

AVMA Disaster Update # 3

(To be posted at www.avma.org/disaster)

(This information is subject to change as additional information becomes available)

Event: Hurricane Rita
Date: September 25, 2005
Situation: AVMA Hurricane Rita Disaster Situation Report

AVMA Veterinary Medical Assistance Team (VMAT) Update

VMAT: Texas

One VMAT member, Dr. Scott Mason – VMAT-3, is serving on the Management Support Team (MST) in Texas. The MST is moving to Houston today. Dr. Mason is working closely with the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) and Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA) and is currently awaiting the State's assessment of the veterinary community and affected animal population to help determine if a VMAT mission is needed. Beaumont, TX will be assessed as soon as possible, and due to extensive damage to that area may be one possible location for a VMAT mission, however as stated in the National Response Plan (NRP) this will be at the discretion of the State officials and only if local resources are unable to meet the need.

Some local information can be found at www.fordparktx.com

VMAT: Louisiana

Management Support Team located in Baton Rouge, LA
Due to extensive damage in Lake Charles, LA state officials are completing local assessments and may determine a VMAT mission is warranted for Lake Charles. This may be determined later today.

VMAT-3: Mississippi

In Hattiesburg, MS 21 members are on the team at the temporary animal shelter...treated 18 dogs, 1 cat, and 1 horse yesterday. Population is around 800 animals at the shelter. VMAT providing medical and emergency care support at the Hattiesburg Shelter, along with Mississippi State Board of Animal Health; Mississippi State Veterinarian's Office; Incident Management Team (NC-SART); HSUS; and a logistical support team from California. Several hundred people working there.

Entire VMAT-3 team was in Hattiesburg until Rita passed through ... now the plan is to send out an assessment team to Gulfport/Biloxi and Waveland in an attempt to reestablish the shelter in Waveland, MS.

This completes the VMAT operational update for 9/25/05

News Release

Texas Animal Health Commission

Box 12966 * Austin, Texas 78711 * (800) 550-8242 * FAX (512) 719-0719

Bob Hillman, DVM * Executive Director
For info, contact Carla Everett, information officer, at 1-800-550-8242, ext. 710,
or ceverett@tahc.state.tx.us

For immediate release: (Carla Everett cell phone 512-865-1696)

Agencies, Associations Address Hurricane Rita's Animal Issues

As Hurricane Rita passes through Texas, agricultural-related agencies and associations have teamed up in support of the Governor's Division of Emergency Management to address animal and livestock rescue, and recovery and disposal of carcasses.

"In preparation for Hurricane Rita, hundreds of sites, such as livestock markets, arenas, fairgrounds, kennels, individuals and veterinarians sheltered evacuated pets and livestock. Information on sites is provided by the Texas Animal Health Commission at 1-800-550-8242, and the full list is on the agency's web site at <http://www.tahc.state.tx.us>. Now we and our partnering agencies and associations are focusing on animal rescue and recovery in damaged and flooded areas," said Dr. Dee Ellis, assistant executive director with the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC).

"Representatives from more than a dozen agricultural-related agencies and animal humane organizations are working cooperatively in the TAHC headquarters in Austin, and each has particular authority, responsibility or expertise. By teaming up, Texas can provide consistent, comprehensive assistance, whether it is damage assessment of animal-related facilities, animal rescue, carcass disposal, or treatment. All efforts are coordinated with the State Operations Center and local governments."

Dr. Ellis said the partnering groups include the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Veterinary Services, Animal Care and Farm Service Agency, and Texas' Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, Parks and Wildlife Department, and Commission on Environmental Quality, Department of State Health Services (Zoonosis Control), as well as the Texas Federation of Humane Societies and American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. He said Texas Animal Control officers, the Texas Veterinary Medical Association and contacts in Louisiana and Arkansas also are team partners.

"Animal rescue is a big issue in flooded areas, and animal care and protection organizations are essential for this effort. By coordinating rescue and sheltering work, the response is greatly enhanced with local governments, and with the field staff from the TAHC, Cooperative Extension Service and other agencies. The Texas Department of Agriculture has a Hay and Grazing hotline, so producers can find lease pastures or hay. Information can be obtained from the TDA toll-free at 877-429-1998, or on the TDA's web site at <http://www.agr.state.tx.us> in the 'Producer Information' section," he said.

"The Commission on Environmental Quality has regulatory authority for carcass disposal, so they are an integral partner, as are county agents, local private veterinary practitioners and TAHC inspectors, who receive reports of displaced, drowned or injured livestock. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department game wardens and state park

personnel are notified of wildlife casualties, and they have rehabilitators permitted to care for wildlife,” said Dr. Ellis.

Texas Veterinary Medical Association

To post or search available veterinary jobs and housing...

TVMA CONNECT is a new online forum designed to enhance communication between members of the veterinary profession, especially during this time of need. To post information or get the latest updates concerning hurricane relief, visit www.tvmaconnect.org.

American Veterinary Medical Foundation (AVMF)

The VMAT efforts are made possible from an annual grant from the AVMF. Those interested in contributing to the Animal Disaster Relief and Response Fund can send a check to the American Veterinary Medical Foundation, Department 20-1122, P.O. Box 5940, Carol Stream, IL 60197, with “Animal Disaster Relief and Response Fund” written on the check’s note section. Online donations are accepted at www.avmf.org.

AVMA Report:

Animals in Public Shelters

The following document will be available at www.avma.org and was developed by consultation between the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Veterinary Medical Association and is advisory in nature. Guidance reflects information available as of September 22, 2005 and may be updated as additional information becomes available.

www.petfinder.com

To register a Lost or Found animal

To provide a foster home for animals

To register a veterinary facility(s) willing to foster or provide medical care

To volunteer

1) Volunteers to Help in Disaster Relief

Veterinarians, Technicians, and others can sign up to volunteer in the disaster response at www.petfinder.com.

The US Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Inspection Service is looking for volunteers (veterinarians, veterinary technicians and assistants, veterinary students) to assist in recovery efforts and in future natural and animal disease emergencies. Send an email to ***EmergencyVMO@aphis.usda.gov*** with the subject line “New NAHERC Volunteer” for more information on how you can get involved.

2) Temporary Housing/Employment Opportunities for Veterinarians and Veterinary Staff

In an effort to assist veterinarians, veterinary technicians and other veterinary staff affected by Hurricane Katrina and Rita, AVMA is establishing a list of people

and clinics willing to offer temporary employment and/or housing to these displaced individuals.

In addition, AVMA wants to establish a database of displaced veterinarians, veterinary technicians and veterinary staff so we can start assisting these individuals with finding temporary employment or housing.

The hurricane veterinary relief job and licensure information has been posted to the AVMA Veterinary Career Center VCC at http://www.avma.org/vcc/hurricane_relief.asp.

A link to the state licensure information has also been placed in the AVMA Hurricane Recovery area at <http://www.avma.org/aa/hurricane/employment.asp>.

If you would be interested in offering temporary employment/housing or are a displaced veterinary related individual and do not have access to the internet, please email us at vetcareers@avma.org or call Cindy Coy at 1-800-248-2862 ext 6683. Please put **Katrina or Rita** in the subject line and give us your full name, phone number and email address (if possible) and we will contact you for more information.

AVMA staff has attempted to contact all of the veterinary state boards and some of the Canadian provinces and has received feedback from many with information regarding licensure requirements for hiring displaced veterinarians. We are encouraging the State Veterinary Medical Associations to work with their corresponding Veterinary State Boards to establish guidelines for temporary employment requirements so that you may better inform your members before they extend an employment offer. The AVMA website will also provide the information we have received from our inquiries and it will be updated daily. It is our understanding that the AAVSB has pledged to waive any score report fees for purposes of licensure in other states in response to the disasters.

If you are a state who has already established a temporary employment job board, please send us a link to your site so we are not duplicating your efforts.

Dr. Kimberly Rudloff
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- 3) AVMA's disaster preparedness booklet ***Saving the Whole Family*** is available at http://www.avma.org/disaster/saving_family.asp. Full text available for free from the Web site.