Factsheet – Incident Management Insert: Flood event

This factsheet covers:

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- **Agricultural and other Chemicals**
- **Facilities, Equipment and Tools**
- **Sourcing from alternate suppliers (emergency supplies)**
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- **Worker Training**
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For more information refer to:

Guidelines for Fresh Produce Food Safety 2019: fpsc-anz.com/food-safety-guidelines-2019/

Getting Further Help

General Advice

Floodwater and leftover debris can be heavily contaminated with food safety and human health organisms.

- It is highly likely that flooded growing sites will have been contaminated by floodwaters that may contain sewerage, animal waste, dead animals and decaying vegetative waste.
- People conducting clean-up activities in these areas should be equipped with long sleeves and long pants, sturdy boots, gloves, eye protection and dust masks.
- As much vegetation and crop waste should be removed from the growing areas as possible.
- Where debris, waste, vegetative matter or rubbish is being collected when cleaning up, it is recommended it is segregated where possible to contain its decay / disease spread potential. It may be some time before all rubbish can be removed.
- Assess and record the damage as you go.
    - Complete the Natural Disaster Damage Survey: https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/climate-and-emergencies/emergency/community/primary-industries-natural-disaster-damage-survey
- After handling any contaminated soil, rubbish or water, wash your hands thoroughly with disinfectant soap and use a hand sanitiser. This should be done before eating, drinking and smoking.
    - Ensure thorough hand washing practices are in place that include full coverage of hands to wrists, underneath nails, between fingers for 20-30 seconds, followed by effective drying until hands are completely dry.
    - Repeat this often, even if hands are still visibly clean.
- Mosquito activity may also increase as a result of flood events, so a strong repellent product is recommended where there is a risk, to avoid contracting mosquito borne viruses.
    - This information from WA Health addresses the risk of mosquito borne disease:
    - ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/J_M/Mosquitoes-and-cyclones
- Be aware of risks associated with rodents, snakes and spiders that may have taken refuge in unusual places.
- Soil should be left to dry out before people are permitted to enter.

Water Sources

Check all water sources used for your property. Even those not directly impacted by flood water may need to be checked to ensure water quality is suitable for your intended use and safe before using. Contamination may be from sources many kilometres up stream.

Water sources should be sampled and tested to ensure its suitability:

- for irrigation (*E.Coli* <100cfu/100ml) (F6.2.3) and
- cleaning and handwashing (*E.Coli* <1cfu/100ml) (F6.3.3)

Any results found outside these parameters indicates water is not suitable for use, and treatment or alternate sources need to be utilised.

Water used for cleaning and handwashing must be clean. If you are unsure, conduct a water test (*E.Coli* <1cfu/100ml) and do not use until results are acceptable. If in doubt – you will need to bring in a safe source of water to avoid contaminating your finished product. This source could be bottled drinking water, town water collected and maintained in clean food grade containers.

An accredited laboratory (NATA) must be used for any testing conducted.

All water source equipment and infrastructure must be completely cleaned and disinfected prior to be put back into use. This includes all irrigation lines, storage tanks, pumps, taps and other equipment. All surfaces feeding rainwater filled tanks should also be cleaned and disinfected (roofs, gutters etc).

Chlorine (sodium hypochlorite or bleach) is considered an effective disinfectant.

- The NSW Health website has a factsheet resource that helps calculate how much chorine to use and how to apply. www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/water/Pages/rainwater.aspx
- Cleaning agents can release hazardous fumes or adversely affect the water quality after cleaning. A tank supplier will be able to advise on the best sanitation method depending upon the material with which the tank is constructed.
- Cleaning the inside of tanks can be dangerous, and you may need to bring in a qualified professional to carry out this task to avoid being overcome by cleaning fumes.

Agricultural and Other Chemicals

In a flood water event, chemical containers, fertiliser and soil additives may be immersed, bags soaked or product contaminated.

Where labels and product identity is lost, or the chemicals are damaged beyond use, the chemicals should be separated and disposed of through ChemClear or registered collection agencies.

Assess and record the damage as you go. This should be conducted on the site by the authorised trained worker.

Empty drums should be carefully emptied of any floodwater, segregated and disposed of through drumMUSTER.

Chemical application equipment may need to be re-calibrated after it has been cleaned and disinfected and put back into use.

Facilities, Equipment and Tools

Businesses should also focus on ensuring thorough cleaning and disinfection/ sanitation of all impervious surfaces, tools and equipment that have been in contact with floodwater.

- Food grade or non-perfumed detergents should be used for all cleaning, particularly of food contact surfaces.
- Cleaning should start from the top down, rinsing all surfaces first to remove gross debris and soil, then conducting a clean with a food grade detergent and hot water (where available); followed by an application of a suitable sanitiser and left to air dry.
- Like for water tanks, chlorine is considered an effective disinfectant.
    - The NSW Health website has a factsheet resource that helps calculate how much chorine to use and how to apply. www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/water/Pages/rainwater.aspx

- Items that cannot be cleaned and sanitised should be evaluated and disposed of where possible. This includes all packaging that would be used to contact product (flow wrap, cardboard, crate liners etc.).
- All drains within facilities should be flushed to prevent re-contamination of cleaned areas.

Sourcing from alternate suppliers (emergency supplies)

Freshcare FSQ and SC F11.1 requires that materials and services that may introduce a food safety risk are managed and evidence of compliance is kept for suppliers of such materials and services.

This now extends to situations, where your normal source of supply is restricted, and you need an alternative.

For items including chemicals (such as cleaning chemicals, soaps, sanitiser); personal protective equipment (PPE) and other hygiene supplies; the following must be considered before sourcing:

- Is it appropriate for intended use?
- Review the specifications for the material you need to source.
- Do you need a safety data sheet?
- Can you get an alternate brand, with same active ingredient?
- Does the supplier have details on their website regarding certifications they hold? Are they a well-known brand?
- Call the supplier and ask how they can help you source an alternate? What can they recommend?
- Check the packaging on arrival has appropriate label and date of manufacture/expiry, where applicable.
- Make a record on Form F11 Supplier table – and indicate it is an emergency source (evidence of compliance) and note what was checked before purchasing.

Biosecurity Considerations

In the aftermath of flooding, biosecurity may also be something you need to consider preventing the spread of disease or other contaminants to your growing sites. Items your business may need to consider and seek local regulatory advice on could include:

- Does site access need to be restricted?
- Can I sustain access to the appropriate number of workers required?
- Do staff require further training to comply with requirements?
- Does this affect visitors?

Freshcare provides access to free sign templates as displayed below that could assist your business in restricting property access to authorised persons only. To download signs visit www.freshcare.com.au/resources/signs

Growing Sites & Re-planting

F2.1.5: For growing sites affected by a flood event, planting must be scheduled to ensure the period between flood water subsiding and harvest **exceeds 90 days** for produce where the harvestable part is grown in, or has direct contact with the soil, and may be eaten uncooked.

F2.17 & 2.1.8: Growing sites are assessed for potential of physical contamination. Any remnant physical contaminants should be removed and disposed of.

Produce testing may be required, depending on product to assess the significance of any microbial contamination. An accredited laboratory (NATA) must be used for any testing conducted.

F6.2.4: Produce that has come into contact with flood water is not harvested unless it meets limits of *E. coli <10 cfu/g* and *Salmonella Not Detected/25g,* or customer specifications.

Useful resource:

- Guidelines for Fresh Produce Food Safety 2019:

https://fpsc-anz.com/food-safety-guidelines-2019

Worker training

Provide workers with updates on how your business is managing the current situation, including additional hygiene measures and site restrictions.

This could be undertaken by providing on-site training, new operating procedures or increased signage.

Areas of focus/reminders for on-site training could include:

- Handwashing procedures.
- Ensuring continued good personal hygiene practices.
- Updates on cleaning procedures.
- Site access restrictions, including segregating any contaminated areas that cannot be accessed.
- Additional biosecurity protocols and procedures.
- Ensure all documents and records continue to be maintained.

Incident management

If you have transitioned or commenced the transition to FSQ4.1 or FSQ4.2, Incident management (F14) is an important element. This current situation being faced is an example that can be included in your plan.

For Supply Chain businesses this is included under M6 Business continuity and incident management.

A record of the incident should be kept as well as any corresponding actions taken. The Form – M4 Corrective action record (CAR) can be utilised.

Getting Further Help

Provider	Link	Contact
Federal Govt	https://www.disasterassist.gov.au/ https://www.droughtandflood.gov.au/regional-assistance/2021-eastern-australia-storms-and-floods	
BOM (Weather and River tracking)	www.bom.gov.au/australia/flood	
NSW Farmers	www.nswfarmers.org.au/NSWFA/Content/ContactUs/emergency_contacts.aspx www.nswfarmers.org.au	Head Office: 02 9478 1000 Member Service Centre: 1300 794 000
NSW DPI (Agriculture)	www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/climate-and-emergencies/emergency/floods	Ph: 1800 808 095 nsw.agriculture@dpi.nsw.gov.au
NSW Local Land Services:	www.lls.nsw.gov.au/help-and-advice/emergency-and-biosecurity/floods	1300 795 299 www.lls.nsw.gov.au/i-want-to/contact-my-local-office

Provider	Link	Contact
NSW Rural Assistance Authority	Local government areas in NSW declared Natural Disasters are eligible for assistance under Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA). Additional assistance measures for primary producers are available for eligible areas. www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance/declared-natural-disasters	1800 678 593. www.raa.nsw.gov.au
NSW Health	www.health.nsw.gov.au/emergency_preparedness/weather/Pages/storms-and-floods.aspx www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/water/Pages/rainwater.aspx	
NT	https://securent.nt.gov.au/prepare-for-an-emergency/flooding	
Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF)	www.farmerdisastersupport.org.au www.qff.org.au/farming-in-qld/horticulture	(07) 3837 4720
QLD Govt	www.qra.qld.gov.au/ https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/dealing-disasters/disaster-types/flood	1800 110 841.
VIC Govt	https://www.floodvictoria.vic.gov.au/	

Provider	Link	Contact
SA Govt	https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/emergencies-and-safety/types/flood https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/water/hazard-management	
SA DPI	https://pir.sa.gov.au/	
TAS Govt	https://www.health.tas.gov.au/ http://alert.tas.gov.au/Pages/Home.aspx	
TAS DPI	https://dpipwe.tas.gov.au/	
WA DFES	https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/safetyinformation/flood/Pages/default.aspx https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/recovery/Pages/DRFA-WA.aspx	13 DFES/ 13 3337
WA DPI	https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-primary-industries-and-regional-development	

Provider	Link	Contact
WA Health	https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/J_M/Mosquitoes-and-cyclones	
ChemClear	www.chemclear.org.au/2021/03/25/agsafe-committed-to-helping-farmers-clean-up-after-natural-disaster/ www.chemclear.org.au/resources/fact-sheets	1800 008 182 www.chemclear.org.au/
drumMUSTER:	www.drummuster.org.au	1800 008 707
Hort Innovation:	https://www.horticulture.com.au/growers/flood-information/#floods-practicalinfo	02 8295 2300 www.horticulture.com.au/hort-innovation/get-in-touch/
National Farmers Federation	https://farmhub.org.au/ https://nff.org.au/	

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