

AVMA Disaster Update # 5

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

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

Event: Hurricane Rita
Date: September 27, 2005
Situation: AVMA Hurricane Rita Disaster Situation Report

AVMA Veterinary Medical Assistance Team (VMAT) Update

VMAT: Texas

No changes since yesterday ... no missions assigned by the state to date.

VMAT-3: Mississippi

VMAT-3 remains at the HSUS shelter in Hattiesburg, Miss. Yesterday the team treated five dogs and two cats yesterday, in addition to general duties in helping to maintain the shelter. The team made arrangements for more horses to be removed from the shelter and relocated to pastures deemed safe from earlier assessments. Nearly all horse owners have been contacted to determine what to do with the horses.

The team went to MST yesterday to arrange the delivery of the VMAT cache; FEMA requested it be returned. The team received a microscope on loan from MSU, which will replace the one that was returned in the cache.

The team has been in touch with a veterinarian on the gulf coast who they helped last week, offering their assistance. Last week VMAT scrubbed the clinic clean, which had at one point held 5 feet of water.

The strike team sent to Mississippi State University returned last night with a report on the damage incurred there from a tornado that touched down Sunday night. Most of the damage was structural, with one report of a human injury that was not severe. Most of the damage was to the school's roof, but some equipment needed to be removed from the ICU section.

Today the team hopes to finish making arrangements for the horses in cooperation with the Mississippi Department of Health and HSUS. The team will continue to make themselves available to HSUS and provide any services they request. HSUS has plans for 150 dogs and cats to be shipped out within 36 hours.

Texas Update:

On a conference call today the humane organizations are coordinating very well and animal rescues have been and will continue to take place. All animal rescue needs should be reported at www.petfinder.com.

Animal Management During Emergencies and Disasters

Thanks to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, veterinary practitioners have learned firsthand

the importance of having disaster management plans in place in their communities. Practitioners who are looking for information on emergency planning should check out “Animal Management During Emergencies and Disasters” by Angela I. Dement, Extension Assistant for Veterinary Medicine with the Texas A&M University System. Dement’s timely article includes valuable information regarding disaster management and planning on the county level. [CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE FULL ARTICLE.](#)

Other helpful links:

The State of Texas guide for local emergency management planning can help animal health care providers determine ahead of time what they should do when disaster strikes. For more information, go to <http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/index.htm>.

The Animal Issues Committee (AIC) of the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) has written new guidelines to help local authorities prepare their own emergency management plans. The AIC guidelines are available at http://www.tahe.state.tx.us/emergency/Animal_Issues_Committee_Planpdf.

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:

Tomorrow, the AVMA, AVMF, and VMATs will be featured on the Today Show at 8:50 a.m. Central Time (9:50 a.m. Eastern) and again on MSNBC at 10:30 a.m. Central Time (11:30 Eastern). Dr. Lisa Murphy who serves on one of our VMATs will be our spokesperson. Dr. Murphy will be presenting Welcome Home Packages for 100 families affected by Katrina. With the help of our generous industry partners, each family will receive for their pets:

- **Fort Dodge Animal Health and National Pet Wellness Month** are providing “twice-a-year” veterinary wellness exams for the life of these pets. These include basic immunizations;
- **Hills Pet Nutrition** has donated a two year supply of dog and/or cat food;
- **Merial** is donating a lifetime supply of preventative medication such as heartworm preventative and anti flea/tick medication; and for when the unexpected happens.

- **Veterinary Pet Insurance** will provide two years medical coverage due to accidents or illness.
- **Hartz Mountain** has donated wonderful baskets containing items such as bowls, collars, and other fun accessories and supplies. They have also included the new "VetPals" pet toys. A portion of the sales of those toys will go to benefit the AVMF's disaster fund. They are available through veterinarians right now and through major national retailers next year.

AVMA staff are in New York accepting donations for the AVMF Animal Disaster Response and Recovery (ADRR) fund at an AVMA "booth" and will be for the rest of the week. An AVMA staff person is also on the ground working with the television producers.

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) 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 is currently being posted to the AVMA Veterinary Career Center VCC at http://www.avma.org/vcc/hurricane_relief.asp. This site is not fully complete with all of the information yet, but will be soon.

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.

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- 2) 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.

3) **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.

At this time, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is NO longer accepting individual medical and relief worker applications. More than 33,000 health care professionals and relief personnel have registered with the Department of Health and Human Services for possible deployment in affected areas. We thank you for your interest.

For Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Members: Each MRC unit is developing a roster of MRC members interested in this activity. If you are interested, you should ask your MRC leader to include you on the roster. All local MRC unit leaders have been asked to ensure that local community needs are met first. For more information about the Medical Reserve Corps, see www.medicalreservecorps.gov.