

Things to Consider When Helping Livestock Farmers Assess Damage From Hurricane Helene

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Many farms along rivers and creeks in Western North Carolina have experienced some level of flooding damage. In some areas the damage is extensive. Regardless of what their crop mix is, it is important for farmers to assess and document their losses quickly. It is suggested that losses be documented with photos and notes on an aerial map whenever possible. Also, high water contours should be noted on the map.

There are some items that will be especially helpful to collect as you visit and help livestock farmers. Many farmers will also have other crop losses that will need to be documented, so **this list is specific only to livestock**. Make sure that you coordinate with other local team members that are working with agricultural losses.

Items to think about include:

1. Direct losses of livestock. Number and type of animals dead or injured badly enough to require vet care.
2. Damage to fences. Feet of fence completely destroyed, feet of fence damaged but repairable. Include type of fence (high tensile fences can almost always be repaired, barbed wire or woven wire are often not repairable).
3. Standing hay destroyed (acres).
4. Baled hay destroyed in number of bales or tons (if bales, estimate weight).
Note: Hay that experienced more than 6 inches of water for an hour should generally not be fed and should be considered a total loss. The same rule of thumb should also be applied to baleage, whether tube wrapped or individually wrapped.
5. Harvested silage lost (in tons including species i.e. corn). Any silage that came into contact with flood waters coming from off the farm is considered adulterated and should not be fed without testing and regulatory approval.
6. Standing corn silage lost. Again, if the crop was flooded it is considered adulterated. If water came up within the farm, then it might be salvaged.
7. Farm equipment damaged or destroyed. Make sure to take pictures.
8. Other livestock related infrastructure damaged or destroyed. Items like waterlines, waterers, stream crossings, water access points.

Purposefully documenting your losses soon after the storm damage will help with both insurance and relief programs. If you have insurance on any losses, you should contact your insurance agent as soon as possible. Keep aware of deadlines for reporting losses for various relief programs that are existing or that may be developed.