

# LIVESTOCK & NATURAL DISASTERS - LIVESTOCK EMERGENCY GUIDELINES & STANDARDS (L.E.G.S.)

**Dr. Paul Cadogan & Dr. Suzan McLennon-Miguel**

In responding to disasters, whether natural or man-made, most of the emphasis has naturally been placed on the alleviation of human loss and suffering. The internationally accepted standards and guidelines for such activities are found in the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response - also called SPHERE - handbook. A significant part of the potential losses and recovery needs in disasters is the livestock sector, seen both from the standpoint of animal welfare AND the role of livestock in the livelihoods of the people affected.



Enter LEGS - the Livestock Emergency Guidelines & Standards – an international protocol for designing, implementing and evaluating livestock interventions to help people affected by humanitarian crises in a manner complementary to SPHERE. Preserving the livestock population addresses the livelihood needs of farmers and

supports food security with a continuing source of animal-based protein for the society, so critical in the aftermath of a disaster and beyond.

The objectives of LEGS are (i) to provide rapid assistance, (ii) to protect livestock assets and (iii) to rebuild livestock assets using two key strategies of identifying the most appropriate interventions needed in an emergency and providing the standards, key actions and guidance notes for these interventions. These are detailed in the LEGS handbook.

Some disasters such as hurricanes, floods and earthquakes are sudden, others, such as drought, develop slowly while others are complex. LEGS provides standards to guide the preparedness, assessment, analysis and intervention processes.

Interventions include destocking (removal of seriously affected animals to prevent suffering or public health risk), provision of veterinary services, feed, water, shelter (to secure those animals that have survived) and restocking (to replace those lost). These are prioritized based on the assessment and analysis of the situation.



Veterinarians and veterinary para-professionals play a key role in Implementation of LEGS which also requires the cooperation of multiple agencies and personnel – government ministries, disaster management bodies, livestock organizations, international support agencies and, of course, farmers.

LEGS training is being implemented worldwide through workshops led by certified LEGS trainers who attended "Training the Trainers" workshops held in various regions of the world. Jamaica's certified trainers are Dr. Suzan McLennon-Miguel of the Veterinary Services Division, Dr. Dailion Robinson-White of RADA, Mr. Delroy Many, retired VSD Animal Health Technician, and Mr. Dwight Williams of the Research & Development Division, Bodles. They have held a number of training sessions for persons involved in the livestock sector and/or disaster management.