



NEWS RELEASE

Texas Animal Health Commission

"Serving Texas Animal Agriculture Since 1893"

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Texas Animal Health Commission Responds to Raging Fires across the State

AUSTIN – The existing wildfire situations across the state of Texas have The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) emergency responders currently working in Bastrop, Travis, Cass, and Waller counties. The TAHC is the lead state agency for livestock related disaster response and continues to provide assessments of animal needs in the affected areas while working closely with local authorities to resolve those needs. The TAHC staffed the State Operations Center (SOC) in support of response operations.

As part of the state's Animal Response Team, the Texas A&M Veterinary Emergency Team (VET) has a 13-member team working with the local sheriff's department and animal control officers to triage and stabilize animals being removed from the burned areas in Bastrop County and to provide veterinary care to the search and rescue canines deployed with Texas Task Force 1.

According to Russell Iselt, Region 7 Supervising Inspector, the TAHC has been assisting local livestock officials in escorting producers into affected/restricted areas to help or allow them to feed and water their stock.

A number of local veterinarians have taken in displaced animals and treated injured or burned animal patients. The TAHC and Texas A&M VET, along with Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA) are working closely to support veterinarians and their needs. "To our knowledge, no veterinary clinics have been destroyed by the fires and many remain open and actively involved," Dr. Tommy Barton, Region 7 Director, said.

"Several organizations/agencies are involved in an emergency situation such as the current wildfires," Dr. Terry Hensley, TAHC Assistant Executive Director, said. "It takes a great deal of team work to address and meet all needs. We are proud to assist the citizens of Texas in resolving animal related disasters and to partner with several state agencies and industry groups that all have a variety of skills that complement each other in our shared mission of addressing the needs of animals in disaster situations," Hensley said.

State officials remind Texans about the continued extreme wildfire danger throughout the state. Texans are urged to be cautious, stay alert and be smart when partaking in activities that involve “fire.” Most counties in Texas are under burn bans, so obey the burn bans as they apply.

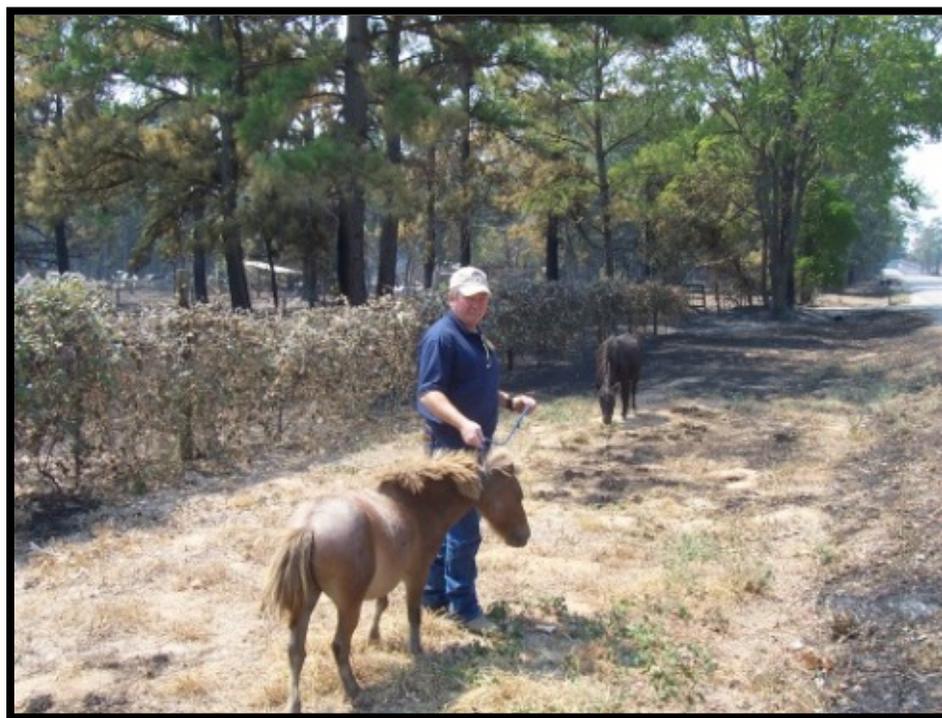
As the TAHC continues to monitor wildfire situations across the state and assist as emergency situations arise, Amanda Bernhard, TAHC Emergency Management Coordinator, says, “You should always try to take your pets and livestock with you if at all possible if a fire occurs, but if you are not able to, make sure to contact the local livestock deputies and animal control officers to find out where animals displaced by the fires have been taken for shelter.”

For TAHC’s current wildfire response and involvement information, find the TAHC on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TexasAHC or Twitter at www.twitter.com/TAHC.

Founded in 1893, the Texas Animal Health Commission works to protect the health of all Texas livestock, including: cattle, swine, poultry, sheep, goats, equine animals, and exotic livestock.

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Danny Williamson, Region 7 inspector, leads miniature horses to safety during the Bastrop County fire.
Photo taken by TAHC.



Livestock Supply Point at Bastrop Rodeo Arena. Photo taken by Region 7 Supervising Inspector, Russell Iselt.



(From left to Right) Rusell Iselt, Region 7 Supervising Inspector and Dr. Terry Hensley, TAHC Assistant Executive Director talk to a member of the TAMU VET while at the Bastrop Rodeo Arena. Photo taken by TAHC Staff Veterinarian, Dr. Holly Poremski.