



NEWS RELEASE

Texas Animal Health Commission
“Serving Texas Animal Agriculture Since 1893”
Andy Schwartz, DVM • Executive Director

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Support from the Sky

Operation Hay Drop Feeds Livestock During Disaster

AUSTIN – Animal emergency response efforts continue to be a team effort in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. With many areas still inaccessible due to high water, support is coming from a variety of sources and locations.

“Due to water too deep to access livestock by truck and water too shallow to reach animals by boat, we must be resourceful,” said Dr. Andy Schwartz, TAHC Executive Director. “We are grateful for the support and capabilities of our partners, which enhances the states ability to help stranded livestock.”

TAHC partnered with USDA, Animal Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS) to conduct livestock needs assessments via helicopters and fixed winged aircraft. To date, responders have flown 10 counties and more than 4,000 square miles assessing livestock needs.

“These assessments are critical,” said Dr. Schwartz. “Using an aerial perspective, APHIS-WS identifies livestock needs and dispatches information to animal responders on the ground.”

When needs cannot be met by boat or vehicle, the Texas Army National Guard has flown in and air dropped more than 210,000 pounds of hay, generously donated by individuals across the state and nation, to livestock marooned by floodwaters.

Response partners supporting the Animal Response Operations Coordination Center (AROCC) include: Texas Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, Texas Cattle Feeders Association, Independent Cattlemen’s Association, Texas Farm Bureau, Texas Pork Producers, Texas Association of Dairymen, Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers, Texas Poultry Federation, Livestock Marketing Association, SPCA, Texas Department of Emergency Management, Texas Forest Service, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas Veterinary Medical Association, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Texas A&M Veterinary Emergency Team, USDA-APHIS-VS, USDA-APHIS-FSA, and USDA-APHIS-WS, and USDA-APHIS-AC.

The TAHC’s Area Command can be reached at 512-719-0799, between 8AM and 5PM.
For the latest information on Hurricane Harvey animal response efforts, visit www.tahc.texas.gov.



USDA-APHIS-WS helicopter preparing to conduct aerial animal assessments



Texas Army National Guard loading hay for Operation Hay Drop



Airboats loading hay for delivery

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