

WOAH workshop on Response Plan Development for Disaster Management and Risk Reduction

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Country: Bulgaria



World Organisation
for Animal Health



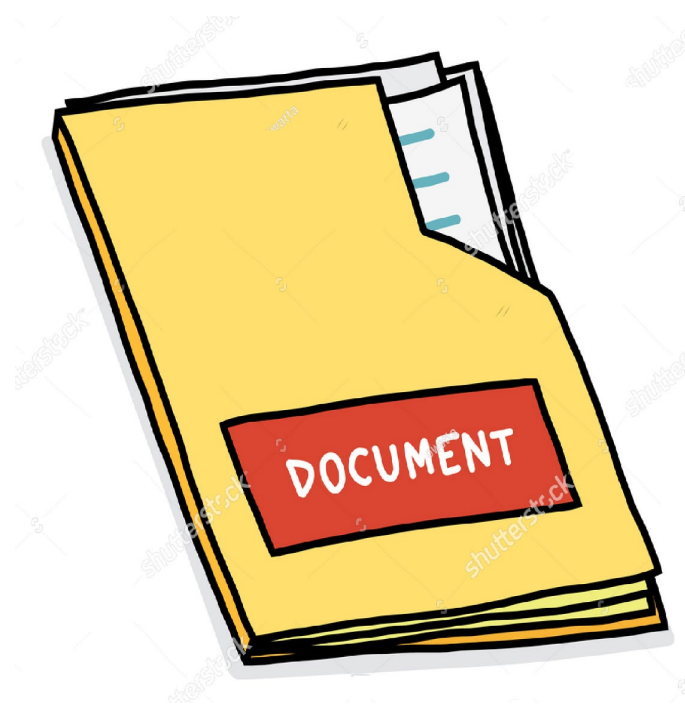
Contingency Plan

- Includes a specific hazard based on certain events or known risks (floods, earthquakes, fires, disease outbreaks, etc.) and development of operational procedures for response.
- The Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA) has approved a Contingency plan for taking veterinary measures in disasters and accidents 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 WOAHA 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 WOAHA recommended processes and procedures that cover all phases of the Disaster Management Cycle: Mitigation/Prevention → Preparedness → Response → Recovery.
- The National Disaster Protection Plan for Bulgaria was prepared on the basis of Article 62, Paragraph 2, Item 2 of the Disaster Protection Act. The plan was updated in 2022.

Bulgaria is highly exposed to hazards caused by natural phenomena. Between 2000 and 2020, disaster losses amounted to 2.14 billion USD. Floods pose a significant risk to many regions in Bulgaria, as do earthquakes, which, although less frequent, can also have a potentially devastating impact. Other frequent events include landslides, forest fires, droughts, extreme heat, storms and harsh winter conditions. Bulgaria is also exposed to hazards related to infectious diseases in humans, animals and plants, and faces risks from industrial and nuclear accidents and transport incidents.

The Disaster Risk Management Plan (DRMP) for Bulgaria sets out objectives, investment priorities and financial mechanisms for managing this risk. It supports the implementation of the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (NSDR) 2018–2030, adopted in April 2018 by the Council of Ministers (CoM), to provide a comprehensive vision and principles, expected results and strategic objectives for disaster risk management (DRM) and related adaptation to climate change. The operational objectives for DRM for the next five years are set out in the National Programme for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDR) 2021–2025, which the DRMP also supports.

The document is based on the report developed under Component 4 of the Agreement for the Provision of Advisory Services to Strengthen Disaster Risk Resilience between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.



The main hazards or risks involving animals

Floods pose a significant risk to many regions in Bulgaria, as do earthquakes, which, although less common, can also have a potentially devastating impact. Other frequent events include landslides, forest fires, droughts, extreme heat, storms and harsh winter conditions. Bulgaria is also exposed to hazards related to infectious diseases in humans, animals and plants, and faces risks from industrial and nuclear accidents and transport incidents.



Flood in Tsarevo

As a result of the cyclone "Daniel", on September 5, 2023, 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.



Fire in the town of Harmanli, Haskovo region on 18.07.2024 - a farm with 200 sheep burns down



Fire in some villages in Yambol region in July 2024



Several bee hives and 6 calves were burned





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 roll 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 (date 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

good communication



good organization



good supporting



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.



Local Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) and mobile units

The Regional District Directorates for Food Safety (RFSD) must ensure:

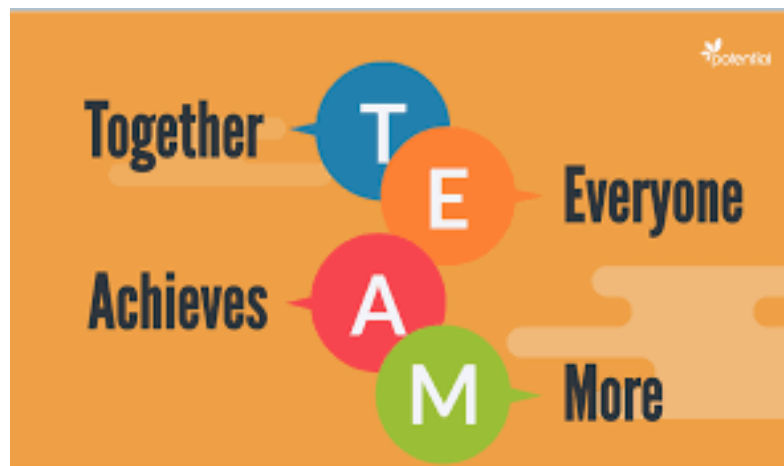
- a list of persons who will participate in the Operational Headquarters of the Ministry of the Interior;
- creation of an Operational Headquarters at the level of the Bulgarian Veterinary Association (chairman, secretary, coordinator, contact person (media and press relations), a person from the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Veterinary Association, if necessary, a representative from the Regional Board of the Bulgarian Veterinary Union, 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



Evaluation, monitoring and lessons learnt

Strengths of the plan:

- Coordination of civil protection services;
- Good cooperation between official veterinarians and registered;
- Good knowledge of the field for which official veterinarians are responsible;
- Creation 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!

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