

Aquaculture in Kentucky is led by a nationally pacesetting education program at Kentucky State University, and by the efforts of Kentucky farmers who have invested in shrimp and catfish ponds – some flooding former tobacco land to do so.

Animal health

The Division of Animal Health stepped up its efforts to keep Kentucky prepared for new **livestock disease threats**. KDA field veterinarian KDA sent Dr. Ed Hall (now head of the Animal Health Division) to help Great Britain deal with an outbreak of **foot-and-mouth disease** in 2001, and lessons learned in this emergency are being applied in Kentucky.

In 2002, field veterinarian Dr. Cris Young assisted with efforts to eradicate **Exotic Newcastle Disease** in California which resulted in the depopulation of some 4 million birds. That same year, three Animal Health officers helped humanely destroy 4.6 million birds in Virginia during an outbreak of **avian influenza**.

West Nile virus cases surged to new high levels among Kentucky equines and humans in 2002. The state countered with attacks on the mosquitoes that bear that dangerous virus.

In June 2003 Kentuckians learned just how closely interconnected the world is, and how vulnerable the Commonwealth is to animal disease, when they first heard of a malady from halfway around the world called **“monkeypox.”**



The mysterious Mare Reproductive Loss Syndrome decimated the foal crop of 2001, but in succeeding years the syndrome has not emerged in such horrifying numbers.



Exotic pets originating in West Africa had been brought to the Midwest, one harboring the disease. The African animal (a giant Gambian rat) had been in contact with prairie dogs bound for a pet shop in Paducah. Other prairie dogs from the Midwest pet supplier had made people ill in other states, so Paducah-area Kentuckians suddenly found they had to consider themselves as possibly at risk.

In the end, no Kentucky cases were identified. The episode nevertheless demonstrated the importance of planning for an agricultural emergency.

KDA has published an **Agriculture Emergency Management Plan**, free on request or available for downloading from the KDA Web site. The booklet lists agencies to be contacted in a suspected agricultural emergency and provides tips on what to do before the authorities arrive if a farmer suspects a biological episode is taking place.

KDA has posted a good record against **livestock diseases** in Kentucky. Brucellosis and pseudorabies were once ominous threats; today they have been eradicated in Kentucky, and the state's animal health experts maintain surveillance to keep them out of the farm economy.

Diseases are being contained and conquered successfully. The solution to the threats to Kentucky livestock is intelligent, cooperative action.

KDA is doing its part to focus and deliver such action as part of a multi-phase state government support system that protects the interests of Kentucky agriculture.