

**STATE SUPPORT FUNCTION (SSF) ANNEX 11**  
**AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

VTEOP  
October 15, 2012

PRIMARY: Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

SUPPORT: Secretary of State; Agency of Commerce & Community Development; Agency of Transportation; Department of Buildings & General Services; Department of Health; Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management, Homeland Security Unit and State Police; Office of the Adjutant General, VT National Guard; University of Vermont Extension; Vermont Farm Bureau; USDA APHIS Veterinary Services; USDA APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine; USDA Farm Service Agency; American Veterinary Medical Association; animal support groups (see Animal Disaster Emergency Plan – ADEP which is Tab 4 of this annex).

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Should a significant natural or man-made emergency occur, it could quickly overwhelm local government resources and their capability to provide necessary services, leading to a disaster situation. Such an emergency necessitates a plan to mitigate the situation utilizing State and/or Federal assistance. An emergency of this magnitude could pose a threat to all facets of Vermont agriculture and could involve crops, agricultural wastes/discharge, nurseries, pesticides, maple groves, animal feeds, animal welfare, injured/displaced animals, dead animals, zoonotic disease, and other related issues.

State government, private sector, and volunteer agencies assigned responsibilities involving emergency agriculture issues are expected to have established operating procedures specifying their emergency support actions and be able to communicate and coordinate these actions in an emergency to best utilize available capabilities.

The multi-level, interagency response to an incident of this nature will be coordinated as outlined in the Base Plan of this document.

**II. MISSION**

The mission of this state support function is to provide the mechanism for coordination of state, local and private resources to control and to eradicate an outbreak of a highly contagious or economically devastating animal/zoonotic disease, highly infectious exotic plant disease, or economically devastating plant pest infestation in response to a significant emergency involving animals (livestock and companion), and plants in Vermont. Additionally, the SSF provides emergency support to farms in Vermont.

### **III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets is responsible for the coordination of all SSF-11 administrative, management, planning, training, preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery activities to include developing, coordinating, and maintaining SSF-11 annex or implementing procedures. The Agency of Agriculture will commit to respond to incidents under our purview and request the assistance of our support agencies when required.

- A. In coordination with, and in support of, the State-Rapid Assessment & Assistance Team (S-RAAT), SSF-11 will assess the situation (both pre- and post-event), and in coordination with local emergency management officials, develop strategies to respond to the emergency.
- B. As the primary coordinating agency, SSF-11 will gather information from support agencies and other agricultural-related organizations throughout the state concerning their level of preparedness, and level of risk in the face of various emergencies.
- C. The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, in partnership with animal support agencies (see ADEP), will coordinate pet evacuation, sheltering, rescue, and disposition. The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets will develop memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with these associations and any other appropriate organizations.
- D. The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets will coordinate equine, livestock, poultry and plant emergency response. The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets will develop MOUs with appropriate livestock related organizations.
- E. The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, in coordination with VDH, will oversee public health, arboviral, and zoonotic disease issues.
- F. The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, in coordination with appropriate support agencies, will provide limited assistance, if available, to exotic animal owners, in case of emergency. Exotic animal owners are urged to maintain full preparation and response capabilities, as specialty facilities for their animals may not be available through regular support channels.
- G. The SEOC will be the point of contact for all requests for animal and plant related assistance. The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets personnel will coordinate and staff SSF-11 the SEOC.
- H. The Department of Buildings and General Services will manage donated materials in accordance with SSF Annex 7 (Resource Support) of this plan.
- I. If criminal or terrorist activity is suspected in connection with an outbreak, the Vermont State Police or Homeland Security Unit will be advised immediately. They will work closely with the responding veterinary or plant diagnostics staff to ensure the proper

handling and packing of any samples and their shipment to the appropriate research laboratory for testing and forensic analysis.

#### **IV. SSF 11 AGRICULTURE ACTIONS**

##### A. Preparedness:

1. Provide for surveillance of emergency issues related to crops, animal feeds, fertilizers and pesticides.
2. Provide for surveillance of plant pests of unknown or questionable origin, which may pose a potential or substantial threat to agriculture, horticulture, economy, the environment generally or public health of the state.
3. Provide for surveillance for an animal disease, chemical, poison or toxin that may pose a substantial threat to the animal industries.
4. Participate in state exercises and periodically conduct, SSF-11 exercises to validate this annex and supporting SOPs.

##### B. Response

1. Advise the Governor and appropriate support agencies of recommended protective actions should the results of surveillance indicate that those actions may be necessary.
2. Provide for inspection and assessment of livestock production facilities and products storage through VT Meat and Poultry Inspection and related food protection units in order to protect public health. Request federal support, as needed, for food-borne disease surveillance, inspection and verification of meat, poultry, egg and milk products in the affected areas. Laboratory support needs may also be identified and requested.
3. Provide consultation and coordinate response on animal and plant issues which impact public or animal health (disease outbreak, bio-terrorist attack, waste and carcass disposal); take reasonable measures to protect animals under emergency care from disease and injury.
4. Provide SSF-5 (Emergency Management, Recovery & Mitigation) with summarized information on the status of recommended and ongoing protective actions.
5. Coordinate with SSF-7 (Resource Support) regarding storage sites and staging areas for animal food and medical supplies.
6. Serve as a coordination point for livestock and equine related disaster assistance and assists with identification and location of housing and other related services for livestock.

1. In coordination with SSF 14 (Public Information), establish a Joint Information Center (JIC) that functions as the principal source of information about the disease outbreak or pest infestation response in the State. The JIC coordinates closely with Federal officials to ensure consistency in the information released to the communications media and the public.
5. Coordinate with SSF 6 as needed for mass care issues (ie. Coordination with DART teams).

C. Recovery

1. Continue response activities, as required.
2. Coordinate damage assessment of reported animal and plant facilities..
3. Coordinate the consolidation or closing of animal shelters or confinement areas, personnel and supplies as the need diminishes.
4. Assist support agencies for long term maintenance, placement, or disposition of animals which cannot be returned to their normal habitat or which have been separated from their owners.
5. SSF-11, with support agencies, will coordinate the animal medical services needed for animal shelter and confinement areas.
6. Coordinate with SSF-1 (Transportation), SSF-3 (Public Works & Engineering), SSF-8 (Health & Medical Services), and SSF-11 (Natural Resources-DEC) for the removal and proper disposal of animal waste and dead animals. When addressing animal diseases, all animal depopulation activities are conducted as humanely as possible while stopping pathogen spread and limiting the number of animals that must be euthanized. Disposal methods for infected or potentially infected carcasses and plant host material are chosen for their effectiveness in stopping pathogen spread and for their minimal impact on the environment.
7. SSF-11, with support agencies, will provide a reasonable level of assistance and care for livestock and animals impacted by disaster.
8. The Vermont Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets may request funds from USDA contingency or program accounts as needed to indemnify producers for animals and suspect animal and plant products seized or facilities held to control a disease as well as to pay the operational costs of the eradication of disease.
9. Ensure SSF-11 team members or their agencies maintain appropriate records of costs incurred during the event.
10. Ensure donated goods are handled through SSF-7 (Resource Support) with appropriate guidance from SSF-11.

D. Mitigation

1. Support and plan for mitigation measures.
2. Support requests and directives from the Governor and/or FEMA concerning mitigation and/or re-development activities.
3. Document matters that may be needed for inclusion in agency or state/federal briefings, situation reports and action plans.

**V. RESPONSIBILITIES**

A. Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

1. Preparedness and Mitigation
  - a. Identify, train, and assign personnel to maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of SSF-11 during periods of activation. On order, staff SSF-11 in the SEOC.
  - b. Develop operating procedures, response plans, and response teams to implement the Animal and Plant Emergency Services functions of SSF-11, including an alerting list of the appropriate response teams from supporting agencies for the EOC.
  - c. Participate in exercises to test operating procedures, and will see that all support agencies are included in training/test functions as appropriate.
2. Response
  - a. Provide Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets staff to SEOC, as requested, and alerts response teams from supporting agencies as necessary.
  - b. Coordinate with agencies to assess and respond to animal and plant needs in the emergency area, and compile a situation report for the SEOC.
  - c. Relay and delegate assistance requests to proper agency through Operations Section, and assures final disposition of tasks assigned. This may include, but is not limited to, providing emergency transportation, medical care, or shelter and food for animals in need.
  - d. Coordinate activities of support agencies, and gather pertinent statistics and data for compilation.
  - e. Coordinate location of food and arranging for and feeding distressed, disaster impacted, and evacuated animals.

- f. Coordinate animal disease diagnosis, control, and eradication consistent with agency mission. Utilize the Agriculture Laboratory for this purpose whenever possible.
  - g. Obtain samples for livestock hay and feed and perform laboratory tests for contamination and pesticide residues. Utilize the Agriculture Laboratory for this purpose whenever possible.
  - h. Conduct preliminary damage assessments of farms and farmlands to determine the nature and extent of crop damage.
  - i. Assist in clean up of unusually large agricultural wastes/discharge releases.
  - j. Conduct animal health, meat, dairy, feed, fertilizer and pesticide testing.
  - k. Perform DNA Sequencing for West Nile Virus and Plant Pests.
  - l. Identify unknown insects or arthropods and unknown plant pathogens.
  - m. Assist in developing GIS maps of quarantine or contamination sites.
3. Recovery
- a. Coordinate the phase-down of animal emergency services through various support agencies, and within framework of EOC and SSF guidelines.
  - b. Coordinate with local contacts involved to collect appropriate data on animal services rendered, and to compile such data for a final report.
  - c. Coordinate return to owner or final disposition of unclaimed animals.
  - d. Coordinate animal disease diagnosis, control, and eradication consistent with agency mission.

**B. Agency of Natural Resources**

1. General:
- a. Identify, train, and assign personnel to maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of SSF-11 during periods of activation. On order, staff SSF-11 in the SEOC.
  - b. Develop operating procedures and response teams to implement the natural and cultural resources and historic properties resources functions of SSF-11 as indicated in the Concept of Operations above, including an alerting list of the appropriate response teams from supporting agencies for the EOC.
  - c. Coordinate native wildlife and natural resources emergency response.

- d. Provide scientific/technical advice, information, and assistance to help prevent or minimize injury to and to restore or stabilize natural and cultural resources and historic properties resources. Areas covered include aquatic ecosystems; biological resources, including fish and wildlife, threatened and endangered species, and migratory birds; soil surveys; drought preparedness and mitigation; critical habitat, including environmentally sensitive and culturally significant areas; watershed survey, planning, protection, and rehabilitation; and reforestation and other erosion control; geology; hydrology, including real-time water flow data; earthquakes and other natural hazards.
  - e. Provide technical assistance to landowners and communities as appropriate to help assess the restoration needs for important fish and wildlife habitat and population restoration.
- 2. Department of Environmental Conservation
    - a. Approve sites and methodologies for the disposal of animal carcasses.
    - b. Provide advice as needed to mitigate environmental impacts of response and recovery operations.
  - 3. Department of Fish and Wildlife
    - a. Identify, train, and assign personnel to maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of SSF-11 during periods of activation. On order, staff SSF-11 in the SEOC.
    - b. Provide native wildlife support within agency policy and statutory guidelines.
    - c. Provide limited assistance if available to coordinate zoo/exotic situations.
    - d. Provide transportation and equipment, if available.
    - e. Address issues of susceptibility and impact of disease in wildlife species.
  - 4. Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation
    - a. Provide technical expertise, laboratory support, and survey personnel for forest pest related emergencies during response and recovery operations.
    - b. Provide forest, state park and recreation facility support within agency policy and statutory guidelines during response and recovery operations.
    - c. Provide transportation and equipment, if available.
- C. Secretary of State
- 1. Assist with temporary licensing of veterinary care workers.
  - 2. Develop and be prepared to provide a list of cultural resources and historical records.

3. Be prepared to provide and/or coordinate technical assistance and information concerning cultural resources and historical records threatened or impacted by disaster situations.

D. Agency of Commerce and Community Development

1. Develop and be prepared to provide a list of historical and archeological resources.
2. Be prepared to provide and/or coordinate technical assistance and information concerning historical and archeological resources threatened or impacted by disaster situations.

E. Agency of Transportation

1. Identify, train, and assign personnel to maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of SSF-11 during periods of activation.
2. Provide heavy equipment for excavating burial sites, moving animal carcasses for disposal and hauling materials for burning or fill.

F. Department of Buildings and General Services

1. Identify, train, and assign personnel to maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of SSF-11 during periods of activation.
2. Be prepared to assist SSF-11 with the receipt and distribution of donated goods (an SSF-7 function).
3. Be prepared assist with identification of State facilities that are cultural resources or historical properties.

G. Department of Health

1. General

- a. Identify, train, and assign personnel to maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of SSF-11 during periods of activation.
- b. Provide public health guidelines including guidance for the diagnosis, prevention and control of zoonotic diseases, including rabies.
- c. Investigating potential bioterrorism events, which may include human/animal health issues.
- d. Develop and execute the State of Vermont Arbovirus Surveillance and Response Plan, and assist in developing and executing the Low Path / High Path Avian Influenza Plans and Highly Contagious Disease Plan (FMD).



2. Disease Control: Provide epidemiological and public health support investigating human/animal health issues, including the transmission of zoonotic diseases and potential human rabies exposure.
3. Waste Management: Provide sanitation and disposal support.

H. Department of Public Safety

1. Division of Emergency Management
  - a. Make notifications of supporting agencies as requested by the lead agency.
  - b. Provide communications and equipment to support operations in the SEOC.
  - c. Provide information to SSF-11 concerning Threat Condition Levels.
  - c. Provide coordination for the implementation of protective actions or measures related any change in Threat Condition level.

2. State Police

Through SSF-13 (Law Enforcement), coordinate assistance to SSF-11 for investigation of animal bites to humans and potential rabies exposure and enforcing animal ordinances or assist with establishing and maintaining bio-security checkpoints and traffic control on public highways in movement control zones.

I. Office of the Adjutant General, VT National Guard

1. Identify, train, and assign personnel to maintain contact with and prepare to execute missions in support of SSF-11 during periods of activation.
2. In support of the USDA-APHIS and Vermont Cooperative Emergency Response Plan for a Highly Contagious Animal Disease when other private and public resources have been exhausted: provide heavy equipment and personnel for excavating burial sites, moving animal carcasses for disposal and hauling materials for burning or burial.
3. Assist with establishing and enforcing movement and quarantine restrictions as requested by SSF-13 (Law Enforcement).

J. University of Vermont Extension

1. Preparedness and Mitigation
  - a. Develop operating procedures to implement SSF-11, including an alerting list of UVM Extension responders including appropriate expertise at UVM in other departments.

- b. Act as the primary point of contact to access appropriate expertise at UVM.
  - c. Coordinate with local UVM Extension personnel to participate in and provide information for the Animal Emergency Response Committee to be developed locally as outlined in Tab 4 to this annex.
  - d. Maintain web page for plant and animal emergency information and links.
  - e. Provide education and technical service to Vermont farmers, processors, and retailers and their communities.
  - f. Provide Plant Diagnostic Clinic Services as a part of the National Plant Diagnostic Network.
2. Response
- a. Provide UVM Extension personnel to SEOC as requested.
  - b. Assist in producing and releasing public service information through UVM and the SSF-14 (Public Information) and the SEOC.
  - c. Act as the primary point of contact to access appropriate expertise at UVM.
  - d. Coordinate through local UVM Extension personnel to assess local situation and identify animal emergency coordinator locally (assigned under the local emergency management director).
3. Recovery
- a. Provide education and technical service to Vermont farmers, processors, and retailers and their communities to speed recovery.
  - b. Assist Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets in monitoring recovery efforts and collecting data on damage assessment and ongoing needs and activities at impacted plant, livestock and equine locations.
  - c. Collaborate with the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets of to issue recovery assessments and reports.
- K. Vermont Farm Bureau
- 1. Notify, activate, and mobilize appropriate personnel and equipment to perform or support assigned functions as designated within this plan.
  - 2. Designate and assign appropriate personnel, as requested, to staff designated facilities that are required, and provide representation when requested if possible.

3. Coordinate all actions with the appropriate primary agencies when performing their assigned missions.
4. Identify all personnel and resource requirements to perform assigned missions which are in excess of the capabilities of the bureau.
5. Identify Vermont farmers and provide them with education on emergency preparedness.

L. Animal support groups (see ADEP, Tab 4 to this annex)

M. USDA APHIS Veterinary Services

1. Notify, activate, and mobilize appropriate personnel and equipment to perform or support assigned functions as designated within this plan.
2. Designate and assign appropriate personnel, as requested, to staff designated facilities that are required, and provide representation when requested if possible.
3. Coordinate all actions with the appropriate primary agencies when performing their assigned missions.
4. Identify all personnel and resource requirements to perform assigned missions, which are in excess of the support agencies' capabilities.
5. Providing technical and epidemiological expertise and laboratory diagnostic support for animal disease related emergencies
6. Providing veterinary and veterinary technician support for emergencies in general.

N. USDA APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine

1. Notify, activate, and mobilize appropriate personnel and equipment to perform or support assigned functions as designated within this plan.
2. Designate and assign appropriate personnel, as requested, to staff designated facilities that are required, and provide representation when requested if possible.
3. Coordinate all actions with the appropriate primary agencies when performing their assigned missions.
4. Identify all personnel and resource requirements to perform assigned missions, which are in excess of the support agencies' capabilities.
5. Provide technical, epidemiological, laboratory, and financial support for plant pest related emergencies

O. USDA Farm Service Agency

1. Notify, activate, and mobilize appropriate personnel and equipment to perform or support assigned functions as designated within this plan.

2. Designate and assign appropriate personnel, as requested, to staff designated facilities that are required, and provide representation when requested if possible.
3. Coordinate all actions with the appropriate primary agencies when performing their assigned missions.
4. Identify all personnel and resource requirements to perform assigned missions, which are in excess of the support agencies' capabilities.
5. When requested, providing staffing, coordination of resources, and documentation.

**P. American Veterinary Medical Association**

1. Notify, activate, and mobilize appropriate personnel and equipment to perform or support assigned functions as designated within this plan.
2. Designate and assign appropriate personnel, as requested, to staff designated facilities that are required, and provide representation when requested if possible.
3. Coordinate all actions with the appropriate primary agencies when performing their assigned missions.
4. Identify all personnel and resource requirements to perform assigned missions, which are in excess of the support agencies' capabilities.

**VI. FEDERAL INTERFACE**

- A. This Annex is designed to function cooperatively and in coordination with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)/Veterinarian Service (VS) and USDA Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) animal and animal product protection plans that exist or are in development and addresses those elements of Emergency Support Function #11 (Agriculture and Natural Resources) that deal with control and eradication of an outbreak of highly contagious animal disease or highly infective exotic plant disease or an economically devastating plant pest infestation.
- B. ESF-11 is designed to coordinate with national public health organizations such as the American Red Cross and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for public health support.
- C. Medical and rescue efforts associated with ESF-11 are supported by a variety of national agencies/organizations such as the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), the American Humane Association (AHA), the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), and the American Horse Protection Association (AHPA).
- D. SSF-11 will coordinate with federal/national organizations to obtain federal assistance when required.