

THE VRC CONNECTION

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2008

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

LOGGING ON TO VRC

EP'S VETERINARY RESPONSE CORPS GOES HIGH-TECH WITH ServNC

The NCD&CS Emergency Programs Division mission is to reduce the vulnerability to or the impact from, any disaster, disease or terrorist attack on the agriculture community of North Carolina. The Emergency Programs Division provides leadership within the NCD&CS and the agricultural community for emergency preparedness and response. The Division establishes public-private partnerships between vital government agencies, industry and volunteers. Emergency Programs field staff are each associated with one of the state's seven Public Health Regional Surveillance Teams (PHRST). The teams work closely with the local health departments and first responders in all aspects of preparedness planning, training, and exercising. The PHRSTs also serve as highly trained epidemiological strike teams. One initiative began by the Emergency Programs Division was the NC Veterinary Response Corps, which was established to provide surge capacity for animal care in a catastrophic event in NC. *See Volunteering Made Easy, Page 3.*



ONE WORLD, ONE MEDICINE ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES

In the 1960's Dr. Calvin Schwabe coined the phrase One Medicine, although the concept has been embraced since the late 19th century. This short and simple phrase summarizes the need for collaboration between human and veterinary medicine to more collectively approach health issues that threaten animals, humans, and the environment. *See One Med, Page 2.*



SAVE THE DATE! DEC 10TH AND 11TH, 2008
WWW.ONEMEDICINENC.ORG

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Upcoming Events, *Page 2*
- Preparedness News, *Page 3*
- VRC Spotlight: Dr. Agnes Davis, *Page 4*



PETS Act and CAMETs

In October 2006 President Bush signed into law, the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act (PETS), which amends the Stafford Act. It requires the director of FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), in approving standards for state and local disaster preparedness plans, to ensure that the plans take into account the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals. It also allows the director of FEMA to make financial contributions to state and local authorities for animal emergency preparedness purposes, including establishing shelters to accommodate people with pets and service animals. *See PETS Act, Page 4.*

One Med, continued.

For the last five years, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and the NCD&CS have hosted the annual One Medicine Symposium to educate and provide attendees with take-home tools that will improve and enhance preparedness for a natural or man-made disaster or infectious disease outbreak. In previous years, we have addressed a One Medicine Approach to: Homeland Security, Health Security, Food Defense, the Intersection of Public Health, Agriculture, and Wildlife (highlighting avian influenza), and Globalization.

The theme of the 2008 symposium, "Earth, Wind, and Fire: A One Medicine Approach to Climate Change," focuses on the effects of climate change on agriculture, public health, and animal health. This year's agenda includes environmental challenges that encourage human and animal health professionals to come together to explore key questions so we can improve awareness and understanding of issues benefiting from a One Medicine approach.

This year's Symposium will take place December 10 – 11 at the Sheraton

Imperial Hotel and Convention Center in Durham, NC. For registration information and other details, please visit www.onemedicinenc.org or call (919) 966-4032. Lodging reservations at the Sheraton Imperial can be booked by calling 1-800-325-3535 and referencing The One Medicine Symposium. To view presentations from previous One Medicine conferences, please visit www.ncagr.gov/oep.

Article provided courtesy of Dr. Kelly Jeffer, Public Health Liaison Veterinarian.

VRC Coordinators

Jennifer House, DVM

Western Veterinary Specialist
(919) 270-0508
jennifer.house@ncagr.gov

Dr. Jennifer House has been the coordinator for the VRC since 2005.

She has worked as a veterinary specialist with Emergency Programs since August of 2003. Dr. House received her B.S. and DVM in Animal Science from North Carolina State University.



She completed a Certificate Program in Community Preparedness and Disaster Management at the University of North Carolina, School of Public Health in 2004.

Mandy Tolson, DVM

Southeastern Veterinary Specialist
(252) 813-0989
mandy.tolson@ncagr.gov

Dr. Mandy Tolson is a lifelong resident of North Carolina. She

graduated from NCSU with a B.A. in Zoology in 1998, an M.A. in Nutrition in 2001, and her DVM in 2005. Dr. Tolson worked in



private practice in Eastern NC before joining the NCD&CS Emergency Programs Division in February 2008.

Sixth Annual One Medicine Symposium



December 10 & 11, 2008

Sheraton Imperial Hotel,
Durham, North Carolina

Information & Registration at: www.onemedicinenc.org

Continuing Education Provided

UPCOMING EVENTS

Regional CAMET Training
(In partnership with NCEM)
Spring 2009
Date and Locations TBD

SART Summit
May 19, 2009
Raleigh, NC

Sheltering Exercise
May 20, 2009
NC State Fairgrounds
Raleigh, NC

REQUIREMENTS FOR VRC DEPLOYMENT

- ICS 100, 200, and 700
- Biosecurity/PPE Training
- Knowledge of NC Emergency Management
- Knowledge of Emergency Support Functions
- Attendance at VRC Meetings
- Signing a Code of Conduct

Preparedness In The News

As local and state preparedness moves forward, national and regional efforts are also making headway. The informal alliance known as NASAAEP (National Alliance of State Animal and Agriculture Emergency Programs) held their second summit to discuss developments on the federal level. Notable mentions include:

- USDA's formation of Animal Care Division within APHIS, which oversees companion animal natural disaster issues. Dr. Kay Corker-Carter is the new division's eastern regional director. Additional personnel will be placed as the division continues to grow. USDA, in the past year, has supported state efforts in the latest hurricane, flood, and fire efforts by bringing in resources, information, and command/control knowledge.

- The PETs Act continues to evolve but does not yet include horses or livestock. Emergency management agencies are putting the act through its paces during each event and though NC has not tested the PETs Act in a big way, NC Emergency Management and NC Department of

Agriculture staff have discussed how NC could use the process.

- NASAAEP has finalized its non-profit status and is seeking to contribute to Preparedness efforts nationally by providing state-oriented guidance and focus. Membership within the alliance will consist of state-appointed representatives, approved by both animal officials and emergency management officials. Non-governmental organizations participate in the group but do not have voting privileges. The summit was funded by USDA and FEMA. The alliance meets yearly and holds conference calls monthly. Dr. Jimmy Tickel is NC's representative and is a member of the board.

REGIONAL PREPAREDNESS NEWS

NC is a member of the Southern Animal and Agriculture Disaster Regional Alliance (SAADRA). This group includes the 14 southern most states in the central and eastern part of the country, stretching from Tennessee to Texas. This group meets several times a year and gives

heavy focus to hurricane response, state-to-state aid, and developing Incident Management Teams (IMT). The group meets during the annual United States Animal Health (USAHA) Conference, which was held this past October in Greensboro, NC. Discussions there focused on implementing the new assessment tool, FASCAT that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has provided.

National and Regional efforts are moving steadily forward and can be measured by how well disasters have been handled in the past year. From unprecedented wildfires, droughts, tornados, flooding, and then a rather active hurricane season, states have fared rather well considering. If you are interested in assisting other states during events, joining the VRC and expressing your desire is a fantastic way to stay abreast of news and get into the game.

This article provide courtesy of Dr. Jimmy Tickel, EP Central Veterinary Specialist



LOG ON TODAY!
Register now at
www.servnc.org

Volunteering Made Easy

Continued from cover page -- The NCVRC was formed in August of 2005 to provide training to animal responders in our state. Since then we have held numerous trainings across the state reaching over 250 people. Our members are primarily veterinarians, veterinary technicians and veterinary assistants. We also have several cooperative extension agents, animal control officers, volunteers and support persons with numerous capabilities. In addition to providing emergency assistance in NC, our members have the training and the opportunity to be pre-credentialed to respond to animal events throughout the nation if requested through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). To be pre-credentialed and eligible for deployments, members are asked to complete several

trainings and sign a code of conduct. For training requirements and online links please see our website at www.ncvrc.org.

Volunteer Management

As the VRC continues to grow, it has become necessary to find a database management system that will allow us to properly utilize the knowledge and skills of members. Recently we have joined the state's volunteer management system, ServNC, and feel that this system best meets our needs. This is the same system that is used by volunteers responding to human health needs within NC. It has numerous capabilities that are ideal for disaster response, such as the capacity to verify licensure for NC veterinarians and registered veterinary technicians through the NC Veterinary Medical Board. This system will house our member data and

be utilized for deployments and messaging. There are three units available for deployments under ServNC: VRC for veterinarians and technicians, SART for non-medical animal responders, and General Agriculture for non-animal responders. ServNC will be the only system we utilize.

So, if you are a current member or would like to join the VRC then you must register through www.servnc.org. Newsletters, training announcements, and deployment requests will all come through ServNC starting in 2009. The registration process takes about 30 minutes and is very comprehensive. Please be as complete as possible when you register. This information is secured and your privacy will be honored.

PETS Act, continued.

In North Carolina, we began increasing our efforts to protect pets in April of 2006. Co-located or “pet friendly” shelters have been successful in some NC counties during Hurricane Isabel and with Katrina evacuees to our state. After attending a conference on Animals in Disasters in May of 2006, we set about our plan to have all counties have some type of co-located shelter or alternative plan for pets. NC is using a modified version of the Marion County, Florida plan to co-locate animals with their owners. This plan is being used as a template because of its successful use during four evacuations related to the hurricane season of 2004 in Florida.

In the event of a hurricane, we know that our Eastern counties will have to evacuate inland and will not be able to shelter their own citizens nor their pets. We have a commitment from ten “host” counties along the I-95/I-40 corridors to plan for sheltering of evacuated pets and their owners. Emergency animal shelter trainings have taken place in these “host” counties and throughout the state. For more information on this subject please visit the recourses website at www.ncargis.com/sheltering/.

An animal sheltering task force was formed with the NC Division of Emergency Management (NCEM), NC Department of Agriculture and the State Animal Response Team (SART). In collaboration with NCEM, we have developed CAMETs (Companion Animal Mobile Equipment Trailers) that are similar to sheltees from the Red Cross. Private donations

provided the funding. These trailers are able to support 50 animals with cages, bowls, generator, and other necessary shelter supplies. They do not have any perishables like food, water or medications. There are currently 9 completed and staged at strategic locations throughout the state; several have already been used for animal disasters within the state. There are 15 more under contract and should be completed soon. They are an NCEM asset, and deployable to other states with an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) agreement. The Veterinary Response Corp has trained with these CAMETs giving members hands-on experience on how to set up and operate a shelter. Brochures have also been developed and distributed to many animal shelters, kennels, pet shops, grooming shops and veterinarians. In educating the public, we recommend evacuation to a friend or family member first; a second option is pet friendly hotels and boarding facilities. Co-located shelters are a last resort for individuals who have nowhere else to take their pets.

By being proactive, forming agreements with Emergency Management and the Red Cross, we have taken great strides in being better prepared for our pets and their owners. If you have an interest in joining the Veterinary Response Corp or would like more information on our pet sheltering efforts please e-mail either jennifer.house@ncagr.gov or joanne.walshweeks@ncagr.gov.

This article provide courtesy of Dr. Joanne Walsh-Weeks, EP Southwestern Veterinary Specialist

VRC SPOTLIGHT:

Agnes Davis, DVM

I joined the NCVRC as soon as I found out about its formation, in August of 2005. That first meeting led to other opportunities. One of the speakers from the first training was Bill Gentry, who told the group of a certificate program offered through UNC-CH’s School of Public Health, Disaster Management and Community Preparedness. I signed up immediately. I later became involved with the American Red Cross (ARC) and was part of their Disaster Action Team. Then I found out about Purdue’s Certificate program in Veterinary Homeland Security and enrolled, and most recently, I have been accepted into the National Veterinary Response Team Region 3 (NVRT-3), formerly known as the Veterinary Medical Assistance Team (VMAT). All of this volunteer work earned me a “Service in Action” award from UNC and “Volunteer of the Month” from the ARC. Those things are nice, but the people I’ve met along the way are the real reward.



All of this has taken some time and a lot of paperwork, but it has all been worth it. I’ve met outstanding individuals like Jimmy Tickel, Bill Gentry, Sharron Stewart, Marty Zaluski, Ernie Wilkinson, Jennifer House, Joanne Walsh-Weeks, Bruce Akers, Dan Wilson, Leonard Bull, Jim Hamilton, and many others. These are the people that are leading this new concept of response against bioterrorism and natural disasters. We are lucky to have them here in North Carolina, setting the standard and spreading the word throughout the nation. And we are lucky to have them lead us. I encourage those of you who are interested in helping animals during disasters; join the NC Veterinary Response Corp. You will receive free training, be among the first privately employed individuals asked to assist during and after an event, and doors will be opened to greater opportunities.

To learn more about Agnes or 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, please contact Jennifer at jennifer.house@ncagr.gov.

ABOUT VRC

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