

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

[Date]

Greetings,

The [Agency Name] is working to improve support for the [Name of State] dairy industry in case of an emergency, such as an outbreak of a contagious livestock disease or a natural disaster. To be prepared to assist, we are reaching out now to collect critical information from all milk processors that operate in [State]. Collection of similar information from [State]'s commercial dairy farms has been underway since June, 2012.

Crisis-preparedness is always important, and in the dairy industry the stakes are especially high. For example we all should be prepared for a possible outbreak of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD), the most contagious of all livestock diseases. As soon as an outbreak is detected, to control the virus, it will be essential to suspend all traffic onto and off of farms with susceptible species. This stop movement order would be a challenge for everyone involved in the movement of milk to market.

Fortunately, the region is now free of such disease, but preparations must be made in advance. Once something like FMD breaks, it is too late to determine who and how to help. That is why we are asking you to work with us to prepare an assessment ("Readiness for Emergency Milk Movement") for your business and to help identify regional, fluid-milk movement and processing conditions that might pose specific challenges in an emergency.

This "Secure Milk Supply" (SMS) project is part of a larger national effort aimed at continuity of business planning in the face of a disease outbreak or natural disaster. While many of the parameters established nationally are applicable to New England, our region is unique in its culture and government, and in farm industry and land conservation practices and pressures.

The six New England states are therefore preparing to respond as a single region, to adjust the bounds of movement controls and increase biosecurity preparations to minimize both risks of contagion and threats to business continuity. Analysis of milk movement data in New England shows clear benefits for processors as well as haulers and producers in a regional planning and regulatory approach. Regionalization also reduces the challenge, duplication, and cost of state-border controls.

There are two main targets for improvement through the enclosed survey:

- 1) Communication. As recent experience with Tropical Storm Irene and other weather crises have repeatedly demonstrated, [State Agency] officials could use more complete and reliable emergency contact information for milk processors. We also seek to learn enough about each processor to anticipate the kind and scale of support that could be required in the face of a disaster.
- 2) Biosecurity. As experience with recent outbreaks of FMD – in the United Kingdom, Japan and now South Korea – has demonstrated, survival of the dairy industry depends on readiness to establish effective barriers to infection on very short notice. [State Agency] will be better able to support business continuity (e.g., provide emergency

permits for milk movement) with assurance that protective measures can and will be in place.

Through preparations like this, [State] and New England are helping to set the national standard for continuity of business planning in the dairy industry. 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 (NESAASA). 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>

Please take some time to complete the enclosed survey. We anticipate that it will take no more than 20 minutes to complete.

Completed surveys should be returned to:

[Name of State Agency]
Attn: [Name of Administrator of Survey]
[Agency Address]

The information provided will be kept entirely confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

[Name]
[Title]

[Name]
[Title]