

National Veterinary Stockpile Hands-On Logistics Warehouse Training in Puerto Rico



Picture above in the warehouse is the Puerto Rico Logistics Section Supply Unit, NVS Trainers, and Observers.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) partnered with the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to conduct the Puerto Rico Hands-On National Veterinary Stockpile (NVS) Logistics Warehouse Training on November 18, 2015 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The purpose of the training was to support Puerto Rico in their efforts to practice their NVS plan, specifically as it relates to logistics warehouse activities; and to provide applicable hands-on assistance to help them enhance their logistics response capabilities. The event was the culmination of two years of preparedness, which included an NVS plan workshop, warehouse site visits, webinars, planning calls, drafting of the Puerto Rico NVS Plan, and online training. This is the first NVS training event conducted in a U.S. territory.

The Puerto Rico Department of Agriculture (PRDA), and APHIS Veterinary Services (VS) Surveillance, Preparedness and Response Services (SPRS) Logistics Center and District 2 hosted the all-day session, with a third party logistics provider supplying the warehouse facility, equipment and key staff. The Puerto Rico Logistics Section Supply Unit practiced its ability to setup, receive, store, stage, and manage NVS inventory in a commercial warehouse setting using a high pathogenicity avian influenza scenario. The PRDA and VS SPRS leadership also conducted a session to clarify their roles and responsibilities, and discuss how a third party logistics provider would integrate into an emergency logistics response.

The Puerto Rico Secretary of Agriculture, Dr. Myrna Comas, made a special appearance to express her support for the unprecedented event. Other participants from Puerto Rico included Ms. Carmen Oliver, Auxiliary Secretary of Agriculture, Dr. Fred Soltero, VS SPRS Assistant Director for Puerto Rico, and other PRDA and VS SPRS District 2 staff. The VS SPRS Logistics Center deployed a training package of NVS countermeasures and provided their expertise as trainers and facilitators. According to Mr. Rodney White, APHIS VS Logistics Center Director, "This training event demonstrates our continued commitment to support U.S. territory animal health partners. It provided emergency responders in Puerto Rico 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 Logistics Center NVS personnel to validate the deployment plan to a U.S. territory."

The training event was a success, and provided the necessary face-to-face interaction to validate the logistics processes and enhance supply chain management skills. The next steps will be for

National Veterinary Stockpile Hands-On Logistics Warehouse Training in Puerto Rico

the Puerto Rico team to finalize their written NVS plan, conduct additional logistics training, and validate the plan through discussion-based and operations-based exercises.

The NVS provides the veterinary countermeasures, animal vaccines, antivirals, or therapeutic products, supplies, equipment, and response support services that states, tribes, and U.S. territories need to respond to damaging animal disease outbreaks. A major goal of the NVS program is to help these partners plan, train, and exercise for the receipt, management, and distribution of NVS countermeasures during a logistics emergency response.

All states, tribes, and U.S. territories are encouraged to develop a written NVS plan to ensure field responders will receive the NVS countermeasures they will need. For planning tools, question and answer documents, and other information, visit the NVS website at <http://nvs.aphis.usda.gov> or contact the Logistics Center NVS personnel at nvs@aphis.usda.gov.