

**APPENDIX 4  
to  
ANNEX N**

**ANIMAL  
ISSUES  
COMMITTEE  
PLAN**

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Jurisdiction

**Approval and Implementation**

**APPENDIX 4  
to  
ANNEX N**

**ANIMAL ISSUES COMMITTEE PLAN**

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Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**NOTE:** The signature(s) will be based upon local administrative practices. Typically, the annex is signed by the individual having primary responsibility for this emergency function in the first signature block and the second signature block is used by the Emergency Management Director or the Emergency Management Coordinator. Alternatively, each department head assigned tasks within the annex may sign the annex.



# **ANIMAL ISSUES COMMITTEE PLAN**

## **I. AUTHORITY**

Refer to Section I of the Basic Plan and to Annex N, Appendices 1 and 2.

## **II. PURPOSE**

- A. Emergencies and disasters frequently involve animals as well as people. Consequently, preparation for, response to, recovery from, and mitigation of animal situations related to disasters should be an integral part of any emergency management activity.
- B. An important goal for direction and control activities related to any emergency or disaster situation is knowing who to contact and having the confidence that the individuals identified are fully prepared to provide advice for handling the situation.
- C. An animal issues committee is an integral part of our local emergency management team and is an essential asset to our community. This plan outlines the types of individuals that make up our animal issues team as well as some of the responsibilities they would have and the situations they may encounter.

## **III. EXPLANATION OF TERMS**

### **A. Acronyms and abbreviations**

ACO – County animal control officer (could be called the “CAC”)  
AHT – Animal health technician (federal government)  
AIC – Animal Issues Committee  
APHIS – Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA)  
CAC – County animal coordinator (probably the same as the “ACO”)  
CAFO – Concentration animal feeding operation  
DPS – Department of Public Safety  
EAD – Emerging animal disease  
EPA – Environmental Protection Agency (federal government)  
FAD – Foreign animal disease  
FEAD – Foreign and emerging animal disease  
FSA – Farm Service Agency (USDA)  
HSUS – Humane Society of the United States  
ICP – Incident command post  
Noah’s Wish – Animal welfare organization for rescuing and sheltering animals  
NPS – National Park Service  
NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA)  
SITREP – Situation report

SPCA – Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals  
TACA – Texas Animal Control Association  
TAHC – Texas Animal Health Commission  
TAMUS – Texas A&M University System  
TCE – Texas Cooperative Extension (TAMUS)  
TCEQ – Texas Commission on Environmental Quality  
TDA – Texas Department of Agriculture  
TDCJ – Texas Department of Criminal Justice  
TDH – Texas Department of Health  
TPWD – Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
TRACE – Texas Rural Awareness, Compliance, and Education (Program)  
TSSWCB – Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (see also NRCS)  
TVMA – Texas Veterinary Medical Association  
USDA – United States Department of Agriculture  
VMO – Veterinary medical officer (federal)  
VS – Veterinary Services (APHIS)  
WS – Texas Wildlife Services (TCE)

B. Definitions

1. Animal Control Officer (ACO) – The person who has the overall responsibility for animal-related issues within our jurisdiction. Sometimes this person may be referred to as the county sheriff or animal coordinator (CAC).
2. Animal health inspector (livestock inspector) - An animal health technician assigned to the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) who may work with our jurisdiction in his or her TRACE capacity to assist us in solving animal health and welfare issues (similar to a federal AHT)
3. Animal health technician - An individual, assigned to the federal government, who may work with our jurisdiction in his or her TRACE capacity to assist us in solving animal health and welfare issues similar to a state (TAHC) animal health inspector
4. Companion animals – A term used for pets such as dogs, cats, rabbits, mice, rats, pot-bellied pigs, reptiles, horses, and so forth that generally are raised in a domestic setting, oftentimes as “part of the family”
5. Depopulation – A term used in the animal industry of the United States for the humane destruction of both sick and exposed or non-exposed animals in a certain area to prevent the spread of a contagious animal or zoonotic disease
6. Diagnosis – In regards to this appendix, a determination as to why animals are affected by disease, trauma, poisoning, drowning, etc.
7. Diagnostician – For this appendix, a veterinarian, toxicologist, pathologist, or other medically-trained person who examines animals and collects diagnostic specimens to determine why animals have died
8. Emerging animal disease (EAD) - A new animal disease or a new form of an old disease

9. Epidemiologist – For the purposes of this appendix, a veterinarian who is trained in identifying diseases of animals and can assist in determining why animals have died, how an animal disease was introduced into an animal population, how the disease spreads within the animal population, and what actions will be necessary to contain and eliminate the disease.
10. Field veterinarian – A veterinarian assigned to the TAHC
11. Foreign animal disease (FAD) – A disease that does not currently exist within the borders of the United States. Once a disease become endemic to the U.S. (i.e., with little chance of it ever being totally eradicated), it no longer is considered a FAD.
12. Foreign and emerging animal diseases (FEADs):
  - a. Are usually, but not always, highly infectious and contagious and have the potential for rapid spread, irrespective of national borders.
  - b. Can have serious socio-economic or public health consequence and a major impact on the international trade of animals, animal products, and animal by-products.
13. Holding facility – A designated facility within our community that may be used temporarily to house and feed animals during disaster evacuations or following the aftermath of a disaster event
14. Pathologist - For this appendix, a scientist who interprets and diagnoses the changes caused by a disease in animal tissues and thereby assists in determining why an animal or group of animals may have died
15. Premises – The property where the animal is located
16. TAHC-APHIS/VS/TX Memorandum of Understanding – The agreement by which federal TAHC veterinarians and inspectors work in a “seamless” relationship with APHIS-VS-TX veterinarians and inspectors (i.e., requests for animal health assistance to our jurisdiction may come from either state or federal personnel).
17. Texas Animal Health Commission – A state agency, separate from the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), which was created in 1893. Its mission and role is to assure the marketability and mobility of Texas livestock and to sustain and continue to make a vital contribution to wholesome and abundant supply of meat, eggs, and dairy products. TAHC makes and enforces regulations to prevent, control, and eradicate specific infectious and/or contagious animal diseases that endanger livestock.
18. Toxicologist – For the purposes of this appendix, a scientist who assists in determining why animals have died, especially if a hazardous substance is suspected

19. TRACE representative – A TAHC or USDA/APHIS/VS/TX veterinarian, animal health technician, or animal livestock inspector assigned to our county to provide assistance for animal emergency management, public information, and educational purposes
20. Veterinary medical officer (VMO) – A veterinarian employed by the federal government
21. Zoonotic disease – A disease that is transmissible to humans as well as animals

#### **IV. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS**

##### **A. Situation**

1. Companion animals (i.e., pets), livestock, and non-domesticated (i.e., wild) animals may be affected by all types of natural and man-made emergencies and disasters.
  - a. Natural disasters that could affect animals in Texas include disease, floods, fires, lightning strikes, wind storms and tornadoes, hurricanes, drought, toxic forage, excessive heat, and winter storms.
  - b. Man-made disasters affecting animals result from a myriad of causes such as traffic and other accidents, poisoning, power outages, bioterrorism, hazardous material spills, explosions, radiation incidents, and other biological or chemical events.
2. Animals may be injured, lost, abandoned, or die during or after an emergency or disaster situation.
3. To enhance the welfare of animals during disaster situations, activities may involve many functions such as evacuation, search and rescue, capture, identification, sheltering, feeding, transporting, and medical assistance.
4. In other cases, the diagnosis and control of an animal disease, as well as the proper disposal of diseased animal carcasses, could be a significant issue.

##### **B. Assumptions**

1. There are individuals in our community who are knowledgeable and skilled in understanding and working with animals and responding to animal-related emergency situations.
2. These individuals may not know the personnel in Hopkins County government who respond to emergency events involving animals, or they may not understand their responsibilities.
3. Our County elected officials, emergency management personnel, and emergency responders may not be fully aware of how to handle certain

situations involving animals, and they also may not be aware of the existence of various types of animal experts in our community.

4. This community would benefit significantly by having a viable animal issues committee or team that could help County officials prepare for, respond to, recover from, and/or mitigate animal-related emergency situations.

## V. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

### A. General

1. Our community will create an Animal Issues Committee (AIC) to plan for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against emergency or disaster situations involving animals.
2. The AIC will consist of government officials as well as private citizens who have an interest or skill in working with animals.
3. The AIC will have an animal-related mission which will vary depending on the needs of our community.
4. The AIC will prepare animal-related planning appendices to selected functional annexes of our local emergency management plan.
5. If appropriate, the AIC will ensure adequate training is provided for personnel who may respond to animal-related emergency or disaster situations as well as assisting during exercises related to animal issues involving disasters.

### B. Animal Issues Committee composition

1. The AIC will consist of a group of individuals with varied backgrounds, experience, skills, and interests that are generally related to the care and/or welfare of companion animals, livestock, or wildlife.
2. Members of our AIC will consist of the following types of individuals: *(The Committee will have as many or as few of the following individuals as deemed appropriate for the mission selected by the group and the needs of the jurisdiction.)*
  - a. Animal control officer (ACO) and ACO personnel *(a key committee member)*
  - b. Veterinarian(s) from private practice, industry, government, public health, the military, and/or the local or regional TVMA organization *(a veterinarian is being identified to assist the Committee in each county)*
  - c. Veterinary technician(s) from local veterinary offices *[good person(s) to have]*

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- d. TAHC or USDA/APHIS/VS "TRACE" representative *(to represent state animal health; one state or federal person assigned to each county)*
- e. Public works representative *(for traffic control and carcass disposal issues)*
- f. County Extension agent for agriculture (TCE) *(for animal disease and non-disease issues)*
- g. Animal humane association or organization representative(s) [e.g., HSUS, SPCA, TACA, Noah's Wish, etc.] *(for companion animal rescue and sheltering issues)*
- h. Emergency management coordinator and personnel
- i. Elected official, County Judge
- j. Farm Bureau representative *(if available; useful for animal disease issues)*
- k. Local animal industry representative(s) from concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) *(as appropriate to the Committee's mission)*
- l. Allied agriculture industry representatives (e.g., feed stores, pet stores, feed mills, livestock markets, food production/processing facilities, slaughter and rendering plants, fuel outlets, equipment stores, animal boarding facilities such as kennels and stables, etc.) *(as appropriate to the Committee's mission)*
- m. Animal association representatives (e.g., cattlemen's, breeders, dairy, and exotic/alternative livestock groups to kennel clubs, horse clubs, and game bird fanciers) *(as appropriate to the Committee's mission)*
- n. Correctional facility representative (if the local prison(s) has an agriculture component) (TDCJ) *(as appropriate to the Committee's mission; can be useful for all aspects of handling livestock in an emergency)*
- o. Environmental representative (TCEQ, TSSWCB, NRCS, and/or EPA) *(for carcass disposal and disinfection issues) (for disease issues involving cleaning, disinfection, and carcass disposal)*
- p. USDA FSA representative *(if available and appropriate for the mission of the Committee; can be useful for obtaining agriculture funds and other agricultural-related assistance)*
- q. Vocational agriculture science teacher(s) *(as appropriate)*
- r. County fair representative *(as appropriate)*

- s. Law enforcement representative County Sherriff, and/or state (DPS) *(important for traffic control and quarantine enforcement in an animal disease situaiton)*
- t. Private and/or public landfill representative *(important for carcass disposal issues)*
- u. Public information officer *(as appropriate)*
- v. Local media representative *(as appropriate)*
- w. Public health representative (veterinarian, epidemiologist, sanitarian, etc. from the local health department or TDH) *(as appropriate to the mission of the Committee)*
- x. Tribal representative *(if available and as appropriate to the mission of the Committee)*
- y. Animal research or laboratory representative *(if available, and as appropriate to the mission of the Committee)*
- z. Higher education representative who is associated with animals or animal husbandry (community college, university, etc.) *(if available, and as appropriate to the mission of the Committee)*
- aa. Zoo representative *(if available, and as appropriate to the mission of the Committee)*
- bb. TPWD and/or NPS wildlife representative (e.g., fish and game wardens) *(if available, and as appropriate to the mission of the Committee)*
- cc. TCE-WS representative (for predator and scavenger control) *(if available, and as appropriate to the mission of the committee)*
- dd. Volunteers interested in animal care and welfare (individuals and/or groups) *(as appropriate to the mission of the Committee)*
- ee. "Public at large" representative *(as appropriate to the mission of the Committee)*

## **VI. ORGANIZATION & ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **A. Organization**

1. The Animal Issues Committee (AIC) will meet as often as necessary at a time and place prescribed by the committee members, by the individual named in the paragraph VII.A. (below), or by his or her representative.
2. The chair of the committee will be either be the individual designated in paragraph VI.A.1 (above) or a person selected by the committee members.

3. The Committee will be an “advisory” group to help solve animal-related emergency or disaster issues within our community. It will not be a tasking (i.e., direction and control) organization.
4. Committee members may, however, in their own capacity or through their daily employment, supervise or participate in activities involving animals to include medical assistance, search and rescue, capture, evacuation, transportation, sheltering, donations management, carcass disposal, and disease eradication.

B. Assignment of Responsibilities

1. Our Animal Issues Committee will consider both non-disease and disease topics.
  - a. Our “non-disease issues” to be considered are:
    - (1) Evacuation and transport of animals from actual or impending disaster locations
    - (2) Sheltering and caring for animals during and after emergencies and disasters in holding facilities or other types of shelters
    - (3) Search and rescue capabilities or teams
    - (4) Capture and holding of stray or lost animals affected by a disaster
    - (5) Animal identification and relocation activities
    - (6) Medical care or humane euthanasia for animals injured in an emergency or disaster
    - (7) Disposal of animal carcasses affected by an emergency or disaster situation to eliminate any disease spread from decaying animals and to eradicate any foul odors and unsightly views
    - (8) Wildlife nuisance situations
    - (9) Administration and logistical support for animal-related emergency or disaster activities (e.g., overturned livestock truck, hazardous materials accident in proximity to animals, etc.)
    - (10) Development of county profiles (locations, types, sizes, and other agricultural demographics) of animal-related production, processing, marketing, and carcass disposal facilities/operations
    - (11) Dissemination of public information regarding animal-related issues
  - b. Our “disease issues,” in which the AIC can lend support to state and federal authorities in a disease response situation, will include:

- (1) Quarantining and containment activities for disease situations
- (2) Coordination of cleaning and disinfection activities for disease eradication
- (3) Traffic control activities to include determination of traffic flow within and in proximity to the quarantine area; setting up signage and traffic barriers; establishment and operation of inspection, cleaning, and disinfection stations
- (4) Obtaining and using appropriate communications capabilities and equipment
- (5) Operations and communications of the local ICP for animal disease response activities
- (6) Obtaining appropriate equipment and vehicles for transportation of diseased animals and animal products from one location to another for slaughter and/or disposal
- (7) Zoonotic public health issues (e.g., rabies vaccinations, West Nile Virus prevention, etc.)
- (8) Identification of an appropriate labor force pool
- (9) Working depopulation and indemnification issues
- (10) Determination of the number and location of disposal sites in the local area that could be used in an emergency to dispose of diseased carcasses while minimizing the spread of disease
- (11) Dissemination of public information
- (12) Vector and scavenger control activities
- (13) Local economic impact issues
- (14) Developing county profiles (locations, types, sizes, and other agricultural demographics) of animal-related production, processing, marketing, and carcass disposal facilities/operations
- (15) Obtaining appropriate equipment, chemicals, and drugs for the capture, transportation, confinement, euthanasia, disposal, cleaning and disinfection, traffic control, and other operations related to disease control and eradication operations
- (16) Providing administration and logistical support for animal disease response and eradication activities

## **VII. DIRECTION & CONTROL**

- A. The Animal Issues Committee will provide support to and work under the auspices of the Hopkins County [animal control officer/emergency management coordinator/other person].
- B. When an emergency or disaster situation arises, the AIC will respond as outlined in their plan(s). This would depend upon the situation and could include a meeting of all or only selected group members, either at a designated location or simply by phone or email.
- C. Generally the AIC will not perform as a response organization. It will function as an advisement group to assist government authorities in their decision-making process associated with animal-related emergency and disaster situations. In many cases, the success of the AIC will depend on the soundness of their pre-disaster planning and support activities provided to local government officials.

## **VIII. READINESS LEVELS FOR THE ANIMAL ISSUES COMMITTEE**

- A. Readiness Level 4 – Normal Conditions
  - 1. Meet on a regular basis
  - 2. Develop appropriate plans, or maintain and periodically revise those already written
  - 3. Develop animal-related “injects” for use during exercises and drills, and promote the use of these injects as well as the employment of the jurisdiction’s Animal Issues Committee in these events
  - 4. Develop a contact list of committee members and local authorities
  - 5. Develop equipment lists and maintain equipment readiness
  - 6. Participate in local training and exercises
  - 7. Participate in critiques of the jurisdiction’s exercises and drills where animal issues were involved
  - 8. In conjunction with local environmental agencies and producer organizations, plan for the disposal of large numbers of diseased animals and animal products.
  - 9. Identify appropriate disposal site(s) in the local area that will accept diseased and non-diseased animals and their products (e.g., eggs, milk, etc.).
- B. Readiness Level 3 – Increased Readiness
  - 1. Review the personnel contact list for accuracy

2. Review animal-related response, traffic control, and carcass disposal plans
  3. Check on availability of key committee personnel
  4. Review the designated equipment list, know the whereabouts of the needed items, and ensure they are operable
  5. Ensure appropriate medical information is available for care of animals
- C. Readiness Level 2 – High Readiness
1. Test communications among committee members and key committee personnel
  2. Check on availability and readiness of needed equipment and information
- D. Readiness Level 1 – Maximum Readiness
1. Contact the animal control officer/emergency management coordinator to ensure they know that Animal Issues Committee personnel are available and how they can be reached.
  2. Report, if needed, to the Hopkins County emergency operating center (EOC) or other designated facility
  3. Assemble the full committee, as needed

## **IX. ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT**

- A. Resource Support and Readiness
1. Any resources (equipment, materials, supplies) needed by the Animal Issues Committee or its members will be identified and listed.
  2. Needed resources will be checked for availability and operability on a periodic basis to include at Readiness Level 3 (see para. VIII.B. above).
- B. Communications
1. The Animal Issues Committee should decide what type of real-time communications method(s) would be most appropriate among the members for various situations such as alerting, emergency responses, exercises, and disaster situations (e.g., should it be via telephone or cell phone, radio broadcast announcement, via email, etc.).
  2. Once the most appropriate type(s) of communications are established for each situation, the Animal Issues Committee should keep an up-to-date listing of their members; the individual animal-related expertise of each

member; and the most appropriate method of contact during working hours, after-hours, weekends, holidays; etc. (see Attachments A and B).

C. Key Facilities

1. The Animal Issues Committee will establish a facility or meeting location at which the group can convene on a periodic basis to consider the myriad of animal issues affecting the jurisdiction.
2. During exercises, as well as actual emergencies, the Animal Issues Committee should decide how they will respond to each and from what location [e.g., by simply using phone contact among the members, convening at the regular meeting facility, operating from another designated emergency location, staffing the jurisdiction's emergency operating center (EOC), etc.]

E. Reporting

1. During response operations (exercises or actual emergencies), if appropriate, situation reports (SITREPs) will be provided to the jurisdiction's emergency operating center (EOC) and/or incident commander (IC), as requested
2. If appropriate, a SITREP format will be developed that either meets the jurisdiction's requirements or, if no specific format is required, than one that most appropriately reports the Animal Issues Committee's activities, challenges, and achievements during a variety of situations.

F. Records

1. Meeting minutes – The Animal Issues Committee should keep a written record of each meeting in order to maintain an accurate accounting of items discussed and actions taken.
2. Activity logs – During exercises/drills and actual response events, the Committee should maintain a log of the various issues considered and actions taken (see Attachment 3).
3. Documentation of costs – If the animal issues committee responds as a separate entity, then expenses incurred in carrying out the response operations for certain events may be recoverable from the responsible party, or from the state or federal governments depending upon the situation. Therefore, records of supplies and equipment used/consumed as well as regular and overtime hours of committee members during a response or exercise operation should be recorded.
4. Written and cost documentation records, maintained by the Committee, should be protected and “duplicated/backed-up” to the maximum extent feasible to preclude them from being destroyed in an emergency or disaster situation.

**G. Post Incident Review**

1. An Animal Issues Committee representative(s) should participate in any after-action review of any emergency event response by the jurisdiction in which a member(s) from the Committee was involved.
2. A committee member(s) should also participate in any exercise critique where animal issues were a part of the scenario.

**X. ATTACHMENT DEVELOPMENT & MAINTENANCE**

- A. The Hopkins County Animal Control Officer/Emergency Management Coordinator is responsible for developing and maintaining this appendix. Recommended changes to this appendix should be forwarded as needs become apparent.
- B. The appendix will be reviewed periodically and updated in accordance with the (Basic Plan/Annex N/other).
- C. Departments and agencies assigned responsibilities in this appendix are responsible for developing and maintaining SOPs covering those responsibilities.

**XI. ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Animal Issues Committee Members
- B. Animal Issue Committee Contact List
- C. Animal Issues Committee Activity Log







