

## I) Continuity of Operations Planning for a Production Agriculture Facility

Why agriculture producers need to prepare for all hazards:

- Protecting your investment is YOUR responsibility, not someone else's
- Some simple checklists will help you identify hazards and vulnerabilities
- Who do you need to identify these items?
- You need to understand how any kind of disaster can affect you
- Examples include snow-blocked passes, Mt. St. Helens, power interruptions, inability to get supplies or market your products, water shortages, disease outbreaks (potato nematode, fireblight in apples, mad-cow disease in Mabton in December 2003)
- Why do you need to plan? Planning is simply insurance for your operation. How will you continue in a disaster, or can you?
- It's important to share this information with others you trust and who share your responsibilities for maintaining your income stream.
- Do not be complacent and believe YOU will not suffer a disaster (I've been through....., that without planning would have ruined my livelihood).

## II) Determine Your Level of Preparedness

On a scale of 0 through 5, rate each of the categories below to identify vulnerabilities and potential threat areas for your operation and facility. 0 is the lowest score (no preparedness) and 5 is the highest. The scoring will point of areas of strength/weakness to help safeguard your operation.

### *All operations and facilities*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Sign-in, sign-out for all coming onto/into your premises
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gated and secure access
- \_\_\_\_\_ Restricted access/locks to key operational areas and supplies
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24/7 surveillance (personnel or mechanical)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Employee background checks (if you think this is important)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Quality assurance of feed/supplies/goods being delivered to you
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have you notified law enforcement/fire of all hazardous chemical storage areas?
- \_\_\_\_\_ For your hazards/vulnerability assessment, did you use a team approach with others from outside your operation (such as Extension, insurance agent, risk manager, law enforcement)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have you identified health and injury risks?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you assess risks and vulnerabilities at least annually?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are your records secure (backup and off-site copies)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have a Continuity of Operations Plan?
- \_\_\_\_\_ If you have a plan, have you shared that plan with others "who need to know?"
- \_\_\_\_\_ If you have a plan, do you exercise that plan at least annually?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you provide preparedness training for employees?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have an evacuation plan?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have you identified natural hazards? (Flood, earthquake, tornado, lightning, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have mitigation measures in place for identified hazards and vulnerabilities?

- III. List primary and alternate sources of supplies or services. Examples may include feed, fuel, electricity, hired labor, equipment, communications, etc. In the chart, match the source with the supply or service you must have.

Supply or Service	Primary	Alternate

- IV. Can you maintain your operation from or with an alternate site? As an example, could you ship milk to another coop, could you move livestock elsewhere, or what happens if your farm is quarantined or flooded?

Primary site	Alternate site

- V. List vital records you must keep, where the records usually are located, and other locations where you keep backup copies (either hard copy or electronic). If you need a computer, can you take yours or is there another you can use? Vital records may include employee information, payroll information, herd or production records, genetic information, supplier information, accounts payable and receivable, tax information, etc.

Primary site records/location	Alternate site

- VI. List **key** hazards and vulnerabilities that could stop or slow down your operation. Examples may include loss of electricity, fire, flood, disease, etc. In the chart below, also list steps you have taken to reduce those hazards and vulnerabilities (mitigation steps). Ways to reduce some hazards may be buying insurance, having a backup generator, having an alternate source of water, etc. You also can use the **Hazards Assessment checklist** (see page 4) to help with this step.

Hazards/vulnerabilities	Mitigation steps

**V) Vulnerability Analysis Scoring Chart**

Rate each criteria on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being low and 5 being high.

Type of Emergency	Probability	Human Impact	Property Impact	Business Impact	Internal Resources	External Resources	Total
Winter storm	2.5	3	1	2.5	1	4.5	14.5
Flooding	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Pandemic or disease	2	5	1	4	1	1	13
Bomb/explosion							
Facility takeover or terrorism							
Power/utility outage							
Radiological incident							
Tornado							
Thunderstorm w/hail, lightning							
Wind							
Fire-internal							
Fire-wildland							
Earthquake							
HazMat							
Transportation incident, including aircraft							
Extreme heat							
Civil unrest							
Landslide							

## VII) BEST PRACTICES FOR EFFECTIVE RISK COMMUNICATION

- **Risk and crisis communication is an ongoing process**
  - ◆ *Incorporate risk communication into the policy development process*
  - ◆ *Continuously evaluate and update crisis communication plans*
- **Conduct pre-event planning and preparedness activities**
  - ◆ *Address existing, emerging and anticipated issues*
  - ◆ *Determine how to reduce risk, plan an initial response, update regularly*
  - ◆ *Conduct practice exercises and drills*
- **Foster partnerships with public**
  - ◆ *Identify your "publics"*
  - ◆ *Build positive relationships with key publics before a crisis occurs*
  - ◆ *Publics could include consumer groups, racial and ethnic communities, stakeholders, etc.*
- **Collaborate and coordinate with credible sources**
  - ◆ *Establish strategic relationships and networks before a crisis*
  - ◆ *Identify subject area experts*
- **Meet the needs of media and remain accessible**
  - ◆ *Recognize that the media is the primary channel to the public*
  - ◆ *Participate in media training*
  - ◆ *Remember that the media is not the enemy...*
- **Listen to public's concerns and understand audience**
  - ◆ *Respond to the public's beliefs whether or not they are accurate*
  - ◆ *Monitor a full range of communication formats: hotlines, letters to the editor, radio talk shows, public forums, blogs, etc.*
- **Communicate with compassion, concern and empathy**
  - ◆ *Enhances credibility and perceived legitimacy*
  - ◆ *These characteristics do not preclude professionalism*
- **Demonstrate honesty, candor and openness**
  - ◆ *Without openness, the public will seek information from less accurate sources*
  - ◆ *Recognize that situation involves risk sharing*
- **Accept uncertainty and ambiguity**
  - ◆ *Acknowledge inherent uncertainty of crisis and risk*
  - ◆ *Assure that accurate and reliable information will be shared as soon as it is available*
- **Give people meaningful actions to do (self-efficacy)**
  - ◆ *Helps restore sense of control over an uncertain and threatening situation*
  - ◆ *Present as **must do... should do... could do...***

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