

Louisiana State Animal Response Team

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LSART Director Joins International Haitian Relief Efforts

BATON ROUGE-- Dr. Renée Poirrier, Lafayette veterinarian and Director of the Louisiana State Animal Response Team, flew into Dominican Republic last week to join an international coalition of animal emergency aid workers in Haiti. She responded as a member of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) Emergency Relief Network, in support of the Animal Rescue Coalition of Haiti (ARCH), which is jointly led by IFAW and the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA).

The mission of the trip was to assist the Haitian people with animal-related issues arising from the earthquakes last month. The ARCH coalition is focusing on restoring community structure by treating livestock, poultry, donkeys and horses in affected areas, and on promoting public health by vaccinating animals for infectious diseases such as rabies and anthrax, which are transmissible to people. The long-term goal is to establish a network of community animal health clinics in the region.



Dr. Poirrier submitted the following internet diary via generator and flashlight.

Sunday, February 7: I flew into Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic and met team members Bill Tanguay of the Animal Rescue League of Boston and Todd Stosuy from Santa Cruz California Animal Control. I stayed overnight at the Euro Hotel in the historic district and watched the Saints win the Superbowl in the hotel lobby with an EMT group from Baton Rouge on their way home from Haiti. WHO DAT!

Monday, February 8: We flew into Port-au-Prince, Haiti on CaribAir Airlines and met with Dick Green from IFAW, Director of Ground Operations for ARCH. We traveled by van to Léogâne, an outlying community within the major strike zone, accompanied by Dr. Thomas, a veterinarian from the Haitian Ministry of Environment and ARCH's liaison to the Haitian government. In Léogâne, we met with Dr. Iam, a Haitian Ministry of Agriculture veterinarian, and Dr. Skinner, a U.S. Public Health Service veterinarian, to discuss providing a local community animal health clinic in Léogâne. Our team then met with the Mayor of Léogâne to make sure he was in favor of having the clinic in his area for two to three days. This took most of the day because of the traffic in Port-au-Prince and the destruction on the roads.

That night we set up our tents at Sonapi, an industrial park near the airport and met the rest of our group, animal control officers from Soda Preca, Dominican Republic. Conditions were hot, noisy and buggy. Our camp was well protected by an UN team assigned to provide security in the area. There was a constant need for vigilance. Food trucks from the Dominican Republic supplied food to the aid workers in the camp as well as many Haitian citizens in Port-au-Prince.

Tuesday, February 9: We traveled about one hour to Gaman village and met with Dr. Emile, a Ministry of Agri-

culture veterinarian. We set up a community animal health clinic where we treated nearly 200 sheep, goats, dogs, cats, cows, pigs, horses, donkeys and chickens. The Haitian Ministry of Agriculture supplied the vaccines. ARCH purchased de-wormers and other medicines and brought them in from the Dominican Republic. We vaccinated dogs and cats for rabies and cattle for anthrax and treated all animals by deworming for parasites. Total numbers were goats-52, dogs-19, cats-5, horses-6, cattle-12, pigs-45, sheep-25, donkeys-13, chickens-12.



Wednesday, February 10: We met Dr. Emile and traveled to Thomazeau where we treated 158 animals – 58 goats, 10 cows, 45 pigs, 12 chickens, 30 sheep and 3 donkeys. Afterwards, we moved to Provence La Rate and treated 310 more animals. We saw 90 goats, 25 dogs, 1 cat, 3 horses, 110 cows, 1 pig, 7 chickens, 47 sheep, 9 donkeys, and 7 ducks. At each clinic, animals were vaccinated, treated for internal parasites and given an injection of B-complex vitamins to combat poor nutrition.

Thursday, February 11: Our team was supposed to meet with Dr. Iam from the Ministry of Agriculture but she became ill. We then went to Léogâne and met with Dr. Skinner from the U. S. Public Health Service. The community had not been notified about the animal health clinic, so we could not set up as planned. A wasted day and a frustrating experience, but we did get to see a human vaccine clinic running in Léogâne.

That afternoon we moved our camp from the industrial park in Port-au-Prince to Dr. Thomas' house in the mountains, where it was much cooler. We met our new Director of Ground Operations, Gerardo Huertas from WSPA. We made plans to have two more animal health clinics in villages near Léogâne, and enjoyed a delicious meal.

Friday, February 12: We traveled to two villages near Léogâne and operated clinics using the protocols we had established. Dr. Gito, a Haitian veterinarian, accompanied us.

Saturday, February 13: We returned to the two villages near Léogâne to finish the health clinics we started Friday. The total number of animals seen at the villages was not compiled by the time we left but was estimated at approximately 300 in each location.

Sunday, February 14: We returned to Port-au-Prince to fly out on CaribAir to the Dominican Republic and then back to the US.

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About LSART

LSART is a volunteer organization whose mission is to prepare and train for emergencies that affect animals, and provide assistance in response and recovery when disasters occur. LSART is a division of The Dr. Walter J. Ernst, Jr. Veterinary Memorial Foundation, a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization. For more information about the organization and our activities, please visit our web site at www.lsart.org.

About IFAW

As the world's leading animal welfare organization, IFAW works from its global headquarters in the United States and 16 country offices to improve the welfare of wild and domestic animals by reducing the commercial exploitation of animals, protecting wildlife habitats, and assisting animals in distress. With projects in more than 40 countries, IFAW works both on the ground and in the halls of government to safeguard wild and domestic animals and seeks to motivate the public to prevent cruelty to animals and to promote animal welfare and conservation policies that advance the well-being of both animals and people. To make donations to help with animal relief efforts in Haiti, please visit www.ifaw.org