

National Veterinary Stockpile, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands Conduct Successful Planning Workshops

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) partnered with Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands officials to conduct National Veterinary Stockpile (NVS) planning workshops in both U.S. Territories. The Puerto Rico workshop was conducted in San Juan on March 26, 2014 and the U.S. Virgin Islands workshop was conducted in Kingshill, St. Croix on March 27, 2014.

Animal Health officials in the Puerto Rico Department of Agriculture and the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture share their respective primary responsibilities for NVS preparedness and response with officials in the Veterinary Services Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands office. For both workshops, the VS office provided liaison and coordination, and the APHIS Emergency Support Function 11 coordinator played a vital role.

Numerous support agencies in both Territories participated in the workshops. A large group of support organizations participated in the Puerto Rico workshop, including the APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine, Department of Homeland Security Customs and Border Protection, Federal Emergency Management Agency Region 2, Mayagüez Zoo, Puerto Rico Department of Health, Puerto Rico Department of Police, Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board, Puerto Rico Veterinary Medical Association, and a third party logistics provider in the private sector.

The Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture was well represented at their workshop by the Commissioner of Agriculture and field personnel from all three islands - St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John. Support agencies located within the U.S. Virgin Islands that participated in the workshop included the Department of Homeland Security Customs and Border Protection, University of Virgin Islands, Virgin Islands National Guard, Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority, Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA), Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources. Both the Commissioner of Agriculture and the VITEMA Director addressed the group and expressed their unwavering support of the NVS preparedness efforts for all three islands.

The purpose of the both workshops was to (1) Verify the Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands NVS plans' responsibilities for primary agencies, support agencies, and other organizations; (2) Assess which NVS countermeasures Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands may request; (3) Verify transportation requirements to both U.S. Territories; (4) Assess job actions for the Supply Unit and other key logistics responders; and (5) Recommend improvements to the Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands plans based on the discussions and lessons learned. Players in the Puerto Rico workshop divided into two working groups to better focus discussions on resource management and warehouse/inventory management.

Both workshops succeeded in further developing the written NVS plans and preparing players to request, receive, and manage NVS countermeasures in the event of a damaging animal disease outbreak. Workshop planning teams were also invited to participate in site visits at possible NVS warehouse locations in the event of a real emergency. The workshops were the first exercises in a series of training and exercise events leading up to a U.S. Territory full-scale logistics exercise with an NVS deployment in the fall of 2015.

The NVS is the national repository of critical veterinary supplies, equipment, animal vaccines, and services that can be deployed to the site of a damaging animal disease outbreak within 24 hours. A major goal of the NVS program is to help states, tribal nations, and U.S. territories 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 responders receive the NVS countermeasures they need. For planning tools, question and answer documents, and other information, visit the NVS website at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/nvs>.

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USDA

Puerto Rico National Veterinary Stockpile Plan Workshop



APHIS

Safeguarding Animal Health

VS
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1

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2

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2