

By ROBERT PIERCE

- Leader & Times

An effective response to a highly contagious animal disease outbreak requires immediate action to stop the spread of disease and to contain the pathogen of concern.

The Kansas Animal Health commissioner may issue an order to control movement of susceptible animals, agriculture commodities and related transports.

Tonight, Seward County commissioners are scheduled to hear from emergency management director Greg Standard about a plan for actions and personnel necessary to respond to this order in the county.

The Standard Operating Guide describes the responsibilities of Seward County and partner agencies to set up and maintain the U.S. Highway 54 traffic control point located in Seward County in Liberal just north of the Kansas-Oklahoma border on old Hwy. 54.

The Kansas Department of Transportation reports that the average daily traffic flow in 2012 for that location was 6,270 passenger vehicles and 1,680 commercial vehicles.

Standard said the traffic control point (TCP) would be staffed with a task force made up of KDOT, Kansas Highway Patrol, local law enforcement, emergency management and other volunteers or county workers.



Standard added the decision to control agriculture movement will be communicated to the Seward County emergency manager by the Kansas Department of Emergency Management.

“KDOT and KHP also will receive simultaneous notification through the appropriate emergency support function coordinator once the State Emergency Operation Center has been activated,” he said. “Upon receipt of the notification, the TCP task force will be activated.”

The SOG then calls for the county emergency manager to become the task force leader and notify the county foreign animal disease team.

“The task force leader will contact the leaders of the functional areas for permitting and traffic control to verify that they received the activation notification,” the guide read. “The leaders of the functional areas responsible for permitting and traffic control will contact the task force leader and alert him or her to their pending mobilization and provide an estimated time of arrival at the checkpoint.”

Functional area leaders will then notify pre-identified workers and have them report to the TCP location in Liberal. Each of these leaders is responsible for ensuring that their staff are trained, supplied and otherwise prepared to mobilize and effectively implement their responsibilities at the checkpoint.

“This includes updating contact lists, assignments and training as necessary to allow the most rapid and complete checkpoint activation practicable,” the SOG said.

The plan also outlines checklists for each functional area leader and a checkpoint-specific staffing chart.

Standard will review the SOG at tonight's county commission meeting which begins at 5:30 p.m. in the commission chambers in the Seward County Administration Building.