

# TIMELY INFORMATION

## Flood Recovery

---

### **Flood Recovery: Garden and Farm**

#### **Home Gardens and Floods**

If your back yard garden was in a flood area, chances are it lost some nitrogen. You will have to refertilize. If you were about to prepare your garden, you will want to wait a couple of days because it's not a good idea to till or cultivate your garden while the soil is fairly wet.

If your garden was submerged in water, anything that was planted—transplants or seeds—probably rotted in the ground and will have to be replanted. Plants under stress from excess rain and/or flooding are more susceptible to disease. Avoid working with plants when they are wet. Remove diseased plants and destroy them (burn, etc.) so they do not infect others.

“Wet feet” (plants in standing water for a prolonged period) will result in stunting of the plants and a reduction in yield and quality of produce. This condition will be more severe in young plants or seedlings. Older, more established plants may be more tolerant of damage due to flooding. Plants will grow again if they were not too severely damaged, but they will likely be stunted with a yellow appearance. It is best to remove all fruits/flowers from the plant after flooding to encourage vegetative growth. This will help offset the negative effect of the flooding.

However, once damage is done, it can't be fully reversed. Why are wet feet a problem? Plant roots absorb oxygen from the soil. When soils are flooded, the roots are unable to absorb oxygen as well as minerals. For more information on getting your garden back to normal after flooding, call your county Extension office.

Source: Joe Kemble, Extension vegetable specialist

#### **Heavy Rains and Soil Erosion**

Surface soil erosion causes soils to lose plant nutrients, lime and organic matter.

The loss of nutrient-rich top soil causes farmers low production and increased fertilizer costs.

The best conservation practices are no match for flooded fields. Resample flooded fields and follow soil test recommendations to restore productivity. Install erosion practices if they are not already in use, and repair soil conservation structures that were damaged.

Source: Charles Mitchell, Extension agronomist, soils

## **Salvaging Stored Wet Grain**

A grain bin can be used to dry grain that has been wet due to flooding. Preferably the bin should have heated air and stirring. With stirring, a maximum depth of two feet is suggested, and without stirring, a depth of one foot. In an unstirred bin, as the drying front comes through the grain surface in places, shovel wet grain over the dry spots to get more even drying. Use drying-air temperatures of not over 140 degrees F. Cool the dried grain to near outdoor temperatures before storing.

Grain that has been soaked in water is likely to contain about 50 percent moisture, much higher than is usual at harvest, and must be bin-dried in comparatively small batches. While small amounts could be dried with natural air, a heated air system is needed to get the drying capacity that will probably be necessary.

Source: James O. Donald, Extension biosystems engineer

## **Flood-Related Diseases in Livestock**

During floods, the obvious danger to livestock is drowning. After a flood, pastures may be eroded or covered with debris, making supplemental nutrition necessary. Round bales of hay that have been submerged will not be of value as a cattle feed source.

If animals are concentrated in a small area during flooding, this can increase the possibility of transmitting infectious diseases. A beef herd that has received the recommended vaccinations for leptospirosis and upper respiratory diseases (IBR/PI3/BRSV/BVD) should be adequately protected. Contact your veterinarian about any health problems that might be related to flooding. Approach stranded cattle with caution; they can be dangerous in their excited state.

Source: Jim Floyd, former Extension veterinarian; approved by Lisa Kriese-Anderson, Extension animal scientist

## **Salvaging Flooded Pesticides**

Some formulations and containers of pesticides can survive flooding without harm and be saved for future use. Others are ruined when wet and must be properly disposed of to minimize their potential harm.

Pesticides in unbroken, waterproof containers can usually be salvaged. Salvageable pesticides may include:

1. Liquid concentrates in glass, metal or plastic containers. If liquids have a milky appearance, water has probably leaked in, and the pesticide should be disposed of.
2. Oil solutions such as livestock sprays designed for direct applications without dilution, or oil-based household sprays. Water can be seen in oil solutions. Separate the oil and water and then return the spray to the original container.
3. Pressurized cans or "bug bombs."

ALABAMA A&M AND AUBURN UNIVERSITIES, AND TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY, COUNTY GOVERNING BODIES AND USDA COOPERATING

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System offers educational programs, materials, and equal opportunity employment to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability.

4. Baits, powders or granules in waterproof containers.

Source: Jim Hairston, Extension water quality specialist