Livestock 360°
Southeastern New York Cooperative Extension Livestock News

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In this Issue

Disaster Preparedness on the Livestock Farm

Elizabeth Higgins, Ag Program Leader, CCE Ulster County

When you think disaster on the farm, what comes to mind? We often think of disasters in epic scales, like a major flood or a devastating tornado. But what about a barn fire? Or a disease that wipes out your flock? Or a drought that reduces your ability to feed your animals from your own pasture or hay? Or a storm that knocks power out to your property for several days? Are you prepared for these likely scenarios? Recent wildfires in Ulster, Sullivan and Greene Counties highlighted the vulnerability of farms with livestock to very localized problems. The avian flu outbreak in the Midwest shows us the risks that farmers face from diseases and pests. Disaster preparation, in a nutshell, is a process of risk assessment and planning. This issue of Livestock 360 covers different types of disasters that a livestock farmer is likely to encounter to help you to become better prepared.

The first risk management strategy you should use, if you are a commercial farm is to register your farm with USDA-FSA. The US Department of Agriculture's farm programs are administered on the local level through county-based Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. The FSA provides and administers farm loans, crop insurance, and disaster assistance compensation. Some of these programs are featured on page 10. You must register your farm with the USDA-FSA to be eligible for any of these programs. It also allows you to access conservation cost-share funding through USDA-NRCS. By registering your farm, when programs become available that could be useful to you, you will already be in the FSA system and ready to apply. If you join their mailing list, you can also be one of the first to know when a new program is announced. Make an appointment with your local FSA office.

Another resource for agricultural disaster education and outreach is EDEN the Extension Disaster Education Network. EDEN is a network of land grant university faculty and staff across the country who are working to provide education, training and resources through Cooperative Extension on disaster preparedness, with an

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Cornell University Cooperative Extension
Ulster, Orange, Sullivan and Dutchess Counties

Agricultural Assessment and Agricultural Districts What are the Differences?

Jennifer Fimbel, Livestock Educator, CCE Dutchess County

We often get phone calls from landowners with questions about Ag Assessment and Ag Districts. These two programs are designed to help keep farmland in viable, commercial agricultural production, but they work very differently. One program provides financial incentives for agricultural use, through tax relief. The other provides protections from regulations and nuisance lawsuits for landowners who are engaged in activities that are associated with agricultural production.

The Agricultural Assessment Program, established under the Agriculture & Markets Law § 305, allows active farmland to receive a reduced assessment for property tax purposes – resulting in a partial exemption from real property taxes. Farmland qualifying for this reduction in assessed value does not have to be enrolled in an Agricultural District. Any owner of at least seven acres of land which produces a minimum of $10,000 annually, or any owner of less than seven acres of land which produces a minimum of $50,000 annually, on average in the preceding two years, from the sale of crops, agritourism events, beekeeping, livestock, or livestock products, riding academy or from a commercial equine operation, is eligible to receive an agricultural assessment. The program only applies to the land, not buildings or homesteads.

The Agricultural Assessment Program establishes a ceiling value for taxable assessments on eligible farmland. The local assessor is provided with State Certified ceiling values every year. Any assessed value which exceeds the agricultural assessment is exempt from Real Property taxation. Landowners must file an application annually, usually by March 1, with the local assessor to be considered for the Agricultural Assessment Program. Failure to file the application on time will result in denial of the exemption.

An agricultural district is a geographic area which

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Programs at a Glance

AGRICULTURAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

- **Provides property tax reduction on farmland**
- **Property does not have to be in an agricultural district to qualify**
- **Owner must file application annually with local assessor; usually no later than March 1**
- **Minimum 7 acres in active farm production and proof of minimum $10,000 gross annual income from farming**
- **If less than 7 acres, $50,000 gross income minimum**
- **Property annually committed to agricultural use for minimum of 8 years if not In an agricultural district; 5 years if In an agricultural district**
- **Property subject to payback of saved property tax dollars if land is converted to non-agricultural use within committed period and possible penalty if there is a failure to notify the assessor of the conversion within 90 days.**
- **Land in agricultural production and rented to farmer may qualify**
- **Eligibility determined by local assessor based upon State law specifications**
- **Assessed agricultural value based upon State certified land classifications**

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT PROGRAM

- **Provides certain protections for agricultural land**
- **Land may or may not qualify for Agricultural Assessment Program**
- **Districts are reviewed every eight years**
- **Owner must apply for Ag District designation during established review period**
- **Annual window for inclusion available for certain types of agricultural land**
- **All applications for annual inclusion must be filed between during the annual window in the County. Contact the County Soil and Water Conservation office or Cornell Cooperative Extension for information on application process.**

Applications reviewed by the County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board and subject to approval of County Legislature and State Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets

CARTs help to avoid scenarios like the photo above.

Local Resources for Emergency Response for Animals During Disasters

County Animal Response Teams (CART) are public and private partnerships for the unified, interagency preparation and response to animal emergencies; they integrate governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, veterinarians, and private volunteers for a cohesive and effective approach in response to animal related disasters, and are based on the principles of the Incident Command System. They increase the capability to respond to animal emergencies on the local, county, state and federal level, have a mission to provide prevention, response and recovery for animal emergencies, and require their members to receive specific training, and sign and abide by a code of conduct. Both Ulster and Dutchess Counties have active CART programs and seek volunteers who are willing to be trained to assist with animals in disasters.

Ulster County: http://www.ulstercorps.org/collaborations/ucart-ulster-community-animal-response-team/ or contact Erin Cambell-Craven at CCE Ulster

Dutchess County: Contact Jennifer Fimbel at CCE Dutchess.

(Ag Assessment and Ag District— continued from page 2)

consists of predominantly viable agricultural land. Districts may include land that is actively farmed, idle, forested, as well as land for residential and commercial uses. The Agricultural District Program, was established under Agriculture & Markets Law § 303. It provides agricultural landowners a number of benefits and protections not associated with property tax relief, which encourage farmers to continue farming.

The Agricultural District Law protects farm operations within an agricultural district from the enactment and administration of unreasonably restrictive local regulations unless it can be shown that public health or safety is threatened. Under Agriculture and Markets Law § 308, known as the 'Right to Farm' law, if a question or dispute arises regarding farm practices that may threaten public health or safety, an opinion can be requested of the Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets as to whether or not sound agricultural practices are being followed. Enrollment in an Agricultural District does not automatically qualify the property for the Agricultural Assessment Program.

For more information on NYS Ag Assessment, see the New York State Department of Revenue site: http://www.tax.ny.gov/research/property/assess/valuation/agindex.htm

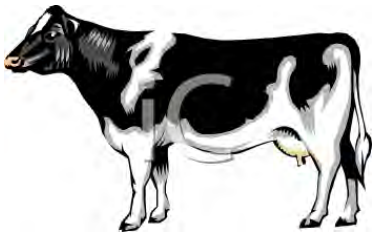
For more information on NYS Ag District Program, see the New York State Department of Ag and Markets site: http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/ap/agservices/agdistricts.html

(Disaster Preparedness—continued from page 1)

emphasis on agriculture. The main website is http://eden.lsu.edu/Pages/default.aspx.

We hope that you are able to put some of these resources and plans in place to help keep you and your animals safe and minimize losses to your farming business.

Getting Ready for Hurricane Season on the Farm



Adapted from LSU Ag Center's "Disaster Readiness for Dairy Farms"

It is hard to believe, after the long winter we had this year, but we are now approaching Hurricane Season! If you were affected by Sandy or Irene/Lee you know that it can be **really** hard to get fuel, generators and emergency building supplies during and right after a storm. The checklist below is intended to help livestock producers be prepared for this season's storms. Some items can be done right away, others (like securing loose equipment) are reminders for when a storm is forecasted. Given the strong winds that can occur suddenly during thunderstorms—being prepared for wind in general is a good practice.

Farm Environment

- Do preventative trimming of trees around barns, driveway and fences.
- Try to maintain as much freeboard in manure lagoon as possible to avoid potential overflow.
- Have on hand 3 to 4 spools of barbed wire plus 50 to 60 metal 'T' post to mend fence or to build a temporary fence.
- Calf hutches that are not in use should be stacked together if possible or anchored.
- Nail down all lose pieces of tin on barns.
- Attach extra guide wires to augers on grain bins.
- Have some extra tarps or shade cloth available to cover equipment if roof is blown off or to provide temporary shade.
- Remove shade cloth from portable shade structures to prevent damage.

Equipment

- Fill up all tractors, vehicles, generators and storage containers with fuel. Fuel can be hard to get during and right after a major storm.
- Service generator(s) and make sure they are operational.
- Run the generator under a load for a couple of hours at least every two months. Make sure that the generator won't fail you when you need it!
- Set up generator in place before storm.
- If using a PTO-type generator, make sure the tractor being used has no fuel or oil leaks to prevent fire hazard.

Feed and Water

- Have about a two-week supply of all feedstuffs needed.
- Have an emergency supply of water.
- Put extra tires on top of silo to help hold down plastic.
- Move round bales from low-lying areas to an area that is readily accessible. Do not store your bales next to a stream. Wrapped roundbales will not protect your farm from rising rivers and may jam up bridges and culverts downstream causing problems to your community and your neighbors.

Animals

- Evaluate herd health program.
- Identify (tag) animals. If animals need to be evacuated and are co-mingled with those from other farms, make sure you have a reliable way to identify your animals.
- Move all animals to high ground if possible.
- Remove calves from calf hutches made out of plastic or fiberglass if possible. If not, anchor the hutches down.
- Have a supply of intra-mammary mastitis treatment, broad spectrum antibiotics, electrolytes and calcium solutions, antiseptics, bandages, needles and syringes.

(Hurricane—continued on page 5)

Biosecurity in the Sheep and Goat Herd[1]

Elizabeth Higgins, Ag Program Leader, CCE Ulster County

One major area of risk for livestock producers is having animals get sick. Sick animals add to costs of production, for medications, reduce incomes as animals fail thrive and, in the worst case, die. Biosecurity is the practice of keeping the spread of infectious agents from infected to susceptible animals minimized. A biosecurity plan must take into account all modes of transmission, including direct animal contact within a herd, contact with wild animals or other domesticated species, airborne transmission, contaminated feed or water, and visitors or vehicles that come onto the farm.

The most basic method of disease control in individual herds/flocks is to avoid introduction of disease agents. If possible and practical, producers should keep a closed herd/flock. Most diseases of a contagious nature are introduced into operations when new animals are added.

Disease agents can be introduced when breeding animals are added to an operation; when animals co-mingle at a fair, show or sale; or when animals contact wildlife. If a closed herd/flock is not feasible, then use an animal quarantine program. A useful isolation program consists of a facility that prevents co-mingling of animals for at least 30 days, including separate water supplies.

The University of Maine and University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Systems have jointly developed a biosecurity plan template for sheep and goat producers. It is available on-line at http://www.sheepandgoat.com/biosecurity/. It covers the key areas of concern, including Breeding Stock, Quarantine, Disease Management, General Management, and Zoonosis (transmission of diseases from animals to humans). By completing this plan, sheep and goat producers have the opportunity to identify areas of concern or risk for their operation and come up with strategies to minimize that risk.

(Hurricane—continued from page 4)

Miscellaneous

- Have some cash on hand (often credit cards will not work).
- If you are a dairy farmer, try to work with milk hauler and marketing coop to have the least amount of milk in bulk tank possible prior to potential hurricane.
- Partner with other farms in remote areas for help—you and your neighbors may be cut off from outside assistance for a few days.

Having the supplies you need to keep you, your family and your animals safe during and immediately after a storm can help to reduce your losses and have you back in business quickly.

[1]Adapted from Purdue University Extension "Common Diseases and Health Problems in Sheep and Goats" https://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/as/as-595-commondiseases.pdf

Food and Water Needs for Livestock During an Emergency[1]

Elizabeth Higgins, Ag Program Leader, CCE Ulster County

In the event of an emergency, every practical effort should be made to leave animals with sufficient food and water for their survival. The amount necessary for survival is considerably less than for other purposes. If the animals survive, then the decision can be made after the disaster whether it is worth the time and expense to bring them back to their previous condition.

Sources of feed and water should be identified before a disaster. In general, it is recommended to prepare the farm to be self-sufficient for 48 hours of food and water. This means having a store of feed on hand and a means to get drinking water to animals. Usually within that time the initial effects of the disaster will be over and the farm will be moving into the recovery phase. A source of water is one of the most important considerations. Animals will ALWAYS need access to drinking water. Animals can go extended periods of time without food, but can only last a couple of days at the most without water. In the event of an emergency on your farm, how will you get water to your animals?

The chart below outlines the recommended feed and water needs of livestock for survival, per day, during a disaster.

Animal	Water in gallons per day (summer-winter)	Feed/Day
Cow	9 g/d—7 g/d	20 lbs hay
Cows with calf	9 g/d—7 g/d	12-18 lbs legume
Sow with litter	3 g/d—7 g/d	8 lbs grain
Ewe with lamb	4 g/d	5 lbs hay
Chickens (per 100 birds)	5 g/d	17 lbs layers, 10 lbs broilers
Turkeys (per 100 birds)	12 g/d	40 lbs
Horses (per 1000 lbs)	5 g/d	20 lbs hay
Dogs and Cats	1 quart per day per animal	Dry food, free choice—enough for 2-3 days

[1]Cornell EDEN *Preparing the Farm and Farm Animals for Disasters* http://emergencypreparedness.cce.cornell.edu/family/Documents/PDFs/Farmanimalprepare.pdf

IPM Twilight meeting for Forage Crops

June 9 - Pests of Alfalfa
5:30 - 7:30 PM
Location: Coon Brothers Dairy Farm
407 Separate Road, Amenia, NY. We will meet at the main barn.

Several important disease, insect, and weed problems can affect profitability of alfalfa production in New York. The most notable pests are alfalfa weevil, potato leafhopper, alfalfa snout beetle, Verticillium wilt, Phytophthora root rot, anthracnose, crown rot, and weeds. Some additional pests may occasionally cause economic losses. Integrated pest management (IPM) methods can be used to help minimize the impact of these pests.

Crop monitoring for pest problems is recommended from early May through early September. Don't know what you are looking for or when to use control measures? Please join us for this free field meeting (please dress for the weather and wear walking shoes).

Our presenter is Ken Wise, Eastern NYS Extension IPM Specialist- Livestock and Field Crops CCA: Certified Crop Advisor, Cornell University

Recertification Credits available
Categories: 1a, 10, 21

Please RSVP by contacting Nancy Halas at: nh26@cornell.edu or 845-677-8223, ext 115 to reserve your spot.

This program is funded through a grant from the Northeast IPM Center.

Weed Control in Horse Pastures[1]

Rachel Moody, Livestock Educator, CCE Orange County

Common Milkweed (Photo: US Fish and Wildlife Service)

Controlling weeds is probably one of the most important decisions to think about when managing horse pastures. Weeds are generally less palatable, less nutritious, and are less dependable as a forage supply to horses than the desirable pasture species they replace. Some pasture weeds are also poisonous to horses. Milkweed is a common example.

Annual, biennial and perennial weeds have different strategies for control. Annual weeds germinate from seed, grow, mature, and die in less than one year. Annual weeds tend to put out a lot of seeds! Chemical control of annual weeds works best when applied in the spring to actively growing, young weeds before they get to seed stage. Mechanical control, such as mowing, is also very effective against annual weeds. Biennial weeds require two years to complete their life cycles. They form a rosette (group of leaves at ground level) and store food in their roots the first year and flower the second year. Control measures, chemical or mechanical, are most effective when applied during the first year's growth before they can build up nutrients in their root. If treatment is delayed until the second year, early season application of a herbicide before bloom is important for seed control. Perennial weeds live more than two years, and grow back from the same roots year after year. Perennials move nutrients into their roots during fall to prepare for winter. Because of this, chemical control of perennials works best when applied in the fall to actively growing and well-developed foliage. As the nutrients move into the roots, the chemical will too. Application of herbicides in spring, or frequent moving during the summer is also effective in controlling growth until fall, weakening the plant. However, mowing alone may take several growing seasons to effectively control the perennial weeds.

When using herbicides, always read and follow labels carefully. Always follow grazing recommendations after herbicide application. Herbicides may make toxic weeds more palatable to horses. Horses should be excluded from the sprayed area for seven to ten days after treatment if poisonous plants are present. Also, most herbicides control either grasses or broadleaves (i.e. alfalfa and clover). If you have a mixed pasture (grasses with legumes like alfalfa and clovers), there are no herbicide options that will control unwanted weeds and leave BOTH legumes and grasses. Broadleaf weeds tend to be the primary problem in grass pastures. Because the herbicides recommended for broadleaf weed control in a grass pasture will kill legumes, they should not be used as broadcast treatments if legumes are present, but rather should be used as a spot treatment for problem areas.

Herbicides alone will not result in a weed-free pasture. High yielding, well-managed pastures will choke out weeds. Proper grazing management is a must. Overgrazing easily damages pastures. Overgrazing pastures tends to pull out roots of desirable plant species, giving weeds space to take hold.

Management Practices to Minimize Weeds in Pastures:

- Protect new seedlings from grazing until they are well established and graze moderately thereafter.
- Allow established pastures a recovery period after grazing. This will reduce weeds and increase pasture yield and nutrition value.
- If possible, mow after each grazing period to control many pasture weeds and encourage new pasture growth. However, do not mow the pasture closer than four inches above the soil.
- During excessive dry or wet conditions, remove horses from pastures.
- In pastures with excessive weeds, where pasture forages are thin, reseeding may be the best practice.

Adapted from University of Minnesota Extension, *Weed Control in Horse Pastures* (2009) http://www.extension.org/pages/15647/weed-control-in-horse-pastures#.VWTJ1M9Viko

Coccidiosis in Poultry[1]

Michelle Lipari, Livestock Educator, CCE Sullivan County

Coccidiosis is one of the oldest and most widely known parasitic diseases of poultry. Coccidiosis is caused by protozoans (a type of microscopic one-cellular animals) known as *Eimeria* that invade the cells in a chicken's or a turkey's intestine. The bird's ability to absorb nutrients suffers, which results in loss of weight or death. Coccidia can also damage the immune system and leave poultry more vulnerable to pathogens like Salmonella.

Medicine in starter food for chicks is used to control coccidiosis. (Photo: USDA-ARS)

Each *Eimeria* parasite is able to infect only one host (for example, chicken or turkey, but not both), and they each attack different parts of the intestine in their specific host. These protozoan parasites are particularly difficult to combat because several different species of *Eimeria* exist in the field. Poultry may develop immunity to one type, but become infected with a different species because the immunity that develops after infection is also specific to only one species.

Coccidiosis organisms develop little eggs (oocysts) in the intestine that are passed in the droppings and can then infect other poultry in the same pen. If birds are held on wire floor, they cannot get in contact with droppings and will generally remain free of coccidiosis. Wet litter and warm temperature induce a heavy coccidiosis infection in the litter. That's why many coccidiosis outbreaks occur in the springtime (May, June).

The bird on the right is infected with *Eimeria tenella*, which results in a smaller comb, diarrhea, and weight loss (Photo: USDA-ARS)

Many avian diseases, including coccidiosis, are currently controlled by drug therapy. Producers add a number of anticoccidial drugs (coccidiostats) to commercial feed to combat the problem. Preventively, drugs are given in the chicks starter and grower feed, from day-old until 12-15 weeks of age. However, they are increasingly ineffective as drug-resistant coccidia strains rapidly develop.

All of the observed effects of coccidiosis are related to disruption of the epithelial cells lining the intestine by the release of parasite stages. While infection with high doses of some *Eimeria* species (*E. tenella*, *E. necatrix*) may cause death to chickens, usually the effects are insidious and are not apparent to the poultry farmer until the chickens are sent to market. The main effects that cause economic losses are a decreased weight gain due in part to the malabsorption of nutrients through the gut wall. This effect causes an increased feed conversion ratio, which is the amount of feed converted into body weight, because feed that is consumed is used inefficiently. Chickens that are infected with high levels of coccidia display symptoms such as droopiness and emaciation and may never achieve weight gain equal to their uninfected counterparts.

If chickens appear sick and ruffled from coccidiosis, get a diagnosis at a diagnostic laboratory. It can be made quickly and medication started immediately. Contact your county extension office for information about Cornell diagnostic services.

[1] Sources: University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Poultry Diseases http://web.uconn.edu/poultry/poultrypages/diseasefactsheet.html#coccidiosis; USDA-ARS *Healthy Animals Newsletter* Issue 10, 2002.

Searching for Land in all the RIGHT Places

Sunday, June 21, 2015, 8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Looking for farmland to rent or buy?

Join Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) educators, local growers, and real estate professionals to learn about what a potential renter or buyer of agricultural land should know when it comes to evaluating soils, water, zoning, and infrastructure for what you want to raise.

The workshop will begin at SUNY New Paltz with a brief introduction. We will then spend the rest of the day visiting farm land and local farms which produce a variety of commodities including hops, livestock, fruits and vegetables. The workshop is $45/person or $35/person if the farm is enrolled in the CCE Ulster Agriculture Program. Space is limited to 25 participants, so register early! Last day to register is June 17th. See more at: http://ulster.cce.cornell.edu/events/2015/06/21/searching-for-land-in-all-the-right-places#sthash.5qjefX5r.dpuf

HUDSON VALLEY FARMLINK NETWORK

A Project of American Farmland Trust

Introduction to Poultry Farming

June 25, 2015 from 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM in Liberty, NY "Introduction to Poultry Farming" will be presented by Michelle Lipari, CCE Sullivan agriculture and 4-H community educator. Topics to be discussed include breed selection, egg hatching, raising chicks and adult birds, feed and nutrition, equipment, healthcare, and the regulations for selling eggs and meat.

Cost to attend is $15.00 per person, per class, or $10.00 per person for CCESC enrollees. Anyone can enroll in the CCE Sullivan Association for an annual donation of $25.00 per household. Enrollees must identify membership status at time of payment in order to receive discounts.

Space is limited and pre-registration with non-refundable payment is required in advance. Seats are only guaranteed with payment. Registration and more information can be obtained by calling CCESC at 845-292-6180 or emailing SueAnn Boyd at srb46@cornell.edu. Donations for CCE Sullivan programs are appreciated. - See more at: http://sullivancce.org/events/2015/04/23/beginning-farmer-workshop-series#sthash.Um3yGXau.dpuf

USDA Value-Added Producer Grants is now Accepting Applications

The VAPG program helps agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of bio-based, value-added products. Generating new products, creating and expanding marketing opportunities, and increasing producer income are the goals of this program. You may receive priority if you are a beginning farmer or rancher, a socially-disadvantaged farmer or rancher, a small or medium-sized farm or ranch structured as a family farm, a farmer or rancher cooperative, or are proposing a mid-tier value chain. Grants are awarded through a national competition. http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants Deadline for applying is July 7 (by mail) or July 2 electronically.

Livestock Insurance and USDA Disaster Programs

Farms can be insured against catastrophic events. Insurance policies are available for replacement of materials damaged, repair work for recovery, boarding of occupants and animals if evacuated, lost production, and relocation. These should be investigated and purchased before the disaster threatens. For a farmer to claim compensation for lost production, which in many cases is the largest economic cost during a disaster, the farmer must have substantial records that document the level of production his/her herd has achieved in previous years. One of the best ways is using recognized herd monitoring programs, such as Dairy Herd Improvement or other programs that are available for various species. To verify the validity of these records a herd health program should be in place, which is based on a valid veterinarian-client-animal relationship. A copy of all production records should be kept in a secure place that the details are not lost during the disaster.

USDA Livestock Disaster Programs

Livestock Forage Program (LFP): LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses due to drought or fire on land that is native or improved pastureland with permanent vegetative cover or that is planted specifically for grazing. Read detailed about the LFP program.

Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP): LIP provides benefits to livestock producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather or by attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government. Learn more about the Livestock Indemnity Program.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP):ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish for losses due to disease (including cattle tick fever), adverse weather, or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by LFP and LIP. Learn more about Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybeas, and Farm-Raised Fish.

In order for you to be eligible for a USDA disaster program, you generally need to be in an area that has been declared a disaster by USDA. A list of all disaster declarations is available here: http://catalog.data.gov/dataset/disaster-declarations-usda. The USDA Emergency Response website also includes other disaster aid for farms.

USDA-RMA also Offers Revenue Insurance Products for Livestock Producers

Rapidly changing livestock prices feed costs can put a livestock operation at risk. Two types of livestock insurance are sold through USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA). Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) protects producers against a drop in prices. Livestock Gross Margin (LGM) insurance protects producers from losses of gross margin, from falling livestock prices, rising feed costs or both. Neither of these policies protects producers against a disease outbreak or death losses. Both of these types of insurance can be purchased to cover finished beef cattle, feeder cattle, market hogs, market lambs or dairy. Both LRP and LGM settlements are based on national market prices, not necessarily the price you receive. Your own price may be above or below what the national market was. By the same token, your own cost of production is not the figure used to determine gross margin; that is calculated with national grain prices from the Chicago Board of Trade.

To learn more:
RMA Livestock Insurance Programs http://www.rma.usda.gov/livestock/
More information about RMA Insurance Programs: http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=CROP_LIVESTOCK_INSUR

Since the last issue of Livestock 360, Avian influenza has become a much bigger concern for the poultry industry in the United States. Since the first documented case in December 2014, over 40 million domestic birds have been documented to have the illness. As we reported in our Livestock Weekly Update, over 30 percent of egg producers in Iowa have lost their flocks due to this disease. Laying hens have been impacted because of the high density of commercial egg production. Turkeys, are also particularly susceptible to the flu. Both egg and turkey markets are expected to be significantly impacted by this outbreak.

USDA's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) posts confirmed cases of Avian Influenza H5N2The site is updated at 4 PM Eastern Monday through Friday. Lab tests that come in after 4 PM each day are included in the next update. http://1.usa.gov/1Q8P0HK. To date over 40 million domestic birds have been affected. In addition cases of Avian Influenza in wild bird populations that have been documented by USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories can be found here http://1.usa.gov/15xZXSX. Wild species with documented avian flu include ducks and geese as well as raptors like hawks, falcons and owls. Currently no cases have been identified in New York State.

Avian Influenza Q&A

Q. How does the avian influenza virus spread in birds?

A. Avian influenza is primarily spread by direct contact between healthy birds and infected birds, and through indirect contact with contaminated equipment and materials. The virus is excreted through the feces of infected birds and through secretions from the nose, mouth and eyes. Contact with infected fecal material is the most common of bird–to–bird transmission. Wild ducks often introduce low pathogenic avian influenza into domestic flocks raised on range or in open flight pens through fecal contamination. Within a poultry house, transfer of the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus between birds also can occur via airborne secretions. The spread of avian influenza between poultry premises almost always follows the movement of contaminated people and equipment. Avian influenza also can be found on the outer surfaces of egg shells. Transfer of eggs is a potential means of transmission. Airborne transmission of virus from farm to farm is highly unlikely under usual circumstances.

Q. What are the signs of illness of birds infected with avian influenza?

A. Low pathogenic avian influenza signs are typically mild. Infected birds typically show signs of decreased food consumption, respiratory signs (coughing and sneezing) and decreased egg production. Birds that are infected with highly pathogenic avian influenza are more severely ill and could exhibit one or more of the following clinical signs: sudden death; lack of energy and appetite; decreased egg production; soft–shelled or misshapen eggs; swelling; purple discoloration; nasal discharge; coughing, sneezing; lack of coordination and diarrhea.

Q. What kind of test is used to diagnose avian influenza in birds?

A. Samples are usually taken by swabbing the mucus that coats the throat of live birds, which does not harm the birds. With wild birds, a fecal sample can be taken instead. These samples go into sealed tubes and are taken to USDA-approved laboratories. The initial test is a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. A PCR test is a rapid method of identifying the virus, typically producing results within 3 hours. If a sample from an area where avian influenza has not been previously detected tests positive on a rapid test, a virus isolation confirmatory test is performed. This test involves growing the sample in embryonated chicken eggs, which then provides the material to allow detailed identification of the strain of virus and whether it is highly pathogenic or low pathogenic. The virus isolation test can take 7- 10 days to produce results. All H5 and H7 isolations are confirmed at the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) National Veterinary Services Laboratories at Ames, Iowa.

Q. What should I do as a poultry owner to protect my flock? Who do I call if my birds show symptoms of bird flu?

A. If you own birds, whether commercial producers or as a backyard enthusiasts, to step up your biosecurity, preventing contact between your birds and wild birds, and **reporting sick birds or unusual bird deaths to State/Federal officials, through the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Division of Animal Industry at 518-457-0218 or to USDA APHIS Veterinary Services NY office at 717-540-2777**. For small flocks, this can include deaths of one bird per day for 2 days in a row.

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WEEKLY LIVESTOCK UPDATE

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