



UNITED STATES ARMY PUBLIC HEALTH COMMAND

Public Affairs Office

5158 Blackhawk Rd. Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21010-5403

410-436-1770

usaphcpao@amedd.army.mil

Veterinary Services Portfolio

Mission

The Veterinary Services Portfolio works with the USAPHC's human disease surveillance experts to monitor and control diseases transmitted from animals to humans. The portfolio performs this mission through preventive care, animal handler/owner education, and animal treatment. Its second mission is protecting military personnel and their families from food-borne disease through surveillance, auditing and assessing vulnerabilities.

Background

The Veterinary Services Portfolio is the newest portfolio within the USAPHC. The portfolio was created in September 2010 as a result of the merger of the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine and the U.S. Army Veterinary Command to form the USAPHC.

Clients

The portfolio's clients are DOD leaders, Army commanders and organizations, Army medical leaders, veterinary treatment facilities and deployed units.

Structure and Organization

The Veterinary Services Portfolio is one of nine portfolios that make up the Army Institute of Public Health, a subordinate unit of the USAPHC. The portfolio is comprised of three programs:

*** Food Protection Program** — The Food Protection Program comprises several components: food defense, food safety, and food and water risk assessments.

The food defense mission is focused on protection of DOD food and bottled water supplies from intentional contamination with biological, chemical, physical or radiological agents. These experts work with other agencies to conduct food vulnerability assessments and other monitoring of all installation food and bottled water sources.

The food safety mission protects DOD food and bottled water supplies from unintentional contamination with biological, chemical, physical or radiological agents. This contamination can occur as a result of food spoilage through improper production and handling, i.e., food

that is not served at the correct temperature or cooked for the correct period of time. These experts work with other agencies to conduct audits of all DOD commercial food suppliers. These suppliers who are audited for food safety are also audited for food defense within the United States.

Food and water risk assessments protect DOD food and water supplies from intentional and unintentional contamination with biological, chemical, physical or radiological agents through anticipating, recognizing, and controlling or mitigating health threats encountered during deployments or exercises occurring outside the continental United States.

Veterinary services experts within USAPHC often present classes on food safety and defense at various Army commands within the United States.

On average, the Veterinary Services Portfolio conducts more than 3,000 commercial food audits per year, which includes assessing food defense risks at commercial food establishments that desire to sell food or bottled water to the DOD. In addition, the portfolio performs installation food vulnerability assessments at more than 4,000 food facilities spread across 376 different installations.

The portfolio's experts ensure that the food the Army consumes is safe to eat.

*** Animal Medicine Program** — Experts in this program provide comprehensive veterinary medical care of the 2,800 DOD-owned military working dogs and 300 other government-owned animals, including ceremonial horses and official mascots. This care is provided from procurement of animals to their retirement from service.

MWD veterinary care provides vital support to the overall security and safety of military personnel during both peacetime and wartime operations. Experts in this program ensure the MWDs are healthy and fit for deployment. These dogs, specifically trained in explosive and drug detection, are force multipliers and save countless lives each year.



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Additionally, the Animal Medicine Program staff at Yuma Proving Ground regularly provides MWD care and handler first-aid training for various teams deploying to theaters of operation. Experts in this program also support evacuation of pets from areas of disaster and danger whenever military families are evacuated. For example, more than 400 pets were evacuated after the Japan earthquake and tsunami of March 2011. In addition, the program's experts also provide specific training to other DOD personnel on working with military working dogs. Clinical care of animals allows veterinarians to perform the public health function of surveillance to identify diseases that are transmissible from animals to humans.

On military installations, these veterinary service personnel give advice to installation commanders on veterinary care and animal disease prevention and control to prevent injury or disease to DOD personnel, pet animals, and wildlife.

Finally, experts in this program also provide privately-owned animal care for all military services, in both stateside and deployed locations. This includes non-emergency sick-call, routine preventive medicine examinations, treatments and vaccinations, health certificates required for safe animal transport, animal bite reporting and veterinary medical support for service/assistance animals at 182 veterinary treatment facilities.

Veterinary Service's People

Approximately 20 people work in the Veterinary Services Portfolio at the Army Institute of Public Health; they have oversight of more than 1,500 veterinary service personnel around the world. They include military and civilian personnel in a broad range of medical and scientific disciplines. Veterinarians, food safety technicians, food defense technicians and administrative personnel are just some of the occupations within the portfolio. In addition to their professional experience, most staff members hold advanced academic degrees and certifications in their respective areas of study.

The program supplements its expertise from multidisciplinary public health experts within USAPHC and also works with other federal organizations, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Food and Drug Administration, MWD program offices and other animal medicine programs.

Benefits for the Army

The Veterinary Services Portfolio emphasizes and completes the "One Health" concept. Animal, human and environmental health are inextricably bound. Causes of disease, injury and disability in people originate in animals and the environment: avian flu, West Nile virus, malaria, unsafe drinking water, food that has not been safely processed or prepared, ineffective sanitation measures in the aftermath of natural disaster, reactions to industrial chemicals, mold in the workplace—these are just a few examples of the health threats stemming from animals or the environment that Army public health professionals address. Through its animal medicine and food safety and defense programs, the Veterinary Services Portfolio strengthens the USAPHC's ability to monitor, assess, mitigate and control human disease threats from military working animals, beneficiary pets and the environment.