

DEPOPULATION AND DISPOSAL OF FOREIGN ANIMAL DISEASE (FAD) INFECTED ANIMALS

2024 (Pre-Helene)

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

This tab documents plans for depopulation and disposal of infected and exposed animals designated by the State Veterinarian (SV) during a Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) outbreak so that biosecurity is maintained, spread of the disease is prevented, and environmental impact is limited.

II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

A. SITUATION

1. A major outbreak of a FAD could have significant impacts on human and/or animal health and cripple for years the state's agribusiness industry and those other businesses that depend on it. Export and production would decrease. Businesses would fail. Tax revenue generated directly and indirectly would diminish dramatically. The state's ability to export susceptible animals would virtually end for three to five years. If the disease spreads to other states, it could have a devastating impact on the United States' ability to compete in the global marketplace. To contain and eradicate the disease, it may be necessary to depopulate significant numbers of infected and susceptible animals and properly dispose of their carcasses.
2. After consultation with the USDA, the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) through the SV classifies a FAD incident as Highly Suspicious or Confirmed. The SV directs depopulation and disposal activities of animals within the quarantine area while maintaining biosecurity.

B. ASSUMPTIONS

1. Depopulation of certain susceptible animals in some FAD outbreaks may be the best solution to prevent spread and involvement of larger numbers of susceptible animals. Vaccination and other measures may not be available as tools to help stop the spread of the disease agent. In addition, if the disease is zoonotic, then depopulation of animals may be necessary to prevent human exposure.
2. In some FAD outbreaks, a managed eradication approach may be taken where infected animals are not euthanized unless the diseases process so affects the animal that animal welfare concerns necessitate euthanasia. Methods of depopulation must be approved by the SV.

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3. Owners of designated animals will likely have limited capability to depopulate and dispose of their animals on their own in a timely manner to prevent spread of a FAD.
4. Composting will be the preferred method of disposal for most FADs since the disease-causing agent will most likely be inactivated during the process and minimal impacts will be incurred to the environment if performed correctly. Owners of susceptible animals may have sufficient land areas for biosecure composting of animal carcasses but have limited access to necessary equipment or subject matter experts to perform it correctly. Composting as a carcass disposal option must be approved by appropriate authorities to ensure that potentially detrimental environmental impacts have been mitigated.
5. Disposal methods (rendering, incinerating, burial, etc.) other than composting may be appropriate in certain instances, but due to the increase in biosecurity risks and other considerations (risk of spread by transport, environmental, etc.), would be used only in specific situations. Disposal options for infected materials including carcasses must be approved by the SV or USDA.
6. If the owner/operator does not have the resources to perform the prescribed depopulation and disposal in a timely manner, then additional resources will be sought from federal and state logistics.
7. When local owner/operator resources are exhausted, the state will be able to provide depopulation and disposal assistance through NCDA&CS and USDA. State resources for this activity are limited, thus contract resources may be required to address a widespread outbreak. Based on availability of depopulation and disposal resources, the Policy Group may decide to manage infected animals in an outbreak rather than depopulate and dispose of them.
8. Since no one method of depopulating animals and disposing of their carcasses is acceptable in every situation, it is impossible to prescribe such methods in advance. Decisions on these methods will be made as the outbreak progresses and taking into account economic, health, environmental and other factors.

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III. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. ORGANIZATION

Depopulation and disposal of designated animals will be accomplished on site (whenever possible) under direction of designated NCDA&CS or USDA personnel. Safety is of paramount importance thus the Safety Officer will review depopulation and disposal protocols and activities.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The SV is responsible for:
 - a. Authorizing the depopulation and disposal of designated animals.
 - b. Providing direction and establishing policy that will designate which animals are to be depopulated to facilitate containment and eradication of the FAD.
 - c. Establishing eradication procedures for depopulation and disposal of designated animals.
2. The assigned Case Manager acts as a liaison for the owners and growers to the rest of the IMT and assists with all procedures and protocols on the infected premises. The Biosecurity Officer is responsible for ensuring that all personnel, including owners, follow proper procedures to maintain biosecurity and prevent the spread of the FAD.

IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

When the confirmation or high suspicion of a FAD on a premises in NC. The SV or designee will direct depopulation and disposal activities for the infected premises. Additional assistance for these activities can be requested through the IMT Logistics and Operations Sections. If resources are not available in-state, additional assistance can be requested by USDA. All activities will be communicated and documented through NC SPARTA and EMRS.

V. REFERENCES

- A. NC General Statute 166-A, North Carolina Emergency Management Act, as amended.
- B. NC General Statute 106 as amended, April 2001.