



UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2016 Resolution

120th Annual Meeting

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RESOLUTION NUMBER: 2

APPROVED

**SOURCE: USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT**

SUBJECT MATTER: Radiological Incident Response and Resources

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

With more than 100 fixed nuclear facilities nationwide, states must be prepared to assist citizens in the event of a site emergency. Public health and other partners will look to animal/agricultural responders for resources needed for service animals and pets. State animal/agriculture emergency planners have identified a severe lack of these resources and therefore a serious gap in our national animal response capability.

Since October 2006, the Pet Evacuation and Transportation Standards (PETS) Act has required local and state emergency plans to include citizens with service animals and pets before, during, and after disasters of all types. Citizens evacuated during a radiation emergency event arriving at reception centers with their service animals and pets will require triage, radiation monitoring, external decontamination, and post-decontamination services and support. Trained personnel, standardized protocols and equipment (including personal protective equipment) must be in place to provide these services. Because only a very limited number of persons have received animal decontamination training at both state and federal levels, resources would be immediately overwhelmed in a disaster.

The United States Department of Health and Human Services and National Disaster Management System (HHS/NDMS) have proven experience at the development and maintenance of personnel resources such as the National Veterinary Response Team (NVRT) to assist states. We believe HHS/NDMS/NVRT provides the ideal solution to fill this critical response gap by development of the following resources: caches of equipment to include mobile animal decontamination portals; personnel teams with current training in animal decontamination techniques; and delivery of guidance and standardized training that can build local response capability to assist animal/agricultural and public health emergency responders and citizens at local, state and federal levels.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Radiological Emergency Preparedness (REP) Program coordinates the national effort to provide state, local, and tribal governments with relevant and executable planning, training, and exercise guidance and policies necessary to ensure that adequate capabilities exist to prevent, protect against, mitigate the effects of, respond to, and recover from incidents involving

commercial nuclear power plants. Following a request from the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) in 2014 to suggest that the REP Program utilize available pet decontamination guidelines to expand the REP program guidelines, the January 2016, REP Program Manual states “FEMA encourages offsite response organizations to plan for the reality that in an emergency, many evacuees will arrive at reception centers with their pets” and “no specific guidance on the radiological monitoring and decontamination of household pets currently exists.”

The United States Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate is capable of performing research that could produce scientific data that could be used to develop best practices for animal decontamination.

This Resolution was originally addressed to the Department of Health and Human Services in 2014, stating: “The United States Animal Health Association urges the Department of Health and Human Services to develop and maintain personnel, equipment, and training resources, especially those needed for pet and service animal decontamination, to supplement state animal response in radiation emergencies and all-hazards events.” The issue is as relevant in 2016 as it was in 2014.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Science and Technology Directorate, to develop and perform research to produce data related to effective methods of animal decontamination in radiological events. Furthermore, DHS is urged to coordinate with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Radiological Emergency Preparedness (REP) Program to apply this data toward development of best practices for decontamination of animals. Lastly, USAHA urges DHS and FEMA REP to partner with the Department of Health and Human Services National Disaster Management System/National Veterinary Response Team programs to develop and deliver training courses to fill the gaps in nuclear event response capabilities that currently exist in local and state jurisdictions.