

# **About the Kansas State Animal Response Team (KS SART)**

**(edited 17 June 2009)**



## **What is the Kansas State Animal Response Team?**

The Kansas State Animal Response Team (KS SART) is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization that began as an initiative through the Kansas Veterinary Medical Association. KS SART builds and supports a unifying partnership between governmental, not-for-profit organizations, animal industry, and volunteers, in order to facilitate local animal disaster preparedness and response development.

When local disaster response capacity is exhausted, KS SART assists in multi-agency disaster response coordination efforts throughout the state when activated by the Kansas Animal Health Department, Kansas Division of Emergency Management, or local Emergency Management.

KS SART trains and credentials volunteers, along with building and maintaining a resource inventory in support of County and Regional County Animal Response Teams (RCART).

## **Is KS SART the primary animal response organization for the state of Kansas?**

The KS SART program is not the primary response organization for animal issues in the state of Kansas. *Local communities have primary response authority in the vast majority of all emergency situations*, including most of the animal response authority. That is why building local response capacity is so critical.

The next level of response is regional mutual aid from local jurisdiction to local jurisdiction. The next step is providing response resources (that will still fall under local command) to communities through the Kansas Emergency Operations Center in Topeka, KS. Through the KS EOC, animal response will be coordinated through the ESF-11 (Agriculture and Natural Resources) and led by the Kansas Animal Health Department. KS SART will provide a strong resource when activated, providing resource coordination for companion animal and non-commercial livestock issues and supporting agricultural issues in collaboration with many other governmental and non-governmental entities. In livestock disease emergencies, the Kansas Department of Agriculture, in partnership with the USDA will provide incident management for animal disease response. In a major or catastrophic emergency, this incident management group could also help manage all-hazards animal issues if requested by the State of Kansas.

The best way to envision KS SART is as a program that works to develop and support animal response team programs across our state!

## **What is the history of the State Animal Response Team model and the Kansas State Animal Response Team program?**

The SART model has its origins in North Carolina following the devastation of Hurricane Floyd in 1999. Over three million pets, livestock, and poultry perished in that event, a figure that could have been substantially reduced with a coordinated emergency plan to address animal and agricultural issues. The North Carolina SART program was created as a partnership between state governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations. Working within existing emergency

management and response systems, including the Incident Command System (ICS), North Carolina SART's mission was to ensure their state was prepared to address issues related to any disaster, any animal, anywhere in their state.

In 2003, the American Veterinary Medical Foundation hosted a pilot presentation of the North Carolina SART model in Colorado. An audience of over 80 people representing 60 state agencies and non-governmental organizations spent two days assimilating and planning.

The Kansas State Animal Response Team began as a steering committee, through an initiative of the Kansas Veterinary Medical Association in 2004. In 2004, a statewide symposium was held to gain interest from the Emergency Management community. In 2007, while still maintaining sponsorship by the KVMA, KS SART incorporated as a non-profit, public 501(c)(3) charitable organization and continues to develop its organizational structure, training program and recruit key officers, Board members and volunteers.

There are many "flavors" of programs nationwide that either use the name State Animal Response Team, State Agricultural Response Team, or State Animal Resource Team or have similar functions under different names. Current and developing SART-like programs now include North Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Maine, Kansas, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Louisiana, Mississippi, Utah, Rhode Island, Texas and Maryland, and additional states. Other states have veterinary medical reserve corps programs, livestock disease emergency response organizations, and other mechanisms for addressing these important issues. In all, over 41 states and territories have some sort of an animal or agricultural emergency program to cultivate community and volunteer involvement.

### **What is a Regional County Animal Response team (RCART) program?**

A Regional County Animal Response team program is a network of animal and animal-agricultural resources organized within a Department of Homeland Security region. These resources are available for planning, prevention, protection, mobilization, response and recovery related to emergency incidents within their community. In regions with enough manpower to support them, an RCART may be organized into multiple teams (tribal, county or municipal-based programs). A tribal unit could develop a response unit separate from the state animal response team program or operate as part of the Regional CART.

In some counties, County Animal Response Teams may be organized, depending upon the personnel and resources available. However, due to the number of sparsely-populated counties within regions, Kansas has determined that regionally-based County Animal Response Teams may be the most efficient method to establish response to some counties within a region.

**What agencies, organizations, and individuals should be part of the RCART network?**

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Local Emergency Managers         | 8. Red Cross                           |
| 2. Animal care and control agencies | 9. Fairgrounds                         |
| 3. Law Enforcement, Fire, EMS       | 10. Livestock producers & associations |
| 4. Brand Inspectors                 | 11. Pet breed rescue & associations    |
| 5. Veterinary professionals         | 12. Public Health Department           |
| 6. KSU Cooperative Extension        | 13. Wildlife agencies and Zoos         |
| 7. Animal-related industry          | 14. Concerned citizens/volunteers      |

\*This list is not inclusive

**Missions that may be assigned to RCART networks:**

- Multi-agency coordination
  - Plan development
  - Communication
  - Local EOC support
- Resource development
  - Equipment & supplies
- Training & Credentialing
  - Professionals
  - Volunteers
- Citizen preparedness and participation
  - Family and businesses
  - Citizen Corps/CERT affiliation possible

**How would a region organize a CART or RCART program? There are seven key steps in organizing an RCART program:**

**1. Obtain support of emergency management and elected officials!**

CART/RCART programs must be organized with authorization and assistance from local emergency management! It is absolutely essential for emergency management to understand and support the CART/RCART building process! Emergency management can help determine if the CART/RCART process could include community or county level subunits.

**2. Form a steering committee**

While it is essential for emergency management to play a leadership role, the community components of CART/RCART programs must be willing to provide the **vast majority of work** in the process. Emergency management agencies are typically overwhelmed with a myriad of

tasks and often understaffed, increasing the need for community support in the CART/RCART building process.

Typical CART/RCART Steering Committee members might include representatives from:

- Local emergency management
- Law enforcement and/or animal control
- Animal sheltering organizations
- Veterinary professionals
- KSU Cooperative Extension
- Livestock associations/producers
- Other entities or individuals with the time and enthusiasm to support this process may be added to the steering committee.

### **3. Define mission/strategies and set realistic goals**

While the entire process of building a CART/RCART, creating a plan, training the RCART, gathering resources and exercising the plan may seem daunting, some realistic goals should be set that are obtainable.

#### **Realistic Goals may include:**

- Define a mission, key strategies, and essential member organizations.
- Creating a memorandum of understanding with the county or other such documentation as necessary to bring an official status to your ART. KS SART would assist with this.
- Developing a volunteer agreement and securing liability and injury insurance coverage as needed.
- Selecting a committee to create a first draft for an animal emergency annex to the local emergency operations team.
- Working with KS SART, Citizen Corps, local emergency management, and other partners to develop a training strategy to support that plan.

### **4. Involve all the stakeholders and volunteers**

While the steering committee may bring together the essential leadership components, the process will need to reach out to all stakeholder agencies and organizations. In addition, CART/RCART programs will need to recruit and train volunteers directly or through organizations to become part of the network. Local Citizen Corps program may be helpful in addressing this issue.

### **5. Create a risk assessment!**

CART/RCART programs should be leading elements in creating a local animal and agricultural risk assessment as the first step in the planning process. This assessment will help build the local plan and help local and state emergency management agencies in working to secure the appropriate resources for prevention, protection, response, and recovery.

## **6. Create a animal/agricultural emergency annex**

In cooperation with the local emergency management agency, the CART/RCART network needs to take a leadership role in working toward a written, all-hazards plan to address animal and animal-agricultural emergency issues in that community.

## **7. Train, practice the plan, review, revise**

Once the plan is in place, it must be periodically exercised.

- Exercises of plans may be done in a “tabletop” exercise where participants work their way through an emergency scenario to help determine the effectiveness of their plan.
- Another exercise is a field exercise or “hands-on” exercise. Typically, these exercises address a specific portion of the plan rather than trying to test the entire plan. An example of an animal exercise would be a joint exercise with the Red Cross and CART/RCART on housing animals in proximity to a temporary human shelter in a disaster.

One key element of community animal emergency response is developing the ability to manage these resources within the incident management system. This could include the training of incident management teams with animal issues experience that could be used to support the management of animal issues during a large-scale event.

### **What is a planning matrix for emergency management?**

At every level, emergency management functions can be broken into functional areas. Often these are called emergency support functions or ESFs. By breaking down community animal issues into functional areas, we can then develop a list of target capabilities and associated tasks that summarize what a community may need to do relative to animals.

The resources available in the community (government agencies and non-governmental partners) should also be listed. When these two lists are placed on a graph, we have a planning matrix. By looking at mission essential task (functions that need the support of animal and agricultural community resources) and deciding what group has the lead, shares a lead, or will provide support in a given area, a community can develop the beginnings of an emergency annex for animal and animal-agricultural issues.

As a simplified example, five mission areas and five resource groups are listed.

	Evacuation SA <sup>1</sup>	Evacuation LA <sup>2</sup>	Sheltering SA <sup>1</sup>	Sheltering LA <sup>2</sup>	Veterinary Care
Animal Control	L	U <sup>3</sup>	S	S	S
Animal Shelter	S		L		S
Veterinary Professional	S	S	S	S	L
KSU Extension		U		L	S
Livestock Association		S		S	

<sup>1</sup>Support Agency

<sup>2</sup>Lead Agency

<sup>3</sup>Unified or shared lead

The list on the following page shows sample mission essential tasks and resource groups that could be used to build a community matrix for animal emergency issues. The next unit will explore these tasks in more detail.

<b>Sample County Animal Emergency Support Function Matrix (examples only: will vary somewhat with community needs)</b>	
<b>Mission essential tasks</b>	<b>Resource Groups</b>
<p><b>Operational tasks</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rapid need assessment</li> <li>2. Animal control and stray management</li> <li>3. Animal evacuation</li> <li>4. Animal transportation</li> <li>5. Animal search and rescue (including technical animal rescue)</li> <li>6. Animal sheltering</li> <li>7. Pet-owner reunion</li> <li>8. Animal feeding/water and agricultural infrastructure support</li> <li>9. Veterinary care</li> <li>10. Wildlife mgmt</li> <li>11. Animal decontamination</li> <li>12. Mortality mgmt.</li> <li>13. Emergency disease management (broad and complex area with multiple sub-tasks)</li> <li>14. Animal disease management</li> <li>15. Zoonotic disease management</li> </ol> <p><b>General tasks with animal/agricultural components:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-agency coordination</li> <li>• Training and exercises</li> <li>• Credentialing/resource typing</li> <li>• Citizen preparedness and participation</li> <li>• Responder health and safety</li> <li>• Donation/volunteer mgmt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Emergency management/EOC</li> <li>o Public information officer (EOC or SO)</li> <li>o EOC donations management team</li> <li>o Animal Control</li> <li>o Animal shelter(s)</li> <li>o Other humane groups</li> <li>o Amateur Radio Emergency Services ARES (ham radio operators)</li> <li>o Boarding kennels, sled dog kennels</li> <li>o Citizen Corps Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)</li> <li>▪ Medical Reserve Corps</li> </ul> </li> <li>o Fairgrounds</li> <li>o KSU Cooperative Extension</li> <li>o KS Department of Wildlife and Parks</li> <li>o Emergency medical services</li> <li>o Equine/livestock humane groups</li> <li>o Horse stables</li> <li>o Fire department</li> <li>o Public works and land fill</li> <li>o Sheriff department</li> <li>o Livestock and equestrian associations</li> <li>o Livestock producers</li> <li>o County mapping department</li> <li>o Public health</li> <li>o Local Red Cross and other voluntary groups</li> <li>o Search and rescue organizations</li> <li>o Veterinary community</li> <li>o Brand inspector</li> <li>o Wildlife rehabilitation/sanctuary facilities</li> </ul>

A model local animal emergency management plan is available on the KS SART Web site at: <http://www.kssart.org>

## How are animal and agricultural issues addressed under the Kansas Emergency Operations Plan?

Animal and agricultural emergency issues are found across many of the national and state emergency support functions (ESF). In our state, these issues will be primarily coordinated through ESF-11, Agriculture and Natural Resources, with a portion of the companion animal element of emergency support coordinated through ESF-6. However, animal issues must be addressed by many other supporting ESFs. An example of the animal and agricultural issues in all the ESFs is as follows:

Support Function	Summary of animal issues
ESF-1: Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation of people will often necessitate transportation of companion animals.</li> <li>• Transportation of animal supplies, livestock and agricultural products may be a significant issue during disasters or animal disease outbreaks.</li> </ul>
ESF-2: Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interoperable communications for animal/agricultural response personnel</li> </ul>
ESF-3: Public Works and Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support of agricultural infrastructure during utility disruption</li> <li>• Animal mortality management support by public works</li> </ul>
ESF-4: Firefighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animal evacuation issues during wildfires</li> </ul>
ESF-5: Emergency Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporation of animal and agricultural stakeholders and concerns during local, state tribal, and national planning and preparedness processes</li> </ul>
ESF-6: Mass care, Housing, and Human services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mass care of associated animal populations secondary to the mass care and housing of human populations</li> </ul>
ESF-7: Resource Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary citizen participation programs</li> <li>• Donations management for animal and agriculturally related materials</li> </ul>
ESF-8: Public Health and Medical Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Veterinary care for animal populations</li> <li>• Zoonotic disease issues impacting human and animal health</li> <li>• Veterinary resources at surge capacity for public health and medical systems</li> <li>• Animal impacts on community mental health</li> </ul>
ESF-9: Urban Search and Rescue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animals as search and rescue emergency response providers</li> <li>• Coordination of animal search and rescue with human search and rescue</li> </ul>
ESF-10: Oil and Hazardous Materials Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decontamination of affected animal populations</li> <li>• Hazardous material impacts on food systems</li> <li>• Disposal of contaminated food or animal feed</li> </ul>
ESF-11: Agriculture and Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animal health emergency response</li> <li>• Wildlife issues in disasters</li> <li>• Primary ESF for Coordination and support of numerous mission essential tasks, including animal control, animal search and rescue, sheltering, evacuation/transportation, decontamination, animal feed/water, pet-owner reunion, rapid needs assessment, and mortality management.</li> </ul>
ESF-12: Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing emergency power to critical animal/agricultural facilities</li> </ul>
ESF-13: Public Safety and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing public safety challenges pertaining to evacuation and subsequent protection of citizens and their animals</li> </ul>
ESF-14: Long-term Community Recovery, Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recovery of agricultural systems and economic sectors</li> <li>• Incorporation of animal issues into community recovery plans</li> <li>• Personal preparedness for families with pets and livestock</li> </ul>
ESF-15: External Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public informational outreach pertaining to animal issues</li> </ul>

While ESF-11 has primary responsibilities for the coordination of animal and agricultural resources, ESF-11 does not “command” animal and agricultural resources in the field. This is done via the incident command system.

The key groups that should be involved with animal and animal-agricultural issues through ESF-11 at the Kansas Emergency Operations Center include:

1. County Emergency Manager (primary lead for all of ESF-11, unless there is a FAD outbreak, in which case KAHD is primary lead for ESF-11)
2. Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) (primary lead for all of ESF-11)
  - a. Kansas Homeland Security
  - b. State Veterinarian
  - c. Division of Brands
  - d. Other divisions of KDA
3. Kansas Veterinary Medical Association
4. Kansas Division of Emergency Management
5. Kansas Department of Health and Environment
6. Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
7. Citizen Corps
8. Kansas State University
  - a. College of Veterinary Medicine
  - b. College of Agricultural Sciences
  - c. KSU Cooperative Extension
9. Kansas Association of Animal Control Officers
10. Livestock associations
11. Kansas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
12. American Red Cross (ESF#6 coordination with ESF#11 on animal sheltering in proximity to sheltered citizens)
13. Industries
  - a. Pet service industry (boarding, grooming, retail)
  - b. Animal health industry (pharmaceutical, vaccines, etc.)
  - c. Agricultural support industries (feed, fertilizers, agro-chemicals, markets, transportation, etc.)
  - d. Insurance
  - e. Other industry stakeholders

### **What is the role of national animal welfare groups?**

There are a number of national groups that have built response capacity for animals in disaster. Some of these organizations have established collaborative relationships with the Kansas State Animal Response Team. KS SART is working to develop agreements with each of these organizations that will provide a standard mechanism to deploy these groups when appropriate. Such deployments will typically be based under the following circumstances:

- An emergency has gone beyond the capacity of the impacted jurisdictions to manage with their own resources and resources obtained through mutual aid.
- The jurisdiction has placed a request for assistance to the Kansas Emergency Operations Center ESF-11 group.

- The Kansas EOC ESF-11 group has not been able to identify in-state resources to meet the needs of the jurisdiction.
- The national voluntary organization is mobilized and given a general mission assignment to report to the local incident command to perform services in support of animal or agricultural mission tasks.

In most circumstances, national organizations would be asked to provide trained teams able to perform specific tasks. Those teams will be required to work under the established incident command, abide by such code of conduct as outlined in an established agreement, follow the assignments created for them, and exit when officially asked to do so. Volunteers associated with these organizations will be asked to have IS-700 NIMS and IS-100, 200 and 800 ICS training as a minimum, along with suitable training in their mission area. Examples of national groups include:

- American Humane (based in CO)
- Code 3 Associates (based in CO)
- The Humane Society of the United States
- United Animal Nations-Emergency Animal Rescue Service
- American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

**Key point summary:**

- ☑ Regional and County Animal Response teams are essential networks of regional resources that serve to increase emergency response capacity at the local level. These efforts should be developed as all-hazards efforts to effectively support any disaster that involves animals in their community.
- ☑ CART/RCART programs do not institute the Incident Command System, but rather provide resources into the existing incident command system to effectively utilize those community resources as part of the overall emergency response.
- ☑ Coordination of animal and agricultural resources across the state during major emergencies is supported through the Kansas Emergency Operations Center and is led by the local County Emergency Manager unless there is an FAD (Foreign Animal Disease) Outbreak, in which case the Kansas Animal Health Department is lead.