



NEWS RELEASE

Texas Animal Health Commission

“Serving Texas Animal Agriculture Since 1893”

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Texas Animal Health Commission Conducts Successful National Veterinary Stockpile Exercise

AUSTIN- As a part of ongoing efforts to prepare for large-scale foreign or emerging animal disease emergencies, the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) partnered with personnel from other state and local agencies to conduct the Texas and National Veterinary Stockpile (NVS) Logistics Exercise on October 30, 2013 in San Antonio. The full-scale exercise focused on the logistical requirements for delivering and managing all of the supplies, vaccines, and equipment responders would need during the initial stages of a damaging animal disease outbreak.

The Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) provided a warehouse facility and equipment, as well as key staff who participated in planning and conducting the exercise. The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) also provided support to protect the health of agricultural responders in the simulated scenario. Personnel from seventeen state and local agencies, industry and non-governmental organizations, and federal entities such as FEMA Region VI and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) attended the exercise.

“This exercise is a great example of multi-agency coordination, and we are grateful for the support from other state agencies including TDEM throughout our planning and exercise process,” said Dr. TR Lansford, TAHC Assistant Executive Director. “In the event of a catastrophic animal disease outbreak, we will count on these other agencies for support, and help with coordinating the resources that would be needed to mount an effective response.”

“One of the unique components of the exercise was that we simulated the receipt of antiviral medications that might be needed to protect our animal health responders in a zoonotic disease event. Our state public health counterparts at the DSHS have embraced this as part of their mission and it’s a great partnership and example of ‘One Health,’” said Dr. Holly Hughes-Garza, lead NVS planner for the TAHC.

Continued improvement and regular testing of the NVS capabilities with exercises like the one held here in Texas helps to ensure that Texas and the U.S. is prepared to deploy vital resources to quickly stop the spread of animal diseases to protect the health and value of animal agriculture. According to Rodney White, NVS Director, “This full-scale exercise demonstrated the commitment of the NVS program to support our state animal health partners. It provided emergency responders in Texas an opportunity to have hands-on experience working with the NVS countermeasures they would need in the event of an animal disease outbreak, and allowed an equal opportunity for the NVS personnel to respond as they would in a real emergency.”

The NVS is the national repository of critical veterinary supplies, equipment, vaccines, and services that can be deployed to the site of a damaging animal disease outbreak. A major goal of the NVS program is to help states,

tribal nations, and U.S. territories to plan, train, and exercise for the receipt, management, and distribution of NVS countermeasures during an emergency response.

For more information on TAHC Emergency Management preparedness efforts, visit www.tahc.texas.gov/emergency or call the TAHC Emergency Management Coordinator at 1-800-550-8242.

Founded in 1893, the Texas Animal Health Commission works to protect the health of all Texas livestock, including: cattle, swine, poultry, sheep, goats, equine animals, and exotic livestock.

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