



**Vibrant Response Exercise 2014**  
**July 21-25, 2014**  
**ESF #11 After Action Report (AAR)**



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**Exercise Summary**

This exercise scenario was a ground-based 10 Kiloton (KT) improvised nuclear device (IND) detonated in Indianapolis, Indiana with catastrophic effects. The National Atmospheric Release Advisory Center modeled approximately 53,050 fatalities with 11,130 resulting from the initial blast and 41,920 fatalities from early fallout. Several hundred thousand survivors notionally sheltered in place initially. A Presidential Major Disaster Declaration for 13 counties of the State made them eligible for FEMA Individual and Public Assistance. As part of the exercise further intelligence strongly pointed to an additional nuclear device present in the United States. Various cities were identified as potential targets including New York City and Washington, D.C.

As part of this exercise and consistent with FEMA concepts, a National Incident Management Assistance Team (N-IMAT) deployed to Indiana and operational control of the incident was passed from the RRCC to the NRCC on day two. The FEMA N-IMAT stood up the Initial Operating Facility (IOF) across the street from the Indiana State Emergency Operations Center.

ESF11 was notionally activated to the RRCC, the IOF, and the NRCC. Collateral duty ESF11 desk officers also were involved in parts of the exercise, but were unable to participate at the IOF due to space limitation. APHIS also supported the exercise by staffing for a simulation cell located with the NRCC.

**Lessons Learned**

**Successful**

1. The USDA ESF11 Coordinator in FEMA Region V along with desk officers established and maintained multiple shifts at the RRCC. The ESF11 collateral duty team was prepared with prior issued logins and passwords allowing use of FEMA's WebEOC.
2. Deployment of the USDA ESF11 Coordinator from FEMA Region I to the IOF in Indianapolis was essential for the continuity of ESF11 assistance in the disaster before, during and after the transfer of operations to the NRCC.
3. The Director of the National Veterinary Stockpile (NVS) provided timely consultation and responses regarding whether NVS would be a viable resource to the State of Indiana in the IND scenario.
4. The Animal Care representative on the Advisory Team coordinated well with the ESF11 Coordinator at the IOF for consultations, meetings and provided written summaries of state agricultural challenges and advice for pet decontamination and livestock issues.
5. The exercise was a great opportunity to learn about capabilities of other federal response partners, while collaborating to address state needs. Simulated response with state and federal agencies ensured three days of active play in the exercise. ESF4/USDA Forest Service staff provided outstanding desk officer coverage while teaching ESF11 about USFS roles and resources.
6. APHIS successfully exercised the ability to provide ESF11 support for the week long exercise in several locations in three different states.

## Challenges/Areas for Improvement

1. The May 2013 rewrite of the ESF11 Annex tasks ESF11 as responsible for the functions of animal and agriculture health and emergency management. Several APHIS employees separately offered program resources that were not consistent with the exercise scenario or realistic deployment timeline. For example, FEMA and state officials were repeatedly assured the National Animal Health Emergency Response Corps (NAHERC) was a readily deployable asset after the nuclear detonation. Even after a conference call on day three clarified the scenario was not consistent with immediate deployment of APHIS personnel, some continued to suggest them to the state and FEMA. Other examples:
  - The State of Indiana and FEMA received contradictory information from APHIS exercise observers and participants regarding APHIS capabilities to lead a pet decontamination response for approximately 72,000 pets.
  - APHIS employees assured FEMA and the State of Indiana that Veterinary Services can accept a FEMA Mission Assignment to provide Depopulation, Decontamination and Disposal (3D) response for more than 10 million livestock utilizing NVS, NAHERC and VS staff for this complex radiation scenario.
  - The ESF11 National Coordinator requested VS confirmation of this capability, but did not get a response. This resulted in inability to confirm to FEMA and the State what APHIS deployable capabilities were available to provide assistance under a Mission Assignment.
  - APHIS staff should provide unified messages to states, FEMA and other federal agencies about realistic response capabilities to avoid continued confusion.
  - In a disaster/Stafford Act declaration, a state requests assistance to FEMA which authorizes and provides Mission Assignment (MA) authority and funding. Actions APHIS programs take on their own, are under their own funding and authority.
2. Several FEMA Individual Assistance staff at the RRCC, NRCC and IOF made multiple verbal requests to ESF11 to perform ESF6 functions or state functions, rather than for technical assistance. These verbal requests (ESF11 received no Mission Assignments for this exercise) included:
  - Take steps that duplicate (hence confuse) state efforts for pet response;
  - Order pet supplies, determine locations for and create/staff pet shelters;
  - At the national level, to identify pet shelters and numbers of pets at shelters;
  - Contrary to a proposed plan, to assign the pet decontamination task to ESF11.
3. The state level response for animals included multiagency Federal, state and NGO efforts, with several FEMA IMAT and Voluntary Agency Liaisons personnel involved. Yet there was a verbal suggestion to the National Coordinator for an animal multiagency coordination center to operate from Washington DC. While this did not develop into an official request, it would have added confusion to state coordinated response efforts.
4. USDA headquarters emergency management elements did not participate in the exercise. It was a missed opportunity to work through the issue of how USDA response activities could be coordinated with FEMA, and the issues of statutory or Stafford Act activities.