

Disaster Planning for the Disposal of Animal Carcasses in Nebraska

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Nebraska is known worldwide for its agricultural resources. In 2005, we ranked among the top five states in number of cattle raised, fed and slaughtered. Nebraska is the number one marketer of red meat in the U.S. and has over 7.5 million head of cattle processed annually. We are seventh in the number of egg laying hens. 20% of Nebraskans are employed in farm or farm related jobs.¹

Needless to say, given our state's reliance on agriculture, addressing threats to the food supply is a high priority. In 2003 the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality and the Nebraska Department of Agriculture began discussions on how best to prepare should it be necessary to dispose of large numbers of animals. While a contagious animal disease annex to the State Emergency Response Plan had been developed years before, there had as yet been no efforts to address disposal in any detail. There were two basic questions to be answered: What are the most effective disposal options and how can we minimize environmental impacts?

An interagency team of disease experts, engineers, geologists and regulatory specialists was formed to guide the development of a comprehensive statewide plan. At the local level, the plan would give decision makers the tools to pre-select a disposal option and location **before** an emergency. At the state level, the plan would give decision makers the tools to select a disposal option and location **during** an emergency.

In July of 2004 what is now known as the "Catastrophic Animal Mortality Management Plan" or CAMMP was approved for publication. The CAMMP includes site selection criteria, a Geographical Information System Package on CD, cost estimates, checklists for various disposal options and engineered plans for burial pits. The CAMMP is currently in use with local emergency managers, livestock producers, state agencies and the federal government.

Key points of the CAMMP:

- Flexible, multipurpose resource for planning and response
- Disposal methods, costs and checklists
- GIS tool for site selection (soils, groundwater, disposal facilities, animal concentrations)
- Periodic updates

This presentation will give an overview of Nebraska's efforts in preparing for a key element in an agricultural related emergency, the disposal of large numbers of animal carcasses. It will describe the five primary elements of the state plan known as the CAMMP, focusing on details of the GIS Package and its use in identifying disposal sites.

¹Nebraska Agricultural Fact Card, Nebraska Department of Agriculture, February 2006
Nebraska Cattle Feeders brochure, Nebraska Department of Agriculture,
Ag Promotion and Development Division