Module 29
Veterinary Disaster Management

Student Activities

Questions

1. **According to the UN definition, what are the key features of a disaster?**

    (1 marks)

    Hazard; vulnerability; and incapacity to cope

2. **Give four reasons why the authorities in any given country may not include animals in disaster planning.**

    (4 marks)

    Any four of the following:

    - Lack of expertise and funding to meet animals' needs in a disaster

    - Lack of expertise and funding to train the emergency response teams

    - Emergency response personnel are not assigned to rescue animals

    - Lack of expertise and funding to plan for animals in disasters, e.g. risk reduction projects

    - The authorities may not perceive the full importance of different domestic animals to their owners

    - They may be overwhelmed with humanitarian problems

    - There may be different attitudes to animals' capacity to suffer

    - There may different cultural differences towards the value of some animals

3. **Natural events, such as storms, are hazards. When they occur in vulnerable communities, they become disasters. Give two examples of a slow-onset natural disaster and two examples of a rapid-onset natural disaster in such communities.**

    (2 marks)

    - Slow onset: drought, freezing weather, insect infestation, disease epidemic, flooding

    - Rapid onset: flooding, earthquake, tornado, hurricane, cyclone, severe storm, wildfire, landslide, tsunami

4. **Give the two main reasons why it is important to save animals in disasters.**

   (2 marks)

   • Because animals are sentient and can therefore suffer in disasters – injury, hunger, etc.

   • Because animals are very important to humans, as companions or for livelihoods and food

5. **Are there any public health reasons for saving animals in disasters? Give reasons for your answer.**

   (2 marks)

   YES because:

   (i) potential for increase in numbers of strays and the spread of zoonotic diseases such as rabies, Leptospirosis, and *Toxocara* spp.

   (ii) animals are a source of food and livelihoods. Without them people will be malnourished and children are especially at risk of long-term health consequences from this.

6. **List two of the most important recommendations for pet owners, in terms of disaster preparedness.**

   (2 marks)

   • Identify your pet

   • Ensure you have a carrier for your cat and a lead for your dog

7. **Name the four main elements of disaster management.**

   (4 marks)

   • Prevention/mitigation

   • Preparedness

   • Response

   • Recovery

8. **What is triage?**

   (2 marks)

   Answer: The process of sorting patients into groups based on their need for, or likely benefit from, immediate medical treatment.

9. **Name three ways in which vets can help with disaster management.**

    (3 marks)

    Any three of the following:

    • Members of Veterinary Emergency Response Units/Animal Response Teams

    • Overseeing community-based projects

    • Advising on national planning/law, which includes animals

    • Collaboration with humanitarians

    • Developing resources and training – handbooks, lectures, courses

    • Demonstrations – drills

    • Public service announcements

    • Advising clients re preparedness, e.g. identification

10. **Name four of the main areas in which a vet needs additional training, if he/she is to be fully qualified to respond to disasters.**

    (4 marks)

    Any four of the following:

    • Incident Command System

    • Hazardous materials and decontamination

    • Public health issues

    • Managing his/her emotional well-being

    • Human first aid/life support and initial care

    • Management and care of animals

In-class activities

Discussion

Suggested time for activity is 30 minutes.

Students are divided into small groups. Each group is assigned a different region of the world to represent.

Suggested regions:

- Eastern sub-Saharan Africa (droughts, insect infestations)

- Central America (flooding, mudslides, volcanoes, cyclones)

- South-East Asia (earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis, cyclones, zoonotic diseases)

- Southern Australia (droughts, wildfires)

Students are then asked:

What are the obstacles that you might encounter (in the region you have been assigned) in helping livestock owners and pet owners to be prepared to save their animals in a disaster? Brainstorm ways that might help you to overcome such obstacles.

Each group is then asked to briefly report back to the rest of the class on the key points they thought of, with each group providing constructive criticism on the similarities and differences between their findings.

Projects

1. **Review or create a preparedness plan for the small animal clinic at your veterinary school that is appropriate to the types of disaster that might occur in your region (either real or the one assigned in the above discussion).**

2. **Create a disaster preparedness plan for someone on a low income who may keep a variety of animals as a smallholder. Include the costs, and ensure that it is affordable.**