

BAXTER COUNTY, ARKANSAS
ANIMAL CONTROL
ANNEX N

PURPOSE

Although the protection of human life is the highest priority in emergency response, recent disasters and follow-up research have shown that proper preparation and effective coordination of animal issues enhances the ability of emergency personnel to protect both human and animal health and safety.

The purpose of this appendix is to coordinate the effective use of public and private partnerships for the care and well-being of animals during and after a natural or technological disaster. The plan addresses issues concerning companion animals (pets), livestock (including horses), exotic animals, and wildlife. It is much more efficient to address animal issues prior to an incident rather than during one.

This appendix is a guideline for coordination between its partners. Organizations within this plan are encouraged to develop their own emergency operations policies and procedures.

ANIMAL POPULATION ESTIMATES

Based on Baxter County's human population of approximately 38,590 (17,052 households) and formulas developed by the American Veterinary Medical Association, the following are estimates of the numbers and types of animals in Baxter County:

A. Companion Animals (Pets)	
Dogs	9,105
Cats	10,466
Birds	2,148
Horses	682
Rabbits & Ferrets	392
Rodents	392
Reptiles	255
Fish	1074

Livestock/Large Animals

The USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) has gathered the following Baxter County livestock data in a 1997 Agriculture Census:

	Farms	Animals
Dairy Cattle	1	90
Beef Cattle	342	22,000
Hogs	12	588
Sheep	0	0
Chickens & Turkey	12	1,129,611
Farms Not classified	125	
Total Farms	492	

Exotics

There are several breeders of exotic animals in the county who are known to local animal control officers.

Wildlife

Per our local Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Baxter County has significant populations of deer, black bear, a wide variety of birds and small mammals, including skunks, gray squirrels, and foxes.

RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Emergency Management Director

1. The Emergency Management Director is responsible for implementation of the county emergency plan.
2. The County Judge designates an individual to serve as a County Animal Coordinator.
3. Baxter County does not have an animal coordinator at this time.

B. County Animal Coordinator (CAC)

The County Animal Coordinator (CAC) is responsible for developing, maintaining and managing the Baxter County Animal Operations Emergency Plan.

The CAC works with the donations and volunteer management functions to handle offers and requests for donations of animal-related goods and services.

The CAC assists the emergency manager with efforts to coordinate activities of animal welfare organizations that come to help during emergencies. When the congregate care (evacuation) plan is activated, the CAC also works with representatives of congregate care agencies to make sure that animals brought to evacuation sites are properly sheltered and cared for.

The CAC is responsible for coordinating the dissemination of information with the County or EOC Public Information Officer. Some possible topics of such messages would include evacuation options and responsibilities of animal owners, mitigation and recovery actions for domestic animals, how to report animal needs and incidents observed in the community and donations needed by responding organizations. The CAC also implements a communications system among responding animal organizations, to promote cooperative efforts between animal responders.

The CAC arranges for public education and training on animal disaster issues.

The CAC develops standardized animal registration/intake and reporting forms for use by animal shelters initiated in an emergency.

C. North Arkansas Humane Society (NAHS)

1. The *North Arkansas Humane Society* is the primary agency for companion animal issues, and will assist the CAC by advising him/her on companion animal needs, and will coordinate information and records pertaining to companion animals during emergency situations.
2. The *North Arkansas Humane Society* is the primary agent for the sheltering of companion animals brought to them by animal rescue personnel, or found at large. Residents should, whenever possible, take their animals with them and provide for their private care when they are instructed to evacuate their homes. If the situation does not permit them to make appropriate care arrangements, *the North Arkansas Humane Society* is responsible for opening, managing and operating needed shelters, providing food, water and attention to critical medical needs.

3. The *North Arkansas Humane Society* will, in cooperation with congregate care providers during emergency situations, provide co-located (or nearby) housing for companion animals owned by disaster evacuees staying in congregate care facilities. The NAHS will also coordinate the animal sheltering activities of other responding organizations. Standardized forms and procedures will be adopted at each shelter established.
4. The *North Arkansas Humane Society* has developed a list of sites and buildings in and near the county that could serve as temporary animal shelters in an emergency.
5. The *North Arkansas Humane Society* may charge a fee to the pet owner for sheltering and medical services.
6. The *North Arkansas Humane Society*, local veterinarians and other animal assistance organizations are encouraged to work together to provide care to domestic animals, both at shelters and in disaster areas. (Veterinarians may charge a fee for their services.)
7. The *North Arkansas Humane Society* will maintain the following records during the emergency, to address liability and public health issues, and to aid in the quick return of an animal to those responsible for it. Any additional record keeping will be at the discretion of the shelter.
 - Description, including type and breed, color and sex of animals.
 - Location (city/township) or address where animal was found/rescued.
 - Structure from where animal was rescued.
 - Information from identification tags, tattoos, microchips and collars found on animal.
 - What happened and condition of the animal.
 - Owner or caregiver, if known, including emergency contact information.
 - Rescuer's and/or Rescuing Agency's name and contact information.
 - Vet care given.
8. The *North Arkansas Humane Society* is responsible for reuniting animals sheltered with their owners when the emergency situation passes. The NAHS, in conjunction with other agencies and organizations, will develop and implement holding period and animal reclamation procedures specific to the event, and will publicize these procedures through the Emergency Management Public Information Officer (PIO).

D. County Agricultural Extension

Baxter County Agricultural Extension can be contacted for possible sheltering for livestock and other animals. An attempt will first be made by the livestock owner to find sheltering. If sheltering is not available to the owner, *Baxter County Agricultural*

Extension will be contacted for possible sheltering at the fair grounds or other suitable facilities and sites, for which permission for use has been arranged for in advance.

- Transportation of animals will be the responsibility of the farmer/owner.
- Feeding, care, and medical concerns are the responsibility of the farmer/owner.
- The county fairgrounds will only be used as a temporary shelter facility. **NOTE:** *Try to determine how long the “temporary” period could possibly be.*

E. Baxter County Animal Control

1. In cooperation with the County Animal Coordinator, local animal control will coordinate all rescue, capture, and transportation efforts of assisting animal organizations/responders.
2. The local animal control facility may be used as an initial holding and triage facility for rescued animals.
3. Animal control dispatch will be used in conjunction with county emergency communication systems to alert the Humane Society and other animal responders about progress of rescue operations.

F. Veterinary Community

The CAC will coordinate with the veterinary community for their services, including the treatment of minor and severe injuries, illness, and animal contamination issues. A triage veterinarian may be assigned to determine whether to provide care at the clinic or the shelter facility. Veterinarians may charge a fee to the pet owner or responding agencies for services, including sheltering and medical services.

G. Responding Animal Assistance Organizations

Are **required** to establish and maintain contact with EOC/Incident Command staff, through the county animal coordinator or assigned voluntary agency liaison/representative.

H. Transportation

Animal owners should be encouraged to plan in advance to take their animals (and appropriate Health/vaccination and ownership records) with them, or arrange privately for a place to care for their animal if a future evacuation should become necessary. For those not able to do this:

Small Animal – If evacuation becomes necessary, pet owners shall be encouraged to transport their own animals to an animal shelter site. When not possible, the North Arkansas Humane Society may be able to coordinate transportation to an animal shelter.

Large Animal - If evacuation becomes necessary, owners of large animals shall be encouraged to transport their own animals to a large-animal shelter site. When not possible, the Baxter County Agricultural Extension Office may be able to coordinate transportation to a shelter for large animals.

I. Dead Animal Disposal

Disposing of animals that have died requires great care (especially in site selection) because as carcasses decompose, they release materials that can contaminate the environment or cause diseases, particularly if large volumes are involved. Should disposal of dead animals become necessary, the county animal coordinator will coordinate with local, county and state health officials and with the Arkansas Board of Animal Health and the Arkansas Pollution Control Agency to determine the best methods for dealing with dead animals.

PLAN ACTIVATION CRITERIA

Activation of the animal emergency plan will be considered when there is an emergency situation/event that requires shelter or care of animals. Consideration should also be given to activating the animal emergency plan whenever the county's congregate care plan is implemented for emergencies.

PLAN ACTIVATION PROCEDURES

A. Emergency Management Director

1. The Emergency Management Director will activate the Animal Emergency Plan and the County Animal Coordinator (CAC), whenever the situation warrants.

2. The Emergency Management Director, in coordination with the County Public Information Officer and County Animal Coordinator, will disseminate information about animal issues to evacuees and emergency personnel. To properly disseminate information the EM Director, PIO and CAC will coordinate to:

- a. Notify agencies that provide Congregate care (the Red Cross and Salvation Army for instance) that the plan has been activated, so that they can direct evacuees that cannot accommodate their own animals to the appropriate animal shelter.

Notify Law Enforcement on the location of the animal care facilities.

Notify evacuees, via the media, instructing them on the location of the animal care facilities.

Notify the public, via the media, about how to report animal needs and incidents that they observe in the community.

4. When required, the Emergency Management Director makes requests for additional assistance and support. When a disaster situation in the county exceeds its locally available resources, the Emergency Management Director may request assistance and support from other recognized agencies providing animal care and shelter. The Emergency Management Director will base this request on feedback from the County Animal Coordinator and other animal assistance agency responders.

B. The County Animal Coordinator (CAC)

1. The CAC will be the on-scene coordinator for the Animal Emergency Operations Plan. The county animal coordinator will direct, manage and oversee operations of the plan.
2. The CAC will call the Executive Director of the North Arkansas Humane Society to initiate their plan for the management and care of domestic animals.
3. The CAC will notify appropriate animal control officers to assist with animal rescue. The county animal coordinator will coordinate search and rescue for animals in the disaster area.
4. The CAC will contact veterinarians needed for the management and care of the animals.

5. The CAC coordinates with local/county/state health departments, the AR Board of Animal Health and the AR Pollution Control Agency on the removal and disposal of dead animals.
6. The CAC will submit situation reports to the County Emergency Manager in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to inform the Emergency Manager of activities, operations, and plans.
7. The CAC will continue directing, managing and overseeing the operations of the Animal Emergency Operations Plan.