



NEWS RELEASE

Texas Animal Health Commission
"Serving Texas Animal Agriculture Since 1893"
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dr. Dee Ellis Receives 2014 International Association of Emergency Managers - USA Career Excellence Award

AUSTIN- Dr. Dee Ellis, Texas' State Veterinarian and Executive Director of the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) was recently awarded the "2014 International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM-USA) Career Excellence Award". The IAEM-USA Career Excellence Award recognizes a national leader who has made significant contributions throughout his career to promote and improve the emergency management profession in the USA. This is the first time the award has been presented to a veterinarian.



Dr. Ellis has been involved with animal related emergency response activities for over 20 years. He played a major role for the TAHC in formalizing animal disaster plans for the state of Texas, as a result of numerous large scale disease and natural disaster events that impacted the state. The TAHC is now considered the state's lead agency for animal disaster related events, and utilizes an all-hazard approach to ensure appropriate plans and response contingencies are in place for disease, man-made, and natural disasters affecting animals.

Under Dr. Ellis' leadership, the TAHC formalized the Texas Animal Response Team network that includes other state agencies, local jurisdictions, the Texas A&M University Veterinary Emergency Team, as well as many private sector stakeholder and industry groups. Texas was one of the first states to include local jurisdiction planning templates for animal disaster issues that also included producer and veterinary practitioner participation.

Dr. Ellis responded to the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak in the UK in 2001, as well as numerous state and national disease events during his career. As a result, he was able to assist the USDA and livestock industries with national disease response planning, as well as hardening the Texas plans.

Under Dr. Ellis' guidance, the latest addition to Texas' animal response capability is the creation of the Texas Horseback Emergency Response Team. The team is comprised of TAHC and USDA volunteers whose roles are to round up and transport stray livestock in the aftermath of a disaster.

The response team also assists in capturing animals that have strayed into Texas from Mexico which pose disease risks, public safety protection, and is prepared to assist other states upon request. The TAHC mounted response team is the only one of its kind in the United States.

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