**Position Description:** This proposal will address a critical need for UC ANR to take a much needed leadership role in Rural Community Disaster Preparedness (RCDP) through outreach and research and lead in statewide, role-specific best practice solutions for the safe resolution of disaster incidents involving animals as well as the environmental destruction that occurs annually in California. This proposal is for a 100% UCCE appointment in Veterinary Extension within the Department of Medicine and Epidemiology (VME), School of Veterinary Medicine (SVM) with collaborative opportunities with the Western Institute for Food Safety and Security (WIFSS), the Center for Equine Health (CEH), and the Center for Food Animal Health (CFAH) on the UC Davis (UCD) campus. A DVM or equivalent degree with graduate level training and/or board certification in an appropriate discipline will be required. The successful candidate will have knowledge and experience with disaster related programs, including animal health and welfare, disease outbreaks, rescues, the incident command system, animal evacuation and sheltering, preparedness courses, working relationship with first responders, and experience with local, state and national agency disaster programs.

**Justification:** California experiences a multitude of natural disasters per year which include catastrophic wildfires, floods, earthquakes, emerging diseases, droughts, blizzards and other calamities which destabilize rural communities. The state’s highly productive livestock and poultry operations are associated with rural communities, and all are vulnerable to natural or intentional disasters leaving rural communities and their associated livestock operations subject to significant economic, life and production losses. Along with ever present risks associated with natural disasters, California livestock are also subject to risks to animal agriculture through a border with Mexico, air and sea ports from Asia and the Western Pacific, and the Pacific flyway for waterfowl. All of these make California vulnerable to hazards impacting the health and welfare of livestock and poultry. Sadly, rural communities have been overlooked for preparedness funding from federal and/or state governments for planning and training to address disasters with local constituents.

SVM faculty have been at the forefront of addressing disasters on an ad hoc basis and have provided assistance to local organizations, however, there are no academic or UCCE faculty with a dedicated effort assignment to meaningfully take on the significant outreach challenge of assisting rural communities to become more prepared for managing disasters. UCD has many resources which can serve as the foundation for strong UCCE leadership focused on rural community disaster preparedness. Examples of SVM faculty/unit accomplishments that could help support an RCDP specialist include: innovative rescue procedures developed for large injured livestock; CAHFS monitoring for new and emerging diseases; the Oiled Wildlife Care Network addressing oil spills affecting marine and terrestrial wildlife; and, courses for awareness and management of all hazards disasters in rural communities developed through WIFSS.

**Extension:** Education and training on understanding the role of first responders during a disaster, knowledge of the multiple agency responsibilities, knowledge of diseases of animal or public health concern, animal evacuation and sheltering, and the ability to coordinate with multiple agencies are needed for community first responders, leaders, and volunteers. Training on these topics can be further supported by training UCCE Advisors making them aware of the vulnerabilities so they can also support a viable active community effort to address potential disasters in their jurisdictions. The RCDP Specialist will also provide high level and quality continuing education to professional organizations and policymakers within communities.

The RCDP Specialist facilitated planning involving local stakeholders and Incident Command personnel will include both science and evidence based information that can be standardized to be effective for community and incident command needs. Of utmost importance is the attention paid to animals and the attending personnel.

**Research:** A need exists for more scientific and/or evidenced based research on new approaches that improve planning and implementation of best practices for various disasters. The Specialist will collect data, develop or collaborate with programs such as WIFSS, CEH, CFAH, CVMA, Cal OES, and CDFA to develop or adapt training materials for on-line as well as hands-on demonstration of activities important for preparedness. Epidemiological evaluation of the characteristics of the various geophysical and regional differences or new models for future use in training leading to improved standardization of procedures for preparedness training will improve the quality of disaster preparedness standards. Publication outlets could include California Agriculture, ANR Peer Review sources, peer-reviewed veterinary and agriculture journals, and lay agricultural producer publications.

**ANR Network:** The RCDP Specialist will need to coordinate with local, regional and state planners for emergency preparedness and implementation of plans in the face of disasters. The recipient will interact with other UC I&R and AES faculty, UCCE Specialists and Advisors involved with health and welfare of livestock, poultry, environmental sciences, rangeland, water, aquaculture, forestry, public health and social science relevant to rural communities.

**Networks External to ANR:**  By working/networking with Cal OES, Cal Fire, California Departments of Food and Agriculture, Public Health, and Fish and Wildlife, law enforcement agencies, first responders, Animal control Officers, and the California Veterinary Medical Association, the RCDP Specialist will help develop best strategies for improving preparedness. By working closely with faculty at WIFSS, in VME and the SVM, CEH and CFAH the RCDP Specialist can capture resources and information which can be assimilated and distributed to UCCE Advisors and first responders. The opportunity to serve as advisor for the Veterinary Emergency Response Team (VERT) for training veterinary students in their role in future disasters preparedness will be an important role filled by the RCDP Specialist. The Specialist will collaborate with local, state and national agencies to fund research projects and to develop and deliver outreach and train-the-trainer materials for UCCE Advisors and first responders.

**Support:** Administrative support for grants and contracts will be from Veterinary Medicine Extension and the SVM Department of Medicine and Epidemiology.

**Other Support:** WIFSS, CEH and CFAH can provide funding on collaborative projects as well as federal agencies such as USDA and DHS and from philanthropy. The specialist can apply for intramural grants to support his/her program through the Center for Food Animal Health (SVM-UCD) that provides seed grants ($20,000/yr) twice a year. In addition, the specialist will have the opportunity to collaborate with scientists at the Western Institute for Food Safety and Security (WIFSS-UCD) and its state and federal agency partners on food safety, water quality and related issues.

**Location:** This position will be located at the UC Davis campus at the School of Veterinary Medicine which will give the specialist access to SVM laboratory and office space as well as close proximity to UCD SVM faculty and California’s Emergency response infrastructure (Cal OES) in Sacramento.

**Developed and proposed by:** This position was initially drafted by Bennie Osburn (Dean Emeritus and Director of Outreach and Training, WIFSS), John Madigan (Professor, Medicine and Epidemiology), and John Angelos (Chair, Medicine and Epidemiology) with input from AES faculty, local community stakeholders, and Rob Atwill (Director of Veterinary Medicine Extension, SVM).