



Southern States, National Veterinary Stockpile Successfully Test
Capabilities for Responding Logistically to a Damaging Animal Disease
April 2010

The Southern Agriculture and Animal Disaster Response Alliance (SAADRA) in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture's National Veterinary Stockpile (NVS) successfully tested their collective ability to respond logistically to a damaging animal disease during the last week in April.

The exercise started with agricultural authorities in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi requesting emergency assistance from the NVS followed by the NVS' simultaneous deployment of push packs, simulated vaccine, and vaccine ancillary countermeasures to exercise sites in the three states. Participants--169 in total--included State personnel from SAADRA members including Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. Federal personnel included those from the NVS as well as Eastern and Western Regions of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

The functional exercise was conducted in accordance with the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program guidance. Its purpose was to enhance Federal, State, and SAADRA logistics emergency response knowledge, collaboration, and expertise in requesting and using the NVS' countermeasures for responding to a damaging animal disease outbreak. During the exercise, warehouse personnel in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi operated warehouses where they received, stored, managed, and staged NVS countermeasures to practice their logistics support of field operations.

Prior to the exercise, the NVS conducted a one-day, logistics training workshop that trained personnel on the logistics and inventory management functions that they'd need to master to support responders in the field during a large scale outbreak.

The exercise was the culmination of a year of planning. The planning team of State and Federal personnel used the capabilities, activities, and tasks from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Target Capabilities List as a foundation for developing the exercise's objectives and scenario. The team selected two target capabilities from the list and developed corresponding objectives to evaluate logistic response procedures to a potential Rift Valley Fever outbreak.

The capabilities and objectives of the exercise were as follows:

- Capability: Animal Disease Emergency Support
 - Objective 1: Validate that State and Federal logistics personnel are able to execute the responsibilities and activities identified in State animal disease emergency support plans.
 - Objective 2: Exercise the NVS request process with State and Federal agencies.

- Capability: Critical Resource Logistics and Distribution
 - Objective 1: Validate State personnel ability to execute warehouse activities, including receiving, staging, and storing NVS countermeasures; conducting inventory management; and preparing issues for field response.
 - Objective 2: Identify planning gaps, shortfalls, or limitations that may impair the receipt, processing, and distribution of NVS countermeasures.
 - Objective 3: Validate that NVS tri-wall packing slips match the tri-wall contents.
 - Objective 4: Validate NVS and State cold-chain management of simulated vaccine during shipment and storage.
 - Objective 5: Validate that State logistics warehouse facilities and layout are designed for efficient and effective operations.

The benefits of the exercise included:

- Increased understanding of the size and scope of operations needed to receive and manage NVS countermeasures
- Improved teamwork skills among State personnel
- Increased interaction and collaboration of State and Federal agencies
- Increased leadership buy-in and collaboration in the agriculture community from intra-State participation

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