

NORTH CAROLINA EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN (NCEOP)  
**ANNEX B | APPENDIX 4**  
**FOREIGN ANIMAL DISEASE OPERATIONS PLAN**  
2024 (Pre-Helene)

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**A. PURPOSE**

This appendix outlines actions and procedures that the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC), the Agriculture Emergency Operations Center (Ag EOC), and the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) will take when a Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) threatens susceptible animals in North Carolina. North Carolina will seek the assistance of and cooperate with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in accordance with their FAD Plan.

**B. SCOPE**

This appendix will be activated in coordination with the State Veterinarian (SV) or designees and North Carolina Emergency Management (NCEM) when there is a credible FAD threat to North Carolina.

**II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS**

**A. SITUATION**

There are thousands of facilities and animal population groups in North Carolina that are vulnerable to naturally occurring FADs as well as potential targets for intentional disease introduction. Response to these types of incidents will involve local, state, federal, and private agencies. Agribusinesses that breed and produce susceptible animals in the hundreds or thousands within the confines of a single operation make attractive targets. An outbreak of a foreign animal disease could cripple the affected industry and dependent businesses for years. Export markets would be lost, and production would dramatically decrease. Businesses would fail. Tax revenue generated directly and indirectly would diminish dramatically. North Carolina's ability to export that type of susceptible animal species would be impacted for months to years. If the disease spread to other states, it could have a devastating impact on the United States' ability to feed its people and to compete in the global marketplace. In the case of FADs with significant human health effects, the response urgency and economic impact may be much greater.

Activation will be a result of notification of NCEM through the SERT by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS), which will likely be the first state agency to detect a potential FAD. The SV is the responsible individual within NCDA&CS for FADs and works with the Emergency Programs (EP) Director to coordinate with the

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SERT. An Agriculture Incident Management Team (AgIMT) will be activated by the SV that initially will be comprised of NCDA&CS employees during the investigation period but will quickly include other partners if the incident escalates into a large outbreak. The AgIMT will utilize the Incident Command System (ICS) to manage the response. With most FAD responses, NCDA&CS, in coordination with USDA, would be the lead technical agency with the SERT in support. There are situations such as a zoonotic or bioterrorist incident that USDA, EM, Public Health, Law Enforcement, and NCDA&CS representatives may be included in a Unified Command structure. Policy decisions will be formed through a Policy Group comprised of the Commissioner of Agriculture (or designee), SV, USDA representative, Public Information Officer (PIO), and any other representatives of agencies, Industry, or subject matter experts that the SV deems important to policy determinations and will be implemented by the AgIMT.

**B. ASSUMPTIONS**

1. NCDA&CS, through the SV, has jurisdictional authority as the lead technical agency for a FAD incident in NC. NCDA&CS will offer technical advice to the SERT Leader under the NCEOP in the response.
2. In any FAD incident, the USDA'S Area Veterinarian in Charge (AVIC) will collaborate with the SV's Office and will lead the federal response.
3. Understanding that NC may not be the first state to become affected by an outbreak, resulting in limited federal resources, the SV and SERT must be prepared to proceed with FAD incident response with limited federal agency participation.
4. For the purpose of plan development, a worst-case scenario was assumed, involving the discovery of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) at one or more production sites in the swine industry.
5. Because animals are exported out of the state and out of the country, an infection could rapidly become a national or multinational incident. The costs associated with the loss of animals, production, exports, and indirect items may be in the billions of dollars. Any delay in detection of a FAD and implementation of this plan may increase these costs.

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6. Due to the unique regulatory nature of FAD emergencies and the policy decisions required, there will be more direction to the Incident Command Posts (ICPs) and Branch Offices from the Policy Group/NCDA&CS AgIMT, specifically from the SV due to regulatory authorities, than with other types of SERT Operations.
7. If a zoonotic disease were involved, NCDA&CS would be the lead technical agency through a Unified Command with the NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health with specific responsibility for human health. Public Health would also be represented in the policy group and if human infections occurred.

### **III. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **A. LEAD STATE AGENCY**

##### **1. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY (NCDPS)**

##### **NORTH CAROLINA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (NCEM)**

- a. ICPs at County or Branch EOC's manned by NCEM Incident Management Teams (IMT) are bound to decisions made by veterinary authorities within the scope of the Incident Response Plan. ICPs may be located at county EOCs or elsewhere as necessary to accomplish their missions. Response zones may cross county lines.
- b. Initially, outbreak management will occur through the State AgIMT in conjunction with the county EOC in the affected county. As an outbreak expands, additional county EOCs may be activated to provide command/logistical support.
- c. NCEM will provide logistical support for the AgIMT which would include tracking and managing resource requests at the State EOC. Logistics may establish an identification office in the vicinity (ex. county EOC) to provide identification badges to all persons authorized entry into restricted areas (EOC's, Zones, Infected Premises, etc.).

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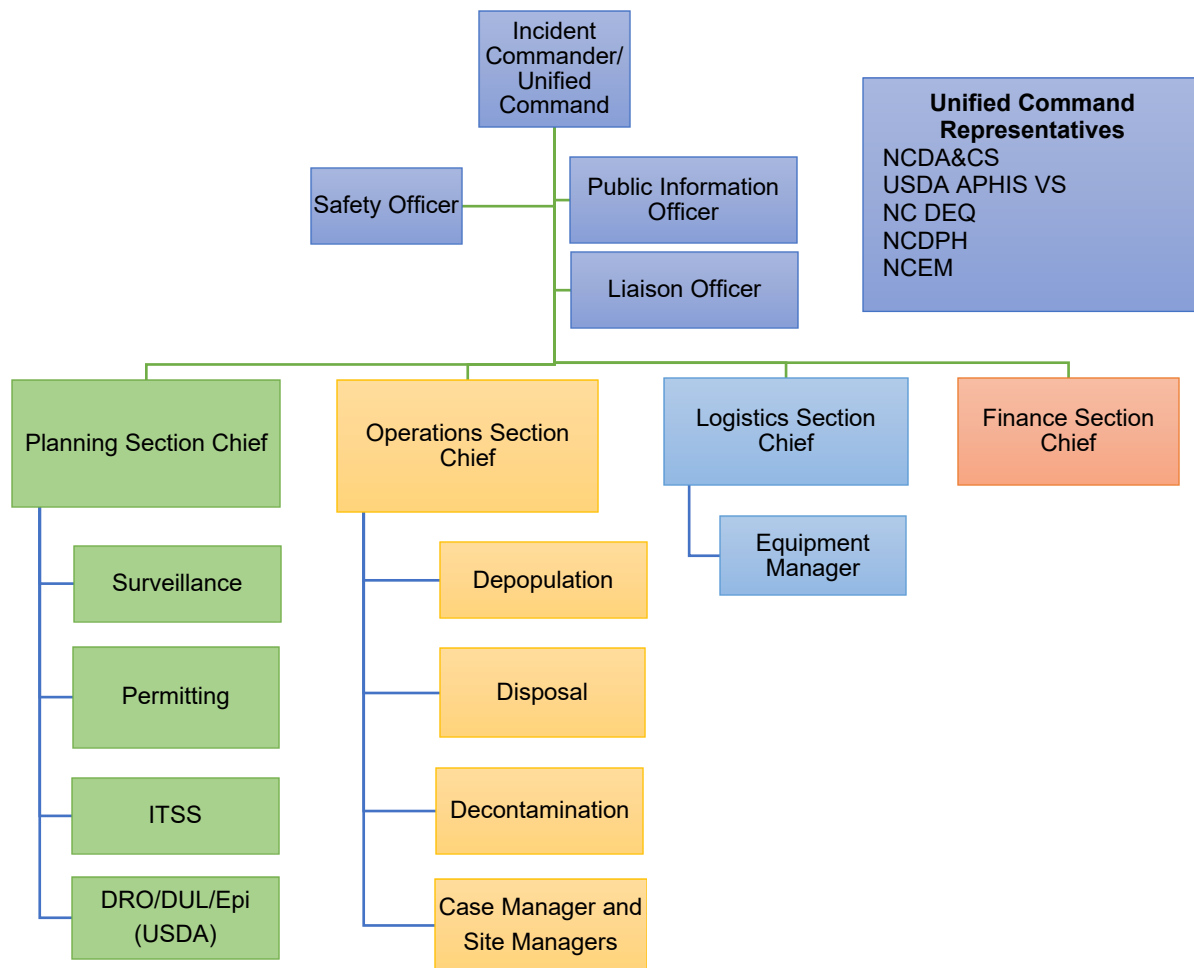
**B. LEAD TECHNICAL AGENCY**

**1. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & CONSUMER SERVICES (NCDA&CS)**

- a. The NCDA&CS, through the SV, is the lead technical agency for FAD incidents. NCDA&CS will have a liaison(s) to the State EOC that will serve as technical advisor to the SERT Leader. Official documentation for FAD incidents will be through USDA's Emergency Management Response System 2.0 (EMRS2) and NCSPARTA. EMRS2 is the response software package that USDA and states use to manage the information, reporting, permitting, and documentation of disease response. NCSPARTA would be used for requesting and tracking local and state resources along with reporting and documentation to County EM and state/local Law Enforcement. Response communication will use whatever means are available depending on the location of the response (VIPER, emails, telephone, etc.).
- b. The SV, in collaboration with USDA, is responsible for assigning personnel (Foreign Animal Disease Diagnosticians (FADD)) to investigate premises that have reported animals showing signs compatible with a FAD or that may have been exposed to infected animals.. These premises may be quarantined pending test results.
- c. The SV or designee also makes determinations as to appropriate resources for quarantining affected premises, ensuring the depopulation of designated animals, disposal of dead animals, and decontamination of premises in coordination with USDA and potentially the SERT depending on the extent of the outbreak.
- d. NCDA&CS SV's Office is responsible for activation of an AgIMT to oversee the response activities needed to eradicate/manage a disease outbreak. The AgIMT would assign all personnel needed to manage the incident both in the State EOC as well as in the field. The SV and USDA will form a Unified Command and include any other agencies as deemed necessary based on the type of FAD occurring. The SV would also form the Policy Group either upon confirmation of an outbreak or even before confirmation to aid in policy decisions. Depending on the size of the outbreak, Branch Offices and remote ICPs may be established by the AgIMT which would work with Emergency Management to assign appropriate personnel.

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- e. The AgIMT may be located at the Ag EOC, State EOC, or remote ICP depending on the size and scope of the outbreak. The response partner agencies that assist in disasters will be formed into the SART (State Animal and Agricultural Response Team) and will serve as a Multiagency Coordination Group (MAC) to help collect/disseminate information as well as identify resources necessary for response.
- f. For FAD emergencies, the SERT is organized as detailed below:



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The amount of assistance needed during an FAD incident will vary depending on size and scope of an outbreak. The Incident Commander, in consultation with the Policy Group, will establish incident objectives, which would include activities in the following areas:

- Biosecurity Protocol Implementation;
  - Veterinary Resource Management;
  - Epidemiology;
  - Surveillance; and
  - Infected premises operations (depopulation as needed, disposal, and decontamination).
- g. Statewide surveillance activities are organized under the Operations Section within the AgIMT. Coordination of border and facility surveillance as well as surveillance at other points of potential disease entry, such as airports, port, rail, and mail facilities will be prioritized according to the outbreak needs.
- h. The SV may assign personnel to serve at Regional and County Emergency Operation Centers, to assist with the management of the veterinary and animal related activities.
- i. An epidemiology function will be included in the AgIMT and will coordinate the collection of disease-related information, disease spread detection, and prevention efforts such as trace in/out, permitting, and vaccination control. Epidemiology activities include both investigation of the outbreak and developing an understanding of how to prevent disease from spreading to negative premises.
- j. Those personnel assigned to infected premises will be considered contaminated and will undergo wait periods before entering other premises with susceptible animals or into areas containing equipment/personnel that are considered non-contaminated.

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- k. Operations is responsible for all response activities and will include activities on infected premises as well as activities on premises not known to be infected (ex. Surveillance and Biosecurity). Activities on infected premises may include depopulation (either to manage the outbreak or due to animal welfare concerns), disposal of carcasses and contaminated materials and decontamination of personnel, equipment, and the premises. Industry personnel and/or contractors will play a substantial role in carrying out the operational activities on infected premises and may enter into contracts with USDA.
- l. All required response positions (i.e. Case Managers, Site Managers, Field Reimbursement Specialists) will be staffed by either state or federal personnel to ensure growers and/or owners of affected premises received eligible indemnity and compensation from USDA.
- m. Permitting of animals and animal products will be accomplished using EMRS 2.0 with the primary purpose of assisting in disease containment efforts and facilitating business continuity during the response.
- n. The NCEM Branch Offices provide ready access to the NCSPARTA system. Due to the highly contagious nature of diseases such as Foot and Mouth Disease and Avian Influenza, multiple counties may become involved in an outbreak quickly. If resource needs exceed the capacity of NCDA&CS, NCSPARTA will be used to facilitate resource requesting/tracking, information dissemination, and especially law enforcement activities across jurisdictions. EMRS 2.0 contains and uses protected industry information and will be used by animal health officials to manage disease tracking/reporting and permitted movement of animals and animal products.
- o. Activities such as investigations, placing quarantines, depopulation, disposal, and decontamination will be overseen by trained subject matter experts who may oversee multiple infected sites. Safety Officers will oversee and approve activities on all premises and in Operational Briefings and on Incident Action Plans.

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**C. SUPPORTING STATE AGENCIES**

**1. NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (NCDHHS)**

**NC DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH (DPH)**

- a. In the event that a FAD is zoonotic, NC DPH will coordinate with local health departments with regards to the investigation and monitoring of disease in response personnel and other exposed individuals as well as provide technical expertise to the AgIMT on safety protocols.

**2. NC DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (NCDEQ)**

- a. Provide trained personnel to assist in the field and on infected premises as needed.
- b. Provide expertise in determination of adequate disposal sites as needed.
- c. Provide guidance, in collaboration with NCDA&CS, on biosecurity, decontamination, on-farm burial/disposal, composting, incineration, and transport for disposal and/or rendering.
- d. Establish and maintain points of contact within the private disposal industry sector, at the federal level, and with other states.
- e. Provide general educational information for the public via website and publications.

**3. NC WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION (NCWRC)**

- a. NCWRC will provide expertise related to detection and management of a FAD in wildlife populations.

**D. SUPPORTING FEDERAL AGENCIES**

**1. UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)**

- a. Confirm diagnosis through National Veterinary Services Laboratory.
- b. Make initial national announcement of FAD confirmation with NCDA&CS.



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- c. Act as liaison between interested parties: contractors, other states, other countries.
- d. Determine how and when depopulation may take place with indemnity guaranteed.
- e. Provide USDA-specific required response personnel and work through indemnity and compensation approvals for infected or exposed premises.
- f. Provide trained personnel to assist in incident response in Command or General Staff positions or enter into a Unified Command.
- g. Provide epidemiology support.
- h. Negotiate with and approve contractors to help with response if needed.
- i. Provide resources from the National Veterinary Stockpile.
- j. Coordinate communication between NCDA&CS and USDA District Office and/or Riverdale USDA office.

#### **IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

##### **A. GENERAL**

When NCDA&CS receives a report of an illness in susceptible animals in North Carolina that appears to be a FAD, the SV or designee coordinates with USDA to assign a Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostician (FADD) to the premises to investigate the report. The SV will assign appropriate state veterinary personnel to assist USDA. Following an initial investigation, the incident will be classified based on the degree of suspicion that the animals are infected with a FAD - high suspicion, intermediate suspicion, or low suspicion. In the case of a low suspicion classification, no notification outside of NCDA&CS will be made.

##### **B. NOTIFICATION**

If there is confirmation of an FAD outbreak nationally but not in NC, this constitutes an Enhanced Watch status for the SERT. A limited AgIMT may be activated to review plans and assess readiness for response to an FAD should one be detected in NC.

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When USDA notifies the SV that a premises under investigation has been confirmed to have a FAD, the SV or EP Director will notify the SERT of disease confirmation. Depending on the disease and scope of the outbreak, this could prompt activation of the SERT. The AglMT, by following USDA guidance, will establish Response Zones consisting of the infected premises, the infected zone, the buffer zone, and the surveillance zone. Surveillance of susceptible animals will be conducted in the Control Area (Infected and Buffer Zones) according to response protocols as quickly as possible.

The Commissioner of Agriculture along with the NCEM Director will advise the Governor and may ask for emergency declarations at the state or federal level if the scale and scope of the outbreaks warrants a large response. If a zoonotic disease is suspected, DHHS will be included in all briefings and decision processes.

## **C. RESPONSE ACTIONS**

### **1. INITIAL**

- a. Investigate and characterize the suspected case.
- b. Perform an epidemiologic investigation including surveillance and Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping.
- c. Establish an ICP and Joint Information Center (JIC).
- d. Reduce the risk of disease spread through appropriate decontamination procedures off of infected premises and enhanced biosecurity practices for all susceptible premises in the Control Area.
- e. Enact NCDA&CS FAD Response Plan which includes establishing quarantines, Control Areas, AglMT, permitted movements, and disease eradication procedures.

### **2. CONTINUING**

- a. As the FAD outbreak progresses, the number of infected premises or quarantine areas may increase requiring implementation of area commands under the National Incident Management System. All of these groups will remain under the direction of the SV and the SERT/AglMT, if warranted, throughout the incident.
- b. Continue adherence to enhanced biosecurity protocols.

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- c. Continue surveillance activities within the zoned areas and on premises that have received potentially contaminated/infected animals, feed, equipment, and/or personnel.
- d. Depopulate for disease control/eradication or for animal welfare considerations, appropriately dispose of carcasses, contaminated materials, etc., and decontaminate infected premises and materials to prevent disease spread.
- e. Maintain interagency coordination via assigned liaison.
- f. Ensure appropriate use of Public Affairs and media management.
- g. Maintain effective and efficient supply acquisition and dissemination from Logistics.
- h. Take into consideration medical support and other human factors to include both physical and mental health.
- i. Maintain communications with Industry and other impacted businesses.
- j. Maintain appropriate research and laboratory support.
- k. Ensure all documentation is completed and submitted to the appropriate agencies via the established routes (i.e. EMRS 2.0, NCSPARTA) for all state agencies involved along with animal owners/growers.

## **V. REFERENCES**

- A. Chapter 166A of the North Carolina General Statutes, North Carolina Emergency Management Act, as amended
- B. Chapter 130A of the North Carolina General Statutes, Public Health
- C. GS.106-399.4 of the North Carolina General Statutes, Imminent threat of contagious animal disease; emergency measures and procedures.
- D. NC National Veterinary Stockpile Plan
- E. NCDA&CS Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) Plan

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**VI. TABS**

- A. State Border and Traffic Security
- B. FAD Containment and Quarantine
- C. Depopulation and Disposal of FAD Infected Animals
- D. FAD Decontamination