Communicating with Veterinarians and Producers about Animal Health
What is OAHN?

- OAHN is a program focused on disease surveillance and animal health.
- A network of networks – we have networks for every species group.
- Most networks are made up of OMAFRA veterinarians and an epidemiologist, Animal Health Laboratory pathologists, private vets, and sometimes industry members.
- Networks meet to discuss lab data, reports from species specialists, veterinary surveys, and more.
- Networks then create some form of communication:
  - Vet/Owner/Producer report
  - Infographic
  - Podcast
  - Infosheet
Our audiences and what we know about them

- **Veterinarians**

- **Producers / Owners**

**What we know**

- They are busy
- They have lots of sources of information
- Many organizations vying for their time
- Different groups need different types of communication (no one-size-fits-all strategy)
- Receptive to new information if it fills a gap and provides them something of value
How do we reach them?

**Vets**
- Each vet species group is better reached using different mediums (email, social media, mailouts, events)
- Initially, it is useful to piggyback on other already established communications channels
  - Listservs
  - Veterinary organization newsletters
  - Social media groups
  - Set up a table at an industry event

**Producers and Owners**
- Producers all have their own industry groups, events, and listservs
- Owners are trickier to reach, but respond well on social media and through different hobby groups/pages
- Initially, it is useful to piggyback on other already established communications channels
  - Listservs
  - Producer group newsletters
  - Social media groups
  - Set up a table at an industry event
Successful Methodologies

**Simple but difficult:**
- Create something of value
- Explain its value to gatekeepers/species resource
- Use their established and trusted communications channel to disseminate information
- Track KPIs, hone your method, and repeat
- Build a following for and trust in your communications

**Example: Information Cards**
- One of our OMAFRA co-leads had a great connection with a species group
- A new disease threat was just hitting the news
- Not a lot of easily accessible information existed
- OAHN coordinator created an infographic with input from the expert network/OMAFRA
- OMAFRA co-lead communicated with industry group, which has an extensive mailing list for most producers and vets in Ontario
- Industry asked for printed versions, which it then mailed to 1400 producers
- Infographic was widely disseminated
Conclusion

- All modes of communications are valuable, but must be tailored to the vet/producers group
- Find out the gatekeepers of information dissemination within the group you are trying to reach
- Build inroads with them, ensuring they understand the value you are providing to their group
- Initially, piggyback on their communication channels in order to disseminate your information / build your brand with the groups you are trying to reach
- Assess, modify, plan, repeat