

Name of State Agency
Agency Address
Agency Phone and FAX numbers
URL for Agency Website

Date

Greetings,

I write to let you know about an initiative to improve support for **State** farms in an emergency such as outbreak of livestock disease, storms, or floods. In updating response plans, we've already discovered that we also need to update our information about your operation. Many basic facts are already on-hand, but we want to make sure that preparations are based on as full and accurate a picture as possible.

Consider, for example, an outbreak of a highly contagious livestock disease – such as Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD), which is probably inevitable, sooner or later. For sure, you will find support from our office essential. Fortunately, the region is now free of such disease, but preparations cannot wait. Once something like FMD breaks, it is too late to figure out who and how to help. That is why we are asking you to let us know about your farm's "Readiness for Emergency Milk Movement."

As soon as an outbreak is detected, all traffic onto and off of farms with susceptible livestock will be suspended. This step is essential for disease control. Unfortunately, it also represents a challenge for farms that need to move milk to market. Your participation now is intended to help **State Agency** prepare, insofar as possible, to sustain dairy operations, even while fighting infection.

There are two main targets for improvement through this survey:

- 1) Communication. As experience with the most recent storm (Irene) demonstrated, state agricultural officials could use more complete and reliable information on how to contact farms in need. We also seek to learn enough about each operation to anticipate the kind and scale of support that could be required.
- 2) Biosecurity. As experience with recent outbreaks of FMD have demonstrated – as in the United Kingdom and now Korea – farm survival depends on readiness to establish effective barriers to infection on very short notice. **State** agricultural officials will be better able to help farms continue operations (e.g., provide emergency permits for milk movement) with assurance that protective measures can and will be in place.

Improvements in these areas can only be made with your cooperation. That is why we are asking you to help in completing this review. Please consider the attached details ("Answers to Questions") and share with our representative as much information as you can when he or she comes to your farm for the review. Completing the survey should require no more than 20 minutes of your time and could greatly help our ability to help you in an emergency. The information provided will be kept entirely confidential.

These preparations are part of a much larger effort to promote a "Secure Milk Supply" (SMS) in the state, the region, and the U.S. as a whole. Through preparations like this one, New England is helping to set the national standard for SMS readiness. Similar outreach efforts are underway in every New England state. They are being carried out through the regional collaborative known as the New England States Animal Agriculture Security Alliance (NESASA). To learn

more about this effort and to review milk movement and other industry data that have been compiled to date, please visit the NESAASA website at <http://nesaasa.weebly.com/ne-sms-project.html>

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Name
State Secretary of Agriculture

Name
State State Veterinarian