

State of Wisconsin and National Veterinary Stockpile Conduct Successful Logistics Exercise

Would Wisconsin and the National Veterinary Stockpile have the ability to efficiently respond to a Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak if it were to occur in the middle of a cold Wisconsin winter? That very question was asked and answered on January 27-28 as 90 participants turned out at the Wisconsin National Guard's Volk Field in Camp Douglas, Wisconsin to take part in a full-scale exercise of the Wisconsin Draft National Veterinary Stockpile (NVS) Plan. The answer is a resounding, "Yes!"

The two-day event, organized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the State of Wisconsin, brought together representatives from 18 federal, state and local agencies, industry and non-governmental organizations, as well as one foreign government. Exercise participants role-played their response to a FMD outbreak that necessitated the deployment of NVS countermeasures.

A semi-truck delivered supplies and simulated vaccine, and exercise players went about establishing a warehouse system that tested their ability to receive, store, pick and stage NVS countermeasures. The exercise warehouse was provided by the Wisconsin National Guard as part of their Domestic Operations support mission. Evaluators observed the activity and provided feedback to participants who can then reflect on the experience and adjust procedures to become more effective.

"Two years of intensive planning culminated in a valuable test of our ability to respond to a catastrophic animal disease outbreak and fortify valuable working relationships with our partners," said Dr. Paul McGraw, Wisconsin's State Veterinarian.

The planning team selected objectives to evaluate federal and state logistics response plans, identify areas for improvement, and exercise interagency collaboration. The objectives were designed to validate Wisconsin's ability to implement portions of the *Wisconsin Draft National Veterinary Stockpile Plan* and validate NVS's ability to respond to a Wisconsin request for NVS countermeasures and vaccine for a damaging animal disease outbreak.

"We had an objective to test whether we could keep vaccine within proper temperature limits during an event occurring in subzero weather—a test that Wisconsin is uniquely capable of testing," McGraw said. "This element of the exercise proved challenging and opened our eyes to needed changes in our plan."

In the months leading up to the exercise, Wisconsin exercise players conducted NVS logistics warehouse training and learned to use the inventory management file available on the password protected NVS website <http://aphis.usda.gov/nvs>. NVS staff also conducted a drill two months prior to give players the opportunity to practice key functions and fully prepare for their exercise roles.

"This full-scale exercise demonstrated our commitment to support state animal health partners by providing emergency responders in Wisconsin an opportunity to have hands-on experience working with NVS countermeasures and allowed an equal opportunity for the Logistics Center

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NVS personnel to respond as they would in a real emergency.” said Rodney White, APHIS Veterinary Services Logistics Center Director.

The exercise actually kicked off with a separate test of the NVS request process using an FMD scenario to state and federal animal health officials on January 20. The Wisconsin State Veterinarian’s Office and APHIS Veterinary Services (VS) District 3 officials determined the need for NVS countermeasures and set forth requesting the materials.

Day one of the exercise on January 27 encompassed setting up the warehouse operations, preparing the inventory management system and receiving the countermeasures. During this phase, the receiving and distribution manager received the shipment, and directed warehouse teams to offload the simulated vaccine, check its temperature to ensure the required temperature was maintained during transit, conduct inventory, and quickly store it in a refrigerated truck. Players appropriately responded to an inject that some of the vaccine was out of temperature tolerance. The warehouse team then offloaded the countermeasures truck using a forklift, inspected for damages and shortages, and stored each tri-wall container in its storage location on the warehouse floor. Players then secured the countermeasures and warehouse, and the exercise was suspended for the day.

A series of briefings to all attendees kicked off the second day of the exercise. Following the briefings, warehouse play resumed with players reacting to exercise injects and taking action to respond to a variety of simulated circumstances. Multiple injects for the warehouse teams required them to pick a variety of supplies from the NVS 24 hour push packs and move them to staging in preparation for distribution to field responders.

Exercise observers viewed the exercise play from designated observation areas. Each inject and expected action was reviewed with the observers as exercise play unfolded. Observers were afforded a close look of the warehouse, NVS countermeasures, and cold chain technologies during the lunch period. As the exercise came to a close, the warehouse shut down emergency functions and returned to normal operations. During this time, warehouse teams and managers conducted actions to return accountable NVS countermeasures to the warehouse, pack and prepare them for return, and load them back onto the tractor trailer for return shipment to the NVS program. All exercise participants were involved in a hotwash to identify positive attributes, areas for improvement, and lessons learned.

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 field responders will receive the NVS countermeasures they will need. For planning tools, question and answer documents, and other information, visit the NVS website

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at <http://nvs.aphis.usda.gov> or contact the Logistics Center NVS personnel
at nvs@aphis.usda.gov.

Training and Drill



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Warehouse Set Up



Exercise Play



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Cold Chain Management



Observer Opportunities



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Wisconsin Supply Unit

