

**CAEM Meeting Minutes:** March 27, 2007 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**Attending:** Blanchard, Cole, Ehart, Elvinger, Heath, Heckert, Littlefield, Lovern, Levings, O'Brien, Ostrowski, Parr, Rankin, Roehr, Robinson, Roth, Scarfe, Siminuch, Thompson, Dennis Wilson and Ron Wilson.

1. **Government Relations Committee Meeting in DC, February** – Keith Roehr reviewed the highlights of the GRC notes he prepared and circulated to the committee prior to the meeting. GRC top priority items were Continuity of Business Plan, NAHLN, and All Hazards All Species Resolution. The response to the resolution was circulated earlier to the committee and included in the GRC notes. Other topics covered were VS Memorandum 580.4 as relates to the role of the NAHLN in FAD investigations, Emergency Management and Diagnostics (EMD) update from Jose Diez including PPE resolution. Any question e-mail Keith directly, if questions pertain to a specific unit and we wish to have them clarified at the next meeting, please e-mail Pat Blanchard to forward to the appropriate party.

Keith reported that APHIS has hired 3 FTE within Animal Care and some of their responsibilities are related to the emergency response regarding companion, research, and exhibit animals. Allan Hogue of Animal Care co-chaired the ESF-11 rewrite effort with Tom McGinn that submitted document to DHS on Feb 16. Notes on this effort were included in GRC notes under Tom McGinn's section.

The All species All Hazards resolution indicated USDA would welcome an umbrella organization to lead the national coalition the resolution recommends. After discussion, CAEM felt, AVMA would be the most appropriate and will draft a letter for Lee Myers to sign requesting AVMA take on this role. It was felt the umbrella organization would host conference calls, meetings, identify the right people to be at those meeting, obtain and circulate best practices, facilitate the work of group, and coordinate with APHIS. Currently AVMA may not have adequate staffing to fulfill this role without new sources of funds. They are currently recruiting for a leadership position in Emergency Response but Cindy Lovern will be leaving and has been our primary contact on the emergency issues and is AVMA staff liaison role to their Disaster and Emerging Issues committee so there may be a transition gap in knowledge and historical information on the issues.

Bethany O'Brien: VS worked with Animal Care and Wildlife Services and wrote an APHIS position statement on all hazard/all species responses. The statement is working its way up the chain for approval before it can be circulated outside of USDA. Within EM & D a carcass disposal workgroup is currently forming.

2. **Community Continuity Planning (CCP) Concept Paper** – Sebastian Heath: The paper was circulated prior to the meeting. Sebastian reviewed the reasoning for this broad approach within USDA including the need to recognize that an agricultural disaster impacts the community outside of the direct farm and raw product processors. Another reason for this approach is to utilize the programs and expertise that already exist for continuity of business planning from other agencies within USDA (ie Rural Development, FSA, etc.) but not within APHIS. A meeting with major stakeholders will occur in April to further develop the concept paper. The stakeholder groups to be represented were sent in previous email with the draft paper. Curt Mann, former chair of the Food and Ag Government Coordinator Council, requested that this multi-agency approach within USDA be taken to leverage expertise and existing funding streams. Currently a plant or animal disease is not listed as an eligibility trigger, though this can be addressed internally. The grants are generally intended for operational expenses to bring the key people together to develop the plans.

Outcome of the national group would be to provide to guidelines to help communities in developing their own plans. Guidelines would include measures of success, who should be part of the plan development process particularly as plans relate to a foreign animal disease emergency. Plans could include how agriculture would operate during an outbreak. CCP concept is focused mostly on planning which includes identifying funding sources and their triggers so it can flow readily and quickly in the face of disasters, utilizing community skills and innovative ideas, such as auctioneers for appraisers, slaughter plant workers for on farm kills, etc. The plan could involve elements that would facilitate refinancing and response to disasters.

Funds are awarded through a grant process and recipients must indicate how it will benefit the community. Funding is usually to provide for travel and operational expenses to develop the plan. It must be community driven and plans only succeed when the community is motivated to develop them. Communities are not specifically defined and it will be the role of the concept paper stakeholder group to define what a community is in broad enough terms that it could include an agricultural community for instance dairy industry of xx state. Ideally, an agricultural related "community" group would develop a business continuity plan and measures for success for a foreign animal disease event.

Regarding conflict of this approach with the Animal Ag Coalition regional demo projects in national livestock continuity of business project (NL COBP) we supported in USAHA resolution #6. The CCP approach could be used by develop plans recognizing the broad impact of disease on a community and utilizing existing funding streams within USDA without needing new funds in a tight federal budget.

NL-COBP also wants to review, harmonize and modify existing federal, state and local disease response plans to mitigate their impact on animal production agriculture and related businesses and make them more continuity of business friendly during an outbreak.

CAEM role: It was suggested that the committee could facilitate the Animal Ag Coalition and the CCP plan moving towards similar goals. Bob Ehart noted the NL-COBP, even if it does not acquire the funding requested, opens the door for further discussion and points out the gaps in the current foreign animal disease response.

3. **ABA Model Holding Time Act-** Pat Blanchard recorded pros and cons comments from discussion and will send to the committee for final comments due by April 6<sup>th</sup> so these could be forwarded to the National Assembly as the invited respondent and USAHA may also respond separately. A final response is due to ABA by April 20.
4. **Farm Bill:** Bob Ehart indicated that hearings and writing will occur in April and May, debate in July, conference in August, and the bill should be passed in September. There is a baseline, 15-20 billion which could move around but there must be offset for any new funding requests. The Animal Ag Coalition proposal related to emergency response funding within the Farm Bill was circulated to the committee prior to the meeting and included 60M for 5 years to fund the NL-COBP.
5. **Ag Emergency State Needs Document:** Pat circulated a justification document written by Jim Roth and Jane Gaylon at the request of Elizabeth Pyke. This document was intended to provide justification for why money was needed to accompany the document on how much and for what it was needed that Elizabeth provided in December for feedback. Since then she has changed jobs and been unable to complete the revisions. At this time no other

state in the Midwest consortium has been able to assign someone to someone to take it on. If anyone is aware of a state-based legislative unit active on these issues in Washington D.C. that is willing to take this on, please contact Keith Roehr. At the state level FTE has continued to be the major problem and most funds are not allocated for this purpose.

6. **Update – SSP:** M. Siminuch reported they reviewed sections 2 and 3 of chapter 1. These need to be more detailed with criteria and how to apply those criteria, validation of the tools for both pre- and post-harvest vulnerability assessments.
7. **Four States FDA Exercise:** Dave Tompkins forwarded a 1 page with bullets from their exercise. If you have further questions contact him directly.
8. **Next meeting April 26, Thursday, 11am EDT.**