



SCIENCE AND
EDUCATION **FOR**
SUSTAINABLE
LIFE

Animal health care in disasters

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Defining the question:

What is animal health care?

What is a disaster?

Natural disasters,

Man-made disasters...

Nuclear or chemical accidents

Rapid natural disasters

Slow environmental changes

Break in communications?

War and conflict situations?

Background

- We know quite a lot about what happens to animals in crises and disasters...
- But less about what happens to the possibilities of providing animal health care.
- Hence, the Competent Authority asked SCAW to investigate this.
- Litterature review and personal communication.



Focus on veterinary care for food producing animals



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Hur påverkar olika typer av kriser och samhällsstörningar djurens hälso- och sjukvård?



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Main categories of problem with access to veterinary services

- Weather, nature and climate related problems
- Other issues
- War, conflicts or red alert situations



Some examples

Heat waves and drought

- A warmer and more humid climate, shorter winters = more diseases
 - Increased wildlife – livestock contacts = risk of disease
 - Increased risk of forest fires/wild fires
 - Increased animal movements
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- Increased need for veterinary service to treat
 - contagious diseases,
 - metabolic diseases, feed related...
 - animals with burns, lesions.



Some examples

Power failure

- Primary (problems related to production or distribution of electricity) or secondary (problems related to heavy snow/ice or fallen trees on the wires).
- Can mainly be prevented by improving the power supply system, to allow for rapid re-connections, regionalization, 'buried wires', i.e. decreased vulnerability.



Power failures

- As a result of storms, blizzards, or wildfires – link to climate change
- Problems related to communication – electricity for mobile phone connection, for mobile phone and computer batteries, for internet access. Difficulties to get in touch with a vet, for a visit or for digital or phone consultation.



- Animal health consequences: ventilation, water and feeding systems, milking...

- Back-up power supply? Diesel?



More examples

Limited accessibility to farms

- Extreme weather conditions: storms, forest fires, mud- or landslides, floods, heavy blizzards...
- Vets cannot access the farms, animals cannot leave, feed trucks cannot access.



More examples

Shortage of vets and other animal health personnel

- Caused by pandemics/restrictions, large outbreaks of contagious exotic animal diseases, healthy knowledgeable people needed elsewhere...

Trade issues

- Caused by strikes, natural disasters causing disruption, war or conflicts in other countries or regions, human pandemics, etcetera. Veterinary drugs not available on demand.



Conclusions and take home messages

- Animal welfare legislation: does not include exceptions for 'exceptional circumstances', but....
- The owner of the animals have a responsibility also during disasters, cannot expect the authorities to 'take over'.
- The owner is expected to provide for his/her animals, at least short-term, and to have a functional plan for how to solve power failures, handle heavy rain or storms, clear the roads to the farm and so on. To a reasonable extent.



Conclusions and take home messages

- Many problems will affect both animal health *per se*, and the possibility of providing veterinary service.
- Blocked roads, shortage in vets, power failures, failure in telephone and internet communications, and trade issues (shortage of veterinary medicinal products) **are problems that can be foreseen, and if not prevented, at least included in the contingency plan.**
- Training of vets on how to act during disasters?
- In case of war or conflict situations, other problems in society will occur simultaneously.



**Thank you for your
attention!**

