

EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION 17: VETERINARY CONCERNS UNIT

PRIMARY AGENCY: Okeechobee County Animal Control

SUPPORT AGENCIES: Okeechobee County Waste Management
Okeechobee Veterinarians
Horse Owner Associations
Okeechobee County Sheriff's
Office Okeechobee Cattlemens
Association
Okeechobee Dairy Owners Association

RESOURCE AGENCIES: Agriculture Extension Office

NIMS: The lead agency representative will serve as the Veterinary Concerns Unit Leader. This Unit will report directly to the Logistics Section Chief.

I. INTRODUCTION**A. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit is to identify, manage, and organize the response of resources needed for the veterinary needs and care of pet, farm, and wild animals following a significant emergency, and to coordinate emergency response and relief assistance between local and state and federal governments for support of this function.

B. SCOPE

The ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit involves identifying and meeting the care and veterinary needs of animals following a major or catastrophic emergency. The scope of this support can be generally categorized into the following sub-functional areas:

- Assessment of veterinary needs.
- Conduct of veterinary care and disease control.
- Organization of veterinary and animal care personnel.
- Identification and coordination of equipment and supplies.
- Maintaining statuses of veterinary and animal hospital care capabilities.
- Coordination food and medicine.
- Coordinating with the ESF-8 / Health and Medical Services Unit and ESF-14 / Public Information for the release of animal related advisories and information.
- Collection and disposal of dead animals.
- Provision and coordination of emergency veterinary services.

II. POLICIES**A. PRIORITIES**

The operations of the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit will be directed toward the performance of veterinary and animal care functions in conjunction with the conduct of county emergency operations and protective actions. The primary focus of this effort will be to provide those emergency services needed to address animal welfare and public health and safety concerns.

B. ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES**1. Primary Agency**

The Okeechobee County Animal Control Department is designated as the Primary Agency for this ESF and will coordinate all activities of the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit. As the Primary Agency, the Okeechobee County Animal Control Department is responsible for the following:

- Notification, activation, and mobilization of all agencies assigned to the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit.
- Organization, assignment, and staffing of all facilities at which this ESF is required to be located.
- Coordination of all support agency actions in performance of missions assigned to this ESF.
- Coordination of requests for assistance and additional resources in performance of the mission of this ESF from all assigned agencies and forwarding them to the appropriate or agency.
- Coordination of the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit activities through the County Emergency Operations Center (CEOC). The primary agency, and support agencies as required, will provide staff at the CEOC on a 24 hour basis, for the duration of activation of the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit.
- Providing or tasking resources to support veterinary and animal care needs in an emergency environment. Additional resources as required to perform these operations which are beyond local capability will be coordinated with State and Federal government. All state and federal responses for this function will be requested by this, and when deployed locally, are subordinate to the County ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit operations.
- In support of the above, assuring that the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit have an emergency response and field deployment capability.
- Acting as the primary source of animal related public information.
- Point of contact for any national assets or federal ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit responses to the emergency for this function.
- Responsible for maintaining and updating the animal protection resource inventory including medical care.

2. Support Agencies

All support agencies of the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit are responsible for the following:

- Notifying, activating, and mobilizing all personnel and equipment to perform or support assigned functions as designated within the County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) of this document or the response actions of this annex.
- The designation and assignment of personnel for staffing of all facilities at which this is required, and representation is determined by the primary agency of this to be necessary.
- Coordination of all actions of the support agency with the primary agency in performing assigned missions of the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit.
- Identifying all personnel and resource requirements to perform assigned missions which are in excess of the support agencies capabilities.
- In accordance with assignment of responsibilities, each support organization participating under the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit will contribute to the overall response but will retain full control over its own resources and personnel.

C. RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS

Federal and State assistance to this Emergency Support Function will be provided under Public Law 93-288, and Florida Statute Chapter 252, and the Florida CEMP. However, during the emergency response and for the first hours after the occurrence of catastrophic emergency there may be little if no assistance available. The primary and support agencies of the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit must plan to be as self sufficient as feasibly possible during this period.

D. RESOURCE COORDINATION

This will provide resources using its Primary and Support agency authorities and capabilities, in coordination with others, to support its missions. This will allocate available resources based upon priorities identified by the Emergency Operations Center.

If resources are unavailable, the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit, this ESF / Unit will send the resource request to the ESF-7 / Resource Support Unit (Procurement Unit), under the Administration / Finance Section of the Okeechobee County NIMS / EOC Interface. If the resource request cannot be filled through the ESF-7 / Resource Support Unit, the request shall be forwarded to either the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) Liaison in the Okeechobee County EOC, if one is available or, the State of Florida Division of Emergency Management Operations Desk.

All municipalities and all other ESFs / Units will coordinate with the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit representation at the CEOC when requesting emergency support or disaster assistance from this. In the case where a conflict of priorities develops, this ESF / Unit will work directly with the Emergency Operations Center Management Team (EOC-MT) to resolve the situation.

The ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit primary agency will coordinate with the Okeechobee County Waste Management Director for collection and disposal of dead animals.

D. RESPONSE AND RECOVERY COORDINATION

Although this annex addresses response and recovery activities of the agencies associated with the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit, the CEOC is responsible for coordinating all emergency activities, therefore, emergency operations of the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit will be initiated commensurate with needs and emergency priorities as determined by the EOC-MT.

E. COORDINATION OF ACTIONS

All agencies assigned to the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit will coordinate all actions in performance of emergency response and assistance missions with the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit representation assigned by the Primary Agency of the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit in the CEOC.

III. SITUATION**A. DISASTER CONDITIONS**

- A significant emergency could quickly overwhelm resources and capabilities in providing animal care, regulation, and veterinary services, and could necessitate the need for State and/or Federal assistance.
- Animal hospitals, kennels, pasturage, and livestock facilities may be severely damaged or destroyed. Those facilities which survive with little or no structural damage may be rendered unusable or only partially usable.
- Facilities remaining in operation may be overwhelmed by demand in the immediate aftermath of the occurrence. Disruption in local communications and transport systems could prevent timely re-supply.
- Large scale emergencies such as a hurricane may generate high animal casualty volumes and will require the use of temporary shelters, hospitals, and disposal facilities.

B. PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

- Resources within the affected areas may be inadequate to clear animal casualties. Additional capabilities will urgently be needed to supplement and assist animal care and regulation in the impacted area.
- The damage and destruction from a catastrophic emergency will produce urgent needs for veterinary support.
- Assistance in maintaining the continuity of veterinary and animal care and regulation services will be required.
- Disruption of services and facilities, loss of power, and the increased numbers of stray and injured animals increase the potential for disease and epidemics.
- Every attempt will be made to assure that county and regional resources will be fully utilized before requests are made for state assistance.
- Normal veterinary and animal supply sources may be destroyed or damaged necessitating the imposition of resource management over the remaining resources.
- Medical supplies of any kind from outside the affected area may be delayed from several hours to several days, making mandatory the utmost austerity in the consumption of available supplies.
- There will be an immediate overload of requests for emergency medical aid.
- Individual animal control and wildlife units will be working as independent entities due to a loss of communications.

IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. GENERAL

During declared states of local emergency, the Primary Agency of the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit is responsible for implementing its functions. A representative of the Primary Agency will be available in the CEOC during activation to respond to requests for support submitted to this. This person will staff the work station assigned to the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit in the CEOC, and will identify which support agencies for the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit are required, and take steps to assure that support agencies are activated or on alert as appropriate.

ESF-17 will coordinate and monitor all animal care, regulation, and veterinary activities being conducted in conjunction with emergency operations. It is anticipated that immediately after a major or catastrophic emergency has occurred, an assessment of priority for resources will be conducted by the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit to determine the degree of support required from state and federal resources.

Before, during, and immediately after a significant emergency, the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit will focus primarily on public and animal safety concerns. Support agencies will provide services as required by the Primary Agency.

B. EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION ORGANIZATION

1. Federal Level

At this level, the duties will be organized under the auspices of the ESF-8 / Health and Medical Services Unit in accordance with the Federal Response Plan. The Federal ESF-8 / Health and Medical Services will be directly represented at the Federal DFO in or within proximity to the County.

2. State/Regional Level

At this level, the duties will be organized under the auspices of the ESF-8 / Health and Medical Services Unit and in accordance with the State CEMP. The ESF-8 / Health and Medical Services Unit will be present in the State EOC. In addition, when a Regional reception and staging area has been established, representation of the ESF-8 / Health and Medical Services Unit at that location will be initiated.

The ESF-8 / Health and Medical Services Unit response will be activated and directed by the State Health Office and the Department of Agriculture Coordinator at the State EOC. Upon activation, the Coordinator will coordinate with the impacted County to determine if additional resources will need to become operational.

ESF-8 will have a field deployment capability. The ESF-8 / Health and Medical Services Unit will support the State EOC by having a representative(s) who will be deployed with the State EOC Advanced Team prior to or directly after a disaster or manmade event for the purpose of consultation at the CEOC with the health representative. If the situation warrants a follow-up activity, impact assessment will require two or more representatives to be placed on the State Impact Assessment Team. They will provide expertise in assessment and immediate response planning for the effected areas.

3. County Level

The ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit will organize under the leadership of the Okeechobee County Animal Control Department. The ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit will establish liaison with other appropriate ESFs / Units and maintain open communications with these ESFs / Units in both the planning and operational phases. Under the Okeechobee County NIMS / EOC interface, this Unit shall report directly to the Logistics Section Chief.

Support agencies will be coordinated by the Primary Agency. However, each agency represented will be expected to maintain its operational capability and direct its response resources in accordance with its agency's operating procedures. Should a conflict arise between the Primary Agency and a support agency, the issue will be turned over to the EOC-MT for resolution.

Primary and support agencies will provide sufficient personnel to staff the 24 hours per day, seven days per week. The staff will be qualified persons able to facilitate decisions for the agency they represent.

The ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit will be organized in a manner that ensures rapid response to public animal care, regulation, and veterinary requirements. Emphasis will be on each agency assigned to the having thorough and up-to-date plans that have been coordinated through the Primary Agency. These plans will be operational in nature, and standardized whenever possible, to include compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). When activated, agencies in the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit will operate under these plans and their support documents.

As needed, special advisory groups on animal care and regulation subjects will be assembled and consulted by the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit.

The designated team leader for this ESF at the CEOC is responsible for all activity of the subject only to the guidance and direction of the EOC-MT and the policies of this plan.

The ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit will provide information, as required, to the ESF-5 / Planning Section for inclusion into Incident Action Plans (IAPs) and situational briefings.

4. Municipal Level

Municipal agencies which have been designated to perform or coordinate like functions for the municipality may work directly with the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit at the CEOC for resources and support.

C. NOTIFICATION

1. Initial

Initial notification will be sent by the Emergency Management Division to the Primary Agency of the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit advising that a threat situation or an emergency has occurred which warrants or may warrant the implementation of this plan.

2. Primary Agency

The Primary Agency will in turn notify all support agencies to begin mobilization of resources and personnel and prepare to commence operations assigned to the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit.

3. Support Agencies

The notification process for support agencies will be completed according to their internal operational procedures.

D. MOBILIZATION**1. Primary Agency**

Immediately following notification to activate the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit, the Primary Agency will complete the following:

- Assure necessary emergency operating facilities and reporting systems are established.
- Establish communications with the CEOC and obtain status reports.
- Notify the CEOC when the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit is prepared to begin operations.
- Provide appropriate representation to the CEOC.

E. RESPONSE ACTIONS**1. Initial**

- Monitor and evaluate for animal evacuations.
- Conduct assessment of animal care and regulation operations and an inventory of available resources.
- Identify animal hospital care resources.
- Continuously acquire and assess information about the emergency situation.

F. CONTINUING ACTIONS

- Update Assessments.
- Request and coordinate state resources.
- Coordinate the activation animal care and veterinary response teams.
- Coordinate animal care related transport requests.
- Coordinate with the ESF-1 / Transportation Unit for the movement of animal care supplies, equipment and support personnel to staging areas.
- Coordinate requests from animal hospitals/clinics and other facilities.
- Coordinate requests for animal evacuation.
- Continue to identify the nature and extent of veterinary problems, and establish appropriate monitoring and surveillance of the situation to obtain valid ongoing information.
- Lead and support agencies will have and maintain appropriate listings of agency staff to call for performing response activities. The response people will be available 24 hours per day, seven days per week.
- Primary and support agencies will have and maintain listings of all available resource providers used by the agency in emergency situations. These would include private sector vendors.
- All ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit agencies will ensure that all actions taken are recorded and communicated to the Logistics Section Chief in the CEOC.
- At all times, ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit agencies should be able to make brief and accurate status reports to the ESF-5 / Planning Section with information for inclusion in Incident Action Plans (IAPs) and other reports as needed.

- Priorities will continually be reassessed to address the most critical issues in dealing with health and medical needs and strategies will be developed.
- Resources which are committed to specific missions will be tracked for redeployment if necessary. Updated information will be provided to the ESF-5 / Planning Section (Resource Management Unit).
- Resources for will be restaged as appropriate.

G. RECOVERY ACTIONS

1. Initial Actions

- Ascertain need for animal care, regulation, veterinary support.
- Determine need for response to critical animal control situations.
- Prepare for participation in animal search and rescue missions as required.
- Conduct assessment and determination of functioning of veterinary offices, animal hospitals, and clinics and their capabilities.

2. Continuing Actions

- Resources will be provided to assist animal care, regulation, and veterinary activities.
- Coordination will be made with the ESF-5 / Planning Section for the development of longer term strategies.
- The ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit will provide its support agencies and the ESF-5 / Planning Section and the ESF-14 / Public Information Unit with regular updates for inclusion into Incident Action Plans (IAPs) and situation reports.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. PRIMARY AGENCY

- Provide leadership in directing, coordinating, and integrating the overall efforts to provide animal care, regulation, and veterinary assistance.
- Coordinate and direct the activation and deployment of resources of animal and veterinary personnel, supplies, and equipment.
- Coordinate the evacuation of animals from the disaster area when evacuation is deemed feasible and appropriate.
- Arrange for the establishing of active and passive surveillance systems for animal protection and welfare.
- Coordination with the support agencies in directing and prioritize animal care and veterinary activities.
- Coordination to ensure that a sufficient number of trained personnel are stationed at each animal care site.
- Coordination with the ESF-2 / Communications Unit to ensure a working system of communications with the CEOC has been established. This may include radio, telephone, or cellular telephones.

- Coordination with ESF-7 / Resource Support Unit (Procurement Unit) for generators and fuel.
- Coordination with ESF-7 / Resource Support Unit (Procurement Unit) and the ESF-15 Volunteers and Donations Unit for supply information pertaining to potential volunteer groups, contract vendors, and other entities that may be able to supplement local resources.
- In addition to those activities previously stated, ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit will coordinate with the ESF-15 / Volunteers and Donations Unit regarding the activities of volunteers actively engaged in providing assistance.
- Develop and maintain a roster of personnel that staff the CEOC. Sufficient staffing will be available for 24 hours per day, seven days per week.
- Recording of incoming requests for assistance, who was assigned to respond, and the action taken.
- Establishing a protocol for prioritizing response activities.
- Coordination of activities with other ESFs /Unit.

VI. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit will utilize personnel and resources from its lead and support agencies to respond to mission assignments related to its functions. Additional resources available at other ESFs / Units may be coordinated and mobilized to support the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit missions.

When requests begin to exceed the ESF-17 / Veterinary Concerns Unit's capability to respond, requests will be forwarded to the ESF-7 / Resource Support Unit (Procurement Unit) under the Administration / Finance Section of the Okeechobee County NIMS / EOC Interface. If the resource request cannot be filled through the ESF-7 / Resource Support Unit, the request shall be forwarded to either the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) Liaison in the Okeechobee County EOC, if one is available or, the State of Florida Division of Emergency Management Operations Desk.