Incident Response Planning at Livestock Shows

Patrick Allen & Traci Naile, Oklahoma State University, and Chelsea Poe, Red Angus Association of America

Questions to consider

The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is considered to be the city’s “signature event,” much like New Orleans’s Mardi Gras and New York City’s New Year’s Eve at Times Square. In 2013, attendance reached a record high of 2,506,238 people and more than 28,000 volunteers worked at the event.

1. What are some of the issues or vulnerabilities that could occur at the Houston Livestock Show?
2. Who should be planning for emergencies at a livestock show?
3. What are the roles of these planners?
4. What are barriers to planning? Challenges?
5. How would your answers change if you were planning for a smaller, possibly local or regional, show?

Concepts from the study

• Incident response planning
  ◦ Preplanning, writing stand-alone plans for private facilities, inviting important local agencies to tour facilities
  ◦ Executing incident response plans
    ◦ Who actually responds, level of response necessary

• Challenges in implementing response plans
  ◦ Value of animals, moving livestock between venues, evacuating people and livestock, visitors who do not know the local area, large mass of people
  ◦ Example incidents
    ◦ Dumpster fires, flooding, fires, tornadoes

Concepts from the study

• Communication
  ◦ “… it’s only as good as how well it’s communicated, and getting that to the appropriate people and making sure that it’s followed. The simple fact is, communicating the plan is the single key to making the facility a safe place to be.”

• Incident response training
  ◦ Table-top exercises using the stock show fairgrounds as the basis for an incident

Concepts from the study

• Shows are important to communities
• Lack of communication among show officials and emergency management officials creates barriers to effective planning and response
Concepts from the study

- Needs
  - Engaged partnerships
  - Understanding by elected officials of entities’ roles in response
  - Cross-training for all officials in livestock handling and emergency management