

# **A Public Health Approach To Failure-To-Evacuate Due To Household Pet Ownership**

A CONSULTATIVE REPORT FOR THE  
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**Arnold L. Goldman DVM, MS**

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Thesis Defense Committee

Agnes T. Leitheiser RN, MPH (Advisor)  
James Hart MD, MPH  
Richard Bianco PhD

## **Executive Summary**

This report describes the consultative process completed to date on behalf of the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee (CREPC) of the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), in Hartford, Connecticut. The deliverable requested was a planning process leading to the creation of an operational resource capable of managing displaced household pets and service animals of citizens residing in Capitol Region municipalities. For the purposes of this consultation and report, household pets and service animals are defined as they are in applicable Federal regulations to be domesticated animals traditionally kept in the home for pleasure, such as dogs, cats, birds, rodents (including rabbits), fish, and turtles. In this setting, an operational resource describes the people, training and equipment required to accomplish the requested set of tasks. The work described was an integral component of a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional planning process intended to address all-hazards planning, and foster all disciplines collaboration, in the Capitol Region of Connecticut. The culmination of that process was the Regional Emergency Support Plan (RESP) for the Capitol Region, which is also known as Region 3 of the Connecticut Department of Emergency Management & Homeland Security (DEMHS) Preparedness Region planning scheme. This report will be of value to local and state public health agencies, regional and local emergency management agencies and veterinary medical associations, as they develop their own animal response teams and operational guidelines for those teams. This report addresses issues related to the use of volunteers in government service, their legal standing and their management as members of animal response teams. The report also addresses the role of the animal response team and its public health function. The purpose of the report is to describe the public health approach taken in creating an animal response team in the Capitol Region of Connecticut.

In disasters, animal issues are people issues. The human-companion animal bond offers a framework for understanding the emotion people invest in their animals and in animals generally. That bond leads them to take risks on behalf of their animals that may endanger themselves as well as first responders. It further demonstrates that there can be public relations consequences associated with ignoring animals in disasters.

Evacuation is an important tool for minimizing the risks to citizens in disasters. The public health risk of failure-to-evacuate due to pet ownership has been established as a challenge to efficient, safe evacuations. Pet ownership approaches 60%<sup>1</sup> of American families. The public has come to expect that should evacuation be necessary, they will be able to evacuate with their animals, and appropriate animal care will be available at public shelters. Recently enacted Federal<sup>2,3</sup> and Connecticut state<sup>4</sup> laws specify that local, county and state governments take steps to ensure the safety of the evacuated household pets of displaced citizens. While most first responder and volunteer organizations active in disaster do not provide animal care services, it is now common for them to partner with private organizations that do so. Collaboration between local and state emergency management and animal care organizations should be fostered and encouraged in every jurisdiction to further interoperability. Planning and preparedness activities should integrate planning and preparedness for animals. This should be accomplished within an all-hazards, all-disciplines planning process and should be specified within all resulting documents. Creation of animal response teams of trained volunteers can offer a mechanism for providing animal care at mass care shelters. Use of the Citizen Corps - Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program as the primary organizational agency of the animal response team provides a pathway for the liability protection and workman's compensation protection necessary for

any first responder. This allows the extension of government employee benefits to volunteers when properly trained, credentialed and authorized to respond. Leadership derived from the veterinary medical community provides the subject matter expertise required for the success of an animal response team. Recruitment, training and retention of volunteers offer ongoing challenges to efforts to sustain animal response teams. Additional challenges include the lack of institutionalization of inter-jurisdictional collaboration as standard operating procedure among adjacent municipalities and funding for training, equipment and volunteer retention activities.

## **Introduction**

The first use of the phrase *failure-to-evacuate* in the context of pet ownership is attributed to Dr. Sebastian Heath.<sup>5</sup> Dr. Heath describes a phenomenon in which, despite the life threatening risks of an impending disaster, a significant proportion of people resist or refuse evacuation if their animals must remain behind. Some studies indicate that as many as 20% of household evacuation failures are due to pet ownership.<sup>6</sup> Families tend to evacuate together and some refuse even a mandatory evacuation order to protect their pets. Even if they are persuaded to evacuate, some will return prematurely to rescue an animal left behind.<sup>7</sup> Such actions, and the emotional justification for them, are a consequence of the *human-companion animal bond*.<sup>8</sup> The human-companion animal bond describes the deep, emotional connection between human and animal, and the strength of it often leads people to take extraordinary risks on behalf of their animals. To a sizeable proportion of the population of the United States, pets are regarded *like family*.<sup>8,9</sup> Thus it is no surprise, that in the face of disaster, people expect to evacuate their pets with their human families. In pet-owning households the risk of evacuation failure is almost doubled with each additional pet

owned.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, pet ownership can be a significant threat to public health, as well as to animal health, in disasters.

In a disaster, the public health risks are numerous and diverse. They include the physical dangers presented by the disaster condition itself as well as the additional physical dangers of damaged structures and infrastructure, including utilities, contaminated water and food, infectious disease, parasitic disease and chemical or toxin exposure. Disasters may be created by natural events including temperature extremes, high wind, heavy rain or wind driven water, geologic events such as earthquakes or volcanic eruptions, fire, as well as by man-made events related to failure of man-made structures through construction defect, materials failure or terrorism. Recent disasters have included all these types.

An often under-appreciated additional public health hazard is that of the mental health of victims. Emotional distress may be related to lost or missing people including relatives, friends and neighbors, injury or illness to any of them, the loss or damage of possessions such as a home and precious personal items, as well as the further stress of grieving for missing, injured or dead animals.<sup>10</sup> Grief associated with animal loss has always been a hidden process, as our society has not fully acknowledged or approved it.<sup>10</sup> In the case of disaster, such suppressed grief only adds to the overall emotional burdens of victims.

It is obvious that avoidance of the adverse affects of disasters constitutes a worthwhile public health risk mitigation strategy and should be pursued as a matter of public policy. A major tool used to mitigate public health risk in a disaster is the mass evacuation of citizens from the affected area. Citizen relocation accomplishes several goals: it avoids, minimizes or ends the direct disaster-associated risk of injury or death on the part of the citizens themselves, it lessens future risks to first responders who

might be ordered to enter an increasingly more dangerous disaster area to rescue or recover victims and it removes from the disaster area individuals who may engage in criminal activity or who may increase the risk to themselves or to others through their presence or activities.

The effectiveness of a mass evacuation is not solely dependant on the effectiveness of government agencies, but is also dependent on the people themselves, who are expected to respond favorably to requests or orders for evacuation. This response is based on trust. If citizens are not assured their needs will be met if they comply, significant numbers of citizens will refuse or resist evacuation, compromising the ability to minimize disaster-related public health risks. Law enforcement alone cannot ensure an effective evacuation in a free society and therefore the cooperation of the public is an essential element for successful evacuations.

Integral to effective evacuation is a safe, secure and functional destination to evacuate to, whether it is a friend or family member's home or a mass care shelter. Most people will arrange for their own shelter in a disaster, relying on friends, relatives or others outside the disaster area. It has been variously estimated that approximately 20% of people will seek or require public shelter<sup>11</sup>. These people may include those without support networks of family or friends, the elderly, the disabled, the impoverished, urban dwellers and those without their own mode of transportation. Thus the creation of safe, secure mass care facilities for those who require public shelter is an essential component of effective evacuation.

Almost 60% of the population owns household pets and those that do most often own more than one<sup>1</sup>. The American Veterinary Medical Association reports that households with pets average 2.0 pets per household<sup>1</sup>. It can be assumed therefore, that whenever a large number of people are affected by a disaster, many pets are also

affected.<sup>14</sup> People value the safety of their animals highly and expect that their animals' needs will be considered by authorities during an event requiring evacuation and public shelter. Large animals too, may influence the evacuation behaviors of citizens, however for the purposes of this consultation and report, it was assumed that large animals would be sheltered-in-place when their owners must evacuate. It is rarely practical to move significant numbers of large animals. Other animals, including those owned by institutions such as colleges, universities, pharmaceutical companies and hospitals would not be expected to affect citizen evacuation behavior, and the welfare of such animals remains the responsibility of their institutional owners.

Mass care shelter operations for people are primarily conducted by local authorities, which may work closely with nongovernmental organizations such as local chapters of the American Red Cross (ARC) to serve the needs of disaster victims. Shelter operations are quite complex in that they must meet a wide range of individual and household needs, including individuals with special needs, those with service animals, those with assistance animals, as well as individuals with household pets.<sup>16</sup> Indeed there is a distinction that must be made between understanding the legal status and planning for the presence of service animals and assistance animals in or near mass care facilities.<sup>12</sup> Service animals and assistance animals cannot be managed in a manner similar to household pets by categorically segregating them away from their owners. Service animals and assistance animals are each regulated under a specific area of the law in order to protect the rights and dignity of the individuals utilizing these animals. Service animals are defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as dogs trained to perform tasks for the benefit of the disabled individual.<sup>13</sup> The manner in which government agencies, businesses and individuals must treat those using service animals is also defined by the regulations. The ADA also specifies the use of miniature

horses as an alternative to dogs in limited cases. Service animals may not be excluded from mass care facilities and are regarded as a physical extension of their owners. The owners themselves must, under most circumstances, be treated the same as all other sheltered citizens. In contrast, the Fair Housing Act addresses assistance animals, which are defined as those animals used to provide emotional support for persons.<sup>12</sup> Disabled individuals using assistance animals may request reasonable accommodations for these animals while housed in a mass care facility. Unlike service animals, however, in most circumstances, assistance animals may be excluded from mass care facilities if they “pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated.”<sup>12</sup> ARC chapters are not however, tasked with, skilled in or able to accept animal care duties<sup>15</sup> nor are the municipal authorities, whose buildings most often house evacuation shelter operations. Local emergency managers must therefore work closely with a variety of private and nongovernmental entities to provide appropriate services to evacuated citizens including pet care services. Through coordination with state department’s of agriculture, animal oriented organizations, veterinary medical associations and county and state animal response or resource teams, effective animal-related services may be obtained.<sup>16</sup> On the national level the ARC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the American Veterinary Medical Association and Foundation so as to encourage local ARC Chapters and state and local veterinary medical associations to partner in creating disaster-related animal care services in every municipality, county, region and state.<sup>17</sup>

In summary, addressing the needs of displaced citizens who evacuate with household pets during disasters helps to mitigate the public health issue of evacuation failure related to animal ownership. Failure-to-evacuate, delayed evacuation or attempted disaster zone re-entry are minimized when animal needs are addressed at the



planning stage. A public health program designed to address disaster-related animal health concerns and capable of providing shelter for evacuee pets, improves public health, as during disasters human health behaviors encompass concern for the safety of animals. Addressing the mass care needs of animals enhances the improvement of the physical and emotional health of evacuees as well as protects would be rescuers and enhances the overall effectiveness of evacuation. A failure to plan for animals jeopardizes public health.

## **History**

Connecticut is a "home rule" state and its 169 municipalities and 2 tribal nations function largely independently of their neighbors, and of state government. County government was abolished in 1958. Years later, Regional Planning Organizations were created to foster collaboration among municipalities. The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) is one of the 15 Regional Planning Organizations, and CRCOG coordinates the collaborative activities of its 29 member municipalities. Within CRCOG, the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee (CREPC) is charged with collaborative public health and homeland security planning. By voluntary participation CREPC also supports an additional 13 communities for a total of 41 communities. CREPC is a multi-agency coordination (MAC) group, as defined within the National Incident Management System (NIMS).<sup>18</sup>

CREPC developed the Region 3 Regional Emergency Support Plan (RESP), to fulfill its mission to enhance the operational readiness of its member governments in handling all types of emergency incidents.<sup>19</sup> The RESP provides a framework for CREPC member communities and agencies to collaborate in planning, communication, information sharing, and coordination activities before, during, or after a regional

emergency.<sup>19</sup> The Region 3 RESP includes 20 Regional Emergency Support Functions (RESF) each of which brings a particular subject matter expertise to bear on behalf of planning and preparedness for every discipline represented.

RESF #11, while entitled “Agriculture & Natural Resources” to be NIMS and Incident Command System (ICS) compliant, is narrowly defined at the sub-state, regional level as “animal protection.” This includes mitigation, response and recovery activities related to household pet care in disasters. During the mitigation phase, RESF #11 leadership, teams, and support agencies are trained in the RESP activation and implementation process and in NIMS/ICS protocols. During the emergency phase, RESF #11 provides animal response and evacuation services to the extent that the mission requires. During the recovery phase, RESF #11 continues to provide services initiated in the emergency phase. Additional animal shelter services may be initiated during the recovery phase.<sup>19</sup> Fulfillment of the public health mission of animal protection, tasked to RESF #11, requires a team of trained, credentialed individuals with animal care knowledge and skills, led by team leaders with advanced training and subject matter expertise. Specially trained veterinarians are candidates for this leadership role.

A team has been described as a group of people with complementary skills, committed to a common purpose and specific performance goals. Collaboration and interdependence are required characteristics of team members. In *Team Building*<sup>20</sup>, Dyer et al describe 9 characteristics of effective teams:

1. Clear goals and values.
2. People understand their assignments, roles and contributions to the whole.
3. Trust and support are implicit.
4. Open multidirectional communication exists.
5. Decisions are freely made.

6. All act with commitment to mission.
7. Team leaders are supportive and maintain high personal standards.
8. Differences are noted and openly managed.
9. Team structure and procedures are consistent with assigned tasks, goals and the people involved.

In the case of an animal response team organized for the purpose of addressing the public health risk of failure-to-evacuate due to animal ownership, these characteristics are evident. The goals and values are related to the public health mission of protecting people by protecting their animals. Under the Incident Command System structure, assignments, roles and contributions are readily apparent. Team members are trained appropriately and trusted to perform required tasks and exercise leadership where appropriate. An open line of communication is maintained through the chain-of-command so that every team member knows who to report to and who reports to him or her, as well as how differences are resolved. As membership on the team is voluntary, and requires a significant amount of time and effort to attain and maintain an adequate level of training, both free will and commitment are implicit. No one is required to be involved, as each team member freely chooses to do so. Team leaders are required to have a greater degree of training and all team members must maintain personal behavior standards according to a Code-of-Conduct<sup>21</sup> (Addendum 1). Finally, as the animal response team's operational procedures are explained in the RESP, there is little question as to how the team is utilized or what its role will be.

The appropriateness of the animal response team as a public health approach to mitigation of failure-to-evacuate due to animal ownership can be measured against the "Ten Essential Public Health Services"<sup>22</sup> discussed in the Local Public Health System Performance Assessment Instrument.<sup>23</sup> The Ten Essential Public Health Services

Represent the spectrum of public health activities that should be provided in any jurisdiction. They thus provide measurable performance standards by which to assess local public health systems. From the point of view of a program based on the health risk of failure-to-evacuate due to animal ownership the ten essential services are provided as follows:

1. *Monitor health status to identify community health problems.* Community monitoring to estimate animal population, citizen ability to evacuate with their animals, adherence to public health based immunization regulations (Rabies) as well as adherence to animal control laws can provide information helpful to program planning.
  
2. *Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.* Assessment of animals owned by people with functional needs, those without personal transportation and those with limited financial resources in the community can offer information regarding numbers of people who may seek public shelter with their animals and those who may need assistance to reach public shelter.
  
3. *Inform, educate and empower people about health issues.* An active program to educate citizens about their transportation and shelter options in an evacuation will empower them to be prepared for themselves and their animals in case of evacuation.
  
4. *Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems.* The animal response team program is based on recruitment, training and retention of

community members who are willing and able to assist their neighbors in evacuations. Partnerships with organizations and the members of organizations likely to be interested in animal response in disasters are likely to strengthen the animal response team program.

*5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.* The planning and volunteer development processes for the animal response team are focused on support of individual health and community health.

*6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.* Rabies immunization and animal control law enforcement are designed to keep people safe. Laws pertaining to evacuation with pet animals also minimize health risks in evacuations. Enforcement and education increase community awareness of the priority placed on evacuation along with pet animals.

*7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.* Community education about animal-related laws and policies, as well as about public health practices related to animals and good animal care practices provide a link to the animal response team program. Understanding its mission, as well as create awareness of the opportunity. Direct participation strengthens that link.

*8. Assure a competent public and personal health care workforce.* The integration of animal issue planning and response into overall planning and response activities creates an expectation of professionalism in this area similar to that of other public health priorities. The recruitment process and the standardized training provided to program volunteers assure competence and quality among those volunteers.

*9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility and quality of personal and population based health services.* The training and exercising of the volunteers provides a continuous and ongoing process of quality control. Volunteers receive guidance through the planning process and feedback after training and exercises in an effort to improve response mechanisms and performance.

*10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.* Across the nation, at all levels of government and in all jurisdictions and among not-for-profit agencies with response missions, discussions are occurring which seek to identify best practices for animal response in disasters. The National Alliance of State Animal & Agricultural Emergency Programs (NASSAEP)<sup>24</sup> meets annually to draw together state and local program leaders. Best Practice Working Groups have been created to address subject matters in a variety of sub-areas. It is expected that as new information is revealed beneficial to the public health in these areas, it will be incorporated into future planning and response practices.

The key elements of a public health program have been described by Landesman<sup>25</sup> and others, and include 6 activities:

1. Hazard analysis.
2. Advance response planning.
3. Capability development.
4. Surveillance.
5. Plan implementation.
6. Recovery.

These 6 activities can be seen as cyclical with lessons learned during each cycle informing the next analysis and planning phase.

The animal response team program also embodies the 6 traditional public health principles<sup>26</sup>:

1. The Principle of the Aggregate. The program focuses on a population, animal owners.
2. The Principle of Prevention. It emphasizes prevention of failure-to-evacuate by creating a mechanism for animal care during evacuation from disasters and encouraging evacuation with one's animals.
3. The Principle of Community Organization. Community resources, indeed multiple communities' resources within the Capitol Region of Connecticut, were pooled to create a program to meet a specific health risk and need.

4. The Principle of the Greater Good. Through evacuation of most potential disaster victims with their animals, it is believed few victims will resist evacuation and later require rescue or recovery services.

5. The Principle of Leadership. Program leadership, provided by veterinarians with public health knowledge and expertise as pertains to disaster planning and response, provide credibility to the program.

6. The Principle of Epidemiology. The foundation for the program relies on understanding the risk of failure-to-evacuate due to animal ownership. As public health interventions are based upon understanding causes, the program fulfills this principle.

### **Purpose & Imperative of the Animal Response Team**

The purpose of the animal response team is to make people safe in disasters by helping them keep their animals safe. Without the assurance of a safe destination for man and animal, a significant number of people will resist or avoid evacuation, putting themselves and public health response personnel at risk. The issue is seen as important enough that federal and state statutes have been enacted requiring specific actions be taken on the part of governments with respect to household pets and service animals in disasters.

At the Federal level, and in response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, a post-event analysis<sup>27</sup> originated by the White House recommended that state and local evacuation plans should specify procedures to address the pre-positioning of food, medical and fuel



supplies. These plans should address establishing first-aid stations, tracking and coordinating movements of evacuees, evacuating pets, unaccompanied minors, the elderly, and evacuating people who lack the means to leave voluntarily.<sup>27</sup> In 2006, in response, Congress passed the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006 (PETS Act).<sup>2</sup> The PETS Act amended the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act<sup>28</sup> to ensure that state and local emergency preparedness operational plans addressed the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals, following a major disaster or emergency. The PETS Act authorizes FEMA to provide rescue, care, shelter, and essential needs for individuals with household pets and service animals, and to the household pets and animals themselves following a major disaster or emergency.<sup>2</sup>

Also in 2006, Congress passed the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act<sup>3</sup> (PKEMRA). PKEMRA expanded FEMA's operational and coordination capabilities and its role in emergency response by designating it a primary agency. It also added additional authorities and responsibilities for FEMA to assure pet rescue and shelter.

In 2007 the Connecticut General Assembly passed, with the vigorous support of the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association, Connecticut Public Act 07-11, "An Act Concerning the Evacuation of Pets and Service Animals and Approval of the Local Emergency Plan of Operations."<sup>4</sup> This law requires that all Connecticut municipalities' emergency response plans contain a description of measures to be taken to address the evacuation of the household pets and service animals of evacuated citizens. It further prohibits the distribution of state or federal disaster preparedness funding to a

municipality unless its emergency plan includes the description of measures to be taken to address the evacuation of household pets and service animals of evacuated citizens.

The RESF #11 Annex of the Region 3 RESP stipulates an operational animal response element within the CREPC and Region 3 planning process for citizen mass care. The animal response team is recommended as the mechanism by which the RESF #11 operational capability could be enabled. The FEMA document “Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101 Supplement: Household Pet and Service Animal Planning Checklist”<sup>29</sup> contains a series of questions for planners to consider as they work to address the needs of pets and service animals as stipulated in federal and state law. It describes the creation and use of animal response teams to address animal issues in disasters.

### **Development of the Animal Response Team**

In 2003 animal response teams in Connecticut did not exist, nor was there widespread awareness that they might be needed. Unlike many Gulf coast and Midwestern states, Connecticut has been mostly disaster-free since the 1955 floods. These widespread and devastating floods killed 91 and left 12 more missing and presumed dead. Of 169 towns, 67 were affected, with 1100 homes destroyed and total damage estimated at one half billion dollars. The number of animals killed or missing went unrecorded.<sup>30</sup> Since then the disasters Connecticut has experienced have been less widespread and have had far less impact, with wind storms, ice storms and hurricane near misses occurring from time to time. Connecticut has by all estimates been fortunate, however timely investments in planning and preparedness is prudent.

Analysis of the few existing animal response teams in other states revealed great variation in their missions, capabilities, organizational structure and authority to operate.

Teams with similar or related missions are variously named *animal response teams*, *agricultural response teams*, *animal resource teams* and veterinary medical reserve corps. Most of these teams claim multiple mission emphases. That variation reflects both the type of animals and type and volume of agriculture in each state, as well as the common events that led to disasters in those regions of the country.

In Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania State Animal Response Team (PASART)<sup>31</sup> is organized as a private, not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization. The Colorado State Animal Response Team (COSART)<sup>32</sup> and Maryland State Animal Response Team (MDSART)<sup>33</sup> were similarly organized, but in Colorado's case agricultural animals and horses were more prominently addressed. In North Carolina, the North Carolina State Animal Response Team (NCSART)<sup>34</sup> was constituted as a public-private partnership, with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture playing the lead role in furthering collaboration with partners in the private, nongovernmental and governmental domains. North Carolina is heavily agricultural but with several large urban centers, so their focus is broad and includes equal emphasis on all species. In Florida, the Florida State Agricultural Response Team (FLSART)<sup>35</sup> is an integral part of the Florida Department of Agriculture. Due to Florida's tremendous agricultural industries, FLSART places a large emphasis on agriculture in all its forms. In all cases, these response/resource teams rely primarily on trained volunteers, passionate about the mission, and eager to participate.

In 2005, the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) applied for and won a disaster preparedness "startup" grant from the American Veterinary Medical Foundation. Funds from that grant were pooled with CREPC funding, and representatives of NCSART leadership were hired to consult on behalf of CREPC, RESF #11 and CVMA. NCSART representatives arranged to moderate a state animal response team (SART) "summit meeting" which brought together numerous

stakeholders among state and local agencies and the private sector to discuss animal response team, team building. Representatives from local and state public health were included. The meeting concluded with a consensus that developing the animal response team concept was desirable, however, the manner in which to best accomplish that for Connecticut remained unspecified. Further, to be maximally effective the program would need to cover the entire geography of the state as soon as possible, so that each region of the state could provide mutual aid to the others, should one region's resources be exhausted. The expectation was that CVMA would identify veterinarians to serve as animal response team leaders in each of the 5 state preparedness regions. At the time of the Summit a leader for Region 3 had been identified.

A number of challenges existed to this vision. Adequate funding for equipment and training had yet to be committed. Equipment appropriate to the program had to be identified, put out for bid and purchased. Sources of animal response team volunteers needed to be identified and then the volunteer candidates had to be recruited, trained, exercised and credentialed. Before that, appropriate training had to be conceived and decided upon. A public awareness program needed development both for the public health and emergency management communities as well as for the general public. Finally, political bias in some communities against a public health program conceived regionally, needed to be overcome. In a home rule state like Connecticut this is a significant challenge. Under Connecticut law, the Home Rule Act<sup>36</sup> stipulates that issues of purely local concern are most logically addressed locally. Emergency declarations, evacuations and opening shelters are considered to be local issues first, even if the emergency is catastrophic and extends across jurisdictional borders. Finally, the legal structure that would allow volunteers to serve government had to be clarified. Significant

issues of liability as well as the potential for personal injury insurance protection needed to be examined, and decisions made, on how these issues would be handled.

### **Process of Consultation**

This consultative report will discuss the consultative process leading to development of a public health program known as an animal response team in Connecticut's Preparedness Region 3. The Region 3 RESP specifies provision of shelter services to the household pets of evacuated citizens as the purpose of RESF #11. That purpose is the operational mission of the Region 3 Animal Response Team.

This process consultation will be based on the scholarship of Edgar Schein, as explained in his book, *Process Consultation Revisited*.<sup>37</sup> Schein's method is based on 5 principles which describe the attitudes and behavior of the consultant, in his or her effort to assist the client to achieve an effective consultation. This method is most suitable for consultations that focus on a specific process, in this case assisting in the development of an animal response team. The client is CREPC.

The first principle for a consultant to consider is, *Always try to be helpful*. It may seem obvious, however, as with any assistance offered to another person or entity, it should be provided in a manner and at a time at which the client is able to best appreciate it. It is important to keep in mind that a consultant is an employee and must maintain a professional demeanor in his or her interactions with clients.

The second is *Always stay in touch with the current reality*. This could be restated as maintaining situational awareness. Situational awareness<sup>38</sup> is a phrase that emerged from aviation science in the 1990s and means being aware of what is happening around you to understand how information, events, and your own actions will impact your goals and objectives, both now and in the near future. The development of

the current priority of disaster preparedness and response, especially as it relates to animal issues as public health issues, has been rapid and unpredictable. Disasters around the world, and the medias coverage of them, has brought new focus to emergency management and homeland security studies, as evidenced by numerous new educational programs in those fields, both in secondary education and at the college level, with some leading to advanced degrees.<sup>39</sup> The recognition that animals matter in disasters, not just for their own sake, but for the human factors they influence is a still an evolving paradigm. Finally, laws such as the PETS Act, PKEMRA and CGS 07-11 influence the results that a client hopes to achieve from a consultancy focused on this subject.

The third principle, *Access your ignorance*, speaks to honesty, especially with oneself. While a consultant may know how to help a client understand how to achieve their goals, there are always unknowns. One cannot know everything about the clients' situation, and should be honest with oneself about what is known, what is unknown, and what is thought to be known but may be incorrect. It is a matter of observing and overcoming the normal expectations and assumptions that every person makes. That introspective process will help the consultant to help the client by maintaining a questioning attitude, rather than having preconceived notions. In this case, by becoming an integral part of the client's leadership team, and leading RESF #11 development directly, the consultant was able to achieve the desired result.

The fourth principle, *everything one does is an intervention*, is reminiscent of the Observer Effect in physics<sup>40</sup>, in which the simple act of observing a phenomenon changes that phenomenon. The same can be stated here, as in a consultancy the consultant is interactive with the client, the client's staff and the operations being evaluated. While the consultant's intention is to intervene to achieve the goals of the

client, it must be remembered that the evaluative process will produce information that may be viewed in a positive manner or in a negative manner. How that information is communicated may make a significant difference in how it is received and acted upon.

Finally, the fifth principle, *it is the client who owns the problem and the solution*. The consultant must maintain a polite detachment, not just for his or her own sake, but so that the client remains empowered to pursue the solutions produced by the consultative process. It's not only that the consultant is unable to institute the recommended change absent the client's authority and positive steps to do so, but also that the consultant shouldn't attempt to do so. A consultant should not undermine the authority of the client nor take steps, no matter how positively intentioned, that the client chooses not to take.

This consultative report reviews the process of animal response team development in Connecticut's Preparedness Region 3. Three main components are required to have a functional animal response team: mission appropriate equipment, volunteers and leadership. This report focuses on the volunteer aspects of the equation. In every state with an animal response team, volunteer personnel are the key component required to accomplish the animal response team public health mission. Volunteer development consists of three elements: recruitment, training and teambuilding and retention.

### **Volunteer Recruitment**

Despite several decades of widely reported declines in volunteerism by Americans, renewed interest had been reported in recent years, right up until the current recession.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, there are many competing opportunities and avenues by which citizens may become involved. Even confined to the realm of animals and animal

care, there are numerous non-governmental organizations vying for citizen contributions, both of time and of money, as well as government affiliated programs and teams in which volunteers may participate.

A number of different animal response teams with distinct missions exist. The Southern Agriculture and Animal Disaster Response Alliance (SAADRA)<sup>42</sup> has developed a Resource Typing Guideline<sup>43</sup> for animal response teams, which clarifies the purposes and missions of these teams, and the qualifications of the volunteers required to perform specific missions. Within each resource there are several types based upon skills required and magnitude of the incident. Resources include:

1. Animal Health Incident Management Team: provides overall management of animal-related incidents.
2. Agriculture & Animal Damage Assessment Team: obtains rapid, ongoing and accurate assessments of incident damage.
3. Animal Treatment Team - Companion Animal Shelter: Provides veterinary services within temporary animal shelters for a displaced population.
4. Large Animal Treatment in Shelter: Provides veterinary services within temporary animal shelters for a displaced population.
5. Large Animal Transport: Transports large animals from an impacted area.
6. Companion Animal Evacuation & Re-entry: Evacuates animals and returns displaced animals to local areas
7. Companion Animal Transport: Evacuates animals and returns displaced animals to local areas
8. Animal Shelter Team: oversees the mobilization, operations and staffing of temporary animal shelters.



9. Large Animal Search & Rescue: capture, technical rescue, handling and management of large animals.
10. Companion Animal Search & Rescue: capture, technical rescue, handling and management of small animals.
11. Veterinary Strike Team: veterinarians and veterinary support staff tasked with providing veterinary medical care in impacted areas.

In this case, an *Animal Shelter Team*<sup>43</sup> is the resource required to facilitate providing shelter to animals evacuated in disasters. The role of involved veterinarians was anticipated to be as leaders and subject matter experts, rather than in a clinical treatment role, as would be the case for an “*Animal Treatment Team - Companion Animal Shelter*” or a “*Veterinary Strike Team*.”<sup>43</sup>

Identifying the means to motivate potential volunteers to join this particular initiative was a key to the future success of the entire public health program. The motivation of individuals to help animals in need is a powerful one, and despite the necessary public framing of the animal response team mission as one relating primarily to public health, volunteers attracted to it will also be motivated by the animal welfare aspects. It matters little, for practical purposes, which aspect most motivates a given volunteer, only that one or both of them do so. Additionally, their interest may be based upon both the emotional and intellectual aspects of working with animals: the genuine needs of animals and the recognition that animals are dependent on us for their care and we owe them that care. The same expectation by evacuating citizens that their own animals will be cared for will also motivate an already willing and engaged volunteer who wants to offer that care.

In the Capitol Region animal response team volunteers were sought from among the fields of animal control (officers and agencies), veterinary medicine (veterinarians

and veterinary technicians), municipal CERT members, animal welfare organizations, breed clubs, the farming community, emergency management and the general public.

Initial methods of outreach included media contributions and electronic mail. Media contributions included television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and web-logs. Electronic mail was sent to all 41 municipalities' emergency management directors (EMD) as well as their animal control departments or officers (ACO), to dog breed clubs affiliated with the Connecticut Dog Federation in the region, to all veterinary hospitals in the region and to other private animal-oriented organizations.

Speaking engagements were held for municipal CERTs, breed clubs, animal welfare organizations, fire departments, senior centers, state agencies, farm bureau, emergency management organizations, veterinary medical organizations, schools, religious institutions, animal control professional societies and local colleges and universities.

One challenge identified in the recruitment process was the tendency for ACOs to attend training with no intention of actually joining the team. While training municipal ACOs in the skills and knowledge appropriate for the animal response team mission helped these ACOs understand the mission and the operational methodology of the local animal response team, ACOs already have an official role in disaster response in their area of expertise. The ACO role in disasters is the same one they have in non-disaster situations, the capture and securing of loose or abandoned animals in their jurisdictions. Indeed the existence of an animal response team, by facilitating animal evacuation and shelter, makes the role of the ACO much easier in a disaster by minimizing animal abandonment and separation of animals from their owners. It is unlikely; however, that very many local ACOs would be available for animal response team deployment in the event of a disaster. Instead, it is far more likely they will be working extended hours at

their regular positions. Nevertheless, the awareness on the part of ACOs of the RESF #11 resource is beneficial to overall public awareness of the animal response public health role. On that basis the training of municipal ACOs in animal response has value. Still, to make this system work, an adequate number of otherwise uncommitted volunteers must be trained and credentialed.

Another potential pool of volunteers is individuals who are already members of a municipal CERT. Such persons, while possibly inexperienced with animals, already have a demonstrated motivation and interest in serving the community, and may be interested in the animal care mission. They may not, however, be able to realistically commit to a second responder team, nor be available to both in a deployment.

The main avenue of recruitment of volunteers was from within the animal care and interest communities. This avenue has the significant advantage of recruiting from among a group of people already self-identified as being highly interested in animal welfare, and in some cases, highly knowledgeable and skilled. Some of these individuals were identified with the assistance of the state veterinary medical association, the state-level professional society of veterinarians. Veterinary medical associations have the ability to effectively communicate with a large number of veterinary personnel efficiently.<sup>44</sup> The animal care and animal interest community also includes animal welfare organizations, breed clubs, veterinary paraprofessional societies and others strongly interested in animal welfare. This group, while highly motivated to assist animals, may be somewhat less interested in the public health aspects of the animal response team, as compared to the animal welfare aspects, however as previously stated, this may be irrelevant.

People volunteer for many different reasons including the opportunity to meet others, to learn new skills, to have relationships, from a desire to serve others, from a

desire to feel needed, in looking for employment and to have fun.<sup>45</sup> For most people volunteering in this program, the motivators to participation include an interest in animals and their welfare, a desire to serve, a desire to feel needed, a desire to belong to a team of like-minded persons and patriotism.

In the first 2 years of volunteer recruitment efforts, 74 volunteers were identified. By using an "individual data form"<sup>46</sup> for team registration which included questions about past and current employment, past and current experience with animals, ICS and emergency response experience and demographic information, an overview of the history and experience of volunteers was documented (Table 1: Volunteers).

Volunteers included 45 women and 29 men. The mean age of the volunteers was 48.33 years with the youngest being 24 and the oldest 77. No volunteers were accepted at less than 18 years of age. There was no maximum age specified.

Educational attainment was recorded and included 44 volunteers with a high school diploma, 1 with a 2 year undergraduate degree, 16 with a 4 year undergraduate degree, 11 with a graduate or professional degree and 2 with an unreported level of formal education. Just 6 volunteers reported military service, with 49 reporting none and 19 unknown or unreported.

The reported current employment of volunteers did not primarily involve animal-related work. Of those that did report animal-related work, 12 were current municipal animal control officers, 6 were current veterinary technicians and 3 were veterinarians. The remainder spanned a wide variety of fields including: 21 self-employed in business, 6 in law enforcement, 3 in firefighting, 2 were teachers, 2 were students, 2 worked in municipal government in non-public safety roles and 1 worked in an allied health profession. 8 were retired and 8 were unemployed.

With respect to the volunteers most significant prior professional, vocational or avocational experiences with animals, 20 had worked or volunteered in animal shelters, 14 volunteers reported experience with riding or training horses, 7 had experience in injured wildlife rehabilitation, 4 worked on or grew up on farms, 1 had previously been a veterinary technician, 1 was a pre-veterinary undergraduate college student, 1 was a professional dog trainer and 3 were veterinarians. 23 people reported their animal experience was solely as a hobby. No volunteer reported they had no experience of any kind.

With respect to prior experience in disaster response in either an animal-related or public health related role, 7 volunteers reported experience and 67 reported none.

### **Volunteer Training & Team Building**

By statute<sup>4</sup> Connecticut requires municipalities that evacuate and shelter citizens in emergencies to provide for household pets and service animals. Co-located pet sheltering is one of the most common methods of providing emergency accommodations for pet owners and their animals. A co-located pet shelter is one, which is adjacent to, or on the same premises as, a public mass care shelter. These shelters, by their proximity, allow pet owners to provide the majority of the care for their own animals, reducing the animal shelters logistical and staffing requirements.<sup>47</sup>

The mass care shelter premises, and any co-located animal shelter which may also be opened there, remain under local emergency management director control in accordance with state and local law. Such shelters are organized and managed by local authorities in collaboration with local chapters of national non-governmental organizations such as the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army and others, capable of providing necessary services to disaster victims. These organizations train and

credential their own volunteers as well as provide both liability insurance protection and workman's compensation insurance protection to those volunteers. Liability insurance protection is important should a volunteer accidentally injure another person or damage the property of another person. Workman's compensation insurance is important in case the volunteer is injured. These protections protect the organizations themselves, the community and all involved individuals against lawsuits arising from unexpected adverse circumstances.

In contrast, animal response teams are most often made up of local volunteers, or volunteer members of local organizations, that are unaffiliated with any larger, nongovernmental organization providing such protections. Due to concerns about the liability of local municipalities and state government agencies in using civilian volunteers in employee-like roles in government service, it is vitally important to local and state authorities that all animal response volunteers be properly trained, credentialed and also provided with the same essential liability and workman's compensation insurance protections as if they were employees.

Under Connecticut state law, Title 28, Chapter 517 contains within it the state laws and regulations pertaining to civil preparedness, emergencies, emergency powers of the Governor and the roles of emergency responders.<sup>48</sup> In Section 28-1(5) *civil preparedness forces* are defined to include groups of specially trained teams of individuals who are volunteers. Such teams as the Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT), the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), the Urban Search and Rescue Team (USAR) and the Behavioral Health Crisis Response Team (BHCRT) and others, are included. Section 28-6 grants the involved individuals, though they are not state employees while engaged in activities with their respective teams, *the same rights and immunities as are provided by law for the employees of the state.*<sup>48</sup>

To determine whether other volunteers in state service could also obtain the necessary protections directly from the state, the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) sought a legal opinion<sup>49</sup> from the Connecticut Attorney General on the legality of providing other volunteer teams in state or local government service the same liability and workman's compensation protections as if they too were state employees or members of these other aforementioned civil preparedness forces. Specifically, the Commissioner sought an opinion about a component of the Federal Citizen Corps<sup>50</sup> initiative that seeks to engage more volunteers nationally in civic life, the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)<sup>51</sup> program.

The Attorney General's opinion<sup>49</sup> was released July 20, 2006 and in describing CERT as a federally chartered program under which CERT members remain under the authority of a local official, went on to clarify that CERT members are afforded the same protections provided for government employees. Moreover, CERT members are immune from liability for actions taken in the course of their civil preparedness duties, except for willful misconduct. The opinion concluded as follows: "It is our opinion that the foregoing statutory provisions make it clear that CERT members are protected under Title 28 of the General Statutes during the course of their training for, and participation in, civil preparedness activities."

This opinion thereby provided a clear legal status for animal response teams, if organized according to the CERT program model. While CERT is not an animal care program per se, its charter and guidelines are flexible enough to allow for many diverse areas of specialization, including animal care. CERT training educates people about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. Using their training,

CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event and can take a more active role in preparing their communities.<sup>52</sup>

The Basic CERT program is taught in the community by a trainer who has completed the CERT Train-the-Trainer program<sup>53</sup>. This program is conducted by state training offices for emergency management and by the FEMA Emergency Management Institute. Basic CERT training includes disaster preparedness, fire safety, disaster medical operations, light search and rescue operations, CERT organization, disaster psychology, terrorism and a simulated exercise. The Basic CERT program also has available to it, two modules<sup>44</sup> designed to teach general animal issue planning and response to municipal CERT members. These modules are presented at an awareness level however, and are not intended for the training of animal response teams, whether they are organized within the CERT program or through other programs.

For the animal response team CERT, the Basic CERT training modules are supplemented with Connecticut-specific subjects as well as animal and public health oriented lecture subjects and training activities. The former include: Introduction to CERT in Connecticut, Regional Emergency Planning Teams, Regional Emergency Support Plans, Regional Communications and Overview of Connecticut Agriculture. The latter include Overview of Animal Response as Public Health Program, Introduction to Connecticut State Animal Response Team, Animal Behavior & Handling, Animal Triage & First Aid, Animal Evacuation Shelter Planning & Operations, Agroterrorism & Bioterrorism, Hazardous Materials, Biosafety Practices & Farm Security, Personal Protective Equipment, Foreign Animal Disease Overview, Zoonotic Disease Overview and Animal Decontamination. (Addendum 3)

At the conclusion of basic CERT training, personal response equipment is issued to each new trainee and an oath of loyalty<sup>54</sup> to the constitutions of both the State of



Connecticut, and the United States of America is administered by a designated public official, in accordance with Title 28. An official CERT identification card is issued by the Statewide Citizen Corps Council on which the job title *Animal Response Team* is displayed.

Following completion of all coursework volunteers have the opportunity to participate in continuing education and training which occurs throughout the year.<sup>55</sup> In addition to bimonthly lectures and team meetings, there are regular team mobilization exercises offered, usually in conjunction with one or more municipalities conducting mass care exercises, or in conjunction with local chapters of the American Red Cross.

### **Volunteer Retention**

Most volunteer organizations accomplish their work through the time and talent contributed by unpaid volunteers. Given the importance of volunteers, it is surprising that while much attention is devoted to their identification, recruitment and training, often far less attention is devoted to their retention. The result is turnover, which leads to the need for recruitment of new, untrained volunteers and organizational efficiency then suffers. One study found a 66% national volunteer retention rate over a 4 year study period.<sup>56</sup> One state agency that advises organizations that manage volunteers offers a list of volunteer retention tips.<sup>57</sup> Retention begins in the interview process where the volunteer should be made to understand the nature of the organization, its goals and what sort of work he or she will be asked to do. This is also an opportunity for the organizations leader or human resources representative to assess whether the potential volunteer is a good fit for the organization. In this case, a volunteer uncomfortable with animals or people would be a poor fit. There are 6 key components<sup>57</sup> to volunteer retention: Placement, orientation, training, supervision, evaluation and recognition. Placement

refers to the work the volunteer is assigned and agrees to do. It is important the volunteer understands the job description and that to the extent possible it matches his or her skills, interests and availability. In the animal response team, the training required is significant enough that volunteers who stay know the job and the leaders know the volunteer is interested in the work. Orientation describes the process that should occur when the new volunteer agrees to join the organization. He or she should be introduced to the other volunteers and given a complete introduction to the work and mission of the organization. In the animal response team we accomplish all of this through the formal training process. Training, in the case of the animal response team is described elsewhere and is self-explanatory. No volunteer can deploy until they have completed the required training. Supervision in this case is accomplished in accordance with the ICS. All volunteers must complete several ICS courses prior to becoming a credentialed team member. Evaluation is a chance for the volunteer to experience personal growth and ongoing education and training opportunities are scheduled to assist with that. Finally, both verbal and tangible forms of recognition are important to maintain enthusiasm and loyalty to the program. It should not be assumed that the work is its own reward. The Region 3 Animal Response Team has not created a formal recognition program and this is a shortcoming that should be addressed.

The animal response team currently has a high tempo of training activities both in and out of the Region for volunteers to participate in. In addition, the 41 municipalities in the Capitol Region, and CREPC itself, have frequent municipal and Regional exercises for one or more Emergency Support Functions to train and exercise their personnel. The animal response team often has the opportunity to participate in these multidisciplinary disaster response scenarios and these are often more realistic than is possible when the team exercises independently.

After three successive years of recruitment and training, with one Basic CERT training class held each year, 74 people have completed Basic CERT training. Of the 74 volunteers trained, at least 50 regularly (defined as at least twice yearly) attend meetings, drills and exercises and express the willingness to deploy upon request. Interestingly, 66% of 74 is 48.8, very close to the expected volunteer retention as defined in the reference cited earlier.<sup>56</sup> This is remarkable considering the animal response team is a response agency in a state with few disasters. It is expected to be a challenge to retain volunteers in a state with few disasters and this has been shown to be true in other states as well. Mr. Ron Sohn, executive director of the Maryland Veterinary Medical Association aptly states it like this: "We want to be ready, but it's like having a fire department that never has a fire."<sup>58</sup>

It must be recognized that while Connecticut is itself rarely affected by disasters requiring widespread evacuation, mass care and the provision of animal shelter services, other adjacent areas, including the nearby New York City metropolitan area, have plans to utilize Connecticut resources and host communities for their evacuation and shelter needs should disaster strike those communities.<sup>59, 60</sup> A host community is defined as one which has agreed to receive and shelter individuals who have been evacuated from their homes or area.<sup>61</sup> The New York City metropolitan area, with a population of approximately 19 million people<sup>62</sup>, is one which has been the previous location of terrorist attacks and it continues to be targeted by terrorists for attack.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, New York City has been, by far, the most common target location of terrorists in the United States.<sup>63</sup>

## Conclusions

Evacuation is an important tool to minimize risk to the public in disasters. Pet ownership approaches 60% of American families.<sup>1</sup> The public health risk of failure-to-evacuate due to pet ownership has been established as a challenge in evacuations from disasters.<sup>6</sup> People evacuated in a disaster expect that when they agree to evacuate, their pets will also be evacuated and cared for. Federal and state laws specify that animal care is an important consideration in planning and implementing evacuations. Most first responder and mass care organizations do not provide animal care services. Local emergency management officials must therefore collaborate with non-governmental animal care organizations to provide for animal care in the mass care setting. Local teams of trained volunteers can provide supervision and hands on animal care for the evacuated household pets of displaced citizens. Co-location of animal shelter with mass care facilities minimizes staffing and logistics problems related to providing shelter to animals. The use of trained volunteers has been demonstrated to be a successful method of staffing animal response teams charged with providing shelter to the displaced household pets of evacuated citizens. In many states such programs have been used successfully in real emergencies to mitigate the public health risk of failure-to-evacuate due to companion animal ownership. In Connecticut animal response teams are organized under the Citizen Corps CERT program so that a verifiable level of training is provided. After completion and issuance of credentials, Title 28 mandated liability and workman's compensation insurance protections apply to volunteers as if they were government employees. Inasmuch as failure-to-evacuate due to animal ownership is a public health risk that can be mitigated with appropriate preparedness actions, the creation of the Region 3 Animal Response Team has been a positive step. The capability now exists to address the shelter needs of the displaced animals evacuated

with evacuating citizens. Challenges and limitations exist, however, which could limit the effectiveness of the animal response team. Many of these shortcomings were elucidated in a “SWOT” analysis completed in Region 3 in September 2008.<sup>64</sup> While some were resolved a number of others remain. These can be grouped into three categories: volunteer issues, funding issues and mutual aid issues.

Volunteer issues include such concerns as volunteer attrition, multiply committed volunteers, training rigor, rare disasters and deployments and from the leadership point of view, leadership attrition and spontaneous volunteers.

- Volunteer retention is an ongoing challenge as volunteers leave the team for various reasons. As previously discussed<sup>56</sup> 66% of volunteers are commonly retained over 4 years in most volunteer organizations.
- Multiply committed volunteers are often “adrenaline junkies” or in this case passionate animal caregivers who seek to be as involved as possible. For the animal response team this may mean the volunteer is committed elsewhere when they are needed most.
- Training requirement rigor may keep some volunteers from committing to join the animal response team. In particular Basic CERT training requires a minimum of 20 hours classroom and practical training, which has little to do with the animal response mission. Unless a veterinarian or other person with a high degree of animal care knowledge teaches the class, the subject matter may not attract a prospective animal response team volunteer.
- Few disasters and deployments occur in Connecticut due to a relative dearth of disasters. Because of this, a higher tempo of team training and exercise participation is required to maintain volunteer interest. This may be challenging to

provide, and time consuming for the volunteer team leaders who may have scarce time available.

- Leadership attrition may occur when the pace of training, meetings and administrative duties outstrips a leaders available time. It can be a challenge to identify and engage deputy leaders to take over some of the responsibilities.
- Spontaneous volunteers are those volunteers who arrive at an incident uninvited, may not be trained and are not members of a deployed team. These volunteers may be a challenge to cope with, even more so when adequate numbers of trained volunteers are already present. Well meaning individuals desirous of helping may be unaware of the organized response efforts already underway or of the Incident Command System. Working independently they may obstruct organized team operations and may, because of their attitudes, interfere with efficient and safe animal care activities.<sup>65</sup> They may be unaware of hazards and may cause injury to themselves or others and they may not be self sufficient adding to the logistical support requirements of the operation.<sup>66</sup> Some response organizations have developed protocols to utilize spontaneous volunteers, reasoning that the manpower may be needed, and turning them away entirely may be more disruptive than placing them in low risk roles they may be qualified to perform.<sup>67</sup> There may also be public relations consequences to barring their participation.

Funding issues include the ability to provide volunteer retention mechanisms, the adequacy of available response equipment, and the ability to provide necessary medical (veterinary) care to sheltered animals.

- Volunteer retention mechanisms refers to the last component of the 6 key components to the volunteer retention, recognition.<sup>57</sup> Recognition may be very simple including verbal or written acknowledgements or more tangible to include awards, testimonial gatherings or gifts. Even simple gifts such as tickets to a show, shirts, trophies or plaques are not without cost and in a climate of limited government funds, reduced charitable giving and regulations prohibiting government expenditures for these, providing tangible recognition poses a challenge.
- Veterinary medical capabilities are not inherently a part of RESF#11, as defined by the Region 3 RESP and CGS 07-11. That said, it is self evident that animals sheltered in disaster may arrive at the shelter with pre-existing conditions, may become ill while in transit or may become ill while in the shelter. The veterinarians oath<sup>68</sup>, reminds veterinarians they have committed to serve society, relieve animal suffering and promote the public health, in equal measures. These reminders would seem to require that where animals are under care, veterinary medical services ought to be made available.
- Adequacy of response equipment remains an open question. How prepared are we now? How prepared should we become? How prepared can we afford to become? These are questions that are as yet unanswered and, except for the first, are perhaps unanswerable.

Mutual aid is that support provided upon request by one jurisdiction to another. Mutual aid agreements and assistance agreements are agreements between agencies, organizations, and jurisdictions that provide a quick mechanism to obtain emergency

assistance in the form of personnel, equipment, materials, and other associated services.<sup>69</sup>

- One mutual aid issue is that of the emergency management director in one or more of the municipalities within any of Connecticut's 5 Preparedness Regions being resistant to collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions in their respective region on regional public health programs. This attitude is related to the culture of "home rule" that predominates in Connecticut local government. Under these circumstances state and regional government entities are often unable to lead collaborative initiatives when individual municipalities prefer to go their own way. This is often true even when planning for disasters that would be so large as to be clearly cross-jurisdictional in scope.
- In Region 3 such collaboration is fairly well developed, however, the 4 remaining Regions remain behind in their own collaborative planning and preparedness and thus cannot currently provide the robust mutual aid component to Region 3 that is required for maximum possible preparedness in each Region.
- Further, all Regions face budgetary challenges which have prevented achieving the equipment targets originally envisioned.

At best, building a new culture of cooperation and collaboration among jurisdictions will likely take a generation or more and may never attain the full acceptance required for maximum efficiency and effectiveness. In animal response and public health terms, this means Region 3 may not be able to rely on in-state mutual aid if overwhelmed.

Therefore, maximizing intra-regional preparedness is essential to adequately meet the health needs of the public.



### **Recommended Actions & Dissemination of These Recommendations**

- Volunteer attrition can be minimized by adhering to the 6 key components of volunteer retention: Placement, orientation, training, supervision, evaluation and recognition.<sup>57</sup> Assuming the first 4 are adequately addressed through the existing recruitment, training and leadership programs, attention to evaluation and recognition are likely to be fruitful in enhancing volunteer retention. Specifically, once individuals are identified who have gone “above and beyond” in their commitment to the program, creative ways to provide recognition should be sought and implemented. Awards, public acknowledgement and an appreciation event are all ways of recognizing achievement and commitment of volunteers.
- The challenge of multiply committed volunteers is best addressed at the recruitment and placement stages. Potential volunteers should be screened for other first response commitments, whether related to a vocation or to an avocation, and should be educated about the expected commitment to the animal response team. In cases where individuals have valuable skills, but are already partially committed elsewhere, it may be possible to engage them for a specific task that is not response oriented, such as writing or public relations, and take advantage of their strengths to the extent possible.
- As far as training requirement rigor may dissuade potential volunteers, this concern must be submerged by the imperative to adequately train every volunteer for competence, and to best insure the safety of themselves and others. If a potential volunteer is unwilling to complete all the required training, they are also unlikely to be sufficiently committed to the team objectives and mission to be a successful team member. Such people should be discouraged from pursuing involvement.

- While it is fortunate that there are few disasters and therefore deployments in Connecticut, this poses a challenge to retention, in that some may question their involvement or even why the team should exist. Communicating the imperative of local planning, readiness and response capabilities to every volunteer is a start, but may not be sufficient to maintain their involvement or team morale. A sustained effort to have the team participate in team specific, as well as joint activities, with other first responder disciplines and other regional animal response teams, should provide a level of regular participation adequate to keep the majority of volunteers involved.
- Leadership attrition may result from over-commitment, other personal factors or even political machination. Abrupt loss of leadership may be devastating to the team and its mission. A US Army Field Manual<sup>70</sup> on leadership states that a leader: *Develops others:* and encourages and supports the growth of individuals and teams to facilitate the achievement of organizational goals. Leaders prepare others to assume positions within the organization, ensuring a more versatile and productive organization. Leaders should be encouraged to identify and recruit deputy or vice leaders with whom to share duties and to whom to turn leadership over to, in circumstances of temporary or permanent inability to continue in their leadership role. Veterinary medical associations, through their communication networks, can be helpful in identifying future leaders<sup>44</sup>.
- Spontaneous volunteers are a challenge to all first responder organizations, especially those that are themselves voluntary in nature. Being prepared for them in advance, with a designated supervisor and list of acceptable duties they can perform will mitigate the disruption their presence might otherwise cause.<sup>65, 66</sup>

- Funding issues affect multiple aspects of animal response team effectiveness. As previously discussed good volunteer retention practices may incur expenses that should be budgeted for. If government regulation prohibits government funds expenditures for these activities, then private funding should be sought. The Connecticut Veterinary Medical Foundation is one such source of private sector funding that may be made available without such restrictions.
- The adequacy of response equipment is funding dependent and in this case animal care equipment is provided for and funded primarily from government sources. The Connecticut DEMHS Mass Care Working Group (MCWG) has accepted as a target the capability to shelter 1000 household pets in each of the 5 Connecticut Preparedness Regions.<sup>71</sup> In total 1560 cages currently exist in the state for this purpose, with 750 in Region 3. Funding for equipment acquisition should continue to be sought.
- Veterinary medical clinical capabilities are also funding dependent. Specialized veterinary medical equipment, suitable for providing a triage-level of clinical care to sheltered animals will require funding from government, the private sector or both. Efforts should be made to facilitate this process. Once funding is in place additional volunteer veterinarians and veterinary technicians may be recruited specifically to provide for this function. Veterinarians with advanced degrees in public health, specifically in the *public health preparedness* focus area<sup>72</sup> are well suited to make the case for fulfillment of this capability, as well as to judge what the priorities within the capability should be. Infectious disease risks among displaced animals, as well as the risk of zoonotic disease in disaster victims involved in caring for their own animals and the shelter workers assisting them, are powerful arguments for veterinarians with advanced training and competency

in public health serving in leadership roles in animal response planning for disasters.

### **Mutual Aid Issues**

- Ongoing education regarding the benefits to municipalities of regional collaboration, not just with respect to the RESF #11 animal response mission, but with respect to all planning and preparedness goals, may eventually lead to more widespread collaboration. Stressing the economies of scale attainable by joint purchasing and the efficiencies attainable by equipment and task sharing may help convince those who remain skeptical of the wisdom of regional planning.
- Preparedness Region 3, with an established culture of collaboration must continue to strive for the maximum attainable self sufficiency not only for its own needs, but to provide for mutual aid to the other Regions. The lag in preparedness experienced by the remaining 4 Regions need not impede Region 3 from attaining its own preparedness goals.
- As the remaining Regions also face budgetary challenges, leadership by Region 3 in allocating funding for animal response target capabilities, may also inspire the remaining Regions to do likewise.

### **Plan for Implementation & Measurement**

- Develop and document a coordinated and ongoing volunteer recruitment program which is targeted at the volunteer demographic already identified as most likely to engage in animal response team training and activities.
- Develop and document a coordinated and ongoing volunteer retention program, which targets the volunteers already in place.

- Educate local emergency management directors, local public health officials, CREPC members, DEMHS officials, legislators, veterinary medical association leaders and the public about the need for animal response capabilities to be organized as a regional asset.
- Advocate for adequate funding from government sources and engage the private sector in fund raising activities to provide for volunteer retention and additional equipment needs.
- Advocate for adequate funding from government sources and engage the private sector in fund raising activities to provide for the envisioned veterinary medical adjunct to RESF #11.

A volunteer-staffed animal response team is a proven tool for enabling the provision of animal shelter services in the mass care environment during disasters. Providing for such teams requires a legal and political framework conducive to their development and maintenance, a recruitment program, a training regimen, a retention program and adequate funding. Leadership derived from among the veterinary medical community provides the subject matter expertise required for establishment of an animal response team. Together these components comprise a public health program capable of mitigation of failure-to-evacuate due to companion animal ownership.

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Table 1: Volunteers

	Female	Male										
<b>Gender</b>	45	29										
	<b>HS Dipl</b>	<b>2 Yr Deg</b>	<b>4 Yr Deg</b>	<b>Grad/Prof</b>	<b>Educatio n</b>	<b>Mil Svc</b>						
<b>Education/ Military Svc</b>	44	1	16	11	2	6						
	<b>ACO</b>	<b>Vet Tech</b>	<b>Vet</b>	<b>Busi ness</b>	<b>Law Enforce</b>	<b>Firefight</b>	<b>Teachin g</b>	<b>Studen t</b>	<b>Gov't.</b>	<b>Allied Health</b>	<b>Retired</b>	<b>Unempl</b>
<b>Current Employment</b>	12	6	3	21	6	3	2	2	2	1	8	8
	<b>Shelter</b>	<b>Horse</b>	<b>Wildlife</b>	<b>Farm</b>	<b>Vet Tech</b>	<b>Pre-Vet</b>	<b>Dog Train</b>	<b>Vet</b>	<b>Hobby</b>	<b>None</b>		
<b>Prior Animal Experience</b>	20	14	7	4	1	1	1	3	23	0		
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>										
<b>Prior Disaster Response</b>	7	67										

**List of Abbreviations Used in Table 1**

ACO=	Animal Control Officer
Deg =	Degree
Dipl=	Diploma
Dog Train=	Dog Trainer
Firefight=	Firefighter
Gov't.=	Government
Grad/Prof =	Graduate or Professional School
HS Dipl =	High School Diploma
Law Enforce=	Law Enforcement
Mil Svc =	Military Service
Pre-Vet=	Undergraduate student
Svc=	Service
Unempl.=	Unemployed
Vet=	Veterinarian
Vet Tech=	Veterinary Technician
Yr=	Year

## Addendum 1: CTSART Code-of-Conduct



### CTSART CODE OF CONDUCT

v04262008

Regional Animal Response Team volunteers working for or representing the civilian preparedness forces of the CTSART program shall adhere to this Code of Conduct. All CTSART Regional Animal Response Team members will sign this document to indicate that they understand and agree to abide by its content. Incident Commanders will have the authority and discretion to immediately deactivate any individual for behavior that is contrary to this Code of Conduct or federal, state or local law.

1. Individuals shall project a professional manner and appearance while participating in any CTSART- related activities. While on site at a disaster, conference or other CTSART activity the following will not be tolerated:
  - a. Consumption of alcoholic beverages and possession, use or selling of any illegal drugs, b. Violation of any laws, c. Public outbursts, derogatory remarks about other organizations or individuals., d. Illegal use or display of a firearm.
2. Individuals shall identify operations that are beyond their capabilities based on their experience, training and knowledge, and notify the Incident Commander. CTSART volunteers agree not to self-deploy. Individuals shall observe all safety rules and regulations and be familiar with proper usage and operation of all equipment.
3. Individuals shall be expected to accept assignments and/or orders by the supervising authority (Incident Commander), or if required, make discretionary decisions based on appropriate intent and good judgment.
4. While representing CTSART, volunteers will not participate in operations that serve to promote political agendas, other organizations, personal financial gain or personal ideologies of any kind.
5. Individuals shall not enter private properties to perform CTSART duties without verbal permission from the owner or a supervising authority and will be accompanied by a law enforcement escort.
6. Individuals shall remain in contact with the appropriate ICS authority, and confine their activities to the stated mission and directives of the Incident Action Plan.
7. All individuals shall display the CTSART Regional Animal Response Team credential, while on site for a disaster.
8. Individuals will be required to document or participate in documentation of field operations in a timely manner, and submit documentation to the incident commander.
9. Individuals shall not transport animals to facilities other than the ones that have been assigned by the supervising authority without authorization from the supervising authority.
10. Individuals shall refrain from taking photographs of people without their written permission. Any photos that are taken will not be used for public display without the expressed written permission of the owner.
11. In situations in which an animal(s) is removed from a property without prior permission of the animals owner, the responder must leave written notification of the removal of the animal or disturbance of the property in the most visible area possible on the property.
12. Individuals shall not accept personal gratuities. All offers of donations shall be directed to the Regional Animal Response Team's Team Leader.

X \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
CTSART Volunteer

X \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Team Leader

**Addendum 2: CTSART Individual Data Form, Page 1**

CONNECTICUT STATE ANIMAL REPOSE TEAM INDIVIDUAL DATA FORM	
<b>Personal Data Survey</b>	<b>Date Completed:</b> _____
<b>Basic Information</b>	
Name	
Mailing Address	
City	State                      Zip
This address is    Home <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work <input type="checkbox"/>	
Home Phone	Home Fax
Cell Phone	Pager
Work Phone	Work Fax
Preferred Email Address	
<b>Organizational Affiliations</b>	
Please ensure an <i>Organization Resource Data Sheet</i> is on file if your organization is willing to participate in animal emergency relief programs	
<b>Primary Organization</b>	
Position	
Work Phone	Work Fax
Work Email	
Comments	
<b>Secondary Organization</b>	
Position	
Work Phone	Work Fax
Work Email	
Comments	
<b>Qualifications and Experience</b>	
Please list advanced degrees, special skills and training certifications:	
Please list relevant experience:	
<i>Please also attach additional information as needed and a description of your potential availability for extended or out-of-state deployment</i>	

### **Addendum 3: Education & Training Requirements for Volunteers**

#### FEMA Emergency Management Institute Independent Study Courses

- IS 10 Animals in Disasters: Awareness & Preparedness
- IS 11 Animals in Disasters: Community Planning
- IS 100.b Introduction to the Incident Command System
- IS 111 Livestock in Disasters
- IS 317 Introduction to CERT
- IS 200.b ICS for Single Resources & Initial Action Incidents
- IS 700.a National Incident Management System (NIMS) An Introduction
- IS 800.b National Response Framework, An Introduction

<http://www.training.fema.gov/is/>

#### Citizen Corps: Basic CERT Training Topics

- Unit 1: Disaster Preparedness
- Unit 2: Fire Safety
- Unit 3: Disaster Medical Operations—Part 1
- Unit 4: Disaster Medical Operations—Part 2
- Unit 5: Light Search and Rescue Operations
- Unit 6: CERT Organization
- Unit 7: Disaster Psychology
- Unit 8: Terrorism and CERT
- Unit 9: Course Review and Disaster Simulation

<http://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/>

#### Connecticut State Animal Response Team Courses

##### Connecticut Specific Topics:

- Introduction to CERT in Connecticut
- Regional Emergency Planning Teams
- Regional Emergency Support Plans
- Regional Communications

##### Animal & Agricultural Specific Topics:

- Overview of Animal Response as Public Health Program
- Introduction to Connecticut State Animal Response Team
- Animal Behavior & Handling
- Animal Triage & First Aid
- Animal Evacuation Shelter Planning and Operations
- Overview of Connecticut Agriculture
- Agroterrorism & Bioterrorism
- Hazardous Materials
- Biosafety Practices & Farm Security
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Foreign Animal Disease Overview
- Zoonotic Disease Overview
- Animal Decontamination

<http://www.ctsart.org>

**Addendum 4: Acronym Glossary**

ACO	Animal Control Officer
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ARC	American Red Cross
ART	Animal Response Team
BHCRT	Behavioral Health Crisis Response Team
CERT	Community Emergency Response Team
CGA	Connecticut General Assembly
CGS	Connecticut General Statutes
COSART	Colorado State Animal Response Team
CPG	Comprehensive Preparedness Guide
CREPC	Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee
CRCOG	Capitol Region Council of Governments
CTSART	Connecticut State Animal Response Team
CVMA	Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association
CVMF	Connecticut Veterinary Medical Foundation
DEMHS	Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security
DMAT	Disaster Medical Assistance Team
EMD	Emergency Management Director
ESF	Emergency Support Function
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FLSART	Florida State Animal Response Team
ICS	Incident Command System
MAC	Multi-Agency Coordination
MCWG	Mass Care Working Group
MDSART	Maryland State Animal Response Team
MOU	Memorandum-of-Understanding
MRC	Medical Reserve Corps
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NCSART	North Carolina State Animal Response Team
PASART	Pennsylvania State Animal Response Team
PETS Act	Pet Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act
PKEMRA	Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act
REPT	Regional Emergency Planning Team
RESF	Regional Emergency Support Function
RESP	Regional Emergency Support Plan
RPO	Regional Planning Organization
SAADRA	Southern Agriculture and Animal Disaster Response Alliance
SART	State Animal Response Team
SWOT	Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue Team



**Addendum 5: Recent Connecticut Weather Incidents – Region 3 ESF 11 After Action Reports**

## 1. Hurricane Irene, August 27 – August 28, 2011

The Region 3 Animal Response Team was initially alerted for possible deployment at the designated Regional shelter at East Hartford High School the evening of Thursday August 25th. Over the next twenty-four hours, two Region 3 CTSART equipment trailers were pre-placed at the high school by the RESF 11 Team Leader.

A REPT meeting was held Saturday morning, August 27<sup>th</sup> at the Regional Coordination Center in Manchester, CT where it was determined that Region 3 coordination and operational elements would not be deployed, in favor of individual municipalities running their own respective operations. Regional resources were to be held in reserve as backup only. Therefore, no Regional shelter operation was planned for people or animals.

By Saturday evening, August 27<sup>th</sup>, the City of East Hartford, customarily a Regional shelter site, elected to open their municipal shelter, also within the East Hartford High School campus. The Region 3 Animal Response Team was requested to deploy at that site in support of the City. Eight members of the Animal Response Team mobilized cages and support equipment and then operated an evacuation animal shelter in a science classroom complex overnight, providing shelter to just a few pets. Most team members were released prior to midnight that same Saturday. Shelter breakdown and demobilization was ordered by 3 PM Sunday, August 28th.

With respect to overall preparedness and response, it was reported by local media that the storm was less severe than predicted and that the response was more robust than ultimately necessary. The responder community was nevertheless proud of their demonstrated ability to respond. In terms of R-ESF 11 capabilities, the Region 3 Animal Response Team demonstrated the effectiveness of our planning process and response capability during Hurricane Irene. The Team deployed within 2 hours of the request to do so and accomplished the delegated task of providing shelter to the displaced pets of evacuated citizens.

## 2. Winter Storm Alfred, November 5 – November 6, 2011

This unusual early winter storm brought twelve to eighteen inches of snow to Capitol Region communities, damaging trees and power lines throughout Region 3. Almost 1 million people were initially without power and after 8 days there were several hundred thousand still without power.

In this incident, no shelters were opened in advance of the storm. After the storm had passed, 80 shelter sites were opened in the 41 communities in the Region, with some providing shelter for household pets and service animals. The Region 3 Animal Response Team was not deployed as an operational unit, however several caches of animal cages and related equipment were provided to communities for their local use.

In this case, it is too early to determine what political and media fallout may occur relative to the lack of Regional resources requested or utilized. Politicians and the media are already blaming the local electric utility, Connecticut Light and Power, for a lack of storm readiness, however the accuracy of that charge is far from clear. This was by all accounts an unusually severe weather event and one, which occurred at an uncharacteristic time of year.

As constituent governments in a home rule state, Connecticut municipalities continue to suffer from an inability to cooperate, collaborate and share control during emergencies. This independence clearly harms all of their response capability in disasters, as they tend to avoid preparing and responding regionally, in favor of independent action.