



## INPUT PAPER

Prepared for the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015

### **COSTA RICA EMERGENCY FUND FOR ANIMALS IN DISASTERS**

Created by the Animal Health Services

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## Table of Contents

Background .....	3
Capacity for Emergency Management .....	4
Legal Framework .....	4
Financial Resources .....	5
Capacity Building .....	6
Culture of Resilience .....	8
Pet Preparedness in Urban Settings .....	8
Improve Preparedness of Livestock Producers .....	9
Conclusion .....	10
References.....	11
In the text:.....	11
Figure 1 Emergency Simulation Exercise, Oct. 2013. Photo A.Kondo/WSPA .....	6
Figure 2 VERU members during response operation in 2008. Photo WSPA.....	7
Figure 3 Pet Owner Survey Results 2012-2013.....	8

## Background

The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) has been collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture in Costa Rica to strengthen its capacity in health and emergency management, as a way to protect the livelihoods of livestock producers and guarantee food security. Beyond the food security and nutrition that farm and working animals provide to millions of people, keeping animals also acts as a form of insurance against hard times and provides further economic opportunities such as the production of milk, manure and other outputs. Animal-related income streams are critical to underlying causes of risk and provide economic and social wellbeing in the world's poorest and most vulnerable regions, 70% of the world's poor own livestock (Campbell, R. & Knowles, T., 2011).

This input paper is a case study review developed by WSPA of the process for the establishment of the Emergency Fund for Animals in Disasters, undertaken by the country's Chief Veterinary Officer known as the Animal Health Service (SENASA, Spanish Acronym), which is an autonomous entity of the Ministry of Agriculture.

The effort by the Government of Costa Rica is an example of how the disaster risk reduction function can be decentralized, as indicated by the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), to include other governmental entities, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, to share this responsibility with civil defence and other institutions that traditionally have been in charge of this task.

In addition, the fund provides for adequate resources to be available to implement disaster response and recovery procedures; in this case, specifically allocated to protect the livelihoods of livestock producers.

This case study is undertaken by WSPA as a contribution to the 2015 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction (GAR 2015), as part of the UNDP's thematic review on Disaster Risk Governance. As stated in the Concept Note developed by UNDP:

*"Disaster risk governance shall refer to the way in which the public authorities, civil servants, media, private sector, and civil society coordinate at community, national and regional levels in order to manage and reduce disaster and climate related risks. This means ensuring that sufficient levels of capacity and resources are made available to prevent, prepare for, manage and recover from disasters. It also entails mechanisms, institutions and processes for citizens to articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights and obligations, and mediate their differences". (UNDP, 2013)*

This case study review aims to contribute to the research on the implementation of HFA Priority 1: Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation. More specifically, it refers to core indicators 1 and 2: National policy and legal framework for disaster risk reduction exists with decentralized responsibilities and capacities at all levels; and Dedicated and adequate resources are available to implement disaster risk reduction plans and activities at all administrative levels.

## **Capacity for Emergency Management**

The process for the consolidation of the Ministry and SENASA's capacity for health and emergency management included three main key components: Legal Framework, Financial Resources and Capacity Building. These three elements contributed significantly to the Ministry's capacity to support the livelihoods of livestock producers during disasters.

### **Legal Framework**

There are two Costa Rican Laws that supported the creation of such a capacity within the Ministry of Agriculture, but these had not been fully executed.

In this regard the National Emergencies and Risk Prevention Act, number 8488 (see Annex 1), in its Article 25 establishes the responsibility of the Costa Rican government to prevent disasters and the obligation of all public institutions and their programmes to consider in their budgets the concepts of risk and disaster, and thus include the necessary funds to effectively prevent these from occurring, or reduce their impact. Furthermore, Article 27 of the Act clearly establishes the obligation of all public institutions to include in their budgets the allocation of resources for risk control and disasters.

The General Act of the National Animal Health Service, number 8495 (see Annex 2) establishes in its Title IV how the entity will perform during a declared emergency. In addition, Article 95 proclaims that SENASA would create and administer a cumulative emergency fund.

Despite the fact that these laws clearly stated SENASA's obligation for emergency management, the entity had not yet consolidated the financial resources or the capacity for such a function.

On 7<sup>th</sup> August 2013, the Ministry of Agriculture, through its Executive Decree No. 37828-MAG (see Annex 3), established the bylaws that determined SENASA's responsibilities during animal health emergencies. These bylaws proclaim the definition for all purposes of a Health Emergency, which can be defined as the event caused by man or nature that threatens the status of a country and raises the need for SENASA to take urgent and immediate action in a given time, be it from its appearance, declaration or confirmation of the presence of a disease of epidemic proportions and/or high economic impact for the country, and it stays on until the declaration of control and/or eradication is issued.

It was therefore established that the Ministry of Agriculture and SENASA have a direct responsibility to support the livestock sector during an emergency, and to protect the livelihoods of many thousand communities. The cattle population of Costa Rica was

estimated at 1,873,272 in December 2012 according to data from Integrated Registry of Agricultural Establishments Registration (SIREA)<sup>1</sup>.

The development of this legislation in SENASA, not only provided the legal framework for the emergency fund, but also the official establishment within the institution of a Department for the Management of Animals in Disasters, which previously only existed on an interim basis within another position. This department will support other regions in promoting local livestock producers to implement preparedness measures. In addition, process is underway for including recommendations for disaster risk reduction in SENASA's Best Practice Manuals for producers.

## **Financial Resources**

According to the decree regulating the Fund, SENASA can allocate up to 10% of the revenue generated per month from the sale of services. The amount of the allocation is determined based on the needs of the monthly operation. Resources can also come from loans, grants, allowances, penalties and any other legal sources of funding. The fund was established with an initial contribution of US\$ 100,000 and by January 2014 over US\$600,000 had been allocated.

It should be stated that SENASA's annual budget has not increased as a result of the creation of this cumulative fund. The financial resources allocated come from monthly underspent.

The fund can be activated upon a declared emergency due to an epidemic outbreak (related to animal diseases) and non-epidemic (result of a natural or human-caused phenomena). SENASA will create health plans to address each type of emergency and may request the Executive Branch to declare a regional or national health emergency when required, in order to implement the plan following all relevant administrative and budgetary controls.

On October 24<sup>th</sup> 2013, the Ministry of Agriculture, Civil Defence and WSPA, organized a desk exercise to simulate the implementation of the emergency fund. SENASA personnel were provided with an emergency scenario of a flood, and asked to respond using the bylaws of the fund. The exercise included members of the legal, administrative and management departments, in addition to field personnel. Independent evaluators and international observers participated in the event. The evaluation evidenced some areas of improvement, such as the definition of the management structure during emergencies, and the need to create administrative, financial, and operational procedures. These recommendations are being included by SENASA in an action plan.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://registrosenasa2.addax.cc/>



*Figure 1 Emergency Simulation Exercise, Oct. 2013. Photo A.Kondo/WSPA*

## **Capacity Building**

The third component of this effort was capacity building. The Ministry of Agriculture and SENASA needed to train its technical personnel, to effectively manage emergencies that affect livestock producers. Furthermore, SENASA staff needed to be able to conduct accurate damage assessments and determine the appropriate emergency response, in order to execute correctly the resources of the cumulative fund.

It was therefore determined that a capacity building programme needed to be in place for all SENASA and the Ministry's field staff.

WSPA established a partnership with the Education Research Institute (INIE, Spanish Acronym) of the University of Costa Rica to conduct an investigation on "Guidelines for optimizing the training programme on Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS)". (Brenes and Diaz, 2013). This research aimed to assess the attitudes, knowledge and practices of the Ministry's personnel about disaster prevention with livestock population, as a way to learn how these staff members understand the possible risk in their areas of influence.

The research consists of two phases, the first of which was completed in 2012. This initial phase, which established the baseline for the training, included a questionnaire that was applied to 103 people. The questionnaire included three areas of analysis: information and knowledge, attitudes and values, and practices.

The analysis of this baseline presented no satisfactory results for any of the areas. On a scale of 1 to 5, information graded 3.32, attitudes graded 3.8 and practices graded 3.25. The overall average is 3.46, which is also not satisfactory.

As a baseline study facing the implementation of the training program in LEGS, this scenario opened up the possibilities to improve in all areas, with particular emphasis on the opportunities for implementing the various proposals of the LEGS Manual (LEGS, 2009).

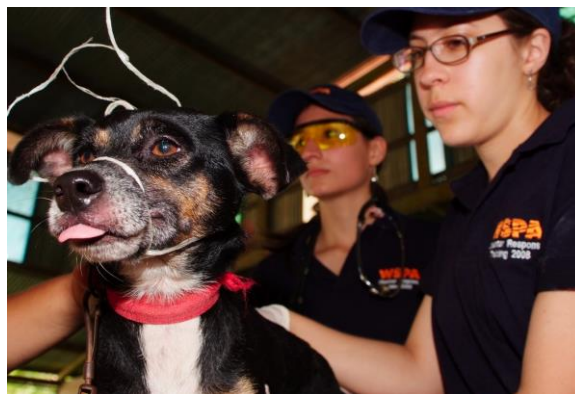
Upon the results of this research, WSPA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, started a training programme that included all SENASA field personnel. Staff was distributed among the regions and participated in three-day LEGS workshops.

LEGS are a set of guidelines for the design, implementation and assessment of livestock interventions to assist people affected by humanitarian crises. LEGS aims to improve the quality of emergency response by increasing the appropriateness, timeliness and feasibility of livelihoods-based interventions.

The LEGS Manual is a formal “companion” to the Sphere Project’s Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response. Detailed information about the LEGS project is available in their website<sup>2</sup>.

WSPA and the Ministry of Agriculture are now conducting a post training investigation that will determine the change in the knowledge, attitudes and practices of staff after the training. Results of this assessment will be analysed by INIE and available in the first semester of 2014.

An additional component of the country’s capacity that should be mentioned is the development within the Veterinary Faculty of the National University, of a Veterinary Emergency Response Unit (VERU). This programme consisted of a course for advanced veterinary students about emergency management, animal handling, biosecurity, and other components of disaster management. After the course, some of the students would support WSPA during response operations in Costa Rica, in close collaboration with local authorities. By December 2013, 115 students have passed course. The programme has now evolved to include an emphasis on disaster risk management and climate change adaptations, a set of skills that veterinary professionals would be able to apply within any of their future areas of work (clinics, governmental, industry, production).



*Figure 2 VERU members during response operation in 2008. Photo WSPA*

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.livestock-emergency.net/>

# Culture of Resilience

The internal process within the Ministry of Agriculture was accompanied by an awareness campaign, implemented by WSPA in collaboration with SENASA. The goal of this campaign was to promote among animal owners a culture of resilience, as they are the first responders in case of an emergency. The campaign consisted of two stages: an initial stage that would focus on urban settings and pets, and a second stage that would focus on livestock in a rural environment.

## Pet Preparedness in Urban Settings

This communications campaign was designed based on the results of a countrywide investigation conducted by Cid Gallup<sup>3</sup> (Cid Gallup, 2013) that aimed to determine the level of preparedness of pet owners.

This study was based on four key criteria that would distinguish a fully prepared pet owner:

- ID Tag with the owner’s contact information
- Kennel and leash
- Emergency kit in a secure container
- Friend or family member that could take care of the pet in case of evacuation

In addition, pet owners were asked if vaccination and deworming is up to date.

During the baseline research in 2012, it was determined that less than 3% of all pet owners fulfilled even two of the four criteria, only 5% of the pets had ID Tags. Based on these results, a communications campaign was designed including a TV PSA<sup>4</sup>, social networks and SMS services. After a three-month campaign, the research was conducted again in 2013. Results showed an increase in the preparedness level of pet owners, as shown in the graphic below. The campaign is being broadcasted again from November 2013 through February 2014 and afterwards a final assessment will be conducted.

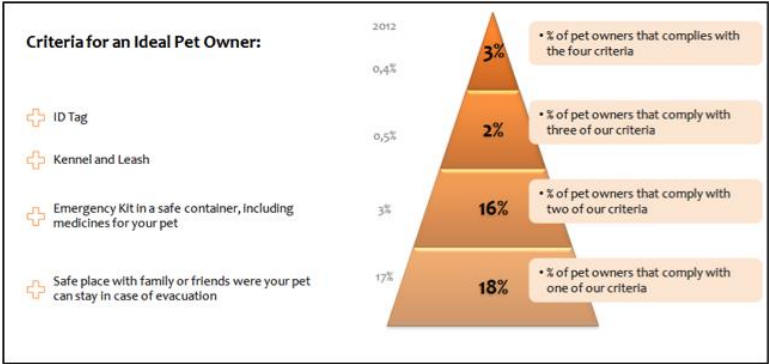


Figure 3 Pet Owner Survey Results 2012-2013

<sup>3</sup> For more information visit : <http://www.cidgallup.com/Ingles/Index.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> Visit WSPA You Tube Channel: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nkplyVMd2k>



## **Improve Preparedness of Livestock Producers**

The second stage of this process will include an awareness campaign for livestock producers in Sarapiquí, a rural area located in the Caribbean of Costa Rica, that is prone to flooding and its population is highly dependant on livestock for their livelihood.

This campaign is still on its early stages, and will be designed based on the results of an in-depth assessment conducted with local producers in December 2013, that included 120 interviews with small and medium cattle producers (up to 100 heads) that live in areas prone to flooding (approximately 400 square km), this survey had a 95% confidence level (Barrionuevo & Asoc., 2013). Some of the key results of the survey include:

- 75% of the producers receive more than half their income from livestock production (43% depend entirely from this activity) and their level of income ranges from US\$350 though US\$935
- 70% have been affected by floods, half of them suffered very important losses and 30% have not been able to recuperate
- Over 90% have not received any preparedness training in the last 3 years and 58% do not receive early warnings about floods

Based on the results of this survey, it was also determined that workshops would be the best medium to share the message with our target audience (most producers agreed that workshops or technical meetings in a farm are their preferred medium as opposed to using mass media or other tools).

Although the exact contents of the workshops are not fully defined, as they will be developed together with the local producers through a participative process, these will include the preparedness elements already identified by WSPA and included in the assessment:

- Preparing safe areas within the farm
- Using alternative food
- Pasture rotation
- Destocking
- Food and water supply
- Drainage systems
- Preventive veterinary medicine
- Renting higher grounds in other farms

A similar process was conducted by WSPA, SENASA and Civil Defence from 2007 to 2009 in Turrialba, Costa Rica, a town located near an active volcano. The town's main activity is dairy cattle and the project built the awareness of the community towards the importance of being prepared in case of a volcanic eruption (WSPA, 2011). The results of this experience were consolidated in an interactive online tool developed by WSPA and UNISDR<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://eird.org/cd/wspa-isdr/>

## Conclusion

The process conducted in Costa Rica is a good reflection of how national policy and legal framework for disaster risk reduction exists with decentralized responsibilities and capacities at all levels. Not only did the process include the Ministry of Agriculture, which had traditionally not been integrated in disaster risk management processes; the process ensured that the Ministry was able to face such responsibility by building its own capacity.

In addition, the creation of the emergency fund ensures that dedicated and adequate resources are available to implement disaster risk reduction plans and activities at all administrative levels, which will mean that livestock producers affected by disasters will no longer depend on Civil Defence and national emergency funds for support.

This process is a model for other Central American countries wanting to protect their livestock from disasters, and this case study review will be used to promote these efforts with regional bodies and Ministries of Agriculture in the region. The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture<sup>6</sup> is also developing a detailed systematization of this process at the request of WSPA.

It should be noted that although this case study evidences how these two HFA indicators have been moved forward, the HFA fails to include an indicator that reflects an improvement in the livelihood protection and food security component. This element should be considered as part of the Post 2015 discussions.

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<sup>6</sup> [www.iica.int/Eng/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.iica.int/Eng/Pages/default.aspx)

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