

THE VRC CONNECTION

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Colorado's 2013 Flood Event and Animal Issues

By Debrah Schnackenberg, Director, Disaster Services
PetAid Colorado (Colorado Veterinary Medical Foundation)

Colorado is becoming accustomed to dealing with large disaster events as 2012 saw the Waldo Canyon Fire in Colorado Springs and its twin in the summer of 2013, the Black Forest Fire. Both of those events were heavy in animal issues and provided solid lessons for animal response in Colorado. However, this past September, Colorado experienced a flood disaster event unlike any we had previously experienced. On September 9th, a slow moving cold front stalled over Colorado and met a warm humid monsoonal air moving in from the Gulf of Mexico. Within 48 hours a heavy rain had started to fall and a disaster of unprecedented proportions had begun for both the people and animals of the Colorado Front Range. Between September 10th and September 15th record amounts of rain fell along the northern Front Range counties with Federal disaster declarations ultimately made in 15 counties. In Boulder County alone, 17 inches of rain fell in those 5 days, over two-thirds of the usual *annual* average rainfall for the City of Boulder. The impacts of the flooding were devastating to individuals, families and their property and animals. The flooding directly caused eight human deaths and the evacuation of 11,000 people. A total of 19,000 homes were damaged and another 1,500 homes were destroyed. The mountain towns of Jamestown and Lyons were completely cut off from the rest of the state due

to flooding and the complete destruction of the roads and infrastructure linking them to the outside world. Conditions in these two required Colorado National Guard airlifts to evacuate citizens and their pets out of the towns. Over a period of 2 – 3 days the National Guard helicoptered over 1,750 residents and 816 pets out these areas to safety. **(continued on page 3)**

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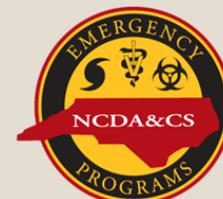


NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE &
CONSUMER SERVICES

Emergency Programs Division

Steve Troxler, Commissioner

Sharron Stewart, Director



Tenth “One Medicine” Symposium

Pesticides from All Sides: A One Medicine Approach to Pesticides

By Dr. Anna Allen, NCDA&CS EP Division

The Tenth “One Medicine” Symposium, Pesticides from All Sides: A One Medicine Approach to Pesticides, was held on December 12th at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel and Convention Center in Durham. This year, the program focused on the history, regulation, current uses and impact of pesticides related to human health, animal health and the environment. There were 217 attendees from a variety of disciplines including physicians, nurses, veterinarians, veterinary technicians, public health professionals, environmental health specialists, agriculture professionals, wildlife professionals and federal, military, state and local government agencies. This year, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the symposium, Dr. Julie Casani, Public Health Preparedness Director from the NC Division of Public Health, gave a retrospective presentation at lunch. Speakers included representatives from the EPA, NCDA&CS, NC DPH, CropLife Foundation, NCSU, NCSU-CVM, The Agromedicine Institute, Carolinas Poison Center, and Bayer. The symposium is designed to improve awareness and understanding of the topics from a One Medicine perspective and to foster objective, intellectual discussion across disciplines. Previous themes have included homeland security; health security; food defense; public health, agriculture and wildlife; globalization; climate change; influenza; vectorborne disease; and antimicrobial resistance. Interested in learning more? Visit www.onemedicinenc.org for conference information. Visit <http://www.ncagr.gov/oep/OneMedicine/index.htm> to view presentations from past symposia.



VRC COORDINATOR	UPCOMING EVENTS:	REQUIREMENTS FOR VRC DEPLOYMENT
<p>Mandy Tolson, DVM Southeastern Region Emergency Programs Veterinarian (252) 813-0989 Mandy.Tolson@ncagr.gov</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see our website for future training and activities. • Check out our sheltering webinars posted on the website! • http://www.ncagr.gov/oep/sheltering/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICS 100, 200, and 700 • Biosecurity/PPE Training • Knowledge of NC Emergency Management • Knowledge of Emergency Support Functions • Attendance at VRC Meetings • Sign a Code of Conduct
<p style="text-align: center;">COMPLETE YOUR VRC REGISTRATION AT WWW.SERVNC.ORG</p>		

(continued from page 1) The Colorado Veterinary Medical Reserve Corps (COVMRC) was deployed to both the Boulder City Airport as well as to the Fort Collins National Guard Armory Field to provide triage and veterinary medical services to the animals coming off of those flights. Most animals were in very good shape coming off the flights while a few required transport to clinics for more extensive care. This was an enormous effort and a true success in collaboration between the National Guard, the COVMRC and the local Humane Societies who provided the bulk of the temporary animal emergency sheltering during the flood event. In all, over 600 household pets passed through our emergency animal sheltering organizations during the initial two weeks of this multi-week event supported by Humane Society Staff, volunteers and the COVMRC.



Unfortunately, large numbers of horses and small livestock were stranded in mountainous areas by washed out roads and downstream flood flows flooded agricultural areas, contaminated local water supplies and created significant crop damage not only on the Front Range but also in the counties eastward.

Animal Search and Rescue for household pets that owners were forced to leave behind in the fast moving evacuation efforts was conducted by county Animal Control Officers with assistance from two National Animal Response Organization Teams based in Colorado, Code 3 Associates and American Humane Association. All of these household pet efforts were jointly coordinated between PetAid Colorado in the State EOC ESF-6a (Household Pets and Service Animals) position and County ESF-11 (Animals and Agriculture) for household pets and service animal response. Coordination and assistance for companion livestock was largely driven out of local equestrian clubs and organizations at the local level.

VRC MISSION: Train and prepare professionals in the animal care community to respond to disaster events (all hazards) that affect both production and companion animals. Our members will serve as a resource for our state and the nation.

NOTES: To see recent news and updates, please visit the VRC website at www.ncvrc.org. If you have questions about the VRC or would like to offer suggestions or articles for future newsletters, contact Mandy at mandy.tolson@ncagr.gov.

Agriculture Emergency Response Teams

By Mike Mayes, NCDA&CS EP Division

Quite often, after a disaster, resources are needed to help clear debris, mend fences, or tarp buildings and heavy equipment. However, problems may arise during a large event when resources become scarce very quickly. In order to meet the needs of agricultural communities across the state after disasters, Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler created a program in the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services that would do just that: provide recovery assistance to farming communities. Out of this program came the concept of the Agriculture Emergency Response Team (AERT), which describes a team of people who are trained in five basic task areas to support affected communities.

The concept is quite simple. An AERT is comprised of an eight- to ten-person team who are trained in each of the five task areas before they are sent to provide assistance at the request of a county or area. The five basic tasks were developed from discussions of concerns between Commissioner Troxler and farmers. He learned that their greatest recovery needs were: farm access, harvestability, fence repair, tarping and field debris removal.

The NCDA&CS Emergency Programs Division developed the AERT model into a community resiliency program, where individuals from counties come together to form teams. The teams are augmented by a small amount of equipment which includes an enclosed trailer with supplies such as fence posts, temporary fencing material, tarps, gloves, eye protection, wheel barrows and chain saws – the basic equipment needed to complete the aforementioned tasks.

At two separate locations during 2013, personnel from NCDA&CS volunteered to be the first to participate in training as AERT members. The team members were trained by departmental personnel using the available AERT trailer and associated equipment. Participants learned skills such as using a tarp to cover a structure such as the roof of a farm building. Team members utilized ropes with attached weights to pull the tarp over the structure, which prevents volunteers from climbing on potentially damaged or unsteady nearby structures or needing additional bulky equipment such as ladders. After a disaster there are many needs that can only be met with additional manpower and covering damaged rooftops is definitely one of those tasks.

There are other tasks, such as harvestability and field debris removal require an even greater number of people to assist in the effort. Harvestability requires plants, including field crops such as tobacco or those on a nursery farm, that have been blown over during a wind or flood event to be returned to their natural positions to be salvaged. Field debris removal could potentially require an even greater number of personnel, as debris could be scattered among acres and acres of fields. Clearing this debris would allow the farm and surrounding community to return to normal operations as soon as possible.

An AERT trailer could be quickly mobilized and transported to an affected community along with the team. NCDA&CS currently has three trailers located in the western, central and eastern parts of the state.

Another important feature of the AERT program is the opportunity for other entities to assist and participate as partners with NCDA&CS. One group that has enthusiastically offered their support is the United States Civil Air Patrol (CAP) from North Carolina. The Civil Air Patrol has cadets, ranging in age from 12 to 19 years old, who are able to participate in all tasks except farm access - as this task requires chain saw operation certification. These cadets are formed into teams and are self-sufficient with communications, equipment, vehicles and an adult team leader.

Agriculture and Agribusiness are North Carolina's largest industry, contributing more than \$77 billion to the economy. Understanding the unique needs of farmers and farming communities in times of disaster and developing programs and resources, such as AERTs, to meet those needs will hopefully help make their journey on the road to recovery just a little bit smoother and faster so that they may continue to provide quality products and services for our state our nation, and our world.



Tarpping a structure; NCDA&CS, 2013



AERT Trailer; NCDA&CS, 2014

Unique Opportunities for Training & Preparedness

By Dr. Bruce Akers, NCDA&CS EP Division

Have you completed all of your trainings and readings for NCVRC? Are you fully credentialed? Why do I ask, you say? I know that since you have joined us in membership, or if you are interested in joining, you have a “spark” for preparedness and response, especially when it concerns the animal populations. My focus in this article is related to additional training available to you through emergency management channels.

First I want to say “Think Global, Act Local.” If you have talked with any emergency management personnel, you have likely heard the chant, “All disasters start local and end local.” Those are the facts. As any event starts, it may be as local as your home, clinic, car, etc. but as soon as it exceeds a person's capability to manage it, the event escalates to higher and higher levels of management and resources until it is controlled. During the response and as the event is being negated the reverse happens and response resources demobilize, reducing the size of the event back until it reaches the most local level again, where it started. At the lowest level, recovery may last for days, weeks, months or even years for something as large as a hurricane. This is why I started with the phrase at the beginning of this paragraph. No matter how well you are trained, a fast moving event can overwhelm your resources; so first and most important, “get your own house in order.” You cannot be part of the solution for the bigger event if you are impaired by the event. In the military we were required to have a family care plan that would outline how our family would be cared for when we had to run out the door at a moment's notice with no expectation of when we would return. Have you thought about it? How well prepared is your family or your business? How well can they function without you and for how long? **(continued on page 6)**

Unique Opportunities for Training & Preparedness

By Dr. Bruce Akers, NCDA&CS EP Division

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With your home base covered, your next level of immediate engagement will be with your community or county. This finally brings me to the subject of more training – Whew! Thought I wouldn't get there, right? I have been on my trek for more than nine years and would like to highlight some of the great training offerings I have observed. Some are available to you immediately and others may become available to you by joining your local Emergency Management Agency and their County Animal Response Team. Many of these are available to you at no cost and many are starting to offer Continuing Education Credits for your license.

First I would like to mention the online courses available from the FEMA Emergency Management Institute. You likely already know this site as hopefully you have completed your minimum ICS Trainings (ICS 100, 200, 700), but you really need to go back to the site and browse their catalog. There are courses on Animals in Disasters, more advanced ICS Courses, and many courses on management and response to a variety of disaster types. These are all online correspondence courses to be completed at your own pace, so no pressure.

Now that you are building your “disaster response resume,” think seriously about joining your local emergency management's volunteer registry, animal response teams, American Red Cross chapter, church group, etc. Many groups host trainings on sheltering (human & animals) and resources to manage these (Companion Animal Mobile Equipment Trailers/CAMETs). You would play an integral role here; you have skills to share such as medical, animal behavior and animal handling experience. I have seen some agencies partner with their local Community Colleges to sponsor Technical Large Animal Rescue courses too. Some of these courses may cost a fee, for some you may be able to take advantage of scholarships if you are part of the county response organization, and some are free. Some counties are even partnering together on a regional basis, such as Piedmont Emergency Animal Response Team (PE ART). This group of counties hosts regular trainings for their volunteers, usually with CE credits available. Many charge minimal or no fees and cover subjects like ropes and knots related to large animal rescue, animal sheltering, and even reptile familiarity and management in response. Additional training offerings will become available as you involve yourself with your county emergency management as you bring unique skills that they can use. Some folks that have working farms have actually become training sites for other first responders/firemen/EMS to get familiarity with “on farm” hazards as many are not aware of the many hazards there or how to handle/move large animals around during a response to a fire or other emergency type event. Finally, I would like to mention the availability of Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) now being taught at many of the local community colleges at minimal or no cost. Remember, disasters start local and end local!

I am not negating any benefits of the large number of trainings available through many animal response agencies (local and national) that you may have found or attended as many are great trainings and supply a vast amount of experience that will someday assist you in a response. I am just attempting to open your eyes to the extensive offerings “in your own backyard” that will, if nothing else, help you meet and network with the responders you may see again in the middle of an event. Be confident in your preparedness trainings as many of these are now being mandated in medical/nursing training programs, much the same as the Emergency Programs Division has been providing to the students of the NCSU CVM and the four veterinary technician programs across our state for more than five years.

Thank you for listening to my ramblings and I would like to encourage you all to not let your spark for preparedness dim and continue to improve. One last thought to leave you with, “If you’re not part of the solution....you’re part of the problem” so, let’s all be prepared to the level that we CAN be part of the solution.

Offerings that you may benefit from include:

- IS-111.A - Livestock in Disasters: <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/courseOverview.aspx?code=IS-111.a>
- IS-10.A - Animals in Disasters: Awareness and Preparedness:
<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/courseOverview.aspx?code=IS-10.a>
- IS-811 - Emergency Support Functions (ESF) #11 - Agriculture and Natural Resources Annex:
<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/courseOverview.aspx?code=IS-811>
- ICS 100 - <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/courseOverview.aspx?code=is-100.b>
- PE ART - <http://www.readyforsyth.org/what-is-pe-art-piedmont-emergency-animal-response-team>
- NC Emergency Management Training Calendar:
<http://terms.ncem.org/TRS/courseDesc.do?sourcePage=courseSearch&cofId=74867>
- Local Community Colleges – Find your nearest community college and visit their website:
http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/colleges_map.aspx

NCDA&CS Staff Attend All-Hazard Incident Management Team Training

By Mark Howell, NCDA&CS EP Division

As the population densities of both human and agricultural communities continue to grow in North Carolina they create greater concentrations of risks and the role of managing agricultural emergencies becomes more demanding and complex. To better meet the needs of our citizens, farmers, and the agriculture industry during emergencies and disasters, 14 NCDA&CS staff from the Food and Drug Protection and Emergency Programs divisions attended a week long “food-centric” Incident Command System (ICS) – Incident Management Team (IMT) 0-305 training in Richmond, Va., in January to acquire the skills necessary to better manage this increased complexity.

The opportunity to attend the ICS IMT 305 course was offered by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services - Rapid Response Team in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. The course was developed utilizing funding from a 2013 Food and Drug Administration Innovative Food Defense Grant. The course was specifically targeted to the food and agriculture sector with the overall goal of developing food response IMT capacities, capable of functioning within the National Incident Management System during a large and/or complex incident. Food Response IMTs can either support existing ICS structure, or can assume command of an incident when requested. The course included participants from Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina and federal partners from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s Baltimore District Office and the Surgeon General’s Office.

The All-Hazards IMT course, designed by the U.S. Fire Administration, is a series of simulation exercises
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NCDA&CS Staff Attend All-Hazard Incident Management Team Training

By Mark Howell, NCDA&CS EP Division

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And instruction for incident management team members. Classroom lecture topics included: leadership and team dynamics, introduction to the planning process, and the planning cycle and were provided to enhance team interaction, communication, and decision making, improve risk management, and reduce errors. In addition, participants increased their proficiency in the roles and responsibilities of IMT members during large or complex incidents through daily simulation activities. The simulations were designed to test the participants in their functional knowledge as well as their ability to function as a team.

An important part of the IMT program is team development. This is where the members of an IMT work as a team, and learn the knowledge and skills needed to perform effectively in a learning environment under stressful, dynamic and changing conditions. Team decision-making is a critical aspect of effective IMTs, and this skill was developed by the two NCDA&CS IMT teams from Food and Drug Protection and Emergency Programs divisions in an exercise/activity environment, so that the skills can now be applied appropriately during an emergency.

The course offered practical experience through extensive exercises and simulations conducted within the context of an all-hazard incident. Participants gained valuable experience in disaster simulations, including a weather-related scenario with the purpose of reviewing ICS processes and introducing participants to the operations within the IMT construct. A second exercise highlighted the nuances encountered when a cluster of illnesses is associated with a foodservice establishment. The food-based scenario included the epidemiological investigation, trace back to identify the affected product, implementation of a recall, and the role of regulatory agencies in the response. This exercise engaged the IMTs in a day-long response, highlighted by a number of “high stress” injects that required applications of ICS processes and principles and culminated in the development and delivery of an Incident Action Plan (IAP). Each IMT presented their developed IAP to the course instructors and fellow participants who shared constructive feedback and highlighted areas for improvement and strengths of the incident action plans.



EP Division staff, NCDA&CS 2014