

**IN-PERSON MEETING OF THE
LOUISIANA ANIMAL CONTROL ADVISORY TASK FORCE**

**DECEMBER 20, 2022, 10:00 A.M.
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY
VETERANS' MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM
5825 FLORIDA BLVD
BATON ROUGE, LA 70806**

CALL TO ORDER

The hearing was called to order by Dr. Brent Robbins, Chair and State Veterinarian of Louisiana, at 10.00 A.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Kevin Wofford, Assistant Commissioner, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called. Members present: Robbie Averett; Brent Robbins, D.V.M.; Chalyn Fayard, D.V.M.; Chip Fitz; Joe Stark, D.V.M.; and Henry Wimberly.

Members absent: Shelly Fontenot, D.V.M.

A quorum was present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were received at this time.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Dr. Robbins introduced the new members: Robbie Averett; a former LDAF employee inspector for the LACATF for many years and former secretary of the LA Animal Control Advisory Task Force; and Joe Stark, D.V.M., a private practice veterinarian since 1986 in Lake Charles, LA.

COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE, MIKE STRAIN, D.V.M.

Commissioner of Agriculture & Forestry, Mike Strain, D.V.M., wished everyone a Merry Christmas. He then informed the task force of an ongoing case involving several deceased horses which were linked to alfalfa cubes found to be contaminated with *Clostridium botulinum*. The case involves multiple states, with more than 100 horses known to be affected with 45 confirmed deaths. Additionally, as we go into the Louisiana Legislature this year there is a recognized 1.5 billion dollars for one time use made available and to be used for one-time expenditures. If you have agencies requesting money for shelter repairs, and/or updates that may be possible this year;

however, the funds are for one-time use only and cannot be put toward recurring expenses. The programs themselves will not be expanded on at this time as we are expecting FY2024 to be short budget wise.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Dr. Chalyn Fayard moved to approval the minutes of the previous meeting. This motion was seconded by Henry Wimberly and passed.

OLD BUSINESS

Dr. Ashley Prejean began by giving the history of the Louisiana Animal Control Advisory Task Force, which began in 2017 with the objective of being dedicated to serving the shelter animals of Louisiana by ensuring the humane treatment of all shelter animals, assisting, and furthering the advancement and education of animal control officers, shelter employees and volunteers, supporting law enforcement, and working for solutions to address pet overpopulation. For several years the board has worked to create a proposal for continuing education for shelter staff, and veterinary staff. This is a proposal we have been passionate about but the veterinary board did not approve it so the focus will be redirected toward other goals.

Dr. Prejean is working to create better community relationships, build trust with law enforcement, and develop a support structure for shelters in need. Dr. Prejean also clarified that she also works as a training liaison between the shelters and law enforcement to increase training proficiency. Dr. Stark asked about the task force's involvement in the state's emergency action plan for shelters during and after Hurricane Ida. Robbie Averett informed the task force in detail on how the task force mobilized the shelter trucks, supplies, feed in place, rescues, and personnel to assist in the aftermath of Ida.

2022 Inspection Numbers

87 Shelters identified, 78 of those are open, 9 are closed, however those numbers do vary year to year, and we do check on them periodically to keep our numbers up to date.

78 inspections were completed, 31 emergency facility plans have been received and 10 parish emergency pet plans have been received.

Post-Covid-19, the biggest hurdle at the shelters is personnel shortages. According to inspection reports, the most common findings during the shelter inspections were unsealed concrete; dogs found to be housed on rocks, gravel and or grass; insufficient amounts of fans to facilitate air flow; poor drainage; odors of strong ammonia from pet waste caused by over-crowding and/or poor drainage; and lack of appropriate quarantine areas and/or kennels for intakes. Many facilities also are in need of kennel repairs.

Dr. Prejean also introduced a new system for grading the shelter inspections based on a weighted numbering system. This new system was well received by the task force. Questions were

addressed concerning possible shelter problems that were “scheduled” for repair and if those problems would count as a deficiency against the inspection. The problems would be put down in the inspection report with a time for a re-inspection after the problems are addressed.

The task force then discussed differentiating a holding facility from a shelter as it applies to the inspection process also came up and was addressed by the task force. This discussion included time frame schedules for holding facilities, direct adoption from those holding facilities, rescues pulling from holding facilities rather than from shelters, and the logistics of each situation and location.

Mr. Wimberly stated that in Central Louisiana, there is an excess of holding facilities for small animals as well as small livestock. His concern is that most small towns in that area do not employ a full-time animal control officer and must rely on law enforcement to be involved in what would be typically the “dog catcher” role. In that role, law enforcement would pick up stray animals and bring them to these small-town holding facilities that would keep the animals for up to 3 days before turning them over to a larger parish run shelter. The inspectors for the task force discussed the smaller facilities, and the idea of pulling resources to ease the burden of those facilities. LDAF Shelter Inspector, Lillie Wiley, mentioned a statewide spay neuter program and Chip Fitz agreed to work with her on that matter.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ETHICS TRAINING

Ashley Prejean, D.V.M., reminded the task force members to complete the required ethics and sexual harassment training. As of this meeting, there is almost 100% compliance with the training.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were received at this time.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next LACATF meeting is tentatively for December 6th, 2023, at 10:00 A.M. in the Veterans’ Memorial Auditorium, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, 5825 Florida Blvd., Baton Rouge, La 70806.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Chip Fitz moved to adjourn the meeting This motion was seconded by Chalyn Fayard, D.V.M, and passed. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 11:45 P.M.