

**APHIS Joint Regional Board of Directors
ESF-11 Resources & Staffing Proposal
October 2006**

Background: Introduction

On July 6, 2006 Dr. Ron DeHaven and the APHIS Eastern Regional Board of Directors met to discuss, among several topics, the increasing demands on APHIS programs to serve as primary Coordinator under the National Response Plan's Emergency Support Function #11. This discussion took place just prior to the town hall meeting held in Raleigh, NC.

As a result of these concerns, Dr. DeHaven asked the Joint Regional Board of Directors to develop a proposal describing the resources and staff required to meet these increasing demands from the USDA's Department of Homeland Security and FEMA.

The Joint Regional Board met September 7, 2006 in Ft. Collins, Colorado at the Western Regional hub. (See attachment for a list of participants and facilitators). At this meeting OEMHS Director, Joe Frick, described the current slate of demands he is faced with coordinating on behalf of USDA as the primary ESF-11 Coordinating Agency. The Regional Directors also shared some of their concerns over the constraints they face as program managers in responding to these additional requests from the Department.

The following sections provide first, a brief narrative about the widening gap in APHIS' ability to respond to its ESF-11 Coordinator's role effectively and efficiently, and then a conservative staffing plan to address these coordination needs.

Section 1: APHIS' Current Capacity to Serve as ESF-11 Coordinators: (Why APHIS is not ready to coordinate ESF-11 events):

There are several critical factors that impact APHIS' ability to coordinate and properly manage ESF-11 events. They include inadequate staffing, unclear role definition and communication channels, a poorly defined chain of command, and insufficient funding. The Joint Board provides greater explanation of these factors below:

Staffing:

During an incident, there are ESF-11 responsibilities at 2 APHIS regional hubs, 10 FEMA Regional Response Coordination Centers (RRCC), corresponding Joint Field Offices (JFO), and State Emergency Operation Centers (EOCs). Currently these responsibilities are being performed, on an ad hoc basis, without dedicated staff to recruit, lead, supervise, and coordinate USDA resources as defined in the ESF-11 delegation. There are sufficient responsibilities to dedicate full time staff at the hubs and

RRCCs in order to recruit teams, set up rotations, coordinate training and exercising of teams as well as conduct necessary liaison with FEMA, DOI, State agricultural and emergency agencies and other USDA agencies.

Although Veterinary Services (VS) has a small staff of 19 full time employees dedicated to emergency management (EM) in the field, the National Animal Emergency Management guidelines call for a much broader scope of activities than those addressed by ESF-11 delegation. Most APHIS field employees are part of local emergency response activities and are engaged with their state and local counterparts in planning and preparation. This is also an unfunded activity that is reimbursed only after an Action Request Form (ARF) is approved by FEMA. Most of the other APHIS units have even fewer resources dedicated to emergency management and these resources are also dedicated to program specific or local emergency response activities.

What the delegation represents to the field is another unfunded mandate. It is a dilution of high priority efforts such as highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) preparedness and local emergency response. In many cases, the same limited numbers of EM personnel are expected to play major roles in ESF-11 staffing and coordination, AI preparedness, and local response as part of a State/Federal Agricultural Response Team (SART). So while we may be better able to leverage resources from other agencies during a major disease or pest outbreak, our own APHIS staff becomes less prepared to manage the operational functions of an incident where they are assigned the lead agency (i.e., all hazards work) without additional specialized resources.

The estimated field staffing needs for ESF-11 teams are approximately 80 people coming from APHIS, FSIS, DOI, and other USDA agencies. If implemented, staffing and training of the teams, setting up rotation schedules and other necessary interagency coordination can be accomplished in 2 years. FNS maintains parallel teams for food assistance issues for ESF-11. The 80 people required for the ESF-11 teams in the field could be assigned collateral duty to fulfill training and duties during activities. Unlike the National Response Coordination Center (NRCC) and headquarters EOC staff, many of the RRCC, JFO and state EOC staff will be required to travel and be on TDY status to fulfill their obligations during an incident.

Communication:

There is a need for communication down to the field level in all partnering USDA agencies on the DOI memorandum of agreement (MOA) that pertains to ESF-11. Our experience shows that expectations regarding preparedness and participation of these agencies have not been effectively communicated at this level.

At the regional FEMA level, there appears to be parallel leadership responsibilities of ESF-11 between FNS and APHIS. Is this the intended organizational structure? It is not clearly understood from the delegation of authority. This needs to be clarified.

Chain of Command:

Chain of command during activations is not clear. When a FEMA ARF is executed, requests for staffing ESF-11 assignments and local responders are currently conducted through multiple chains of commands in various agencies. Can the ESF-11 coordinator at the RRCC assume supervision of team members during activation, including call up and assignments? ESF-11 team members in the field have multiple possible assignment sites, including the RRCC, ERT, ERT-A and JFO. Many times these locations are functioning simultaneously. Often team members must travel to a duty location with no advance notice. Duty locations and length of assignments vary with the incident. It would be consistent with ICS principles to delegate authority to the coordinator to activate team members and supervise their assignments while on the incident. This would require pre approval of a roster of team members and the commitment by participating agencies to make these employees available upon very short notice and for specific periods of time.

Except for FNS, there is a fundamental lack of knowledge at the field level of responsibilities that come under the auspices of ESF-11. Even FEMA at the regional level does not have a clear understanding of which activities allow reimbursement and which do not. This creates operational and resource problems during an incident and APHIS, as designated ESF-11 coordinator, faces increased liability.

Funding:

If APHIS is truly going to be a leader in emergency response, financial resources must be readily available to accomplish rapid and effective responses. Most APHIS programs do not maintain resources held in reserve to apply towards emergency response. For example, Wildlife Services has 23 wildlife disease biologists nationwide who would be available to respond immediately to an emergency. All other WS employees are tied to projects by some portion of cooperative dollars. Commodity Credit Corporation funds cannot be used to pay regular salary and thus would not be applicable for immediate needs when called to respond. Therefore, we propose that an emergency response account be established in APHIS.

In previous responses to emergencies, a wide range of dollar amounts have been necessary. For the Exotic Newcastle Disease outbreak this amount was approximately \$150 million; for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza – \$1.5 million--and for hurricane Katrina approximately \$85,000. We propose that the emergency response account initially be funded at \$1 million. This fund should be no-year money, in other words, APHIS should seek carry-over authority. The funds could be used to cover immediate training needs that arise at the outset of an emergency, for immediate supplies and accommodations that first responders require, and other necessary expenses.

In summary, APHIS needs to recognize both its ESF-11 coordination responsibilities, as well as its local response and fund and staff them appropriately. There is currently no dedicated staff or budget for these activities. Without these resources we will not be able

to properly and successfully carry out our emergency mission. Lines of communication must be established to keep partnering agencies aware of their roles and responsibilities as they pertain to ESF-11. To improve and ensure adequate lines of communication, a single chain of command needs to be established. Current methods create confusion and potentially duplicate efforts.

Section 2: Staffing Plan for Developing ESF-11 Coordination Capacity

While the Joint Board recognizes that being the ESF-11 Coordinator DOES NOT MEAN APHIS must fill all the gaps for the Department or the Federal sector, it does believe there are some key positions APHIS must fill to ensure its ability to meet these new responsibilities. It also understands the other three cooperating agencies under the ESF-11, (DOI, FNS, and FSIS) will need to contribute to building this increased capacity, and some of those positions are identified as well. So, the first three new job categories/types are those that the Joint Board suggests APHIS establish, hire and manage directly. The last category is one that would be filled with employees from all four ESF-11 cooperating Agencies.

1. APHIS Regional ESF-11 Coordinators - GS 13 or 14 (2 positions - one per *APHIS* region):

- New, full-time positions, non-collateral duty, report to respective Regional APHIS Board of Directors, but are assigned to one Program for official supervisor of record. Funded by APHIS Emergency Funds
- Responsible for setting regional policy for ESF-11 response within their respective Regions
- Responsible for establishing and coordinating training of ESF-11 responders
- Supervise APHIS FEMA Team Leaders
- Coordinates and acts as a liaison with Headquarters Emergency Management staff (OEMHS). Meets regularly with OEMHS staff.
- Located in APHIS Regional Office

2. Aphis Resource Management System (ROSS) Dispatch Coordinator - GS 5 -7-9 (6 positions - three per APHIS region)

- New, full-time positions, non-collateral duty. Assigned to Programs for official supervisor of record. Funded by APHIS Emergency Funds.
- Positions to be placed 1 in VS, one in PPQ and 1 for all other APHIS Units
- Responsible for population and maintenance of employee records in ARMS system.
- Responsible for TDY dispatch for program and non program emergencies.
- Will coordinate with program managers and emergency personnel to identify qualified individuals for pre-determined positions established in the ARMS system.
- ARMS (ROSS) training a requirement. Must have working knowledge of APHIS travel policies.
- Coordinators will serve as backup for other coordinators and train and exercise together to optimize dispatch of employees to emergencies.
- Located in APHIS Regional Office

3. APHIS-FEMA Team Leaders - GS 11 - (10 positions: one placed in each FEMA Region— or roughly 5 per APHIS Region)

- 10 new, full time, non-collateral duty positions. Located in each FEMA Region. Permanently assigned to one Program for official supervisor of record. Funded by APHIS Emergency Funds. (To be located in APHIS offices near FEMA Region Headquarters). On Call 24/7 .
- Implements regional policies for ESF-11 responses.
- Supervised by APHIS Regional ESF-11 Coordinator.
- Acts as APHIS liaison to FEMA in respective FEMA region. Attends FEMA Regional Interagency Steering Committee (RISC) meetings and other ESF-11 related meetings as necessary.
- Coordinates ESF-11 responses within the FEMA region. (FSIS, FNS, DOI, others as needed)
- Responsible for maintaining POC rosters of all ESF-11 responding agencies.

- Responsible for recruiting and maintaining trained cadre of ESF-11 response staff within each FEMA region for ERT-A, JFO, and RRCC staff. Responsible for maintaining rotation schedules of ESF-11 response staff.
- Responsible for coordinating training of ESF-11 response staff.

4. ESF-11 Staff: GS 9 - 11 (16 Staff Years - 80 collateral duty positions -- located in each FEMA Region--roughly 40 per APHIS region)

- Not new positions, part-time, Collateral duty. Equivalent to 16 SYs to be supplied by ESF-11 programs including APHIS, FNS, FSIS, and DOI.
- Responsible for staffing ESF-11 desks at RRCC and JFO and participating in ERT-A (Emergency Response Team - Advanced) during ESF-11 activation in emergencies.

Summary Table of Proposed Staffing Plan

Position	Eastern Region	Western Region	Field	Priority for Establishing and Hiring
1. APHIS Regional ESF-11 Coordinator	1	1		1
2. ARMS Dispatch Coordinators	3	3		2
3. APHIS FEMA Team Leader	5*	5*		3 - FEMA IV - Atlanta, Georgia - Urgent 3 - FEMA VI - Denton, Texas - Urgent 4 - FEMA III - Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 4 - FEMA IX - Oakland, California 5 - FEMA II - New York, New York 5 - FEMA X - Seattle, Washington 6 – Other FEMA Regional Offices
4. ESF-11 Staff			16 Staff Years (80** Collateral Duty Positions)	3 - Atlanta and Denton 4 - Philadelphia and Oakland 5 - New York and Seattle 6 – Other FEMA Regional Sites
Total Positions	9	9		
Total FTEs	9	9	16	18 Regional Staff + 16 SYs in Field

* These positions are to be located at or close to FEMA field offices.

**The 80 Collateral Duty positions, also known as Coordination Agents, are not limited to APHIS resources. These responsibilities are equally assigned throughout the five ESF-11 five agencies and require the same level of commitment from each agency.

Attachment
APHIS Joint Board of Director's Meeting Attendees
September 7, 2006

	Name	Title	Program	Location
Eastern Region	Betty Goldentyer	AC ER RD	AC	NC
	Vic Harabin	PPQ ER RD	PPQ	NC
	Andrew Wilds	PPQ ER Acting Emergency Program Director	PPQ	ME
	Jack Shere	VS ER RD	VS	NC
	Dave Warner	VS ER ARD	VS	NC
	John Kinsella	IES ER RD	IES	NC
	Charles Brown	WS ER RD	WS	NC
	Lorraine Jones	ER Facility Manager	ESD	NC
Western Region	Jeff Green	WS WR RD	WS	CO
	Rick Bruggers	WS NWRC Director	WS NWRC	CO
	Brian McCluskey	VS WR Acting RD	VS	CO
	Mark Davidson	VS WR ARD	VS	CO
	Jose Diez	VS Acting CEAH Director	VS CEAH	CO
	Bob Gibbens	AC WR RD	AC	CO
	Timothy Fordahl	IES WR RD	IES	CO
	Richard Zink	PPQ CPHST Lab Director	PPQ CPHST	CO
	Phil Garcia	PPQ WR RD	PPQ	CO
	Sherry Sanderson	PPQ WR ARD	PPQ	
	Gail Moses	WR Facility Manager	ESD	CO
Others	Joseph J. Frick	OEMHS Director	EOC	MD
	Juanda Rogers	ESD Director	ESD	MD
	Bill Macheel	PEM Senior Program Analyst	PPD	MD
Facilitators	Kathy Schrack	PEM BPT Analyst	PPD	CO
	Jan Grimes	PEM Senior Program Analyst	PPD	MD
	Becky Gomez	Administrative Support Assistant	WS WR	CO
Via Video	Laura Sickles	Emergency Management Technician	OEMHS Emergency Support Branch	MD
	Michael Tadle	Communications Specialist	OEMHS Emergency Support Branch	MD
	Mike Panchura	PEM BPT Analyst	PPD	DC