

Mississippi Emergency Support Function #11 – Food and Agriculture

ESF Coordinator:

Mississippi Board of Animal Health (MBAH)
Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC)
Mississippi Department of Health (MSDH)

State Support Agencies:

Mississippi Department of Emergency Management
Mississippi Crop Agency
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
Mississippi Department of Public Safety
Mississippi Military Department
Mississippi Department of Transportation
Mississippi State University
Mississippi Forestry Commission

Federal Support Agencies:

Federal Emergency Management Agency
United States Department of Agriculture
United States Food and Drug Administration
United States Department of Health and Human Services

Other Support Agencies:

Local Governments and other organizations

Introduction

Purpose

The Food and Agriculture Incident Annex describes the roles and responsibilities associated with all incidents that require a coordinated State response involving the Nation's agriculture and food systems.

Scope

The protocols outlined in the annex apply to all actual or potential incidents requiring a coordinated State response. The objectives of a coordinated State response to an incident impacting food and agriculture are to:

- Detect the event through the reporting of illness, disease/pest surveillance, routine testing, consumer complaints and/or environmental monitoring.
- Determine the primary coordinating agency.
- Determine the source of the incident or outbreak.
- Control and contain the distribution of the affected source.

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- Identify and protect the population at risk.
- Assess public health, food, agriculture, and law enforcement implications.
- Assess the extent of residual biological, chemical, or radiological contamination, then decontaminate and dispose as necessary.

A food and agriculture incident may threaten public health, animal nutrition, food production, aquaculture, livestock production, wildlife, soils, rangelands, and agricultural water supplies. Responding to the unique attributes of this type of incident requires separate planning considerations that are tailored to specific health and agriculture concerns and effects of the disease (e.g., deliberate contamination versus natural outbreaks, plant and animal versus processed food, etc.). Specific operational guidelines, developed by organizations with responsibility for the unique aspects of a particular disease or planning consideration, will supplement this annex and are intended as guidance to assist State, and local public health and agriculture authorities.

Special Considerations

Detection of an intentional or unintentional contamination/adulteration of food, animals, plants, or a pest outbreak may occur in several different ways and involve several different modalities:

A terrorist attack on food or agriculture may initially be indistinguishable from a naturally occurring event; moreover, depending upon the particular agent and associated symptoms, several days could pass before public health, food, agriculture and medical authorities even suspect that terrorism may be the cause. In such a case, criminal intent may not be apparent until some time after illnesses are recognized.

A devastating attack or the threat of an attack on the domestic animal population and plant crops through use of highly infective exotic disease or pest infestation could result in severe economic loss. Early detection, allowing for early intervention, would come from agriculture expert authority reports as well as unusual patterns in surveillance systems.

A food or agricultural incident may involve international trade.

Relationship to the Whole Community

This section describes how ESF #11 relates to other elements of the whole community.

Individuals/Households

Individuals are responsible for knowing the risks they face and developing emergency plans for their families that include emergency preparedness for the animals in their household, whether those animals are owned for pleasure or commercial purposes. To the extent possible, during an incident, individuals should carry out their emergency plans in accordance with responder instructions.

During an incident, to the extent practical, animal evacuation and sheltering should be conducted in conjunction with human evacuation and sheltering efforts; animals should be sheltered near their owners. Service animals are not pets and may not be separated from the individual with a

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disability or other access and functional need, and they should be permitted anywhere the public goes. Owners should provide food, water, husbandry, and exercise for their animals while they are in emergency shelters.

State, Tribal, Territorial, Insular Area, and Local Governments

Local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments are primarily responsible for the welfare of individuals and animals within their jurisdictions.

Typically, at the local level, the animal control agency is the authority that has jurisdiction for non-disease animal emergency management issues within a given community. At the state level, the Department of Agriculture, Board of Animal Health, State Wildlife Management Agency, or the Emergency Management Agency coordinates animal response activities.

When requested and mission assigned, ESF #11 can assist in coordinating or providing technical assistance to address animal/agriculture emergency management issues. The state, tribal, or territorial government designates an official(s) to coordinate with Agriculture and Natural Resources. This official(s) serve as the principal point(s) of contact with ESF #11 Coordinators at the Regional Response Coordination Center.

Transportation and distribution of food supplies within the affected area are arranged by local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, Federal, and voluntary organizations.

Animal and agricultural health responses are conducted in collaboration and cooperation with state authorities and private industries to ensure continued human nutrition; animal, plant, and environmental health; and support of the American economy and trade, under USDA statutory authority.

Inspection of meat, poultry, and processed egg products; production and import facilities; and distributors during a response may be conducted, occur with local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area authorities and the regulated industry, if needed, to ensure public health and support the American economy and trade.

Actions taken during an animal or agricultural emergency are guided by and coordinated with local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area emergency preparedness and response officials, homeland security officials, and existing USDA internal policies and procedures.

Actions taken during an emergency threatening the environment or cultural and historic resources are guided by and coordinated with the appropriate local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area agencies, including the state historic preservation office, state archives, and local emergency management agencies.

Private Sector/Nongovernmental Organizations

Most animal and agriculture emergency response resources and assets are owned or controlled by the private sector and NGOs.

Animal emergency management is and has always been a whole community effort—a blending of emergency management and animal handling expertise. At the local level, veterinarians, farmers, animal control agencies and humane organizations, breeders, wildlife rehabilitators, and others make up the animal infrastructure within a community. These entities should be

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encouraged to collaborate with government to meet emergency animal needs in their communities. Many states have integrated animal response capabilities, such as county and/or state animal response teams, veterinary medical reserve corps, or similarly named entities. Animal and agricultural health responses are conducted in collaboration and cooperation with state authorities and private industries to ensure continued human nutrition; animal, plant, and environmental health; and support of the American economy and trade. Businesses where animals are integral to operations (such as production agriculture, zoos/exhibitors, research facilities, breeders, animal welfare agencies/sanctuaries, and veterinary hospitals) should be encouraged to have contingency plans in place for animals housed in the facility, in the event of a disaster or emergency. Nonprofit networks can provide information on contingency planning for veterinary facilities, zoos, and other congregate animal facilities.

Cultural heritage institutions (such as museums, libraries, archives, records repositories, and historical societies) should be encouraged to develop emergency plans, including having contingency plans in place for their collections in the event of a disaster or emergency.

Transportation and distribution of food supplies within the affected area are arranged by local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, Federal, and voluntary organizations. Inspection of meat, poultry, and processed egg products; production and import facilities; and distributors during a response may be conducted with local, state, tribal, territorial, tribal, and insular area authorities and the regulated industry, if needed, to ensure public health and support the American economy and trade.

Policies

This annex supports policies and procedures outlined in the National Response Framework, the Emergency Support Function (ESF) #8 – Public Health and Medical Services Annex; the ESF #10 – Oil and Hazardous Materials Response Annex; the ESF #11 – Agriculture and Natural Resources Annex; the Terrorism Incident Annex.

If an agency becomes aware of an overt threat involving biological, chemical, or radiological agents or indications that instances of disease may not be the result of natural causes, State Law Enforcement and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) will be notified. The FBI, in turn, immediately notifies the National Operations Center (NOC) and the National Counterterrorism Center.

Participating State agencies may take appropriate independent emergency actions within the limits of their own statutory authority to protect the public, mitigate immediate hazards, and collect information concerning the emergency. This may require deploying assets before they are requested via normal State Emergency Operations Plan protocols.

Local governments are primarily responsible for detecting and responding to food and agriculture incidents and implementing measures to minimize the health and economic consequences of such an incident or outbreak.

Planning Assumptions

The first evidence of dissemination of an agent may be the presentation of disease in humans, animals, or plants. This could manifest either in clinical case reports to domestic or international public health or agriculture authorities or in unusual patterns of symptoms or encounters within domestic or international human and animal health and crop production surveillance systems.

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Food and agriculture surveillance systems may detect the presence of a radiological, chemical, or biological agent and trigger directed environmental sampling and intensified human and animal surveillance to rule out or confirm a case. If a case is confirmed, then these systems may allow for mobilization of a public health, medical, and law enforcement response in advance of the appearance of the first human and/or animal cases, or quick response after the first human and/or animal cases are identified.

A food and agriculture incident may be distributed across multiple jurisdictions simultaneously. Response to this incident could require the simultaneous management of multiple “incident sites” from national and regional headquarters locations in coordination with multiple State and local jurisdictions.

An act of food tampering or agro-terrorism, particularly an act directed against large sectors of the industry within the United States, will have major consequences that can overwhelm the capabilities of many State, tribal, and local governments to respond and may seriously challenge existing State response capabilities.

A food or agriculture incident may include biological, chemical, or radiological contaminants, which may require concurrent implementation of other State plans and procedures.

Food and agriculture incidents may not be immediately recognized as such until the biological, chemical, or radiological agent is detected or the effects of exposure on the public, animals, or plants are reported to appropriate authorities.

No single entity possesses the authority, expertise, and resources to act unilaterally on the many complex issues that may arise in response to a food or agricultural incident.

Concept of Operations

General

The primary functions of the Food and Agriculture Incident Annex are to:

- Support effective and coordinated communication between State and local responders to a potential or actual incident impacting food and agriculture that requires a coordinated State response.
- Minimize public health and economic impacts of a food and agriculture-related incident.
- Provide transition from response to rapid recovery following a food and agriculture-related incident.
- The key elements for an effective response to a food or agriculture incident include the following:
 - Rapid identification, detection, and confirmation of the incident.
 - Implementation of an integrated response to a food attack/adulteration, highly contagious animal/zoonotic, or exotic plant disease or plant pest infestation.

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- Identification of the human and animal population, and/or plants at risk.
- Determination of how the agent involved was transmitted, including an assessment of the efficiency of transmission.
- Determination of the public health and economic implications.
- Control, containment, decontamination, and disposal.
- Protection of the population(s) and/or plants at risk through appropriate measures.
- Dissemination of information to advise the public of the incident.
- Communication with all relevant stakeholders.
- Assessment of environmental contamination and extent of cleanup, decontamination, and disposal of livestock carcasses, plants, or food products involved.
- Identification of the law enforcement implications/assessment of the threat.

Primary State functions include supporting local public health, food, and agriculture entities according to the policies and procedures detailed in the State Emergency Operations Plan.

Incident Detection and Identification

Determination of Incident

Local authorities may be among the first to recognize the initial indication of intentional or naturally occurring contamination of food, of highly infective plant or animal disease, or of an economically devastating plant pest infestation or animal disease. Recognition may come from a significantly increased number of people reporting ill to public health care providers, increased reporting of sick animals to veterinarians or animal health officials, or numerous plant anomalies reported by State officials or the public. Other sources may include routine laboratory surveillance, inspection reports, consumer complaint systems, and hotlines. Therefore, the most critical decision making support requires surveillance information, identification of the cause of the incident, a determination of whether the incident is intentional or naturally occurring, and the identification of the human or animal population and/or plants at risk.

Laboratory Testing

Identification and confirmation of contaminated food or the environment, highly infective animals and plants, or an economically devastating plant pest infestation may occur through routine surveillance and laboratory testing.

Mississippi Chemical Laboratory tests for such substances as pesticides and residues. There is a seed lab which audits package contents against package labels. There is a petroleum products lab which tests samples of petroleum products for content and quality. There is a metrology lab which is the state standard for weights and measures.

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The Mississippi Veterinary Research and Diagnostic Laboratory assists the livestock and poultry industries, private veterinarians, and animal owners of Mississippi by diagnosing and monitoring animal diseases that can:

- affect humans;
- reduce the productivity or marketability of animals;
- threaten animal populations;
- affect the safety or quality of animal products.

The laboratory also participates in federal cooperative disease programs and works with other state agencies to provide veterinary diagnostic testing, disease surveillance, animal health monitoring, drug testing, collaborative research, and animal health education.

The MSVRDL is accredited by the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians. The AAVLD establishes acceptable criteria for quality assurance, safety, personnel qualifications, and laboratory facilities.

Notification

A potential or actual incident requiring a coordinated State response involving contaminated food, infected animals or plants, or economically devastating plant pest infestation shall be brought to the immediate attention of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). MEMA will coordinate with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and other federal agencies as needed, and will coordinate with local/regional Emergency Operation Centers (EOCs) to facilitate response activities.

Actions

The following steps are required to contain and control a food or agricultural incident:

- Ensure the safety and security of the food and agricultural infrastructure in the affected area, as needed.
- Inspect food facilities that can continue to operate in the affected area, as needed.
- Conduct laboratory tests to identify contaminated food, animals, or plants.
- Conduct product trace back and trace forward investigations of identified food, animals, or plants.
- Detain, seize, recall, or condemn affected food, animals, or plants.
- State authorities will request approval from the EPA for the use of pesticides to decontaminate plants, animal facilities, and food facilities from biological contaminants.

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Responsibilities

This section summarizes responsibilities in response to a potential or actual incident requiring a coordinated State response that involves contaminated food or infected animals or plants. The procedures in this annex are built on the core coordinating structures of the National Response Framework. Roles and responsibilities of cooperating agencies are provided in Table 1 on the following page.

ESF #11 Review and Maintenance

As a minimum, the state agency contact will coordinate and conduct an annual review of this annex with all support agencies. Additional reviews may be conducted if experience with an incident or regulatory changes indicate a need. Recommendations for change will be submitted to MEMA for approval, publication, and distribution.

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Table 1. Agency Roles and Responsibilities Matrix

Function	MBAH	MDAC	MSDH	MEMA	MSVRDL	MDEQ	MCL	MNG	MDPS	MSU				FEMA	USDA	CDC	FDA
Coordination	◆	◆	◆	◆										◆	◆	◆	◆
Security		◆						◆	◆								
Rapid ID of Agent			◆		◆		◆	◆							◆	◆	◆
Laboratory Confirmation	◆	◆	◆		◆		◆	◆							◆	◆	
Outbreak Transmission Information	◆	◆	◆		◆					◆				◆	◆	◆	◆
Control and Contain Outbreak	◆	◆	◆		◆			◆	◆	◆					◆	◆	◆
Decontamination and Disposal	◆	◆	◆		◆	◆		◆		◆					◆	◆	◆
Food Safety and Food Defense	◆	◆	◆		◆										◆	◆	◆
Public Health			◆		◆	◆		◆		◆				◆	◆	◆	◆
Public Information	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆				◆				◆	◆	◆	◆
Law Enforcement Issues		◆						◆	◆						◆		
Economic/Market Issues	◆	◆								◆					◆		
Support Services (Feeding, Facilities, Counseling, Transport)					◆			◆						◆	◆	◆	