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Judging Dept.

**June Beckman-moore**

Student

EPI/BIOSTAT

2

Millicent Eidson

Dept or Program Years in program

Mentor

## **Bioterrorism and Emerging Disease Preparedness: A Training Needs Assessment for New York Veterinarians**

Author (s)

**June Beckman-Moore, Lindsay Benson, MPH, Millicent Eidson, MA, DVM,  
DACVPM (Epidemiology), Bryan Cherry, VMD, PhD**

Veterinarians are an important partner in public health emergencies, especially those involving infectious diseases. They play a critical role in disease surveillance and may be the first to identify an emerging outbreak involving zoonoses. They may serve as medical staff in points of dispensing or mass vaccination clinics for humans. They may provide mass care to animals and/or humans in the event of a bioterrorism event. Although public health is included in the curriculae at most schools of veterinary medicine, continuing education is necessary for veterinarians who serve as volunteers or for those who may be asked to participate in emergency preparedness events.

In an effort to identify training needs for veterinarians, the New York State Department of Health and the University at Albany School of Public Health Center for Public Health Preparedness (a partner in the New York Consortium for Emergency Preparedness Continuing Education) distributed a mail survey on emergency preparedness and zoonotic diseases to 1831 licensed veterinarians in New York State. Surveys were returned by 529 respondents (29%). Analysis of this training needs assessment focused on respondents' perceived risk of a bioterrorism event/zoonotic disease emergency, willingness to participate in and desired formats for training programs and exercises related to emergency preparedness, topics in which additional education is required, involvement with volunteer teams, and relationships with county health departments.