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## **Hurricane Preparation and Recovery in the Southeastern United States**

# Swine Producers Guide



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This guide is based on information from the Humane Society [Taking precautions for protecting livestock](#); USDA [Do You Have a Plan for Your Livestock Should Disaster Strike?](#); American Veterinary Medical Association [Large Animals and Livestock In Disasters](#); Texas A&M AgriLife Extension [Hurricane Preparedness for Livestock](#); NC Pork Council [N.C. hog farmers make final preparations in advance of hurricane Florence](#); Farm Journal's [Pork 5 Tips to keep your farm operating in a disaster](#); NC Pork [Hog Farms and Hurricanes: a Primer on Lagoons and Flooding](#); North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services [Prepare your farm for weather disasters](#); and Pork Quality Assurance training, Version 3.

**This is 1 of 23 guides to help Southeastern U.S. producers of economically important agricultural commodities build resilience to, prepare for, and recover from hurricane impacts. All guides can be found on the USDA Southeast Climate Hub [Hurricane Preparation and Recovery Commodity Guides website](#).**

**Disclaimer:** This guide contains a compilation of information from multiple coastal States in the Southeastern United States. Therefore, some of the links and resources may not be relevant or even appropriate for your location. Information in this document was provided by USDA and various university Extension staff and based on shared experiences preparing for and recovering from hurricane impacts; however, individual producer situations will vary. This guidance should not be interpreted as required actions by regulatory or insurance agencies. STATE OR LOCAL GUIDANCE/REGULATIONS AND INSURANCE POLICIES SUPERCEDE THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS GUIDE. Check with your local Extension agent; county, State, or Federal contact; consultant; or insurance agent regarding the appropriateness of these recommendations to your specific situation.

**Pesticide Statement:** Pesticides used improperly can be injurious to humans, animals, and plants. Follow the directions and heed all precautions on the labels.

Apply pesticides so that they do not endanger humans, livestock, crops, beneficial insects, fish, and wildlife. Do not apply pesticides when there is danger of drift, when honey bees or other pollinating insects are visiting plants, or in ways that may contaminate water or leave illegal residues.

**Note:** Some States have restrictions on the use of certain pesticides. Check your State and local regulations. Also, because registrations of pesticides are under constant review by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, consult your county agricultural agent or State Extension specialist to be sure the intended use is still registered.

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# **Hurricane Preparation and Recovery in the Southeastern United States**

## **Swine Producers Guide**

### **This guide will focus on:**

- How swine producers should plan for a hurricane
- Facility design to minimize hurricane damage
- Steps to take to minimize disruptions in production
- Equipment needed for operation during a hurricane

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	1
<b>SECTION 1</b>	
<b>Building a Resilient Operation</b>	3
Personal safety	3
Recordkeeping, documentation, and insurance	3
Infrastructure	4
Livestock concerns	7
Emergency planning	7
<b>SECTION 2</b>	
<b>Long-Term Operation Maintenance</b>	11
Prior to hurricane season	11
Monthly considerations during hurricane season	14
<b>SECTION 3</b>	
<b>Short-Term Preparedness</b>	15
1-7 days before a hurricane is forecast to strike	15
1 day before the hurricane strikes	20
<b>SECTION 4</b>	
<b>Post-Hurricane Recovery</b>	21
Immediately after the hurricane has passed	21
Within a week following hurricane impacts	23
Within a month after hurricane impacts	27
<b>Appendix</b>	29
<b>Farm Emergency Plan</b>	29
Before the hurricane	29
Immediately after the hurricane	32
<b>Emergency Contacts List</b>	34
<b>Initial Site Planning</b>	37
Hurricane risk	37
Site characteristics	37
<b>Resource Links</b>	40

# Introduction

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Preparing for and recovering from hurricane events

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People who live and work in the Southeastern United States are unfortunately familiar with the devastation and loss of life and property that can accompany a hurricane event. While hurricanes have always been a threat to the Southeast, with an average of over two strikes per year since 1900, the threat posed by hurricanes is growing. Recent studies suggest that as ocean temperatures continue to rise, hurricane intensity is increasing. Hurricanes of the future will likely be slower moving, higher category hurricanes that produce destructive winds and flooding.

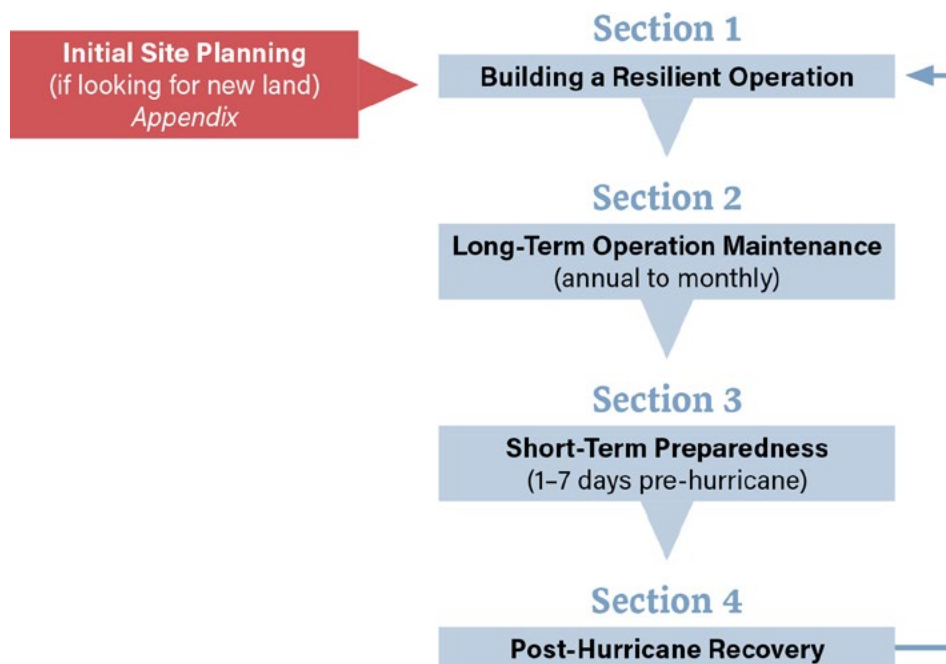
To help producers remain resilient and productive in the face of this threat, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Southeast Climate Hub developed this guide containing steps that can be taken to prepare for and recover from hurricane events. This guide is separated into four primary sections:

- The **Building a Resilient Operation** section outlines a range of considerations and systems that producers can put in place to increase their resilience to hurricanes.
- The **Long-Term Operation Maintenance** section lists specific pre-hurricane actions and periodic checks to be done on an annual basis (before hurricane season) and monthly basis (during hurricane season).

- The **Short-Term Preparedness** section lists specific actions to be done in the week before a hurricane arrives.
- The **Post-Hurricane Recovery** section outlines activities that producers can take to minimize their losses following a hurricane. It begins with actions immediately following a hurricane that are focused on safety and continues with ongoing actions a week out and a month out.

The guide also includes an appendix with two customizable templates for a **Farm Emergency Plan** and an **Emergency Contacts List**. Directions on what to include in these two documents are outlined in the **Building a Resilient Operation** section. Their use is described in the **Short-Term Preparation** section. Both the plan and list should be periodically reviewed, as mentioned in the **Long-Term Operation Maintenance** section. The appendix also includes an **Initial Site Planning** guide that can be referenced if purchasing or leasing new land, and **Resource Links** to helpful Federal, State, and Extension websites that are also referenced throughout the guide.

The flowchart below shows the layout of this guide and how it is intended to be used. Note that after recovering from a hurricane, producers should start back at the **Building a Resilient Operation** section, and incorporate guidance and any lessons learned into their operational and emergency management plans.



Layout and use of the hurricane preparation and recovery guide.

## SECTION 1

# Building a Resilient Operation

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Systems that are recommended to be put in place well before the arrival of any hurricane to increase productivity and reduce your risk of damage and recovery time

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Agricultural operations in the Southeastern United States can implement a range of measures to increase their resilience to hurricanes and tropical storms. Contact your local Extension office and other State and Federal resources for further information.

## Personal safety

For safety tips and resources that facilitate informed decision making before, during, and after a hurricane strikes, see the Ready.gov [Hurricanes website](#) and U.S. Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) [Hurricane Safety Tips and Resources website](#).

## Recordkeeping, documentation, and insurance

- The importance of pre- and post-hurricane documentation cannot be overstated. Assistance for disaster recovery may not be available until weeks or months after a hurricane. Therefore, it is important for purposes of insurance compensation and recovery assistance to do thorough recordkeeping of the damages and losses sustained on your farm as well as your cleanup and recovery efforts.
- The worst time to find out that you do not have enough insurance, or the right insurance, to cover your damages is when you need help recovering. Regularly review your insurance policies with your agent to be sure you have adequate coverage, including flood insurance, for your facilities, vehicles, farm buildings and other structures, and livestock. Be aware that there are limitations on how soon insurance coverage will take effect. Generally, insurance policies will not cover damage if the policy was not in place before a hurricane has formed.
- Establish an inventory system so that you know exactly what's on your farm at all times for potential insurance claims and disaster recovery assistance. It is critical to have a documented inventory (photos, videos, and written lists and descriptions) of your farm buildings, vehicles, and valuable equipment on your farm before a disaster occurs. Maintain accurate records of harvest, equipment inventories, and supplies purchased. This inventory and documentation will be essential for filing insurance claims after the hurricane. Keep copies of this inventory in multiple places such as on your computer, offsite in a safe location,

and on a cloud-based server using an established procedure to update and transmit the information weekly.

- Take these records with you should you choose to evacuate for a hurricane:
  - Inventories and documentation for insurance and disaster recovery
  - Farm Emergency Plan
  - Emergency Contacts List
  - Comprehensive nutrient management plan
- For more information, see:
  - USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) [Livestock Risk Protection Fact Sheet for Swine](#) (LRP-Swine)
  - RMA [Agent Locator](#) to search for approved insurance providers
  - U.S. Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) [Flood Insurance website](#) to learn more about flood insurance options for qualifying home and business owners

## Infrastructure

### Buildings

- Consult topography and flood maps when building new facilities, storing feed and hay, and moving animals. Consider the potential for higher elevation areas on the property to become evacuation sites.
- Locate buildings above the 100-year flood zone whenever possible, and construct buildings and other structures to meet the building code requirements in your area. Reinforce building structures and use hurricane straps in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. For more guidance on protecting farm structures and buildings from winds and flooding, see the FEMA [Compilation of Wind-resistant Provisions](#) and [Design Guide for Improving Critical Facility Safety from Flooding and High Winds](#).
- Design the facility such that rainwater runs away from the building and waste lagoons.
- Pay special attention to feed storage bins and other equipment housed outside of the buildings. Make sure these structures are well anchored and able to withstand hurricane-force winds.

### Power and backup power

#### Circuit breakers

- Know the location of your main circuit breaker and breaker box. The box is generally located inside of buildings, but additional breakers may be located outside.



- Ensure that the breakers, including the main breaker, are correctly labeled. Correct labeling will help you ensure power is cut to the appropriate appliances or to the entire building.

### **Backup power**

- Create a Backup Power Plan and store with your Farm Emergency Plan (see “Emergency planning” below).
- Check local, county, and State codes for any requirements to supply backup power during short-term emergencies.
- To provide power when the main power goes out, supply critical operating areas with a standby generator wired with a transfer switch. Install generators with enough fuel storage for 2 weeks of full operation.
- Provide backup power for ventilation, feed, and waste management systems. If you have electronic feed systems, make sure that the computer and the air tank needed for the electronic feeder are connected to the backup power source.
- If your facility uses well water, provide backup power for the well.
- Post the operating procedures near each generator. Consult your owner’s manual for specific safety, maintenance, and operational recommendations.

### **Roads**

- The primary driveway into the farm should have adequate drainage to prevent flooding. The road should be well packed with a solid base that will hold up to heavy equipment and trucks during extreme conditions. For more information on maintaining unpaved roads, see the USDA [Environmentally Sensitive Road Maintenance Practices for Dirt and Gravel Roads](#).
- If you do not have a secondary entrance to your farm, construct one if possible to provide alternative access from a different road in the event the primary entrance is blocked.
- If the farm is in a location where all roads leading in and out may flood, purchase or make arrangements to rent or borrow a boat that can safely navigate the floodwaters to gain faster post-hurricane access to your property.

### **Water management**

Total water management is essential, including waste lagoons and drainage systems, and must take into account the water table and soil drainage.

#### **Drainage**

- Make sure that the farm is designed according to USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) standards and that proper drainage away from the buildings is provided.
- Consider creating water retention areas to reduce overall flooding during low to moderate-intensity hurricanes.

### Waste lagoons

Make sure that all water spillway and lagoon berms are in good condition and have not eroded. It is important that water move away from buildings and lagoons.

### Culverts

Make sure culverts are properly designed regarding size and location.

### Water table depth

The amount of flooding will be determined by your land's topography, the amount of precipitation received, and the pre-hurricane water table. The higher the pre-hurricane water table, the more likely that flooding will occur for a given amount of precipitation. The chance of flooding can be estimated by measuring the pre-hurricane water table and considering the effects of varying precipitation amounts:

A general rule of thumb is that 1 inch of rain will cause the water table to rise about 10 inches in fine-textured soils, 6 inches in most of the flatwoods sandy soils, and 4 inches in coarse sands. It may take 4 to 6 days for the water table to return to its desired levels following rains of 1 inch or more. For example, if the water table is at 50 inches, 6 inches of precipitation will cause localized flooding on fine-textured soils, but no flooding would occur on sandy soils.

### Trees and windbreaks

- Remove trees that could potentially blow down and block the entrance to the farm.
- Construct windbreaks. Trees and shrubs used as windbreaks should be native species that will develop strong, deep root systems and be hardy enough to resist breaking during high winds. For example, red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) resists strong winds very well. Keep trees or shrubs pruned and free of dead or dying branches.
- Windbreaks should be constructed so that they are far enough from buildings that they will not damage buildings if they fall.
- For more information about how windbreaks can provide economic, environmental, and commercial benefits, see the USDA National Agroforestry Center [Windbreaks website](#).

### Debris disposal

- Create a plan for salvage operations including a method of debris disposal. Learn what materials and the specifications regarding composition of materials the landfill nearest your farm will accept, and identify alternatives if needed. For disposal of chemicals or other hazardous materials, follow specific procedures to meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), State, and local requirements.
- For more information about debris disposal following natural disasters, see the EPA [Dealing with Debris and Damaged Buildings website](#), including their [Disaster Debris Recovery Tool](#).

## Livestock concerns

### Burial site and plan

- Burial site—Have mass mortality burial sites for catastrophic losses pre-approved by your State’s Department of Agriculture and Environmental Protection Division. These sites should be identified and approved (soil tested, water table determined, etc.) prior to the event so that they can be opened and used with little delay. In most States, the identification of the burial site will be part of the farm’s comprehensive nutrient management plan or emergency action plan.
- Burial plan—Some States require that swine producers have an approved emergency disposal plan in place before disposing of carcasses following a catastrophic event. The plan should include who to contact for approval and assistance. For more information, see the:
  - Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries [Animal Industries Division website](#), [Department of Environmental Management website](#), and [Emergency Management Agency website](#)
  - Florida [Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services website](#) and [County Emergency Management Office](#)
  - Georgia Department of Agriculture [Animal Industry Division website](#)
  - Louisiana [Department of Agriculture and Forestry website](#)
  - Mississippi [Board of Animal Health website](#)
  - North Carolina [Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Veterinary Division](#)
  - South Carolina [Department of Health and Environmental Control website](#)
  - Virginia [Department of Environmental Quality website](#) and [Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services website](#)
- To learn more about onsite composting of animal carcasses, see the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service [Livestock Mortality Composting Protocol](#).

### Emergency planning

- U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations require an employer with more than 10 employees to have a printed copy of an emergency action plan readily accessible to all employees. (If you have 10 employees or fewer, the emergency plan may be reviewed orally.) For more information about emergency action plans, see the OSHA [Agricultural Safety Fact Sheet](#).
- Consider bringing together a disaster planning team, which could consist of the farm owner and engaged family members, the farm manager, herd veterinarian, an insurance representative, local Extension agent, and other individuals.

## Farm Emergency Plan

- Your Farm Emergency Plan details how your operation will respond in the event of a hurricane, preparing the operation for a worst-case scenario and ensuring continuity of operation.
- See [Appendix: Farm Emergency Plan](#) for a sample plan that you can customize for your operation. The plan should include a checklist of tasks necessary to secure the facilities, fuel supplies, chemical supplies, and equipment; protect any animals onsite; disconnect electricity and gas service; ensure that critical supplies are well stocked; etc.
- Make sure all of your employees know the formats (electronic or hard copy) and locations where the Farm Emergency Plan is stored.
- Consider creating a “hurricane suggestion box” where employees can place ideas for training and planning they believe would increase the operation’s resilience and safety in the face of a hurricane, based on their previous experience.

## Maps and signage

- Prepare or update maps for all facilities, including locations of alternate entry/exit routes, electrical equipment (with shut-off options), fuel storage tanks (both above and below ground), propane tanks, compressed gas (for welding, etc.), and chemical spill equipment.
- Post signs around the premises stating that trespassing is not permitted. Following a disaster, unauthorized and unwanted visitors such as onlookers, rescue agencies, or humane organizations, or persons trying to assess damage or gain information about animal care may be attempting to access your property. Agriculture authorities can assist with proper language and signage.

## Hurricane tracking apps

Download one or more computer and mobile device applications (apps) that model hurricane track predictions, send alerts, and track hurricane impacts. Given the rapid advance of mobile technologies, check for new options each year prior to hurricane season. The NOAA [National Hurricane Center website](#) is a good source for keeping up to date on the latest hurricane activities. For more information about emergency alerts, see the Ready.gov [Emergency Alerts website](#).

## Roles and responsibilities

- Designate an Emergency Response Team for your farm. Members of the team should be:
  - Thoroughly trained and physically capable of performing assigned duties
  - Knowledgeable about the hazards found on the farm
  - Trained in decision making regarding when to take actions themselves and when to wait for outside emergency responders

- Define a chain of command with clearly defined primary and secondary roles and each person's responsibilities. Some individuals may not be reachable after a hurricane, so alternative levels of authority need to be established to resolve critical issues quickly. In your Farm Emergency Plan, list who will be responsible for each task and how they'll report fire, flooding, building collapses, and other emergencies. Identify procedures to be followed by the people who remain to handle critical operations.

## Communication

### Emergency Contacts List

- Develop and maintain a list of all people connected with your operation that should be contacted in an emergency. See [Appendix: Emergency Contacts List](#) for a template that you can customize. The Emergency Contacts List should include names, phone numbers, and other pertinent information (email addresses, locations, etc.) for individuals (owners, family members, employees, employee family members), emergency responders, State and local agencies, contractors and suppliers, and anyone else who is on your farm on a regular basis or provides crucial emergency services.
- Keep copies of your Emergency Contacts List (hard copies as well as electronic copies) in multiple locations, including your home, office, and vehicle, and with all family members and key employees. It is a good idea to have this information stored on your and your employees' mobile devices.

### Lines of communication with local businesses and officials

Establish communication with your local law enforcement and fire departments, electricity and gas providers, and other key groups to help them understand the nature of your business so that they can respond as needed in the event of a hurricane. Let them know the number of employees typically onsite, the potential impact of the hurricane on animal welfare, and the potential hazards that could lead to environmental contamination in the event of flood or structural damage.

### Post-hurricane communications

- Purchase a battery-powered or hand-crank radio to stay up to date about conditions beyond your property in case you lose electricity for an extended period of time.
- Consider ahead of time the locations where producers and others could meet if all communication lines are down (e.g., a local feed or equipment supplier).
- Contact a local AM radio station to see whether it could serve as a communication channel in the aftermath of a hurricane.
- For more hurricane-related communication recommendations, see the U.S. Federal Communications Commission [FCC and FEMA: How to Communicate Before, During and After a Major Disaster website](#).

### **Identification of evacuation sites**

Identify potential evacuation sites well in advance of hurricane season, keeping in mind that public facilities normally used for agriculture or exhibition purposes may be allocated for other purposes during a disaster situation. Collaboration with other producers to provide evacuation space will help free up the usual public facilities for housing rescued animals or other uses.

### **Electricity and gas**

- Contact your local utility company for possible guidance on disconnecting power from downed lines to prevent harm to employees or livestock in the immediate area. Record their instructions in your Farm Emergency Plan.
- If certain equipment requires specialized shutdown procedures, train employees in these procedures.

### **Equipment operation**

- Train personnel in the safe operation of unfamiliar equipment (such as generators or drainage pumps) that they may have to use in case of a hurricane.
- Make sure the appropriate employees are prepared to set up your backup generators. They should refer to your Backup Power Plan for information about where generators and generator fuel can be found, where they should be placed in preparation for a hurricane, and how they are to be connected to the electrical loads they will power.

### **Drones**

Consider getting an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) (i.e., drone) pilot license and purchasing a UAV. Small UAV quadcopters or hexacopters that can be equipped with visual or RGB cameras are relatively inexpensive (\$500 to more than \$2,000). Use of UAVs will help with damage assessment if accessing your operation directly is impossible or unsafe. For regulations and more information about operating a UAV, see:

- U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Federal Aviation Administration [Unmanned Aircraft Systems website](#)
- University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Science (IFAS) Extension [Preflight and Flight Instructions on the Use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles \(UAVs\) for Agricultural Applications](#)

### **Chemical safety**

Take the necessary steps to prevent chemical spills from storage tanks containing fuel, herbicides, pesticides, or other potentially dangerous liquids.

### **Basic emergency response skills**

Train all members of your Emergency Response Team in the use of various types of fire extinguishers, first aid, and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).

## SECTION 2

# Long-Term Operation Maintenance

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Periodic checks of systems already in place  
(described in the previous section)

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### **Prior to hurricane season**

Survey your operations to assess the potential impact that high wind or heavy rain or flooding would have on livestock and facilities, and identify any changes that should be addressed. Contact your local Extension office and other State and Federal resources for further information specific to your circumstances.

### **Annual review of emergency planning tasks**

#### **Farm Emergency Plan review and reassessment**

- Review your Farm Emergency Plan with your employees, ensuring that they are familiar with all elements and giving them a refresher course in the steps they are responsible for. Make any necessary additions or updates (contract numbers, permit numbers, etc.). Contact third-party vendors to make sure they are still willing to provide services. Farm managers should keep this information onsite in a secure location as well as in their personal electronic devices.
- Review your Emergency Contacts List with your employees and update it with current names and contact information.
- Review items provided in the “hurricane suggestion box,” and add them to your Farm Emergency Plan or training list as relevant.

#### **Employee training**

- Identify key tasks that employees will need to complete during hurricane preparation and recovery operations.
- Once each year, provide training for all employees who will participate in the key tasks identified above.

#### **Personal health and safety tasks**

- Make sure you and your employees have up-to-date tetanus shots.
- For information and links to time-specific guidance for preparing yourself and your home, see the Ready.gov [Hurricanes website](#).
- Download the FEMA [Mobile App](#) to learn emergency safety tips and receive real-time weather alerts, important disaster planning reminders, information about shelters and recovery centers, and more.

## **Recordkeeping, documentation, and insurance**

- At the time of renewal, review insurance policies with your insurance agent and update coverage as needed. Make sure you have adequate flood insurance and coverage for vehicles, farm buildings and structures, and livestock.
- Work with local emergency management and Extension personnel to determine what disaster assistance you may be eligible for after the hurricane.
- Keep records of harvest, equipment inventories, and purchases of supplies up to date. Make sure that you have accurate inventory records of all animals and feed on the farm prior to the hurricane. It will also be helpful to have a complete equipment inventory. After the hurricane, you will need to document mortalities and damage to feed storage facilities and feed lost. You will need to work with your insurance carrier and the disaster relief agencies to determine what documentation you need.
- Long-term records will help to establish a production baseline from which losses can be determined. Be sure that copies of each are in a safe location as described in the Building a Resilient Operation section above.

## **Infrastructure**

### **Buildings and facilities**

Inspect all buildings and facilities for structural soundness. Perform maintenance on facilities and infrastructure to repair items such as loose roofing materials or improperly/inadequately grounded electrical equipment to reduce hazard risk during a hurricane.

### **Drainage**

- Clean out culverts and ditches and other drainage areas especially before and during the peak hurricane season. Keep ditches clear through a good maintenance program including chemical weed control. Regrade areas of the property that are prone to flooding to improve drainage.
- Check any new construction areas, housing developments, or DOT projects nearby to see whether they are affecting your land's drainage. Determine where the water is draining now, and address any new drainage needs before hurricane season begins.

### **Maintenance of trees, windbreaks, and roads**

- Remove dead or dying branches from trees on your property. Keep power line easements free of trees that could potentially fall on the lines during a hurricane. Trees that have grown and now present a risk to utilities, fences, or facilities should be trimmed or removed.



- Maintain windbreaks with regular pruning, especially if they are close to aerial power or telephone lines. To learn more about proper pruning practices, see:
  - Inland Urban Forest Council [A Practical Guide to Proper Pruning of Trees and Shrubs](#)
  - University of Florida IFAS Extension [Pruning Shade Trees in Landscapes website](#)
  - The OSHA [Line-Clearance Tree Trimming Operations website](#)
- Evaluate roads for any repairs or improvements that need to be made before hurricanes arrive.

### **Fencing**

Acquire or arrange for temporary fencing in case of damage to fencing or buildings during a hurricane. Pigs may have to be temporarily housed outside while buildings are repaired.

### **Generators**

- Perform routine maintenance every 6 months (or more often if recommended by the manufacturer) on backup electric and water systems as well as all other essential equipment.
- Do routine annual maintenance on backup generators. Replace old stored fuel with new, fresh fuel. Replace fuel filters, test all generator circuits, and make sure you have all necessary supplies on hand, including spare belts and fuel filters.
- Ensure that all essential equipment functions when powered by the backup generator.

### **Waste lagoons**

Inspect lagoon berms, and repair as needed. Also inspect and repair surface water drainage around the lagoons.

### **Emergency supplies**

- Maintain an ample supply of emergency medical supplies and have raincoats and boots available for employees.
- Maintain a supply of drinking water and dry and canned food sufficient for at least 2 weeks for employees who become stranded at the facility or who need to return to the facility before utility and emergency services are restored.
- Maintain an ample supply of weather-proofing supplies such as tarps and sandbags; fencing supplies; plumbing supplies; lumber, construction tools, nails, and ropes; portable lights; batteries; and battery-powered or hand-crank radios.

## Monthly considerations during hurricane season

See [Appendix: Resource Links](#) for local Extension offices and other State and Federal resources which you may consult for further information.

### Weather monitoring

During the June to November hurricane season, pay regular attention to long-term weather forecasts. Check your weather tracker daily if a hurricane is forecast to move closer to your area.

### Equipment and supplies

- Inspect buildings and make repairs if needed.
- Supplies that take longer to deliver should be reviewed monthly to ensure they are available during a hurricane.
- Check list of equipment and supplies for repairs that may be needed after the hurricane.
- Refresh emergency medical supplies, water, and dry and canned food supplies.
- Obtain sufficient quantities of plywood to protect windows and doors and store in a dry area. Once a hurricane is actually approaching, plywood may be scarce or unavailable.

### Farm equipment

Contact your equipment manufacturers to establish procedures for dealing with damaged equipment. Make sure you won't invalidate your warranty if you attempt repairs yourself.

### Fuel

Consider fuel needs for tractors, generators, and farm vehicles. Any fuel stored onsite poses a contamination risk if storage tanks are not adequately protected from flooding, especially if stored at a low elevation. If secure storage facilities are available onsite, arrange for fuel deliveries several days prior to the expected hurricane impact.

### Generators

- Verify there is adequate fuel to power generator for at least 2 weeks.
- Test backup generators monthly. Make sure all critical equipment—including ventilation, feed, waste management systems, and the well (if you use one)—can be attached to the generator and that the generator has adequate power to supply all critical loads.

### Waste lagoons

Keep lagoons pumped as low as possible. Note that 20 to 30 inches of freeboard is desired prior to a hurricane impact.

## SECTION 3

# Short-Term Preparedness

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Bracing for the hurricane: specific actions to be done in the week before a hurricane arrives

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## 1–7 days before a hurricane is forecast to strike

First and foremost, take whatever precautions necessary to protect your family, your employees, and yourself. After that is accomplished, focus on protecting your farm. Once forecasters have put your area in a hurricane's path, there are a number of precautions you should take to prepare.

### Employee safety

- Determine whether individual employees plan to evacuate or stay during the hurricane. For those who evacuate, establish a schedule for checking in after the hurricane to provide updates so they know when they can return as well as the extent of damages. For employees who stay, be sure they have safe lodging and have a plan for them to report in.
- Inform workers of changes to the normal work schedule. To allow time for workers to get home safely, all activities should cease well before the hurricane arrives.
- If housing on the farm or an employee's home is not considered secure, consider renting a hotel room for the employee and their family to use for showers after the hurricane if electricity is out for extended period of time.
- Consider securing a caterer or food truck to provide meals for employees and their families after the hurricane.

### Employees' roles and responsibilities

- Review your Farm Emergency Plan with your employees and make sure that it is up to date. Discuss each person's responsibilities and develop a care schedule for the animals. At no time should any employee be expected to put their life in danger to care for the animals. Employees should stay onsite only if they can do so safely. If people will remain onsite, make arrangements for food and water. If the facility is located where incoming roads may flood, locate and stage a boat that can safely navigate the floodwaters.
- Continue to monitor hurricane track and strength updates. Listen closely for evacuation orders in your area.

- Determine whether individual employees plan to evacuate or stay during the hurricane. For those who evacuate, establish a schedule for checking in after the hurricane so that they know the extent of the damages and when it is safe to return. For employees who stay, be sure they have safe lodging, sufficient food and water, and an established plan for checking in.
- Ensure that personnel have training in first aid and key personnel know how to operate emergency equipment they may be unfamiliar with (e.g., a chainsaw to remove trees blocking roads).

### **Communications**

- Make sure you have communicated with employees and suppliers to verify your hurricane plans. Communicate with employees any last-minute modifications to the Farm Emergency Plan or emergency action plan.
- Ensure that all communication equipment, including weather radio, AM/FM radio, and other devices, is available and working properly. Keep mobile devices fully charged. Have rechargeable battery packs or charging cables for your vehicle to maintain communication. Texting may be a more valuable form of communication than calling when the phone networks may be overwhelmed.

### **Food, water, and cash**

- Make sure your operation still has a 2-week supply of drinking water as well as dry and canned food.
- Secure cash reserves for purchasing supplies after the hurricane. In widespread power outages, credit and debit cards will not work, and many vendors do not accept checks.

### **Recordkeeping, documentation, and insurance**

- Ensure that important documents are in a safe, dry place and that duplicates are in alternative locations offsite.
- Prior to the hurricane, take a complete inventory of the animals on the farm, the amount of feed in storage, and all equipment and its condition. Take a short video of the farm to show the condition of the buildings prior to the hurricane so that any damage from the hurricane is well documented, as this will aid with insurance claims and disaster recovery assistance.
- If you have insurance through FEMA's [National Flood Insurance Program](#), your policy may cover up to \$1,000 in loss avoidance measures such as sandbags and water pumps to protect insured property. Check with your insurance provider to confirm. Keep copies of all receipts and a record of the time spent performing the work and submit these documents to your insurance adjuster when you file a claim to be reimbursed.

## Equipment

### Relocating and protecting equipment

- Move all non-critical farm equipment to higher elevations or store in secure buildings.
- Move pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers to a secure place, on high ground above any potential flooding if possible.
- Ensure that tanks containing fuel, fertilizer, and other liquids are kept full and tied down.
- If your facility uses well water, make sure that the well is protected from the weather to prevent damage to the pump. Potable water will be needed for drinking and for the evaporative cooling system.
- If temperatures are cool enough, turn off the evaporative cooling system and install weather covers over cool cells.

### Preparing emergency equipment

- Ensure that all emergency equipment is ready (e.g., compressors and heavy machinery).
- Make sure chainsaws are in good working condition. Stock up on fuel mixture and bar and chain oil. Sharpen the chain, keep the saw file and saw wrench close at hand, and make sure you have a spare chain.
- Make sure that farm equipment (trucks, trailers, tractors) you will need after the hurricane is fully fueled and operational.
- Unplug computers and other electronic equipment to protect from electrical surges and store these items safely.

## Infrastructure

### Backup generators

Be sure your backup generators are fully operational, with full fuel tanks and portable fuel storage tanks. Your generators may have to run for several days until the power company can restore electricity. Review the owner's manual for the maximum run time and other unit specifics.

### Fuel

- Make sure you have a minimum of a 2-week supply of diesel and gas. Be sure the supplier understands how much you use daily and that it is necessary for providing animal care and avoiding a potential overflow of a lagoon. If secure storage facilities are available onsite, arrange for fuel deliveries several days prior to the expected hurricane impact. Consider fuel needs for tractors, generators, and farm vehicles.

- Service stations will not be able to supply fuel if they do not have electric power for the pumps, so make sure portable fuel storage tanks are full.
- Any fuel stored onsite poses a contamination risk if storage tanks cannot be adequately protected from anticipated flooding. Move them to higher ground or secure in place.

**Electricity and gas shut-off**

- Consult your Farm Emergency Plan and follow procedures for disconnecting electrical power and gas to some or all buildings and any non-critical equipment in danger of being flooded.
- Disconnect electrical power to any buildings that do not contain pigs but may get flooded.
- Shut down gas pumps.

**Buildings and grounds**

- To secure building components:
  - Check on the security of roofing and siding materials and windows and doors.
  - Make sure all other building components are tied down securely.
- Secure objects around your farm, so that they don't blow away or become hazardous projectiles. Where feasible, move loose equipment inside and store it such that it will not blow around and cause damage.
- Fill feeders and securely fasten lids.
- Place weather covers over cool cells if the temperature is low enough that restricting ventilation rates will not have an adverse effect on the animals housed within the building.
- If there is a perimeter gate to the facility, close it to ensure that if any animals get loose during the hurricane, they are contained within the center area (e.g., pens, pasture).

**Roads and fences**

- If the roads leading to the farm are likely to flood, stage your boat in a secure, easy-to-access location.
- If you have animals housed outside, make sure that perimeter fences are in good condition.

**Drainage**

- Check drainage ditches and culverts around your facilities, and remove debris.
- Pump down all water from ditches to the maximum extent possible.

**Waste lagoons**

Pump waste lagoons as low as possible, while remaining in compliance with your comprehensive nutrient management plan.

**Supplies**

- Review inventories and order any additional supplies that can be delivered before the hurricane.
- Purchase animal health supplies including vet wrap and other materials needed for treatment of any wounds.

**Animal safety and feed**

- Ensure that all animals have a place in each pen that will not flood. Move pigs to higher ground as needed.
- Fill water troughs with water to ensure pigs have adequate water and to keep troughs from blowing around.
- Check your feed inventory yourself and call the feed mill if you are low to schedule a delivery ahead of the hurricane. Do not depend on someone else to do this, as your service tech and feed mill personnel will likely have their hands full.
- Order extra feed and fill all feed storage bins to capacity as close to the expected impact as possible. Plan to have 7 to 10 days of unlimited feed, or 14 to 21 days of rationed feed. This will ensure that pigs have feed throughout the hurricane event, and the extra weight will help to prevent wind damage to the storage bins. Give the feed company plenty of notice as it will be working to provide additional inventory to others in the area as well as secure its facilities.
- Work with your nutritionist to develop a backup plan for feeding animals in case you cannot unload feed in bins or restocked ingredients and concentrates inventories are delayed.
- Ensure that all feeders and waterers are working properly. The day before the hurricane, verify that feed has been delivered and feed storage bins are full.

## 1 day before the hurricane strikes

- Perform a final verification of the hurricane track and strength. Listen closely for evacuation orders for your area.
- Make sure your employees have evacuated to secure areas at least 1 day prior to hurricane impact. If some staff will remain onsite, confirm that they have access to structures on high ground or elevated slabs or pylons that can withstand hurricane winds and rain, sufficient stores of clean water and food, medical supplies, working radios or cell phones, and sufficient battery or generator power. Those workers remaining onsite will likely need to rely on mobile device communication with evacuated supervisors and colleagues, since local radio and television communications often black out for several hours as a hurricane passes. Local first responders may also be out of communication at the time of hurricane impact.
- Personnel remaining onsite to monitor the farm until the last moment should keep an eye on water levels in low-lying and problematic areas so they have sufficient time to exit the operation before levees, surrounding roads, and highways are blocked with floodwaters.



## SECTION 4

# Post-Hurricane Recovery

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Activities that can be taken to minimize losses immediately after, a week after, and a month after a hurricane

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## Immediately after the hurricane has passed

When the hurricane has passed, proceed with extreme caution as you begin to inspect for damage. Consider all downed power lines to be energized and lethal! If there are structures that were damaged, there will be debris that could have exposed nails, screws, splinters, or sharp edges that could potentially cause injury to people and animals.

### Safety

- Make safety your first priority. Do not rush back into a facility until you are sure it is safe. Use extreme caution due to the unsafe conditions presented by weakened trees and damaged structures, equipment, and electrical and gas systems.
- Continue to watch the weather forecast. Are waters still forecast to rise more than they are now? Some floodwaters peak up to a week after the hurricane.

### Electricity and gas

- Avoid downed power lines, as these may still be live and present an electrocution hazard. Operate on the assumption that all downed power lines are live. Remember that a downed power line on a fence may energize the fence.
- When restoring electricity to buildings that have flooded, use extreme caution and consult with an electrician and your power provider. See the Alabama Cooperative Extension System [Restoring Electrical Service website](#).
- Natural gas or liquid petroleum (LP) gas leaks can cause deadly explosions. Check for natural gas or LP gas leaks, and if a leak is suspected, turn off the gas, evacuate the area, and notify your gas company and the authorities. Tell employees to stay clear.

### Ground water

- After a flood event, ground water should be used with caution if contamination is suspected anywhere in the general vicinity. It is advisable to have a sample analyzed for potential contaminants. If the ground water source has been subject to flooding, treat the well with chlorine to reduce the risk of bacterial contamination prior to using the water.

- For more information about disinfecting wells, see the:
  - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [Disinfecting Wells website](#)
  - Alabama Cooperative Extension System [Flooded Wells: Shock Chlorination website](#)
  - Louisiana State University AgCenter [Well Water and Drinking Water Analysis in LSU AgCenter](#)
  - Mississippi State University Extension Service [Disinfecting a Water Well through Shock Chlorination](#)
  - North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources [How to Disinfect Your Well](#)
  - South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control [Steps In Disinfecting A Well](#) and Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service [How to Prepare Your Well for the Next Flood: Evacuation Preparations and Return Home website](#)
  - University of Florida IFAS Extension [What Can You Do After Your Well Is Flooded](#) and Florida Department of Health [Is your well water, well?](#)
  - University of Georgia Cooperative Extension [Disinfecting Your Well Water: Shock Chlorination](#)
  - Virginia Cooperative Extension Virginia Household Water Quality Program [Shock Chlorination: Disinfecting Private Household Water Supply Systems](#)

### **Roads and buildings**

- Before entering any buildings, check for levee breaches, rising or incoming water, and evidence of fire or structural damage.
- Verify that all the buildings have power (from generators or the grid) and that all fans and feed systems are working correctly.
- As soon as it is safe, call in the employees needed for inspection and clearing debris from roads. Cordon off areas that are unsafe.

### **Security**

Watch your farm for unwelcome visitors like looters. Secure your equipment and farm entrances, and make sure your security cameras are operational.

### **Recordkeeping, documentation, and insurance**

- Do not begin cleaning up or repairing damage until you have thoroughly documented the damage. Contact your insurance adjuster as soon as possible to decide on the best plan moving forward with potential damage to your livestock. (See “Within a week following hurricane impacts” below regarding post-hurricane documentation.)
- If you have experienced flooding and have flood insurance through the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program, see their [How do I Start My Flood Claim? website](#) for information about starting a claim.

## Livestock

- Inspect buildings for damage and ensure the safety of the pigs. Use extreme caution when entering damaged buildings. Pigs should be removed from damaged buildings if at all possible.
- If there has been a significant death loss, document the numbers and follow the procedures outlined in the emergency action plan portion of the comprehensive nutrient management plan for the disposal of the carcasses. Contact the State Department of Agriculture and notify them that you have a mass casualty event. (Refer to “Livestock concerns” in the Building a Resilient Operation section, for details and links to the relevant State office.)

## Waste lagoons

Check lagoon and waste management systems. If lagoons have spilled over the top or failed, report this immediately to local officials and the:

- Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries [Animal Industries Division](#)
- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services [Division of Animal Industry](#)
- Georgia Department of Agriculture [Animal Industry Division](#)
- Louisiana [Department of Agriculture and Forestry](#)
- Mississippi [Board of Animal Health](#)
- North Carolina [Department of Environmental Quality](#)
- South Carolina [Department of Agriculture](#)
- Virginia [Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services](#)

## Within a week following hurricane impacts

### Personal health and safety

Take care of yourself during recovery. Disasters and the recovery period afterward take a toll on human health. Disaster recovery takes a long time and can be very stressful. For guidance to help you through this difficult time, see:

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [Disaster Mental Health Resources website](#)
- North Carolina Cooperative Extension [Tips for Handling Family Stress After Disasters](#)

### Communications

The local supply/seed stores are often natural sources of information if the power is down and electronic communication is limited. In addition, radio stations have generators that allow them to transmit if their towers are not damaged.

## Recovery assistance

Before beginning cleanup, talk with your insurance company and consult with disaster assistance program agents to learn about available programs, eligibility requirements, and application procedures (see “Disaster assistance” below for more information about assistance programs).

### Documentation of damage

Many disaster assistance programs will become available after the disaster, perhaps even years later, and an operation can only receive assistance for damage that was documented. For instance, the [Emergency Conservation Program](#) (ECP), administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), can provide funding and technical assistance to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters. The work must be documented, and farmers must receive authorization from their local USDA office in advance.

#### *Photos and video*

Take photos or video first before beginning any cleanup or repairs. Photograph and take video of damaged facilities and property and/or livestock mortality with written notes describing what is in the pictures and where they were taken. This “after” documentation will be used with your pre-hurricane “before” documentation to clearly show your losses.

#### *Drones*

If you own and have a license to operate a UAV (i.e., drone), utilize it now to take aerial photographs of damage to your operation. Local Extension offices might have access to drones and personnel with a drone pilot license to assist you.

#### *Written records*

Keep a notebook with you throughout the recovery period. Describe the work you did and record all expenses. Keep a running log of names and what was discussed during conversations with insurance, State, and Federal agency contacts to create a valuable, third-party record of your recovery efforts that can be used later as documentation for disaster assistance programs. You may not remember everything that was discussed at these meetings, so have a second person involved in the conversations if possible so that one can ask questions and the other can take notes.

### Disaster assistance

- Communicate early and often with recovery assistance contacts. Check in with them throughout the recovery process. Note that assistance will vary from one hurricane to the next and one budget year to the next.
- Call your local [FSA Office](#) to report any losses or damages and inquire about available assistance programs, application procedures, and deadlines.
- Check in with your local Extension office, USDA agencies, and your State Department of Agriculture to see what assistance may be available following the hurricane.

- Consult the following resources:
  - FEMA [Disaster Recovery Center Locator](#) and [Individual Assistance website](#) to find the closest recovery center and other resources to assist you during your recovery
  - USDA [Disaster Resource Center website](#) for updates on emergency designation areas and available assistance programs
  - Farmers.gov [Protection and Recovery website](#), including the five-step [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#) to learn which USDA disaster assistance programs are available to assist you with your recovery
  - U.S. Department of Labor’s [Disaster Unemployment Assistance Program website](#)
- To learn more about USDA Disaster Assistance Programs that may be right for you, see:
  - [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP)—FSA program for eligible livestock owners and contract growers who experience above-normal livestock deaths due to specific weather events as well as disease. To receive benefits, producers must file a “notice of loss” within 30 days of livestock death or injury and submit an application for payment within 60 days after the calendar year in which the loss condition occurred.
  - [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP)—FSA program that provides payments to qualifying producers to help compensate for losses
  - [Emergency Farm Loans](#)—FSA program that provides eligible farmers and ranchers low-interest loans to help them recover from production and physical losses
  - [Disaster Set-Aside Program](#)—FSA program that allows eligible FSA borrowers to skip an annual installment payment and move it to the end of the loan repayment period
  - [Emergency Watershed Protection](#) (EWP) Recovery Assistance—NRCS program that provides financial and technical assistance to quickly address serious and long-lasting damage to infrastructure and land
  - [EWP Floodplain Easement Program](#) (EWPP-FPE)—NRCS program option for converting land to permanent easements for the purpose of improving flood plain management and reducing the threat to life and property
  - [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP)—Year-round NRCS rehabilitation program with funding authority to provide financial assistance to repair and prevent excessive soil erosion caused or impacted by natural disasters
  - [Emergency Conservation Program](#) (ECP)—FSA program with technical assistance through NRCS that helps eligible farmers and ranchers repair damage to farmlands caused by natural disasters

## Insurance claims process

Begin the insurance claims process (Federal, private, or both). Accurate losses of inventory and equipment may not be fully documented yet, but start the paperwork now since insurance claims can take months to resolve following hurricane events.

## Infrastructure assessment and repairs

- Assess damage to equipment and infrastructure and form a prioritized list of needed repairs.
- Gather quotes from qualified vendors to make repairs to facilities and equipment. Vendors are often overwhelmed in the months following a hurricane, so making contact soon after the hurricane is important for an expedient response.
- Monitor fuel levels in backup generators and order additional fuel as needed.

## Waste lagoons

Continue to monitor lagoons daily to ensure they maintain integrity.

## Floodwater contamination

“Floodwater” refers to the overflow of external sources of water such as rivers or canals and not to direct precipitation that may pool in or near your fields or facilities.

### Food and water

- Floodwaters may contain elevated levels of pathogenic bacteria and chemicals, which cannot be removed from a food once contaminated. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration considers all human and animal foods that come into contact with floodwaters to be adulterated. If you must destroy and dispose of any feed products, keep documentation showing that the feed was not fed to pigs entering the food supply.
- If you have a well, regardless of whether the wellhead was flooded, submit ground water samples for microbial and chemical testing to ensure that the aquifer was not contaminated. Also monitor wells for coliform contamination.

### Feed-handling equipment

Thoroughly clean and sanitize all feed handling equipment that may have become contaminated during the hurricane. First, physically remove dirt or debris with a brush or with water and a detergent. Then, sanitize with an antimicrobial chemical to reduce microorganisms on the surface of the equipment. Make sure equipment is dry before use.

## Livestock

### Animal health

Monitor animals for any signs of disease. Consult your local veterinarian if you observe any disease issues.

### Feed

If animal feed was flooded, it should be disposed of. If trucks can access your farm, order a new supply.

### Suppliers and transporters

- Check with feed and semen suppliers to ensure that deliveries will be made as scheduled. Find alternative sources if needed.
- Check with transporters and packers to see whether they are able to take pigs to market or whether pigs will have to be housed for an extended period of time.

### Pests and insects

Watch for insects, such as fire ants, as well as displaced wildlife. Rodents can cause a problem in your livestock houses, feed, feed lines, etc., and will be more prevalent after a hurricane and flooding.

## Within a month after hurricane impacts

### Recovery assistance and insurance claims

- After many natural disasters that result in widespread damage, additional programs often become available to aid with agricultural losses. These programs are not guaranteed, however, and are generally handled on a case-by-case basis depending on the hurricane's impact. In addition, some programs require additional processing time for a special appropriation from the U.S. Congress and Presidential approval.
- While a special allocation may not be immediately available, it is important to document losses and to illustrate to your legislators the impact of the hurricane on your operation. This information will help promote policy decisions and additional allocations that may become available.
- Continue to follow up on the insurance claims process. Begin filing for any additional State or Federal disaster assistance programs for hurricane recovery.
- See the USDA [Disaster Resource Center website](#) for updated information about FEMA aid and other disaster programs.
- Continue to document everything and keep a record of conversations with agency contacts. This creates a valuable, third-party record of your recovery efforts that may be used later as documentation for assistance programs.

## Organic certification

If your farm is organic, it is important to consider how the hurricane impacts may affect your certification. Temporary variances from some organic practices are possible, so contact your certifier to determine whether your practices qualify. It is most important to report prohibited substances that may have infiltrated your farm during the hurricane.

## Infrastructure and equipment

- Continue to check for any structural or equipment damages or losses and document each incident when discovered. Check feed storage bins for any damage or leaks that may have developed, and repair as needed.
- Continue to gather quotes from qualified vendors to make repairs to facilities and equipment. Vendors are often overwhelmed in the months following a hurricane, so making contact soon after the hurricane is important for an expedient response.
- Monitor buildings for water damage or mold development, and monitor wells for coliform bacteria.
- Continue to refill fuel tanks and check backup generators until full power is restored.
- Perform general and preventative maintenance on any equipment that was flooded. Keep all receipts for parts and labor as well as a list of any equipment that is determined to be a total loss.
- Examine drainage ditches and canals to determine to what extent they were silted in by floodwaters and need repair and cleaning of debris. Clean and/or repair drainage ditches if necessary.

## Waste lagoons

Continue to carefully inspect lagoons for signs of damage.

## Feed storage bins

Check feed storage bins for any damage or leaks that may have developed and repair as needed.



# APPENDIX

## Farm Emergency Plan

Hurricane preparedness can have a direct effect on your farm's profitability and long-term survival. For agricultural operations in hurricane-vulnerable regions, it is critical to have a Farm Emergency Plan in place outlining key tasks and different people's roles and responsibilities as you brace for the hurricane. Your Farm Emergency Plan can save valuable time in a chaotic situation when multiple challenges clamor for immediate attention, helping you prioritize your actions and recover from the hurricane as efficiently as possible.

Use this sample plan to customize for your operation. Preparation for these tasks—putting the systems in place—is described in the main guide (see “Emergency planning” in the Building a Resilient Operation section). Though there is some overlap with the tasks listed in the Short-Term Preparedness section, this sample plan is intended to be a document you can use during an actual emergency.

### Before the hurricane

#### Tracking the hurricane

Use your hurricane tracking app. The NOAA [National Hurricane Center website](#) is a good source for keeping up to date on the latest hurricane activities. Learn more about emergency alerts at the Ready.gov [Emergency Alerts website](#).

#### Emergency Response Team

- Gather the members of your farm's Emergency Response Team, who have been thoroughly trained in their respective tasks and are knowledgeable about the hazards found on the farm.
- Review the chain of command and individuals' primary and secondary roles and responsibilities.
- Discuss modes of communication as well as alternatives in case any communication channels become unusable during or after the hurricane.
- Review your farm's Emergency Contacts List.

## Employees' status and location

Review procedures to account for all employees after an emergency evacuation. Determine who will evacuate and who (if anyone) will stay during the hurricane. For those who evacuate, establish a schedule for checking in after the hurricane. For those who stay, be sure they have safe lodging and sufficient food and water and establish a clear plan for them to check in.

## Maps and emergency escape routes

Using the map of your farm with all buildings and contents, review emergency escape routes and hurricane preparation procedures for each building, facility, and area of the operation.

## Emergency equipment and supplies

Locate the following equipment and supplies:

- Emergency medical supplies for both humans and animals
- Raincoats and boots
- Weather-proofing supplies such as tarps and sandbags
- Fencing supplies
- Plumbing supplies
- Lumber, construction tools, nails, and ropes
- Portable lights, batteries, and battery-powered or hand-crank radios

## Food, water, and cash

- Make sure there is a 2-week supply of dry and canned food and drinking water (at least ½ gallon per person per day) stored onsite if personnel will be staying onsite.
- Secure cash reserves to use for purchasing supplies after the hurricane.

## Facility security

- Ensure that important documents are in a safe, dry place.
- Check on the security of roofing and siding materials and windows and doors, and make sure all other building components are tied down securely.
- Secure outside objects around your farm, so that they don't blow away or become hazardous projectiles.
- If there is a perimeter gate to the facility, close it to ensure that any animals that get loose during the hurricane are contained within the center area (e.g., pens, pasture).
- Check drainage ditches and culverts around your facilities for debris.
- Pump down all water from ditches.

## Equipment

- Ensure that all emergency equipment is ready (chainsaws, compressors, heavy machinery, etc.).
- Move all non-critical farm equipment to higher elevations or store in secure buildings.
- Move pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers to a secure place, on high ground if possible.
- Make sure that farm equipment you will need after the hurricane, such as tractors with front-end loaders or skid-steer loaders, is fully fueled.
- Be sure your backup generators are fully operational. Fill the fuel tanks and portable fuel storage tanks.

## Fuel

- Make sure you have a minimum of a 2-week supply of diesel and gas. Be sure the supplier understands how much you use daily and that it is necessary for farm operations. If secure storage facilities are available onsite, arrange for fuel deliveries several days prior to the expected hurricane impact. Consider fuel needs for tractors, generators, and farm vehicles.
- Any fuel stored onsite poses a contamination risk if storage tanks cannot be adequately protected from anticipated flooding. Move to higher ground or secure in place.
- Since fuel may be unavailable if service stations have no power, make sure portable fuel storage tanks are full.
- Ensure that tanks containing fuel, fertilizer, and other liquids are kept full and are tied down.

## Backup generators

- Retrieve backup generators and fuel and place them where needed.
- Connect generators to critical electrical loads as outlined in your Backup Power Plan.

## Electricity and gas shutdown

- [Outline the shutdown procedures for electricity and gas, according to instructions you are given by your utilities and other experts.]
- [Outline the shutdown procedures for specific equipment.]

Service or equipment to be shut down	Procedures for shutdown

## Forage crop

[Add actions specific to your crop.]

## Animal care

- Develop a care schedule for the animals, making sure that your employees' safety comes first.
- Check your feed inventory and schedule a delivery from the feed mill ahead of the hurricane if necessary.

## Immediately after the hurricane

### Safety

- Make safety your first priority. Do not rush back into a facility until you are sure it is safe. Use extreme caution due to the potentially injurious situations presented by weakened trees and damaged structures, equipment, and electrical and gas systems.
- Continue to watch the weather forecast. Are waters still forecast to rise more than they are now? Some floodwaters peak up to a week after the hurricane.

### Electricity and gas

- Avoid downed power lines, as these may still be live and present an electrocution hazard. Operate on the assumption that all downed power lines are live. Remember that a downed power line on a fence may energize the fence.
- When restoring electricity to buildings that have flooded, use extreme caution and consult with an electrician and your power provider. See the Alabama Cooperative Extension System [Restoring Electrical Service website](#).

- Natural gas or LP gas leaks can cause deadly explosions. Check for natural gas or LP gas leaks, and if a leak is suspected, turn off the main property gas line, evacuate the area, and notify your gas company and the authorities. Tell employees to stay clear.

### **Roads and buildings**

- Before entering any buildings, check for levee breaches, rising or incoming water, and evidence of structural fire or damage.
- As soon as it is safe, call in the employees needed for inspection and clearing debris from roads.
- Cordon off areas that are unsafe.

### **Security**

Watch your farm for unwelcome visitors like looters. Secure your equipment and farm entrances, and make sure your security cameras are operational.

### **Insurance and documentation**

- Do not begin cleaning up or repairing damage until you have thoroughly documented the damage. Contact your insurance adjuster as soon as possible to decide on the best plan for moving forward with potential damage assessment, cleanup, and repair.
- If you have experienced flooding and have flood insurance through the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program, see their [How do I Start My Flood Claim? website](#) for information about starting a claim.

# Emergency Contacts List

You may customize this for your operation. Delete items that do not pertain to your commodity or location and add companies or organizations specific to your commodity.

## Individuals

Name(s)	Role(s)	Phone number(s)	Notes
	Owner(s)		
	Members of the Emergency Response Team		
	Other key employees or managers		

## Emergency Services

Organization	Name(s)	Phone number(s)	Notes
Emergency medical responders			
Hospitals			
Fire department			
Law enforcement			
Emergency management agency			
Veterinarian			

### Utilities, Roads, and Trees

Organization	Name(s)	Phone number(s)	Notes
Electric utility or cooperative			
Natural gas utility			
Water utility			
County road department or State Department of Transportation			

### Insurance Companies

Organization	Name(s)	Phone number(s)	Notes
Commodity insurance companies			

### Contractors and Suppliers

Organization	Name(s)	Phone number(s)	Notes
Electrical contractor			
Plumbing contractor			
Mechanic			
Fuel supplier			
Generator servicing			
Equipment dealer			
Equipment rental company (emergency generators, lifts, etc.)			

### **Federal, State, and County Organizations**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Name(s)</b>	<b>Phone number(s)</b>	<b>Notes</b>
State Department of Agriculture			
State Board of Animal Health			
Local Extension office			
County emergency management agency			
County Health Department			
USDA Farm Service Agency			
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)			
U.S. Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)			
State Department of Agriculture or agency responsible for permits and inspection			



# Initial Site Planning

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Considerations when deciding on a new location to establish or purchase land for swine operations

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## Hurricane risk

No model or long-term forecast can determine when and where hurricanes will strike during any given hurricane season; however, return period maps have been developed to give a good indication of relative hurricane risk. Return period maps display the number of years between hurricane events and help quantify the vulnerability of coastal areas to hurricanes. To learn more about your area's hurricane return period, see the NOAA [What are the chances a hurricane will hit my home? website](#).

It is important to remember that return period maps represent a long-term average and that even if the average return period for a hurricane is 25 years, hurricanes can still occur at one spot on successive years or even in the same year. It is also important to understand that while most data show only where hurricanes have made landfall, hurricanes can also move hundreds of miles inland causing significant wind damage and flooding.

Use NOAA's [Historical Hurricane Tracks tool](#) for a map and dates of hurricanes that have impacted your area in the past 150 years. The timing and track of historic hurricanes may be different than those for future hurricanes and should be used with caution.

## Site characteristics

### Topography

- When planning for long-term preparedness, evaluate a potential site for your operations with an eye toward reducing the risk of surface flooding or coastal storm surge. It is unlikely that all risks can be avoided. However, the negative considerations of an elevated open site are often less than those of low-lying areas susceptible to flooding. Land should be gently sloping with adequate drainage.
- When possible, choose a site that has higher elevation areas so that buildings are constructed outside of a flood zone and farm equipment can be easily moved to avoid flooding.

## Flood risk and storm surge

- Assess historic and predictable patterns of flooding to determine which areas are at the highest risk of damage during extreme weather.
- Consult the following Federal and State resources for estimating flood risk:
  - FEMA [Flood Map Service Center website](#) (for official flood maps)
  - Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs [Flood Map website](#)
  - Florida residents should contact their county government
  - Georgia Department of Natural Resources [Flood Map Program website](#)
  - Louisiana State University AgCenter [FloodMaps Portal website](#)
  - Mississippi Emergency Management Agency [Floodplain Management website](#)
  - North Carolina [Flood Risk Information System website](#)
  - South Carolina Department of Natural Resources [Flood Mitigation Program website](#)
  - Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation [Flood Risk Information System website](#)
- Determine proximity to bodies of water at risk for storm surge. In some areas, storm surge can cause flooding many miles inland from the coast. See the NOAA [National Storm Surge Hazard Map](#) to assess your risk and plan a safe evacuation route.

## Buildings, roads, and waste lagoons

- Choose a site with good roads that will allow multiple escape routes when evacuating from hurricanes and tropical storms that can cause rising floodwaters, storm surge, or downed trees. It is critical that roads leading to and from the facility are outside of the 100-year flood plain to ensure feed and fuel delivery and allow for transport of animals off the farm.
- Ensure that the swine production facility is outside of the 100-year flood plain, and check with local zoning officials for additional requirements. If an existing facility or roads are in the flood plain, additional planning is required as discussed below.
- It is important also that lagoons be outside of the flood plain and designed so that surface runoff does not overflow them, causing a waste spill and possible environmental contamination.

## Utilities

- Plan to have utilities and other critical infrastructure permanently constructed on higher ground to avoid equipment and infrastructure damage during flooding.
- Search for areas with resilient electrical grids. Avoid relatively isolated sites with limited access to electrical utilities.

## Burial site

Identify a location for an approved burial site for catastrophic losses approved by the State Department of Agriculture or appropriate agency in the event there is a large number of animal deaths.

## Natural windbreaks

Natural windbreaks may be used to help reduce wind damage to the buildings. However, make sure that windbreaks are located far enough from buildings that downed trees will not damage buildings.

# Resource Links

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## Extension, State, and Federal websites

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### Alabama

Extension Websites	Purpose
<a href="#">Extension Office Locator</a> *	Contact information for Extension agents in your county
<a href="#">Disaster</a> *	Resources to help prepare for and recover from hurricanes and other disasters
Extension Disaster Education Network ( <a href="#">EDEN</a> )	Information and program resources to help with hurricane preparedness and recovery

\*Alabama Cooperative Extension System

State Websites	Purpose
Alabama <a href="#">Governor’s Office</a>	News and information from the Governor, including evacuation orders and emergency declarations
Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries ( <a href="#">ADAI</a> )	Main source for answers to your agriculture-related questions
ADAI <a href="#">Animal Industries Division</a>	Main source for answers to your animal industry-related questions
Alabama <a href="#">Emergency Management Agency</a>	News and resources to help you prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies, including hurricanes

## Florida

Extension Websites	Purpose
<a href="#">Swine</a> *	Resources to help swine producers improve management and productivity
<a href="#">Swine Health</a> *	Information and resources for managing swine health
<a href="#">Extension Office Locator</a> *	Contact information for Extension agents in your county
<a href="#">Disaster Preparation and Recovery</a> *	Resources to help prepare for and recover from hurricanes and other disasters
Extension Disaster Education Network ( <a href="#">EDEN</a> )	Information and program resources to help with hurricane preparedness and recovery

\*University of Florida IFAS Extension

State Websites	Purpose
Florida <a href="#">Governor’s Office</a>	News and information from the Governor, including evacuation orders and emergency declarations
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services ( <a href="#">FDACS</a> )	Main source for answers to your agriculture-related questions
FDACS <a href="#">Division of Animal Industry</a>	Main source for answers to your animal industry-related questions
Florida <a href="#">Division of Emergency Management</a>	News and resources to help you prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies, including hurricanes
Florida <a href="#">Emergency Response Team</a>	Disaster assistance resources for residents

## Georgia

Extension Websites	Purpose
<a href="#">Swine</a> *	Resources to help swine producers improve management and productivity
<a href="#">Extension Office Locator</a> *	Contact information for Extension agents in your county
<a href="#">Emergency Resources</a> *	Resources to help prepare for and recover from hurricanes and other disasters
Extension Disaster Education Network ( <a href="#">EDEN</a> )	Information and program resources to help with hurricane preparedness and recovery

\*University of Georgia Cooperative Extension

State Websites	Purpose
Georgia <a href="#">Governor's Office</a>	News and information from the Governor, including evacuation orders and emergency declarations
Georgia Department of Agriculture ( <a href="#">GDA</a> )	Main source for answers to your agriculture-related questions
GDA <a href="#">Animal Industry Division</a>	Main source for answers to your animal industry-related questions
Georgia <a href="#">Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency</a>	News and resources to help you prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies, including hurricanes

## Louisiana

<b>Extension Websites</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<a href="#">Swine</a> *	Resources to help swine producers improve management and productivity
<a href="#">Extension Office Locator</a> *	Contact information for Extension agents in your parish
<a href="#">Disaster Preparedness for Animals</a> *	Resources specific to animals to help prepare for hurricanes and other disasters
<a href="#">Disaster Information</a> *	Resources to help prepare for and recover from hurricanes and other disasters
Extension Disaster Education Network ( <a href="#">EDEN</a> )	Information and program resources to help with hurricane preparedness and recovery

\*Louisiana State University AgCenter

<b>State Websites</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Louisiana <a href="#">Governor’s Office</a>	News and information from the Governor, including evacuation orders and emergency declarations
Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry ( <a href="#">LDAF</a> )	Main source for answers to your agriculture-related questions
<a href="#">LDAF Office of Animal Health and Food Safety</a>	Main source for answers to your animal health-related questions
Louisiana <a href="#">Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness</a>	News and resources to help you prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies, including hurricanes
<a href="#">Emergency Louisiana</a>	Disaster assistance resources for residents

## Mississippi

Extension Websites	Purpose
<a href="#">Swine*</a>	Resources to help swine producers improve management and productivity
<a href="#">Animal Health*</a>	Information and resources for managing swine health
<a href="#">Extension Office Locator*</a>	Contact information for Extension agents in your county
<a href="#">Disaster Preparedness*</a>	Resources to help prepare for and recover from hurricanes and other disasters
Extension Disaster Education Network ( <a href="#">EDEN</a> )	Information and program resources to help with hurricane preparedness and recovery

\*Mississippi State University Extension Service

State Websites	Purpose
Mississippi <a href="#">Governor's Office</a>	News and information from the Governor, including evacuation orders and emergency declarations
Mississippi <a href="#">Department of Agriculture and Commerce</a>	Main source for answers to your agriculture-related questions
Mississippi <a href="#">Board of Animal Health</a>	Main source for answers to your animal health-related questions
Mississippi <a href="#">Emergency Management Agency</a>	News and resources to help you prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies, including hurricanes



## North Carolina

Extension Websites	Purpose
<a href="#">Swine</a> *	Resources to help swine producers improve management and productivity
<a href="#">Extension Office Locator</a> *	Contact information for Extension agents in your county
<a href="#">Disaster Information Center</a> *	Resources to help prepare for and recover from hurricanes and other disasters
Extension Disaster Education Network ( <a href="#">EDEN</a> )	Information and program resources to help with hurricane preparedness and recovery

\*North Carolina Cooperative Extension

State Websites	Purpose
North Carolina <a href="#">Governor's Office</a>	News and information from the Governor, including evacuation orders and emergency declarations
North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services ( <a href="#">NCDA&amp;CS</a> )	Main source for answers to your agriculture-related questions
NCDA&CS <a href="#">Veterinary Division Swine Health Programs</a>	Main source for answers to your swine-related questions
North Carolina <a href="#">Department of Public Safety Emergency Management</a>	News and resources to help you prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies, including hurricanes

## South Carolina

Extension Websites	Purpose
<a href="#">Swine Information</a> *	Resources to help swine producers improve management and productivity
<a href="#">Extension Office Locator</a> **	Contact information for Extension agents in your county
<a href="#">Emergency Preparedness and Post Hurricane Impact Resources</a> **	Resources to help prepare for and recover from hurricanes and other disasters
Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN)	Information and program resources to help with hurricane preparedness and recovery

\*Clemson University Livestock Poultry Health  
 \*\*Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service

State Websites	Purpose
South Carolina <a href="#">Governor's Office</a>	News and information from the Governor, including evacuation orders and emergency declarations
South Carolina <a href="#">Department of Agriculture</a>	Main source for answers to your agriculture-related questions
South Carolina <a href="#">Emergency Management Division</a>	News and resources to help you prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies, including hurricanes
<a href="#">Team South Carolina Emergency Response</a>	Disaster assistance resources for residents

## Virginia

Extension Websites	Purpose
<a href="#">Extension Office Locator</a> *	Contact information for Extension agents in your county
<a href="#">Disaster Education Network</a> *	Resources to help prepare for and recover from hurricanes and other disasters
Extension Disaster Education Network ( <a href="#">EDEN</a> )	Information and program resources to help with hurricane preparedness and recovery

\*Virginia Cooperative Extension

State Websites	Purpose
Virginia <a href="#">Governor's Office</a>	News and information from the Governor, including evacuation orders and emergency declarations
Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services ( <a href="#">VDACS</a> )	Main source for answers to your agriculture-related questions
VDACS <a href="#">Swine</a>	Main source for swine-related topics
Virginia <a href="#">Department of Emergency Management</a>	News and resources to help you prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies, including hurricanes

## State (FSA and NRCS)

State FSA Websites	Purpose
USDA <a href="#">FSA Alabama</a>	Focus on State FSA resources, including financial and technical information sharing
USDA <a href="#">FSA Florida</a>	
USDA <a href="#">FSA Georgia</a>	
USDA <a href="#">FSA Louisiana</a>	
USDA <a href="#">FSA Mississippi</a>	
USDA <a href="#">FSA North Carolina</a>	
USDA <a href="#">FSA South Carolina</a>	
USDA <a href="#">FSA Virginia</a>	

State NRCS Websites	Purpose
USDA <a href="#">NRCS Alabama</a>	Focus on State NRCS resources, including financial and technical information sharing
USDA <a href="#">NRCS Florida</a>	
USDA <a href="#">NRCS Georgia</a>	
USDA <a href="#">NRCS Louisiana</a>	
USDA <a href="#">NRCS Mississippi</a>	
USDA <a href="#">NRCS North Carolina</a>	
USDA <a href="#">NRCS South Carolina</a>	
USDA <a href="#">NRCS Virginia</a>	

## Federal

Federal Websites	Purpose
Ready.gov <a href="#">Hurricanes</a>	Resources to help individuals prepare for and recover from hurricanes
U.S. Department of Agriculture ( <a href="#">USDA</a> )	News and announcements related to agricultural commodities and disaster recovery programs
USDA <a href="#">Disaster Resource Center</a>	Resources to help you build long-term resilience to and recover from hurricanes and other disasters
USDA <a href="#">Office Locator</a>	Contact information for USDA offices in your county, including FSA, NRCS, Rural Development, and Conservation Districts
USDA Farm Service Agency ( <a href="#">FSA</a> )	Assistance with securing loans, receiving payments, and applying for disaster relief programs
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service ( <a href="#">NRCS</a> )	Financial and technical assistance for farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners
USDA Risk Management Agency ( <a href="#">RMA</a> )	Assistance with Federal crop insurance and managing risk
USDA RMA <a href="#">Agent Locator</a>	Contact information for local RMA offices in your county
U.S. Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency ( <a href="#">FEMA</a> )	News and information to help you prepare for and recover from hurricanes and other disasters
U.S. Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ( <a href="#">NOAA</a> )	Resources to view historical, current, and predicted hurricane activity and warnings in your area
NOAA <a href="#">National Hurricane Center</a>	Current and forecasted tropical cyclone activity, educational resources, and advisory warnings for your area of interest
NOAA National Weather Service <a href="#">Weather-Ready Nation</a>	Latest news, information, and technology to enable informed decision making before, during, and after a hurricane strikes

**Dove, Robert. 2021.** Swine producers guide. Gen. Tech. Rep. SRS-260t. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 49 p. <https://doi.org/10.2737/SRS-GTR-260t>. (McNulty, Steven; Gavazzi, Michael, eds. Hurricane preparation and recovery in the Southeastern United States).

This is 1 of 23 guides to help Southeastern U.S. producers of economically important agricultural commodities build resilience to, prepare for, and recover from hurricane impacts. All guides can be found on the USDA Southeast Climate Hub [Hurricane Preparation and Recovery Commodity Guides website](#).



<https://www.climatehubs.usda.gov/hubs/southeast/>

To access this guide, as well as those produced  
for other commodities, please visit:

<https://www.climatehubs.usda.gov/hubs/southeast/topics/>



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