



New Mexico Department of Agriculture
& USDA/APHIS FEMA Regions VI & IX
Table Top Exercise (TTX)
After Action Report (AAR)



EXERCISE SUMMARY

On December 9, 2015 the New Mexico Department of Agriculture and ESF #11 Coordinators from FEMA Regions VI & IX conducted a Table Top Exercise (TTX) for the purpose of utilizing the *State of New Mexico Disaster Animal Response Team (DART) Manual Pet Sheltering: Standard Operating Procedures (Draft)* in response to an earthquake scenario. This scenario and the resulting resource impacts are based upon FEMA Region VI Rio Grande Rift Earthquake planning with the State of New Mexico, and actual events from recent disasters.

One of the many functions and goals of an exercise is to bring together agencies and organizations in a risk-free environment to identify and practice the roles and responsibilities described in their respective plans before an event occurs. The exercise consisted of 64 attendees representing 22 local, State, Tribal and Federal agencies. The Exercise Planning Team identified four (2) Core Capabilities and (3) exercise objectives. This exercise also included corrective actions resulting from the TTX conducted in November 2013.

CORE CAPABILITIES

- 1. Operational Coordination** - Establish and maintain a unified and coordinated operational structure and process that appropriately integrates all critical stakeholders and supports the execution of core capabilities.
- 2. Mass Care (Animals)** – Provide life-sustaining services to the affected population with a focus on hydration, feeding, and sheltering to those who have the most need, as well as support for reunifying families with pets.

Exercise Objectives

1. Familiarization with key ICS Principles.
2. Test key portions of State Plans concerning response tactics.
3. Test processes to initiate support from federal and other agencies.

A “hot-wash” briefing with all the participants was conducted immediately following the exercise with the following key issues observed as successful and recommendations for future exercises. This list also includes additional improvements identified and suggested by the three Exercise Evaluators.

LESSONS LEARNED

Successful:

- (1) The NM Disaster Animal Response Team (DART) continues to make progressive steps forward in terms of capabilities and organization. This exercise yielded specific areas for further development of the DART and the accompanying state plan thru drills, workshops, etc.
- (2) This exercise allowed for substantive collaboration and interaction between the agencies and groups represented. This was the most diverse group of participants (e.g. federal, state, local, Non-Governmental, and private industry) to their exercise to date, that focused specifically on companion animal issues following a catastrophic disaster impacting over one million people and thousands of pets and animals.

- (3) The exercise provided the participants valuable organizational skills thru the use of ICS and NIMS principles in the exercise design and implementation,

Challenges/Areas for Improvement:

- (1) The DART and supporting agencies would benefit from additional exercises that focus on ICS principles with a focus on completing various ICS Forms (e.g. ICS-202, ICS-207 & ICS-215).
- (2) Several potential improvements (e.g., reunification process, transportation, etc.) to the DART Plan and Standard Operation Procedures were identified during the exercise with a complete list outlined in the Improvement Plan developed for the New Mexico ESF #11 State Coordinator.
- (3) Coordinate with potential NGO agencies that could assist with companion animal issues during a major response. This may also include executing formal agreements with key potential NGO agencies.