Lessons Learned from 2017 Wildfires

USAHA Committee on Animal Emergency Management

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Lead up to the fire

- March 6, 2017
- Good rains summer/fall 2016 – lots of forage
- High temperatures, high southwesterly winds
- Arcing of electric wires started fires
- Rapidly moved northeast developing long fire line
- Rapid change of wind to northwest pushed miles wide fire line to southeast
- So wide and so fast that people could not get animals moved quickly enough
- 4 Separate wildfires
Damage

- 2 lives lost
- 310,000 acres burned
- > 3,000 head of cattle killed or euthanized
- >6,000 head of swine killed
- ~ 550 miles of fence damaged or destroyed
- 8 homes destroyed
- Uncounted outbuildings, tractors, equipment, hay
Immediate Needs

- Carcass Disposal
- Injured animal care
- Feed and hay
Long Term Needs

- Financial Assistance
  - FSA, NRCS,
  - > $3 million donated
- Hay and Feed
  - >20,000 round bales and many tons of feed
- Fencing Material
  - > 50 miles of fencing materials donated
Lessons Learned

- ODAFF is responsible for carcass disposal in FADs
- In OK’s EOP no agency is given responsibility for carcass disposal in mass casualty or natural disasters
- Even though producers don’t want us involved in their business in normal times, they sort of expected us to take care of things in the emergency
- Our agency has laws on carcass disposal but they can be waived in emergency situations
Plans for the Future

- Put carcass disposal coordination into our Annex in the State EOP
- In situations like this where there are a lot of livestock involved have a team in place to be a clearing house for information and coordination
- We were never officially requested for assistance
- Local Co-ops, County Extension Offices, industry worked together to manage the follow up
- ~ 70% fences rebuilt
Questions?