relationships through regular calls, ad hoc response to issues, and face to face meetings.
- 4 Engage industry in the networks and demonstrate the value of OAHN to producers and their organizations.