Credentialing Animal Emergency Reponders

In an attempt to build emergency management capacity in the U.S. the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has established a credentialing system called the National Incident Management System (NIMS) that defines the minimum qualifications for most response positions within the Incident Command System (ICS). A subset of these responders are the Animal Emergency Responders (AER), who, once credentialed, can assume official positions in emergency management and, therefore, give credibility to issues surrounding animals and their owners in disasters.

The basis for a national system for credentialing emergency responders is to establish common performance standards for responders as well as common definitions for resources, i.e., credentialing is resource typing of response personnel. The official AER credentials are summarized in below.

Criteria used to credential Animal Emergency Responders.

Credential	Criteria
Education	Formal instruction based upon a curriculum that prepares an individual with the core knowledge and skill for entry into a discipline and for performing a job title
Training	Instruction and activities that enhance and an individual's core knowledge; increase skill set and proficiency; and strengthen and augment abilities
Experience	Time required functioning in a job title for an individual to attain proficiency in applying knowledge, skills, and abilities
Physical/ Medical Fitness	Physical and medical considerations that, when applied, help to ensure safe performance in risky environments
Certification	Designation granted by Authority Having Jurisdiction-that an individual has met the requirements and achieved specific knowledge, skills, and abilities
Licensing	Legal designation granted by Authority Having Jurisdiction, indicating that a person has met the necessary legal requirements to function in a job title. Licensing requirements are established by a State or federal agency to permit persons to practice their trade or profession
Because the needs of animals are highly specialized each animal emergency responder is further typed based on his/her qualifications, experience or expertise of dealing with certain species. Hence credentialed AERs also meet species pre-requisites for one or more of the following groups: • Companion animals (such as dogs, cats and household pets); • Equines; • Livestock (such as cattle, sheep, goats, pigs) • Avian; and • Zoo, non-domestic and exotic species (grouped together as "Non-domesticated")	