

Food and Agriculture Incident Annex

Coordinating Agencies:

Department of Agriculture
Department of Health and Human Services

Cooperating Agencies

Environmental Protection Agency
Department of Commerce
Department of Defense
Department of Energy
Department of Homeland Security
Department of the Interior
Department of Justice
Department of Labor
Department of State
Department of Transportation
Department of Veterans Affairs
General Services Administration
U.S. Agency for International Development
U.S. Postal Service
American Red Cross

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of the Food and Agriculture Incident Annex is to describe how the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services, and the Cooperating Agencies will respond to all incidents that require a coordinated Federal response involving the Nation's agriculture and food systems. This annex supports policies and procedures outlined in ESF#8, Public Health and Medical Services Annex; ESF#10, Oil and Hazardous Materials Response Annex; ESF#11, Agriculture and Natural Resources Annex; Terrorism Incident Law Enforcement and Investigation Annex; and the Federal Food and Agriculture Decontamination and Disposal Roles and Responsibilities document.

Scope

The Food and Agriculture Incident Annex outlines the actions, roles, and responsibilities associated with a response to a food or agriculture incident of known or unknown origin requiring Federal assistance. The protocols outlined in the annex apply to all actual or potential incidents. Actions described in this Annex may take place with or without a Presidential Stafford Act declaration or a public health

emergency declaration by the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) or an emergency declaration by the Secretary of Agriculture (USDA). This Annex applies to incidents impacting food and agriculture that require a coordinated Federal response.

The objectives of a coordinated Federal response to an incident impacting food and agriculture are to:

- Detect the event through the reporting of illness, disease/pest surveillance, routine testing, consumer complaints and/or environmental monitoring;
- Establish the primary coordinating agency;
- Determine the source of the incident or outbreak;
- Control and contain the distribution of the affected source;
- Identify and protect the population at risk;
- Assess the public health, food, agriculture, and law enforcement implications;
- Assess the extent of residual biological, chemical, or radiological contamination and decontaminate and dispose as necessary;

A food and agriculture incident requiring a Federal coordinated response may threaten public health, animal nutrition, food production, aquaculture, livestock production, wildlife, soils, rangelands, and agricultural water supplies. Responding to the unique attributes of this type of incident requires separate planning considerations that are tailored to specific health and agriculture concerns and effects of the disease (e.g. deliberate contamination versus natural outbreaks; plant and animal versus processed food, etc.) Specific operational guidelines, developed by organizations with responsibility for the unique aspects of a particular disease or planning consideration, will supplement this annex and are intended as guidance to assist Federal, State, local and tribal public health and agriculture authorities.

Special Considerations

Detection of an intentional or unintentional contamination/adulteration of food, animals, plants, or a pest outbreak may occur in several different ways and involve several different modalities:

- A terrorist attack on food or agriculture may initially be indistinguishable from a naturally occurring event; moreover, depending upon the particular agent and associated symptoms, several days could pass before public health, food, agriculture and medical authorities even suspect that terrorism may be the cause.

In such a case, criminal intent may not be apparent until some time after illnesses are recognized.

- A devastating attack or the threat of an attack on the domestic animal population and plant crops through use of highly infective exotic diseases or pest infestation could result in severe economic loss. Early detection, allowing for early intervention, would come from agriculture expert authority reports as well as unusual patterns in surveillance systems.
 - A food or agricultural incident may involve international trade.
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Policies

- If any agency becomes aware of an overt threat involving biological, chemical, or radiological agents or indications that instances of disease may not be the result of natural causes, the Department of Justice must be notified through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Weapons of Mass Destruction Operations Unit (WMDOU). The FBI, in turn, immediately notifies the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC) and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC).
- USDA and HHS, or both Departments acting in coordination, will serve as the overall primary coordinating agency for food and agricultural incidents that are not designated as Incidents of National Significance using established departmental procedures. USDA and/or HHS will be supported by other federal agencies as appropriate. For Incidents of National Significance involving food or agriculture, USDA and HHS will perform the roles described in this Annex in coordination with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and State partners. USDA and/or HHS will function as Senior Federal Officials within the Joint Field Office Coordination Group when the incident requires the appointment of a Principal Federal Official and/or a Federal Coordinating Officer.
- Coordinating agencies will use the structure consistent with the NRP and the National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) to carry out their response duties affecting State, local, and tribal governments.
- Nothing in this plan alters or impedes the ability of Federal, State, local, and tribal governments from carrying out their specific authorities to perform their responsibilities under law.
- Participating Federal agencies may take appropriate independent emergency actions within the limits of their own statutory authority to protect the public, mitigate immediate hazards, and collect information concerning the emergency.

This may require deploying assets before they are requested via normal NRP protocols.

- State, local, and tribal governments are primarily responsible for detecting and responding to food and agriculture incidents and implementing measures to minimize the health and economic consequences of such an incident or outbreak.
- This annex does not create any new authorities nor change any existing ones.

Planning Assumptions

- The first evidence of dissemination of an agent may be the presentation of disease in humans, animals or plants. This could manifest either in clinical case reports to domestic or international public health or agriculture authorities or in unusual patterns of symptoms or encounters within domestic or international human and animal health and crop production surveillance systems.
- Food and agriculture surveillance systems may detect the presence of a radiological, chemical or biological agent and trigger directed environmental sampling and intensified human and animal surveillance to rule out or confirm a case. If a case is confirmed, then these systems may allow for mobilization of a public health, medical, and law enforcement response in advance of the appearance of the first human and/or animal cases or quick response after the first human and/or animal cases are identified.
- The occurrence or threat of multiple catastrophic incidents may significantly reduce the size, speed, and depth of the federal response. If deemed necessary or prudent, the Federal Government may reallocate finite resources to respond appropriately.
- A food and agriculture incident may be distributed across multiple jurisdictions simultaneously. Response to this incident could require the simultaneous management of multiple “incident sites” from national and regional headquarters locations in coordination with multiple state and local jurisdictions.
- The Federal Government supports affected State, local, and tribal health or agriculture jurisdictions as requested or required. The response by Federal agencies is flexible and adapts as necessary to respond to the incident.
- An act of food tampering or agro-terrorism, particularly an act directed against large sectors of the industry within the United States, will have major consequences that can overwhelm the capabilities of many State, local, and tribal governments to respond and may seriously challenge existing Federal response capabilities.

- A food or agriculture incident may include biological, chemical, or radiological contaminants, which may require concurrent implementation of other federal plans and procedures.
- Food and agriculture incidents may not be immediately recognized as such until the biological, chemical, or radiological agent is detected or the effects of exposure on the public, animals, or plants are reported to appropriate authorities.
- No single entity possesses the authority, expertise, and resources to act unilaterally on the many complex issues that may arise in response to a food or agricultural incident.

Concept of Operations

General

The primary functions of the Food and Agriculture Incident Annex are to:

- Support effective and coordinated communication between Federal, state, and local responders to a potential or actual incident that require a coordinated Federal response impacting food and agriculture
- Minimize public health and economic impacts of a food and agriculture-related incident
- Specify roles and responsibilities of coordinating Federal agencies and departments
- Provide transition from response to rapid recovery following a food and agriculture-related incident.

The key elements for an effective response to a food or agriculture incident include the following:

- Rapid identification, detection, and confirmation of the incident;
- Implementation of an integrated response to a food attack/adulteration, highly contagious animal/zoonotic or exotic plant disease or plant pest infestation;
- Identification of the human and animal population, and/or plants at risk;
- Determination of how the agent involved was transmitted, including an assessment of the efficiency of transmission;
- Determination of the public health and economic implications;

- Control, containment, decontamination, and disposal;
- Protection of the population(s) and/or plants at risk through appropriate measures;
- Dissemination of information to advise the public of the incident;
- Communication with all relevant stakeholders;
- Assessment of environmental contamination and extent of clean-up, decontamination, and disposal of livestock carcasses, plants, or food products involved; and
- Identification of the law enforcement implications/assessment of the threat.

Primary Federal functions include supporting State, local, and tribal public health, food, and agriculture entities according to the policies and procedures detailed in the NRP.

Incident Detection and Identification

Determination of Incident

State, local, or tribal authorities may be among the first to recognize the initial indication of intentional or naturally occurring contamination of food, of highly infective plant or animal disease, or of an economically devastating plant pest infestation or animal disease. Recognition may come from a significantly increased number of people reporting ill to public health care providers, increased reporting of sick animals to veterinarians or animal health officials, or numerous plant anomalies reported by state officials, or the public. Other sources may include routine laboratory surveillance, inspection reports, consumer complaint systems and hotlines. Therefore, the most critical decision-making support requires surveillance information, identification of the cause of the incident, a determination of whether the incident is intentional or naturally occurring, and the identification of the human or animal population and/or plants at risk.

Laboratory Testing

Identification and confirmation of contaminated food or the environment, highly infective animals and plants, or an economically devastating plant pest infestation, may occur through routine surveillance and laboratory testing.

DHS established the Integrated Consortium of Laboratory Networks (ICLN) to assure that the U.S. homeland security infrastructure has a coordinated and operational system of laboratory networks that provide timely, high quality, and interpretable results for early detection and effective consequence management of acts of terrorism and other events requiring an integrated laboratory response. The ICLN provides an interagency

organizational structure for the nation's advanced-capacity laboratories to detect, respond to, and recover from Incidents of National Significance involving human health, animal health, food, agriculture, and plants. The collective national laboratory testing capacity of the ICLN derives from utilization of established laboratory networks such as the Food Emergency Response Network (FERN); the Laboratory Response Network (LRN); the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN); the National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN); and additional laboratory networks within the Federal agencies with responsibilities and authorities for laboratory preparedness and response.

Notification

A potential or actual incident requiring a Federal coordinate response involving contaminated food, infected animals or plants, or economically devastating plant pest infestation shall be brought to the immediate attention of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of HHS. The HHS Secretary then notifies the Assistant Secretary for Public Health Emergency Preparedness. This incident shall also be brought to the attention of designated officials according to ESF #8 Annex and ESF #11 Annex as well as departmental policies. If terrorist or other criminal activity is suspected in connection with the incident, procedures outlined in the Terrorism Incident Law Enforcement and Investigation Annex will be followed. USDA and HHS are responsible for notifying the Secretary of Homeland Security through the National Operations Center.

A potential or actual incident requiring a Federal coordinated response involving food, animals, or plants shall be brought to the immediate attention of the appropriate industry segments by regulatory officials (HHS, USDA, or EPA), particularly in the instance of a terrorist attack.

International Notification

Once a positive determination is made that an identified contaminated/adulterated food or agricultural product has crossed the U.S. border, HHS and/or USDA will notify the Department of State and other international agencies as appropriate.

Activation

Once notified of a credible threat of contamination/adulteration or a natural or intentional disease outbreak in humans, plants, or animals, HHS and USDA will coordinate with Federal, State, local, and tribal authorities and key industry entities to determine the extent to which Federal, state, local, tribal and industry resources are needed and can be provided. HHS and USDA will coordinate with ESF #8 and #11 partners to assess the situation and determine appropriate public health, food, and agriculture actions. Some or all of the ensuing actions may include:

- Targeted epidemiologic investigation;
- Increased surveillance for patients with certain clinical signs and symptoms;
- Increased surveillance of animals for certain clinical signs and symptoms;

- Increased surveillance of plants for signs of disease or other pest infestation;
- Targeted inspection of human food and animal feed manufacturing, distributing, retail and other facilities as appropriate; and
- Increased inspection of plants and animals for contamination.

Actions

The following steps are required to contain and control a food or agricultural incident requiring a Federal coordinated response:

- HHS and USDA will assist State, local, and tribal authorities:
 - To ensure the safety and security of the food and agricultural infrastructure in the affected area as needed;
 - In inspecting food facilities that can continue to operate in the affected area as needed;
 - In conducting laboratory tests to identify contaminated food, animals, or plants;
 - In conducting product traceback and trace forward investigations of identified food, animals, or plants; and,
 - To embargo, detain, seize, recall, or condemn affected food, animals, or plants.
- EPA will approve, as appropriate, requests from Federal and State authorities and industry for the use of pesticides to decontaminate plants, animal facilities, and food facilities from biological contaminants.
- HHS, USDA, and EPA will:
 - Provide technical assistance and guidance to state, local, and tribal authorities who are coordinating food facility cleaning and decontamination, depending on the nature of the contaminating agent;
 - Provide technical assistance and guidance to state, local, and tribal authorities who are coordinating the disposal of contaminated food, animal carcasses, or plants;
 - Coordinate with Federal, State, tribal, and local authorities as well as the food and agriculture industry during the investigation, response, decontamination, disposal and recovery efforts;
 - Coordinate with DHS, State, local, tribal and other Federal agencies on the messages released to the public to ensure that communications are consistent and accurate.

Responsibilities

This section summarizes Federal coordinating agency responsibilities in response to a potential or actual incidence requiring a Federal coordinated response that involves contaminated food, infected animals or plants. The procedures in this annex are built on the core coordinating structures of the NRP. The specific responsibilities of each department and agency are described in greater detail in the respective ESFs.

Coordinating Agencies

Department of Health and Human Services

HHS provides leadership by ensuring the safety and security of food, animal feed, food-producing animals, and animal therapeutics. HHS, through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and in coordination with the states, develops and implements surveillance systems to monitor the health of the human population. [Note: HHS, through the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), has statutory authority for all domestic and imported food except meat, poultry, and egg products, which are under the authority of the USDA/Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). FDA also has statutory authority for animal feed and for the approval of animal drugs intended for both therapeutic and non-therapeutic use in food animals as well as companion animals.]

Department of Agriculture

USDA provides leadership by assuring the safety and security of processed meat, poultry and egg products through the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS); coordinating animal and plant disease and pest response through the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS); and providing nutritional assistance through the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). (Note: USDA, through FSIS, has statutory authority for meat, poultry and egg products.)

Additional roles and responsibilities of cooperating agencies are provided in the table below.

Agency Roles and Responsibilities Matrix*

Function	ARC	DHS	DOC	DOD	DOE	DOI	DOJ	DOL	DOS	DOT	EPA	GSA	HHS	USAID	USDA	USPS	VA
Coordination		■											■		■		
National Defense and security				■													
Rapid ID of agent		■											■		■		
Laboratory Confirmation					■								■		■		
Outbreak Transmission Information						■							■		■		
Control and Contain Outbreak													■		■		
Decontamination and Disposal											■		■		■		
Food Safety and Food Defense													■		■		
Public Health													■		■		
Public Information													■		■		
Law Enforcement Issues		■					■						■		■		
Economic, Market Issues			■					■	■						■		
Support Services (Feeding, Facilities, Counseling, Transport)	■			■	■					■			■		■	■	■
International Coordination									■					■			

*Additional information may be found in ESF-8 and ESF-11.