



**Shake Out Earthquake Exercise  
Federal Emergency Management  
Agency (FEMA) Region VIII and Utah  
April 2012  
ESF 11 After Action Report (AAR)**



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### **Exercise Summary**

On 17<sup>th</sup> April, FEMA Region VIII and Utah exercised their response to a 7.0 magnitude earthquake in Salt Lake City. Notification of the earthquake happened by the Emergency Notification System in FEMA Region VIII. Upon activation, the ESF 11 Coordinator submitted a Resource Request Workbook for initial staffing to include: ESF 11 desk officer at the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food Emergency Operations Center in Salt Lake City, ESF 11 desk officer at the FEMA Regional Response Coordination Center in Denver, and ESF 11 liaison officer attached to the FEMA Incident Management Assistance Team in Salt Lake City. In addition, subject matter experts for household pets and congregate feeding were requested for desk officer support. For APHIS resources, western region dispatch created a Shake Out Exercise incident in the Resource Ordering Status System (ROSS), attached employees to the incident in ROSS, and sent dispatched employees a Resource Order. For partner agency resources, FEMA Region VIII partner agency contacts identified resources for deployment. FEMA utilized Action Request Forms to simulate Mission Assignment (MA) authority utilized during a presidential disaster declaration under the Stafford Act. Beyond the Federal Operations Support MA for activation, two additional MAs were discussed with FEMA in response to state requests for assistance with livestock feeding and stray animal recovery. Resources were demobilized by 19<sup>th</sup> April.

### **Lessons Learned**

#### **Things that worked well:**

1. Connectivity with state ESF 11 both at the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food and the Division of Emergency Management was effective. ESF 11 desk officers and subject matter experts in Salt Lake City maintain working relationships and routine communications with state stakeholders. These existing networks facilitate resource requests being processed through the system correctly and in a timely manner. Eight desk officers were rotated through the exercise and all conducted themselves in a professional manner and successfully operated the ESF 11 desk. The exercise gave APHIS employees a “real world” training experience which is an invaluable scenario-based addition to classroom and virtual desk officer training.
2. ESF 11 partner agencies provided timely and effective response to needs requested by the state and federal ESF 11 desk officers. For example, a USDA feeding commodities report was quickly assembled and provided by FNS. The Department of the Interior (DOI) related injects were scripted out as to what key steps would likely be taken, in preparation for the exercise. This information is an excellent training tool for desk officers.

3. ESF 11 desk officers maintained effective communications across three locations throughout the incident. Consistency in messaging can be a challenge when email and phone systems are operational but are especially challenging when communication options are unreliable due to power outages. Two additional state requests for federal assistance beyond the activation of ESF 11 (livestock feeding and stray animal capture) were quickly and clearly communicated with the appropriate parties. These resource requests provided an opportunity to discuss statutory authority and mission assignment authority with FEMA MA Manager in FEMA Region VIII.

Things that could use improvement:

1. USDA and DOI were not incorporated into the draft FEMA Region VIII Catastrophic Earthquake Plan prior to Shake Out. Because agriculture and natural resources/cultural/historic issues are not included in the FEMA plan, USDA and DOI were not listed as players on materials used during the exercise, ESF 11 responders did not receive exercise responder handbooks at the start of the exercise, and the pre-scripted mission assignments provided during the exercise did not match USDA and DOI resources. ESF 11 needs to continue to work with federal and state emergency management contacts to increase understanding of how to access USDA foods and why agricultural/animal issues and natural/cultural/historic issues are important during the first few days of a disaster response. In addition, ESF 11 needs to continue to work with FEMA and their contractors to integrate animal and agriculture agencies and resources into the FEMA Region VIII Catastrophic Earthquake Plan.
2. The Emergency Notification System did not place. The notice of activation call to a single point of contact, the ESF 11 coordinator, but rather notified all USDA/DOI participants in the exercise. This created confusion for the responders who were unclear whether they needed to respond to the call from FEMA and call-in to the 1-800 number provided and what their “pin” number might be. The ESF 11 Coordinator will provide the single point of contact (and 1 back-up) to FEMA Region VIII in order to prevent this confusion for the next activation.
3. A few administrative improvements were identified.
  - a. The decision to utilize action request forms in lieu of MAs during the exercise was a lost opportunity to increase awareness regarding key MA information (signatures, funding amounts, effective date) and where this information is located on the document. Any chance for desk officers to review a MA is valuable.
  - b. Lack of FEMA email in-boxes for the ESFs (recently discontinued) made it difficult for desk officers to keep up with information flow, track mission assignment work progress, and determine status of state requests for assistance.
  - c. Some situations occurred where resource requests did not progress through the system as expected. This resulted in poor utilization of APHIS-wide resources for

addressing stray animal issues and lack of proper authority and funding. The ESF 11 desk officer training materials will be reviewed toward the goal of clarifying the importance of single-source resource ordering.

- d. Connecting the dots on human and household pet sheltering between ESF 6 and ESF 11 at multiple locations proved challenging. Situational awareness was difficult to obtain throughout the exercise. Due to these disconnects, the exercise was unable to explore larger issues related to strategic support (technical assistance) and on-scene assistance (direct federal assistance) that would likely be requested during a disaster.