

THE VRC CONNECTION

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

August 2010

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

Be Prepared!

Hurricane Season 2010

Hurricane season in the southeast is typically observed June 1 through November 30. North Carolina has experienced a number of memorable storms, however, nothing catastrophic since Hurricane Floyd flooded the state in 1999. Floyd was a multi-billion dollar disaster with heavy impact to the state's agriculture economy. The 2010 season is predicted to be above normal, according to NCSU researchers. The N.C. Veterinary Response Corp is an essential resource to assist with hurricane response in our agriculture communities. Volunteers should be prepared for possible storm activation in a moment's notice. Seasoned responders prepare themselves by having an emergency plan for their families and pets to implement pre-event or in their absence. Maintaining good collaboration in addition to strong community relationships provide some assurance for smooth interaction during a catastrophic event.



In this Issue:

- Co-location Sheltering (pg 2)
- Member Spotlight: JoEtta Newman (pg 3)
- Volunteer Preparedness (pg 3)
- NAHERC (pg 4)
- VRC Training at AB Tech (pg 4)

National Animal Health Emergency Response Corps

The National Animal Health Emergency Response Corp (NAHERC) was established by USDA APHIS in 2001. NAHERC allows VRC members to join and be federalized and still respond to a disaster in North Carolina. During a disaster a VRC member who is a member of NAHERC would still be activated under NC VRC but this association allows for federal reimbursement process.

For more information see page 4.

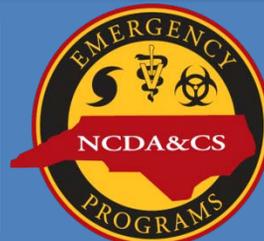


NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & CONSUMER SERVICES

Emergency Programs Division

Steve Troxler, Commissioner

Sharron Stewart, Director



Co-location Sheltering



By Dr. Bruce Akers

What is co-location sheltering? It's not you and your pet sheltering side by side at the county human shelter. Co-location sheltering is a model of sheltering that NCD&CS Emergency Programs Division is showing, educating and encouraging counties to consider as a beneficial option as they decide how to comply with the Pet Evacuation & Transportation Standards Act (PETS Act). We at Emergency Programs prefer to shy away from the description of "Pet Friendly" as it is too nebulous and gives every person a different "false view" of what to expect. I like to say, you the human go to the shelter and get three hot's and a cot and your pet will receive similar accommodations just not in the same area/room as you. Ideally the pet shelter is in close proximity to or very short distance from the human shelter. Often that will be in the same building as the human shelter but just in a disconnected location or wing of the shelter. Often this is easy to arrange because many of evacuation shelters are staged in schools that have floor arrangements that easily accommodate this plan. The biggest safety concern is that the pet area be on a separate heating and ventilation system than the human shelter to protect those that may have allergies or respiratory diseases (asthma, COPD) or those who have a fear of the animals. Additionally, the area must have controlled access to prevent unnecessary patrons from wandering into the area.

Every county must review their facilities, personnel and capabilities and make decisions that best serve their populace. Some are adopting the co-location model as it can have great benefits if managed properly. Co-location shelters help to facilitate the timely evacuation of the 60 percent of persons who would not evacuate if they were unable to take their pets with them. The people who stay behind may find themselves in situations that may later necessitate their rescue by first responders in a more dangerous environment putting others at risk as well. Another option some counties are using is to surge up their local animal shelter with additional cages or open an additional shelter in a separate building. While that is a viable option, it creates the dilemma of how to get pets to that shelter and the owners to the human shelter which may be quite distant from each other. Some counties are even including in their plans for the owners to provide the labor for caring and feeding of their own animals which alleviates the personnel problems caused by lack of volunteers or small animal control agency staffs. The co-location model, if managed well, may better serve the citizens of North Carolina. Ultimately, each county should choose the plan which works best for their citizens and facilitate early evacuation of their residents.

VRC COORDINATOR

Mandy Tolson, DVM
Southeast Region Emergency Programs
Veterinarian
(252) 813-0989
mandy.tolson@ncagr.gov

REQUIREMENTS FOR VRC DEPLOYMENT

- ICS 100, 200, and 700
- Biosecurity/PPE training
- Knowledge of N.C. Emergency Management
- Knowledge of emergency support functions
- Attendance at VRC meetings
- Sign a Code of Conduct



COMPLETE YOUR VRC REGISTRATION AT
www.servnc.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

- North Carolina State Fair – October 14-24
- North Carolina Veterinary Conference (NCVC) – November 5-7
- One Medicine – December 8

Dates are tentative. Please check www.ncvrc.org for updates.

VRC SPOTLIGHT:

JoEtta Newman, RVT



JoEtta Newman, BS, AAS, RVT

I believe so much in the NCVRC and the need to give back to the animal and human communities, that I have now integrated, along with the help of the NCVRC staff, the basic classes of the NCVRC into my classroom activities. In doing this I hope to, educate my students in the methods of disease prevention, spread, containment and eradication. As a byproduct I hope to encourage my students to get involved in some way after they graduate with the NCVRC or other organization and give back to their communities. I hope that they see that just because you graduate, doesn't mean that the learning has stopped. They should continue to grow and learn and use that knowledge to help beyond their job. I truly appreciate the efforts of the staff of the NCVRC. They have given of their time and energy to help with this project by traveling to Asheville and providing no cost training to my students. Maybe along the way, we will have a few new eager veterinary technician students find that they too want to help in the preparation and response to animal disasters and be as thrilled to be a member of the NCVRC as I am.

Tips for Being a Prepared Responder:

- Prepare an emergency kit for all members of your family .
- Prepare an evacuation kit for you and your family (include a supply of essentials for you, your family and your pets).
- Prepare a disaster and evacuation plan for your family and your business now (see <http://www.avma.org/disaster/default.asp> for helpful guidelines).
- Prepare a 3 day survival kit in case you are deployed (prepare a day pack or gear bag to include personal items you may need for a response).
- Maintain an updated list of emergency contacts.
- Keep up with training (Please visit www.ncvrc.org for updated training information. All volunteers registered through servNC for NCVRC will receive training announcements and other updates through the servNC system.
- Touch base with your local partners (county animal response teams, emergency management, cooperative extension, animal control, public health, rescue groups, etc.).

For more information, guides and tips visit:

<http://www.avma.org/disaster/default.asp>, www.ready.gov and www.fema.gov

For the last six years, I have been an instructor for the Veterinary Medical Technician program at Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College in Asheville, North Carolina and the advisor for the Student Association of Veterinary Technicians for our program. I have also worked in companion animal and emergency medicine practices as well as a spay/neuter clinic. In my spare time, I have been a member of the North Carolina Search and Rescue Dog Association, Inc. for the past 16 years. We assist with the location of lost and incapacitated persons in urban, wilderness, water, and disaster situations. With them I have served in many positions including field support, command liaison, and dog handler with my PBGV partner "Tater".

I was turned on to the North Carolina Veterinary Response Corps by one of my students a few years back. I can not thank her enough. Before joining, I attended a day long training in Asheville with a couple of my students (we had a lot of fun by the way), and quickly realized that it was the perfect marriage of my two loves, veterinary medicine and search and rescue. When I figured out that I could put my disaster response experience to use in the veterinary world, I was instantly hooked and have been enthusiastically attending trainings since. Another perk has been finding people that share the same passions which has led to all of the wonderful people that I have met and kept in touch with along the way. Did I mention that the training was fun too?

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.

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.

National Animal Health Emergency Response Corps

(please visit www.ncvrc.org for the full article)

By Brie German

During an emergency response, it's important to be prepared and have the right number of people with the right set of skills. For the Veterinary Services (VS) program, the National Animal Health Emergency Response Corps (NAHERC) is a crucial part of making that happen.

VS created the volunteer corps to make sure that—in addition to its own ranks—it has an external established network of trained veterinarians and technicians available to combat U.S. animal disease outbreaks. NAHERC consists of private and state animal health technicians and veterinarians willing to step in and support APHIS. Depending on the situation, duties may include examining herds or flocks, vaccinating animals, collecting epidemiologic information, depopulating diseased animals, or inspecting livestock markets, trucks, and vehicles.

For more information, please visit <http://naherc.aphis.usda.gov> or send an email to: naherc@aphis.usda.gov



VRC Training for Students

By Dr. Mandy Tolson

On July 12th I had the pleasure of visiting students in the veterinary technical program at Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College. During this training, I provided an overview of the N. C. Veterinary Response Corp and the requirements to become a VRC member. These students were excited to learn about the N. C. Veterinary Response Corp and how they can serve their state and community in the event of a disaster that affects agriculture. These students will soon be practicing across the state and will serve as a great resource to the NC VRC.



There is always a great need for trained volunteers across the state. The VRC tries to reach veterinary technical students and veterinary students across the state each year. The veterinary students who graduate from NCSU College of Veterinary Medicine are fully credentialed to respond in a disaster. We hope that these students will go out into practice more prepared and ready to serve their community when needed.