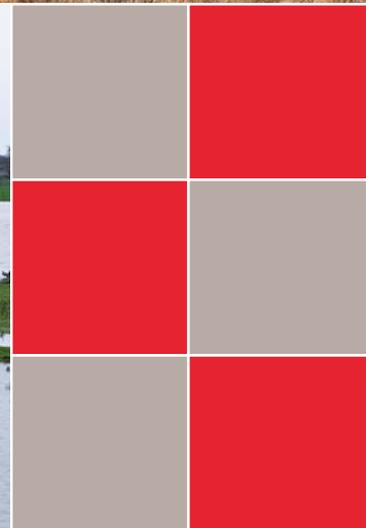
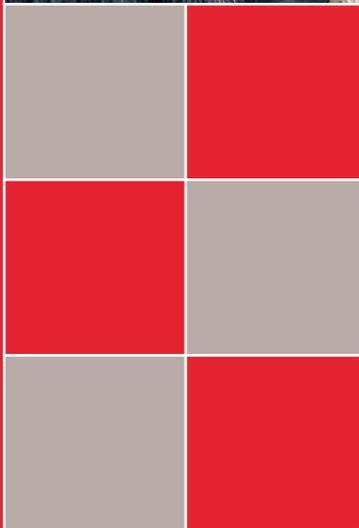




European
Commission



DG Health and
Food Safety

OVERVIEW REPORT

Veterinary Preparedness for Natural Disasters

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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Health and food audits and analysis

DG(SANTE) 2018-6518

OVERVIEW REPORT
ON
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AMONG VETERINARY SERVICES FOR DEALING
WITH NATURAL DISASTERS

Executive Summary

This overview report on veterinary preparedness for natural disasters analyses the responses from 20 Member States to an on-line questionnaire (2017) and the additional level of detail discussed during the fact-finding missions to France and Italy (2018). Detailed information about the findings in France and Italy can be found in Annex II, whilst the results of the on-line questionnaire are described in Annex III.

At EU level there is a well-developed framework for cooperation and coordination of civil protection and humanitarian aid, which adds to the national capacities. The level of preparedness among veterinary services varies substantially among Member States. Tasks for veterinary services in a natural disaster have varied from a purely supportive role to other rescue services, to active involvement in the planning and implementation of rescue operations and relocation of animals, being an information hub for animal owners and food producers, and facilitating the rapid recovery of livelihood in the agricultural sector.

The rescue of companion and production animals in an area struck by a (natural) disaster is not always included in the tasks for national civil protection mechanisms. In an emergency, such as a natural disaster, animal owners are likely to look to their veterinarians for help and support. Animals hold great emotional value for most citizens and production animals are very important for rapid recovery of livelihoods, particularly in rural areas. It is therefore important for animal keepers, stakeholder organisations and veterinary services to be aware of where the responsibilities lie in their territory, and to plan in "peace-time" in order to be prepared for crisis situations and have realistic expectations of rescue services and competent authorities.

Specific disaster management plans for the veterinary services have been drawn up in five of the Member States, which are countries with experience of natural disasters in recent years. The veterinary services in six Member States are particularly well-prepared, through a combination of training and exercises, access to disaster management plans drawn up by their own or another authority, and have tested their systems for dealing with animals under difficult conditions in real natural disasters. The veterinary services in ten of the responding Member States have had no access to targeted training or exercises on natural disaster management. Four of these veterinary services had no guidelines other than the animal disease contingency plans. Although some components of the contingency plans are useful also in a natural disaster, these ten veterinary services may not be in a position to provide swift and adequate support to citizens and rescue services in a natural disaster.

Voluntary organisations and private individuals are often keen to help in a disaster situation but there is a risk that the handling of unforeseen, and sometimes unnecessary, donations (e.g. of pet food) and volunteers can take resources from the organised official rescue operations. Good cooperation with non-governmental organisations, volunteers, and stakeholders in "peace-time" provides the foundation for effective measures in a natural disaster.

The findings in this report will be shared and discussed with representatives from Member States at a workshop, organised in the framework of Better Training for Safer Food, in December 2018.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Veterinary preparedness for natural disasters.....	1
1.2	The European framework for natural disaster preparedness and management.....	1
2	Objective and methodology	2
3	Legal basis.....	4
4	Background	4
5	Main conclusions	6
6	Action taken by the Commission services – a workshop for Member State experts.....	8
Annex I	Legal references	
Annex II	Details of individual fact-finding missions	
Annex III	Responses to the on-line questionnaire	

ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

Abbreviation	Explanation
DGAL	The French General Directorate for Food (<i>Direction générale de l'alimentation</i>)
EC	European Community
ERCC	The Emergency Response Coordinating Centre of the EC's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EU	European Union
IUVENE	The Italian National Reference Centre for Urban Hygiene and Non-Epidemic Emergencies (<i>Centro di Referenza Nazionale per l'Igiene urbana veterinaria e le emergenze non epidemiche</i>)
ORSEC	The French inter-ministerial organization for civil security response (<i>Organisation de la Réponse de Sécurité Civile</i>).

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 VETERINARY PREPAREDNESS FOR NATURAL DISASTERS

The veterinary service is normally not the lead authority when a natural disaster strikes and the challenges for operators and veterinarians are quite different from those encountered in an outbreak of a serious animal disease or food-borne illness. However, veterinary expertise is often called upon by other authorities and animal keepers in a disaster situation. Well-organised rescue of animals will prevent evacuated owners from returning to unsafe areas to care for any animals left behind.

"An animal in a disaster can be a victim, a danger, a source of food, a rescuer or a sentinel. The care of animal health and welfare has been identified as a significant response capacity gap. It is acknowledged that the overwhelming majority of the animal keepers want to save their animals and take a risk in order to do so."¹

"An estimated 250,000 dogs and cats were displaced or died as a result of the storm [*Hurricane Katrina*]."²

"Often, human safety and animal welfare are intertwined - families will not evacuate their homes without their pet dogs and cats and small family farmers are afraid to leave their livelihoods behind."³

"The additional finding that pet ownership is associated with household evacuation failure is important, and a better understanding of this relation should improve public and animal safety in future disasters"⁴

".../ animal transport will have to take place before any decision to evacuate people (well before 4 days prior to the event), or after the flooding has started."⁵

This report describes information gathered on the levels of preparedness for dealing with natural disasters among veterinary services in Member States, and the systems in place for targeted training of staff, for cooperation and coordination with national civil protection mechanisms, and for learning from exercises and real events. The focus is on natural disasters, although the same systems and mechanisms could be suitable also for dealing with certain man-made disasters.

¹ Conclusions from the conference "Natural disasters and One-Health: Are we prepared?", 16-17 April 2015, Brussels, Belgium

² <https://www.aspc.org/blog/lessons-hurricane-katrin-as-legacy>

³ Moore K., International Fund for Animal Welfare. Proceedings from the conference "Natural disasters and One-Health: Are we prepared?", 16-17 April 2015, Brussels, Belgium

⁴ Heath, S.E. et al (2001), Human and pet-related risk factors for household evacuation failure during a natural disaster. *American Journal of Epidemiology*. 153 (7), p. 659

⁵ Wijker J. et al (2018), Farm evacuation coefficient: a novel indicator in veterinary crisis management, *Veterinary Record* 182(16), p. 462

1.2 THE EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK FOR NATURAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND MANAGEMENT

"Worldwide, natural disasters are growing in frequency, complexity and severity, and are aggravated by challenges such as climate change" (The annual report of the European Union's humanitarian aid and civil protection policies and their implementation in 2015⁶).

"The wildfire season of 2017 will most likely be remembered as one of the most devastating in Europe. As of September 2017, wildfires have already burnt around 700,000 hectares of land in the EU, and have claimed the lives of more than 75 people" (the September 2017 newsletter⁷ from the European Commission's Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre).

"Our best strategy for flood management is learning to live with flooding, that is, preparing ourselves today to be better adapted for flood risks tomorrow" (Chapter 3.4. of the report "Science for disaster risk management 2017: knowing better and losing less" by the Commission's Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre⁸).

There is a well-developed framework for cooperation and coordination of civil protection and humanitarian aid in the EU. The European Parliament recently voted to upgrade the existing EU civil protection capacity to enable even faster and better disaster response and introduce new RescEU reserve assets, which will add to, not replace, the national capacities⁹.

There are no components of this framework that focus on the protection and rescue of animals or the roles of veterinary services.

The European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations uses numerous monitoring tools to provide early warnings to its Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) and to Member States, to help mitigate the damage caused by natural disasters. These tools monitor *inter alia* forest fires, floods, and severe weather. This Directorate-General is also the coordinator of the European Commission-wide Action Plan within the global "Sendai framework for Disaster risk reduction 2015-2030"¹⁰. The project described in this overview report was added to this action plan at its first revision in July 2017.

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/annual_report/2015/en.pdf

⁷ <http://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/overview/Newsletter>

⁸

http://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/portals/0/Knowledge/ScienceforDRM/Science%20for%20DRM%202017_version%2022%20June%202017.pdf, Poljanšek, K., Marin Ferrer, M., De Groeve, T., Clark, I., (Eds.), 2017. Science for disaster risk management 2017: knowing better and losing less. EUR 28034 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2017, ISBN 978-92-79-60679-3, doi:10.2788/842809, JRC102482.

⁹ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20180528IPR04447/resceu-meps-vote-to-upgrade-eu-civil-protection-capacity>

¹⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/partnerships/relations/european-and-international-cooperation/sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction_en

The Union Civil Protection Mechanism¹¹ aims to promote solidarity and to support, complement, and facilitate coordination of actions taken by Member States in the field of civil protection in pursuit of the following common objectives:

- to achieve a high level of protection against disasters by preventing or reducing their potential effects, by fostering a culture of prevention and by improving cooperation between the civil protection and other relevant services;
- to enhance preparedness at Member State and Union level to respond to disasters;
- to facilitate rapid and efficient response in the event of disasters or imminent disasters;
- to increase public awareness and preparedness for disasters.

2 OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was sent to the central veterinary authorities of all Member States in July 2017. Following an assessment of the responses received, France and Italy were selected for more in-depth fact-finding missions in 2018.

The objectives and methodology were as follows:

Objective	Methodology
To gather baseline information about the roles and responsibilities of veterinary services in the context of emergency preparedness for natural disasters.	Meetings with selected national experts and with the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. An on-line questionnaire to the veterinary services in all 28 Member States circulated in July-September 2017. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the 20 responses received.
To identify models that can strengthen the preparedness in veterinary services and the coordination within Member States for dealing with different types of natural disasters.	Targeted questions in the on-line questionnaire. Fact-finding missions to two Member States (France and Italy) with specific inter-sectorial systems for dealing with natural disasters and experience from recent disaster events. Detailed information about the findings in France and Italy can be found in Annex II, whilst the results of the on-line questionnaire are described in Annex III.
To share the information gathered and good practices identified, with all Member States and to promote networking among Member State	This overview report. A workshop on veterinary preparedness for natural disasters 11-13 December 2018, within the

¹¹ Decision No 1313/2013/EU

officials.	framework of Better Training for Safer Food. All Member States will be invited to participate with one official from the veterinary services and one civil servant from another service, with which the veterinary services would cooperate in a natural disaster situation.
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3 LEGAL BASIS

Emergency preparedness for natural disasters falls under the competence of Member States and is not specifically regulated in EU law. There is no specific requirement in EU legislation for veterinary services to be trained and prepared for dealing with the specific effects of natural disasters on animals, food and feed. Thus, the fact-finding missions were carried out with the agreement of the competent authorities.

EU rules of particular relevance to veterinary services in a disaster situation include Article 3 of Council Directive 98/58/EC¹², which obliges Member States to make provision to ensure that the owners or keepers take all reasonable steps to ensure the welfare of (farm) animals under their care and to ensure that those animals are not caused any unnecessary pain, suffering or injury. Special animal welfare rules also apply *inter alia* to the killing of animals and for registration and movement of animals. In addition, animal health rules apply to movements and traceability of animals.

Annex I comprises a list of EU legislation of relevance for this overview report. The annex refers, where relevant, to the last amended version.

4 BACKGROUND

Each Member State has the primary responsibility to protect people, the environment, and property, including cultural heritage, on its territory against disasters and to provide a disaster-management system with sufficient capabilities to enable the Member State to cope adequately and in a consistent manner with disasters of a nature and magnitude that can reasonably be expected and prepared for.

Thus, each Member State is responsible for the emergency preparedness and management of man-made and natural disasters, which may or may not affect the animal, food or feed sectors. The veterinary services are normally not the leading authority in the event of a natural disaster, but might be called upon for assistance by the local, regional or national bodies responsible for leading the disaster management. In Member States, the authorities responsible for civil protection at national, regional and local levels usually have the main responsibilities for emergency preparedness and for coordinating the actions taken to deal with natural disasters.

¹² Council Directive 98/58/EC.

All Member States are obliged to have contingency plans in place for dealing with suspicions and outbreaks of certain serious animal diseases¹³, and are also responsible for protecting the welfare of farmed animals in line with the minimum standards laid down in EU legislation (Council Directive 98/58/EC). EU legislation also sets welfare standards for the conditions at the time of killing¹⁴ and for animal transport¹⁵.

However, the legally required contingency plans for managing animal disease outbreaks and food and feed crises may not be suitable in all situations that can occur during a natural disaster. Presentations and discussions at two recent conferences on emergency preparedness for natural disasters^{16,17} indicated that there was wide variation among Member States with regard to the involvement of veterinary services in planning, preparation and exercises for dealing with such disaster scenarios, when urgent actions are needed under conditions which might not meet the legal requirements in the areas of animal welfare, animal health and feed.

Following a natural disaster, roads may be unpassable, electricity supply interrupted, feed and water for animals may be ruined or unavailable, and animal owners/keepers may have been injured or evacuated. In such situations, there might be a need to consider deviating from otherwise binding rules on animal welfare, animal movement, and animal health, while minimizing the potentially negative immediate and long-term impact of such deviations.

Non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders are often involved in setting up and running emergency animal shelters, providing means of transport, finding alternative feed sources, and other practical assistance. Such organisations often act quickly with the aid of social media.

A natural disaster does not necessarily require the same set of skills and measures by veterinary services as an animal disease outbreak (or food/feed crisis). For example, measures following a disease outbreak are often focused on preventing further spread among production animals through rapid depopulation, strict movement restrictions and epidemiological investigations. In contrast, the main purpose before, during and after a natural disaster is to find ways to save (animal and human) lives and to support rapid recovery of livelihoods. This usually means rapidly moving animals, in unusual ways to unusual and temporary locations to facilitate livestock production under difficult conditions, and sometimes to depopulate holdings humanely under primitive conditions. It is also important to take into account the emotional importance of livestock, pets and hobby animals for persons that are evacuated or otherwise traumatised by the event.

¹³ Council Directive 92/35/EEC; Council Directive 92/66/EEC; Council Directive 92/119/EEC; Council Directive 2000/75/EC; Council Directive 2001/89/EC; Council Directive 2002/60/EC; Council Directive 2003/85/EC; Council Directive 2005/94/EC

¹⁴ Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009

¹⁵ Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005

¹⁶ "Natural disasters and One Health: Are we prepared", Federation of Veterinarians of Europe and the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, with the participation of the European Union, Brussels 16-17 April 2015

¹⁷ Seminar on Animal Health Contingency Planning in the Nordic-Baltic Countries, the Nordic-Baltic Veterinary Contingency Group, Vilnius, Lithuania, 12–13 October 2016

5 MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The rescue of companion and production animals in an area struck by a (natural) disaster are not always included in the tasks for national civil protection mechanisms. This is the situation in France, whilst in Italy the 2018 Code of civil protection for the first time lists animals among the priorities for protection.

Citizens are normally expected under national rules to be prepared for taking care of themselves, their families and their property in an emergency but it may not be clear to them who is responsible for what, how to identify the relevant risks, and how to become an active part of the civil protection system. In France, national guidelines point out that an operator of a livestock farm has the primary responsibility for planning how to evacuate the animals, a national strategy identifies the need to teach citizens more about risks and civil protection, and zonal training centres offer such training for citizens. In certain high-risk areas in Italy, veterinary authorities encourage pet owners to prepare for relocation of their pets in an emergency.

It is important for animal keepers, stakeholder organisations and veterinary services to be aware of where the responsibilities lie in their territory, and to plan in "peace-time" in order to be prepared for crisis situations and to have realistic expectations of rescue services and competent authorities.

Structural damage to the offices of (veterinary) services, and damages to communication systems and power supplies can add further complications, which need to be taken into account in the planning for disaster management. Examples from Italy showed how the emergency services had helped set up temporary facilities for the local veterinary services.

In a natural disaster animal owners are likely to look to their veterinarians for help and support. Animals hold great emotional value for most citizens, and production animals are very important for rapid recovery of livelihoods, particularly in rural areas. When the practitioners and veterinary services are unprepared for such situations, animal rescue might be overlooked, delayed, or carried out by services without specific competence in animal health and welfare. Citizens may also return to their animals, if left behind in disaster areas, and need to be rescued again.

The on-line survey showed that the level of preparedness among veterinary services varies substantially within the EU and is not necessarily linked to the previous occurrence of natural disasters in the country. Certain tools that are used for animal disease control are also needed in a natural disaster, such as the registration and location of animals and holdings, including zoos and research facilities, the location of food and feed businesses, and the rules for culling, transport and disposal. However, preparedness and instructions for implementing movement restrictions and depopulation in an outbreak of a serious animal disease do not meet the needs for saving animal lives through rapid relocation in a natural disaster.

Tasks for veterinary services in a natural disaster have varied from purely a supportive role to other rescue services to active involvement in the planning and implementation of rescue

operations and relocation of animals, being an information hub for animal owners and food producers, and facilitating the rapid recovery of livelihood in the agricultural sector.

The veterinary services in six countries are particularly well-prepared through a combination of training and exercises, access to disaster management plans by their own or another authority, and having tested their systems for dealing with animals under difficult conditions in real natural disaster scenarios.

Specific disaster management plans for the veterinary services have been drawn up in five of the Member States with experience of natural disasters in recent years, whilst in seven Member States (both with and without experience of natural disasters) the services rely solely on their internal procedures for dealing with serious animal diseases.

The veterinary services in 50% of the responding Member States have had no access to targeted training or exercises on natural disaster management. Four of these veterinary services had no guidelines other than the animal disease contingency plans. These ten veterinary services may not be in a position to provide swift and adequate support to citizens and rescue services in a natural disaster.

Any exercises or real intervention in a crisis should preferably be used to identify and document what went well, and what could have been done better. Such knowledge can be used to improve the systems in preparation for the next crisis, and can be useful also for veterinary services in other regions or countries. The majority of the veterinary services that had taken part in exercises or disaster management had carried out or received such reviews. A network for collating and sharing such observations and good practices could be useful for raising the preparedness among veterinary services in the EU.

In some countries, official veterinarians and practitioners have access to comprehensive training programmes and exercises to prepare them for taking part in disaster management. In other countries there is neither training, nor instructions available. If the language barrier could be overcome, less experienced veterinary services could benefit from access to training and exercises in other countries. A good practice by the Slovakian veterinary services was that they kept a list of their staff's language skills, in order to identify persons able to participate in exercises and training in other Member States. This was done in the context of their contingency planning for animal disease control¹⁸, but the approach could equally be used to prepare for natural disasters.

When the administrative systems facilitate the re-allocation of human and/or technical resources across administrative boundaries the affected services can be supported and no valuable time is lost trying to source additional resources in the middle of a rescue operation. This is one of the main functions of the specific civil protection systems in France and Italy.

Coordinated civil protection assistance can be provided to Member States through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. It draws assistance from the European Emergency Response

¹⁸ DG(SANCO)/2014-7046

Capacity, which brings together resources such as rescue or medical teams, experts, specialised equipment or transportation, provided from 23 participating states. A similar system for voluntary provision of veterinary expertise and equipment suitable for animal rescue might be a model for cross-border support to (particularly the less well-prepared) veterinary services in a crisis.

Good cooperation with non-governmental organisations and stakeholders in "peace-time" provides the foundation for effective measures in a natural disaster. It is important for veterinary services to realise that rescue of companion animals together with their owners needs to be prepared and planned well in advance together with the human rescue services and external organisations which can provide temporary housing and care for companion animals which cannot stay in the temporary camps for humans.

Voluntary organisations and private individuals are often keen to help in a disaster situation. There is a risk that the handling of unexpected donations and volunteers can take resources from the organised official rescue operations. Experience from Italy shows that, when such help can be channelled and targeted through a well-functioning civil protection/veterinary service system the volunteers and voluntary supplies can complement, and not hinder, the activities by the official services.

Veterinary services may have an important role to play in the rapid recovery of livelihood, for example through the assessment of damages to food processing establishments and the identification of cost-effective actions to quickly re-start the production and retail. According to the questionnaire responses, few veterinary services saw themselves involved in the recovery phase. In contrast, examples observed in Italy showed how good cooperation between local authorities, operators and veterinary services had been vital for the rapid recovery of livelihoods throughout the food chain in the rural areas affected by the recent major natural disasters.

6 ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMISSION SERVICES – A WORKSHOP FOR MEMBER STATE EXPERTS

In December 2018 a two-day workshop for all Member States will be organised within the BTSF framework to present this overview report and to provide a forum for discussion, learning and networking between Member State experts. The programme will cover international activities, Training and exercises, lessons learned from recent events, and crisis preparedness. The Member States will be invited to send participants from veterinary services as well as from other civil servants who are involved in the planning and management of natural disasters that can affect animals.

A separate report from this workshop will be published as an attachment to this overview report.

ANNEX 1 – LEGAL REFERENCES

Legal Reference	Official Journal	Title
<i>The Union civil protection mechanism</i>		
Dec.1313/2013/EU	OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 924– 947	Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism Text with EEA relevance
<i>Animal welfare</i>		
Dir. 98/58/EC	OJ L 221, 8.8.1998, p. 23-27	Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes
Reg. 1/2005	OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p. 1-44	Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations and amending Directives 64/432/EEC and 93/119/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1255/97
Reg. 1099/2009	OJ L 303, 18.11.2009, p. 1-30	Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 of 24 September 2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing
<i>Epizootic diseases and animal traceability</i>		
Dir. 92/35/EEC	OJ L 157, 10.6.1992, p. 19-27	Council Directive 92/35/EEC of 29 April 1992 laying down control rules and measures to combat African horse sickness
Dir. 92/66/EEC	OJ L 260, 5.9.1992, p. 1-20	Council Directive 92/66/EEC of 14 July 1992 introducing Community measures for the control of Newcastle disease
Dir. 92/119/EEC	OJ L 62, 15.3.1993, p. 69-85	Council Directive 92/119/EEC of 17 December 1992 introducing general Community measures for the control of certain animal diseases and specific measures relating to swine vesicular disease
Dir. 2000/75/EC	OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 74-83	Council Directive 2000/75/EC of 20 November 2000 laying down specific provisions for the control and eradication of bluetongue

Dir. 2001/89/EC	OJ L 316, 1.12.2001, p. 5-35	Council Directive 2001/89/EC of 23 October 2001 on Community measures for the control of classical swine fever
Dir. 2002/60/EC	OJ L 192, 20.7.2002, p. 27-46	Council Directive 2002/60/EC of 27 June 2002 laying down specific provisions for the control of African swine fever and amending Directive 92/119/EEC as regards Teschen disease and African swine fever
Dir. 2003/85/EC	OJ L 306, 22.11.2003, p. 1-87	Council Directive 2003/85/EC of 29 September 2003 on Community measures for the control of foot-and-mouth disease repealing Directive 85/511/EEC and Decisions 89/531/EEC and 91/665/EEC and amending Directive 92/46/EEC
Dir. 2005/94/EC	OJ L 10, 14.1.2006, p. 16-65	Council Directive 2005/94/EC of 20 December 2005 on Community measures for the control of avian influenza and repealing Directive 92/40/EEC
Reg. 1760/2000	OJ L 204, 11.8.2000, p. 1-10	Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 July 2000 establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and regarding the labelling of beef and beef products and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 820/97
Reg. 21/2004	OJ L 5, 9.1.2004, p. 8-17	Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004 of 17 December 2003 establishing a system for the identification and registration of ovine and caprine animals and amending Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003 and Directives 92/102/EEC and 64/432/EEC
Dir. 2008/71/EC	OJ L 213, 8.8.2008, p. 31-36	Council Directive 2008/71/EC of 15 July 2008 on the identification and registration of pigs (Codified version)
<i>Food and feed</i>		
Reg. 882/2004	OJ L 165, 30.4.2004, p. 1, Corrected and re-published in OJ L 191, 28.5.2004, p. 1	Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules

ANNEX II – DETAILS OF INDIVIDUAL FACT-FINDING MISSIONS

Table of Contents

- Annex II – Details of individual fact-finding missions2
- II.1 Fact-finding mission to Italy2
 - II.1.1 Competent authorities2
 - II.1.2 Cooperation between authorities3
 - II.1.3 Experience from natural disasters3
 - II.1.3 Plans, guidelines and instructions4
 - II.1.4 Cooperation with other actors4
 - II.1.5 Training5
 - II.1.6 Exercises.....6
 - II.1.7 Lessons learned6
 - II.1.8 Recovery phase9
- II.2 Fact-finding mission to France.....11
 - II.2.1 Competent authorities11
 - II.2.2 Cooperation between authorities11
 - II.2.3 Experience from natural disasters12
 - II.2.4 Plans, guidelines and instructions13
 - II.2.5 Cooperation with other actors15
 - II.2.6 Training15
 - II.2.7 Exercises.....16
 - II.2.8 Lessons learned17
 - II.2.9 Recovery phase17

ANNEX II – DETAILS OF INDIVIDUAL FACT-FINDING MISSIONS

Country	Date of mission	SANTE ref. no. (no individual reports)
France	12-15 March 2018	DG(SANTE)/2018-6426
Italy	18-21 June 2018	DG(SANTE)/2018-6427

II.1 FACT-FINDING MISSION TO ITALY

II.1.1 Competent authorities

Established in 1992 (Law 225), the Department of Civil Protection in the Presidency of the Council of Ministers is the central authority for the national civil protection service (*Servizio nazionale della protezione civile*). The civil protection service includes all State resources. Thus, the operative structures of the national civil protection service comprise scientific institutes, technical services, the fire brigade, the armed forces, the police forces, the Red Cross, the national mountain rescue and speleological corps, and the national public health system (including national, regional and local veterinary services).

Their current roles and tasks are laid down in Legislative Decree No. 1 of 2 January 2018: Code of Civil Protection. The 2018 Decree introduced for the first time a clear responsibility for the national civil protection service to protect animals, in addition to the already existing tasks to protect human life, physical integrity, goods, settlements, and the environment, from damage or danger arising from natural and man-made disasters.

The Department of Civil Protection can issue additional legal instruments e.g. to address specific emergencies. Shortly after the first earthquakes in 2016 the Department of Civil Protection issued Order No 393 of 13 September 2016 "Further emergency civil protection resulting from the exceptional earthquake that hit the regions of Lazio, Marche, Umbria and Abruzzo on 24 August 2016". Article 7 of this Order provides the legal basis, and necessary derogations from existing legislation, for the transfer of livestock to temporary shelters and orders the four regions to set up temporary shelters and facilities for housing, feeding and milking of animals, as well as for the preservation of milk, in order to facilitate business continuity.

The Ministry of Health is the central competent authority for the national public health system, including animal health, food and feed safety and animal welfare. It shares these responsibilities with the regional health services (in 19 regions and two provinces). Within each region there are a number of local health units that are responsible at local levels.

The national health services comprises one national institute of health and 10 veterinary public health institutes, each covering one or more regions. In 2013, the *Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Moe "G. Caporale" – Teramo* was appointed the National Reference Centre for Veterinary Urban Hygiene and Non-Epidemic Emergencies

(*Centro di Referenza Nazionale per l'Igiene urbana veterinaria e le emergenze non epidemiche*, IUVENE).

[http://www.izs.it/IZS/Centres_of_excellence/National_Centres/CRN - IUVENE](http://www.izs.it/IZS/Centres_of_excellence/National_Centres/CRN_-_IUVENE)

II.1.2 Cooperation between authorities

In a non-epidemic emergency all actions are planned and coordinated by operational committees within the framework of the Civil Protection system at municipal, inter-municipal, provincial or regional level, as relevant. These civil protection activities are led by the governmental leaders at each level (mayors in municipalities and regional presidents in regions). The emergency preparedness and response systems apply the "Augustus method", which is based on three steps, i) information collection to define the scenario, ii) identification of objectives and responsibilities, and iii) operational flexibility during support activities. This is achieved through defined response plans (adapted to the types of risks) which can be combined at the operational level to optimize the response. The persons making up each operational committee represent defined functions, and decisions are based on objectives and goals, which make the committees independent from the administrative organisations. The operative function "Health, Social Care and Veterinary" is the most relevant one for the fact-finding mission.

Officials from the local health services, including the veterinary services, in the Ministry of Health would be part of the operational committees at municipal, inter-municipal and provincial levels, whilst the regional health/veterinary services would take part in regional operational committees. Since 2016, each regional health service has a nominated contact person, *referente sanitario regionale* (usually a veterinarian or medical doctor) for emergency management and coordination with the Civil Protection Department. These contact persons are formally appointed by the President of the region. This system facilitated the effective distribution of targeted support from the Civil Protection Department to the farms and food businesses in the areas affected by the 2016/2017 earthquakes.

In a non-epidemic emergency which affects several regions, or when the local civil protection system is overwhelmed because of the disaster's severity, the Civil Protection Department activates a Coordination Centre at ministerial level (*Comitato operativo*). When needed, a Direction of Command and Control is set up close to the affected area to coordinate and assist the operative structures of the local Civil Protection operational centres. Whilst official public health staff can be reallocated between local authorities within a region, only in some regions does the regional legislation provide a basis for the temporary reallocation of official public health staff to other regions to facilitate speedy inter-regional deployment.

II.1.3 Experience from natural disasters

In both periods 2007-2011 and 2012-2017, Italy experienced a wide array of natural disasters ranging from regional floods, landslides and volcanic events to national/multi-regional forest fires, earthquakes and heat-waves. Major earthquakes occurred in 2009 (L'Aquila) and in 2016-2017 in central Italy, when the damages caused by the series of earthquakes in August

and October 2016 and January 2017 was further exacerbated by extreme snowfall coinciding with the seismic event in January.

The veterinary services have been directly involved in the management of natural disaster events whenever animals or production of food were affected. They have also worked closely with the civil protection system, operators, and the local, provincial and regional governments during the recovery phase after a disaster.

II.1.3 Plans, guidelines and instructions

Civil protection is a shared competence between the state, the territories and the citizens. Under the 2018 Code of Civil Protection all territorial and local authorities are encouraged to have civil protection plans in place for dealing with non-epidemic emergencies. Such plans are compulsory for municipalities. These plans, which are developed together with the citizens, must include *inter alia* operational strategies and intervention models, and defined communication channels within and between authorities as well as to and from the citizens. The plans must also include procedures for review and updating, even during an event, and for organising exercises.

Although the national, territorial and local plans may differ in structure, there is a homogenous response system which provides support to all citizens. To avoid misunderstandings the terminology, alert levels and colour coding have been harmonised between all the plans and instructions.

The first national guidelines for veterinary non-epidemic emergencies were issued in 1998 (and amended in 2002). Following the issuance of the 2018 Code of Civil Protection, the Ministry of Health issued a new national plan for veterinary non-epidemic emergencies (*Piano nazionale per le emergenze veterinarie di tipo non epidemico*) in April 2018. It is applicable to the veterinary services nationwide and identifies and defines tasks, responsibilities, and methods of intervention and coordination for the prevention and management of non-epidemic emergencies. It deals with all tasks for the veterinary services, i.e. veterinary public health, animal welfare, feed safety, and animal health. This plan is comprehensive, yet very practical and could be a useful background document for other Member States with less practical experience than Italy. Territorial and local plans will be complementary to the national plan.

Several regional and local veterinary services have drawn up their own plans for non-epidemic emergencies (sometimes combined with animal health emergencies). These plans may need to be amended to reflect the instructions in the over-arching national plan.

II.1.4 Cooperation with other actors

In accordance with the Code of Civil Protection, the Civil Protection Department maintains an updated register of all relevant operative functions of the national civil protection system, including volunteers' organisations. Any person or organisation, who intends to volunteer, or provide education or training related to civil protection in more than one region or autonomous province, must be registered on the national or regional lists of civil protection

volunteers. Competent authorities are encouraged to involve the listed volunteer organisations in the relevant planning and exercises.

The 2018 Code of Civil Protection provides the basis for:

- a national committee of civil protection volunteers, which will bring together representatives who have been designated by the volunteer organisations on the national and territorial lists.
- financial support to volunteer projects focusing on improving the resilience of local communities, raising awareness of hazards and civil protection, and improving the technical preparedness for non-epidemic emergencies.
- the organisation, by municipal councils, of municipal civil protection groups comprising citizens who volunteer for these activities. These groups act under the responsibility of their municipality and need to be registered on the territorial lists.

This system ensures both an overview over the available volunteer resources and a quality control on the competence of such organisations.

The veterinary services have memoranda of understanding with private veterinary organisations, and private veterinarians took part, under the supervision of local veterinary services, in the damage assessments following the 2016/2017 earthquakes and reported their findings into the IUVENE national database on standardised forms.

II.1.5 Training

Although there are no compulsory training courses for veterinarians in the area of civil protection, there are courses and exercises available. Certain civil protection courses are compulsory for certain staff categories in some regions.

IUVENE was appointed by the Italian Ministry of Health *inter alia* to create a network of reference persons in each scientific institute, to draw up plans and procedures for non-epidemic emergencies and management of dog populations, and to organise relevant training courses for official veterinarians, private practitioners and volunteers. In 2015-2017, IUVENE organised two study days on veterinary urban hygiene and non-epidemic emergencies for staff of the national health system and one three-day course for persons, including staff of the veterinary services, involved in management and controls of shelter kennels in two regions.

IUVENE recently initiated a project to identify perceived and actual training needs among veterinary officers, with and without experience from non-epidemic emergency management. The aim is to promote a continuous capacity building process at national level. An on-line survey was distributed to 2500 veterinarians in May 2018 and the analysis of the responses had already started at the time of the fact-finding mission.

Training programmes for veterinary services have been developed in several regions. In 2017, one region (Campania) established a Regional Veterinary Reference Centre for Non-Epidemic Emergencies, managed by one local authority, the scientific institute of Southern Italy, and the University of Naples Federico II, in collaboration with a geological research foundation

specialising in the after-effects of earthquakes. <https://www.cervene.it/cervene-centro-regionale-veterinario/> This regional reference centre provides technical and scientific assistance and information material to the regional and local authorities, draws up emergency plans and operational manuals, organises training, alert drills and simulation exercises for veterinarians, and liaises with the regional civil protection system and IUVENE. Between December 2017 and June 2018 the regional reference centre had organised six courses and exercises on different aspects of non-epidemic emergencies. The activities lasted 1-3 days each and focused on the roles of local services and volunteers with regard to food safety and evacuations of humans and animals.

One national veterinary volunteer organisation, which was formed in 2017, provides targeted support to the Civil Protection System and is registered in the National list of civil protection volunteers. Another veterinary volunteer organisation, which has applied for registration, is linked to the Italian Scientific Society of Preventive Veterinary Medicine and has been accredited as a training provider under the Italian Continuing Education in Medicine programme. Course participation may give credits that count towards the obligatory continuing education system. The latter organisation provided three training courses in 2017 on the role that veterinarians would have to safeguard veterinary public health and food safety in a non-epidemic emergency. In July 2018, the organisation planned to arrange a basic course on civil protection and the role of the veterinary service in the operative function "Health, Social care, Veterinary" under the Civil Protection System.

II.1.6 Exercises

Between 2010 and 2018, the Civil Protection Department organised four national exercises which engaged veterinary services. Two focused on seismic events, where the veterinarians were involved in support to the rescue-dog activities and checks on whether facilities were suitable as a temporary shelter for livestock. Two exercises dealt with floods/tidal waves, where the veterinary services were assessing damages to animal holdings and planned preventive and emergency measures to protect animal welfare in farms and dog pounds.

In addition to these centrally organised exercises, a number of territories and local authorities would have organised exercises and alert drills dealing with non-epidemic emergencies but these are not registered at central level.

II.1.7 Lessons learned

The Italian authorities have routinely evaluated the measures taken in connection to natural disasters and have identified several areas for improvement.

The following are some examples of lessons learned from previous emergencies, which had led to improvements of the emergency systems:

- The legislation on civil protection did not include an obligation to protect animals.

Although, in practice, rescue operations included animals prior to 2018, the new Code of Civil Protection (2018) explicitly states that animals, meaning both livestock and

companion animals, also deserve protection. Examples from recent natural disasters show that not only livestock but also pets were rescued and placed in shelters pending the reunification with their owners or re-homing.

The IUVENE has provided specific training for veterinarians on how to ensure animal health and welfare in these shelters. Certain regions with areas where emergencies can be predicted (volcano eruptions, floods) have developed training programmes for veterinarians, established "twinning projects" to prepare for voluntary relocation of pets already at pre-evacuation alert levels. For relocation of farm animals, the animal health status of both the holding of origin and the relocation holding are taken into consideration to avoid negative consequences for the animal health status of the animals concerned. Decisions to relocate farm animals are taken by the relevant civil protection authority.

- There needs to be multi-disciplinary plans for non-epidemic emergencies at all relevant levels that identify well-defined chains of command, rules and competences, as well as the availability and level of training of human resources.

As described previously, all municipal administrations are required under the Code of Civil Protection (2018) to have civil protection plans in place. The veterinary services provide one of many operative functions that could be involved in non-epidemic emergencies, depending on the type of emergency.

- There needs to be specific guidelines and supportive technical tools for the veterinary services on management of natural disasters, particularly for the initial phases.

As described previously, the Ministry of Health has issued national guidelines for non-epidemic emergencies (2018), which takes into account the 2018 Code of Civil Protection and must be reflected in regional and local plans in the health services.

The electronic management of emergency data, which was linked to the animal identification database, was further refined by IUVENE in connection to the 2016/2017 earthquakes to create the IUVENE Web Geographic Information System. For the planning phase, it maps e.g. the geolocation of holding, administrative boundaries, and topography and roads and seismic hazards to assess the estimated vulnerability of livestock and establishments. During a non-epidemic event, all relevant measures are added into the database using standardised forms provided in the system. The information entered can be correlated with the animal database and is immediately available to all the institutional subjects involved in the emergency for monitoring, analysis and evaluation. IUVENE also operates a helpdesk which is open to all parties concerned. A lesson learned from the period between using the system in 2009 and refining it in 2016 is that such electronic systems need to be maintained and kept updated also in peacetime.

Furthermore, IUVENE is contributing to a research project aiming to identify indicators for prioritisation of measures following a non-epidemic emergency and one

regional scientific institute is working on a system of sensitivity indicators for animal holdings.

- There is a need for a flexible framework that veterinary professionals can use to target and manage the actions taken to limit the consequences of disasters.

The veterinary function had been activated for the management of major floods in 1994, earthquakes in 1997 and landslides in 1998.

At the time of the earthquake of L'Aquila (2009), a veterinary task force was established directly by the Ministry of Health (MoH) under the Department of Civil Protection's Command and Control Directorate. It comprised three independent but interconnected sub-units, "Companion animal health and welfare", "Farm animal welfare" and "Food safety". This integrated emergency management response system included public and private veterinarians, public health operators, NGOs, and professional associations. This model was the basis for the current comprehensive civil protection system, which relies on operational committees that steer defined operative functions, as previously described.

The *Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise "G. Caporale"* had a crucial role in planning, coordinating and controlling veterinary activities on behalf of the National Civil Protection Service. This institute was already managing the national database for animals, holdings and movements, and certain other veterinary information systems. It was able to contribute with its own knowledge and skills in the area of animal welfare, urban veterinary hygiene, staff training and laboratory diagnostics, and provide all the instruments necessary to restore communications and, in particular, enable e-management of the emergency. Following this first experience, this scientific institute was appointed National Reference Centre for the Urban Veterinary Hygiene and Non-Epidemic Emergencies by the Ministry of Health.

- The power of social media can overwhelm the capacity of local authorities.

During the 2016/2017 earthquakes, as a result of un-controlled initiatives on social media, private donations, primarily of pet food, were made to the local competent authorities dealing with displaced persons and their pets. The quantities rapidly exceeded the needs, large quantities had to be disposed of, and the administration of these supplies took resources that could have been better used. This shows that there is a need for civil protection and veterinary services to find ways to use social media to provide rapid information to the general public, e.g. on how to donate supplies in a more organised way.

- There is limited knowledge about the animal welfare conditions in temporary shelters.

In the aftermath of the 2016/2017 earthquakes, studies were carried out on the animal welfare conditions for different types of animals housed in temporary shelters (large plastic tunnels). The results showed that problems can occur due to over-stocking, poor ventilation, difficulties to keep these shelters clean, and sometimes overheating unless the ventilation is assisted by fans. The most obvious welfare issues were noted

in temporary holdings for dairy cows, which in most cases were kept indoors all year round.

- There is a risk that some individuals make fraudulent claims.

Against the background of previous problems, local authorities now have explicit instructions to ensure that no compensation is paid for the damage/re-construction of illegal structures or activities.

II.1.8 Recovery phase

The Code of Civil Protection provides the legal basis for more disaster-specific ordinances of Civil Protection, and other measures, which may (or may not) include economic interventions for affected operators. Civil Protection Ordinances issued by the national government set down and justify derogation from existing national rules, in agreement with the affected region(s). A regional administration can introduce derogations from regional legislation. The Civil Protection Ordinance 393 of 13 September 2016 was issued in response to the earthquakes at the end of August. It lays down financial rules for the re-construction work of *inter alia* animal shelters in the four regions affected by the earthquakes, allows derogation from certain animal movement rules, and obliges the affected regions to create and install temporary structures to shelter, feed and milk animals, and to preserve milk and dairy products. A Commissioner is appointed to lead the re-construction work.

The cooperation between local authorities, veterinary services, volunteers, stakeholder organisations, and the civil protection system continues well into the recovery phase. Several examples of this were seen in the area affected by the 2016/2017 earthquakes.

In the initial phase the focus for all services is to save human lives. Where possible, the civil protection and veterinary services facilitate the rescue of pets together with their owners. If the rescued pets cannot be kept in the camps set up for people, the pets may be placed in temporary shelters/kennels until they can be reunited with their owners or re-homed.

Subsequently, in the immediate aftermath of the natural disaster, the focus is to move the production animals to safety and to assess and restore local food production. In 2016, the animals were rescued from collapsed buildings and initially housed in empty barns or fields on the same holding or nearby. The authorities supported the recovery of livelihood among local agri-food producers (farmers, establishments and retail outlets) so that they could resume safe food production and find outlets for selling the products. Feed quality was assessed and mobile milking units were swiftly provided by the farming community. Small food enterprises were helped to get access to potable water, electricity and fridges either in their original location or in temporary facilities. The local authorities also helped organise markets where local produce could be sold when their normal retail outlets had been damaged.

In addition, the civil protection service supported the local authorities by providing temporary offices and clinics for veterinary practitioners, pharmacies and other health services to ensure that owners could receive help for themselves and for their injured or sick animals.

In the next phase, numerous temporary animal shelters (large plastic tunnels) had been provided by the civil protection service and had been erected on sites that had been selected in cooperation with the veterinary services. Concrete floors and connections to electricity and water had been put in place by the Regional Forest Agency.

The veterinary services in the affected area cooperated closely with the veterinary services in Sardinia to facilitate the old tradition among shepherds in Sardinia to donate sheep to shepherds in need in return for lambs the following year. These movements required veterinary resources during two consecutive years, for preparation, health checks and movement controls but were deemed to have important cultural and symbolic values. The donation also improved the contacts among the affected shepherds as well as between shepherds and the local authorities.

The temporary shelters were still housing livestock in June 2018. The veterinary services were actively involved in the planning of new permanent animal buildings and were very clear in their advice that these new buildings had to meet the legal animal welfare requirements even if the old buildings they would replace had not done so.

II.2 FACT-FINDING MISSION TO FRANCE

II.2.1 Competent authorities

The Ministry for the Interior is in charge of the inter-ministerial function ORSEC (*Organisation de la Réponse de Sécurité Civile*). This function provides a robust framework for any type of crisis, with the advantage that it creates a permanent model built in peacetime. This means that the competent authorities, including veterinary services, can focus on issues where their specialist competences are needed, whilst the ORSEC system can provide additional resources when needed.

ORSEC is a national organisation for the management of serious incidents that severely disrupts daily life and might jeopardise the integrity of persons, property or the environment, *inter alia* natural disasters. This function was first established by Law No. 2004-811 of 13 August 2004, and the corresponding implementing Decree 2005-1157 of 13 September 2005, and is now integrated in the Interior Security Code.

The French territories in mainland Europe are divided into 13 regions and 96 departments (*départements*). The regions and departments are led by prefects who function as representatives of the prime minister and all ministers at their respective level of the civil administration. Within the departments, the more than 35,000 municipalities (*communes*) are led by mayors (*maires*).

Furthermore, the territories in mainland Europe are divided into seven territorial defence zones, each comprising one to four regions. These defence zones have one zonal prefect (*Préfecture de zone*) each. The defence zones are the intermediate level between the departmental and the national levels of the ORSEC organisation. The prefects at zonal and departmental levels (but not regional level) are part of the chain of command from the Ministry of Interior in a crisis situation. Each municipal mayor is responsible for the first-line protection of the local population and is obliged in a crisis to report to, and cooperate with, the departmental prefect.

In the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, issues regarding animal welfare and animal health are handled by competent authorities at central (*Direction générale de l'alimentation, DGAL*), regional (*Direction régionale de l'alimentation, de l'agriculture et de la forêt*), and departmental (*Direction départementale de la protection des populations*) levels. The chain of command and organisation of the veterinary services under the Ministry of Agriculture and Food are described more in detail the country profile for France (DG(SANTE)2016-8844): http://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/country_profiles/details.cfm?co_id=FR.

II.2.2 Cooperation between authorities

The ORSEC is a permanent organisation, which links all relevant competent authorities and rescue services both in peace-time and in a crisis. Formal structures for coordination between the animal welfare and animal health authorities and the ORSEC system, led by the relevant

authority, exist at central, zonal, and departmental levels. Cooperation with other authorities is organised in the same way.

In a crisis, a special command centre (*Centre opérationnel départemental*) bringing together the relevant competent authorities, is set up in each affected department. These command centres determine "why, who, what" and inform their zonal command centre, which is permanently active, 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. The nature of the crisis determines which competent authorities are represented in the command centre and which authority should take the technical lead. Thus, the veterinary services may or may not take part. The prefect of a department is responsible for all formal decisions on measures to be taken by the ORSEC network in the whole department, e.g. evacuation.

The regional veterinary services function as the "back-office", providing support to the representatives of the veterinary services included in the command centre. In case of an animal health crisis, the veterinary services would be the leading technical expert supporting the Prefect (Director of Operations in the command centre). Linked to the command centre are local operational command posts, each led by a Commander of Operations, which are responsible for coordinating the implementation of fieldwork measures ("how").

The stakeholders for the ORSEC organisation, at each relevant level, maintain up-to-date registers of where the capacities, competences and equipment, that might be useful in a crisis, are located in "peace-time". In a crisis, the Prefect can allocate or reallocate human or technical resources (e.g. ambulances, aircrafts, diggers, fire engines, transport vehicles, containers for waste, temporary shelters for humans) via departmental and regional support units (*Cellule départementale/régionale d'appui*), should the municipal or departmental response capacity become exceeded or strained. The Prefect can also requisition the assistance from the military and the security forces. Reallocated human resources could include veterinarians, mostly private practitioners or veterinarians in the Fire and Rescue Services (employees or volunteers).

The Fire and Rescue Services are often the first responders in a natural disaster scenario. They have access to search and rescue dogs, as well as veterinary expertise for the treatment of injured animals and suitable technical equipment for also rescuing large animals (including barges for transport over water). Rescued large animals would be temporarily housed in e.g. assembly centres, following advice from mayors or veterinary services. Their animal rescue operations have until now been restricted to individual animals or groups of animals rescued from transport vehicles involved in road traffic accidents.

II.2.3 Experience from natural disasters

Both in 2007-2011 and in 2012-2017, France experienced floods and forest fires that involved regional areas (i.e. more than one departmental territory). In addition, during both periods, there were local landslides and drought events. There have also been several (snow) storms which have caused fallen trees and power cuts in local areas.

Veterinary services have mainly been involved in crises linked to epizootic disease outbreaks, and then as the lead authority. The support from the ORSEC allowed the veterinarians to focus on tasks related to disease eradication and not on logistics and finding (extra) resources. This system has been described in the report from an audit on contingency planning for epizootic animal diseases (DG(SANTE)2014-7044), which has been published here: http://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/audit_reports/details.cfm?rep_id=3538.

In other crises, the regional veterinary services have been consulted about safe removal of carcasses of dead animals and suitable locations for temporary shelters for large animals. They are also routinely consulted before production animals are returned to the farm after having been kept in temporary shelters. As regards assessments, treatments or euthanasia of injured animals, e.g. in road traffic accidents and other disaster situations, the Fire and Rescue service usually relies on the assistance from veterinarians among their employees or volunteers, rather than sourcing assistance through the veterinary services.

II.2.4 Plans, guidelines and instructions

In addition to the plans and instructions in the contingency plan for epizootic animal diseases, the veterinary services (and the public) have access to general disaster management plans and information sheets that have been published by the Ministry of Interior here: <https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Le-ministere/Securite-civile/Documentation-technique/Planification-et-exercices-de-Securite-civile>. This website presents an overview leaflet on the ORSEC system and several ORSEC guides, e.g. G1 on the general structure and function of ORSEC; G3 and G4 on alerts and information to the public; G5 a departmental and zonal guide on how to deal with the consequences of major power cuts, a departmental guide on an influenza pandemic causing mass mortality; S3 a departmental specific guide on floods. In November 2017, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food together published the "General guidelines of the National emergency sanitary intervention plan", S5. The website also provides *inter alia*:

- guidance documents in support of the municipal protection plans (*Plan Communal de Sauvegarde*), describing the necessary components of such a plan, how to elaborate the plan, how to plan and conduct simulation exercises, and how to set up rescue centres (for humans). Municipal protection plans are compulsory for municipalities with high-risk facilities, such as nuclear power plants and dams, and voluntary for other municipalities.
- Reports related to exercises, real events and feedback, including a 2013 summary and analysis of real events 2010-2012 (*Synthèse RETEX 2013*).

A comprehensive "Decision support guide for the management of the agricultural environment in the event of a nuclear accident" has been co-authored by the Association of Agricultural Technical Coordination and the Institute of Radiation Protection, in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders in the field of agriculture. The work was initiated and financed by the central veterinary services (DGAL) and the Nuclear Safety Authority. This guide comprises practical guidance on prioritisation and measures to safeguard the welfare of

production animals (pigs, birds, and ruminants) and food safety in the protection and surveillance zones implemented following a nuclear accident. The most recent update from 2012 has been published here:

http://www.irsn.fr/FR/expertise/rapports_expertise/Documents/environnement/IRSN_Guide-ACTA_2012.pdf

The veterinary services at central level are currently developing a plan for emergency transport of animals. This plan is linked to an earlier request to the departments to identify locations where, in a crisis, large animals could be housed temporarily or slaughtered.

In cooperation with the Animal Health Service, the locations and numbers of breeding animals with particular genetic value can be identified.

A guidance document from the Ministry of Interior on "mass-evacuations" (*Guide méthodologique «Évacuations massives»*) includes generic and specific guidance on how to deal with mass evacuation of human populations. With regard to animals, this guidance document:

- recognises the risk that persons, if evacuated without their animals, might return to dangerous locations to care for their animals and suggests that framework ORSEC plans recognise the risks for human lives (persons returning to high-risk areas to care for animals) and human health (contamination from mass-mortality of animals) if livestock are not evacuated;
- recommends that the relevant ORSEC plans include procedures for how to deal with livestock in a disaster. Such planning should include at least access to registers over all herds and owners/keepers of livestock in the area and an inventory of potentially useful means of transport for live animals;
- suggests that evacuation of pets and livestock could be considered by the Command Centre and the Prefect if it facilitates the evacuation of animal owners/keepers who are reluctant to leave their animals, provided that it does not take resources from or hinder evacuation of the rest of the affected population. For animals that cannot be evacuated, the safety of the operator/keeper should be assessed before allowing him/her to return to care for the animals;
- points out that operators of livestock farms have the primary responsibility for planning how to evacuate their animals. This can be done through "twinning" with appropriate holdings elsewhere, or by identifying other suitable structures for their animals. In a crisis situation, solidarity between farmers is expected to make it possible for operators/keepers themselves to organise and implement the evacuation of livestock.

The current instructions from the Ministry of Interior for the Fire and Rescue services for a major natural disaster with mass evacuation (which has not happened) would be to save human lives and property. The Fire and Rescue services currently have no instructions to include pets when rescuing people or to rescue large numbers of livestock.

II.2.5 Cooperation with other actors

Based on a sanitary mandate from the Prefect, the departmental veterinary services can request that private veterinarians step in to support the veterinary authorities, particularly in emergency situations.

The veterinary services also have regular contacts with organisations in the agricultural sector from which assistance and/or equipment can be obtained, particularly in a disaster scenario. In animal disease-related emergencies the Animal Health Services (*Groupements de défense sanitaire*) regularly carry out cleaning and disinfection of premises after depopulation, and have been involved in the drafting of certain contingency plans and training modules for animal health, but are not directly involved in the management or training for natural disasters. Nor have they, in general, been involved in planning, training or exercises organised in the general ORSEC framework. At their own initiative, these services produced and distributed information material on disease prevention to operators in the poultry sector during the recent avian influenza outbreaks. The Animal Health Services stated that they have the capacity, capability and communication network to provide further assistance to the veterinary services in natural disaster situations since they are in close and regular contact with a large proportion of the farmers, but this area remains to be explored further.

The veterinary services do not have established contacts or specific agreements with non-governmental organisations operating in the area of animal protection or pet animal rehoming, with the exception of a few organisations dealing with wild birds. Such organisations have occasionally provided temporary shelter for dogs in isolated incidents but they have not been involved in the planning for disaster management.

II.2.6 Training

Many veterinarians, mostly practitioners, are affiliated as volunteers to (and some are directly employed by) the Fire and Rescue services and can take part in their comprehensive training programmes. The Fire and Rescue services offer training not only to firemen and veterinarians but to all stakeholder groups who might become involved in rescue operations. The centre visited provided 50.000 training days/year for 12 Departments and had lecture halls, accommodation for participants and facilities for simulating e.g. traffic accidents, fires, gas accidents, collapsed buildings and damaged power lines.

There is one national and seven zonal inter-ministerial training centres which were created in 2014 as a result of the 2008 white book on security and defence. The white book was transposed into legislation (L 1111-1, codified the defence law) as the strategy for national defence and security. The strategy identified *inter alia* that citizens needed to be taught about risks and become actively involved in civil protection and contribute to knowledge of institutions. These zonal centres implement training activities in accordance with plans drawn up by an Inter-ministerial steering committee. Each zonal training centre has a pedagogic steering committee that plans the individual training activities.

The national veterinary services school (*École nationale des services vétérinaires*) in Lyon has included a comprehensive, one-week training course in their catalogue of continuing education for veterinarians. Such an inter-ministerial pilot course was organised for the first time in 2018, attended by military veterinarians, fire brigade veterinarians and staff from veterinary services, and is now being evaluated. Furthermore, a guest speaker from the zonal veterinary services is invited to give an annual presentation on crisis management to the local veterinary students.

II.2.7 Exercises

There are two main types of exercises: drills, which are short and focus on a particular instruction and an expected outcome; and simulation exercises, which are based on scenarios, include reflection processes and decision-making, and often engage several authorities. Both types of exercises involve post-exercise evaluation and feed-back components. The simulation exercises can be organised as table-top exercises, field exercises or a combination of the two. The exercises involving ORSEC are organised with different levels of complexity: mono-departmental; bi-departmental; or multi-departmental.

The Ministry of Interior organises exercises on many different topics that may include situations involving the veterinary services as first responders (epizootics) or as participants (floods). Their planning covers both zonal and departmental levels.

The DGAL in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food has its own programme of exercises specifically for the veterinary services.

Between 2013 and 2017, there were 493 exercises in total and thirty of these exercises dealt with civil protection following disaster events (nuclear, technological, seismic and floods).

During 2017, 37 zonal, 22 bi-departmental, and 31 mono-departmental exercises were organised, involving 5,800 participants. Whilst most of these exercises dealt with epizootic diseases, seven had focused on civil protection following disaster events. The veterinary services are always involved when the events or exercises deal with epizootic diseases but in the zone visited they had also taken part in exercises dealing with floods and earthquakes. Two examples were discussed:

- one zonal exercise had dealt with a simulated rupture of a dam creating a high wave of water reaching a major city after passing through three departments. It was a combined desk-top and field exercise involving seven departments and 76 departmental services. The majority of these services carried out their tasks in scenarios where their offices had been flooded or were without electricity. Actions involving the veterinary services included the movement of cattle herds and laboratory animals out of the risk area;
- one zonal desk-top exercise had focused on a seismic event. The veterinary services and the agricultural sector were involved in locating holdings at risk, moving animals and feed to temporary locations, feeding animals that could not be moved, and removal and disposal of carcasses.

National targets have been set for DGAL exercises in 2018-2021, which should also involve professionals other than the state services to prepare for collaboration and cooperation in a crisis. Each departmental veterinary service must organise at least six events (exercises or real cases) during this period.

Within the three-year plans of the Ministry of Interior, at least one exercise should deal with epizootic events. Each defence zone should organise two larger exercises per year in addition to the departmental exercises. Many such exercises deal with civil protection and may or may not involve the veterinary services. In recent years, the national plan has required at least one session per year on terrorism in each zone.

II.2.8 Lessons learned

All exercises and real events are subject to post-event reviews, many of which have been published. In fact, the whole ORSEC organisation was developed as a result of a review of the previous system for dealing with natural disasters and other crises

The different actors evaluate their specific area of competence. The main objective is always to save human lives and important structures. These are examples of lessons learned in the veterinary area that were discussed during the mission:

- the documented after-exercise review for the flood exercise described above identified the need to define in advance where the most vulnerable cattle holdings were in order to be able to prioritise restoration of electric power, as well as the locations of laboratory animals and zoos;
- efforts to evacuate horses in a real flood caused the veterinary services in that department to cooperate with the French Horse and Riding Institute (*Institut Français du Cheval et de l'Équitation*) to locate suitable locations for evacuated horses, which had proven very useful in a subsequent flood in the same area;
- based on experiences from previous natural disasters, all departments have been requested from the central veterinary services to identify locations where, in a crisis, large animals could be housed temporarily or slaughtered.

II.2.9 Recovery phase

There is a legal framework in the Law of 13 July 1982 for compensation to farmers and others who have suffered losses due to natural disasters through a public sector re-insurance scheme. Briefly, the mayor of a municipality can formally submit a request to the Prefect (Ministry of Interior) for recognition of a natural disaster which, if granted, provides the framework for assessing if operators have a right to compensation. One pre-condition is that the lost or damaged property must have been covered by a property and casualty insurance policy.

Information about this system has been published on the website of the Ministry of Interior: <https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Le-ministere/Securite-civile/Nos-missions/La-protection-des-personnes-des-biens-et-de-l-environnement/Le-dispositif-de-reconnaissance-de-l-etat-de->

[catastrophe-naturelle](https://www.ccr.fr/-/indemnisation-des-catastrophes-naturelles-en-france) and it is further explained in English here: <https://www.ccr.fr/-/indemnisation-des-catastrophes-naturelles-en-france>.

The veterinary services in France are not directly involved in the recovery phase, but they do take part in decisions on when it is suitable to move animals back onto previously damaged premises.

ANNEX III – RESPONSES TO THE ON-LINE QUESTIONNAIRE

Table of Contents

Annex III – Responses to the on-line questionnaire2

 III.1 Competent authorities and models for cooperation2

 III.2 Experience from natural disasters 2006-2017.....3

 III.3 Disaster management plans, guidelines and instructions.....3

 III.3.1 Countries without recent natural disasters4

 III.3.2 Countries with recent natural disasters5

 III.4 Cooperation with private actors and non-governmental organisations.....5

 III.5 Training, exercises and lessons learned8

 III.6 Training.....8

 III.7 Exercises9

 III.8 Reviews after exercises or disasters.....10

 III.9 Lessons learned.....11

 III.10 Recovery phase12

 III.11 Member States' suggestions for future support from the Commission12

ANNEX III – RESPONSES TO THE ON-LINE QUESTIONNAIRE

Individual letters were sent to all 28 Member States on 10 July 2017, introducing this project and informing the veterinary authorities how to access and register their responses in the on-line questionnaire. Twenty (71%), of the 28 Member States responded to the on-line questionnaire.

The 20 responding Member States were Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

The relevant questions asked in the on-line questionnaire are listed in the boxes under each heading.

III.1 Competent authorities and models for cooperation

Q: Concerning natural disasters, which competent authority has the main responsibility at national level for disaster prevention and disaster management?

Q: Is the organisation of the competent authorities involved in animal welfare, animal health, food safety and feed safety as described in the published Country Profile?

Q: Please upload a description of how the veterinary services would be involved in the management of a natural disaster. (Change of command structures in case of natural disasters)

The organisations of the competent authorities involved in animal welfare, animal health, food safety and feed safety were as described in the published Country Profiles¹ in all but two Member States, which both provided updated organisation charts following recent reorganisations.

In 17 Member States (85% of the respondents) one specific central competent authority (not linked to the veterinary services) has the main responsibility at national level for both disaster prevention and disaster management. These authorities are mostly connected to the Ministries responsible for internal affairs but in one Member State the designated authority is linked to the Ministry of Defence. However, they may also be independent ministries, intergovernmental bodies, or boards specifically designated for prevention and management of disasters and rescue operations.

In 1 Member State, a specific government board is responsible for disaster rescue, whilst disaster prevention is the responsibility of the environmental authority. In another Member State the government body responsible for *inter alia* environmental issues would be the lead authority for prevention and management of natural disasters, albeit supported by a civil contingency secretariat.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/country_profiles/index.cfm

In 1 Member State there is no lead agency for natural disasters. Instead each competent authority is responsible for disaster preparedness and business continuity in its own sector in a disaster scenario.

III.2 Experience from natural disasters 2006-2017

Q: Please indicate the type(s) of natural disaster event(s) that occurred in 2012-2017 & 2007-2011 - and the largest area affected.

Q: Were the veterinary services (at any level) involved in the management of any of the disasters described above? If so, please describe the responsibilities and tasks of the veterinary services in the management of disasters described above - at national, regional and/or local levels.

Six Member States had not experienced any natural disasters in the last twelve years (2006-2017).

The remaining 14 Member States had experienced floods (13 Member States), forest fires (10), strong winds/storms (6), major power cuts (3), excessive snow/rain fall (3), drought (4), landslides (3), and/or earthquakes (2).

Most of these natural disaster events had occurred, and been managed, at local level. However, seven Member States had experienced floods that affected and were managed at regional level and in two Member States the floods had affected several regions. Three Member States had experienced regional forest fires and two Member States had experienced multi-regional forest fires.

The veterinary services had been involved in the management of natural disasters in 13 of the 14 Member States that had experienced such events. The exception was local forest fires in one Member State, which had not required any veterinary intervention.

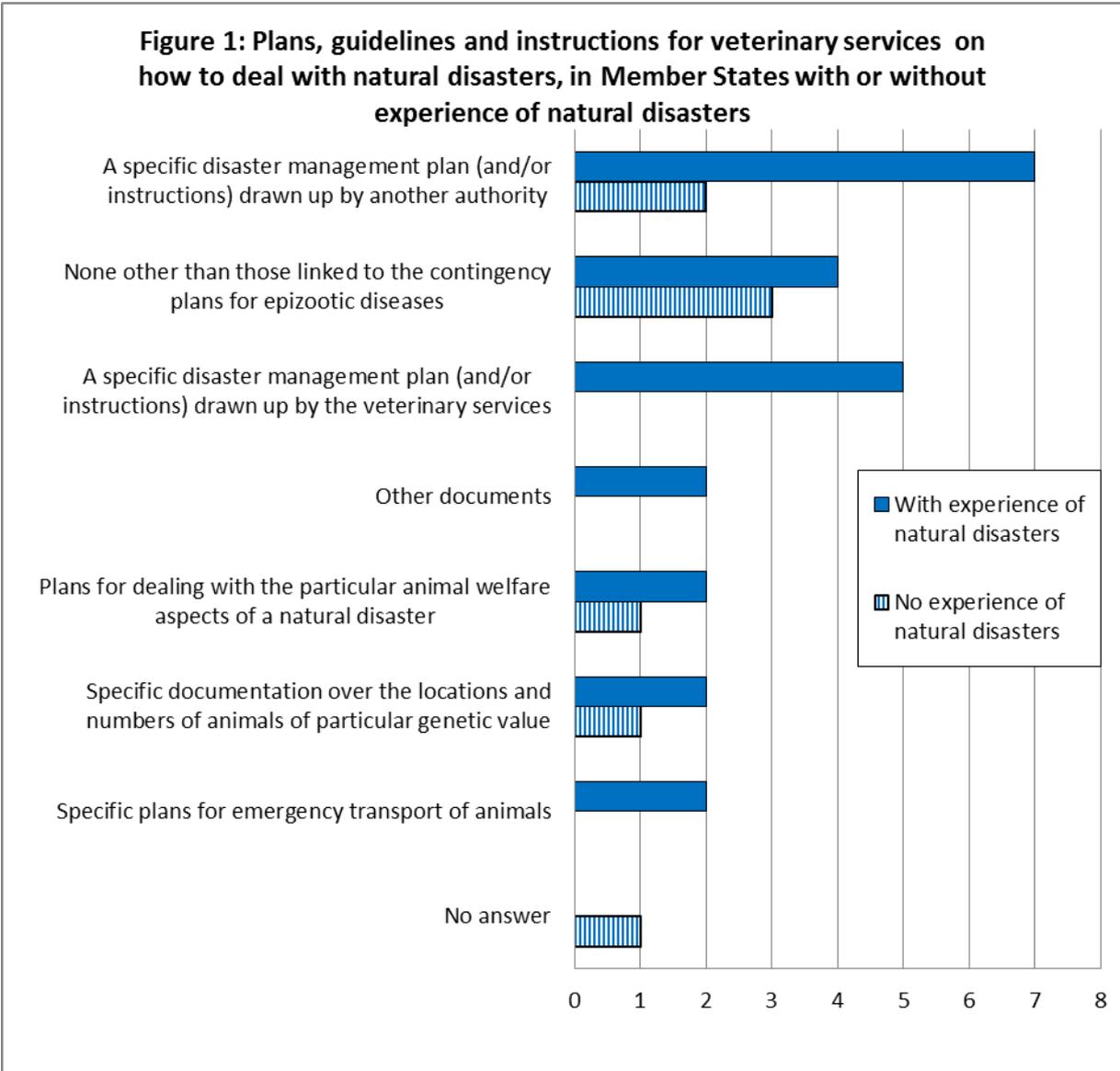
III.3 Disaster management plans, guidelines and instructions

Q: Which plans, guidelines and instructions are available in the veterinary services for use by staff dealing with a natural disaster?

The veterinary services in 5 (26%) of the 19 Member States responding to this question had developed their own specific disaster management plans and/or instructions and, in three of these Member States, the veterinary services were also aware of disaster management plans drawn up by another authority.

The veterinary services in 7 (37%) other Member States did not have their own disaster management plans, but were aware of plans developed by other authorities and/or had complemented their animal disease contingency plans with components of importance for disaster management. In contrast, in 7 (35%) other Member States, the veterinary services would rely solely on their contingency plans drawn up to deal with epizootic animal diseases.

Figure 1 and parts III.3.1 and III.3.2 illustrate the differences between countries with experience of natural disasters and those without.



III.3.1 Countries without recent natural disasters

Five Member States had not experienced any natural disasters which had involved the veterinary services in the last twelve years (2006-2017). One of these veterinary services did not respond to the question on guidelines and instructions.

In 1 of the remaining four Member States the veterinary service would apply a specific emergency plan drawn up by another authority and had plans for dealing with the particular welfare aspects of a natural disaster and documentation over where genetically valuable animals were kept.

In 3 Member States, the veterinary services did not have any other guidelines or instructions for natural disasters than those included in their animal health contingency plans.

III.3.2 Countries with recent natural disasters

In 13 of the 14 Member States that had experienced natural disasters, the veterinary services had been involved in the management of one or more of these disaster events.

The veterinary services in 5 (35%) of these 14 Member States had drawn up specific disaster management plans and three of these services also had access to disaster management plans drawn up by other authorities.

In 4 (29%) of the 14 Member States, the veterinary services relied on disaster management plans drawn up by other authorities. Furthermore, 2 of these services had complemented the plans drawn up by other authorities with specific documentation over the locations and numbers of animals of particular genetic value and 1 also had a plan for emergency transport of animals.

The veterinary service in 1 Member State had complemented their animal health contingency plans with specific plans for dealing with emergency transport and animal welfare in a disaster situation, whilst the veterinary services in 3 (21%) of the 14 Member States did not have guidelines or instructions other than those included in their animal health contingency plans and were not aware of any disaster management plans drawn up by other authorities. In 2 of these countries, the disasters (flood/forest fire/ earthquake/ drought) had extended beyond local level.

III.4 Cooperation with private actors and non-governmental organisations

Q: Do the veterinary services have the legal right to require the assistance of private veterinarians or staff of other services in case of a natural disaster?

Q: Are there bodies/organisations within the agri-food industry (e.g. animal health and welfare services, farmers' relief organisations, agri-food advisory services etc.), which the veterinary services would cooperate with in "peace-time" and/or emergencies such as natural disasters?

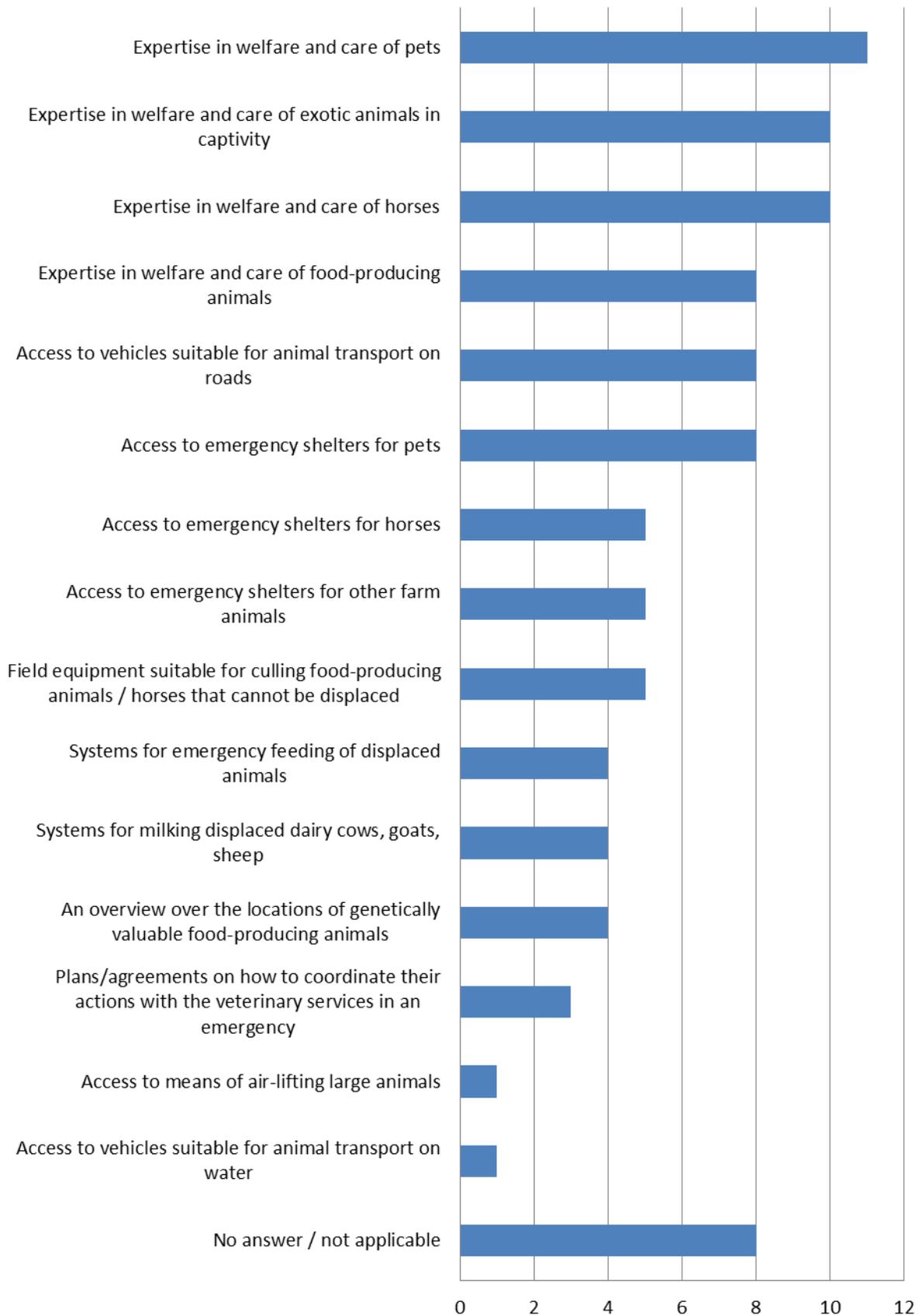
Q: Do the veterinary services have well-established contacts with specific non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that would/could be of assistance in managing a disaster situation involving pets or the agri-food sector?

In 11 Member States the veterinary services have the legal power to require assistance by private veterinarians or staff of certain other services in case of a natural disaster. In 3 Member States such services can be availed of within the framework of memoranda of understanding or similar agreements. Veterinary Services in 7 Member States do not have the legal right to require assistance, but one of these services pointed out that the integrated rescue system can do so. However, this information was not explicitly asked for in the on-line questionnaire, so we do not know how many of the other leading authorities have this legal power.

The veterinary services in 17 Member States cooperate in "peace-time" and/or emergencies with stakeholder ("bodies") in the agri-food industry, whilst the veterinary services in 3 Member States have no such cooperation. None of the latter Member States had experienced natural disasters.

The veterinary services in 16 Member States have well-established contacts with specific non-governmental organisations that would/could be of assistance in managing a disaster situation involving pets or the agri-food sector. The capacities of these non-governmental organisations varied among Member States (Figure 2). In 4 Member States, 3 of which had experienced no natural disasters, no such contacts were indicated.

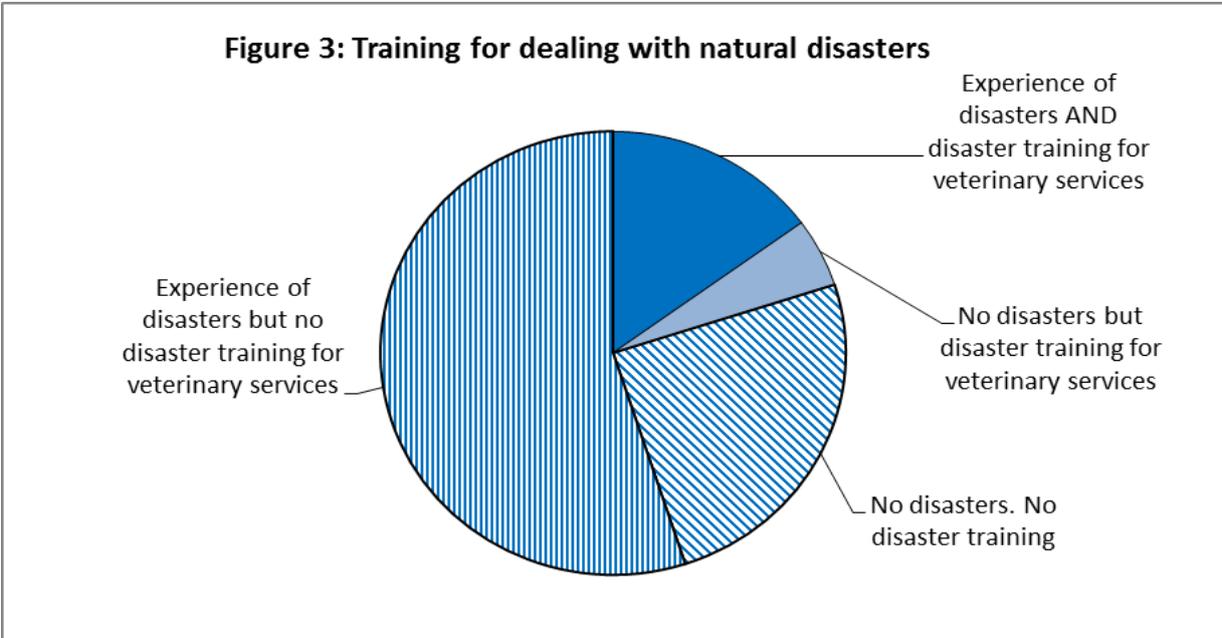
Figure 2: The non-governmental organisations that the veterinary services are in contact with would have:



III.5 Training, exercises and lessons learned

- Q: Are there any compulsory or voluntary training programmes preparing veterinary services' staff for their (new) roles when dealing with natural disasters?*
- Q: Have the veterinary services taken part in any simulation exercises (for natural disasters) organised internally or together with civil defence authorities?*
- Q: Did the veterinary services carry out a documented "after-exercise review" of the decisions and actions it took during the simulated natural disaster to identify weaknesses and strengths in the system and to highlight lessons learned?*
- Q: If you experienced a real natural disaster - did the veterinary services carry out an "After-Action Review" of the decisions and actions it took during the natural disaster to identify weaknesses and strengths in the system and to highlight lessons learned?*
- Q: What are the most important lessons learned for the veterinary services from your reviews of the decisions and actions taken during natural disasters - or during simulation exercises if there have been no real natural disasters in our country? What needs to be done (in general terms) to make sure the measures work (even) better next time? How have you shared these insights with staff in un-affected areas, with NGOs, and with other stakeholders?*

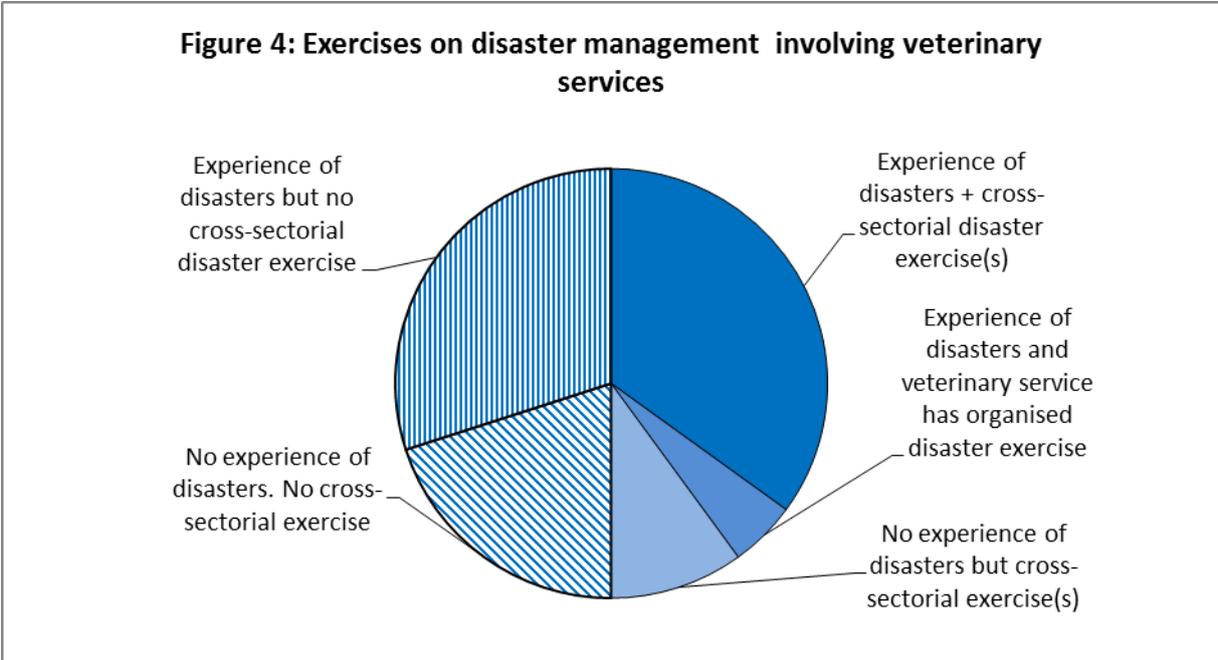
III.6 Training



Four (20%) Member States, three of which had experienced natural disasters in the last 12 years, have compulsory or voluntary training programmes preparing staff of veterinary services for their (new) roles when dealing with natural disasters, whilst the remaining 16, of

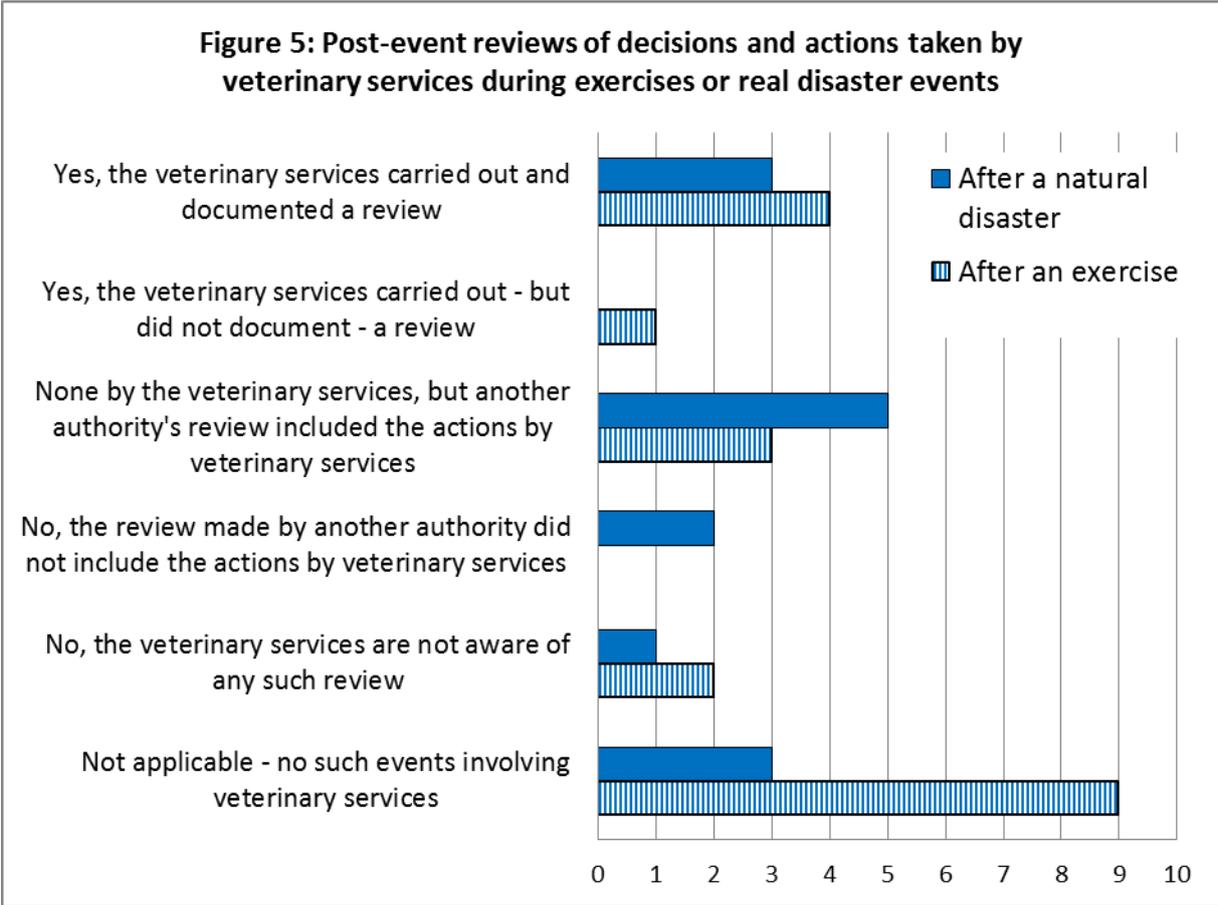
which 11 (69%) had experienced natural disasters, have no such targeted training programmes.

III.7 Exercises



In 9 (45%) Member States, the veterinary services have participated in at least one cross-sectorial exercise for natural disaster management organised by the civil protection authorities and in one Member State the veterinary services had organised at least one internal simulation exercise at central level for natural disaster management. Eight (80%) of these 10 Member States had experienced natural disasters in the last 12 years. The veterinary services in the remaining 10 Member States, of which 6 (60%) had experienced natural disasters, had not taken part in any exercise dealing with natural disaster management.

III.8 Reviews after exercises or disasters



Where veterinary services had taken part in exercises, **post-exercise reviews** had been carried out in 8 Member States (80%), either by the veterinary services themselves (5 documented reviews and 1 non-documented), or a documented post-exercise review carried out by another authority had included the actions of the veterinary services (3 Member States). The veterinary services in 2 Member States were not aware of any after-exercise reviews, although they had participated in exercises.

Post-disaster reviews of the part played by veterinary services had been carried out in 8 (73%) of the 11 Member States where veterinary services had been involved in the management of natural disasters in the past 12 years. In 3 of the Member States, the reviews had been carried out and documented by the veterinary services, and in the remaining 5, the reviews carried out by other authorities had included also the activities of the veterinary services.

In 2 Member States the review had been made by another authority and did not include the activities of the veterinary services, and the veterinary services in 1 Member State were not aware of any post-disaster review. The remaining 3 Member States responded when questioned about reviews, that the question was not applicable because the veterinary services had not been involved in the management of natural disasters in the past 12 years, although

two of them had earlier declared that they had been involved during that period, so these results are somewhat unreliable.

In summary, the staff of veterinary services in 10 of the 20 responding Member States (50%) - 6 with experience of natural disasters in the past 12 years, and 4 Member States without such experience - had neither had access to targeted training nor taken part in exercises on disaster management. However, in 2 of these Member States, post-disaster reviews had been carried out and documented by the veterinary services.

III.9 Lessons learned

Of the 14 Member States with experience of natural disasters, 6 shared lessons learned from these experiences in their responses to the on-line questionnaire.

These 6 Member States mentioned that they had taken note of one or more of the following issues that could be improved:

- the need for specific guidelines for veterinary services, especially for the initial phases of a natural disaster, where a multi-disciplinary approach is needed;
- the need to raise awareness among local responders that any natural disaster that affects humans is likely to affect animals as well, and raise awareness of the help that can be provided by veterinary services;
- the need for robust structures capable of cross-departmental consensus decisions with all the technical authorities concerned;
- the need for an electronic system with defined interfaces to record operations, distribute information, and support reporting and decision-making;
- the chain of command needs to be clear and pre-defined;
- access to appropriate protective clothing;
- when the crisis is (still) managed at local or regional level, the authorities need to keep the central level informed of the developments;
- the need to share experiences with veterinarians in other areas.

III.10 Recovery phase

Q: Can farmers and other food business operators receive compensation from the state budget for losses and/or costs related to natural disasters?

Q: Are operators obliged to have insurance for losses incurred by natural disasters?

Q: After a natural disaster, have the veterinary services been involved in (or responsible for) targeted actions to facilitate recovery of the agri-food sector and the restoration of people's livelihoods? Actions involved could be financial compensation for losses, fast-track approval of new buildings, facilitating movement of animals, supporting derogations in the area of organic farming, etc. etc. Please describe how this was achieved and what was done.

In 15 (75%) of the Member States, there are systems in place for compensating farmers and food business operators from the state budget for losses/costs incurred during natural disasters, whilst in 5 Member States there are no such possibilities. Four of the latter Member States responded that operators are not obliged to hold private insurances for such losses, whilst the remaining 16 Member States did not respond to that question.

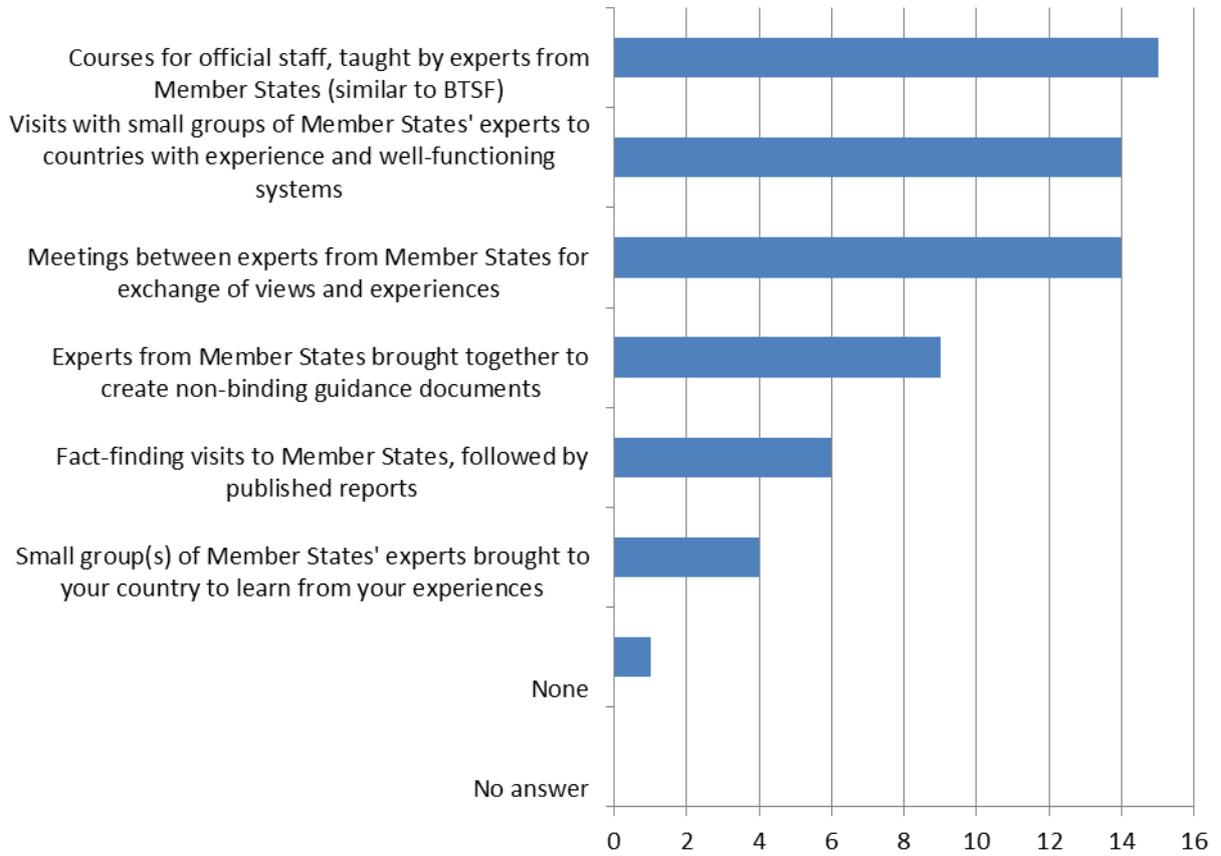
Eight Member States responded to the question about veterinary involvement in the recovery phase after a natural disaster. In 4 of these Member States, the veterinary services had not been involved. In 4 other Member States, the veterinary services had sometimes participated on a case-by-case basis, often at local or regional level, by e.g. administering compensation claims and notifications of structural damages, caring for rescued animals, facilitating animal movements, and financing dioxin analyses of feed.

III.11 Member States' suggestions for future support from the Commission

Q: In addition to a report describing the outcome of this questionnaire, what type of involvement (if any) from the European Commission would you like to see that could improve the veterinary services' capability to deal with natural disasters? Please note that none of these listed activities have been planned by the Commission at this stage, but your response can be used for future discussions.

Figure 6 shows that 16 of the 20 responding Member States were interested in courses for official staff taught by experts from Member States (similar to those organised within the framework of the EU programme "better training for safer food (BTSF)". Other preferred models for learning which could be facilitated by the European Commission were study visits between Member States (4 Member States were willing to host such visits), and expert meetings to exchange views and experiences. One Member State added that it could be particularly beneficial to organise targeted practical training for groups of veterinary services from countries with similar problems.

Figure 6: Member States' suggestions for future involvement from the European Commission



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