

ANIMAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS STATEWIDE - COLORADO

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PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The Colorado State University (CSU) Spur campus provides a free, learning experience for K-12 students, families, and Denver visitors on food, water, and both animal and human health. The three-building complex is an urban infill project located in metro Denver near the National Western Complex. Vida (Life) was the first building to open in January 2022. Six months later Terra opened with the focus on food and agriculture and Hydro, dedicated to all things water, will open January 2023. The Vida building focuses on animal and human health. It is the home of the Dumb Friends League small animal hospital serving the surrounding neighborhoods as well as the Temple Grandin Equine facility that provides adaptive horsemanship opportunities. Following Hurricane Katrina that devastated New Orleans in 2005, Congress passed the Pet's Act (Pet evacuation and transportation Act) in 2006. This act requires that counties develop animal disaster response plans for household pets and service animals if they receive FEMA funds. Since the Spur campus houses both horses and household pets (dogs and cats) under CSU care in downtown Denver, an emergency management /safety plan for animals that parallels the one for people is essential for enhancing community safety as well as Spur's commitment to prioritizing both human and animal health. Presently, the number of animals in the facility is small but expansion will occur quickly. A basic emergency/safety plan will provide a scaffold on which to expand as the facilities grow in size and complexity. It will also provide an anchor for partnership with other animal facilities that will be built at the National Western Complex which is adjacent to the Spur campus.

INTERSHIP GOALS

- 1) Develop a contact list of first responders, regulatory and support agencies, & responsible parties for CSU Spur campus.
- 2) Detail maps of the area with walking and driving evacuation routes.
- 3) Identify risks specific to the area.
- 4) Develop protocols for animal response using an "All Hazards" approach.

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR EDUCATION

This summer internship is valuable for a DVM student in two distinct ways. Much of the professional program is focused on the client or owner-animal patient relationship. The Extension summer internship exposed me (as a DVM student) to both community animal issues and regulatory animal disease issues. It also provided an opportunity to work with veterinarians outside of the private practice realm (state veterinarian, federal and state vets, MPH vets) and other community professionals such as County Extension agents, public health, brand inspectors, and Emergency managers with whom I will partner with throughout the duration of my professional life.

WHAT YOU DID

1) Develop a contact list of first responders, regulatory and support agencies, & responsible parties for CSU Spur campus.

I was able to interact with and obtain contacts for stakeholders involved in the CSU Spur Animal All Hazards plan. This included attending the Colorado Cattlemen's Association Convention & Colorado Livestock Association Convention. This allowed me to network with individuals involved in the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) leadership. I also met leaders in our local communities, CO State Legislature, and CSU leadership. This provided an opportunity to learn the geography, political climates, and vision of Colorado Agriculture as it pertains to CSU Spur and CSU Extension's role in animal disaster preparedness and community involvement.

2) Detail maps of the area with walking and driving evacuation routes. 3) Identify risks specific to the area.

I attended a walk through of the CSU Spur Vida campus with the General Manager of CSU Spur Campus & the CSU TGEC Director. This allowed us to develop a better understanding of the Denver metro area where CSU Spur campus is located and expanding. This inspired the need to include paper physical walking and driving evacuation routes inside of buildings and vehicles associated with CSU Spur. At this visit we recognized the CSU Spur campus is vulnerable to a variety of hazards, all of which have the potential for disrupting communities, causing significant property damage, and producing numerous human and animal casualties.

4) Develop protocols for animal response using an "All Hazards" approach.

Beyond CSU Spur, I attended an Emergency Management Exercise on CSU South Campus to demonstrate what a response to an incident looks like. I also networked with emergency managers from neighboring counties (including Douglas County). I then implemented this information to develop a written "All Hazards" approach response plan for the CSU Spur facility and an Annex of contact information for reference in the event of an emergency at CSU Spur.

Figure 1. CSU Spur Facilities



CSU Spur Facilities from left to right: Hydro, Terra, and Vida

WHAT YOU LEARNED

The common theme this summer was **flexibility & adaptation** in animal disaster preparedness. I learned that "the plan" must always be ready to be adapted and that the facility or situation may not always be what you expect. For example, we learned much about the facility walking through it rather than just studying plans. I also learned that our "All Hazards" plan for the CSU Spur campus is a living document. It will change with the facility, the community, and their needs.

I also learned so much about the **general logistics of Emergency Management**. In terms of what that looks like on a community, state, federal and agency level. I also learned how emergency response changes depending upon what the hazard at hand is. Whether it be a hypothetical emergency all the way to a national biosecurity threat.

Extension is a valuable community partner and Disaster Preparedness is a TEAM sport. This summer, I met and connected with so many amazing professionals that showed me the importance of working together to accomplish a common goal. Each person was a subject matter expert in their field but was not afraid to share this knowledge to contribute to the community.

Figure 2. Emergency Management Cycle



NEXT STEPS

I will continue to work with Dr. Ragan Adams in the Clinical Sciences department throughout the school year. My next steps include continuing to finalize the written "All Hazards" approach plan for the CSU Spur facility and an Annex of contact information for reference in the event of an emergency at CSU Spur. As well as adapting this plan as the community in the Denver metro area grows.

References:

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