Hurricane Preparation Suggestions for Dairies

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Most dairies cannot evacuate during a hurricane, so preparations must be made to shelter in place and provide care for the animals. Each dairy should have a specific plan for handling a storm and the plan should be reviewed with employees so everyone knows what to do. The following items should be considered as part of an overall checklist when preparing for the storm. Others may be added that are specific for individual operations.

1. Make sure there are adequate inventories of feed, fuel, and supplies on hand to operate for a minimum of 1 week.

2. Make sure the emergency generator(s) is working properly, has been serviced, and has a full tank of fuel. Have a backup plan in case the generator malfunctions.

3. Check lagoons and start pumping onto approved fields to provide adequate space for rainwater from the storm as soon as possible.

4. Securely anchor calf hutches so they do not blow away in the event there are strong winds. If necessary, use hay bales to make a wind break around the hutches.

5. If portable shade structures are used, remove shade cloth from these structures so they do not get blown around and cause property damage or injury animals or employees.

6. Move cattle to areas that are easily accessible and away from any low areas that could be flooded.

7. Secure any items that could be blown around by strong winds so they do not become projectiles and cause additional damage.

8. Inspect power lines and remove any trees that might blow down and disrupt power.

9. Review work schedules and have a plan in the event some employees cannot make it in to work. Make sure contact information is posted for

10. Do not forget to stock food and drinks as well as suitable rain clothing at the dairy for workers.

11. When the storm arrives, continuously monitor the weather and plan activities to minimize risk of injury to workers and animals. Have a place designated for all employees to shelter in the event there is a tornado.