

State of the art on contingency planning for the management of animal welfare issues during floods

Stela Karadzhova-Georgieva,
Chief inspector, RFSD–Montana,
Bulgarian Food Safety Agency

Lisbon, Portugal, 1718
January, 2024



World
Organisation
for Animal
Health
Founded as OIE

Organisation
mondiale
de la santé
animale
Fondée en tant qu'OIE

Organización
Mundial
de Sanidad
Animal
Fundada como OIE





Legislation and regulatory authority

- The Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA) has approved a Contingency plan for animal welfare in the event of disasters since April 2021. The Plan refers to the Bulgarian National Disaster Prevention Plan and is based on the multidisciplinary approach and relationships between institutions in disaster management.
- The plan follows the WOAAH Guidelines on ‘Disaster management and risk reduction in relation to animal health and welfare and veterinary public health’ and describes the roles and duties of the veterinarians in the WOAAH recommended processes and procedures that cover all phases of the Disaster Management Cycle: Mitigation/Prevention → Preparedness → Response → Recovery.



Emergency support functions (ESF)/ expert teams

Responsibilities of the veterinary services - to maintain up-to-date information in the database for:

- Livestock facilities - number, location, types of animals;
- Veterinary medical facilities in each district - number, at what distance they are from the livestock facilities, number of practicing veterinarians;
- Availability of zoos, dolphinariums and centers for wild animals in the given territory;
- Information on available populations of wild animals (hunting and forestry) – species, habitat range;
- Animals used in experiments for the purpose of training in veterinary medical educational institutions.



Role of veterinary services:



- ✓ Veterinary services are usually not the lead competent authorities in the event of a natural disaster, which poses major challenges to the same, much different from those of a disease outbreak.
- ✓ **Their role is supporting in rescue operations;**
- ✓ Veterinary services take care for animals;
- ✓ Organize the process of collecting the dead animals and their removal;
- ✓ Control the risk of disease spread;
- ✓ Check the animal holdings and animals (data base information)
- ✓ In cases of the emergence of particularly dangerous infectious diseases as a result of a disaster, the operational (contingency) disease control plans are followed



The most important thing during a natural disaster is to ensure the safety of people and animals.

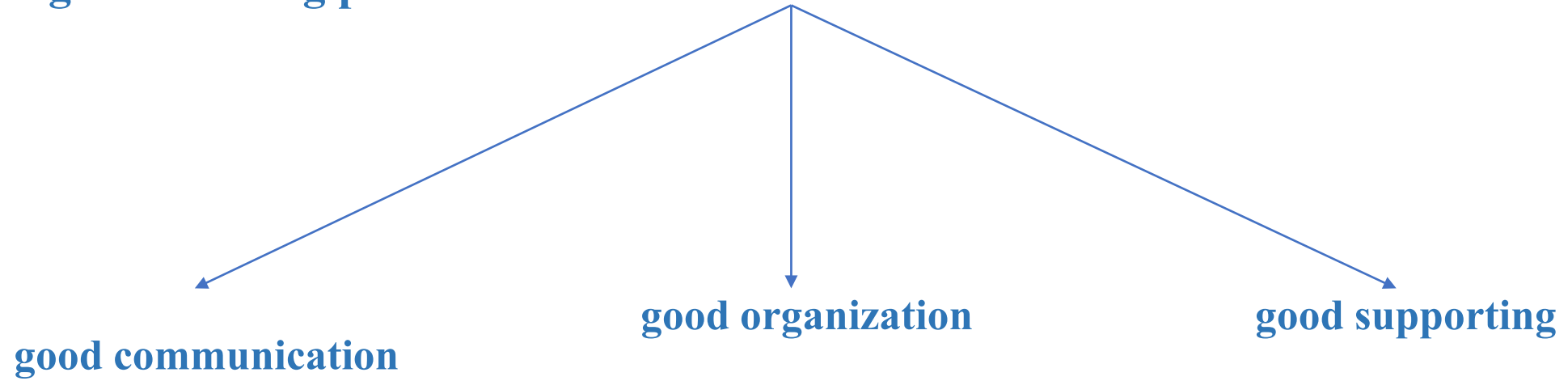
During natural disasters, in many cases it is necessary to resort to the help of veterinarians when it comes to animals in distress. Studies show that between 9 and 25% of people would not evacuate during a disaster unless their animals were safe. They would also enter a disaster area to save them. A well-organized rescue of animals would prevent already evacuated farmers from returning to dangerous areas to help distressed animals.

An example plan for the evacuation of animals should be adapted to the conditions in the given area and include :

- Ensuring the transportation of animals;
- Provision of alternative (temporary) shelters with suitable living conditions;
- Provision of food and water for the animals' needs;
- Provision of veterinary medical assistance when necessary;
- Humane killing of animals that cannot be saved;
- Removal of carcasses of dead animals;
- Returning animals to their original habitats, if intact, or transporting them to non-disaster-affected locations.



good working plan





Budgeting and resourcing

- The provision of transport, temporary accommodation and feeding of the animals is organized and provided by the mayors or deputy mayors of the municipalities (according to Art. 55 (2) item 1 of the Disaster Protection Act).
- Funding and material and technical support for disaster protection (according to Art. 61 of the Disaster Protection Act) is provided by:
- The budgets of the relevant ministries and departments, municipal budgets, commercial companies and sole traders (for their sites), included in implementation of the measures under the plan.



National/Regional Emergency Operation Centre (EOC)

Main Directorate "Fire Safety and Protection of the Population" - Ministry of Internal Affairs (in accordance with Art. 29 (1) of the Law on Protection in the event of disasters) forms and leads an operational headquarters for the management of the disaster and makes contact with the ministries competent in view of the nature of the disaster, departments and institutions.



The main natural disasters risky for Bulgaria are:

- Floods – floods are common natural disasters on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria. They cause enormous damage as they affect populated areas, industrial areas, productive agricultural lands and engineering infrastructure.
- Flooding can be:
 - - Natural floods - mainly caused by melting of ice and snow, during precipitation or when jams are formed by ice flow or freezing;
 - - Man-made floods - caused by other influences - in the event of damage to a hydrotechnical facility, which may lead to an accident or in the prevention of critical situations in a hydrotechnical facility.
- Fires
- Earthquakes
- Heavy snowfall



Map of Bulgaria showing the areas with a significant risk of flooding along the main river basins.





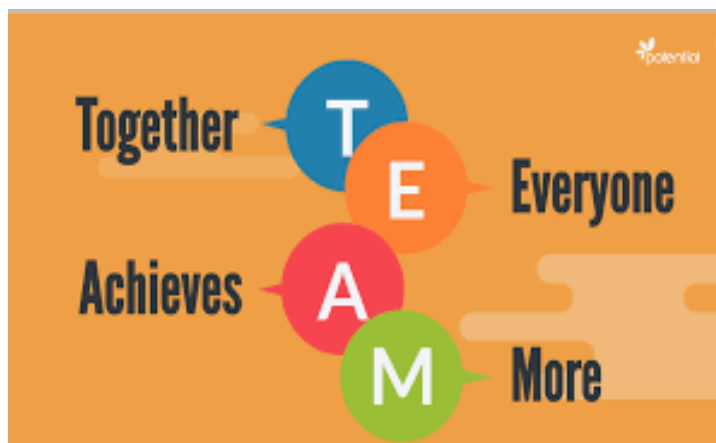
Local Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) and mobile units

- The Regional Food Safety Directorates (RFSD) must ensure:
 - a list of persons who will participate in the Operational Headquarters of the Ministry of the Interior;
 - establishing an Operational Headquarters at the level of the RFSD (chairman, secretary, coordinator, contact person (media and press relations), a representative from the private veterinarians, a representative of animal breeding associations, representatives from NGO);
- - list of available livestock facilities and animals, by category in the affected area;
 - a list of suitable temporary shelters for animals, when possible;
 - checking the availability in the BFSA and providing, if necessary, materials, equipment, preparations, human resources needed in cases of distressed animals.



Integration and coordination with other agencies, organizations and stakeholders

- Fire safety directorate (ministry of interior);
- Civil Protection;
- Local authority (municipalities);
- NGO's;
- Volunteers;
- Associations;
- Shelter workers;
- Transporters companies
- Others





As a result of the cyclone "Daniel", on September 5, the city of Tsarevo was hit by a huge flood







Unfortunately, the floods took 4 victims, including a young colleague - a veterinarian.

About 70 animals, mainly cattle, died during the flood. The owners of the dead animals are compensated at the expense of the state.



11. Evaluation, monitoring and lessons learnt

Strengths of the plan:

- Coordination of civil protection services;
- Good cooperation between official veterinarians and private;
- Good knowledge of the field for which official veterinarians are responsible;
- Making of local organizations of volunteers and donors;
- Possibility of improvisation (the probability of something going wrong is high, after all, it is a natural disaster).

Weaknesses that can be an obstacle:

- Exchange of information between different institutions and poor quality communication (interruption of telephone and Internet networks);
- Lack of safety procedures and protocols; • Insufficient places for evacuation of people and animals;
- Actions by veterinarians and volunteers who are not coordinated and well prepared ("saving" animals that are already safe);
- Circulation of wrong or out of context information by outsiders.

Thank you **for** your attention!

12, rue de Prony, 75017 Paris, France
T. +33 (0)1 44 15 19 49
F. +33 (0)1 42 67 09 87

woah@woah.int
www.woah.org

[Facebook](#)
[Twitter](#)
[Instagram](#)
[LinkedIn](#)
[YouTube](#)
[Flickr](#)



World
Organisation
for Animal
Health
Founded as OIE

Organisation
mondiale
de la santé
animale
Fondée en tant qu'OIE

Organización
Mundial
de Sanidad
Animal
Fundada como OIE

