



**Hurricane Matthew, Region IV
Florida, Georgia,
North and South Carolina
October 2016
Emergency Support Function
(ESF) #11
After Action Report (AAR)**



Incident Summary

Emergency Support Function #11 (ESF #11) was activated to the FEMA Region IV Regional Response Coordination Center (RIV RRCC) at 7:00 am October 4, 2016, in preparation of possible landfall of Hurricane Matthew. Possible high wind and storm surge impacts were anticipated in Florida (FL), Georgia (GA), South Carolina (SC), and North Carolina (NC) therefore FEMA sent Liaison Officers (LNOs) and multiple Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMATs) to each state. NC eventually had three FEMA IMATs providing assistance within the state at the same time. This activation was more complicated than normal because the hurricane's projected landfall was constantly changing and FEMA was repeatedly shifting IMATs and the focus of their resources from one state to another. The center of Hurricane Matthew eventually made landfall as a Category One storm October 8th, near McClellanville, SC and exited into the Atlantic Ocean just south of North Myrtle Beach, SC becoming post tropical October 9th off the coast of NC. Northeastern South Carolina and eastern North Carolina received the most damage because of the sixteen plus inches of rain and the resulting extensive riverine flooding. Several rivers in NC established new record flood levels and some of the localities affected and damaged by Hurricane Floyd were again devastated. ESF #11 provided Desk Officers (DO) at the FL and NC Emergency Operations Centers (EOC). ESF #11 was demobilized from the RRCC on October 13th.

Lessons Learned

Successful

1. ESF #11 Desk Officers provided at the RIV RRCC by USDA Food and Nutrition Service and APHIS' Animal Care, Plant Protection & Quarantine, and Veterinary Services (VS)
2. ESF #11 Desk Officers provided to FL and NC EOCs as requested by FEMA IMATs
3. Having the national ESF #11 daily coordination call separate from the regional call
4. Coordination with National Response Coordination Center and National Coordinator
5. Continued outstanding support of APHIS Mission Assignment Manager
6. Providing USDA Recovery POCs as requested by FEMA and State Emergency Management (EM)

Challenges/Areas for Improvement

1. The FEMA IMAT directed to SC EOC initially requested an ESF #11 Desk Officer. That IMAT was re-directed to FL EOC and the new IMAT cancelled request while ESF #11 DO from Alabama was beginning travel to SC.
2. If USDA Recovery POCs at the state level were more proactive in reaching out to State EM and FEMA it might minimize multiple repetitive requests coming to the ESF #11 RC.
3. Simplified, clear consistent APHIS Dispatch messaging should be developed
4. Because four RIV states were impacted and a concurrent VS emergency response was beginning in VS District 2, some newer, less experienced ESF #11 Desk Officers had to be utilized. This experience emphasizes the need of continued recruitment and annual training of desk officers plus the need of enhanced support from all ESF #11 partners.
5. VPN connectivity continued to be sporadic at the RIV RRCC, a better solution is needed.

6. Multiple requests for USDA POCs from multiple FEMA IMAT personnel in the same state demonstrated again that FEMA staff was not communicating effectively. Validating FEMA requests is important.
7. There are still challenges within APHIS programs in understanding what ESF #11 at the FEMA Regional level has access to based on state level reporting. States share with ESF #11 at the RRCC what information they decide to include in their reports.