

AVMA Rita/Katrina Disaster Update # 7

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

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

Event: **Hurricane Rita and Katrina**
Date: September 29, 2005
Situation: AVMA Hurricane Disaster Situation Report

AVMA Veterinary Medical Assistance Team (VMAT) Update

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LOUISIANA ANIMAL RESCUE AND RECOVERY SITUATION REPORT

September 29, 2005

CURRENT SITUATION:

1. The Louisiana Animal Rescue and Recovery Incident Command Post has been activated.
2. A secondary operations center will be set up in Lake Charles, Louisiana, for the recovery operations in the aftermath of Hurricane Rita.
3. All inquiries about animal rescue and recovery operations and volunteering may be made through this hotline: 1-888-773-6489.
4. Monetary donations to the cause may be made by accessing the website <http://www.lvma.org> to the Dr. Walter J. Ernst, Jr., Veterinary Medical Foundation.
5. There are seven (7) temporary animal shelters located at strategic locations across the state. The shelter at Shreveport has been re-activated. The largest two are located in the Baton Rouge area:
 - a. Lamar Dixon Expo Center, at Gonzales: Humane organization affiliated teams are dispatched daily to the New Orleans area in response to specific requests from owners who had to abandon their animals when they evacuated their homes and rescuing stray animals of unknown ownership.
 - b. Parker Coliseum on the L.S.U. Campus in Baton Rouge: Animals sheltered here are of known owners, many of whom are staying at one of the many shelters located in the Baton Rouge area.

CURRENT OPERATIONS:

1. **Activities by the Veterinary Services and Louisiana Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry, Animal Health Services, personnel on September 28, 2005:**
 - a. The task of providing fresh water and feed for stranded livestock in Cameron, Calcasieu, Iberia, and Vermilion Parishes is being coordinated with the Louisiana National Guard. The National Guard has provided six (6) tanker trucks for delivering water to stranded cattle.
 - b. Continue to coordinate carcass disposal at the Lamar-Dixon shelter.
 - c. Continue with the efforts associated with establishing secondary operations center in Lake Charles.

- d. Eighty (80) round bales of hay were delivered to the staging at the County Agricultural Extension Office in Abbeville (Vermilion Parish).
- e. Continue evacuating cattle from flooded areas in Vermilion and Cameron Parishes.
- f. The Animal Care AHT is circulating between the Parker and Lamar-Dixon Shelters to address animal welfare issues as they arise.

2. **Activities at the Lamar Dixon Expo Center shelter yesterday (September 28, 2005):**

- a. The current census of animals housed in this shelter is:

794 dogs	217 horses
282 cats	
69 small caged pets	15 goats
1,145 small animals	232 large
- b. The 42 two person teams dispatched to New Orleans on feeding and watering missions retrieved a total of 145 dogs, 65 cats, and 2 birds and admitted them into the shelter.
- c. For the first time, the gate closure time of 8:00 PM was strictly enforced. Four (4) vehicles (containing 16-20 dogs and cats) were turned away and were instructed to retain those animals until this morning. They were given enough dog and cat food to get them through the night. This action reduced the stress on the VMAT teams who triage the rescued animals as they are admitted.
- d. There were 175 dogs and cats exported to outlying shelters.
- e. There were 37 pet-owner reunions involving dogs, cats, a lizard, and a hamster.
- f. Carcass disposal needs have been at a minimum over the past few days.
- g. The animals remaining under the 10 day rabies-watch quarantine following the infliction of a bite wound include 18 dogs and 2 cats. The cats will come off of quarantine in two (2) days, and the dogs will be transferred to one of three veterinary clinics in Baton Rouge where they will complete their 10 day quarantine period. Sheltered pets inflicting bite wounds in the future will be transferred directly to one of the aforementioned veterinary clinics or to the local Animal Control Shelter.
- h. Two Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) from a local fire department are on site to treat bite wounds and other minor injuries sustained by the staff and volunteers.
- i. The demobilization plan (in preparation for closure on October 15, 2005) includes adherence to the following plans:
 1. Feeding and watering operations will be continued by HSUS credentialed teams while the LaSPCA-Animal Control shelter is prepared in Algiers.
 2. Each team will include one veterinarian who will make the determination as to which animals truly fit "in critical need of veterinary care" criteria.
 3. Animals requiring more than routine veterinary treatment will be transferred to a Baton Rouge veterinary clinic to complete their therapy. A limit in treatment costs will be determined.
 4. Incorporate the 8-9 veterinary clinics that have reopened in New Orleans into the rescue and recovery scenario.

5. All efforts possible will be made to open the LA-SPCA-Animal Control Shelter so that it can begin accepting shelter animals as soon as possible.
 6. HSUS has five (5) 53 ft. refrigerated trucks available for transferring animals to outlying shelters.
3. **Status at the Parker Coliseum shelter located on the L.S.U. campus:**
- a. The census of rescued animals was stable over the past 24 hours:
391 dogs
247 cats
28 small caged pets
666 total
 - b. Pet owners have until September 30, 2005, to reclaim their pets.
 - c. September 28th was the last day that Parker Coliseum management admitted any animals into the shelter.
 - d. Before being discharged, all dogs will receive a heartworm treatment. Neutering will be delayed until after the last day they can be reclaimed by the owner.
 - e. Those pets that are not retrieved by their owners by October 1, 2005. A ***provisional adoption*** program has been established so they can be adopted by new owners, **but they can still be claimed by their rightful owners until December 31, 2005.** October 1st thru October 3rd will be devoted to this endeavor.
 - f. The period of time between October 3rd and October 15th will be devoted to transferring the abandoned animals to outlying shelters. In preparation for this mass transfer, the health certificate books and liability release forms on all animals have been procured.
 - g. Excessive ambient temperatures and humidity continues to result in heat-related casualties and impaired work productivity.
4. **U.S. Public Health Service Activities:**
- a. The mission of the USPHS in the Animal Rescue and Recovery effort is to support the health of animals entering the Parker Coliseum and Lamar-Dixon Shelters, and to ensure that they are healthy when they leave either of these two shelters to outlying shelters or back to their owners.
 - b. USPHS veterinarians will be available to augment the animal rescue and recovery efforts in south-southwest Louisiana.
 - c. An ARF requesting a replacement staff of five (5) veterinarians to replace those who disengage on October 5, 2005 is being submitted.
 - d. A pediatrician stationed at Lamar-Dixon and EMTs are monitoring the health and safety of staff and volunteers at both shelters.
5. **Veterinary Medical Assistance (VMAT) Report:**
- a. As operations wind down, the VMAT Triage Operations Chief expressed her gratitude for the opportunity for VMAT to participate in Louisiana's Animal Rescue and Recovery ICP format.
 - b. VMAT teams (consisting of veterinarians and veterinary technicians) are special units that are mobilized during disaster events under the auspices of the AVMA. The membership on a VMAT unit involves submitting an application and partaking of specific training in the triaging of animals, so veterinary volunteers "off the street" do not qualify.

- c. VMAT teams are responsible for the health and safety of the volunteers at a staging site, and they are acting at the behest of the State Veterinarian in the particular state they are serving.
- d. VMAT is scheduled to leave Lamar-Dixon at the close of business, at 8:00 PM, on September 30th, but they will still be available for veterinary support at other sites. By that time, temporary animal shelters may be established in southwestern Louisiana that will require their services.
- e. VMAT teams have been solicited from the AVMA to help in the Hurricane Rita animal rescue and recovery efforts in south-southwest Louisiana.
- f. Donated supplies have been categorized and palletized in preparation for the closure of the Lamar-Dixon shelter. "There are materials to supply four (4) veterinary clinics," a VMAT representative proclaimed.

6. Logistics Section Activities:

- a. Unsolicited donated supplies keep arriving and storage space in the warehouse is at a premium. Efforts are being made to determine who among the satellite shelters, and humane associations, are in need of supplies.
- b. The unsolicited donated supplies continue to arrive. They must be dispersed prior October 15, 2005. Efforts are in progress to identify any shelters are in need of supplies in an effort to reduce the inventory in the main warehouse.
- c. The one hardware item that is in demand are the airline-approved shipping crates for dogs and cats. The Parker Coliseum management is in need of 200 large and medium-sized airline-worthy crates, in anticipation of shipping abandoned animals in their shelter to outlying shelters. They will make an appeal for donated crates with Pets Mart or Petco.
- d. Animal shipping crates have been requested by the Iberia Humane Society and Lake Charles Humane Society for the transfer of animals needing to be transferred to outlying shelters.

7. Public Information Officer Activities:

- a. Many calls were received about the recovery efforts involving livestock in the aftermath of Hurricane Rita.
- b. The PIO is presently in south-southwestern Louisiana coordinating public information efforts from the secondary operations center located in Lake Charles, Louisiana.

8. The 248th Medical (Veterinary) Detachment:

- a. This group is touring the following sites today
 - i. The Lamar-Dixon Shelter in Gonzales.
 - ii. The JOC in Baton Rouge.
 - iii. The Orleans Parish Animal Control Shelter site in Algiers.
- b. Their commander will report to the ICP at the Louisiana Department of Agriculture building on Friday, at which time their mission and end of tour date will be established.
- c. They will assist in the transition of the Lamar-Dixon Shelter to the Orleans Parish Animal Control Shelter in Algiers.

9. The Establishment of the Animal Control Shelter in Algiers (Orleans Parish):

- a. A large warehouse (with 45,000 sq. ft. floor area) has been selected as the site for the Orleans Parish Animal Control Shelter.
- b. The goal is to be operating by October 7, 2005, in order for it to begin receiving (rescued) animals.
- c. The Louisiana National Guard is being asked to help clean up the site in preparations for the required renovations of the facility to convert it into an animal shelter.
- d. An architect has inspected the facility to determine the plumbing and electrical alterations that are necessary to transform it into an animal shelter.
 - i. In lieu of the installation of floor drains, a bedding material will be used that will have to be changed daily.
 - ii. Outlets for fans are necessary for the air circulation.
- e. Efforts are in progress to identify companies that can:
 - i. Erect the perimeter chain-link fence as well fences for dog runs.
 - ii. Supply cages or kennels
 - iii. Shavings or another type of bedding material
- f. HSUS is providing the trailers which can be located within the building to serve for office space, redemption center, etc.

10. Louisiana Animal Rescue and Recovery ICP Staffing Outline:

a.	APHIS, Veterinary Services Western Regional Office in Fort Collins:		<u>9</u>
b.	APHIS/MRPBS, Riverdale:		<u>2</u>
c.	Louisiana, Baton Rouge:		<u>57</u>
	• Louisiana Veterinary Medical Association:	<u>1</u>	
	• Private Veterinarians (active license):	<u>2</u>	
	• Louisiana Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry	<u>6</u>	
	• USDA APHIS AC	<u>2</u>	
	• USDA APHIS IES		<u>1</u>
	• USDA APHIS LPA	<u>1</u>	
	• USDA APHIS VS	<u>14</u>	
	• Volunteer		<u>1</u>
	• U.S. Public Health Service	<u>8</u>	
	• VMAT	<u>21</u>	
d.	Total number of personnel:		<u>68</u>

FUTURE OPERATIONS

- 1. At the Lamar-Dixon Expo Center temporary shelter, the **HSUS** is **preparing** for the closure date:
 - a. Expedite the transfer of animals to outlying shelters.
 - b. **September 30, 2005:** After that date no more animals will be retrieved from the New Orleans area.
 - c. Until that date, the "Strike Team" force will respond to each of the addresses on the request list.

- d. After September 30th, continue feeding and watering where the animals are located in Orleans Parish.
 - e. Continue to perform analyses of requests for animals from outlying shelters as to appropriateness, number and type of animals requested, and the availability of transportation for moving those animals.
 - f. Continue Special Strike Team operations by responding to police, state patrol, FBI, and USMS requests for technical rescues.
 - g. Coordinate requests for resources from agencies and individuals impacted by Hurricane Rita.
 - h. **October 15, 2005:** Shelter will be vacated (animals transferred to outlying shelters and shelter will be closed) and the area cleaned, so the site is in the same condition as it was prior to occupation by the shelter.
 - i. The export of animals from this facility will be accelerated in consideration of the impending October 15th closure date.
 - j. All of the Animal Welfare regulations and paperwork requirements will not be adhered to during the shipment of animals to outlying shelters in order to expedite the process.
2. After canceling the initial request, the Louisiana State Public Health Veterinarian has reissued the request to the Communicable Disease Center (CDC) to send three (3) epidemiologists to investigate the animal bite incidents that have occurred at the Parker Coliseum Shelter, the Lamar-Dixon Shelter, and at the seven (7) satellite shelters in the state. They are due to arrive this today. They will be housed at the dormitory associated with the School for the Visually Impaired in Baton Rouge.
 3. Continue providing basic support for stranded livestock, affected livestock producers, and veterinary practices in the Katrina and Rita ravaged areas.
 4. Continue to formulate plans for the foster/adoption care of unclaimed animals, both small and large animals.
 5. The Incident Commander has requested that all volunteers and staff that have taken digital photographs of the Animal Rescue and Recovery Operations provide the ICP with copies of the photographs so that a photographic record can be maintained.
 6. The Orleans EOC has requested that assessments be made on the number of veterinary clinics located in New Orleans that have been destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.
 7. Continue establishing a secondary operation center headquarters in Lake Charles that will be the coordination site for the recovery efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Rita in south-southwestern Louisiana.
 8. If large numbers of livestock carcasses are encountered during the recovery efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Rita plans are being formulated to use burning as the disposal method.

Submitted by:
 Dr. Terry H Conger
 Deputy Planning Section Chief

**The HSUS Southwest Regional Office: Arizona, New Mexico, Arkansas,
 Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas**

09/28/2005

DALLAS—The Humane Society of the United States disaster animal response teams have been mobilized to assist the Texas Animal Control Association with their temporary animal shelter in Nacogdoches, Texas. There are approximately 300 owned companion animals at the facility, not including horses.

Plans are in the works to move the temporary shelter to Lufkin, Texas today due to a conflict with a pre-scheduled event at the site in Nacogdoches.

The HSUS, through its Southwest Regional Office in Dallas, is working on animal rescue and relief efforts in Texas in cooperation with United Animal Nations (UAN), the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), Animal Humane Association (AHA) and the International Foundation for Animal Welfare (IFAW).

To report a lost pet or to report an animal left behind in the wake of Hurricane Rita, Texas residents can call the Houston SPCA at (713) 802-0555 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Central time. Beginning on Thursday, September 29, the public can call the Houston SPCA's free hotline: 1-866-481-7722. They can also log on to <http://disaster.petfinder.org/emergency/>

According to the Texas Animal Health Commission, 20,000 animals were evacuated before Hurricane Rita struck. Of these animals, 13,000 were sheltered by or with their owners. The rest were sheltered by humane animal care organizations:

- 2,000 — Bryan-College Station
- 600 — Nacogdoches
- 800 — Dallas
- 1,200 — Austin
- 600 — Bexar county

Another 10,000 head of livestock, most of which were horses, were also evacuated. For more information, visit the Commission's web site at <http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/>.

For more information on The HSUS disaster response team efforts, go to www.hsus.org.

The Humane Society of the United States is the nation's largest animal protection organization representing more than 9 million members and constituents. The non-profit organization is a mainstream voice for animals, with active programs in companion animals and equine protection, disaster preparedness and response, wildlife and habitat protection, animals in research and farm animal welfare. The HSUS protects all animals through education, investigation, litigation, legislation, advocacy, and field work. The group is based in Washington and has numerous field representatives across the country.

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.

<http://disaster.petfinder.org/emergency/>

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 <http://disaster.petfinder.org/emergency/>.

The US Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Inspection Service is looking for volunteers (veterinarians, veterinary technicians and assistants, veterinary students) to assist in 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.

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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.

The VMAT efforts are made possible from an annual grant from the **American Veterinary Medical Foundation (AVMF)**. The AVMF just approved a \$100,000 grant to support immediate VMAT needs in the Hurricane Katrina and Rita Responses. 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.