



Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AAVMC Announces Disaster Fund to Help Provide Relief to Animal Victims of Katrina

WASHINGTON, D.C., September 13, 2005 – The Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) has established the *AAVMC Disaster Fund* to help veterinary medical colleges provide assistance to the thousands of animals that have fallen victim to Hurricane Katrina and to assist in animal relief efforts in the future.

Late last week, the AAVMC Board of Directors held an emergency conference call during which the Board agreed to provide the initial \$20,000 for the *Fund*, which will help support the coordinated disaster relief effort being undertaken by members of the veterinary medical profession. AAVMC will also conduct an international fund-raising drive to raise additional money for the *Fund*. The Fund will provide grants to AAVMC member colleges and universities involved in the relief effort whose expenditures are not reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA).

“Veterinary medicine has an important role to play in this unprecedented natural disaster, and it is doing so,” said Dr. Joseph A. DiPietro, Dean of the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine and President of the AAVMC. “The human dimensions of this catastrophe are well understood. But thousands and thousands of companion and agricultural animals have been killed, injured and displaced. Veterinarians are also playing an important role in dealing with the potential infectious disease and public health problems.”

The AAVMC will match *Fund* contributions from member institutions, students, faculty, staff and alumni of the 32 North American colleges of veterinary medicine, the 16 departments of veterinary science and comparative medicine and other affiliate members, as well as the general public, up to a total of an additional \$30,000.

“The *Fund* will provide grants to member institutions that incur expenses associated with their disaster relief efforts,” said Dr. Heider, noting that many expenditures associated with the relief effort may not be reimbursed by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or other sources. “We recognize that our people want to help, and this is a way that the academic veterinary medicine community can band together and do that.”

The impact of the hurricane and subsequent floods on animals is being felt all across the Gulf Coast. Currently, thousands of sick, injured and possibly orphaned animals are being temporarily housed and cared for by Louisiana State University's College of Veterinary Medicine (LSU-CVM) faculty, students and staff, while officials and service organizations seek to reunite them with their owners. In Mississippi, faculty, staff and students from the Mississippi State University's College of Veterinary Medicine (MSU-CVM) are caring for distressed animals in that state. Katrina also destroyed numerous private veterinary medical practices in the coastal areas.

The *AAVMC Disaster Fund* grants will help offset expenses associated with rescue efforts, which may include such items as computers used to assist animal/owner reunification efforts, to feed, vaccines, pharmaceuticals, fencing, kennels, fans and other equipment required to house and manage the influx of animals.

Donations may be sent to:

AAVMC Disaster Fund
C/o AAVMC
1101 Vermont Avenue, NW
Suite 301
Washington, D.C. 20005-3521

Toll-free: 877-862-2740
Email: aavmcdisasterfund@aavmc.org

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The Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges coordinates the national and international affairs of all 32 veterinary medical colleges in the United States and Canada, eight departments of veterinary science, eight departments of comparative medicine, two animal medical centers, and three international colleges of veterinary medicine. We foster teaching, research and service missions of our members, both nationally and internationally. For more information about AAVMC, please visit our website at www.aavmc.org.