

# MISSISSIPPI COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN (CEMP)

## Food and Agriculture Incident Annex

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### Coordinating Agency

Mississippi Board of Animal Health (MBAH)  
Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC)  
Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH)

### Support Agencies

Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)  
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)  
Mississippi Department of Public Safety (MDPS)  
    Mississippi Office of Homeland Security (MOHS)  
Mississippi Military Department (MMD)  
    Mississippi National Guard (MSNG)  
Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT))  
Mississippi State University (MSU)  
Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC)  
Mississippi Veterinary Research and Diagnostic Laboratory (MSVRDL)  
Mississippi State Chemical Laboratory (MSCL)  
Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS)  
Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks (MDWFP)  
Mississippi Development Authority (MDA)  
American Red Cross (ARC)

### Federal Support Agencies

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)  
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)  
United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA)  
United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

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## Food and Agriculture Incident Annex

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### 1. INTRODUCTION.

**a. Purpose.** The purpose of the Food and Agriculture Annex is to describe the roles and responsibilities associated with all incidents involving agriculture and food systems that require a coordinated response utilizing the five fundamental principles in the National Response Framework (NRF) doctrine.

The five principles encompass:

- (1) Engaged partnership;
- (2) Tiered response;
- (3) Scalable, flexible, and adaptive operational capabilities;
- (4) Unity of effort through unified command;
- (5) Readiness to act.

**b. Scope.** The protocols outlined in the Annex apply to all actual or potential incidents requiring a coordinated response. Actions described in this Annex may occur with or without a declaration by the Governor, President, Secretary of Agriculture, or a public health emergency declaration by the directors of the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) or Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS).

The objectives of a coordinated response to an incident impacting food and agriculture are to:

- (1) Detect the event by reporting illnesses, pest surveillance, routine testing, consumer complaints, and/or environmental monitoring.
- (2) Determine the primary coordinating agency.
- (3) Determine the source of the incident or outbreak.
- (4) Control and contain the distribution of the affected source.
- (5) Identify and protect the population at risk.
- (6) Assess public health, food, agriculture, and law enforcement implications.

(7) Assess the extent of residual biological, chemical, or radiological contamination, then decontaminate and dispose of as necessary.

A food and agriculture incident may threaten public health, animal health, food production, aquaculture, livestock production, wildlife, soil, rangelands, and agriculture water supplies and have cascading effects, including significant psychological and economic impacts. Responding to the unique attributes of this type of incident requires separate planning considerations tailored to specific health and agriculture concerns and effects of the disease (e.g., deliberate contamination versus natural outbreaks, plant and animal versus processed foods, etc.)

**c. Special Considerations.**

(1) Detection of an intentional or unintentional contamination/adulteration of food, animals, or plants, or a pest outbreak may occur in several different ways and involve several different modalities.

(2) A terrorist attack on food or agriculture may initially be indistinguishable from a naturally occurring event. Depending upon the particular agent and associated signs or symptoms, several days or weeks could pass before public health, food, agriculture, and medical authorities even suspect terrorism may be the cause.

(3) Depending on the incident, a disproportionate percentage of victims may be among the most vulnerable populations, including children, the elderly, immune-compromised individuals, and disadvantaged people.

(4) A devastating attack or the threat of an attack on the domestic animal population and plant crops through highly contagious animal diseases, exotic plant diseases, foreign pest infestation, or other contaminants could result in severe economic loss and public health consequences. Early detection, allowing for early intervention, would come from food and agriculture experts, regulatory authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and others that can identify unusual patterns in surveillance systems.

(5) A food or agriculture incident will most likely compromise international trade, given the increasing globalization of the food and agriculture supply chain.

**d. References.** Specific operational guidelines developed by organizations responsible for the unique aspects of a particular disease or planning consideration will supplement this Annex and assist federal, state, tribal, and local public health and agriculture authorities.

## **2. POLICIES.**

**a.** This Annex supports policies and procedures outlined in the NRF and State of Mississippi Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), Emergency Support Function (ESF) #6 Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing, and Human Services, ESF #8 Public Health and Medical Services, ESF #10 Oil and Hazardous Material, ESF #11 Animals, Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the federal Food and Agriculture Decontamination and Disposal Roles and Responsibilities document.

**b.** If an agency becomes aware of an overt threat involving biological, chemical, or radiological agents or indications that instances of a disease may not be the result of natural causes, state law enforcement and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) will be notified. The FBI, in turn, immediately notifies the National Operations Center (NOC) and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCC).

**c.** Participating State agencies may take appropriate independent emergency actions within the limits of their statutory authority to protect the public, mitigate immediate hazards, and collect information concerning the emergency. This may require deploying assets before they are requested via standard Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) protocols.

**d.** State, tribal, and local governments, often directed or coordinated by federal agencies, are responsible for detecting and responding to food and agriculture incidents and implementing measures to minimize the health and economic consequences of such an incident or outbreak.

## **3. ASSUMPTIONS.**

**a.** The first evidence of dissemination of an agent may be the presentation of disease in humans, animals, or plants. This could manifest either in clinical case reports to state and local public health or agriculture authorities or in unusual patterns of symptoms or encounters within state and local human and animal health and crop production surveillance systems.

**b.** Food and agriculture surveillance systems may detect the presence of a radiological, chemical, or biological agent and trigger directed environmental and product sampling and intensified human and animal surveillance to rule out or confirm a case. If a case is confirmed, then these systems may allow for mobilization of a public health, medical, and law enforcement response in advance of the appearance of the first human and/or animal cases or quick response after the first human and/or animal cases are identified.

**c.** A food and agriculture incident will often be distributed across multiple jurisdictions. Response to these incidents could require coordinating multiple “incident sites” simultaneously from local, tribal, state, regional, and national levels and require private-sector partnerships.

**d.** An act of intentional food contamination, food tampering, or agro-terrorism, particularly an act directed against large sectors of the industry within the country, will potentially have significant consequences that will overwhelm the capabilities of many state, tribal, and local governments to respond and may seriously challenge existing Federal response capabilities.

**e.** A food or agricultural incident may include biological, chemical, or radiological contaminants, which may require concurrent implementation of other federal, state, or county plans and procedures.

**f.** Food and agriculture incidents may not be immediately recognized until the biological, chemical, or radiological agent is detected or the effects of exposure to the public, animals, or plants are reported to the proper authorities.

**g.** No single entity possesses the authority, expertise, and resources to act unilaterally on the many complex issues that may arise in response to a food or agriculture incident, especially given the increasingly global nature of the food and agriculture system.

**4. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS.** The primary functions of the Food and Agriculture Incident Annex are to:

**a.** Support effective and coordinated communication between federal, state, tribal, and local responders to a potential or actual incident that requires a coordinated response impacting food and agriculture.

**b.** Minimize public health and economic impacts of a food and agriculture incident.

**c.** Provide a transition from response to rapid recovery following a food and agriculture incident.

**d.** The critical elements for an effective response to a food and agriculture incident include the following:

(1) Rapid identification, detection, and confirmation of the incident.

(2) Implement an integrated response to a food attack/adulteration, highly contagious



animal/zoonotic diseases, exotic plant diseases, or plant pest infestation.

(3) Identification of the human and animal population and/or plants at risk and/or impacted.

(4) Determination of how the agent involved was transmitted, including assessing transmission efficiency and the additional risk of transmission.

(5) Determination of the public health and economic implications.

(6) Control, containment, decontamination, and disposal to ensure effective recovery of the infrastructure impacted.

(7) Protection of the population(s) and/or plants at risk through appropriate measures.

(8) Dissemination of information to advise the public of the incident.

(9) Communication with all relevant stakeholders.

## 5. INCIDENT DETECTION AND CONTROL.

**a. Determination of Incident.** State, tribal, or local authorities are likely to be among the first to recognize the initial indication of intentional or naturally occurring contamination of food, of highly infective plant or animal disease, or of an economically devastating plant pest infestation or animal disease. Recognition may come from a significantly increased number of people reporting ill to public health care providers, increased reporting of sick animals to veterinarians or animal health officials, or numerous plant anomalies reported by State officials, agricultural extension agents, inspection reports, consumer complaints systems, and various hotlines. Therefore, the most critical information requirements are surveillance information, identification of the cause of the incident, determining whether the incident is intentional or naturally occurring, and identifying the human or animal population and/or plant at risk.

**b. Laboratory Testing.** Identification and confirmation of contaminated food or environment, highly infective diseases of animals and plants, or an economically devastating plant infestation may occur through routine surveillance and laboratory testing.

Mississippi State Chemical Laboratory (MSCL) tests for such substances as pesticides and residues. There is a seed lab that audits package contents against package labels.

The state also has access to the Integrated Consortium of Laboratory Networks (ICLN). The ICLN can provide timely, high-quality, and interpretable results for early detection and effective consequence management of terrorism and other events requiring an integrated laboratory response. The ICLN provides an interagency organizational structure for the Nation's advanced-capacity laboratories to detect, respond to, and recover from incidents involving human health, animal health, food, agriculture, and plants. The collective national network of the Food Emergency Network (FERN), the Laboratory Response Network (LRN), the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), the National Plant Diagnosis Network (NPDN), and additional laboratory networks within Federal agencies also have responsibilities for laboratory preparedness and response.

The Mississippi Veterinary Research and Diagnostic Laboratory (MSVRDL) assists the livestock and poultry industries, private veterinarians, and animal owners of Mississippi by diagnosing and monitoring animal diseases that can:

- (1) Affect humans.
- (2) Reduce the productivity or marketability of animals.
- (3) Threaten animal populations.
- (4) Affect the safety or quality of animal products.

The laboratory also participates in federal cooperative disease programs. It works with other state agencies to provide veterinary diagnostic testing, disease surveillance, animal health monitoring, drug testing, collaborative research, and animal health education.

The MSVRDL is accredited by the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD). The AAVLD establishes acceptable criteria for quality assurance, safety, personnel qualifications, and laboratory facilities.

**c. Notification.** A potential or actual incident requiring a coordinated county or state response involving contaminated food, infected animals or plants, or economically devastating plant pest infestation shall be brought to the immediate attention of the Mississippi Board of Animal Health (MBAH), Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC), and MSDH. These departments will then notify, as appropriate, the Mississippi Department of Public Safety (MDPS), the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security (MOHS), and appropriate industry segments.

**d. International Notification.** Once a confirmed contaminated food and agricultural product produced outside the borders of the United States crosses into the U.S. and subsequently into

Mississippi, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) notifies the U.S. Department of State (DOS) and other international organizations as appropriate (e.g., World Health Organization (WHO), World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH)). In addition, if an international trading partner positively confirms that a food or agriculture product exported from the United States, with origin in Mississippi, is contaminated/adulterated, the affected trading partner will notify USDA, Health and Human Services (HHS), and/or DOS. In either situation, if it is suspected that the contamination/adulteration results from criminal and/or terrorist activity, the federal agencies will notify the FBI and/or the appropriate law enforcement and health agencies.

**e. Activation.** Once notified of a credible threat of contamination/adulteration or a natural or intentional disease outbreak in humans, plants, or animals, MSDH, MDAC, and MBAH will coordinate with Federal agencies (who will coordinate internationally), tribal and local authorities, and key industry entities to determine the extent of which resources are needed and can be provided. MSDH, MBAH, and MDAC will coordinate with ESF #8 and ESF#11 partners to assess the situation and determine appropriate public health, food, and agriculture actions. Some or all of the ensuing actions may include:

- (1) Targeted epidemiologic investigations.
- (2) Increased surveillance for patients and animals with certain clinical signs and symptoms.
- (3) Increased surveillance of plants for signs of disease or other pest infestation.
- (4) Targeting inspection of human food and animal feed manufacturing, distributing, retail, and other facilities, as appropriate.
- (5) Increased inspection of plants and animals for contamination.
- (6) Assessment of environmental contamination and extent of cleanup, decontamination, and disposal of livestock carcasses, plants, or food products involved.
- (7) Identification of the law enforcement implication/assessment of the threat.

Primary State functions include supporting public health food and agriculture entities according to the policies and procedures detailed in the NRF and CEMP.

**6. ACTIONS.** The following actions are required to contain and control a food or agriculture incident:

Food and Agriculture Incident Annex to MS CEMP

**a.** MSDH, MBAH, and MDAC will assist state, tribal, and local authorities to:

(1) Ensure the safety and security of the food and agriculture infrastructure in the affected areas, as needed.

(2) Inspect food and agriculture facilities in the affected area, as needed, to ensure that they can continue to operate.

(3) Conduct laboratory testing to identify contaminated food, animals, or plants.

(4) Embargo, detain, seize, or condemn affected food, animals, or plants.

**b.** As appropriate, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or MDAC will approve requests from federal and state authorities and industry for the use of pesticides to control or mitigate plant pests and decontaminate animal, agricultural, and food facilities from biological organisms of concern.

**c.** MSDH, MBAH, MDAC, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) will:

(1) Provide technical assistance and guidance for coordinating food facility cleaning and decontamination, depending on the nature of the contaminating agent.

(2) Provide technical assistance and guidance to coordinate the disposal of contaminated food, animal carcasses, or plants.

(3) Coordinate with the food and agriculture industry during the investigation, response, decontamination, disposal, and recovery efforts.

(4) Coordinate with MOHS and ESF #15 External Affairs, if activated, on public messaging to ensure that communications are consistent and accurate.

**d.** MDAC, MBAH, and MSDH will determine the availability of efficacious registered pesticides to control or mitigate a biological or pest agent and, if necessary, prepare a request to EPA for emergency exemption of pesticide registration.

**e.** During an event within the capacity of MDAC, MBAH, or MSDH to control, MEMA will coordinate potential further support for this event.

## Food and Agriculture Incident Annex to MS CEMP

**f.** MEMA will coordinate the federal government resources if a food or agriculture incident is associated with a terrorist attack, becomes a major disaster, or is an emergency as defined by Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 (HSPD-5). MDAC, MBAH, and MSDH will maintain the authority and responsibility for the incident.

Additional roles and responsibilities of cooperating agencies are provided in Table 1. (Agency Roles and Responsibilities Matrix) on the following page.

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Food and Agriculture Incident Annex to MS CEMP

Function	MBAH	MDAC	MSDH	MEMA	MSVRDL	MDEQ	MSCL	MSNG	MDPS	MSU	FEMA	USDA	CDC	FDA
Coordination	◆	◆	◆	◆							◆	◆	◆	◆
Security		◆						◆	◆					
Rapid ID of Agent			◆		◆		◆	◆				◆	◆	◆
Laboratory Confirmation	◆	◆	◆		◆		◆	◆				◆	◆	
Outbreak Transmission Information	◆	◆	◆		◆					◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Control and Contain Outbreak	◆	◆	◆		◆			◆	◆	◆		◆	◆	◆
Decontamination and Disposal	◆	◆	◆		◆	◆		◆		◆		◆	◆	◆
Food Safety and Food Defense	◆	◆	◆		◆							◆	◆	◆
Public Health	◆		◆		◆	◆		◆		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Public Information	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆				◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Law Enforcement Issues		◆						◆	◆			◆		
Economic/Market Issues	◆	◆								◆		◆		
Support Services (Feeding, Facilities, Counseling, Transport)					◆			◆			◆	◆	◆	

**Table 1.** Agency Roles and Responsibilities Matrix

\*Additional information may be found in ESFs #8 and #11

**7. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES.** The procedures in this Food and Agriculture Incident Annex are built on the core coordinating structures of the CEMP and references listed below. The specific responsibilities of each department and agency are described in the respective ESF, Support, and Incident Annexes, internal agency plans, policies, and procedures. See the CEMP Base Plan or the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) Operations Section for a comprehensive list of Authorities and References.

- a. Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act; amended the Disaster Relief Act of 1974, PL 93-288.  
[https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/stafford-act\\_2019.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/stafford-act_2019.pdf)
- b. Public Law 104-321, October 1996 (EMAC)  
[Public Law 104-321, October 1996](#)
- c. MS Code, Ann. Â§ 33-15(1972): Mississippi Emergency Management Act of 1995, Title 33-15, et al. [Successor to Mississippi Emergency Management Law of 1980]  
[MS Code 33-15](#)
- d. MS Code, Title 45, Chapter 18 Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)  
[Mississippi Code of 2018, Title 45, Chapter 18](#)
- e. National Preparedness Goal, Second Edition, September 2015  
<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/25959>
- f. National Incident Management System, Third Edition, October 2017  
<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/148019>
- g. National Preparedness System  
<https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness/system>
- h. National Response Framework, Fourth Edition, October 2019  
[https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/NRF\\_FINALApproved\\_2011028.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/NRF_FINALApproved_2011028.pdf)
- i. FEMA National Incident Support Manual, Change 1, January 2013  
[https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/FEMA\\_National\\_Incident\\_Support\\_Manual-change1.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/FEMA_National_Incident_Support_Manual-change1.pdf)

- j. FEMA Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plan, Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101, Version 3.0, September 2021  
[https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_cpg-101-v3-developing-maintaining-eops.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_cpg-101-v3-developing-maintaining-eops.pdf)
- k. MEMA Response Framework, June 2023  
[MEMA Downloads/MEMA Publications](#)

The MEMA reference repository, containing the CEMP base plan, associated annexes, appendices, and other supporting documents, can be found at [MEMA Downloads](#).

Most Mississippi emergency management stakeholders have access to this site. However, non-registered stakeholders may gain access to the repository by submitting an e-mail request to [preparedness@mema.ms.gov](mailto:preparedness@mema.ms.gov).

**8. REVIEW AND MAINTENANCE.** This Annex will be continuously reviewed and exercised to evaluate the state's and political subdivisions' ability to execute response and recovery operations and support tribal, local, and municipal emergency management agencies. Directors of primary state agencies are responsible for maintaining internal policies, plans, SOPs, checklists, and resource data to ensure a prompt and effective response to a disaster in support of this Annex. For training purposes and exercises, the MEMA Executive Director may activate this Annex as deemed necessary to ensure high operational readiness.

MEMA will revise this Annex on a biennial basis. The revision will include testing, reviewing, and updating the document and its procedures. This Annex will be updated every two years, or as necessary, to incorporate new presidential or state directives, legislative changes, and procedural changes based on lessons learned from exercises and actual incidents. This Annex will be rewritten every four (4) years.

MEMA coordinates updates, modifications, and changes to the Annex. Heads of state agencies with ESF coordinator responsibility will periodically provide information regarding changes with available resources, personnel, and operating procedures. Recommended changes will be submitted to MEMA for approval and distribution. Submit recommendations via e-mail to [preparedness@mema.ms.gov](mailto:preparedness@mema.ms.gov).

This Annex applies to all state agencies, state boards, state commissions, and state departments assigned emergency responsibilities and to all elements of local government in accordance with current law and Executive Orders (EOs).