

## Annex K - Animal Protection

### PURPOSE

This annex provides guidance and assignment of responsibility for animal protection issues before, during, and after an actual or potential emergency; and facilitates overall coordination of animal issues during emergency operations. The goal of this annex is to protect domesticated and non-domesticated animals (including pets, livestock, and wild animals), the public health, the public food supply, the environment, and to ensure the humane care, and treatment of animals in the event of an emergency that causes animal suffering.

The overall responsible parties for implementing and amending this annex are the University of Minnesota Extension – Houston County, the county Feedlot Officer, and the Emergency Management Director.

### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

Nationwide, public and private sectors are taking a pro-active approach to include pet concerns in disaster planning with all agencies, organizations, businesses, and individual citizens. Houston County's vulnerability to natural and man-made disasters make it crucial to carefully address animal concerns and needs in disaster preparedness plans. According to FEMA Disaster Assistance Policy (DAP) 9523.19, the following are definitions of type of pets and the shelters possibly offered during a disaster:

- **Household Pet:** For the purpose of this plan and in accordance with FEMA Disaster Assistance Policy (DAP) 9523.19, household pets are defined as a domesticated animal, such as a dog, cat, bird, rabbit, rodent or turtle that is traditionally kept in the home for pleasure rather than commercial purposes, can travel in commercial carriers, and be housed in temporary facilities. Household pets do not include reptiles (except turtles), amphibians, fish, insects, arachnids, farm animals (including horses), and animals kept for racing purposes.
- **Service Animal:** In alignment with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. In addition to the provisions about service dogs, the Department of Justice's revised ADA regulations have a new, separate provision about miniature horses that have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Specific criteria exist to determine if a miniature horse meets ADA regulations for a service animal.
- **Community Supported Pet Shelter:** Household pets are sheltered in existing facilities (public animal shelters, humane society locations, veterinary offices and hospitals, etc.) and cared for by staff and volunteers until reunification or adoption.
- **Pet-Friendly Human Shelter:** A shelter that is co-habited by humans and their household pets. These shelters typically allow pet owners to take care of their own animals, reducing the shelters' logistical and staffing requirements.

- Co-Located Household Pet Shelter: A congregate household pet shelter that is located in a completely separate facility from the human emergency shelter where owners are still responsible for the care and needs of their household pet(s).
- Temporary Household Pet Shelter: A congregate household pet shelter that is located in a completely separate facility from the human emergency shelter where owners are not allowed to take care of their household pets.

<sup>[36]</sup>Shelters in Houston County will not allow farm animals or livestock into any shelters, and it is the responsibility of the owner/individual to make plans for livestock or farm animals.

- a. There are many possible locations to have a pet shelter in Houston County. In many cases, the best pet sheltering locations are facilities near a human shelter which avoids separation between those who wouldn't evacuate or shelter without their pets. Houston County will only open a pet-friendly human shelter in circumstances where there aren't many people housed in a shelter. Pet-friendly human shelters are frowned upon due to allergy and religious reasons.
- b. Southeast Minnesota Region 1 Emergency Managers have a trailer which houses pet supplies including cages and kennels to assist in pet sheltering. Other resources that may be needed may have to be acquired through pet stores and veterinary clinics throughout the county. Requests for pet assistance and resources such as food, medicine, shelter material, specialized personnel, equipment and additional veterinary support, will be transmitted through the EOC and emergency management officials.
- c. Houston County will work on training individuals to run a pet shelter. Likely candidates include current groomers and pet boarding businesses, who will already know how to run such a facility. Identification may be provided through ID badges. Local pet shelter teams will ensure that people and pet issues are addressed using established pet protection and support organizations, processes and procedures. Responsibility for situation assessment and determination of resource needs in the event of a large-scale disaster lies primarily with the Logistics Branch Director or Emergency Management Director.

If an animal disease outbreak were to occur prior to or during a disaster, Public Health will work with the state and other agencies to determine the best course of action to take. Public Health is currently trained in responding such scenarios and would be a great resource to assist in the process of taking care of a disease outbreak.

- a. Local law enforcement may need to assist in security and traffic control from the site of an animal disease outbreak, in order to ensure a disease doesn't spread to others. Any further outbreak response may require state or mutual resources dedicated solely to animal disease outbreak containment.
- b. Animal carcasses will be disposed of as mentioned in annex J, Debris Management.
- c. Farmers may need to work with Public Health and the EOC if opened to identify possible locations of susceptible animals.

Lost and displaced pets, incapable of being cared for by their owners or who may be a danger to themselves or the public will be the responsibility of local volunteers and available animal control agencies. These pets will be sheltered, and if possible, returned to their owners. If the pets cannot be returned to their owners, they will be cared for in accordance with established and legal procedures. A shelter will be open 24 hours per day until the EOC determines closing of shelter.

## SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

### Situation

- Natural, technological, or manmade disasters could affect the well-being of both domestic and wild animals.
- Houston County and its municipalities recognize the need for a pro-active pre-disaster approach to planning for animal protection during disasters.
- Houston County, its municipalities, and non-government organizations/volunteer groups have collaborated and planned emergency operations minimize suffering of animals during an emergency. This operational planning has included, where feasible, any animal in the county needing protection during a disaster, whether domestic or wild.

### Assumptions

- Animal protection planning includes care and rescue of animals adversely affected by a disaster.
- Pet and livestock owners, when notified of an impending threat, will take reasonable steps to protect and care for their animals, and if evacuated will normally take their domestic animals with them or place them in prearranged private boarding kennels/similar facilities.
- Pet and livestock owners have primary responsibility for their animals.
- Evacuation of large animals should take place well in advance (36 hours prior) of an emergency such as a flood.
- There will be circumstances when pet and livestock owners will not be able to protect their animals or will abandon them during a disaster. This includes unscheduled drop-offs at animal facilities.
- Many people may not evacuate without their animals, or will delay their evacuation in attempting to prepare for leaving their animals behind.
- Some people will not evacuate if given the choice between that and leaving their pets. This is particularly true of the elderly.
- If not properly planned for during an emergency, animal issues could escalate to the point of detracting from other higher priority emergency operations.
- Animal disaster relief efforts will be more efficient and effective if all stakeholders within the community carry out animal protection planning and coordination.

- Pre-disaster education is of utmost importance to ensure the public has ample time to implement arrangements for both small and large animals.
- Individuals and groups may volunteer assistance to provide animal services to supplement established organizations. Such services include collection, boarding, and owner reunification.
- The County may require outside assistance to carry out animal protection operations during a disaster.
- In most emergencies, outside animal protection and rescue assistance will likely be available; however, a disaster may limit animal protection operations due to the magnitude of the event, and may require activation of additional specialized agencies through mutual aid.
- Post-disaster planning should address animal protection operations for a seven-day period. After seven days, mutual aid supplementing county resources may be needed.

## CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

### Organization

Animal protection in the county is a combined and coordinated effort of several county, state, and non-government organizations to include the University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County, Public Health Department, County Feedlot Officer, Emergency Management, the County PIO/Sheriff's Office, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, and other organizations on an as needed basis.

### Concept of Operations

Animal owners have the basic responsibility for care and protection of their animals, including during a disaster (Refer to Attachment 1, Houston County Disaster Planning Tips for Pets, Livestock, and Wild Animals).

The city or county will be responsible for any domestic animals who have become a danger to the public or themselves, or who don't have a current owner caring for them. The University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County will provide information for supporting agencies listed in this annex for protection of animals not being cared for. Poultry and livestock protection issues are the responsibility of the County Feedlot Officer. If required, these animals will be sheltered, fed, and, if possible, returned to their owners. If the owners cannot retrieve their animals, the animals will be disposed of in accordance with established animal control procedures.

Wild animals that have strayed out of a natural habitat and are in danger to either themselves or the public will be the responsibility of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. If possible, the Minnesota DNR will return them to their natural habitat.

The county Emergency Management Director has the responsibility for assessing the emergency, determining required resources, and coordinating emergency operations in the county. The Emergency Management Director will coordinate issues involving animal

protection with the University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County and other organizations listed in this annex that support animal protection operations.

All primary and supporting agencies listed in this annex will work together to provide for animal protection within Houston County.

Any requests for outside assistance regarding animals shall go through the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), including for resources such as food, medicine, shelter material, specialized personnel, and additional veterinary assistance. If applicable, the EOC will then transmit the information to the state EOC. The state EOC will coordinate outside assistance from other local jurisdictions, and/or state and federal resources.

The Incident Command System (ICS) shall be the basis of all animal protection planning.

Public health concerns involving animals are managed in accordance with appropriate Public Health Department plans and procedures.

The University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County and Emergency Management Director may deviate from the procedures outlined in this annex when immediate and direct action is necessary to protect the public's safety, which takes priority over animal protection.

#### Notification

The Emergency Management Director will activate this annex when there is an emergency causing an increased requirement for animal protection in the county or a surrounding municipality.

The University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County and County Feedlot Officer will advise on implementing procedures in this annex.

The Emergency Management Director will notify the appropriate support and mutual aid agencies when this annex is activated.

The county PIO will issue public information regarding animal through various media outlets as required.

#### Response

##### *Domestic Animals – County and Support Agency Animal Evacuation Shelters*

If the need arises, the county, or Progressive Animal Welfare Society (PAWS), Houston County Humane Society, or other animal support agencies may also sponsor and/or open emergency animal evacuation shelters.

If the County or one of the animal support agencies has animals placed under its care, the owner will be required to sign a release form and provide proof of vaccinations. In the absence of the records, veterinarians will screen the animals to determine whether the animal may enter the shelter, or should go to an animal medical facility.

In the event that local animal shelters are destroyed or incapable of operating due to the emergency, those in charge of the animals may move animals outside the County for care and protection.

#### *Pets of Evacuated Access and Functional Needs Citizens*

Access and Functional Needs citizens (individuals with mental or physical handicaps who require evacuation assistance) may also require assistance in evacuating their pets.

In the event that an individual relies on an animal due to the individual's handicap, the assistance animal will be sheltered in the same facility in a separate room or area, unless the relied-upon animal is a seeing-eye pet and must remain with its owner.

#### *Stray/Lost Domestic Pets*

All stray/lost domestic pets recovered during a disaster by the University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County, will be sheltered, as circumstances dictate, at an appropriate animal boarding/medical facility when available. If no facilities are available, the county fairgrounds or a private farm may temporarily house the animals.

Any pets who cannot be cared for by owners or who are found by other citizens will also be sheltered at the above locations.

Unclaimed animals will be managed in accordance with established County procedures, i.e. livestock and poultry by the University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County or the County Feedlot Officer, and pet animals (cats, dogs, etc.) by local animal shelters (see resource manual).

#### *Evacuated and Stray/Lost Livestock*

Due to the size of most livestock and the inability of current resources to transport large numbers of livestock, the County encourages livestock owners to develop their own animal shelter and/or evacuation plans.

Livestock shelter facilities may include county farms and stables. It is currently the responsibility of the livestock owners to identify and locate shelter facilities.

#### *Wild Animals*

The MN DNR will normally transport those wild animals endangering themselves or the public back to their natural habitat. If the DNR is unable to transport the animal back to its natural habitat due to the emergency or to sustained injuries, the DNR shall transport the animal to an appropriate animal boarding/medical facility, if possible. (Note: *Most Animal Control Shelters will not accept wild animals for boarding.*)

If the animal presents an immediate danger to the public, has sustained untreatable injuries, or it appears inflicted with an incurable disease, it will be disposed of in accordance with established MDA and Board of Animal Health animal control procedures.

### *Animal Medical Facilities*

Local animal medical facilities will be the primary facilities to provide medical care to animals during an emergency.

If injured animals cannot be accommodated by local animal medical facilities during an emergency, local veterinary clinics and animal medical facility personnel will assist in locating outside animal medical assistance from animal support agencies, where possible.

Depending on the extent of the emergency, the County EMD may request volunteers or Veterinary Medical Assistance Teams from the American Veterinary Medical Association to assist in the medical treatment of domestic and wild animals.

### *Animal Search and Rescue*

**Domestic Pets** – local animal shelters will be responsible for and coordinate the rescue of stray domestic pets, or those animals needing assistance due to the emergency, or the owner's death or evacuation of their owners.

**Livestock** – The University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County, County Feedlot Officer, MDA, or the US Department of Agriculture will assist as requested and as available with the rescue of stray livestock, or livestock needing assistance due to the emergency, the owner's death, or evacuation.

**Wild Animals** – The MN DNR will be responsible for and coordinate the search and rescue of any wild animals out of their natural habitat that are endangering either themselves or the human population.

**Stranded Animals** – If rescue personnel are unable to rescue domestic animals due to an emergency, food and medical assistance for the animals will be coordinated with an animal support agency by the University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County or County Feedlot Officer, as appropriate.

**Additional Aid** – If county resources cannot meet animal search and rescue requirements, the University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County will request outside assistance through the County EOC from the State Animal Response Team (SART), or other available animal rescue groups.

### *Animal Bites/ Disease Control*

A rabies/ disease outbreak is a serious threat during a disaster, and the Public Health Director will take appropriate steps to control any rabies/ disease outbreak.

Persons suspecting Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) in livestock or poultry shall notify the MN Department of Agriculture.

## Recovery

### *Release/ Destruction*

#### *Domestic Pets/ Livestock*

Public Health and University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County will support efforts to identify owners of stray/lost animals. If they are unable to find the owners, animal support agency personnel will attempt to put the animals up for adoption according to their individually established procedures.

Animals whose owners cannot be located, and who are unadoptable, will be managed in accordance with established MDA procedures.

#### *Wild Animals*

MN DNR will support efforts to reintroduce wild animals back to their natural habitats.

### *Disposal of Animal Carcasses*

A coordinated effort with the University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County, County Feedlot Officer, and Environmental Services (with support from MDA and MPCA) will be responsible for the disposal of those animals (cats and dogs) killed or euthanized during the event.

Under the advisement of the University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County, the County Feedlot Officer, MDA, MPCA, Environmental Services, Highway Department, and the US Department of Agriculture will be responsible for the disposal of dead livestock and poultry.

## ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

### *General Organization Responsibilities*

All organizations that support this annex are responsible for developing their respective SOPs for conducting emergency operations in support of the county, or the surrounding municipalities' infrastructure.

All organizations that support this annex in the county, or surrounding municipalities, are responsible for coordinating with other organizations from which they require local support to develop letters of understanding or mutual aid agreements for that support.

All organizations supporting this annex in the county, or the surrounding municipalities, will coordinate their plans and operations with the University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County or Emergency Management Director.

Any organization supporting this annex that requires additional resources or outside assistance is required to forward their request to the county EOC when activated, for processing and prioritization.

Private boarding kennels and private animal medical facilities will be responsible for their own staffing. The citizens who use their facilities based on established policies of the facility will compensate them.

Pets with significant injuries or illnesses will be transported to an animal medical facility for treatment.

#### Specific Key Position Responsibilities

University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County will:

- Be the primary agency on this annex in regards to providing information
- Coordinate support agencies to manage animal protection and care prior to and during emergencies in the county
- Provide for and coordinate personnel, equipment, and shelter, as required, to protect domestic animals
- Provide services to control injuries, bites, and diseases related to the protection of animals
- Develop and maintain an appropriate emergency notification system of animal control support personnel and agencies for that can support the County in the protection and care of animals during an emergency

County Feedlot Officer will:

- Advise the University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County and the Emergency Management Director on issues involving livestock and poultry during an emergency
- Assist the County in the protection of livestock and poultry during an emergency
- Provide information in the future disposal of dead livestock and poultry (Board of Animal Health will provide disposal services)

Emergency Management Director will:

- Activate the Emergency Operations Center, when necessary
- Notify appropriate primary, support, and mutual aid agencies, when this annex is activated

The Public Information Officer will:

- In coordination with the University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County and the Emergency Management Director, develop a process to deliver instructions expeditiously to the general public on how to protect their pets and livestock during an impending emergency
- Assist in notifying the public of available animal shelters and where further assistance for their pets and livestock may be found
- In coordination with the University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County, develop pre-scripted press releases concerning animal care and shelter to be released prior to, during, and in the aftermath of an emergency
- In coordination with the University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County, consider designating a public school facility as a pet friendly shelter to be used during an emergency situation

### Support Agencies

Environmental Services will:

- Coordinate the disposal of deceased animals

Local Law Enforcement will:

- Provide services to control injuries, bites, and diseases related to the protection of animals in conjunction with the DNR, as needed
- Develop and maintain an appropriate emergency notification system of animal control support personnel and agencies who can assist with animal control during a disaster

The Highway Department will:

- Assist in the disposal of deceased animals using equipment on hand

Other National or State Animal Agencies

- Provides personnel and equipment, as required, to rescue and care for domestic and wild animals
- Provides animal medical care assistance during an emergency situation

## ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

### Administration

All organizations providing animal protection services during an emergency should maintain adequate and accurate records of domestic animals under their care so as to be able to return the animals to their owners after the emergency, and provide the owners a record of any problems encountered with the animal.

The University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County in coordination with the Emergency Management Director has overall direction and control of animal protection and the procedures implemented in this annex when activated.

## CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT

### *Line of Succession*

1. University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County
2. County Feedlot Officer

Other Organizations supporting this annex are in accordance with the organization's established policy.

### Logistics

Animal evacuation shelters and medical facilities will separately arrange for sources of potable water, animal feeds, medical, cleaning, shelter supplies, and communications equipment.

Consideration should be given to pre-coordinating with animal feed mills and companies, veterinary medical suppliers, water suppliers, and cleaning product suppliers to prepare for possible shipment of supplies to an established delivery point in the County as soon as the shelters are activated, if required. The delivery point will serve as a storage center and a

distribution center for the various shelters and hospitals. If the need arises, resource agencies (e.g. kennel clubs) may be requested to donate cages and other various shelter supplies.

#### PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

The primary responsibility for informing support agencies rests with the University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County. The support agencies to this annex will assist the University of Minnesota Extension-Houston County in developing and maintaining this annex.

A periodic review will be conducted of this annex for revalidation and necessary changes in accordance with the basic plan. Appropriate signatures and approval dates will identify revisions to this plan. The revision process will include incorporation of changes based upon periodic tests, drills and exercises, as appropriate

All organizations that support this annex will develop and maintain their own organization's updated Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), and mutual aid agreements, as appropriate, that are supportive of this annex. This information will be coordinated with and provided to the Emergency Management Director, as necessary.

#### Training and Exercises

All primary and supporting agencies involved will train for and exercise this annex periodically, as necessary.

Training to and exercise of individual organization's SOPs that support this annex are the responsibility of each respective organization.

#### AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

- *MN General Statues, Chapter 130A – Public Health Law 5*

## Attachment 1

### County Disaster Planning Tips for Pets, Livestock, and Wild Animals

#### Domestic Pets

- If you evacuate your home, DO NOT LEAVE YOUR PETS BEHIND. Pets most likely cannot survive on their own, and if by chance they do, you may not be able to find them when you return.
- For public health reasons, many citizen emergency evacuation shelters cannot accept pets.
- Arrange ahead of a major disaster or emergency, to shelter your pet at a local animal shelter or out of the area.
- Include local animal shelter's numbers in your list of emergency numbers—they will be able to provide information concerning pets during a disaster.
- Find out which motels and hotels in your area allow pets.
- Make sure identification tags are up to date and securely fastened to your pet's collar. If possible, attach the address and/or phone number of your evacuation site. Make sure you have a current photo of your pet for identification purposes.
- Make sure you have a secure pet carrier and leash or harness for your pet so that if the animal panics, it cannot escape.
- Take pet food, bottled water, medications, veterinary records, cat litter / pan, can opener, food dishes, first aid kit and other supplies with you in case they are not available later.
- Make sure you have a copy of your pet's medical records. If you are unable to return to your home right away, you may need to board your pet. Most boarding kennels, veterinary shelters, and animal shelters require that your pet's vaccinations are current.
- If it is impossible to take your pet with you to temporary shelter, contact friends, family, veterinarians, or boarding kennels to arrange for care. Make sure medical and feeding information, food, medicine and other supplies accompany your pet to its foster home.

#### Livestock

- Evacuate livestock whenever possible. The evacuation sites should have or be able to readily obtain food, water, veterinary care, handling equipment and facilities.
- If evacuation is not possible, a decision must be made whether to move large animals to available shelter or turn them outside. This decision should be determined based on the type of disaster and the soundness and location of the shelter.
- All animals should have some form of identification that will help facilitate their return

#### Wild Animals

- Wild animals often seek higher ground, which, during floods, eventually become submerged (i.e., island), and the animals become stranded. If the island is large enough and provides suitable shelter, you can leave food appropriate to the species. Animals have a flight response and will flee from anyone approaching too closely. If the animal threatens to rush into the water, back away from the island.
- Wild animals often seek refuge from floodwater on upper levels of a home and may remain inside even after the water recedes. If you meet a rat or snake face to face, be careful but do not panic. Open a window or other escape route and the animal will probably leave on its own. Never attempt to capture a wild animal unless you have the training, protective clothing, restraint equipment and caging necessary to perform the job.

- Beware of an increased number of snakes and other predators who will try to feed on the carcasses of reptiles, amphibians and small mammals that have been drowned or crushed in their burrows or under rocks.
- Often, during natural disasters, mosquitoes and dead animal carcasses may present disease problems. Outbreaks of anthrax, encephalitis and other diseases may occur.

#### Further Assistance

- If you see any injured or stranded animal in need of assistance, during a major emergency, contact the Houston County Sheriff's Department. If you have any questions or concerns about animal protection or issues involving animals during non-emergencies or in the aftermath of a major disaster or emergency, contact the Houston County Public Health Department. You may also get a list of local animal shelters, motels, and hotels that accept pets from the County Public Health Department