



A Department of Homeland Security National Center of Excellence

Host Institution: Texas A&M University
University of California, Davis | University of Southern California | University of Texas Medical Branch

For Immediate Release
October 31, 2007

Media contact Rusty Cawley,
469-338-9478 / rcawley@vprmail.tamu.edu

DHS approves \$5 million grant to fund Year 4 product development at the FAZD Center

College Station – The Department of Homeland Security has approved a \$5 million grant to fund a fourth year of product research and development at the National Center for Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense, the FAZD Center announced.

The funding is made through the DHS' University Programs Centers of Excellence grant program.

Approval was granted after an extensive review process. DHS also extended approval for the FAZD Center through Year 5, pending availability of funds.

"Leadership at DHS clearly appreciates the risks posed to national stability by exotic and engineered animal diseases," said FAZD Center Director Dr. Neville P. Clarke. "We are gratified that DHS has again demonstrated its support for the FAZD Center's mission of developing the leading products that will directly address these risks."

The Center is focused currently on three diseases: Rift Valley fever, foot and mouth disease, and avian influenza. All three are exotic to the United States, but have the potential for catastrophic outbreaks. In addition, both Rift Valley fever and avian influenza are zoonotic diseases; they may be transmitted from animals to humans.

The FAZD Center creates products in three categories:

- Biological systems, such as vaccines and anti-virals to protect livestock from infection during outbreaks, plus rapid diagnostic tests to provide early detection of outbreaks and to distinguish vaccinated animals from infected animals.
- Information and analysis systems, such as computer models that allow anticipation of and reaction to the spread of disease during an outbreak.
- Education and outreach systems, such as training workshops for early responders and graduate studies programs to create the next generation of scientists to deal with catastrophic zoonotic diseases.

Though primarily designed to defend the nation from intentional attack, these products offer the dual benefit of protecting against natural or accidental outbreaks.

About the FAZD Center: Established as a DHS National Center of Excellence in 2004, the FAZD Center is the integrated, full-spectrum center charged with generating a stream of products to protect America from the exotic and engineered animal diseases that threaten public health and economic stability. Texas A&M University serves as the Center's lead institution. Core partners are the University of California, Davis, the University of Southern California and the University of Texas Medical Branch. Associate partners are the University of Minnesota and Georgetown University.

###