Temporary Sheltering: Equine

The temporary sheltering of equine species (e.g., horses, mules, donkeys, etc.) may be a necessary action during an animal health emergency situation. Some practical considerations involved when setting up these sites for equids include shelter location and type; food, water, and shelter requirements; transportation details; and sanitation consideration.

Assessment and Planning

- Location and possible shelter sites:
  - Publicly owned lands
  - Fairgrounds
  - Abandoned or empty feedlots
  - Fenced pastures (climate permitting)
  - Other buildings such as airplane hangars, livestock auction markets, or building a shelter on a site
- Animals
  - How many?
  - Infected or not infected?
  - Food and water requirements
  - Housing requirements
- Food and water
- Waste management
- Personnel
  - Animal handling and care experience
  - Biosecurity
  - Site security
- Length of time

Shelter Requirements

- Containment
  - Containment: fencing, pens, stalls
  - Check for sharp objects
  - Spacing
- Shelter from elements
  - Wind breaks
- Ventilation
- Temperature control
  - Shade, fans
  - Warmth
- Bedding
  - Straw, wood chips

Supplies Needed

- General Supplies—halters, lead ropes, blankets, bedding, wheelbarrows, rakes, pitchforks, feed, hoses, disinfectant, bleach, buckets
- Office Supplies—release and identification forms, paper, pens, computers
- Veterinary Supplies—medications, vaccines, bandages, leg wraps, IV fluids
- Waste disposal
  - Prompt removal of waste
  - Daily cleaning of stalls
  - Clean and disinfect equipment after use
  - Use dedicated equipment for isolation areas
- Isolation area for sick animals
- Special needs
  - Juvenile animals (e.g., foals, yearlings)
  - Pregnant or lactating mares

Transportation

- Unload animals at a distance from the shelter
- Having a one way flow of traffic can aid in the "check-in" and unloading process
- Vehicles should be cleaned and disinfected

Housing Equine

- Avoid overcrowding
- Segregate animals based on:
  - Gender (e.g., stallions, mares)
  - Stallions should be housed separately
  - By herd
  - Mothers with offspring
  - Pregnant mares
- Isolate sick animals
- Appropriate density
- All animals should have some form of permanent identification
  - Brand, microchip, tattoo
- Can be housed in outside pens if climate allows
- Animals need ample room in holding pens
- Do not mix animals from different herds

Just-In-Time training materials can be found at http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Emergency-Response/just-in-time-training.php
Food and Water

- Feed: 1-2% of body weight
  - Open pasture
  - Grass or baled hay: 10-20 lb/1000 pound animal/day
- Water: 5 gallons/1000 pound animal/day
  - Water consumption will increase in hot weather conditions
- Grain may be needed for young, lactating or pregnant animals
  - Additional nutritional requirements
- Monitor feed and water intake
  - Animals not eating should be examined by a veterinarian

Waste Management

- Prompt removal of animal waste to ensure hygienic conditions
- Stalls and pens should be cleaned daily
- Equipment used for waste management should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- Dedicated equipment should be used in isolation areas

Veterinary Care and Involvement

- Incoming and outgoing animals need to be thoroughly examined
- Incoming animals should be isolated from others
- Daily inspections of the animals in the shelter
- Animal disease recognition form should be posted
- Isolate sick animals
  - A separate area should be set up for sick or ill animals
  - Animals showing illness should immediately be examined by a veterinarian
  - Any confirmed diseases should be reported

Additional Resources

- AVMA Disaster Preparedness and Response Guidebook
- Basics of Feeding Horses: Feeding Management. University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension
  - http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/pages/publicationD.jsp?publicationId=914
  - http://msucares.com/pubs/infosheets/is1713.pdf

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