How is animal welfare addressed within Canada’s emergency response plan?

Dr C. Wittnich
Member, Canadian Veterinary Reserve Advisory Board, CVMA
(Chair, Civil Emergency Sub-committee)
&
Lead Veterinarian, OERS-Disaster Response Division
It’s NOT...

Thank-you for inviting me...its been fun...
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CVMA & The Canadian Veterinary Reserve

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Currently it is NOT...so let's ask...Why do people & their animals need to be rescued?
Total devastation...no shelter for man nor beast.

What is to be done....
Promote animal health and welfare. (from The Veterinarian’s Oath)

- Human-animal bond is strong, must provide for both in a crisis situation
- Both human public health and animal health linked
- Veterinarians are uniquely trained in today's world of super-specialization to have a broad view on approaches needed
- Cannot rely on others. Time to act like an independent G-6 nation for a change
- Canada traditionally assists other nations as well, currently we are impotent in the animal care arena to assist in other’s disasters
Man made health issues:
- Entanglements
- Oil Spills
- Injury
- Poisonings

Natural Disaster health issues:
- Hurricanes
- Tornadoes
- Floods
- Fires

Pandemics
Widespread Animal Disease
THE CANADIAN VETERINARY RESERVE
“A New and Exciting Initiative”
Mission of the CVR

• To assist governments in responding to animal health emergencies such as disease outbreaks or natural disasters.

• To supplement existing response capabilities of the federal and provincial governments and augment Canada’s capacity to contain an animal disease outbreak or to lessen the impact of a civil emergency on human and animal populations.

• To provide Canada with additional flexibility to increase support for international animal disease control efforts.

• To be the central resource where Canadian veterinarians can provide their expertise and services to assist in declared emergencies to benefit society in general and animals in particular.
The Vision of CVR

CVMA

CFIA

Infectious Diseases

CIVIL

National Disasters

Other Infectious Diseases
CVR Stakeholders

- Provincial Veterinary Medical Associations
- Provincial VMA Registrars
- Provincial Chief Veterinary Officers
- Canadian Veterinary Colleges
- Canadian Federation of Humane Societies
- Oceanographic Environmental Research Society
- Canadian Animal Health Coalition
- Canadian Animal Health Institute
- Canadian Association of Animal Health Technologists and Technicians
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency
- Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness Canada
- Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
The Canadian Veterinary Reserve
Civil Emergencies Branch

Will consist of 3 aspects:
Veterinarians
Technicians
NGO’s
CVR – Civil Response

• Veterinarians … animal medical care/human health
• Technicians … provide animal medical care support
• NGO’s … sheltering, support, rescue, daily care, logistics
Average animal intake numbers ~150/day
Puppies!

They need to be rescued from miles around.
Disaster or not...
The aftermath
...nature waits for no one
Daily temperature = 110 degrees F
Not much shade – trees/leaves gone

Result = heat stroke
Family pet left in house as per instructions....

The result is not pretty...
the same dog after vet and grooming care
Blinded and injured by flying debris, weak, malnourished, dehydrated...

Recovered and adopted...
Many animals lost, were very malnourished, frightened.....

Immediate medical care, a kind touch
3 squares a day... critical
Species specific practice is NOT an option
If they were at ground zero they need help...
Disasters are species blind. ..prepare to deal with it
Farm animals of all kinds
Domestic and wild
Disasters strike the young as well.
Set up a owner finder station.
Animal responses must be linked to overall Emergency Response Plans...

- Do more than by yourself
- Additional resources
- Avoid duplication
- Leverage of manpower
- Safety
Potential animal numbers Canada:

5,000,000 dogs

2007

Cat statistics not well documented... even if half...

Toronto alone... 180,000 dogs
The “Challenge”

- Lessons learned following Katrina, Rita and other global disasters
- United States government has integrated animal health issues into their federal, state and local level response plans
- CVMA is uniquely positioned to lobby government bring together the critical key partners and “...do it right and do it now”
CVR training:

- Trained (in disaster medicine) licensed (inter-provincial) disaster response Veterinarians & Technicians with NGO’s (volunteers, sheltering care rescue)
- Communications, rapid assessment and deployment
- Rapid access to resources ($ & equipment) as needed
- Centralized Chain of Command
- All in place with agreements PRIOR to any disaster

CVMA is taking the lead working with government to set-up a unique and effective response system
Civil Emergencies Sub-Committee

**Chairperson**
Carin Wittnich, University of Toronto, Faculty of Medicine

**Members**
Michael Belanger, President, OERS - Disaster Response Division
Peter Buck, Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)
Tracey Firth, Canadian Animal Health Institute (CAHI)
Jim Goltz, Council of Chief Veterinary Officers (CCVO)
Shelagh MacDonald, Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (CFHS)
Don Puccini, Consultant to CVMA
Tara Sefton, Canadian Association of Animal Health Technicians & Technologists (CAAHTT)

Dr Gordon Dittberner – CVMA consultant
Participating Organizations

Canadian Veterinary Medical Association - Lead

Government
Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)
Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)
Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC)
Provincial Governments (Emergency Measures Organizations and Chief Veterinary Officers)
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)

Technicians
Canadian Association of Animal Health Technicians & Technologists (CAAHTT)

NGO’s
Lead NGO= OERS-Disaster Response Division
Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (CFHS)
Others (CAHC, CRC, SJA)

Industry
Animal Health Industries (CAHI)
The “way ahead”...

for the CVR Civil Emergencies Branch

• defining the organizational framework, approach and project requirements, including funding.

• Begin training, simulation exercises
The Canadian Veterinary Reserve
Civil Emergencies Branch
Be all that we can be...

OERS  www.oers.ca
CVMA  www.canadianveterinarians.ca
password protected