



# **State of Vermont Emergency Management Plan**

## **Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets Partner Annex**

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**STATE OF VERMONT  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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**Record of Plan Revisions**

Revision Date	Summary of Changes	Pages Affected	Completed by

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## I. BACKGROUND

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFM) facilitates, supports and encourages the growth and viability of agriculture in Vermont while protecting the working landscape, human health, animal health, plant health, consumers and the environment. The Secretary of VAAFM shall supervise and be responsible for the execution and enforcement of all laws relating to agriculture and standards of weight and measure (6 V.S.A. § 1). Supplemental to this power, VAAFM is primarily responsible for:

- Protecting the health and welfare of Vermonters and their livestock and poultry by advancing a safe and secure food supply within a marketplace that provides fair and equal access to consumers and processors
- Protecting Vermont's livestock herds and poultry flocks from the introduction and spread of foreign and domestic disease
- Administration of the Emergency Livestock Feed Program

Some of the authority of the VAAFM lies within the following Vermont State Statutes:

- Title 6 V.S.A. – § 1 (General powers of Agency; Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets)
- Title 6 V.S.A. – § 19 (Emergency livestock feed program)
- Title 6 V.S.A. – § 21 (Authority to address public health hazards and food safety issues)
- Title 6 V.S.A. – § 793 (Powers and duties of Livestock Care Standards Advisory Council)
- Title 6 V.S.A. – Chapter 66 (Produce Inspection)
- Title 6 V.S.A. – Chapter 102 (Control of Contagious Livestock Diseases)
- Title 6 V.S.A. – Chapter 107 (Movement of Livestock And Poultry)
- Title 6 V.S.A. – Chapter 113 (Feeding Prohibited Food Waste To Swine)
- Title 6 V.S.A. – Chapter 215 (Agricultural Water Quality)

## II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Annex is to establish general guidance in emergency management functions for VAAFM during emergencies in which the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) is activated and VAAFM's support is required. This Annex is one element of the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) and will require coordination with other Annexes. This Annex supports the ability for VAAFM to meet its Mission – to facilitate, support and encourage the growth and viability of agriculture in Vermont while protecting the working landscape, human health, animal health, plant health, consumers and the environment.

## III. OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW

VAAFM is organized into the following operational divisions and sections:

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- Administration Division
  - Business Office Section
  - Communications Section
  - Information Technology Section
  - Land Use Section
- Agricultural Development Division
  - Business Development Section
  - Food Access Section
- Agrichemical and Plant Industry Division
- Lab Division
- Water Quality Division
- Food Safety & Consumer Protection Division
  - Animal Health Section
  - Dairy Section
  - Consumer Protection Section
  - Meat Inspection Section

### **IV. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **a. General:**

VAAFM is responsible for the coordination of all activities relative to the maintenance of this Annex. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- i. Identify, assign, and train personnel to understand and perform the decision-making responsibilities of the VAAFM representative role within the SEOC, when activated.
- ii. Provide feedback to ensure this Annex reflects actual and true VAAFM responsibilities.
- iii. Participate in appropriate training and exercises to ensure VAAFM Representatives maintain SEOC operational readiness.
- iv. Collect and report disaster impact information regarding farms and the agriculture sector in general to the SEOC, when activated.
- v. Develop mutual support relationships with professional associations and other private services and volunteer organizations that may assist during emergencies or disasters.
- vi. Gather information from support partners and other agricultural-related organizations throughout the state concerning their level of preparedness and level of risk.
- vii. Coordinate pet sheltering and disposition. VAAFM will develop agreements with these associations and any other appropriate organizations.
- viii. Coordinate some livestock, poultry, plant, pesticide, feed, fertilizer and water quality emergency responses. VAAFM will develop agreements with appropriate livestock related organizations. Some livestock and poultry disease outbreaks will require

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- establishment of a Unified Command comprised of VAAFAM and the United States Department of Agriculture.
- ix. In coordination with the Vermont Department of Health (VDH), oversee public health, arboviral, and zoonotic disease issues.
  - x. Through the SEOC, coordinate the response to all requests for animal and plant related assistance.
  - xi. Coordinate with the Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS) to ensure warehouse space is made available to house National Veterinary Stockpile (NVS) countermeasures.
  - xii. Provide inspectors and advise on agricultural debris removal.
  - xiii. Provide technical assistance for agricultural market recovery.
  - xiv. Provide technical assistance for resource conservation.
  - xv. Develop plans for deployment of VAAFAM personnel and resources in an emergency.
  - xvi. Coordinate response of ag partners (for ex. University of Vermont Cooperative Extension) in deploying partner personnel as needed.
  - xvii. Provide assistance in locating privately held stores of animal feed.
  - xviii. Provides inspection and embargo authority where necessary to prevent use of ag commodities (meat, dairy, maple and produce) which are damaged or suspected of being unsuitable for use.
  - xix. Coordinate recovery assistance efforts, which engage VAAFAM field inspectors.
  - xx. Supervise salvage or other disposition of food and feeds, which may have been damaged or compromised in an emergency event.
  - xxi. Be prepared to provide laboratory capabilities for screening and testing, as appropriate for identified incident requirements.
  - xxii. Provide sampling and laboratory analysis assistance. Maintain equipment/ instrumentation and supplies necessary to perform chemical analyses on a variety of samples that may be associated with hazardous materials releases.
  - xxiii. Provide laboratory and technical assistance to secure and analyze suspected contaminated samples, and identify contaminants such as pesticides and certain other toxic materials in soils, vegetation, and water.
  - xxiv. Coordinate animal disease diagnosis, control, and eradication consistent with agency mission. Utilize the Agriculture Laboratory for this purpose whenever possible.
  - xxv. Obtain samples for livestock hay and feed and perform laboratory tests for contamination and pesticide residues. Utilize the Agriculture Laboratory for this purpose whenever possible.
  - xxvi. Provide technical assistance in cleanup of unusually large agricultural wastes/discharge releases.
  - xxvii. Assist in developing GIS maps of quarantine or contamination sites.
  - xxviii. Coordinate with local contacts involved to collect appropriate data on animal services rendered, and to compile such data for a final report.

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Emergency Support Function (ESF) #11 – Agriculture and Natural Resources supports State, tribal, and local authorities and other Federal agency efforts to provide nutrition assistance; control and eradicate, as appropriate, any outbreak of a highly contagious or economically devastating animal/zoonotic (i.e., transmitted between animals and people) disease, or any outbreak of an economically devastating plant pest or disease; ensure the safety and security of the commercial food supply; protect natural and cultural resources and historic properties (NCH) resources; and provide for the safety and well-being of household pets during an emergency response or evacuation situation. ESF #11 is activated by the Secretary of Homeland Security for incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response and the availability of support for one or more of these roles/functions.

This Annex is supported by National Response Framework ESF #11 (Agriculture and Natural Resources Annex). The Regional Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is authorized to provide federal assistance as emergency protective measures under the emergency and major disaster provisions of the Stafford Act. ESF #11 may be represented as an advance element of the Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT).

Overall actions necessary for the performance of VAAFMM responsibilities within the SEMP shall include the following:

**b. Prevent and Protect:**

- i. Provide for surveillance of emergency issues related to crops, animal feeds, fertilizers and pesticides and water quality impacts.
- ii. Provide for surveillance of plant pests of unknown or questionable origin, which may pose a potential or substantial threat to agriculture, horticulture, economy, the environment generally or public health of the state.
- iii. Provide for surveillance for animal or zoonotic diseases, chemical, poison or toxins that may pose a substantial threat to animal or public health.

Participate in state exercises and conduct at least one exercise annually to validate this Annex and supporting SOPs. Involvement in actual incidents in which the VAAFMM Annex is activated satisfies this requirement.

**c. Respond:**

- i. Advise the SEOC of recommended and ongoing protective actions should surveillance indicate such actions are necessary.
- ii. Provide for inspection and assessment of livestock/poultry/produce production facilities, ag crops and product storage through the Vermont Meat Inspection Program and related food protection units to protect public health. Request federal support, as needed, for food-borne disease surveillance, inspection and verification of meat, poultry, egg, produce and milk products in the affected areas. Laboratory support needs may also be identified and requested.

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- iii. Provide consultation and coordinate responses to livestock, poultry, produce and ag crop issues which impact public or animal health (disease outbreak, bio-terrorist attack, waste and carcass disposal); take reasonable measures to protect animals under emergency care from disease and injury.
- iv. Coordinate with the SEOC regarding storage sites and staging areas for animal feed, medical supplies and NVS countermeasures.
- v. Serve as a coordination point for livestock-related disaster assistance and assist with identification and location of housing and other related services for livestock.
- vi. In coordination with the SEOC Public Information Officer, establish a Joint Information Center (JIC) that functions as the principal source of information about a disease outbreak or pest infestation response in the State. The JIC coordinates closely with Federal officials to ensure consistency in the information released to the communications media and the public.
- vii. Coordinate with the Agency of Human Services as needed for mass care issues (ie. Co-sheltering of domestic pets).
- viii. When requested, provide information and recommendations concerning the impact of loss or shortage of energy resources on the agricultural community. VAAFMM will be provided the geographical extent of the outage and then will inform the SEOC if there are any farms in need of assistance.

### **d. Recover:**

- i. Coordinate damage assessments of reported losses at animal feed, produce, ag crop and plant facilities.
- ii. Assist with the consolidation or closing of animal shelters or confinement areas, personnel and supplies as the need diminishes.
- iii. Coordinate the animal medical services needed for animal shelter and confinement areas.
- iv. Provide technical assistance and coordination to the Agency of Transportation, the Department of Health and the Agency of Natural Resources for the removal and proper disposal of animal waste and carcasses.

When addressing animal diseases, all animal depopulation activities are conducted as humanely as possible while stopping pathogen spread and limiting the number of animals that must be euthanized. Disposal methods for infected or exposed carcasses and plant host material are chosen for their ability to limit pathogen spread and to minimize environmental impact.

- v. Facilitate referral of owners to providers that can provide for assistance and care of livestock impacted by disaster.
- vi. Coordinate with USDA to indemnify producers for animal/feed/produce/ag crop loss or loss of related products and/or facilities. Federal funds, if available, may also be requested to offset costs associated with disease eradication.
- vii. Maintain appropriate records of costs incurred during the event.
- viii. Provide guidance as requested to the SEOC regarding agricultural donations.

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### e. Mitigate:

- i. Support requests and directives from the Governor and/or FEMA concerning mitigation and/or re-development activities.
- ii. Document matters that may be needed for inclusion in agency or state/federal briefings, situation reports and action plans.

## V. ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Definition
AGOC	Agriculture Operations Center
AOT	Agency of Transportation
APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
BGS	Department of Buildings and General Services
DLAN	State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) disaster management software
EEI	Essential Elements of Information
ESF	Emergency Support Function
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FSMA	Food Safety Modernization Act
GIS	Geographic Information System
IMAT	Incident Management Assistance Team
JFO	Joint Field Office
JIC	Joint Information Center
NCH	Natural and Cultural Resources and Historic Properties
NVS	National Veterinary Stockpile
SEMP	State Emergency Management Plan
SEOC	State Emergency Operations Center
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
VAAFAM	Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
VDH	Vermont Department of Health

## VI. REFERENCES

VAAFAM is responsible for updating, maintaining, and ensuring VAAFAM SEOC Representatives are familiar with the following plans and procedures to support overall state response and recovery efforts:

- USDA APHIS/ State of Vermont Cooperative Emergency Response Plan for a Highly Contagious Animal Disease
- The State of Vermont Arboviral Surveillance and Response Plan
- Avian Influenza Response Plan
- Animal Disaster Emergency Plan
- Contagious Disease Response Plan
- VAAFAM Strategic National Veterinary Stockpile Plan

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- Flood Damaged Crops and Forage Emergency Procedures
- USDA/Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)

**AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS  
STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (SEOC) CHECKLIST**

VAAFMT GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate pet sheltering and disposition.</li> <li>• Coordinate livestock, poultry, plant, pesticide, feed, fertilizer and water quality emergency responses. Some livestock and poultry disease outbreaks will require establishment of a Unified Command comprised of VAAFMT and the United States Department of Agriculture.</li> <li>• In coordination with the Vermont Department of Health (VDH), oversee public health, arboviral, and zoonotic disease issues.</li> <li>• Through the SEOC, coordinate the response to all requests for animal and plant related assistance.</li> <li>• Coordinate with the Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS) to ensure warehouse space is made available to house National Veterinary Stockpile (NVS) countermeasures.</li> <li>• Provide inspectors and advise on agricultural debris removal.</li> <li>• Provide technical assistance for agricultural market recovery.</li> <li>• Provide technical assistance for resource conservation.</li> <li>• Develop plans for deployment of VAAFMT personnel and resources in an emergency.</li> <li>• Coordinate response of ag partners (for example University of Vermont Cooperative Extension) in deploying personnel as needed.</li> <li>• Provide assistance in locating privately held stores of feed.</li> <li>• Provides inspection and embargo authority where necessary to prevent use of food supplies which are damaged or suspected of being unsuitable for use.</li> <li>• Coordinate recovery assistance efforts, which engage VAAFMT field inspectors.</li> <li>• Supervise salvage or other disposition of food and feeds, which may have been damaged or compromised in an emergency event.</li> <li>• Be prepared to provide laboratory capabilities for screening and testing, as appropriate for identified incident requirements.</li> <li>• Provide sampling and laboratory analysis assistance. Maintain equipment/ instrumentation and supplies necessary to perform chemical analyses on a variety of samples that may be associated with hazardous materials releases.</li> <li>• Provide laboratory and technical assistance to secure and analyze suspected contaminated samples, and identify contaminants such as pesticides and certain other toxic materials in soils, vegetation, and water.</li> <li>• Coordinate animal disease diagnosis, control, and eradication consistent with agency mission. Utilize the Agriculture Laboratory for this purpose whenever possible.</li> <li>• Obtain samples for livestock hay and feed and perform laboratory tests for contamination and pesticide residues. Utilize the Agriculture Laboratory for this purpose whenever possible.</li> <li>• Provide technical assistance in cleanup of unusually large agricultural wastes/discharge releases.</li> <li>• Assist in developing GIS maps of quarantine or contamination sites.</li> <li>• Coordinate with local contacts involved to collect appropriate data on animal services rendered, and to compile such data for a final report.</li> </ul>

		Activation Phase:	
1	<input type="checkbox"/> VAAFMT SEOC representatives receive notification, coordinate the response to SEOC	2	<input type="checkbox"/> Establish communication with VAAFMT leadership to advise of the situation and response.
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Check in with SEOC Manager and/or Mission & Resource Support Section Chief to obtain situational information.	4	<input type="checkbox"/> Set up assigned SEOC work station. Establish access to DLAN. Establish and maintain appropriate files and forms.
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Based on the situation, determine appropriate level of staffing for the SEOC. Notify VAAFMT leadership and other VAAFMT personnel as appropriate.	6	<input type="checkbox"/> If warranted, activate the Agriculture Operations Center (AGOC) and consult with VAAFMT leadership to determine staffing levels.

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<b>Operational Phase - Responsibilities During Emergency - (SEOC staff):</b>		
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain a position log, and other appropriate forms and files. Monitor DLAN & make appropriate entries concerning information received and actions taken.	
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Based on the situation (known or forecasted), determine likely future needs of VAAFM personnel and resources. Identify necessary additional staffing requirements.	
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Based on the situation, coordinate with the AGOC, if activated.	
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Establish communications with VAAFM leadership to advise of the situation and determine operational status. Advise of the SEOC of the AGOC activation level and strategic objectives. Establish reporting times for all elements.	
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Assist the SEOC Manager and the Mission & Resource Support Section Chief in developing overall strategic objectives as well as objectives for the SEOC Action Plan. Ensure AGOC strategic objectives inform the objectives of the SEOC Action Plan as appropriate.	
6	<input type="checkbox"/> Monitor status, in consult with the AGOC of all disaster impacts to farms and the agriculture sector in general. Provide situation status information and updates of fire response activities to SEOC.	
7	<input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate requests for support from the overall Agriculture enterprise in Vermont. Facilitate the appropriate response to meet the request for assistance; and obtain and distribute resources, through appropriate channels.	
8	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide Essential Elements of Information (EEI) for the SEOC Situation Report to the SEOC Situational Awareness Section and ensure these EEIs are updated on the VAAFM DLAN Status Board. Locations and status of issues regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Damage or degradation of capability for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Farms</li> <li>○ Agricultural producers &amp; suppliers</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Current quarantined or restricted areas</li> <li>• Contaminated or embargoed agricultural products</li> <li>• Any activation of the Veterinary National Stockpile</li> <li>• Emergency animal shelter activations</li> <li>• Invasive species impact and concerns</li> <li>• Deployed special state assets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resource type, kind, location</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Pending missions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resource type, kind, location</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Potential resource needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resource type, kind, location</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
9	<input type="checkbox"/> Based on identified threat(s) to livestock and the public, provide public information and instructions/directives.	
10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure adequate staffing for continued SEOC coverage. Provide names and hours of staff to the Mission & Resource Support Section Chief and the Planning Section Chief, as well as other SEOC Partners as needed.	
11	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide relief staff with a briefing, to include ongoing activities, objectives for the next operational period, and any other pertinent information.	
12	<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure personnel maintain appropriate records of activities and costs incurred during the event	

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<b>Post Emergency - Demobilization Phase:</b>	
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Obtains, maintains, and provides incident situation and damage assessment information through established procedures.
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Where appropriate, record any personnel injuries or equipment losses.
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Anticipate and plan for arrival of and coordination with FEMA personnel in the SEOC and the Joint Field Office (JFO).
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Based on identified hazardous conditions, provide public information and instructions/directives to the general public
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Upon conclusion of the incident, be prepared to provide recommendations for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal AOT procedures required to support SEOC operations.</li> <li>• After Action Review.</li> <li>• Updates to any parts of the State Emergency Management Plan, especially the AOT Agency Annex and Representative Checklist.</li> </ul>

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**OPERATIONAL PERIOD NOTES**

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**PERSON COMPLETING THIS SHEET**

NAME	POSITION	DATE	TIME