

Preparing Farms for Potential Flooding

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When heavy rain is expected and the soil is already saturated, flooding is likely. Take steps ahead of time to reduce potential losses and speed recovery, should flooding occur. Here are some reminders of ways to prepare for flooding.

Monitor the situation. Keep an eye on predictions and real-time measurements of rain and surface water levels. These can help you estimate the level and timing of flood risk for your location. National Water Center maps are at <https://www.weather.gov/owp/operations>.

For guidance on using this resource see: <https://go.uvm.edu/nwpsintro>. Remember that forecasts and predictions are based on models and can be wrong in either direction.

Move vulnerable resources out of harm's way.

Get equipment, irrigation pumps, tractors and any harvested feed out of low-lying fields, structures, and away from stream banks that may erode/collapse. Make sure livestock can move out of areas before they flood, so they do not get trapped. Ask beekeepers to remove their hives for safekeeping.



Elevate, secure, and protect materials that may be ruined or washed away. These include beehives, chemicals, fertilizers, fuel containers, supplies, etc. that may be exposed or inside buildings prone to flooding. [Sandbags](#) may be useful to keep water out of low-lying structures. Ensure that drainage systems are clear of debris to help prevent flooding on the farm.

Harvest crops that are likely to flood. If time and labor permit, and the risk looks high enough, it may be advisable to harvest ahead of schedule rather than lose crops altogether. If the edible portion of a human food crop is exposed to flood waters, it is considered adulterated and should not enter human food channels ([FDA Guidance](#)).



Contact your support networks. If you have an email list, social media, or other means of connecting to community members, let them know of your flood preparations and how you intend to keep them informed about when and what type of assistance may be needed. [06]

Have supplies for your employees and volunteers on hand. These include drinking water, non-perishable food, first aid supplies, and protective equipment such as gloves and masks.

Sign up for free disaster insurance through the Farm Service Agency [NAP](#) (noninsured agricultural assistance program) -- if your farm is a woman-owned business (at least 50%), you have farmed for 10 years or less, you are a veteran or a member of an underserved community. Simply complete the 2-page [CCC-860 form](#) and submit it to your [FSA County Office](#) or call the Farm Service Agency **today** at (802) 658-2803 for information on how to submit it.

Plan to document losses. Know who is responsible for taking pictures of infrastructure damage and crop and livestock losses, if they occur.

Stay safe! Instruct people not to drive into flood waters of unknown depths, to steer clear of downed power lines, and make sure that everyone has an emergency contact that will be kept informed of where people are when dealing with flooding.

Hope for the best, plan for the worst. Don't assume that rainfall or flood predictions will not be exceeded.

For more information and referrals contact University of Vermont Extension at extension@uvm.edu.

Compiled by Vern Grubinger 7/10/24

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