



Animal Welfare and Business Continuity Self-Assessment Checklist

Introduction

This checklist has been prepared to assist the meat processing industry prepare for and manage the impacts of a disruption on the business and its processing operations due to an emergency, or major event out of the business control. These include a pandemic, fire, flood, food safety issue, stock movement restrictions or an emergency animal or plant disease. These have varied but major implications on the usual operations of a business, and proper planning is essential to mitigate these risks.

Forward planning to adequately mitigate risks, and initiate contingency plans associated with an emergency event affecting an establishment will allow for a more organised, and rapid response leading to a shortened period of reduced capacity, and in turn a faster return to normal business production and operations.

This document is designed as a prompt in developing business specific plans that consider strategies aimed at:

- protecting the health and safety of your employees, their families and the broader community
- maintain and increase food security by enabling the ongoing supply of meat to Australian consumers
- facilitate, as far as possible, business continuity, thereby ensuring:
 - that the welfare of the animals for which you are responsible is not jeopardised,
 - ongoing job security for your workforce,
 - ongoing plant operations,
 - assisting market access to non-domestic (International), and non-human intended food supply chain

Each plant needs to establish and adopt its own contingency arrangements for processing in the event of an unforeseen production anomaly such as a diminished workforce capacity.

Start planning now for how you will continue your operations when your workforce has been significantly reduced through a human, animal or natural emergency event.

Plans should be developed in consideration of a reduced or minimum workforce required to maintain business operations.

Business Details

As you work through each section of the table below, you may already have a procedure in place and documented in another system to address the identified requirements. Where this is the case, please make a reference to it in the “Details of Actions taken” column i.e. animal welfare procedures may all be documented in a HACCP manual, Food Safety Program (FSP) or an Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Plan.

CONTINGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

Steps	Actions	Detail of Action Taken
Emergency contacts		
Do you have the phone number for relevant authorities to notify in case of event affecting your premises?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAD Hotline 1800675888 • Local DPI Office • LLS Office • District Vet • SafeWork NSW 13 10 50 • NSW Health 1300 066 055 • Local Police 	Emergency Numbers are displayed in a prominent area and staff are informed and know who to call.
Have you notified relevant authorities of the event impacting your business?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify DPI and LLS that processing has been affected and why. • NSW health and Safe Work need to be notified if work force has been impacted. 	
Have you alerted the relevant industry peak bodies of the event impacting your business?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW Chief Animal Welfare Officer (DPI) • AMIC; RMIC; • ALFA; APL; ACMF; Dairy NSW; Australian Eggs • NSW Farmers Committees 	
Personnel		
Is your workers health impacted by this event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassure your staff that their health and well-being is the over-riding priority for yourself and the business. • Make sure they feel safe coming 	

Steps	Actions	Detail of Action Taken
	<p>to work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassure them that there is no need for panic. • Notify NSW health and Safe Work NSW of impact to your workers. 	
<p>Have you informed your staff of their reporting responsibilities if they are sick?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any staff experiencing symptoms of a disease must notify the employer immediately and must not come to work. • Provide clear instruction to staff regarding which manager/s should be notified and what method should be used. • If they are ill, or experiencing cold or flu symptoms, DON'T COME TO WORK • Inform staff they may require testing by a general practitioner before they can return to work. 	
<p>Have you fully informed staff of the event that is affecting your business?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a disease outbreak is impacting your business, all staff should be adequately informed about the ways that diseases are transmitted and about products and things that may be involved. • Inform staff of the need for changed practices and security, the role they must play in preventing the spread of the disease and the practical details of what they must do. • Follow closely the directions of the disease control authorities. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If staff affected by zoonotic disease (e.g Q Fever) work health and safety (WHS) considerations associated with employees continuing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the availability of suitable personal protective equipment for a zoonotic disease outbreak and ensure 	

Steps	Actions	Detail of Action Taken
<p>to work in the business must be a priority.</p>	<p>that at least one set is immediately available so that essential animal management can continue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact DPI and NSW Health to inform and receive guidance in this event. 	
<p>Do your staff travel to work together and or live together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasise with staff that social distancing restrictions and measures must be adhered to outside of the workplace if the disease is transmittable • Ride-sharing of staff to the facility should be strongly discouraged, unless they live together in the same household. • To ensure adequate social distancing during a human disease outbreak, staff who work on different shifts should not live, travel or socialise together during the disease outbreak. • Emphasise among staff that vehicles represent an enclosed space where there may be a heightened risk of transmission of disease. 	
<p>Documentation</p>		
<p>Do you have a checklist for managers and other staff members to follow in case of an emergency?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check lists relevant to the site manager/business owner, meat safety inspectors, team leaders and stock handlers, should be readily available to assist workers ensure staff health and animal welfare are managed correctly. • Managers must ensure checklist are referred to in the event of an emergency or potential 	

Steps	Actions	Detail of Action Taken
	shutdown.	
Do you have a system to record people and vehicle movements during an emergency event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you have a procedure in place to track movements onto and off the property during an event. 	
Communication		
Do you have a communications plan to inform and maintain information flow between your Board /shareholders and other key stakeholders (NSW DPI, Food Authority, LLS, NSW Health etc)		
Have you notified all your regular producers that you can no longer accept stock (including local saleyards)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify the producers you process for that your business cannot accept deliveries • Contact buyers and saleyards that your business cannot accept deliveries. 	
Have procedures been developed to notify all livestock transporters of a notifiable/emergency event impacting your business?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise livestock transport company/s that animals should not be delivered, arrange alternate delivery location or return to farm. 	
Have you ensured NO deliveries of animals can be made to the facility without knowledge of management?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display no access signage at each entry to the facility • Gates must be locked, and an afterhours number provided on gate sign • Contact suppliers who regularly deliver outside of normal operating hours to inform them that no stock is being accepted. 	

Animal Welfare

Steps	Actions	Detail of Action Taken
Make alternative arrangements (MOU etc) with local saleyards, agistment sites or other processing plants that animals can be diverted to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact other processor to determine if they have capacity to receive additional stock; notify details of diverted stock delivery if they can accept the delivery • Divert in coming stock deliveries to the closest alternative processing plant that processes the relevant species • Update NLIS and relevant producers about change of processing information. 	
Is there an option to return animals to producer/farm?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If animals are still in transit and the maximum time off water will not be exceeded, return livestock to the farm they came from. 	
How many animals can be kept on the premises without processing them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document how many animals and what species can be kept at facility in lairage or holding paddocks. • Ensure recommended stock density levels are not exceeded. • Ensure bedding is available for animals requiring it • Have enough supply of bedding for at least 14days 	
Do you have a suitably trained person to check stock daily for illness and injury whilst being held?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If animals are kept on premises a suitably trained person must be available to observe animals for illness or injury and ensure adequate feed and water is available. 	
Do you have enough food and water available for held stock for up to 14days?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document how much feed you can hold at one time. • Store maximum amount of feed where possible 	

Steps	Actions	Detail of Action Taken
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check water supply and quality have not been impacted by event • Have an alternate water supply available if needed (trucked in water) 	
<p>Can stock feed still be delivered to facility?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact feed suppliers to ensure deliveries can continue during event impacting your business • Have an optional supplier of stockfeed • Use alternate feed sources such as grass/stored feed 	
<p>Do you have a system in place to euthanise ill or injured stock whilst facility in shutdown?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitably trained (and potentially licenced) person must be available to euthanise stock if they become ill or injured during holding at facility. • Readily accessible equipment e.g. firearm, captive bolt and pithing etc • Refer to the DPI Primefact- Humane Destruction of Livestock on the DPI website if required • Carcase disposal system must be in place if processing not being done at facility (dead hole, rendering, burial) 	
<p>Can separation of livestock be maintained at the facility? (E.g. to prevent fighting, injury or crushing of younger/smaller animals)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility must have adequate room to separate stock during holding • Arrange to move stock to alternate holdings if separation is not possible. 	
<p>Processing</p>		

Steps	Actions	Detail of Action Taken
<p>Do you have ability to work chain at a minimised capacity until all animals onsite have been processed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce two shifts, day and night to continue processing • Do not let shifts overlap and do a thorough clean down of processing area and any common areas between shifts • Have a plan in place of how to work the chain with a minimum number of people while maintaining WHS, food safety and animal welfare regulations • Create teams so the same people are all working together to minimise contact between workers • Consider punitive actions for staff that do not conform with company directives on staff separation. 	
<p>If you have a boning room or further processing area, can you still operate this at a reduced staff capacity?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a plan in place of how to work the boning room or processing area with a minimum number of people while maintaining WHS and food safety regulations • Use procedures listed above 	
<p>If animals are processed but cannot be transported for food do you have facilities to dispose of carcasses?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a plan in place to dispose of carcasses if they cannot be distributed as normal for Human consumption (use as animal food supply zoos, render, burial, burn) • Consider EPA regulations when disposing of carcasses. • How long can you hold carcasses before they are no longer fit for human consumption (Chiller capacity, shelf life) 	

Essential Consumables/Services

Steps	Actions	Detail of Action Taken
Do you have enough fuel onsite to run generators, trucks, pumps and other machinery for 14 days?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure fuel tanks are always checked and kept full in case of an event that stops access to fuel supplies for extended periods. 	
Do you have enough Veterinary medicines or animal treatments that are commonly used onsite to last up to 14days?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a stockpile of the treatments and medicines you commonly use onsite if you are holding stock for extended period. 	
Do you have enough cleaning chemicals and detergents required for cleaning plant at increased intervals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a stockpile of packaged cleaning chemicals and ensure they are stored safely 	
Do you have enough products to ensure good personal hygiene can be maintained onsite?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure you have a good supply of toilet paper, sanitisers, paper towel, tissue and hand soap. 	
Do you have enough supply of packaging, labels, ingredients and other products needed if you are continuing to process and distribute product?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stockpile packaging needs and ingredients. • Make product to suit available packaging and ingredients • Contact packaging and ingredient suppliers to see if they can continue to supply you during event affecting your business. • Have alternate suppliers 	
Is hard waste (garbage or recycling) removal still possible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact local council or waste collection business to ensure rubbish can still be collected • If rubbish removal is not possible, stockpile bins in a designated area away from processing and ensure livestock or pests cannot access this 	

Steps	Actions	Detail of Action Taken
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waste.

Is liquid waste removal still possible?

- Factories cannot operate without supporting services to dispose of waste from washing of plant and equipment

Traceability

Can you trace all animals and persons who have entered and exited the affected property?

- Use visitor logbooks to trace visitors to property
- NVDs will have details of livestock deliveries and can be used for tracing
- Stop all non-essential visitors entering the property
-

Can you trace all product that has been produced at the facility and distributed?

- Use recall procedures if stock or product you have sent out has been affected.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Do you have enough PPE available for ongoing use for all essential staff working on the property?

- Always have a good supply of PPE onsite
- You cannot operate without PPE
- Contact supplier to ensure deliveries of PPE can be made to your premises during an event.
- Have an alternate supplier of PPE to ensure availability

Do you issue PPE to all visitors/staff and delivery drivers?

- Ensure all people entering the property are issued with appropriate PPE and they are using it the whole time they are on the property.

Steps	Actions	Detail of Action Taken
Have you trained staff and visitors how to use issued PPE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff and visitors know how to safely fit, remove and dispose of any PPE, including gloves, eye protection and/or facemasks, if used. • 	
Single Use PPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-use PPE should be disposed of in a plastic bag immediately after removal, to be disposed of in the general waste. • 	
Reusable PPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reusable PPE such as heavy-duty gloves and goggles/eye protection should be cleaned with detergent and water after use and allowed to dry. An added measure would be to then wipe over the surfaces of these items with a disinfectant solution and allow to dry. 	
Cleaning and Disinfecting the Property		
Have you split your property into "Clean" zones and "Dirty" zones?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide the property into a: • Clean zone – does not contain any animals or animal products • Transition zone – area where people and vehicles undergo decontamination • Dirty zone – contains animals and animal products. This area will contain load-off ramps, lairage, processing plant and effluent ponds. • Ensure all personnel onsite are informed about what areas they can and cannot access. • Have clear signage for dirty, 	

Steps	Actions	Detail of Action Taken
	clean and transition areas.	
Have you got a procedure for decontaminating vehicles, equipment and facilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure you have procedures in place and staff trained in how to decontaminate vehicles, equipment and facilities including lairage, normal cleaning procedure maybe adequate however there is the possibility that the authorities will require you to use APVMA approved disinfectants. 	
Effluent and Liquid Waste Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with the EPA is advisable as treatment of waste may be needed before the waste becomes trade waste, sewage or discharged onto paddocks for irrigation. 	

Notes:

This document sets out guidance to assist the meat processing industry prepare for and manage the impacts of a disruption on the business and its processing operations due to an emergency, or major event out of the business control.

Each business will need to translate this into the specific actions it needs to take depending on the nature of the business including the size and type of business, how it is organised, operated, managed and regulated.

This guidance does not supersede any legal obligations relating to health and safety, employment or equalities, and it is important that as a business or an employer you continue to comply with your existing obligations including those relating to individuals with protected characteristics.

It contains no statutory guidance to take into account when complying with these existing obligations. When considering how to apply this guidance, take into account agency workers, contractors and other people, as well as your employees.

For further information

For further information Contact NSW Health on 1300 066 055 or contact the NSW Food Authority via 1300 552 406 or food.contact@dpi.nsw.gov.au

CM9 DOC20/54107

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