

WRITTEN STATEMENT

BY PAUL WILLIAMS, DVM

DIRECTOR, AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND VETERINARY PROGRAMS

GEORGIA DIVISION OF HOMELAND SECURITY

GEORGIA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TO THE

UNITED STATES SENATE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT,

THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

SEPTEMBER 13, 20011

Chairman Akaka, and members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to provide an overview of the State's perspective to the implementation of Homeland Security Presidential Decision Directive 9 and Emergency Support Function 11 in the National Response Framework.

OVERVIEW:

I find it difficult to discuss HSPD-9 or ESF 11 without some historical perspective that relates to my States role in its evolution. The entire concept of integrated agriculture emergency management did not begin with 9/11. It began in the mid 1990's as a result of natural disasters that left the typical agriculture and food sector specific agencies unequipped to respond with the resources that they had internally. In 1994 Georgia became the first state in the nation to have an ESF 11 in the State Emergency Operations Plan, followed shortly thereafter by Florida and Indiana. In 1995 the National Institute of Animal Agriculture invited those three states to present this new concept at their National Conference. The result was a resolution by this organization, comprised of the nation's largest agribusinesses, that the Federal Government install an ESF 11 in the then Federal Response Plan. Early in 2001 the National Emergency Management Association contracted with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency to write an ESF 11 model State Plan that could be adopted by states as additions to state emergency operations plans and to be added to the Federal Response Plan. In 2002 the Gilmore Commission recommended to the White House Advisory Council to the President that the intent of the model plan be placed in the new National Response Plan.

This is the genesis of ESF 11 as we see it today. The current representation of ESF 11 is a result of many working groups comprised of local, state, federal and private sector agencies and organizations to reach the compliance levels outlined in the National Response Framework. The concept of Animal Health Emergency Management and Agriculture and Food Defense has for the most part been a capability that has found its leadership, direction and energy at the state level. Federal agencies have, for the most part, participated with a reluctant acceptance. Federal Sector Specific agencies have statutory responsibility for food safety and control and eradication of agricultural disease which are a vital part of Agriculture and Food Defense, but are only a part of Food Defense. They have done a remarkable job in these areas of statutory responsibility. However, in the broader context of Food Defense and Critical Infrastructure there is a reluctance to provide the same level of commitment. The Department of Homeland Security although having statutory responsibility for all elements of the National Response Framework, including Critical Infrastructure, frequently abdicate their responsibility for leadership and oversight to the sector specific agencies that view these responsibilities as “other duties”.

HSPD-9 and ESF 11

HSPD-7 in 2003 recognized the Agriculture and Food Sector as one of the eighteen elements of National Critical Infrastructure. In 2004 HSPD-9 described various action items that would begin to build capability in Agriculture and Food Defense to include Agriculture and Food Critical Infrastructure Site identification and prioritization. Progress was made in a number of areas. USDA created the National Veterinary Stockpile that has shown great potential value. FDA created pilot programs that began to develop Rapid Response Teams. USDA, Food Safety Inspection Service in coordination with the National Guard Bureau equipped all 55 State Civil Support Team mobile laboratories with the same capabilities as a Food Emergency Response Network Laboratory. The Department of Homeland Security funded National Centers of Excellence that produced training and exercise programs that have been delivered to many states as well as models to address assessment of Risk for Agriculture and Food Sites. Although these are important benchmarks to HSPD-9, States have grown increasingly frustrated with the lack of a comprehensive strategy for coordination and implementation of a state, regional, and national Agriculture and Food Defense Risk Reduction Plan that addresses the elements of the National Infrastructure Protection Plan. Preliminary assessments of each States agriculture and food system showed that as much as two thirds of what their citizens consumed came from another state. We realized we needed a picture of what our agriculture and food system looked like including its supply chain and distribution foot print and the identification of critical nodes within the system if we were to provide adequate Food Defense. We realized that these supply chains and distribution foot prints would be in multiple states and regions requiring regional information sharing, training and exercise.

To accomplish regional capability and mutual aid states have begun to organize. Southern states formed the State Animal and Agriculture Disaster Response Alliance (SAADRA). This includes most of the States in FEMA Region 4 with the addition of Louisiana and Texas. The group was originally formed to deal with hurricane mutual aid coordination, but later took up the task of dealing with Food Defense. In the Midwest twelve states formed the Multi-state Partnership to begin work on Food Defense issues. In 2009 these two regional Alliances met to begin to discuss common goals and objectives. Twenty eight states attended that first meeting to begin to utilize the Food and Agriculture Criticality Assessment Tool created by the DHS, Center for Food Defense at the University of Minnesota. We identified early on a major problem. Even though HSPD 7 had been issued in 2003, there was still no definition of an Agriculture or Food Critical Infrastructure Site. After six years the Government Coordinating Council and Sector Specific Coordinating Councils had yet to develop a definition of an Agriculture or Food Critical Infrastructure Site. As a result for over six years after HSPD 9 there were no such sites identified in the US except for Federal buildings. In January 2010 over 100 representatives from 30 states met with the DHS, Homeland Infrastructure Threat Risk Analysis Center (HITRAC) in Chicago. After three days of meetings HITRAC accepted the State's recommendations for a definition. By June of 2010 over 1400 Level 2 Agriculture and Food National Critical Infrastructure Sites had been Identified and validated by HITRAC.

BUILDING CAPABILITY THROUGH TRAINING AND EXERCISE

Training and exercise since 9/11 has largely been dedicated to developing local, state, and federal compliance to the Incident Command System, the National Response Plan, and the National Response Framework. September 30, 2005 was a major benchmark in Domestic Preparedness as it marked the compliance of all local, state, and federal agencies with the National Response Plan. Continued delivery of such training is essential to maintaining a state of readiness.

However, the current curriculum of training and exercise does not address some of the unique aspects of Agriculture and Food Defense as it relates to Critical Infrastructure, Continuity of Business, and Resiliency. The National Infrastructure Protection Plan calls for the measurement of Effectiveness of plans not just their compliance with the National Response Framework.

States have taken it upon themselves to develop training and exercises that measure the reduction of consequences by developing models that track the reduction of morbidities, fatalities and economic loss based on the actions taken by the participants in the exercise.

In August 2009, Georgia hosted and conducted a full scale live agent exercise at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Brunswick Georgia. Over 300 participants from 60 local, state, federal and private sector agencies and organizations that included the FBI, US Attorney, CDC, USDA, FDA, DHS, DOD, Georgia Emergency Management, Division of Homeland Security and agribusiness companies participated. There were three scenarios of an attack on the US Food Supply.

Two of the scenarios were interdicted, one became operational. The operational scenario created 80,000 illnesses and 40,000 deaths in an unmitigated attack. In the exercise a consequence model funded by State Homeland Security Grant Program and developed by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency tracked the fourteen target capabilities exercised and the consequence reduction of each. At the end of the exercise it could be demonstrated that actions taken by the participants reduced the number of illnesses to 27,000 and the number of deaths to 12,000.

States have demonstrated the ability to advance the capabilities necessary for true Agriculture and Food Defense. This however, requires funding. From 2003 to 2007 FEMA reported that the Agriculture and Food Sector received approximately 1% of State Homeland Security Grant Program funding. Recently the US Animal Health Association, through a resolution, requested funding for regional exercise and training. FEMA responded, stating that from 2007 to 2011 the Agriculture and Food Sector had received 20% of the State Homeland Security Grant Program funds. The states refute this amount following a polling of states by the SAADRA group. All states report no increase in funding for the Agriculture and Food Sector from 2007 to 2011. The reports actually supported a further decrease in funding from the 1% reported by FEMA for 2003-2007. This is more consistent with the overall 40+% decrease in the State Homeland Security Grant Program from 2007 to 2011.

We must continue to measure the effectiveness of our capability. A list of accomplishments to be checked off as done does not answer the question, "are we safer today than we were before"? Agriculture and Food Defense is not about making bricks. It is about building a wall out of those bricks.

The ability to measure what capabilities are most effective in reducing consequences is essential to funding those things that make a difference rather than funding things that do not.

The ability to understand what elements of the Agriculture and Food System is critical to our National Security and the vitality of our economy is crucial. Understanding the Agriculture and Food System as Critical Infrastructure will allow us to prioritize response so that each natural disaster does not carve away another piece of our economic viability that does not return.

I appreciate the opportunity to make these statements before you today. I will try to the best of my ability to answer any questions that you may have.

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