



**Hurricane Irene Activations in FEMA Region I
August 25th – September 7, 2011
Emergency Support Function 11 After Action Report**



Summary

ESF11 Coordinator was activated to the FEMA Region I Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) from August 25-29, 2011 and the Joint Field Office in Burlington, Vermont from August 30- September 07, 2011 in response to Hurricane Irene. FNS NERO staff assisted with ESF11 Desk staffing at the Vermont JFO. FEMA IMATs requested staffing from Farm Service Agency in Vermont, Rhode Island and Connecticut as well as an ESF11 representative at the Rhode Island State Emergency Operations Center. At the request of Vermont Agency of Agriculture, VS staff provided technical assistance at the Vermont State Emergency Operations Center and on Agricultural Assessment Teams.

What Went Well

USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Northeast Regional Office (NERO) provided exceptional and responsive support, as always. FNS quickly responded to numerous inquiries throughout six states, provided USDA Inventories prior to activation, technical assistance to the shelter assessment teams and staffed the JFO in Burlington VT. FNS has well established partnerships which ensured proactive support to all impacted states and FEMA.

FSIS OPEER, Wildlife Services and Veterinary Services volunteered to assist with ESF11 staffing.

ESF11 staff assisted FEMA in drafting a tool for Shelter/Community Assessment Teams, participated in daily briefs and provided follow up on action items teams relayed from assessments.

ESF11 provided support to State Veterinarians and Agriculture on FEMA policies, grant programs and Action Request Forms.

DAR staff in Minneapolis provided rapid and outstanding support to resolve ongoing Blackberry issues.

Challenges/Areas for Improvement

Animal Care was unable to provide personnel on request despite widely advertising the capability to provide technical assistance at every state emergency operations center. While Hurricane Irene was an ample notice event, Animal Care was unable to provide timely staffing for two states. Advertised capabilities were not consistent with deployable assets.

NARSC and Animal Care circumvented FEMA's established system of requesting resources resulting in delayed adjudication of resources.

In each state, there was significant political interest in the federal support to the impacted agricultural communities. States and FEMA had numerous requests for assistance for Farm Service Agency. FSA had great difficulty engaging with federal and state responders. FSA was unable to provide disaster assistance program information in a timely manner and referred ESF11 program staff to Google. FSA in three states referred farmers directly to the ESF11 Coordinator for disaster program information. FSA deployed a staff member who had never heard of Incident Command System to work at a FEMA JFO, making integration very difficult. Conversely, FSA and NRCS in Massachusetts engaged promptly with state and FEMA responders to ensure disaster assistance program needs were met.

ATAC support and GovTrip travel accounting code addition and approval remain unresolved issues.