

**Biology and Community Intertwined — Examples from the Smallpox
Vaccination Campaign
Panel Session**

September 8, 2003, 1:45pm

Moderator: Lois Levitan

Presenters: Ann-Margaret Esnard, Paul Trader, and Terry Nipp

Ann-Margaret Esnard

- City and Regional Planning thinks about city health “last in line” after other agencies.
- Comparative risks – intertwined, triggered risks.
 - Joint natural and tech risks
 - How do we address joint risks?
 - Avoid having teams focused on one aspect
- How do we respond to an airborne toxin?
- Combined natural hazard and public health risks pose additional problems.
- How do risks affect community life – housing, transportation, etc?
- Risks can have both regional and global aspects
- Various levels of complexity as planners and public health officials,
 - Do we have the decision-making tools to address complexity?
 - Tools may not fit problems
 - How do you incorporate local knowledge with tools?
 - Establish cross disciplinary teams
 - Haven’t figure this out yet, even within a community
 - Why should community be thinking about a public health crisis before it occurs?

Paul Trader

- Through his work with Cornell Cooperative Extension, he has been exposed to many natural and public crises and understands both the public and community perspective
- August 2003 Blackout-
 - Rumors—what had happened?
 - Had not practiced what a cooperative Extension office should do in a disaster
 - Where do you look for information, and what are you looking for?
 - Family concerns—pick up kids immediately, leave work early, etc.
 - Non-English speakers lacked even more information
- Must have more emergency response drills
- Involve the community so that they will know what will happen in an emergency
- Extension should involve the media—after a storm, give disaster education materials to newspapers – how to clean up trees, etc.

Terry Nipp

- How do we adjust our Extension programs/agenda after 9/11?
- What were the Department of Justice and others trying to accomplish?
- Outside groups know nothing of Extension, or what it can contribute to emergency relief

Role and Responsibilities of the Land Grant System in Building Community Strengths to Address Biohazards
September 8-9, 2003, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

- Everyone is concerned with their own problems, so what happens in the next emergency, not knowing how others can help?
 - E.g.: The CDC did not know how to handle the anthrax attacks in 2001, whereas people in rural communities were familiar with it. People panicked, and nearly 30,000 wanted to receive inoculations.
- Before a crisis, community leaders need to anticipate what needs to be done for response and relief efforts.
 - Must go beyond police, fire, and government — adjust to fit the needs of each community
- Become involved with state and federal agency people to explain how Extension can help them

Audience Participation

- Beth Claypoole (Cooperative Extension of Wayne County): How do you overcome a lack of trust? Panic and concern for one's family?
- Terry Nipp: Run a simulation. With media coverage of a disaster drill, people begin to understand what is going on, and what will happen during an emergency. Exercises lead to cooperation in the future, as people see how things will have to work and fit together in the case of an emergency, and how their family will be affected.
- Paul Trader: Move beyond government in disaster planning. Involve nonprofits, get them to know one another — provide newspapers with a listing of all the groups and how they can help the public.
- Social sciences, new technology, computer models for how diseases disperse, etc.
 - How can you model a biological agent in real time? How was it dispersed, what's the geography, climate, etc? Then what do you tell people to do? Leave town or go into basement? Where do you get data sets that can be applied to many communities?
- Becky Koch (North Dakota State University): Where is the National Institute for Agricultural Security heading?
- Discussions to coordinate with Extension. What areas do federal agencies want help with? Help develop process for research stations to build better security, and preclude federal regulations.

Notes taken by Dan Knapp, edited by Sara Miller