

Animals in Disasters



SUMMER WYATT
WV STATE DIRECTOR – HUMANE SOCIETY OF
THE UNITED STATES

How Did DART Start?

- After Hurricane Andrew struck Florida, in 1992, victims were distressed when they could not bring pets to public shelters.
- Some people are more concerned for their animals in disasters than they are for themselves. This may impair their ability to make sensible decisions about their own safety & that of rescue workers. Examples include: Evacuation failures & re-entry attempts, and unsafe rescue attempts.



Why Plan?



- If not managed, the animals themselves can become part of the problem and create public health and safety risks - protect animal and human health.
- Good animal management will assist in minimising the impact of the event – reduce magnitude.
- Planning can help protect animal management teams from being expected to work miracles with very short notice & inadequate resources.
- Consulting with local emergency management coordinators can help capture any plans that are in place & can ensure that are part of the overall response.

People and Animals



Understand:

- People will not want to leave pets.
- 60% would risk their life for pet (AVMA).
- 60% households include animals.
- Most have more than 1.

Impact:

- Think outside the box (dogs/ cats).
- Be cautious, even if you know the animal.
- Animal behavior.
- Disorientation/ stress

Disaster/ Evacuation Planning

- Don't be complacent – no one is immune.
- Animals take more time to evacuate/ plan for.
- Planning reduces stress & helps leave earlier.
- Planning preserves options and LIFE!
- Record keeping
- Potential media nightmare.



Options For Animals During Disasters

- Shelter in place
 - If owners are able
- Evacuate
 - Owners need plan & options for shelter
- Pet friendly shelter
 - “people” shelters allowing animals – owners care for own pets
- Emergency animal shelter
 - Volunteers care for pets



Why Pet Friendly Shelters are Needed

- Do not want separation.
- Some pets do better w/ owners caring for them.
- Cannot afford cost of hotel/boarding.
- Cannot find a pet friendly hotel.
- No options w/ family/ friends.
- Should be last resort but may be only option.



Sheltering/ Evacuating by Owners



Educating Pet Owners

- Preparedness kits for each pet:
 - Medications
 - Evacuation plan
 - Blankets & toys
 - Food & water for @ least 3 days
 - Crate(s)
 - Collar with tags should always be on animal(s)
 - Veterinary records
 - Other useful items

Livestock Owners

- Owners must have a plan!
 - Trailering/ transport
 - Containment
 - Identification
 - Veterinary records/ paperwork
 - Where can you go with your animals?
 - Feed/ water access

Livestock Disaster/ Evacuation Plan Cont'd



- Evacuation – can prevent electrocution, dehydration, & barn collapse deaths
 - Evacuate ASAP – be ready
 - Work to establish shelters for livestock – fairgrounds, etc
 - Identify evacuation routes
 - Identify handlers and drivers
- Disaster kit (in central location, available to everyone)
 - Current listing of all animals (location, feeding info, etc)
 - Proof of ownership
 - Temporary ID supplies (neckbands, halters, markers)
 - First aid, flashlight, batteries, flares

Plan for Your Community

Including key stakeholders and allies, can help synchronise any processes and apply consistency.



Possible Partners

- Animal control representative
- Animal humane association representative
- Public veterinarians
- Private veterinarians
- Veterinary technicians
- Animal health regulatory agency representative
- Public works representatives
- Animal industry representatives
- Environmental representative
- County Extension agent
- Media communication representatives
- Elected official representative
- Emergency management coordinator representative

First Actions:

- **Create Local Animal Issues Committee or DART and Plan**
 - **Submit to Local EM for approval**
- **Committee should advise local government authorities**
- **Lay out possible animal disasters in area**
- **Include Human Care Agencies**

Disasters – the Expected & Unexpected



Man Made

- MOU
- Can/ will you assist local law enforcement?
- Hoarding
- Neglect
 - Livestock
 - Domestic “pets”

Natural

- Flooding
- Earthquake
- Wildfire
- Blizzard
- Tornado
- Heat Wave

Additional Thoughts

- Options for animal care:
 - Foster care program:
 - ✦ When shelter is closing but animals still need care.
 - ✦ Last resort & used w/ caution.
 - ✦ Thoroughly screened private homes.
 - Temporary day care
 - ✦ Owners may be returning to retrieve belongings or working.
 - ✦ May be unable to leave pet where they are staying.
- Donation management!
- Off site storage?
- Control intake of supplies or it will control you!
- Set up drop off/ pick up of food to those affected.
- Need a donation manager
 - Approves requests



Distribution plan for food/ water/ crates

How will contain distressed animals?

Proper skills/equipment to deal with a control distressed animals.

Knowing when NOT to respond & having a list of experts to contact.

Staying organized: signage, paperwork, ICS, protocol.



Continue Training Needs & Update Plans Often

Implementation

- Educate public:
 - The best plan is to evacuate with your pets to friends and/or family
 - Identify and promote pet friendly policies of Hotels and Motels during emergencies
 - Shelters are life boats, for both you and/or your pets

- Step One: Establish Policy Guidelines
- Step Two: Develop Standard Operating Guides, Procedures, and Best Practices
- Step Three: Training & Implementation
- No one should be turned away from a shelter with pets



What Do You Need?

Facility:

Animal shelter/kennel

Pet shops

Vet clinics

Wildlife rehab center

Horse stable

Non porous/ solid flooring, safety standards, free of obligations during emergencies – MOU.

- **Team members!**
 - Staffing & security.
- **Training**
 - Florida SART
 - FEMA
 - American Humane
 - HSUS
- **Supplies**
 - Trailer?
 - Crates
 - Leashes
 - Bowls – food & water
 - Cleaning supplies
 - Hardware, tools, zip ties, duct tape.
 - Signage & paperwork – office equip
 - Litter, trash cans & bags, first aid, blankets.



Interested in joining a “DART”?

**DARTs & emergency trailers
exist in some WV counties:**

Jefferson

Ohio Valley

Preston

Hancock

WV DART in next 5 years??

**National Disaster Prep
Month Project?**



Summer Wyatt – WV State Director
HSUS – 304.887.4058
swyatt@humanesociety.org