



Animal Welfare:

During Animal Health Emergencies

During animal health emergency situations – whether a natural disaster or infectious disease outbreak response – animal welfare issues must be considered and addressed.

Animal Welfare

Animal welfare is the ethical responsibility of ensuring the well-being of animals. It refers to the physical and mental state of the animal and includes consideration of the animal's health, behavior and biological function.

Animal welfare plans need to be continuously evaluated and refined

The Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare

The internationally recognized 'five freedoms' define the ideal states of welfare, but provide valuable guidance and a framework for determining and assessing animal welfare situations.

- **1. Freedom from hunger and thirst**
 - Providing ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain health and vigor
- **2. Freedom from discomfort**
 - Providing an appropriate environment, including shelter and a comfortable resting area
- **3. Freedom from pain, injuries, or illness**
 - Providing disease preventive measures or rapid diagnosis and treatment
- **4. Freedom to express normal behavior**
 - Providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind
- **5. Freedom from fear and distress**
 - Ensuring conditions and treatment which avoids mental suffering

Human Interaction

Handling

- Proper handling is key
- Only handle if you have proper experience/training
- Recognize unique situations and seek expert advice, such as the case with zoo and circus animal

Mental Health and Animal Welfare

- Response can affect responder mental health
- May affect animal welfare by:
 - Responder apathy
 - Responder fatigue

Animal Considerations

Behavior During Disasters

- May deviate from normal behaviors
- Unpredictable actions
- Heightened arousal and panic

Animal Health

- Monitor for illness, injury, parturition, nutrition
- Signs may be delayed due to stress analgesia
- Treat appropriately (e.g., medically, surgically, euthanasia)

Comfort and Maintenance

- Consider density and prevent overcrowding
- Ensure stall comfort with proper bedding and cleaning
- Properly regulate temperature and moisture
- Tend to specific needs of specific species (e.g., milking dairy cows)

Euthanasia

- May be necessary to control disease and suffering
- Use proper method and technique
- Ensure the kill
- Consider a third person observer

Environmental Considerations

Transport

- Use proper identification
- Know who and when to group animals
- Employee proper handling techniques
- Ensure the equipment is safe

Facilities

- Uses fences that keep animals in and wildlife out
- Allow adequate stall space and ventilation
- Remove all hazardous foreign objects
- Keep appropriate maintenance equipment is on site

Separation of Groups

- Species dependent (ie– cattle vs. horses)
- Sex dependent (ie-intact males)
- Life stage dependent (ie– neonates, pregnant animals)
- Health and at risk status (ie– sick, healthy, exposed)

For More Information

American College of Animal Welfare

www.acaw.org

American Veterinary Medical Association

- Animal Welfare
www.avma.org/issues/animal_welfare/default.asp
- Animal Welfare Policy Statement
www.avma.org/issues/animal_welfare/policies.asp
- The Veterinarian's Role in Animal Welfare -
www.avma.org/products/animal_welfare/welfare.pdf
- AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia
www.avma.org/issues/animal_welfare/euthanasia.pdf

OIE Animal Welfare Guidelines:

- Terrestrial Animal Health Code
www.oie.int/eng/
- OIE Animal Welfare Factsheet
www.oie.int/eng/resources/AW_EN_FS.pdf

USDA Animal Welfare Information Center

<http://awic.nal.usda.gov>

Development of this educational material was by the Center for Food Security and Public Health at Iowa State University through funding from the Multi-State Partnership for Security in Agriculture MOU-2010-HSEMD-004. June 2010.

