

Federal Agencies, Plans and Programs For Animal Disease Emergencies

What Federal agencies are involved in animal disease emergencies?

The lead agency for responding to an animal disease emergency at the national level is **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)**. There are several division of the agency which handles various aspects of surveillance, detection, diagnostics and response.

Most states have a Federal veterinarian, called the **Area Veterinarian In Charge or AVIC**, who is responsible for monitoring and coordinating USDA APHIS activities within the state. This individual works closely with the State Veterinarian in the event of an animal disease emergency. There are also **Area Emergency Coordinators** that help to coordinate federal activities between multiple states. **Veterinary Medical Officers** are also present and help implement federal animal health programs. These individuals are specially trained as **foreign animal disease diagnosticians, or FADD** to investigate suspected animal disease emergencies.

Many other Federal agencies aid and support the USDA for an animal disease emergency situation. The **U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection** division, monitors ports of entry for imported animal and plant materials. DHS also manages the Beagle Brigade, a detector dog program that monitors luggage, packages, mail and other items brought into the U.S. for prohibited agricultural products. The **Department of Health and Human Services** provides assistance for incidents involving the public's health and medical services. The **Department of Justice** would aid in issues of public safety and security.

What resources are in place at the Federal level for animal disease emergencies?

Livestock Quarantine Stations

Livestock and poultry being imported into the U.S. must be accompanied by an official health certificate and must undergo quarantine at one of four facilities. This helps reduce the risk of disease introduction into the U.S.

National Veterinary Stockpile

The National Veterinary Stockpile is a national repository of critical veterinary supplies, such as vaccines, antiviral drugs, personal protective equipment, that can be deployed within 24 hours to support response efforts.

National Animal Identification System

The USDA manages a voluntary national program created to identify and track the movement of livestock. This aids in determining animals in contact with or commingled with diseases or exposed animals during an animal disease outbreak or emergency.

National Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories

USDA APHIS laboratories provide services for the diagnosis of domestic or foreign animal diseases, import and export testing of animals, training and testing for eradication or control programs.

Federal and Regional Veterinary Response Teams are groups of veterinarians and animal health professionals that can be activated quickly to help meet emergency staffing needs for the response and control of animal disease outbreaks.

For More Information

Emergency Support Function #11 – Agriculture and Natural Resources: More on the Menu than Food.
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/aphis_general/content/printable_version/USDA_ESF.pdf

The lead Federal agency for animal disease emergencies is the USDA APHIS.

The National Animal Identification System helps identify and track at-risk and exposed animals during a disease emergency.

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