Animal Health Planning and Response—TAHC’s Perspective

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Agency Mission

• To protect the animal industry from, and/or mitigate the effects of domestic, foreign and emerging diseases

• To increase the marketability of Texas livestock commodities at the state, national and international level

   • To promote and ensure animal health and productivity

   • To protect human health from animal diseases and conditions that are transmissible to people

• To prepare for and respond to emergency situations involving animals
Texas Animal Health Commission

- Veterinarians
- Inspectors
- Legal & Compliance
- Laboratories
- Communications & Public Relations
- Animal Disease Traceability
- Entry Requirements
- Certification Programs
- Emergency Management
Texas Animal Health Commission Regions

Veterinarians serve as Region Directors

Dr. Brodie Miller - Region 5 Director, Bobby Crozier Region 3 Supervising Inspector
Role of TAHC in Natural Disaster Response

- Lead agency
- Damage assessment
- Carcass disposal
- Animal shelter evacuation
- Triage
- Assist Vet community

- Assist local jurisdictions in response
- Develop state response plan
- Partnerships with other agencies and organizations
- Coordinate resources
Why is animal planning needed?

Animal issues are people issues

Tex. Gov’t. Code §418.043 (11)
- State law, TDEM & TAHC help local jurisdictions plan for animal issues

PETS Act
- Federal law amending FEMA Stafford act and requiring locals to plan for household pets.

Right thing to do!!
Animal issues quickly garner political and media attention.
All emergencies & natural disasters are “local” problems FIRST!
Hazards Affecting Animals

- Tornadoes
- Wild Fires
- Hurricanes
- Floods
- Ice Storms
- Earthquakes
- Windstorms
County Animal Issues Committees
Animal Issue Committees - examine local vulnerabilities and prepare for those first!
Industry Planning

Industry must be involved at local, regional, and state levels

Determining role of state and local government with industry

Assess vulnerability/needs

Veterinary Practitioners must participate!
Role of local veterinarian

Community Response activities:

- Triage injured animals
- Treat animals, euthanasia decisions
- Support animal sheltering issues
- Reimbursed?
Role of Local Veterinarian

Community Planning:

• Participate in local emergency management activities:
  – Animal issues planning
    • Be engaged in local animal issues committee
      – Know the local EMC
      – Shelter planning advisement
      – Be written into animal plans as a resource!
      – Understand EM system and where to go for help (ICS training)
      – Encourage client preparedness
  – Animal issues exercises
State Animal Response Plan Partners

- TX Division of Emergency Management
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
- TAMU CVM VET team
- Industry – TSCRA, ICA, TCFA, TxFB
- USDA VS, NRCS, AC
- Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA)
- Texas Department of Agriculture
Hurricane Ike – Pre Impact:

- Evacuation
- Shelter
- Interstate entry waivers
- Activation of Animal Response Coordination Center (ARCC)
Hurricane Ike – Post Impact:

– Re-entry
– Damage Assessments
  • Veterinary clinics
  • Livestock facilities
– Displaced livestock
Hurricane Ike – Post Impact

- Carcass disposal
- Animal health issues
  - Dehydration, salt toxicity
- Displaced livestock
  - Capture, shelter, owner ID
- Donations management
Small-scale events

Traffic accidents

Local weather events
Larger events, not federally declared

Flooding: TAHC with TXDOT, County, TCEQ, TPWD
Larger events, not federally declared

Wildfires:
TAHC with TxDOT, TCEQ, Local vets triage, County landfill personnel
TAHC Emergency Horseback Response Team

https://www.youtube.com/user/TxAnimalHealth