

For Immediate Release: August 29, 2011  
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## Vermont Farmers Battle the Impact of Hurricane Irene

Montpelier, VT – Many Vermont farmers are experiencing devastating effects from the flooding and washed out roads in the wake of Hurricane Irene. The heavy rains accompanied by high winds are leaving farmers with flooded fields and barns, debris, and limited options for milk pick-ups.

Although we understand that many people are still in emergency response mode, the Agency of Agriculture is urging farmers to report losses sustained due to these weather incidents as soon as possible. These efforts will assist the state in exploring various areas of possible assistance from the federal government.

Vermont Agriculture Secretary Chuck Ross is urging farmers to contact state and federal agencies about any damage or losses they have incurred or expect to incur in the future, so that the scope of the problem and impacts can be documented accurately. “We need to hear from farmers in order to evaluate and determine what kind of help might be available and where it is needed,” said Ross.

Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) is requesting that farmers of all types report damage to any of their property in the following manner so that impact information can be included in their justification for emergency funds.

### **If you are in need of emergency response dial 911.**

If you are in need of provisions or assistance, please contact your local responders, such as your local fire or police departments. They will assess the situation and direct you to necessary resources as well as connect farms in need of power with a working generator.

• ***If there is damage to your house(s) or other dwelling in which you live***, that report should be made by calling 211 and completing a damage assessment report with the operator. The operator will then forward this information to VEM. Natural Resources Conservation Services also has the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) that can help protect property that is in threat of further damage if not immediately repaired. Call 802-951-6796 for information.

• ***If there is damage to any part of your property or business***, including but not limited to barns, milking parlors, crops, fields, equipment, etc., this information should be reported to your county USDA Farm Service Agency or your county Natural Resources Conservation Services office; you can also contact organizations to which you belong such as the Vermont Farm Bureau at 802-434-5646 or NOFA Vermont 802-434-4122. These organizations should send a summary of the information to the Agency of Agriculture which will then forward to VEM. Farmers experiencing loss of crops due to flooding should contact their crop insurance agent immediately as well as USDA Farm Service Agency.

Farmers are encouraged to keep in touch with USDA Farm Service Agency at 802-658-2803 and Natural Resources Conservation Service at 802-951-6796.

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