

**MVMA Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Committee/Animal Issues Working Group meeting
minutes 4-28-21**

Attendance-see attached roster

Updates

American Red Cross

- In response mode. One quarter of their workforce is deployed on some assignment and trying to work virtually when applicable.
- Mass care is still following a non-congregate shelter format by using hotels. They have found it easier to shelter evacuees with pets this way. It is going well so far. A question was asked about the costs of non-congregate sheltering vs. congregate sheltering. At this time Red Cross is not seeing huge differences between the costs for each type of housing.

MN Animal Disaster Coalition-no recent call outs, training has been on hold.

MNVMRC

- The drills and training for the REP program are still up in the air for the summer. The Wabasha reception center is scheduled for a FEMA exercise in September. If FEMA personnel are not allowed to travel at that time, the REP program will see if there are virtual options for the exercise and FEMA evaluation.
- State Vaccination Group-in March, the Biden Administration expanded the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act (PREP Act) to include more professions who would be allowed to administer COVID vaccines to the public. This act extends liability protections to entities and individuals who administer covered medical countermeasures against a public health threat or emergency. The expanded list of eligible providers included veterinarians along with dentists, EMTs and other professions. Inclusion in the amended PREP Act at the federal level is important for the coverage it extends to the listed professions. Dr. Beth Thompson (MN Board of Animal Health), Dr. Julie Wilson (MN Board of Veterinary Medicine and Dr. Joni Scheftel (MN Department of Health) were instrumental in working on this at the state level. As of mid-April, veterinarians in Minnesota are now eligible to join the State Vaccination Group which is housed under MN Responds along with the other Medical Reserve Corps groups. The SVG is independent of the other MRC groups and has its own liability coverage for the members who are administering vaccines. Kathy sent messaging to members and updated the MNVMRC website to include directions for members who may want to participate in the SVG.
- The MNVMRC hosted a virtual version of our foreign animal disease training module on April 17, 2021. Modules included the MN Board of Animal Health introduction to foreign animal disease preparedness, an introduction to the Incident Command System, personal protective equipment and foreign animal disease planning with managed captive wildlife. We had 24 participants from Minnesota, Illinois and North Dakota including veterinarians, veterinary students, veterinary technicians, emergency management at the county and state levels. Overall, the virtual format seemed to work well.

MN Board of Animal Health

- Continue to work on African Swine Fever preparedness
- Also working on disposal planning and have done some cold weather trials.
- They tested the depopulation trailers which use CO2 in colder weather and found a few challenges they are working to fix.
- They were able to use the depop trailer and CO2 effectively for adult animals. They used cull sows and found it worked, but the sows used more CO2 than smaller hogs.
- They also have a project to use surrogate viruses to check the grinding and composting equipment after cleaning and disinfection to verify viral inactivation.
- Lucy Hunt from the MN Department of Agriculture is working to update SOPs.
- They have a grant to test using nitrogen in the depop trailers to assess how well that works.

MN Department of Agriculture

- Working on a sampling plan.
- They are planning training for REP. It will be minimal hands on training at this time.
- They are looking at a new foam delivery system where nitrogen gas will be used. They are planning to demo it this summer if possible.
- They also held a demo using the current foaming system last month.

HSEM

- Still activated for COVID and are focusing on vaccinations at this time.
- Working on the drills for the REP program.
- Governor's Homeland Security and Emergency Management conference planned for a live event in 2022. Cassie is looking for program ideas (cassie.calametti@state.mn.us)

Department of Human Services

- Many staffing changes. David Jensen left his position for the State Fire Marshal's Office. Ross Hoernemann has taken his position. Susan Thibedeau-Coilan has retired and Michelle Lakso has stepped into her position.

U of MN CVM

- Trying to teach virtually as much as possible. They are not allowing nonessential personnel on campus.
- For classes or labs that must be done in person, the students are grouped in pods and are kept together.

USDA-Animal Care employees have been working at vaccinations sites around the country.

MVMA

- Planning on a live convention in 2022. They may still consider an online option depending on the circumstances.
- Veterinary Technician licensing bill (HF 2553) has been introduced in the House by Rep. John Huot. This bill could have important and positive implications for deployment of veterinary

technicians across state lines for emergency and disaster response. Full description can be found at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/bill.php?f=HF2553&b=house&y=2021&ssn=0>

Pet Sheltering Committee

- We are still waiting for the after-action report from the animal sheltering workshop. Due to a lengthy family emergency, one of the facilitators has been unable to work on the project much. Kathy talked to them a few weeks ago, and it sounds like this report is almost finished.
- No new reports on sheltering needs since the last meeting except what was already discussed in the Red Cross and MNADC updates.
- Kathy is currently working on a survey distributed to the emergency managers asking about animal resource caches. That list will be made available once all the data is compiled.

Veterinary Resources Committee

- The veterinary/MNWALK 37 resource guide is due to be updated. Kathy is always looking for input into the content of the resource guide.
- Dr. Willette and Dr. Jorgensen have been in contact with Jeanne Rasmussen the new VOAD coordinator for HSEM. She is interested in being part of the joint committee/working group. She has been in the position since early April.

Animal Rescue

- No updates from BART or Minneapolis Mounted Patrol/Minneapolis Fire
- MNVMRC has grant money available to host a large animal technical rescue introduction when it's safe to hold the class in person.
- Lucy Hunt suggested we notify the Minnesota Air Rescue Team of the large animal technical rescue training since they may be interested.

Managed Captive Wildlife

- Dr. Willette noted there is quite a bit of research being done on various animals and the risk of being infected with and/or transmitting SARSCoV-2.
- Wildlife rehabilitators across the country are facing some challenges. There is a patchy series of regulations overseeing wildlife rehabilitation from state to state. Often neighboring states have completely different regulations covering wildlife rehabilitation, and new regulations have been put into place since wildlife species have been implicated as species that can become infected with the virus.
- Zoos are still dealing with SARSCoV-2 in some of their populations. USDA has a non-species-specific vaccine that has been used in primates, great apes, felids and likely mustelids.

NASAAEP Virtual Summit-recap

- Lucy Hunt found the presentation on Michigan's sampling exercises interesting and would like to plan something similar for the REP program in MN.
- Dr. Greg Suskovic highlighted the presentation given by Dr. Christopher Riley about responder fatigue, self-care and injury prevention.
- Kathy Jorgensen appreciated the emphasis on personal protective equipment for responders. She also discussed the AVMA's initiative on disaster response accreditation. The AVMA is

hoping to roll this out in 2022. ASAR Training and Response plans to have training modules in HAZWOPER available on their website soon.

NASAAEP Summit-future

- The NASAAEP board announced the next live summit will take place in the Twin Cities. We already had a small group of people working on this and met with the board virtually late last summer. Kathy has already sent a list of potential venues and sponsors to the board.
- Moving forward-need a small group of people to act as a summit task force as we work towards scheduling and planning along with the NASAAEP board. Dr. Willette, Betsy Phillips and Dr. Cheryl Eia have all agreed to participate and will meet virtually with Dr. Yvonne Nadler on 5-6-21. If anyone else has an interest in participating, please let Kathy know (coordinator.mnvmrc@gmail.com)
- We will also need some personnel during the summit for helping the NASAAEP board with registration, room moderators, general errands, etc.
- We will keep you all updated as we move forward!