

National Alliance of State Animal and Agricultural Emergency Programs

Organizational Information 2-18-08

Overview: The National Alliance of State Animal and Agricultural Emergency Programs (NASAAEP) provides a framework for collaboration among State Animal/Agricultural Response/Resource Team (SART) programs, state veterinary medical reserve corps (VMRC), and any other state animal and agricultural emergency management programs that wish to participate. NASAAEP provides the framework to enhance communication and cooperation among NASAAEP state program members and with a variety of important stakeholders, including local and tribal animal or agricultural emergency programs, non-governmental organizations, private industry, and Federal agencies.

Mission statement: NASAAEP is a broad national network anchored by state animal and agricultural emergency programs, promoting communication, mentoring, resource development, effective planning and robust disaster response systems.

Vision statement: NASAAEP envisions a nation in which local, state, and national emergency planning and disaster response systems work together to maximize the protection of people, animals, agriculture, public health, and our nation.

Organizational overview:

NASAAEP will be a not-for-profit corporation, registered in the State of Delaware with the intent of applying for charitable not-for-profit status under the IRS Code, Section 501(c)(3).

Interim Contacts for NASAAEP:

Kevin Dennison, DVM
Director, CVMF Animal Emergency Management Programs
Colorado Veterinary Medical Foundation
191 Yuma Street, Denver, CO 80223
303.539.7633, KevinDennison@colovma.org

Elizabeth Wang
Texas Veterinary Medical Foundation
Executive Director, Texas State Animal Resource Team Program
8104 Exchange Drive
Austin, Texas 78754
Phone: 512.452.4224
ewang@tvma.org

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1. Why is NASAAEP needed?

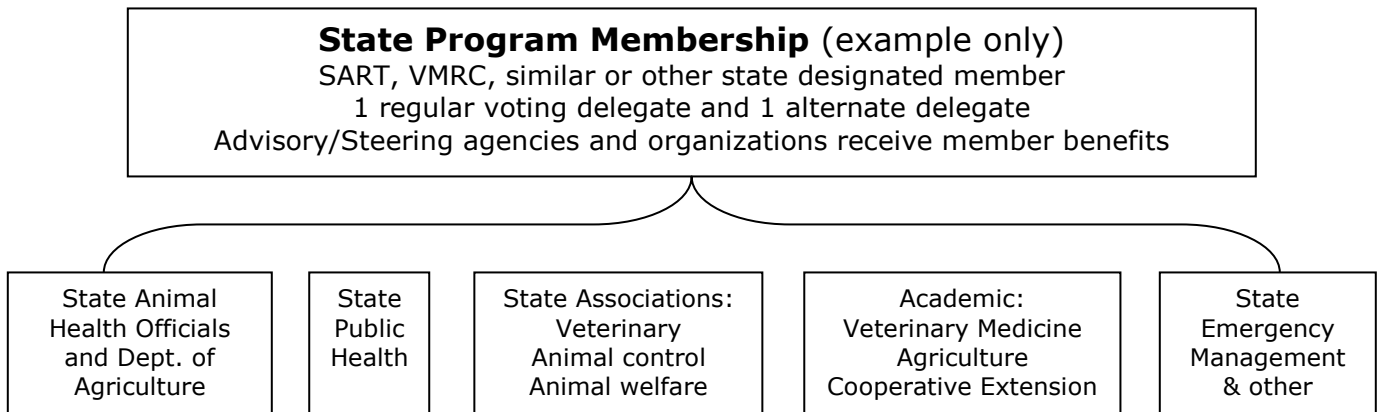
Since 2002, over 3/4 of the states in our nation have developed State Animal/Agricultural Response/Resource Team (SART) programs, veterinary medical reserve corps (VMRC), or similar programs under a variety of names. These varied state programs have been having annual meetings since 2004 and have been participating in USDA-hosted monthly conference calls since 2005. Since very early in this networking process, these programs recognized the need for a formalized organization to help foster communication, collaboration, resource development, sharing of best practices, and the building of strong relationships among states and with non-governmental organizations, industry, and Federal agencies. Many projected NASAAEP members are extending the reach of state agencies by creating a broad resource network and creating pathways for the involvement of animal and agricultural professionals and volunteers. Additionally, these projected members are integrally involved in helping extend animal and agricultural emergency management down to the local level in their states, a task with huge challenges and in need of a national entity to help provide resources, tools, and a collaborative framework in support of that process.

2. Who are the projected voting members of NASAAEP and how will membership be determined?

NASAAEP’s articles of incorporation and bylaws define “State Program Members” as the voting members of the organization. “State Program Members” may be SART-type programs, VMRC-type programs, or any animal or agricultural emergency management program that the state acknowledges to be an appropriate member. Since each state has a unique statutory environment, the NASAAEP organizing documents have been designed to be flexible to meet each state’s needs. Many SART, VMRC, and similar programs are composed of or guided by a broad coalition of state stakeholders often organized as a multi-agency coordinating group, so membership is complex. To accommodate the diverse needs of all fifty states, membership will be based on the following:

- a. The State Program Member must be either a part of state government or a non-governmental entity working under the direction or influence of various state agencies and state non-governmental organizations.
- b. The State Program Member must provide NASAAEP with letters of acknowledgement from both the state’s chief animal health official and the state’s emergency management agency.
- c. The State Program membership is inclusive of the SART and VMRC (or similar) programs and the state entities that serve as principal advisors to the program. The membership application will specify this array of state agencies and organizations that should be included under this extended State Program membership and each would receive benefits such as:
 - Participation in monthly conference calls
 - Access to online resources for NASAAEP members
 - Participation in NASAAEP committees and working groups
 - Participation in NASAAEP annual conference at the member rate
 - Other benefits as are developed for NASAAEP members.

See the diagram below for potential extended benefits of State Program Membership
- d. The membership application will designate one person to be the voting delegate and another person as the alternate voting delegate.
- e. NASAAEP membership will be very reasonable and is projected to be about \$200 annually for participating states.



3. Who are the projected affiliate members of NASAAEP?

NASAAEP will develop additional membership categories that are non-voting on the State Program Member Council. Affiliate memberships will target non-governmental organizations, tribal programs, local animal/agricultural emergency programs, private industry partners, and individuals. These affiliate members may participate in organizational activities including various conference calls, committees, and working groups. Some networking resources may target local communities and volunteers. The annual conference will be designed to provide a forum for the state programs, as well as an educational and networking opportunity for the anticipated broad array of affiliate members. Affiliate memberships will vary in price.

4. How will the board of directors be selected?

The State Program Member delegates and alternates will compose the State Program Member Council. Each State Program Member will have one vote. The NASAAEP Board of Directors will set the number of directors (up to 15) and the Board will be selected through three pathways:

1. The NASAAEP Board of Directors will define "voting regions." State Program Members from each region will elect a board member from their region. These board members may be nominated from the voting delegates and alternate delegates within that voting region.
2. The NASAAEP Board of Directors may choose to allocate an additional number of seats on the Board designated for State Program Member delegates "at large" who will be elected by the entire State Program Member Council.
3. The State Program Member Council will elect additional board members as appropriate to fill the remaining Board seats. These additional board members may be State Program Members or Affiliate Members, and might include individuals that connect NASAAEP to key non-governmental partner agencies, have professional skill sets critical to the NASAAEP Board, or may have access to resources to fuel the development of NASAAEP.
4. The State Program Member Council can remove a board member with or without cause. This empowers NASAAEP to ensure that the NASAAEP Board cannot be derailed from serving its animal and agricultural emergency management purpose and will make it highly resistant to any attempts to use NASAAEP as a platform for tangential political agendas.

Board members on the first permanent board will be elected to serve one, two, or three-year terms, and subsequent terms will be three years in length, to allow approximately 1/3 turnover of the board annually. Board members will elect officers, including the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The board may hire a chief executive officer as the budget allows.

The diagram at the end of this document provides a visual overview of NASAAEP membership, the State Program Member Council, Affiliate Members and the NASAAEP Board of Directors.

5. What types of issues will the board vote on?

The NASAAEP Board of Directors will vote on budget and general organizational governance issues, will elect officers, will hire a chief executive officer when the budget allows, and will give final approval to resolutions from various committees and councils. While NASAAEP can voice an opinion in the national forum like any other organization, NASAAEP will not set state or national policies. Policies are developed through state or federal statutory processes and NASAAEP will endeavor to provide expertise from our membership in support of those processes.

6. Why was this effort not invested in an existing organization, such as the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) or American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)?

The organizing leadership of NASAAEP approached both AVMA and USAHA in 2006 and 2007 concerning the possibility of their organization hosting this effort. Key personnel in the leadership of both organizations declined due to difficulties with resources or from such a project conflicting with long-established organizational committee structures. At this point, the decision was made to pursue establishing NASAAEP as a new not-for-profit corporation. NASAAEP, however, expects to build and maintain strong collaborative relationships with both USAHA (Committee on Animal Emergency Management) and AVMA (Committee on Disaster and Emergency Issues).

7. My state doesn't have a SART-type program or veterinary medical reserve corps program, so can my state still become a member?

Yes – even if a state has not organized a program like a SART, VMRC, or similar program, a state may join with full membership upon obtaining letters of acknowledgment from the chief animal health official and the state emergency management agency. The state application will also list the key collaborators on animal/agricultural emergency management in order to provide those entities with the benefits included with NASAAEP membership.

8. My state has both SART and VMRC-type programs, who should be the member?

Theoretically, a state could have one, two, three, or more programs that might be conceived to be programs of the type networked by NASAAEP. The good news is that states need only purchase one voting membership to include all of those programs with NASAAEP affiliation. The state will assign a voting delegate and alternate delegate to help represent all programs in that state. Where multiple programs, agencies, and organizations are sharing the State Program Membership, we highly recommend that the voting delegates discuss upcoming voting issues within their state network and determine the appropriate vote to be cast by their delegate. Many of the State Program Member Council votes will be electronic, allowing time for discussion among that state's network of participants.

9. How does NASAAEP envision the organization's relationship with the National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials (NASAHO), National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), and National Emergency Management Association (NEMA)?

NASAAEP has a strong desire to work collaboratively with NASAHO, NASDA, NEMA, and many other organizations too numerous to list here. NASAAEP is an organization that networks programmatic elements that are overseen by many of the agencies affiliated with the organizations above. NASAAEP envisions a role of supporting and providing advisory functions for these organizations where appropriate.

10. How does NASAAEP envision its relationship with SAADRA, MAAPA, the Multi-State Partnership for Security in Agriculture, or other regional programs?

In our nation right now, we have a rather challenging array of regionalization. Current regional alignments include the 10 FEMA Regions, USDA Regions, USAHA Regions, and regional animal or agricultural networks of states, such as the Multi-State Partnership for Security in Agriculture, the Southern Agriculture and Animal Disaster Response Alliance, Mid-Atlantic Agriculture and Animal Partnership Alliance, and others. NASAAEP seeks to work collaboratively with regional efforts and encourages regional collaboration. NASAAEP regions will be determined by the NASAAEP Board of Directors and the process is designed with some flexibility to meet evolving needs for regional collaborative alliances.

11. What is the projected relationship between NASAAEP and national animal welfare organizations?

We live in a complex world where the animal agricultural community, biomedical research entities, regulatory agencies, professional associations, animal welfare organizations, and animal rights activist organizations are involved in a vigorous debate over a number of potentially polarizing issues reflecting complex interactions of economics, national security, public health, animal health, and philosophical positions. All of these issues have an impact on animal and agricultural emergency management. NASAAEP is an organization with an emergency management mission. NASAAEP is not designed to advocate for animal rights and would be expected to limit its involvement with animal welfare to emergency planning and response.

There are a number of animal welfare and professional organizations collaborating in what they have termed the National Animal Sheltering and Rescue Coalition (NARSC), including American Humane Association (AHA), American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, Code 3 Associates, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), National Animal Control Association (NACA), Society of Animal Welfare Administrators (SAWA), and United Animal Nations – Emergency Animal Rescue Service (UAN-EARS). These organizations have tremendous response resources for companion animals, and to a lesser degree for livestock, wildlife, and other animal populations. NARSC has developed a strong relationship with FEMA and already consult on FEMA policy decisions pertaining to animals.

NASAAEP recognizes the importance of non-governmental and voluntary organizations in disaster response. NASAAEP desires to work with both government entities at all levels and non-governmental partners. NASAAEP does, however, feel that in order to make effective policy decisions, Federal agencies need major input from state programs, local communities, and a broad array of non-governmental organizations and private sector stakeholders. One of NASAAEP's key roles is to provide state program input to Federal agencies to ensure that state programs are perceived as major stakeholders. In order to do this, NASAAEP will help provide representatives to appropriate DHS/FEMA, USDA, and other working groups. NASAAEP also seeks to foster a positive relationship with NARSC to ensure that we create mechanisms by which their resources can be utilized by state and local programs, with appropriate safeguards in place to maintain such deployments within the boundaries of appropriate incident management protocols and NIMS-compliant public information processes. By establishing a dynamic system for the appropriate utilization of local, state, and national non-governmental animal welfare organizations, the role of groups unwilling to "play by the rules" will be minimized.

12. What is the projected relationship between NASAAEP and the American Veterinary Medical Foundation?

NASAAEP is anticipated to be a charitable organization and will be supported, in part, by public donations, grants, and sponsorships. Without this charitable status, the organizational leaders feel that NASAAEP will be unable to fulfill its broad functions. The American Veterinary Medical Foundation (AVMF) has been a key supporter of state programs, with annual matching and challenge grants that are a strong enabler for many states. Our goal is to work on a strategic plan between AVMF, NASAAEP, and state members with charitable status to help all become more efficient and effective venues for channeling public support for animal and agricultural emergency programs. There is a strong belief among the current NASAAEP organizational leadership that the old adage "the rising tide floats all boats" is particularly applicable here and that raising public awareness of state and local efforts is a critical task for NASAAEP.

13. What is the projected relationship between NASAAEP and the agricultural industry?

NASAAEP State Program Members will vary considerably from state to state. Some SART-type programs are all-hazards, all-species (such as North Carolina), some are broader with additional plant agricultural missions as well (such as Florida) and some are more focused on companion animal issues (such as Texas). Some VMRC-type programs are focused on livestock disease response (such as North Dakota) while some have an "all-species" focus (such as Minnesota) and some are units affiliated with Medical Reserve Corps (such as Oklahoma, Colorado and Maryland). The reality, however, is that the support/advisory network that makes each SART or VMRC possible is composed of a broad array of state agencies and non-governmental organizations. In virtually every case, agriculture plays a key role in giving direction to that array of stakeholders that support NASAAEP State Program Members. We confidently project that our membership will always seek a strong relationship with agriculture and take what steps are available to ensure that our nation maintains a dynamic capability to support our agricultural sectors during times of disaster.

14. What is the projected relationship between NASAAEP and EDEN?

The Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) is a consortium of Cooperative Extension educators across the nation that works to use Extension resources to assist in emergency management, with positive impacts on mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery issues. Agriculture is a significant area for EDEN activities, but EDEN also has the potential to impact a much wider array of community preparedness issues. NASAAEP fully recognizes the tremendous positive potential for EDEN on animal and agricultural emergency management and envisions a strong collaborative relationship between NASAAEP and EDEN.

15. Who is on the interim NASAAEP Board of Directors and what is the Interim Board's role?

During the formative process, NASAAEP will need an Interim Board to bridge the process from incorporation to election of a regular board utilizing the processes outlined in the NASAAEP Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. The Interim Board will primarily be tasked with creating enough organizational infrastructure and resources to allow for the seating of a regular board. Interim board members are volunteers from state programs, non-governmental organizations, or industry that are acting as individuals to guide the NASAAEP formative activities of establishing the corporation, filing for non-profit status, and establishing the NASAAEP membership framework; they are not seated to represent any particular state or sector. In approximately a year, the members of the Interim Board will be replaced (although there is an expectation that some of the interim board members will be elected to serve on the permanent board.) Interim board members volunteered and were confirmed by general consensus at the January NASAAEP meeting in Orlando. (We could not hold a formal vote since the organizational documents have not been finalized and filed, and NASAAEP has no members at this date.) There is opportunity for additional persons to volunteer for the NASAAEP Interim Board to help the organization get "off the starting blocks." A list of current NASAAEP Interim Board members is included below and a more detailed list along with short biographical summaries for each member are available at www.cosart.org/scc.htm.

16. How do I find more information on NASAAEP? At some point in the near future, NASAAEP will activate its Web site www.nasaaep.org, but until then, you can find additional information and updates on the Web site for the NASAAEP conference call: www.cosart.org/scc.htm. Additional information on that site includes minutes from the previous calls going back to 2005 and some training materials and other files of interest to NASAAEP participants.

The monthly NASAAEP conference call is open to SART-type programs, state VMRCs, similar state programs, the state agencies and organizations that support those programs, national non-governmental partners, and federal agencies. The calls are at 3pm, Eastern Time, on the second Wednesday of each month. Please contact Dr. Kevin Dennison, KevinDennison@colovma.org or 303.539.7633, for information on joining the call.

For general information on NASAAEP, you may contact any one of the persons on the Interim Board of Directors:

- **Kevin Dennison, DVM**, Colorado Vet. Med. Foundation, Director of CO SART and CO VMRC, KevinDennison@colovma.org, 303.539.7633
- **Elizabeth Wang**, Texas Vet. Med. Foundation, Executive Director, TX State Animal Resource Team, ewang@tvma.org, 512.452.4224
- **Arnold Goldman, DVM, MS**, Connecticut State Animal Response Team Director, ctsart@ctvet.org, (860) 693-9300
- **Jane Davis, DVM, MS**, Associate Professor, Aurora University, Aurora, IL, also Illinois Veterinary Emergency Response Team, 630-844-4579, jdavis@aurora.edu
- **Warren Hess, DVM**, Field Veterinarian, Utah Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Industry, 801-538-4910, wjhess@utah.gov.
- **Anne M. McCann**, DE SART Coordinator, Delaware Emergency Management Agency, 302.659.2218, anne.mccann@state.de.us
- **Scott Mason, DVM**, Oklahoma VMA/Veterinary Medical Reserve Corps/SART, (405) 722-4777, pnaah@cox.net
- **Dick Green, Ed.D.**, Emergency Relief Manager – Disasters, International Fund for Animal Welfare, 508.744.2085, dgreen@ifaw.org
- **Debrah Schnackenberg**, Director, Animal Emergency Services, American Humane Association, (303) 925-9470, debrahs@AmericanHumane.org
- **Kelle Straw**, Director of Corporate Communication and Public Affairs, Merial Limited, 678.638.3687, Kelle.Straw@merial.com

NASAAEP Organizational Diagram

