

# Texas Dairy Matters

*Higher Education Supporting the Industry*

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## **Are You Ready For A Disaster?**

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Winter Storm Goliath has taken a devastating toll on our West Texas dairy herds. Final numbers aren't in yet, but significant numbers of milk cows, young stock, and fluid milk were lost due to the blizzard conditions. Five of the hardest hit counties-Bailey, Castro, Deaf Smith, Lamb and Parmer-are in Texas' top ten milk producing counties. Milk production from the 60 herds in those five counties in November totaled over 343 million pounds, or roughly 42% of the state's production.

Over the years, the industry has spent a lot of time planning for a disease outbreak and many dairies plan for a power outage by having back-up generators. You never know what the next "disaster" might be, but spending some time planning for emergency situations in advance can certainly help guide your response.

The livestock industry has come together to help you develop a business continuity plan that could help you recover from various disasters. One of these was developed through a grant by the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission and is available on-line at : <http://prod.i-info.com/dashboard/portal.aspx?gid=5A3D6DF3412E47C38C897E0DC7F96E24>. You can get to the site by just entering <http://prod.i-info.com> but will need to click on the icon in the middle of the page to find your community of interest, which is listed as Panhandle/Northwest Texas. Then you can click on the "Livestock Industry" icon. You do have to register at the "RRAP Portal". After registering you will receive an email that will then let you create a user name and password, so you can login.

This comprehensive Business Operations Plan has three key steps: 1) Business Impact Analysis; 2) Risk Assessment; and 3) Business Continuity Planning. You have the option as to how much you want to do. In addition to developing the plan, there is information on training employees included. This is going to take time, but can help you recover from a number of different disasters.

There are other resources available such as the Iowa State University “Farm Emergency Preparedness Plan” which is also available on the web at: <http://www.prep4agthreats.org/All-Hazard-Preparedness/farm-emergency-preparedness-plan> .

Dairy Management Inc. has developed similar materials, which are available through them or your local check-off organizations.

Although it takes time, taking the time in advance to develop a plan to withstand the various disasters that can come from a disease outbreak, Mother Nature’s wrath, or animal activists can help your dairy survive these events. Links to the aforementioned resources will be posted on our <http://texasdairymatters.org> website under the “resources” tab.

on postpartum serum and urine metabolites and performance. J. Dairy Sci. 97:7133-7143.