



**Severe Flooding, Louisiana  
August 2016  
Emergency Support Function  
(ESF) #11  
After Action Report (AAR)**



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Incident Summary

In August 2016, severe flooding impacted numerous Parishes in central and southern Louisiana. Some areas received 30 inches of rain in a very short time. It is estimated that over 60,000 homes were damaged and over 30,000 people were rescued. Many homes were not in flood prone areas and therefore residents did not have flood insurance. A major Presidential Declaration for both Individual and Public Assistance was declared in twenty-one Parishes with the potential for more Parishes to be added as damage assessments are completed.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region VI activated USDA ESF #11 on August 17th, 2016, to coordinate response efforts at the FEMA Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) in Denton, TX and subsequently at Joint Field Office (JFO) in Baton Rouge, LA. ESF #11 personnel staffed the RRCC beginning August 18th as requested by FEMA. ESF #11 transitioned personnel to the JFO in Baton Rouge, LA beginning August 22nd and remained mobilized there until August 29th. ESF #11 initial response actions included activation of the Food and Nutrition Service Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and support to the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) and FEMA ESF #6 for animal emergency response issues.

Major Tasks Completed

1. The FEMA Deputy Federal Coordinating Officer for DR-4277 tasked ESF #11 to assist FEMA ESF #6 and the State with coordinating the priority placement of pets and owners from one shelter to the FEMA Transitional Shelter Assistance program. The ESF #11 task was completed with help from the Louisiana State Animal Response Team at the subject shelter.
2. ESF #11 assisted FEMA Operations with coordinating animal carcass issues and questions from Parish officials. FEMA Public Assistance Guidance documents and other information was provided to Parish officials and also shared with the FEMA Division/Group Supervisors.
3. ESF #11 assisted FEMA and State officials with completion of contingency plans for potential impacts from INVEST 99L as this system was predicted to impact Louisiana.
4. ESF #11 deployed a subject matter expert from USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to address questions and inquiries concerning the various USDA disaster feeding programs.

Lessons Learned

Successful

1. Having an FNS subject matter expert (SME) at the JFO to address questions concerning USDA's disaster feeding programs.
2. Sharing FEMA Public Assistance guidance for protocols and reimbursement to eligible applicants and FEMA field supervisors for animal carcass removal/disposal under Category A or B.
3. Having current information on all USDA programs and response efforts that was shared with ESF #11 at the JFO.

### Challenges/Areas for Improvement

1. Several issues were encountered with logistics and administrative procedures at the JFO.
  - a. Wi-Fi at the JFO was mostly inoperable. Staff deploying to a FEMA facility should come with backup plans for connectivity. For this deployment, ESF #11 staff tethered to agency provided phones which was sufficient unless email attachments were over 1M in size.
  - b. ESF #11 required a funding increase to the activation mission assignment. These requests were not approved automatically as in the past. ESF #11 was required to submit a daily “burn rate” to the FEMA Comptroller for review and approval before the increase was approved. The process took five days to complete.
2. FEMA and State officials still look to USDA for assistance with carcass removal. While the questions pertaining to authorities are hashed through each time, animal carcasses sit in public and private areas as many local jurisdictions lack capabilities to remove and dispose of large animal carcasses. If APHIS could utilize the Animal Health Protection Act authorities and funding on a limited basis to remove and dispose of animal carcasses that may be causing public health concerns (especially mental health) it would be a huge help.
3. USDA FNS could consider seeking reimbursement for activities completed under the FEMA Mission Assignment, specifically for FNS SME’s requested by FEMA to staff the RRCC or JFO. In the past, FNS has not sought reimbursement for eligible work but it is recommended that this decision be re-evaluated.