Brent Warr, the former Mayor of Gulfport, Mississippi, is a nationally-recognized expert on disaster preparedness and recovery. Warr led Gulfport reconstruction efforts in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Mississippi first responders recently received instruction in how to care for large animals during a disaster. The Mississippi State University Extension Service sponsored a workshop entitled Technical Large Animal Emergency Response. The course’s organizers explained that since agriculture is one of Mississippi’s largest industries, many natural disasters can also affect livestock. If first responders have not received adequate training in livestock rescue, they can put themselves and the animals at risk.

The extension course offered hands-on training to police, firefighters, and veterinarians. Instructors explained how most standard rescue equipment can be used with large animals. They also encouraged participants to focus on the torso, not the more fragile head, neck, and legs. The organizers explained that cattle are the most common animal faced by first responders because many highway accidents involve overturned cattle cars. During a hurricane situation, all sorts of animals may become trapped or require evacuation. With proper training, emergency responders will know how to care for large animals during a disaster.