

# WOAH on-line meeting on Disaster Management and Risk Reduction for Europe

## Coordination between Veterinary Services and the National disaster management system in Iceland

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26 September, 2024



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# Natural disasters and emergencies in Iceland

## Hazards of

- Volcanic eruptions
- Earthquakes and ground rupture
- Floods
- Avalanches
- Landslides
- Snowstorms

RÚV-Ragnar Visagge



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Mbl. Árni Sæberg

- 103.000 km<sup>2</sup>
- 384.000 persons
- 3,7 souls pr. km<sup>2</sup>

# Problems to be faced

## Volcanic Eruption and earthquakes

- Gases, air pollution, ash, fluoride, blocked roads, ground rupture, lack of electricity (ventilation, milking, feeding) and water, lack of housing for animals, lack of transport vehicles fast enough, owner access limited

## Avalanches

- Closed roads, lack of electricity and water, animals under snow, owner access limited

## Snowblizzards

- Closed roads, lack of electricity and water, animals under snow, collapsed roofs

## Flood

- Closed roads, lack of electricity and water, drowning animals, lack of transport vehicles fast enough, owner access limited



# Legislations in Iceland – Law on civil protection (2008)

## Civil protection council

- Ministers of health, energy, transport, defence etc.  
**but not** Minister of Agriculture
- Police, Coast guard, Directorate of transport, environment, energy, search and rescue volunteers, Red Cross, Directorate of health etc.  
**but not** the Chief Veterinary Officer



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# Legislations in Iceland

## Several regulations

- Responders of civil protection and national command
  - Police, Coast-Guard, medical staff, firefighters, Red Cross, 112, Search and Rescue, Flight support
- **not Veterinary Authority**
- Requirement of Contingency plans from 2010
- Regulation of responsibility of search and rescue volunteers organisation to rescue
  - People
  - Valuables



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# Various Civil Protection contingency plans

Almost all mention that the Chief Veterinary Officer should be notified

- However, total lack of defined collaboration and connection **to operational command**
- Rescue of animals is owners responsibility by law
  - Commonly in disasters owners need to evacuate fast and can not take animals along, nor are allowed back to enter the affected area.

Contingency plan of pandemic and CBRNE

- Food and Veterinary Authority have defined role



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# The Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority - role

- Generic contingency plan regarding animal health & welfare and veterinary public health
- Guideline to owners how to prepare and react when disaster hits
  - Gradually building specific guidelines for different events
  - Publish information on website and distribute with emails
- Frequent updates of information on website to owners about animal health and welfare risk
- District veterinarians officers have overview over location of livestock, animal species and approximate numbers of animals
  - Can provide information to the Civil Protection/Operational Command
  - Applications to Operational Command asking for priority for animals rescue by ICE-SAR above dead valuables and access for owners to feed or water



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# Experiences

## Challenges

- Not well organised cooperating system between governmental agencies
- Psychological stress/trauma
- Automatic system failure in lack of electricity (feed/water/milking) – reserve power supply mandatory?
- Housing of animals
- Feeding of animals
- Movement restrictions
  - Disease protection
  - Blocked roads or danger
- Lack of scientific knowledge

## Success

- Efficient early warning system
- Very large and well operating volunteer search and rescue organisation
- Regular information meetings with representatives from the main stakeholders, including the Veterinary Authority
- Supportive people who take initiative and think in solutions





# WOAH Guidelines on disaster management (2016)

## Iceland

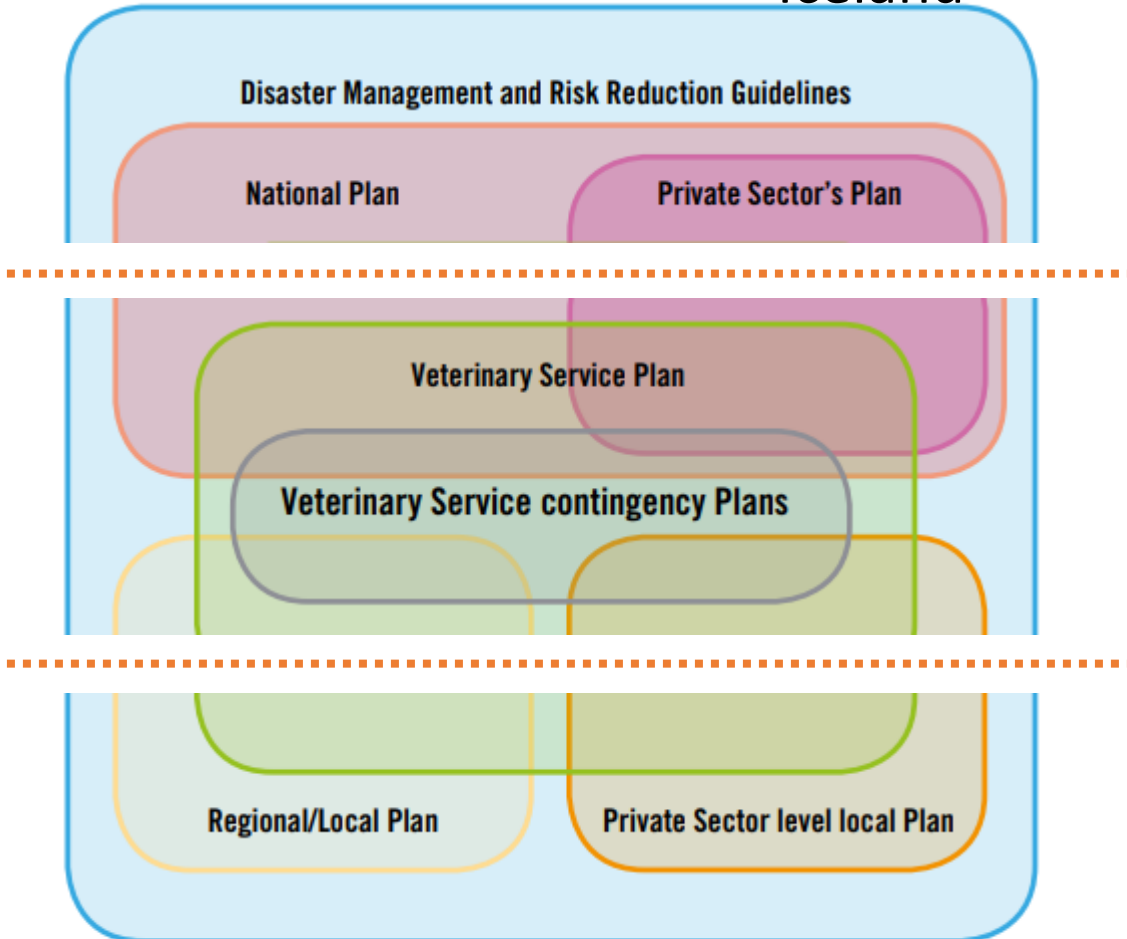


Figure 2. Relationship of Multi-Sectoral Disaster Management and Risk Reduction Plans and Guidelines

## Where we want to be

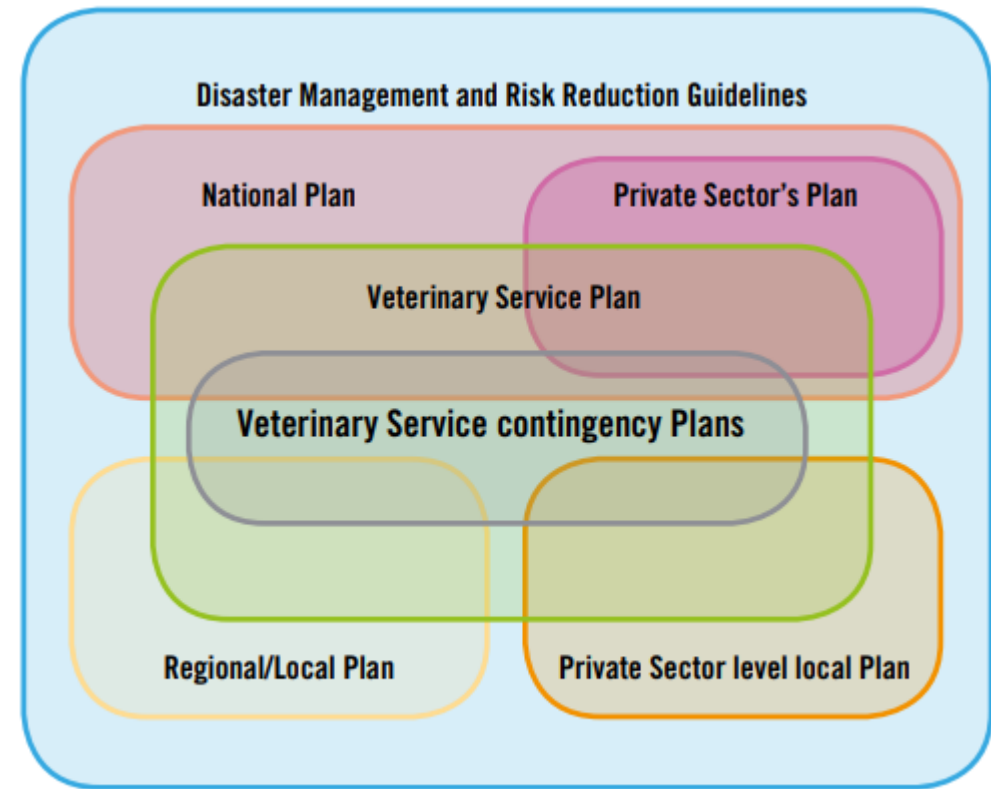


Figure 2. Relationship of Multi-Sectoral Disaster Management and Risk Reduction Plans and Guidelines

# Opportunities for improvement

## Legal framework

- Agriculture Minister and CVO part of the civil protection council
- CVO have a seat at national/operational command
- Animals are defined in the regulation of search and rescue above dead valuables as sentient being
- Livestock holdings depending on electricity – mandatory reserve power supply

## Contingency plans

- Representative from Veterinary Authority in operational command for advice regarding animals
- Animals prioritized first after rescue of people before other valuables
- Different contingency plans for various disaster events

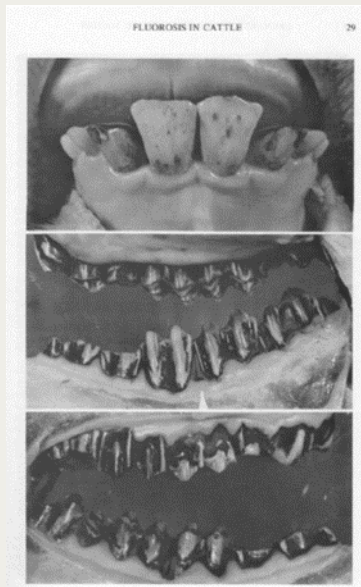


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# Thank you



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