Animal Welfare During Animal Health Emergencies

Animal Welfare

- Ethical responsibility
- Ensuring animal well being
- Physical and mental
- Consideration of animal’s
  - Health
  - Behavior
  - Biological function

The Five Freedoms

- Define ideal states of welfare
- Framework for analysis of welfare
  - Freedom from hunger and thirst
  - Freedom from discomfort
  - Freedom from pain, injury and disease
  - Freedom to express normal behavior
  - Freedom from fear and distress

Welfare During Emergencies

- Animals
  - Behavior, health, comfort, euthanasia
- Environment
  - Transport, fencing, restraint, food/water
- Human Interaction
  - Experience, proper training, mental health

Animal Considerations: Behavior

- Can deviate from normal behavior
  - Heightened awareness and panic
  - New surroundings
  - Increased handling/transport
  - Species specific
- Unpredictable actions
  - May injure self or others
  - Be watchful and prepared
Animal Considerations: Health
- Monitor at all times
  - Illness
  - Injury
  - Parturition
  - Nutritionally
- May have delay in showing signs
  - Stress analgesia
- Treat appropriately
  - Medically, surgically, or euthanasia

Animal Considerations: Comfort and Maintenance
- Density
  - Avoid overcrowding
- Stalls
  - Bedding, manure
- Temperature
  - Excessive heat, cold
- Maintenance needs
  - Milking lactating animals
  - Exercise for horses

Animals: Euthanasia
- Can be necessary
  - Stop disease spread
  - Minimize suffering
- Proper method and technique
  - AVMA euthanasia guidelines
- Ensure the kill
- Third person observer
- Evacuate vs. euthanize
  - Potential for future suffering

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS
- Transport
- Facilities
- Separation of Groups

Environment: Transport
- Identification
  - Consistent with Incident Action Plan
- Grouping
  - Familiar animals, no mixing
- Proper handling
  - Prevent panic with quiet handling
- Safe equipment
  - Ramps, trucks, crates
- Increased panic = unpredictability

Environment: Facilities
- Food, water
- Fencing
  - Keep animals in
  - Keeps wildlife out
- Stalls
  - Adequate space
  - Separation
- Environmental concerns
  - Temperature
  - Ventilation
- Foreign objects
  - Metal and other hazardous material
Environment

Separation of Groups

- Consideration when sheltering
  - Species dependent
    - Cattle vs. Horses
  - Sex dependent
    - Intact males
  - Life Stage dependent
    - Neonates, pregnant animals
  - Health and at-risk status
    - Sick vs. healthy vs. exposed

HUMAN INTERACTION

- Handling
- Mental Health

Human Interaction:

Handling

- Proper handling minimizes stress
- Responders with experience
  - Need to know species
- Recognize unique situations
  - Do not hesitate to consult expert

Mental Health and Animals

- Response stress can affect mental health of responders
- May affect animals welfare
  - Responder apathy
  - Responder fatigue
  - Uncompleted tasks
  - Increased carelessness of tasks
  - Forgetting overall welfare needs

Summary

- Animal welfare during emergencies
  - Five Freedoms
  - Animal considerations
  - Environment
  - Human Interactions

Resources

- American Veterinary Medical Association
  - The veterinarian's role in animal welfare
  - AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia
    - www.avma.org/issues/animal_welfare/euthanasia.pdf
- USDA Animal Welfare Information Center
- OIE Animal Welfare Guidelines
  - Terrestrial Animal Health Code
    - www.oie.org
- American College of Animal Welfare
  - www.acaw.org
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