



**South Dakota Severe Winter  
Storms, Snowstorm and Flooding  
FEMA-4155-DR-SD**



**ESF #11 After Action Report (AAR)**

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**Incident Summary**

Incident period: October 3- 16, 2013. From October 3-5 portions of western South Dakota received up to 48" of snow which, coupled with high winds, created unprecedented blizzard conditions resulting in thousands of power outages and downed power lines. Six counties reported record precipitation and multiple counties and cities declared local disasters. An estimated 30,000 head of livestock were killed as a result of the blizzard. (This number could potentially double as more data is reported). Subsequent melting and additional precipitation caused flooding that resulted in additional damage to public infrastructure. The SD Governor requested a Major Disaster Declaration on October 31, 2013 and one was granted on November 8, 2013. The FEMA Disaster Declaration (FEMA-4155-DR-SD) is for Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation for multiple counties and the Cheyenne River and Oglala Sioux Tribe.

ESF #11 was activated on November 18. ESF #11 was activated via FEMA mission assignment to USDA for support to the Pierre, SD Forward Field Office (FFO) in November and the Rapid City, SD Joint Field Office (JFO) when it opened in December.

ESF #11 coordinated response and recovery efforts with FEMA, APHIS Veterinary Services, Animal Care, Wildlife Services, and Plant, Protection and Quarantine, USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the State Department of Agriculture, State Animal Industry Board, and ESF #11 partner agencies FNS, FSIS, and DOI. ESF #11 assisted FEMA staff with coordination and de-confliction of USDA program activities with FEMA programs.

**Lessons Learned**

**Successful**

- Early coordination with the South Dakota Office of Emergency Management and the South Dakota Animal Industry Board for situational awareness and early identification of agricultural issues proved very valuable, particularly since the event occurred during the government furlough and routine ESF #11 contacts (Veterinary Services) for the state were not available.
- ESF #11 Coordinator as the single USDA point of contact for FEMA provided streamlined technical assistance to FEMA versus mission assigning multiple USDA resources to include APHIS, FSA, and NRCS. APHIS dispatch and Animal Care provided excellent support.
- Presenting USDA program information at the FEMA Public Assistance (PA) Inspector's Briefings provided valuable information to the FEMA Public Assistance field staff resulting in minimized applicant confusion over various federal agency disaster assistance programs. In particular, briefing PA on the NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was beneficial as the program can assist with livestock carcass removal and disposal costs on private lands for eligible ranchers.

**Challenges/Areas for Improvement**

- Inconsistent communication with FSA and ESF #11 National Coordinator.
- Activation for response occurred weeks after the incident so response and recovery were operating simultaneously during this long-term incident.