

Mobilization of a Mobile Veterinary Clinic to Ukraine During Wartime: Notes from the Field

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Abstract

Cite this article: Geller J (2024). Mobilization of a Mobile Veterinary Clinic to Ukraine During Wartime: Notes from the Field. *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*, **18**, e188, 1
<https://doi.org/10.1017/dmp.2024.209>

Abstract

In late May, 2023, a 25' long mobile veterinary clinic was mobilized to Ukraine from the US to provide emergency veterinary response for the animals of Ukraine. Due to effects of the Russian invasion, many pets and other animals were suffering from neglect, starvation and injuries, and many veterinary practices had been forced to close, greatly decreasing access to care. Prior to the mobilization of the mobile clinic, an initial response to care for pets of Ukraine refugees had been set up at the Ukraine-Romania border in early March 2022, soon after the invasion begun. This presentation will describe the initial challenges that arose when 6 million refugees, some with pets, migrated from Eurasia to Eastern and Western Europe with the focus on potential zoonotic disease transmission, barriers to travelling to the EU with pets, and the strong bonds that the Ukraine people had with their pets. The main focus of the presentation will be on the many logistical challenges that arose with the transport and mobilization of the mobile veterinary clinic from the US to Ukraine, and operational issues related to security, travel logistics, language barriers, stocking drugs and medical supplies, pet overpopulation and many other challenges.