

FOR RELEASE: Immediately
FROM: Ken Bolton, UW-Extension Jefferson County Dairy & Livestock Agent
SUBJECT: TIMELY TOPICS

Livestock and Farm Buildings After A Flood

Once the water recedes after a flood there are many things that need to be dealt with before putting a building back in service. These involve dealing with safety issues, service issues and other efforts that will prolong the life of the building.

When a building has been submerged or partly submerged the electrical system and water system have likely been compromised. Of course the electrical system is the most immediate safety concern because of the implication of electrocution. Care should be taken to be sure all systems are not energized. All electrical panels and wiring will need to be opened and thoroughly dried. Wiring and connections will need to be checked for corrosion and loose fittings. Any elements showing corrosion should be replaced if not easily cleaned. Open all conduits to drain water. Outlets and switches that can not be cleaned or checked for corrosion should be replaced. Motors will likely need to be disassembled and should be checked by a qualified electrician.

Water systems, including pumps and treatment systems should be checked and thoroughly purged with sanitary water, especially before using for human consumption. Check pressure tanks and any electrical components. Examine other components such as propane regulators, tanks and lines. Tanks may have floated, compromising the system integrity.

Service issues include thoroughly checking every component including fans, heaters, controllers and lighting. Deep pit swine buildings will likely need to have the pit pumped before the building can be put into service. Wet feed should be removed from all bins and feed lines. Wet feed can be very corrosive. Feed bins may have to be repositioned if they have been moved by rising water. Service roads also will need to be repaired to make them capable of handling farm service traffic.

To reduce the chances that the building life is not unduly shortened by continuing flood issues, do such things as removing interior wall coverings to dry walls thoroughly. This will prevent further wood and fastener deterioration. Rigid board insulation may be reused but fiberglass and cellulose insulation that has become wet loses its insulation properties. A thorough inspection of building integrity, including foundation anchors, should be conducted. Clean all moldy and mildewy surfaces to prevent potential health effects on animals and workers.

Before undertaking any repair work, check with your insurer for the necessary documentation for proof of loss. Company requirements may vary.

Contact the UW-Extension, Jefferson County Office, at 920-674-7196 for more information about dairy and livestock management following flooding.

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