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MRC

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

The Role of Veterinary Professionals in an MRC *A Guide for Unit Leaders*

Veterinarians, animal health technicians, and veterinary support staff have unique skills that can serve an MRC unit in many different ways. Depending on the primary mission and goals of your MRC unit, veterinary professionals may be a great addition, or perhaps it might be a better fit for veterinary professionals in your state or community to form their own unit! Some obvious examples of mission assignments include:

★ **Leadership**

- Veterinary professionals may be able to contribute effectively to the leadership of local MRC units

★ **Animal Care**

- Companion animal and service animal care at evacuation shelters, service at the local animal control, or humane societies during disasters
- Large animal or poultry support during disasters, including potential animal disease emergencies

★ **Epidemiology Expertise**

- Able to identify and track disease patterns, identify case definition
- Unique knowledge of "herd health" principles (people and animals!)

★ **Bioterrorism – Zoonosis Expertise**

- Knowledge of most bioterrorism agents including agent, modes of transmission, signs and symptoms, animal treatment protocols

★ **Decon**

- Ability to perform animal decon and human decon as needed (including at hospitals and shelters, first receivers)

★ **Search and Rescue**

- Ability to assist with the search and rescue component, unique requirements of animal handling, addressing the issue of people failing to evacuate if not allowed to take their animals

★ **Human Care**

- Under appropriate medical direction, able to perform support procedures

★ **Source of Medical Equipment and Supplies**

- Large number of veterinary drugs are human labeled
- Equipment is largely the same (bandages, syringes, surgical instruments)

★ **Community Planning, Outreach, and Education**

- Disaster preparedness for pets and their owners

★ **Animal Vaccination Clinics**

- Public health importance

★ **Mental Health**

- Therapy pets are quite useful in many situations

These are only a few examples of how veterinarians can be utilized in an MRC unit. The easiest way to get started is to contact your local veterinary association or your state veterinary association.

For more information about the MRC or for veterinary information:

Visit

**www.medicalreservecorps.gov
or www.avma.org**

