

THE VRC CONNECTION

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Great Flood Exercise 2013

By Dr. Bruce Akers, NCDA&CS

At the beginning of the year, the State Exercise team started planning for this summer's Large Scale Exercise – A “Great Flood” Event. Little did we know that we would be getting more real practice than the exercise would provide due to heavy rain events throughout the early summer.

On July 16 and 17 the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) activated for the exercise. The State Emergency Response Team (SERT) partners were busy responding to the



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tional scenario. While this was all progressing, planners were monitoring the real time tropical events and daily deluges of rain from summer thunderstorms. The constant rains were swelling our state's streams, flooding streets and saturating the land.

Luckily though, the real events happening right outside our windows did not reach the catastrophic nature of the fictional scenario. The exercise scenario involved a tropical system that dumped rain, followed by another rain system during the fictional recovery phase. In the scenario, Falls Lake swelled to the point of damaging the dam which led to a breach and all the horrors of downstream flooding that would be brought on by a disastrous event. Planning and preparing for these “not real, but very possible” events was intended to challenge us for another Hurricane Floyd-like event.

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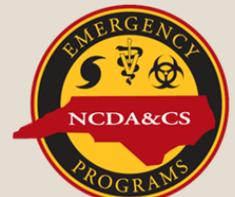


NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE &
CONSUMER SERVICES

Emergency Programs Division

Steve Troxler, Commissioner

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2013 USDA APHIS Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostician Course

By Dr. Anna Allen, NCDA&CS



Plum Island light house

The Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostician (FADD) Course sponsored by USDA APHIS is held three times per year at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center in Plum Island, NY. This past June, I was invited to attend the two-week course, along with 30 other veterinarians from a wide variety of backgrounds. Instructors include current and former APHIS veterinarians, as well as private practitioners who are also FADDs.

Each day, participants take a ferry to the island and spend the morning learning about foreign animal diseases, such as foot and mouth disease, African and classical swine fevers, virulent Newcastle disease and contagious bovine pleuropneumonia. Participants also learn how to perform a proper FADD investigation before spending the afternoon in the laboratories. Two full showers are required before leaving the island...needless to say, we are VERY clean by the end of the course!

We were also taken on a tour of the island and learned about its fascinating history as a military fort before belonging to USDA and the Department of Homeland Security. There are many wonderful old buildings and surprisingly beautiful beaches and vegetation throughout the island. On the weekend in between the two course weeks, participants are free to travel around the area. Many people go into New York City for day or weekend-long trips, while others explore Long Island. The course was an amazing and unique educational opportunity for everyone.

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>COMPLETE YOUR VRC REGISTRATION AT WWW.SERVNC.ORG</p>		

Rescue Operation in Moore County

By Al Carter, Director - Moore County Animal Control



In a joint rescue operation, members of Moore county EMS, Moore County Animal Control, Crain's Creek Fire Department and Cypress Point Fire Department saved seven Pitt bulls from drowning recently. Early in the morning on June 8, after extremely heavy rains spawned by tropical storm Andrea, Moore County EMS received a call from a woman in a rural area of the county that she had awakened to find her lot under water and could not reach seven of her dogs. She reported the water was rising and she feared her dogs would drown.

EMS responded and contacted local fire departments and Animal Control Officer David Myrick, who was on call. When Myrick arrived, EMS and the fire departments were completing a two-stage rope line across 200 feet of rapidly moving water. Employing two boats, the officer and fire department volunteers made their way to the far side of the swollen stream where they found two dogs on the last bit of dry land and five more in the water. "They were all scared and of varying temperaments," said Myrick, making the rescue more difficult.

Al Carter, Director of Animal Operations, said "it was a classic example of cross department cooperation," as the four entities worked seamlessly to bring about a successful conclusion after over four hours of effort. "Between the fire ants, ticks, raw sewage and scared dogs, it was a difficult situation," said Carter but the team worked in a highly professional manner to get the dogs to safety.

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.

Quake 2.0 – the Aftershock

By Dr. Lewis Dodds, NCDA&CS

For the second year in a row, an All-Hazards Regional Exercise was conducted in Spruce Pine by the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management and Avery, McDowell, Mitchell and Yancey counties. Following up on the scenario of a major earthquake in 2012, “Quake 2.0, the Aftershock,” was held April 26-29, and brought 723 participants from 128 organizations across North Carolina as well as parts of Virginia together for four days of training opportunities in various aspects of emergency response, such as fire response, search and rescue, communication, incident management, health care, mass care and sheltering, and pet sheltering.

Many counties have components of their Emergency Operations Plan that address the care of pets by establishing procedures to be followed when a pet shelter is deemed necessary, as required by the PETS Act. A temporary shelter may be one option that could be utilized under certain circumstances. Exercising and training all aspects of emergency response plans are beneficial, so including a pet sheltering component was a natural continuation to last year’s exercise.

A co-located pet shelter component was added this year to allow multiple area animal care and control groups/agencies to participate in an exercise scenario of a large scale event. Utilizing the Mitchell County Companion Animal Mobile Equipment Trailer, participants were able to practice the procedures necessary to activate a temporary emergency pet shelter. A CAMET is a cargo trailer that is equipped with the basic supplies necessary to house 60 pets (cages, bowls, cleaning supplies, etc.) but does not contain any perishable items such as food or medications. Training covered equipment set-up, animal registration and identification, animal evaluation, animal decontamination, sheltering, pet release, facility cleanup and breakdown. Participants took part from Mitchell, McDowell, Haywood and Buncombe counties, NCDA&CS, USDA/APHIS/VS as well as several area veterinarians. Veterinarians received continuing education credits for their participation.



Pet registration during the exercise.

The pet shelter was located in a large tent adjacent to the human shelter, which was operated by area Social Services departments and the American Red Cross. Registration for the pet shelter was done in coordination with the human shelter, so that all pet “owners” were also registrants of the human shelter. This approach was intended to minimize pet abandonment and allow for more consistent information sharing for both human and pet shelter policies. Intake paperwork captured owner/representative contact information as well as pet information and identification was ensured by taking photos of the pet with owner, as well as ID neck bands. The digital photos were printed and used as cage cards.



Registered pets were evaluated by a veterinarian.

Once the shelter equipment was set up, the empty CAMET was utilized as a temporary vet clinic. All incoming pets were evaluated by a veterinarian and health issues discussed with the owners to ensure that the level of care available at the shelter was appropriate for the needs of the pet. Also, rabies vaccinations were administered if proof of vaccination (certificate, not tag) could not be provided by the owner, which was a shelter requirement.

“Decontamination” in the world of emergency response, usually refers to hazardous materials cleanup, and is an involved process using specialized personnel specifically trained for those activities. For the purposes of the pet shelter, decontamination refers to a good bath. The

idea being to make sure all the pets taken in are free of fleas, ticks and any external contaminants, so as not to spread anything to others. Due to the weather, this part of the process was discussed and simulated without actually bathing the animals since all the “evacuated pets” were in fact owned by various participants.

By co-locating the pet shelter adjacent to the human shelter, the day-to-day care of the pets – feeding, cage cleaning and exercising – can be required of the owner, which decreases the staffing necessary to run the shelter. A smaller crew can be utilized to address ongoing registration and intake, oversee owner compliance with shelter policies, ensure the correct owner interacts only with their pet, and verifying the correct pet is released to only their owner of record at the end of their stay.

Once the pet shelter had been emptied of all pets and was officially closed, the equipment was washed, allowed to dry and replaced in the CAMET for the next deployment.

The “Quake 2.0 – The Aftershock” exercise provided a vast opportunity to train in various aspects of emergency response, and by including a pet shelter component, allowed those responsible for the care of pets in their local jurisdictions an opportunity as well. The procedures utilized during this exercise do not represent the full extent of possibilities that exist when planning or operating a pet shelter, but they did allow the participants to exercise their plans, stimulate discussion and thought about their plans, share ideas with others, and provide exposure to some of the points to consider when establishing and operating a pet shelter.



A happy and willing exercise participant!

For more information about Pet Sheltering, visit the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Emergency Programs Division website at <http://ncagr.gov/oep/>

TLAER Training

By Dr. Lewis Dodds, NCDA&CS



Participants practicing a vertical lift.

TLAER, which stands for “Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue,” is a training program designed to train first responders the specialized techniques that can be used to accomplish rescue procedures of large animals. The TLAER training consists of two levels. Initially the Awareness Level course must be completed. This is typically a two-day course taught in a classroom setting, with some technique demonstrations, to familiarize participants to the concepts and situations involved in large animal rescue and introduce the techniques and equipment that might be used. The second Operations Level course is typically a three-day, hands-on applica-

tion of the rescue techniques, using specialized rescue equipment, an equine mannequin and trained horses to accomplish various rescue scenarios. While the training does focus on livestock, especially horses and cows since those are most commonly encountered, a “large animal” rescue may present in various forms, and local responders are frequently required to adapt accordingly. The TLAER Operations Level course demonstrates techniques involved with: general handling of livestock; moving recumbent animals – sideways drag, forward drag, rear drag; trench rescue; mud rescue, water rescue; barn fire response; and trailer accident response.

This year, Dr. Rebecca Gimenez of TLAER, Inc., presented the training program in the Piedmont. The Awareness Level, which had 120 attendees, was taught at Davidson County Community College, Feb. 23-24, and the Operations Level was taught at a private farm in Hamptonville, May 6-8, with 21 participants. Both courses were coordinated by the Piedmont Emergency Animal Response Team, sponsored by the Horse Education and Rescue Organization, with funding assistance from the Winston-Salem Foundation. Continuing education credits were available to veterinarians and technicians who participated. Completion of both courses leads to TLAER certification.

While fire fighters, search and rescue personnel, EMS and other first responders are highly trained in responding to human rescue situations, many are not accustomed to dealing with large animals. And while many of the concepts can be extrapolated from human techniques, there are inherent differences when dealing with large animals that need to be taken into consideration to make for a successful and safe outcome for both the animal and the responders. It is these differences which are examined, and techniques to compensate, which are practiced, that makes this training extremely valuable. This is also the area in which veterinarians, technicians and animal control personnel may be particularly useful in assisting local emergency responders as technical experts. Because, while veterinarians, technicians and even animal control personnel may be familiar with animal handling, most are not familiar with the rescue techniques utilized by emergency responders. By bringing these groups together, first for training and later in actual emergency events, the goal is to utilize everyone’s level of expertise appropriately. Keep in mind that these types of situations require a “team approach” to achieve the best outcome



Participants practice removing an equine mannequin from an overturned vehicle.

If this is an area of interest there are a few things you might want to consider. **First**, become trained in TLAER or some other specialized training emphasizing large animal rescue. There are other programs, just search “large animal rescue.” However, make sure the program is legitimate. **Second**, reach out to your local fire department or search and rescue team. They are probably the folks who will be called to these types of situations. Let them know who you are and learn what you might need to do to be able to participate. It may mean you have to officially volunteer or be a member of the department,



An equine mannequin was also used to simulate a mud rescues.



A fire simulation was another scenario that was practiced.

which may require other training as well. Don't be dissuaded if you aren't immediately received as their greatest asset when it comes to large animal rescue. These people are professionals and it may take some time for them to be convinced that you're serious and you're actually an asset. If you really want to get involved, be respectful and courteous but persistent. **Third**, invest in some basic personal protective equipment. Head and eye protection, good gloves and good boots are a minimum. Take your lead from the local department you will be working with, they will be able to advise you as to what they might require or recommend for you to be safe while on their emergency scene. And never forget it is **their** scene! And **finally**, keep your training current. Don't assume that just because you completed a training course five years ago and haven't used the skills since, that you will be much use to the situation. Just like other areas of technical skill, you have to continue to train and practice to keep those skills sharp. Additionally, there are other areas of training that can be of great value that aren't animal specific. Things such as knot tying, ropes and rigging for vertical lifting and other basic rescue information is available both online and in various live training venues. Your local emergency response personnel may be able to recommend these as well or even teach them.

For more information regarding TLAER, visit the website at: <http://tlaer.org/> . And, be on the lookout for future training opportunities. Also visit PE ART at <http://www.readyforsyth.org/what-is-pe-art-piedmont-emergency-animal-response-team/> and H.E.R.O. at <http://www.heroequinerescue.org/>

Great Flood Exercise 2013

Continued from page 1.

As the scenario progressed, cities and towns prepared for the arrival of the Neuse and Tar rivers which would be swelling out of their banks. This generated the inevitable evacuations and opening of shelters for human and companion animals. Sporadic power outages generated their usual calamitous effects of traffic light outages, rendering gas pumps and bank machines inoperable and rushes on grocery stores for milk and bread for those planning to shelter in place.

Further scenario details included the State Veterinarian hosting conference calls with industry partners to discuss moving food animals to markets in order to avoid the terrible losses experienced by tragic flooding during Hurricane Floyd. Preparing for and implementing business continuity strategies early in the process is essential for all businesses.

Other divisions within NCDA&CS were on standby for response to scenario missions that were injected as the event progressed. Examples were food condemnations, hog lagoon assessments and damage to timber or forest lands. Additionally, agricultural partners would be tasked to assess other environmental impacts from flooding into farming communities along the rivers.

As the exercise progressed, all branches and emergency support functions within the SEOC were ramping up and making preparations to assist local emergency managers with mass care and feeding operations, supply delivery, road clearings and disaster assessments. The SEOC was filled with partner agencies that brought their expertise to the event and rooms were abuzz with activity.

Two days of the scenario progression and the multi-agency coordination which is implemented to assist the locals was achieved by the SERT. It was quite comforting to see this well-oiled machine perk. There are always lessons learned and better planning and preparedness reduce the need to be reactive. Coordination and event management allow responders to remain focused, the resources to be distributed appropriately and provides an environment where personnel are likely to stay ahead of the event. North Carolina's long and projected coast allows for repeated impacts from hurricanes and inland flooding events. These events bring significant damage to our local towns and rural communities. The responders in those areas learn from each event and work to mitigate future impacts.

Our state is routinely recognized across the nation for its preparedness and ability to respond to our residents' needs. North Carolina, being one of the top states in experience with hurricanes, has made us truly ready for the next one, and I'm proud to be a part of it. You too, are a part of this bigger machine, as you do your part by preparing your business and assisting your counties' responders early on in their actions. Please take this time to consider, are you as an individual and a business really ready!

