

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES, WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

Consider yourself lucky if you have an hour's notice of an impending disaster that could affect your life for days, weeks, months or longer. The recent Napa earthquake is an unfortunate but timely reminder that some disasters occur without any warning at all. California is earthquake country and although forecasts of future quakes may help us prepare for these inevitable events, no one can really predict their date, time and place of occurrence.

In addition to earthquakes, wildfires are a given in California. The King Fire in the north, currently in progress, has burned over 96,000 acres and is only 68% contained. Last year, the Rim Fire,



*A horse runs inside a horse racetrack as the Cedar Fire burns in the background.
Photo by K.C. Alfred/UT San Diego.*

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which started in the Stanislaus National Forest, grew to 10,000 acres in 36 hours and 100,000 acres after four days. It took two months to contain.

Two Southern California wildfires that are seared in the memory of those involved occurred in 2003 and 2007, both in San Diego County. The Cedar Fire burned 273,246 acres, killing 15 people and destroying 2,232 homes before being contained, while the Witch Creek fire burned nearly 200,000 acres and triggered the largest evacuation in county history: 500,000 people and 15,000 animals, including several thousand horses.

And there are the occasional floods. In 1974, a series of subtropical storms caused rainfall at elevations of 11,000 feet, melting snow and triggering a cascade of events: rivers overflowed, levees broke and communities found themselves under water. At that time, there was no system at the local, state or federal level to rescue any animals. Dr. John Madigan, Director of the UC Davis International Animal Welfare Training Institute and the Veterinary Emergency Response Team, went to help. He recalls:

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Dr. Claudia Sonder and Lightning Juice

By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail. —Benjamin Franklin

Working with horses in an emergency situation requires experience that many first responders do not have. I've been there, in the pitch black, with well-intentioned firefighters trying to slide an injured horse out of a wooded trench. The horse was panicked and struggling violently. His head was stuck down where I could not access his jugular vein to readily sedate or anesthetize him. I needed their help to reposition him, yet I knew I was putting them at risk to do so. We worked as a team to pull and push until we were able to wedge the horse out of the rocks and move him to a more open spot. He was cold and fatigued from struggle, and he was mad. The men and women with me did not understand why we couldn't hold him up or prop him up. They had never dealt with the power and unpredictable movement of an injured horse. I did my best to keep them safe and position them out of harm's way. In the end, despite hours of work, we were not able to get that horse off the hillside. That experience made me realize that communities and emergency workers

are not prepared for large animal rescue.

In a natural disaster involving horses or other animals, a community large-animal response team can mean the difference between rescue and injury/death. The city of Napa had no warning on the night of August 24, when residents were awakened by a 6.0 earthquake—strong enough to break water lines, cause power outages, ignite a trailer park, and render numerous structures uninhabitable. Local hospitals tended to a number of people who were injured by glass and falling objects, and there were casualties involving crush injuries from collapsing structures. Over the past several weeks, I have heard stories of fear, damage to homes, and loss of keepsakes. The overwhelming sentiment, however, is one of gratitude and a sense of relief that more people and animals were not seriously injured.

What will you do in the middle of the night when your family and animals are at stake? Are you prepared? Is your community prepared? Previous disasters have taught us that the majority of pet owners are reluctant to evacuate without their animals. In many cases, this puts them in direct danger and complicates rescue efforts. Yet, in spite of federal and state laws that were passed after Katrina to include provisions for pets in a disaster, a significant number of states still do not have plans that include animals. Even within the states that do, it is up to individual cities, counties and communities to prepare to carry out the plans with rescue workers trained to handle animals.

In a significant emergency, access to disaster relief efforts will be limited to those who are trained responders. That's why it's so important to

organize, train, and become certified in large animal disaster response. Communities who regularly battle fire or flooding have learned that a well-organized and trained large animal response team can work directly with their local Office of Emergency Services to rescue horses and other animals affected by disaster. We highlight a few of these successful programs to inspire you and serve as a model for your community.

There is a wealth of information available regarding preparing your home and your animals for disaster. The initial phases of preparedness, described in this *Horse Report*, can be accomplished readily and many have taken those steps. Where most horse owners and rural communities stall is in organizing stakeholders for action and training individual players to be part of a response team as certified disaster workers. This requires the collective effort of a few dedicated horse owners in the community willing to lead the effort and having the perseverance to follow through. Our *Horse Report* contains links to experienced groups who know how to accomplish this and can help get you started.

As Benjamin Franklin said, *By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail*. So contact your local Office of Emergency Services and start the conversation. Work with your Animal Services Department, Fire Department, Police/Sheriff's office, and local veterinarians to create a plan for action. The Center for Equine Health and the School of Veterinary Medicine at UC Davis are committed to supporting and communicating training opportunities for large animal disaster worker certification and integration into their local Office of Emergency Services. If you need help finding training opportunities, don't hesitate to contact our office at the Center for Equine Health. ■

Disaster Preparedness — From page 1

I knew we were responding very late. Those horses and the dogs and cats on rooftops were stranded for over 72 hours before a rescue was sanctioned by Emergency Services. As a veterinarian, I was forever changed by this lack of a plan for animals affected by such a disaster, and the horrific suffering of so many animals.

Hurricane Katrina has been described by UC Davis veterinarian Dr. Eric Davis as ...*an apocalypse of mythic proportions for humans and animals.* Assisting with the care of the thousands of animals rendered homeless and wandering the city, Dr. Davis directed an emergency animal shelter and provided veterinary care during the cleanup. He remembers:

The state and national governmental departments and other organizations who had disaster response programs were totally overwhelmed. Communications collapsed, and untested and underfunded relief plans failed.

No matter what the disaster, people and animals are affected. Public safety services including fire and police are likely to be overwhelmed due to the impact of the disaster. Local emergency plans are usually limited to evacuating people, and emergency shelters for humans may deny admission to pets for health and safety reasons.

Large animals require specialized transport and holding areas, which may be difficult or impossible to arrange during a sudden disaster.

And, first responders and other emergency aid workers typically are not experienced in handling horses and other large animals. For these reasons, individuals—particularly owners of horses and livestock—must rely on themselves to have an emergency plan for their animals.

This *Horse Report* describes three ways to develop a disaster plan. Start by thinking about the types of disasters that could occur in your area and develop a plan around those risks (<http://myhazards.calema.ca.gov>). One option may require evacuation and another sheltering in place. Once you're prepared to take care of your own, network with your neighbors for added security for your animals and yourselves.

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*Border patrol agents and volunteers try to get a frightened and reluctant horse into a trailer during the Cedar Fire.
Photo by K.C. Alfred, UT San Diego.*

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The third step is to become involved in organizing an animal disaster group in your community. Become a leader in this effort. This usually starts with a meeting involving horse owners, veterinarian(s), local city or county Animal Services Department, Fire and Police or Sheriff's Department. We provide a couple of different models as well as cite several large animal rescue groups as examples for what can be accomplished for the welfare of all the animals in your city or county.

Three Ways to Get Your Ducks in a Row

Step One: Develop Your Individual Plan

Horses and other large animals require extra consideration in disaster planning because of their size and specific needs, especially when it comes to transporting them to safety. Taking care of animals in these situations requires advance planning and practice. Since you won't have much time to think or act during an emergency, advance preparation will make things much easier during an already stressful situation.

1. Identification. The goal of permanent identification for your animals is reunification in the event you become separated during a disaster. Permanently identify each horse by a method such as microchipping. This should be done by a veterinarian and the paperwork sent in to register the identity. **Note: the microchip is useless without the registration.** Other humane methods of identification include an ID tag attached to the horse's halter

or a plastic neckband engraved or marked with information. At the time of evacuation, consider additional temporary identification such as a leg band. In a pinch, you can spray paint your name and phone number on the horse.

Also, take several full-frame and close-up photographs with detailed descriptions for each horse you own. Record breed, color, size, markings, scars, cowlicks or whorls, and other significant features. Keep copies in a sealed plastic ziplock bag and store it in a safe place. Send a copy to a friend or family member so that the information is preserved in case of fire, or keep a copy in digital form on a cloud server for access from a phone or other mobile device.

2. Halters and Lead Ropes.

Keep halters and lead ropes ready for your horses. On each halter attach a luggage tag with the following information: the horse's name, your name, email address, your telephone number, and another emergency telephone number where someone can be reached.

3. Medical Records and Photos.

Place your horses' Coggins tests, veterinary papers, identification photographs, and vital information—such as medical history, allergies, and emergency telephone numbers (veterinarian, family members, etc.)—in a watertight plastic bag. Store the bag with your other important papers in a safe place that will be easy for you to access and take with you when you and your horses evacuate. An old backpack makes a useful storage container for "grab and go".

4. Transportation. If you have your own horse trailer, keep it road ready by checking the tires, floors and hitch frequently. Make sure your truck is in good working order and that the gas tank is at least half full. If

you don't have a horse trailer, make arrangements to have your horse trailered in an emergency. If you can, have several reliable people who could help with transportation in case one person can't help.

5. Do Your Horses Know How to Load and Unload?

It is vital that your horses are comfortable being loaded into and unloaded from a trailer. A stressful situation will only add to any existing loading issues. If your horses have not been trained to load and unload, train or have them trained and practice the procedure so they become used to it. A major problem in the San Diego County wildfires were horses (and mules) who were not trailer-trained, making it impossible to transport them to safety. As a result, some animals were left behind.

6. Evacuation Sites/Refuge.

Know where you can take your horses in an emergency evacuation. Identify at least two (2) exit routes and a **prearranged destination**. If possible, make arrangements with a friend or another horse owner to stable your horses in a safe zone. Contact your local animal control agency or local emergency management authorities for information about shelters in your area. During mandatory evacuations, shelter sites for animals will be identified by the Office of Emergency Services.

7. Back-Up Plan. Have a back-up plan in case it's impossible to take your horse with you when you evacuate. Consider different types of disasters and whether your horses would be better off in a barn or loose in a field. Your local humane organization or emergency management agency should be able to provide you with information about your community's disaster response plans.



Hickory contemplates a request to go in the trailer. Enticed by some grain, he goes right in. Enticement will not work with horses who have not been properly trained to load and unload into a trailer.



8. Communicate Your Plan.

Share your evacuation plans with friends and neighbors. Post detailed instructions in several places—including the barn office or tack room, the horse trailer, and barn entrances—to ensure emergency workers can see them in case you are not able to evacuate your horses yourself.

9. Evacuate Sooner Rather Than Later.

Evacuate early, even before there is an official evacuation order. If you wait until the last minute to evacuate, emergency management officials may tell you that you must leave your horses behind. In this case, your horses could be unattended for days without care, food, or water.

10. Supplies. Have fresh water and hay available for 72 hours. Don't forget the water buckets. Prepare a basic first aid kit that is portable and easily accessible to bring with you for your horses. Also, prepare an emergency kit that includes water buckets, tarpaulins, leg wraps, knife, scissors and wire cutters. (See <http://cal-cares.com/personal-family> for what to include in an emergency kit.)

Step Two: Network with Your Neighbors

An important aspect of a disaster plan is to network with your neighbors, especially when you have horses and live in a rural area. Networks provide a way for you to communicate with one another in an emergency and can be life-saving.

Talk with neighbors or friends and make arrangements to check on each other after a disaster. Tell one another if you are evacuating and to where, so authorities will know. Buddies may agree to pool resources, such as generators, water tanks, trailers, etc.

Create evacuation authority agreements with your neighbors so that if you are unable to care for or evacuate your animals, they will do it for you. Make sure your neighbors are familiar with handling your horses and know where you keep your animals' emergency supply kit.

Ranch owners should work with your local fire department to have a site inspection and a discussion on defensible space on your property. This will give fire department personnel the chance to evaluate your preparedness and make any recommendations to help you evacuate your horses in an emergency.

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Designate a location in a safe zone where you will meet in an emergency. Contact your local Animal Services Department or Office of Emergency Services to find out if there are predetermined locations where you and your animals should go.

Step Three: Help Create A Large Animal Response Team in Your Community

Following a major disaster, first responders such as police, fire and paramedics may not be able to meet the demands of the public. Factors such as the number of victims, communication failures and road blockages will prevent people from accessing emergency services at a moment's notice as they have come to expect by calling 911. People will need to rely on themselves and each other to meet their immediate life-saving and life-sustaining needs.

The concept for a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) was developed and implemented by the Los Angeles City Fire Department in 1985 and has since been adopted by national disaster response agencies including FEMA. CERT educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations.

Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. CERT members also are encouraged to support

emergency response agencies by taking a more active role in emergency preparedness projects in their community.

If you would like to help your community develop a large animal response team, one of the ways you can do this is to work with an established CERT program, which many communities already have in place. The advantage of going through a CERT program is that you will receive the proper training and credentials needed to be allowed to help in a disaster (to be on the right side of yellow tape), and you will be covered with certain types of insurance provided through the program.

Large Animal Response Team and a City's CERT Program

The city of San Juan Capistrano has had a CERT program in place since 2003 and many members of this community have taken an active role in emergency preparedness. In 2009, equestrians recognized that they wanted to focus their disaster training efforts exclusively on handling horses during a disaster, when there was a need to evacuate animals to safety. Local resident Dr. Julie Ryan Johnson, former Director of Orange County Animal Control and a veterinarian long involved in animal welfare and shelter issues, came up with the idea for organizing a Large Animal Response Team.

Initially, those interested in joining the Large Animal Response Team (LART) were required to first complete the CERT basic training and certification program (approximately 20 hours), but eventually the large-animal program evolved and was sanctioned to operate as an independent response team by the City of San Juan Capistrano. Four levels of training in the administration, handling

and evacuation of horses were established, and volunteers training at each level could be certified to fill a corresponding role during an actual emergency. The four levels are as follows:

Level 1—LART Procedures and Administrative Functions at the Sheltering Site. This phase of training provides an overview of the LART program, policies and procedures with a focus on the possible duties that may be assigned a volunteer performing administrative functions in the LART program or at a sheltering site. Volunteers who complete this level are eligible to assist with administration, communications, record-keeping and paperwork at sheltering sites and during LART team activations. They may also assist with public presentations on disaster preparedness.

Level 2—Basic Large Animal Handling and LART Procedures. This level provides training in the basic skills necessary to safely handle large animals during an emergency and provides an overview of the LART program, policies and procedures. Volunteers who successfully complete Level 2 training are authorized to handle horses and other large animals at sheltering sites.

Level 3—Advanced Large Animal Handling and Trailer Loading. This phase provides training necessary to safely and effectively lead a horse or other large animal through obstacles commonly encountered in the evacuation process and to safely load horses into trailers. The training incorporates both lecture and hands-on practical application in which each volunteer is required to load horses into a variety of different trailer styles.

Level 4—Vehicle and Trailer Operations. This level is designed to provide the techniques required to



safely drive a vehicle while towing a horse trailer. The training consists of both lecture and hands-on exercises that evaluate the participant's ability to safely maneuver a vehicle in emergency evacuation vehicle operations.

San Juan Capistrano's Large Animal Rescue Team has been very successful and has been used by other cities in Los Angeles County as a model. Marc Hedgpeth, one of the founding members of LART, notes: *It is important to have a governmental agency sponsor and actually administer the program to give it credibility with all the governmental first-responder agencies (being recognized to be able to access roadblocks, etc., and for a uniform communication capability).*

We currently invite fire officials, law enforcement, animal control officials, and elected officials to come to our training sessions and our annual drill.

These photos show the Large Animal Response Team trailer, which is outfitted with supplies and equipment, including a generator, and is ready to go in an emergency. Certified members of the team wear bright, identifying vests.

Other Types of Large Animal Response Groups

There are also other ways to organize a group trained to assist in the evacuation or rescue of horses during



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an emergency. The city of Rancho Cucamonga is home to the Alta Loma Riding Club, which has a component of volunteers dedicated to serving on an emergency response team. The Alta Loma Emergency Response Team (ALERT) has two operations: horse rescues and evacuations. The group has operated successfully since 2001 when it was organized and has gained a reputation for their excellence.

ALERT differs from the Large Animal Response Team of San Juan Capistrano in that they do not go through a formal process of certification. Members of the rescue team receive training from other

members and the group conducts annual drills. ALERT always works in conjunction with the Rancho Cucamonga Fire and/or Sheriff's Department and they train with Fire Department personnel in horse handling and rescue procedures.

Where and How Do I Start?

Even the smallest communities have an emergency operations plan that describes how government and private organizations coordinate in a crisis. Emergency managers, elected officials, police or fire department officials are usually in charge of such a plan. Ask to see the local emergency operations plan. Does it have an animal component? If not, you may be able to help develop one. A good

start would be for an equestrian group (riding club or a group of horse owners) to meet with your local emergency manager to discuss how the community can support animal disaster planning efforts and develop a formal plan.

Understand that animal disaster volunteers who are called to action during emergencies work in hazardous situations and handle stressed animals. **To keep everyone safe, training is essential and required in order to be allowed to help in a disaster.** The level of training necessary depends on the level of risk, and volunteers may be expected to continue training on a

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Rancho Cucamonga's ALERT team (Alta Loma Emergency Response Team) trains with city Fire Department personnel in the handling of horses.

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yearly basis to ensure their safety or increase their skill levels.

Disaster work also requires an understanding of the Incident Command System, which provides a common hierarchy in which people can work together effectively in a chaotic situation. The Incident Command System provides standard response and operation procedures to reduce the problems and potential for miscommunication. It is a subcomponent of the National Incident Management System issued by the Department of Homeland Security in 2004.

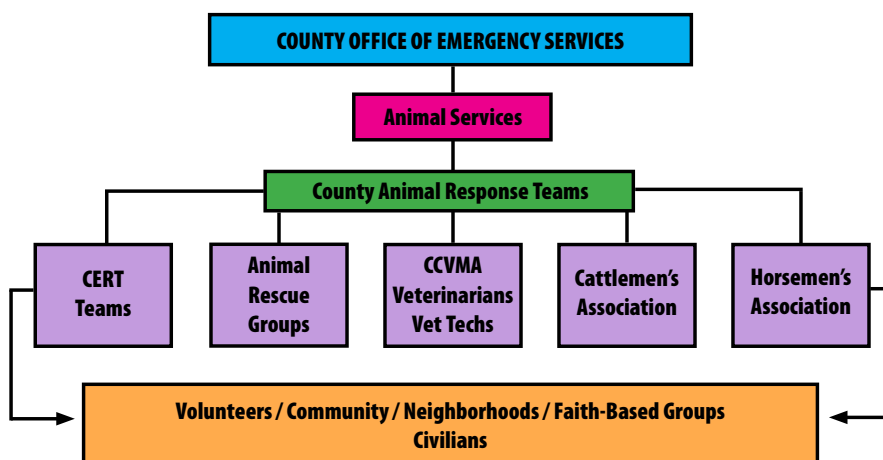
Since there are already a number of certified regional and local animal disaster groups in California, we recommend that you contact one of them to guide your local community through the proper training and certification paths. The **North Valley Animal Disaster Group** in Chico has a strong community outreach component. Representatives from this group attend statewide meetings and seminars and workshops, often giving talks on how to set up an animal disaster group in your community. Their Animal Incident Command System Matrix, which was developed locally, has become a model to other agencies and communities.

The North Valley Animal Disaster Group works in coordination with emergency services including local law enforcement and fire departments. All of these agencies have adopted the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMMS), which incorporates the Incident Command System. This group may be contacted through their website at www.nvadg.org or by calling their hotline at (530)895-0000.

Here is a partial list of some California regional animal disaster groups:

- Alta Loma Riding Club Emergency Response Team**
- County Public Health Animal Care and Control (San Bernardino)**
- County of San Diego Department of Animal Services**
- CVMA Disaster Response Group of Nevada County**
- Emergency Animal Rescue**
- North Valley Animal Disaster Group**
- San Diego Animal Rescue Reserves**
- Santa Cruz County Equine Evacuation Unit**
- Sclar Large Animal Emergency Evacuation**
- SoCal Animal Response Team**
- Yuba Sutter Domestic Animal Disaster Assistance**

Your county may have a written animal emergency plan as part of their overall emergency plan. Some of these may be accessed through the CARES website at cal-cares.com/emergency-managers/sample-county-disaster-plans.



Example of an Incident Command System involving animal response teams.

Disaster Training through UC Davis

International Animal Welfare Training Institute

The International Animal Welfare Training Institute (IAWTI) in the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine has combined forces with the California Emergency Management Agency and the California Department of Food and Agriculture to improve animal health and safety during emergency response efforts. The key area assigned to UC Davis is the training segment.

IAWTI has created training modules and curricula for first responders, emergency planners and veterinarians to improve the care of animals in



San Diego County Sheriff's deputies can only look at a wayward mule that refused to get into a horse trailer in Julian, CA. The deputies tried carrots and potato chips but had no luck. Photo by John Gastaldo, UT San Diego.

disasters. In past years, they hosted numerous workshops in several counties of California to educate and inform in some of the most significant efforts in recent years to secure the safety of animals.

The Institute also oversees the Veterinary Emergency Response Team, a group of volunteer faculty, students and staff in the School of Veterinary Medicine who have an interest in emergency and disaster response. Members of the Veterinary Emergency Response Team receive training in the Incident Command System and the National Incident Management System and become registered Disaster Service Workers. They are a recognized and fully functional Medical Reserve Corps.

Western Institute for Food Safety and Security

The mission of the Western Institute for Food Safety and Security (WIFSS) is to conduct research and provide outreach programs that will enhance food safety and defense in all sectors of the food system continuum, from environment to consumer. They work in conjunction with the Department of Homeland Security to address the awareness, preparedness and recovery from assaults on the food system.

As part of their outreach efforts, WIFSS develops sources to train first responders in rural areas of the country for disaster situations that involve or directly affect livestock and other animals. They offer an Animals in Disaster course to help prepare

first responders and community members for emergencies involving animals, including emergency animal sheltering, safe animal handling/behavior, coordinated response for integrated agencies, and Incident Command/roles and responsibilities. For upcoming courses, visit their website at: http://www.wifss.ucdavis.edu/?page_id=5048.

Protection for Animals at the State and Federal Levels

Since Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans in 2005, major changes have been made to federal and state emergency planning laws with respect to animals. At the time, there were no federal laws in place that required that animals be evacuated,

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rescued or sheltered in an emergency. The lack of planning for animals raised the specter of serious health and safety risks from abandoned animals and animal carcasses. Of course, owners forced to abandon animals were traumatized and those who stayed to care for their pets put their own lives in danger and strained the resources of emergency responders.

The lack of a plan to evacuate animals therefore caused risk to animals and humans and required significant effort on behalf of first responders to save those stranded. As a result, federal and state laws have been passed to include provisions for evacuation of animals, rescue and recovery, shelters and tracking in disaster plans.

PETS Act

In the aftermath of Katrina, Congress passed the Pet Transportation Standards (PETS) Act. The PETS Act is an amendment to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. This landmark legislation enables communities with FEMA-compliant written emergency plans for animals to be able to seek reimbursement for certain supplies, personnel costs and expenses relating to household pet and service animal management during Presidentially declared states of emergency. **The PETS Act does not provide assistance for horses or livestock.**

California Animal Response Emergency System (CARES)

The concept for CARES was conceived in response to the Yuba floods of 1997. As a result of the difficulties experienced managing animals in that disaster, the governor at that time issued a report recommending that *OES (Office of Emergency Services) shall cooperate with local animal control officers and CDFA in reviewing livestock and pet evacuation procedures to develop animal safety and relocation procedures for use during future emergencies.*

CARES is an operational guidance that assists all levels of government with animal management during emergencies. It is managed jointly by the California Department of Food & Agriculture and the California Office of Emergency Services. In 2006, CARES was incorporated into the State Emergency Plan. The CARES website offers excellent current information on preparedness for horse owners: www.cal-cares.com

California Veterinary Medical Reserve Corps

The veterinary community also needs to be ready for possible animal disease emergencies and disasters because of the critical role veterinarians play in ensuring the health and safety of animals and our nation's food supply. The California Veterinary Medical Reserve Corps (CAVMRC) provides volunteer veterinarians, veterinary students and other veterinary professionals with training on a number of topics relating to animals in disasters. Their mission is to provide veterinary services to sheltered animals during a disaster and to help communities prepare to provide for animals before a disaster occurs.

Thousands of animals need care during and after disasters. Some 63% of California households have pets, including an estimated 10 million pet cats, 9 million dogs, and 1 million horses. Other pets, farm animals, and wildlife also need assistance during and after disasters like earthquakes, floods, and wildfires. Volunteer participation can be a matter of life or death for rescued animals and means the world to the owners of those animals.

The CAVMRC is registered as a unit of the Medical Reserve Corps under the California Emergency Medical Services Agency and works in cooperation with local, statewide, and national agencies.

Summary

As a horse owner, it is essential that you work with your community to ensure that a system is in place to handle animals in a significant disaster. Preparedness can occur in stages. Step One is to prepare yourself and your horses and other animals. Step Two is to widen your circle of preparedness by networking with your neighbors. Share information with them so you can help each other.

Once you have completed the first two steps, proceed to Step Three and help your community by becoming involved in the formation of a large animal response team. Get help in doing this by contacting one of the animal disaster groups listed in this *Horse Report*.

Most importantly, don't wait to take any of these steps. ■

Resources and Links

CARES (California Animal Response Emergency System) is an excellent website for information on planning and preparedness. It can be accessed at www.cal-cares.com.

CARES has also created a handy mobile website designed to be viewed from a cell phone or tablet: www.cal-caresfieldguide.com. This site has information on how to evacuate and shelter your animals in an emergency and provides a comprehensive list of contacts, such as for your local Animal Care and Office of Emergency Services by county (County Contact List).

For information on Community Emergency Response Teams:
www.fema.gov/community-emergency-response-teams

Get help in forming a Community Disaster Group by contacting California Volunteers, which serves as the lead state agency for coordinating volunteers in times of disaster. They can provide expertise on how to start, how to connect with others, how to train, and how to partner with local jurisdictions: www.californiavolunteers.org. Telephone (916)323-7647

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services: caloes.ca.gov

CVMA (California Veterinary Medical Association) disaster site:
<http://www.cvma.net/images/cvmapets/documents/Disaster.html>

UC Davis WIFSS (Western Institute for Food Safety and Security) disaster preparedness site:
www.wifss.ucdavis.edu/?page_id=5408



Horses and their owners were successfully evacuated to the Del Mar Fairgrounds during the San Diego County fire of October 2007. Photo courtesy Lt. Dan DeSousa, Deputy Director, San Diego County Department of Animal Services.

Do Your Horses Know How to Load?

LT. DAN DESOUSA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF the San Diego County Department of Animal Services, has had extensive experience with major wildfires and in overseeing the evacuation of several thousand horses and countless small animals. He reports that horse owners without transportation for their animals were a big problem in the two largest wildfires in the county in 2003 and 2007. "We've tried to emphasize from the Cedar Fire in 2003 that if you have horses, have a trailer," he said. "And make sure these horses know how to load into a trailer." Yet many of the horses they attempted to rescue in 2007 were not trailer-trained.

Trailer training is a necessary aspect of horse ownership. There are ways to teach a horse to load properly, and like all training endeavors, their relative ease depends on your patience and your horse's history. If

your horse has had a bad time being loaded, has been pushed or abused or roped in the past, chances are it's going to take some time to get him used to going quietly and easily up a ramp and into a dark trailer. On the other hand, if you start a young horse's training early, you will be rewarded with a horse who thinks that loading up to go somewhere is part of normal, everyday equine doings.

A trailer also needs to be road ready, with everything in good working order. Check tires, floors and regularly. Keep your truck maintained and the gas tank at least half full. Make sure you and your backup person know how to hitch the trailer and drive it. And if you don't have a horse trailer, make sure you at least train your horses to load using a borrowed trailer.



Congratulations to Dr. Isabelle Kilcoyne, Winner of the 2014 Wilson Award

This year's James M. Wilson Award was presented to Dr. Isabelle Kilcoyne for her work on *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis* infection in horses. The Wilson Award is given each year to an outstanding equine research publication authored by a graduate academic student or resident in the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Kilcoyne's publication, "Frequency of *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis* Infection in Horses Across the United States During a 10-Year Period," was honored with the award.



Dr. Isabelle Kilcoyne

Infection caused by *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis* in horses assumes many forms, the most common often called "pigeon fever" due to the swelling of the horse's pectoral region resembling a pigeon's breast. This study documented that the number of cases of infection has risen dramatically over the past ten years and has spread beyond the western United States to affect equine populations across the country. Although further research is needed, the study results suggest that changing environmental factors might play a role in the spread of pigeon fever. The prevalence of infection in Texas, which had 70% of the cases over the period of study, occurred during a time of extreme drought. These environmental changes likely had a significant effect on the life cycles of organisms that transmit the infection or on other unknown factors that facilitated the spread of the bacteria.

Dr. Kilcoyne graduated from the University College Dublin, where she spent a year as an equine surgical intern at the University Veterinary Hospital. She subsequently joined the UC Davis Equine Field Service for two years, after which she completed a residency in equine surgery at the William R. Pritchard Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital. She is currently working as an Emergency Surgery and Equine Field Service clinician at the veterinary hospital. Her main clinical and research interests are in emergency surgery and medicine, particularly gastrointestinal surgery. Congratulations Dr. Kilcoyne!

Communicating During a Disaster

In the recent fires in Northern California, some of the communications were posted on Facebook and Twitter through the Sheriff's Office. Part of personal preparedness is knowing where to go for timely information and having knowledge of how to find it. Be careful that the communications are coming from emergency management officials and not from well-intentioned people who may spread inaccurate information.

Make sure your cell phone has texting capabilities. Why? The bandwidths that become saturated during disasters because of their smaller frequencies combined with the increased number of people making calls. Texting operates on a lower, wider bandwidth, which makes it able to hold up to increased usage during



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There are also numerous apps for mobile devices that could be helpful in an emergency. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has a list of disaster apps: <http://sis.nlm.nih.gov/dimrc/disasterapps.html>.

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Mail ID#1415
Center for Equine Health
School of Veterinary Medicine
University of California
One Shields Avenue
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Center for Equine Health
(530) 752-6433
www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/ceh
www.facebook.com/ucdavis.ceh 

Director: Dr. Claudia Sonder
csonder@ucdavis.edu

Director Emeritus: Dr. Gregory Ferraro
glferraro@ucdavis.edu

Senior Editor: Barbara Meierhenry
cehwriter@ucdavis.edu

Management Services Officer: Kimberly Ney
klney@ucdavis.edu

Dean, School of Veterinary Medicine:
Dr. Michael D. Lairmore

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