



INFORMATION NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 1 NUMBER 1
OCTOBER, 2011

Introduction

Welcome to the first SAVEM Newsletter. You have received this because you have attended a SAVEM workshop, registered your interest to be informed of SAVEM's activities, or registered with the Veterinary Surgeons' Board your request to be informed of an Emergency incident via SMS, having "ticked the box" on your annual Registration papers.

The purpose of these Newsletters is to provide updates on SAVEM's activities, as this organisation progressively transitions to real world readiness from on-paper preparedness. "SAVEM" has already become part of the vernacular in Emergency Management in South Australia

The SAVEM Plan has been created to enable Veterinarians to mount an effective response to an Emergency incident in South Australia involving companion animals, wildlife and livestock.

While Primary Industries & Regions South Australia (PIRSA) is the lead response agency for livestock and horses, SAVEM is a multispecies organisation, and will assist PIRSA if requested in large animal incidents.

SAVEM is a volunteer operation, whereby veterinarians both outreach to the community and at the same time develop their own skills. One of the benefits of Emergency Management is that many skills learned by volunteers are 100% translatable to everyday practice, the workplace and as general life skills.

History and The Future

SAVEM's origins go back to Black Saturday in Victoria in February, 2009. As a result of South Australia's support and contribution to Victoria at that time, and the absence of a Plan for Veterinary Emergency Management in SA, SAVEM was formed to make sure that when the next Emergency incident occurs, the Veterinary community in South Australia will be prepared.

Those veterinarians who attended the last National veterinary conference in May 2011 in Adelaide, may have heard directly from Dr. John Madigan from University of California, Davis, regarding the US experience with emergency response over the last decade and a half, in their case centred at the University.

Summaries of this emergency management history, and the path SAVEM is taking into the future along lines similar to the Davis experience, are available on request in fact sheet form from the SAVEM Coordinator:

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Events in early 2011

After achieving “Assurance” with the State Government through the State Response Advisory Group (SRAG) in December, 2010, SAVEM began and continued through 2011 with:

- Presentation to the SRAG (see listed agencies in Appendix A) and support was formalised through the Minister for Emergency Services.
- Presentation to Emergency Management Forum (see listed agencies in Appendix B).
- Presentation to stakeholders, including Emergency Management, wildlife and other animal rescue organisations. In so doing, SAVEM brought together a collective never before together at the same table, (list in Appendix C) to open our processes for cooperative action toward future in-field emergencies.
- Presentations at Community and University fora, State and National conferences.
- National radio coverage.
- Conducting training workshops for interested veterinarians, students and vet nurses, to learn about emergency management in general and in the SAVEM context in particular. This includes the outcomes for wider society as well as for participating volunteers.
- Participating in Dept of Families and Communities’ “Exercise Ring of Fire” at the Torrens Parade Grounds, in October.

SAVEM acknowledges the very positive support received from PIRSA staff from the outset, in particular from Nancy Bombardieri of Biosecurity SA. Nancy’s knowledge and skill is clear to everyone taking part in a SAVEM training workshop. Her contribution and involvement facilitates identification and acceleration of processes and procedures SAVEM needs to have in place, rather than “re-inventing the wheel”. This not only saves time, but provides a sounding board against which to track our development.

Coming events

Between now and the end of the year plans include:

- a Team Leaders training workshop for volunteers who have completed the Introductory workshop (successfully completed)
- the third in the series of stand-alone Introductory workshops for interested veterinarians (successfully completed)
- Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Team meetings for volunteers who are participating in writing these vital documents in “peacetime”.

Developing our processes

The SAVEM Plan is written according to the Australasian Interservice Incident Management System™ (AIIMS™).

Team Leaders will receive a copy of the AIIMS manual, and other interested veterinarians can obtain this publication via the Coordinator, or at www.afac.com.au. You will find within it much that is helpful with modern practice management.

SOPs

For effective emergency response, direct access and training to Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) by SAVEM volunteers is mandatory.

Since SAVEM's acceptance by Government to be involved with emergency veterinary response, volunteers who have attended an Introductory workshop and with particular areas of interest have collaborated and drafted SOPs for some of the myriad of activities emergency response involves.

We acknowledge the depth of interest and knowledge which volunteers individually bring to these tasks.

SOP team meetings have been both electronic and face-to-face, with all team members learning about uniformity of format and the requirements for content.

Regional training

We are grateful for the response from a number of regional practices who have volunteered to become Regional Coordination Centres for emergency response in their region.

Currently, all SAVEM training takes place in Adelaide. We have however already made application for government support for the future specifically to conduct training in regional areas. When this occurs, Kadina is likely to be the first location of SAVEM regional training, underpinning an already demonstrated commitment to the SAVEM program, and strengthening the emergency response preparedness in the Lower North and on York Peninsula.

Thank you to Eran

During 2011 we have had part time administrative assistance from Eran Welsford.

Eran is a second year veterinary student at Roseworthy. She has provided support generally 1 day per week, outside her student obligations.

We thank her for that period of help.

Comms are important

SAVEM is still evolving. Our capacity to respond to situations can only get better, as each of the developing processes noted above become structured, and subsequently refined.

About 100 vets and vet nurses have attended a SAVEM training workshop. We planned and expected to run two Introductory training workshops, and one Team Leader event. Such was the interest and demand, we held a third Introductory workshop on the first Sunday in November. Thankyou to all who participated, and for your feedback - we welcome comments, questions and suggestions at any time, via the Coordinator.

The next series of training workshops will commence early in 2012. Between now and then, the SOP teams will be aiming to complete a number of these documents, and continue the Policy and Training Manuals.

Firearms

It is probable that in some emergency situations, some animals may be in need of euthanasia but can not be approached. SAVEM has begun discussions with the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Hunting & Conservation Branch Inc.). The goal is that qualified, skilled shooters will where appropriate accompany SAVEM veterinarians to deal with these circumstances.

Appendix A

SAPOL, SAFECOM
CFS
MFS
SES
EFS
SA Ambulance Service
DTEI

Appendix B

SAPOL
CFS
PIRSA
LGA
BOM
DFC

Appendix C

SAPOL
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Department of Families and Communities
RSPCA
Primary Industries and Regions SA
Animal Welfare League
Dog and Cat Management Board
Local Government Association
Engineering Functional Services
Adelaide University Veterinary School
Fauna Rescue
Fauna Care and Release
Native Animal Network
Fire Buddies
Australian Marine Wildlife Research and Rescue Organisation
Wombat Awareness Organisation
Minton Farm Wildlife Sanctuary

Rachel Westcott

SAVEM Coordinator