



Implementing the Sendai Framework: lessons from Costa Rica

More than a billion of the world's poorest people rely on animals for their food and incomes; 752 million livestock keepers live on less than \$2 a day.¹ The poor are most vulnerable to disasters – they are often highly exposed to hazards and have less capacity to cope, adapt and recover.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 represents a major shift in how Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is conceptualised. It focuses on disaster risk management rather than disaster management, emphasising the protection of livelihoods as well as saving people and property. The Sendai Framework in particular includes a clear commitment to the protection of livelihoods and productive assets.

Countries now need to incorporate animal protection into DRR policies, plans and activities to reduce economic losses and safeguard livelihoods.



Animals are more to their owners than simple commodities. They are productive assets requiring protection and care to preserve their productive quality. Animals also represent more than food. They provide livelihoods, cultural identity and companionship.

Costa Rica's government recognised animals' importance in its National Risk Management Policy 2016–2030, launched in November 2015. The policy explicitly states the need for animal protection in DRR.



Costa Rica's national policy explicitly states the need for animal protection in DRR

Context

Costa Rica is exposed to a range of natural hazards. These include earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, floods and landslides. Most economic losses are due to floods and earthquakes. Between 2005–2011, the country's agricultural and husbandry sector suffered losses of more than US\$128 million from disasters. The Cinchona earthquake was one of the most destructive events in this period. It resulted in losses of US\$9.3 million to the agricultural and husbandry sector alone.² Disasters can destroy the entire livelihoods of those directly involved in the 93,000 farms across Costa Rica and the livelihoods of 30% of the rural population dependent on the agricultural sector.³

Creating an emergency fund for animals in disasters

The Sendai Framework recognises that successful DRR depends on coordination within and across sectors. In Costa Rica, this has involved the Animal Health Service (SENASA), within the Ministry of Agriculture, sharing responsibility with Civil Defence. Civil Defence was traditionally in sole charge of disaster-related activities.

In its new role SENASA established a fund to protect animals in disasters. The fund ensures there are adequate resources to implement disaster prevention, response and recovery activities.

The establishment of the fund required three crucial developments: legal frameworks to support its creation, financial resources and capacity building.

Using the fund

Since 2014 the fund has supported a variety of activities. For example, SENASA was able to respond to extreme weather situations in early 2015. These included excessive rains in Turrialba and a drought in the northern region of Guanacaste. SENASA gave emergency assistance to farmers that protected thousands of animals.

SENASA also intends to use the fund for risk mitigation work. For example it will provide aquaponic systems to the drought-prone Guanacaste region. These systems allow families to grow food and animal fodder, when crops wither. By ensuring continued access to fodder, livestock producers can preserve their animals' productivity and protect their welfare.

1

Introducing legislation

Two government Acts supported the fund's creation. One obliges public institutions to allocate resources for risk management and disasters.⁴ The second established SENASA in 2006, and determined how it should perform during a declared emergency. It also created a cumulative emergency fund.⁵

In 2013 a new Executive Decree determined the mechanisms for the implementation and use of this fund, plus SENASA's responsibilities during animal health emergencies.⁶

2

Securing financial resources

SENASA may now allocate up to 10% of its monthly revenue to the fund. In its first year, the fund accumulated US\$1 million. It can also receive donations from other governmental institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Civil Defence. In 2015 Civil Defence donated US\$1 million for a large-scale drought response. SENASA can also receive donations from NGOs and the private sector. Its annual budget has not needed to increase since the fund's creation.

3

Building institutional capacity

To ensure the fund would be used effectively, the capacity of SENASA's technical personnel needed to be developed, so we provided training on Livestock and Emergency Guidelines and Standards. The Ministry of Agriculture is now better able to coordinate with Civil Defence to prepare for disasters and respond.

But implementing Sendai doesn't stop with policy.

That's why we have been working with the government of Costa Rica to foster a culture of preparedness among animal owners. In Sarapiquí, a Caribbean region prone to flooding, rural producers are highly dependent on livestock for their livelihoods. Through workshops with community members and SENASA we helped them identify risks and ways to mitigate them. When the risks were identified we supported the development of evacuation plans and alternative sources of animal feed.

The government also recognised that pets need protection. An estimated 500,000 dogs provide invaluable psychological comfort and support to families across metropolitan Costa Rica.⁷ To protect pets in urban areas we designed a public awareness campaign to improve their owners' levels of disaster preparedness. The campaign highlighted what to do in specific emergencies such as hurricanes, earthquakes or floods, and what to include in an emergency kit.

We measured the campaign's effectiveness by monitoring people's preparedness levels before our activity and afterwards. Our evaluation showed that the number of people implementing at least one of the recommended preparedness measures had doubled, while those implementing more measures had also significantly increased.

- 1 Otte, J. et al. (2012) 'Livestock Sector Development for Poverty Reduction: An Economic and Policy Perspective – Livestock's Many Virtues'. FAO:Rome.
- 2 National Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Agriculture (2013) 'Sistematization of the information of the impact of natural phenomena in Costa Rica. From 2005-2011', Government of Costa Rica.
- 3 National Institute of Statistics and Census (2015) VI 'National Agriculture and Livestock Census', Government of Costa Rica.
- 4 2006 National Emergencies & Risk Act #8488, Article 27.
- 5 2006 SENASA ACT #849, especially Title IV and Article 95.
- 6 2013 Executive Decree #37825-MAG.
- 7 World Animal Protection (2012). 'Canine Population Situation of the Great Metropolitan Area'. Heredia: Study conducted by IDESPO.



World Animal Protection has more than 50 years' experience of helping people help animals in disasters. We work with governments, intergovernmental organisations, NGOs and local partners, to empower communities in disaster-prone areas to prepare for the future.