

AVMA Veterinary Medical Assistance Team (VMAT) Update:

VMAT-1: Louisiana and VMAT-5: Louisiana

I have been asked by the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) not to include VMAT-1 and VMAT-5 activities in this report for the time being. For information please call the NDMS 24-hour line at 800-872-6367 and ask for the ESF #8 Desk.

I did receive the following from VMAT-5 in Louisiana: VMAT 5 continues to support the recovery effort of the animals at Gonzales. Team members have combined with VMAT 1 to provide the support team that is currently running the hospital and animal shelter veterinary activities.

Thanks to the efforts of the veterinarians from the United States Public Health Service (PHS), I have the following update from Dr. William Stokes, PHS veterinarian and AVMA member.

Veterinarians are working in a joint effort in LA. There are VMAT veterinarians, PHS veterinarians, veterinarians working in conjunction with responding humane organizations, and volunteer veterinarians from the surrounding affected communities who have been working in a joint effort to address the needs of the animals, the veterinary infrastructure, and the public health issues. In all there are close to 50 veterinarians under this particular command structure.

VMAT-2: Mississippi

Has been demobilized, but will remain on stand-by in case they are needed in LA.

VMAT-3: Mississippi

Stationed in Hattiesburg, MS at the temporary animal shelter. VMAT-3 is providing the medical care at the Hattiesburg shelter, VMAT-3, through a direct request from the State

Veterinarian in consultation with affected veterinarians in the area, is also providing much needed supplies to the operational veterinary facilities in the affected area, assisting several severely damaged veterinary facilities with clean-up, staff, and supplies, providing veterinarians and technicians to short staffed veterinary facilities, and has a Strike Team in Waveland, MS providing triage and transport of animals back to the Hattiesburg shelter.

AVMA's disaster preparedness booklet Saving the Whole Family is available at http://www.avma.org/disaster/saving_family.asp <http://www.avma.org/disaster/saving_family.asp> . Full text available for free from the Web site.

The VMAT efforts are made possible from an annual grant from the American Veterinary Medical Foundation (AVMF). The AVMF just approved a \$100,000 grant to support immediate VMAT needs in the Hurricane Katrina Response. Those interested in contributing to the Animal Disaster Relief and Response Fund can send a check to the American Veterinary Medical Foundation, Department 20-1122, P.O. Box 5940, Carol Stream, IL 60197, with "Animal Disaster Relief and Response Fund" written on the check's note section. Online donations are accepted at www.avmf.org <<http://www.avmf.org>> .

Texas Veterinary Medical Association

To post or search available veterinary jobs and housing

TVMA CONNECT is a new online forum designed to enhance communication between members of the veterinary profession, especially during this time of need. To post information or get the latest updates concerning hurricane relief, visit www.tvmaconnect.org <<http://www.tvmaconnect.org>> .

Mississippi Animal Relief Fund

(662) 324-9380

Through Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association

Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry

Animal Rescue and Reunion Information from Commissioner Odom

September 19, 2005

Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry (LDAF), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Louisiana Veterinary Medical Association's (LVMA) State Animal Response Team (SART), Louisiana Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (LASPCA), Louisiana State University's School of Veterinary Medicine and the Humane Society of the United States will implement a plan to re-unite owners and rescued animals over the next 30 days.

Extractions and admissions of animals in the areas affected by Hurricane Katrina are beginning to decrease. Owners should plan to claim animals sheltered at evacuation facilities in Lafayette, Monroe, Shreveport, Slidell, and Gonzales before October 1. After that date, the various animal humane groups will arrange foster shelter of unclaimed pets for a minimum of 15 days. After October 15, 2005, unclaimed animals will be eligible for adoption.

Owners seeking to claim their rescued animals may call the Humane Society of the United States' Call Center at 1-800-HUMANE1, make contact by email at katrina@petfinder.com or see www.petfinder.com. Callers and emailers should be aware that the focus of the operation is still on the very demanding business of rescuing, recovering and caring for animals from New Orleans. For those who wish to go to the rescue center in person, it is located at the Lamar-Dixon Expo facility in Gonzales, Louisiana, 9030 St. Landry Road, Gonzales, LA 70737.

In order to protect animals residing in Hurricane Katrina shelters, minimize the likelihood of disease outbreaks and protect human health, sheltered animals receive appropriate vaccinations and medication. To facilitate re-uniting animals with their owners, each animal is photographed and all animals receive microchip identification if needed. Medical and identification information travels with the pets. However, the process of establishing a searchable database of these rescued pets has not kept pace with the rescues. Therefore, your animal may have been rescued but the Call Center may not have a record of that rescue in the database yet. For at least the next few days, the highest priority will remain the rescue and the immediate care of as many pets as can be found and accommodated. Please be assured rescuers are working as fast as they can to make the database current so calls of concerned pet owners can be answered more fully.

To date, over 6,000 animals have been sheltered at emergency shelter locations coordinated by LDAF. This number includes approximately 4,000 dogs, 1,000 cats, 400 horses and lesser numbers of various other companion animals. LDAF and USDA/APHIS in cooperation with Louisiana Cattlemen's Association have also provided emergency feeding and water via truck and airlift for stranded livestock in the impacted area.

Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry

Animal Rescue and Reunion Information from Commissioner Odom

September 20, 2005

In the wake of unprecedented destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina, I am writing to reassure you that the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry is determined to reunite families and their pets, small and large, as quickly as possible.

Veterinarians from the department and USDA's Veterinary Services coordinate the State Animal Response Team (SART) in conjunction with public health veterinarians and local humane groups. This group made necessary preparations and helped coordinate evacuation shelters for large and small animals before Hurricane Katrina made landfall.

After the storm hit, SART took the lead in the largest animal rescue program in the history of the United States. Professionals and volunteers have been working around the clock to save animals and to reunite them with their owners. Those animals that are strays are also being rescued, sheltered and put up for adoption here and in other states that have offered help.

It is important that everyone realize the veterinary professionals organizing these efforts are accomplishing tasks that will set the standard for future hurricane recovery work. I have been to the shelter at the Lamar-Dixon Expo Center in Gonzales and the workers there are doing an excellent job.

They are processing animals at a rapid pace so they are able to rejoin their families or be put up for adoption. This processing not only reunites families and pets, but is also protecting public health. It involves a medical evaluation for external and internal parasites, vaccinations, microchipping for identification purposes and taking a photograph to put on Petfinder.com.

During the medical evaluation, veterinarians or their assistants check the animal to make sure it is fit to travel to a shelter and that it is not carrying any diseases that could be passed on to humans or other animals. We do not want to send a sick animal out of state where it could infect anyone or anything with which it has contact.

Microchipping uses the latest technology in animal identification. The number stored in the microchip is linked to a database of information containing the address or location where the animal was found, where the animal is now located and any medical treatment it has received since the hurricane.

Again, I want to reassure you that we are working diligently to take care of all the

animals that have been rescued and are doing our best to promptly reunite owners and their pets.