Maintaining Livestock Health after a Flood

Disease Control
Following a flood there may be danger of infectious diseases in livestock, but unless serious outbreaks of infection have occurred recently there is no need to be alarmed. Observe these precautions:

- Where large numbers of animals assemble, watch for any sign of infectious diseases such as pneumonia, foot rot or leptospirosis.

  - These diseases are more likely to occur where cattle are crowded on wet ground and where horn flies and houseflies are abundant.
  - If possible, an experienced stockman under the supervision of a veterinarian should handle and feed the animals.

- Promptly report any sign of disease to the nearest veterinarian or County Extension Agent.
- Contact a veterinarian about vaccinating animals for immunity from flood-related diseases such as anthrax, lepto, blackleg and swine erysipelas.

Feed and Water

- Provide clean, uncontaminated water.
- Inspect feeds such as corn, wheat and hay.

  - Damaged grains and moldy hay may cause digestive disturbances.
  - Horses, sheep, poultry, swine and cattle are affected most severely (in that order) by damaged feed.
  - Do not force livestock to eat silage that has been flooded, even though its appearance may be unchanged.
Do not feed any feed or forage that may have been contaminated by chemicals or pesticides.

**Pastureland**

- Standing water may have ruined some pastures.
  - Lack of adequate forage could force animals to eat poisonous plants which are abundant in some parts of the country.
  - Remove fallen wild cherry limbs from pastures to prevent livestock poisoning.

- Before restocking flooded pastures, remove debris, especially along fence lines and in corners. Livestock could be injured from pieces of barbed wire, sharp metal and trash.

**Protecting Dairy Cows**

- Try to milk at regular times. It is better to lose the milk from one milking than to stress high-producing cows.
- If you must use a neighbor's milking parlor, try to keep the two herds separate.
- If feed supplies are limited, give the largest portion of available feed to the highest-producing cows and those recently fresh. This may be a good time to cull the herd.
- Clean and sanitize milking parlor, dairy barn and equipment before returning to normal use.
- Watch for signs of mastitis, which is likely to flare up if milking methods, time and equipment have been changed.

**Sanitation**

- Clean out hog houses, barns and chicken houses.
  - Spray buildings with a good disinfectant before animals occupy them again.
  - Air buildings thoroughly before they are dried out.

- Remove debris from dairy barns.
- Scrub and disinfect walls, ceilings, floors, stanchions and other equipment.
- Scrub the milk house and equipment with detergent and hot water.
- Sanitize equipment, walls, ceilings and floors with dairy sanitizer equipment.

- Dispose of animal carcasses promptly. If there is no rendering company operating nearby, burn or bury carcasses deeply in a place approved by your local soil conservation office.

**Insects**
Mosquitoes and other pests may be abundant after a flood. They not only annoy animals, but some species carry disease. Spray animals with an insect repellent as recommended by your County Extension Agent.