



NEWS RELEASE

Texas Animal Health Commission

"Serving Texas Animal Agriculture Since 1893"

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TAHC and TAMU College of Veterinary Medicine Team Up

AUSTIN - In cooperation with the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC,) the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, has recently developed a mobile Veterinary Emergency Team (V.E.T.) to respond to disasters that affect animals state-wide.

The new team is deployable under the state animal response plan in a disaster situation where there is need for additional veterinary assessment, triage and care. Currently the team is made up of 13 members and consists of A&M faculty, resident veterinarians, veterinary technicians and veterinary students who have completed a disaster medicine elective. The team is fully self-sufficient with their own lodging, food, generators and supplies for responders. Their equipment includes two large climate-controlled tents, one multi-purpose trailer and one clinic trailer with limited surgical capability. The team also has obtained trucks to haul trailers and equipment, as well as an ambulatory medicine truck. Team members are divided into strike teams that can be targeted at either large or small animal issues.

"As the lead agency responsible for dealing with animals affected by disasters, the Texas Animal Health Commission has done an outstanding job of developing one of the premiere animal issues in disasters plans in the country. TAHC personnel have brought together an impressive array of governmental and non-governmental agencies all focused on preserving the health and welfare of animals. The Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences is proud to be part of this effort. Under the leadership of the TAHC the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences will field a team capable of assisting in assessment and providing triage capabilities," said Dr. Wesley Bissett, TAMU's lead faculty member in this effort.

"Our two organizations have put together an impressive array of equipment and personnel that will have the ability to limit and prevent animal suffering as disasters occur. In addition, the TAHC has provided us the opportunity to increase our efforts in teaching emergency response in the veterinary medical curriculum. Ultimately this will lead to increased numbers of veterinarians committed to and trained in emergency response. The end result will be strengthening the foundation of local governmental emergency response efforts. Texas is a "can do" state and the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences appreciates the opportunity to play a role in making sure that we can enhance the efforts of local and state governmental entities during times of disaster."

The Texas A&M V.E.T.s' first field exercise was held in College Station April 23-25. While they are still finalizing the acquisition of necessary supplies, the team is fully operational and mission-ready in time for the 2010 hurricane season.

Under the animal response plan, this team will deploy with TAHC field personnel in a large-scale disaster and will work under the same incident command structure.

The Texas Animal Health Commission works to protect the health of all Texas livestock, including: cattle, swine, poultry, sheep, goats, equine animals, and exotic livestock.



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