

# Pennsylvania State Animal Response Team



**Any Animal, Any Disaster, Anywhere**  
*Creating a safer Commonwealth for animals and people*

## County & State Animal Response Team Objectives

**Overall objective:** Each county or community will effectively develop and maintain a communication, planning, and response network including local animal professionals, emergency response agencies, humane organizations, animal industry, local business community, and volunteers. This network will work in cooperation with local emergency management to develop an integrated animal emergency annex to the local emergency operations plan, and deploy through appropriate incident command pathways.

**Local objectives:** Communities must have (or know how to access) the capacity to:

1. Maintain effective communication with all CART resources during emergencies, ensuring that response is achieved safely, professionally, and with as little confusion as possible.
2. Assist residents in the evacuation of both livestock and companion animals and safely retrieve stranded animals from areas under evacuation orders, when authorized to do so.
3. Search a disaster scene and recover animals to a safe location.
4. Safely extract animals from situations where technical rescue skills are needed.
5. Shelter animals that have been evacuated.
6. Provide veterinary medical care for animals affected by disasters.
7. Assist public health personnel in addressing zoonotic disease and other animal-related issues that may impact public health during emergencies.
8. Respond to animal issues in emergencies involving biological threats (livestock diseases or zoonoses), or chemical and radiological hazards, including natural, accidental, terrorist or criminal events, providing trained resources through appropriate incident command channels.
9. Support local law enforcement authorities in caring for animals in large scale cases of cruelty, neglect, or animal hoarding.
10. Assist local, state, and federal authorities in addressing wildlife, zoo, and wildlife sanctuary issues during emergencies.
11. Address community cultural and mental health needs related to the human-animal bond, animal loss, anxiety over animal safety, and other animal-related concerns.
12. Ensure that during emergencies, accurate and timely information concerning animal issues is disseminated to the public through appropriate channels.
13. Effectively manage community donations/resources/volunteers and any requested resources mobilized from outside the community, including donations, personnel, supplies, and equipment.
14. Accurately track the full costs of response for all resources mobilized through the County Animal Response Team, including supplies, equipment, paid personnel, volunteers, and in-kind donations.
15. Address animal-related issues in the community long-term recovery plan.
16. Provide training that will provide CART members with the knowledge, skills and abilities to meet objectives.
17. Provide information to the public and local businesses concerning:
  - a. Individual preparedness (including animal-related responsibilities)
  - b. Continuity of operations planning for animal-related businesses and/or organizations
  - c. Biosecurity practices and emergency preparedness for agricultural producers
  - d. Zoonoses and animal issues related to public health

**Community objectives during a major foreign animal or zoonotic disease outbreak:**

1. Assist state and federal agencies in establishing and maintaining quarantine zones, ensuring that animals, animal products, contaminated materials, equipment, and sometimes people do not cross quarantine lines.
2. Control stray animals during a disease emergency.
3. Involve local veterinary professionals, who will need to provide surveillance, heightened practice biosecurity, and client consultation concerning the outbreak. In addition, many local veterinary professionals may be needed as temporary USDA employees providing direct response services.
4. Provide mapping/GIS assistance to incident command.
5. Partner with incident command in providing public information. This may be one of the most critical collaborative roles for local communities, ensuring that citizens understand any health risks to animals and people, understand quarantine programs, and understand the community's role in addressing these difficult situations.
6. Address mental health issues, particularly if large scale depopulation of animals is necessary. Livestock producers, responders, the community and other personnel may be impacted emotionally on a very significant scale, potentially creating a second tragedy.
7. Minimize any risk to public safety through the collaborative efforts of local public health agencies and incident command and communicate those risks (or lack of risk) to the public.
8. Dispose of carcasses efficiently, while minimizing the impact on the environment. Local public works, environmental health, land fills, and private industry may need to become involved in carcass disposal, which could become a huge challenge to local communities.
9. Provide resource support. Local emergency managers and County Animal Response Teams must help establish mechanisms for local resource support, potentially including transportation, housing, meals, medical care, personnel, equipment, and supplies.
10. Develop a community long-term recovery committee. In a major or catastrophic livestock disease emergency, the long-term recovery process of getting back to "normal" will create some huge community challenges. Numerous community partners, such as Cooperative Extension, veterinarians, livestock associations, local not-for-profit organizations, faith-based resources, animal-related businesses, chamber of commerce, local government, and concerned individuals may be needed to address these issues in cooperation with state and national resources.

**PASART, state agency, and non-governmental/community based organizations collaborative objectives:**

1. Support the statutory role of local, state and federal agencies in responding to emergencies.
2. Support local communities through developmental assistance, networking, training opportunities, and resource support, including supplies, equipment, and other resources.
3. Develop and maintain a written annex to the Pennsylvania Emergency Operations Plan for livestock disease emergency response and for support of animal issues in locally controlled emergencies.
4. Establish and maintain a unified method for support of local communities on animal issues during emergencies through the Pennsylvania Emergency Operations Center located at PEMA.
5. Develop and maintain a SART Field Operations Team that can provide direct support to local jurisdictions via appropriate incident command pathways.
6. Organize and support non-governmental and community based organizations.