



**USDA 2009-H1N1 PANDEMIC PLAN
For
PROTECTION OF THE WORKFORCE
And
CONTINUITY OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES**

September 15, 2009

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	ii
Foreword - How to Use This Human Pandemic Planning Guidance	iii
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Principles Guiding USDA’s Planning	2
3. Planning Assumptions	3
4. Definitions	4
5. USDA Roles and Responsibilities	8
6. Human Pandemic Command and Control Structure (Operation Mode).....	10
7. USDA Planning Specific Actions	10
Appendix A - Maintaining Essential USDA Functions and Services.....	12
Appendix B - Human Pandemic Planning Guidance for USDA Managers	24
Appendix C - Facilities Planning Guidance for USDA Managers	34
Appendix D - Communications with USDA Employees and Stakeholders	40
ANNEX A. USDA Support of a Broad Federal Response	A-1
ANNEX B. Human Pandemic Planning Guidance for USDA Employees & Family Members	B-1

FOREWORD

The *United States Department of Agriculture 2009-H1N1 Pandemic Plan* may be modified as new guidance is received in response to changes as the characterization of the fall flu season changes. Notifications will be made to all Mission Areas, Agencies, and Staff Offices as they are posted.

The President's Executive Order on Executive Department and Agency Actions to Support Community Preparedness and Response to the 2009-H1N1 Influenza Pandemic states:

It is the policy of the United States to safeguard the health and well-being of the American people during the 2009-H1N1 influenza pandemic by: (1) taking action to slow the spread of disease, mitigate illness, and prevent death, and (2) sustaining critical infrastructure and minimizing the impact of the pandemic on the economy and functioning of society.

This order requires USDA to take immediate steps to achieve three (3) equally important goals:

- Protection of the Federal Workforce
- Continuity of operations of the Federal government, and
- Support of State, local, territorial, tribal, and private sector pandemic preparedness and response activities.

This plan establishes general guidance and directs USDA Mission Areas, Agencies, and Staff Offices to ensure that their Pandemic Plans meet the requirements identified in subsequent sections. Administrators and Office Directors will assign action officers to review and update their Agency and Office Pandemic Plans and ensure that local operating plans for each field facility are similarly updated.

The second wave of the 2009-H1N1 influenza (hereinafter: flu) is due to begin late summer/early fall. Accordingly, all plans should be complete by September 15, and should be revised in a timely fashion as new guidance is issued.

To ensure a unified response in the National Capital Region, Departmental Administration's Office of Operations will oversee the development of the local operations plan for headquarters locations with input from the Mission Areas, Agencies, and Staff Offices.

This document uses the term Continuity of Operations (COOP) in its broadest sense of USDA preserving the capability of USDA to perform its mission, and should not be confused with the *USDA HQ COOP Plan*, which provides guidance related to national security events which may require relocation of essential personnel and functions. The scope of essential functions and services in pandemic planning is much broader than the essential functions identified for traditional COOP, specifically with regard to the

pandemic planning requirements to sustain operations for an extended period of time and to accommodate a loss of human capital versus a loss of infrastructure.

The following is a synopsis of the USDA 2009-H1N1 Pandemic Planning Guidance Checklists and Annexes.

Appendix A Maintaining Essential USDA Functions and Services

Appendix A is designed to guide the USDA managers through the process of identifying and prioritizing their essential functions and services within their area of responsibility or facility to maintain business continuity. Mission Areas/Agencies/Staff Offices should review and update as required their essential functions and services and share those with local planners so that local operations plans can address support for the broad essential functions and the local essential functions and services that must be maintained during a human pandemic. These functions, as a minimum, must include functions in support of the National Essential Functions and USDA Primary Mission Essential Functions, and functions in support of the National Response Framework. These functions should be reviewed and updated periodically as they are a critical element in the process of planning to continue operations during a pandemic.

Appendix B 2009-H1N1 Pandemic Planning Guidance for USDA Managers

Appendix B has been prepared for USDA managers to help address workforce issues, including safety and health, associated with the planning for a pandemic and mitigation of the effects on USDA employees during a human pandemic. The appendix includes three sections: Telework Capability Questionnaire, which provides questions to determine the current telework capability of critical employees and to prepare them for teleworking; Personnel Tracking, provides guidance and samples in the development of specific tracking issues that managers should address in preparation for a human pandemic; Hiring Flexibilities and Pay Options, provides a synopsis of authorities and alternatives available in developing contingency staffing plans.

Appendix C Facilities Planning Guidance for USDA Managers

Appendix C has been prepared for USDA facility managers to help address facility issues associated with the planning for a pandemic and mitigation of the effects on USDA employees and other occupants of facilities, whether USDA-owned or USDA-occupied. Facilities managers need to be prepared to support social distancing techniques and assure that the facilities provide a healthy workplace and are available and open for continuity of business.

Appendix D Communications with USDA Employees and Stakeholders

Appendix D suggests different ways to communicate and provides resources and references to assist in that effort. While there will be Department-wide communications going to all employees and regular communication within Agency supervisory chains, there must be plans in place to make sure each employee knows how to find current and accurate information in the event of a human pandemic. Using this appendix and working with your Public Affairs organization, plans must be developed to communicate internally and with key stakeholders.

Annex A USDA Support of a Broad Federal Response

Annex A addresses USDA support of Federal responses to emergencies. The Federal responses include the *National Response Framework*, which was developed by the Department of Homeland Security as the primary guide for Federal response. It could be possible that during a human pandemic, in addition to concentrating on USDA business continuity, the Department could be called upon to provide support to a broader Federal response. It is important that managers at all levels are aware of the plans and stated Departmental and agency support commitments, which are coordinated through the USDA Homeland Security Office. Checklists are included to summarize USDA involvement in the broader Federal response.

Annex B 2009-H1N1 Pandemic Planning Guidance for USDA Employees & Family Members

Annex B assists USDA employees and their families in preparing for the 2009 H1N1 pandemic by providing a comprehensive guide to the most current information and recommendations available from Government sources engaged in pandemic planning as resources for employees to aid in their preparation, response, and recovery.

USDA 2009-H1N1 PANDEMIC PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR PROTECTION OF THE WORKFORCE AND CONTINUITY OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

USDA has been a vital part of the ongoing Federal efforts to prepare for the possibility of a human influenza pandemic—a global outbreak of a new influenza virus that infects and can be transmitted between humans, and to which humans have little or no immunity. Because of the global nature of this threat, USDA planners are helping to get the USDA workplace more resilient to any potential outbreak of influenza that might occur in the United States. The *USDA 2009 H1N1 Pandemic Plan* is a working document and will be reviewed and updated as needed.

While we continue to monitor the H5N1 strain that developed a few years ago, and which may still pose a threat, the most current concern arises from the outbreak of the novel 2009-H1N1 influenza virus. Because it is a new strain, for which people have no immunity, it has spread rapidly and remains highly contagious. We are in a global pandemic now. The 2009-H1N1 influenza virus has continued to spread globally, causing significant outbreaks in many countries, including the United States, and an increase of cases is anticipated in the early fall. A 2009-H1N1 pandemic vaccine will afford the most durable protection against the influenza virus. Until such time as a vaccine is available for a voluntary vaccination program, as appropriate, the American people need to be prepared for and able to implement various approaches to slow the spread of disease and minimize social disruption.

One characteristic of influenza viruses is that they constantly mutate. Current evidence appears to indicate that the virus has the same degree of lethality as the seasonal flu. The World Health Organization and the Department of Health and Human Services' Center for Disease Control and Prevention are closely monitoring the flu for any indications of changes. However, based on the current number of people with the flu and the fact that a vaccine will probably not be available until after the next wave starts, we anticipate an unusually high number of cases this fall and a corresponding increase in the numbers of fatalities which may approach 100,000.

On November 1, 2005, the President announced the *National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza*, which outlines the approach the Federal Government will take to prepare for and respond to a possible pandemic. The *Strategy* focuses Federal efforts on three pillars: (1) preparedness and communications; (2) surveillance and detection; and (3) response and containment.

To support the *National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza*, the White House Homeland Security Council developed the *Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza*. This *Plan* provides comprehensive guidance for Federal, State, local and tribal governments, and private sector planning and response for an avian

influenza event. Among other things, the *Implementation Plan* directs that each Federal department and agency must prepare its own operational plans focused on employee health and safety and preserving the capacity to perform its mission during a pandemic.

In response to the new emerging threat posed by the 2009-H1N1 virus, the President issued Executive Order _____, *Executive Department and Agency Actions to Support Community Preparedness and Response to the 2009-H1N1 Influenza Pandemic*. Also in response to the new virus, other Federal departments and agencies have been issuing new guidance which is now being posted on www.flu.gov.

(Note: The Department of Homeland Security is the lead department for the *National Response Framework*, which is separate from the pandemic-specific plans mentioned above. The *National Response Framework* can be activated to coordinate the Federal response to major domestic situations. USDA plays a key role in many aspects of the *National Response Framework*, as outlined in Annex A.)

2. PRINCIPLES GUIDING USDA'S PLANNING

With regard to employee safety and health, as well as continued provision of essential functions and services, USDA will use the following overarching principles as it prepares for and responds to a pandemic outbreak:

- In a pandemic, **employee safety and health** and **business continuity** are USDA's primary concerns.
- Executive Order _____, *Executive Department and Agency Actions to Support Community Preparedness and Response to the 2009-H1N1 Influenza Pandemic* provides detailed steps that must be taken by each department and agency.
- The *National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza* and the *Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza* continues to provide a framework for USDA planning.
- USDA will support the *National Response Framework* (NRF) in the event that the Department of Health and Human Services or the Department of Homeland Security activates the NRF in support of a response to the pandemic or some other disaster.
- In the event the pandemic begins to cause absenteeism rates that impact on USDA operations, USDA Headquarters will delegate special human resources authorities to the local level to enable USDA managers to be flexible and creative in managing human capital to ensure continuity of essential functions and services while a pandemic is affecting their geographic area.
- USDA will maximize the use of technology to support business continuity and social distancing.

- USDA officials will coordinate closely with local partners, stakeholders, State and local governments, and health officials.
- USDA will provide its employees with information on pandemic influenza through normal supervisory channels, special messaging, and web services using www.usda.gov/da/beprepared as a primary resource.
- The Federal Government increasingly uses contractors for cost-effective commercial services that support its missions. USDA agencies will ensure that their non-Federal service providers receive pandemic planning information and require contractors who provide support that is integral to the delivery of essential services to present a plan outlining how they will meet their contractual obligations during a pandemic.

3. PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

- Human pandemic influenza is likely to come in “waves” of several weeks to a few months in duration.
- The Second Wave (expected in Sep 2009) is likely to have greater impact than normal seasonal flu. A vaccine will not likely be available until after the second wave peaks in mid-October and may make for a larger second wave with 10 times the number of medical visits and 3 times the number of deaths than we would see from a regular mild to moderate seasonal influenza. This may equate to 90,000 to 100,000 deaths in the United States. As of mid-July there is still insufficient evidence to predict the severity of H1N1 when it returns in the fall.
- Attack rates will likely be 25-30% with children. Middle age adults are presenting with illness disproportionately from seasonal influenza which usually strikes the very young and very old.
- Some persons will become infected but may not develop clinically significant symptoms. Asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic individuals can transmit the infection and develop immunity to subsequent infection.
- At the height of the second wave, absenteeism is likely to be closer to the 20 to 30 percent range similar to the attack rates seen so far. (Factors include that since the virus has a low lethality, there will be less reluctance to report to work—assuming the mortality rate remains consistent with seasonal flu. There may be a higher infection rate than seasonal flu because a significant portion of the population is still getting the flu during non-flu season. Hence there is a greater number of infectious people to spread the disease once climate changes make the spread more conducive. There is also a higher incidence of people in the work force who are infectious (as opposed the children and older aged individuals).
- Illness among the public and absenteeism in the private sector workforce may impact essential functions and services needed by USDA customers, the ability of

USDA contractors to deliver goods and services, USDA's ability to procure needed supplies, and distribution systems. We do not believe the impact will be as severe as in the Avian Flu scenario. Community mitigation guidance for school closures has not been finalized by CDC yet. This could have a significant impact on absenteeism from primary caregivers staying home with both sick and well children.

- Assuming the current flu does not change, a vaccine will not be available until the peak of a second wave in mid-October. The stockpile of anti-viral drugs has been greatly expanded in the last few years but this assumes that a new variant does not appear that is resistant to current anti-virals.
- Influenza is spread through droplets from an infected person. USDA planning must recognize that viral transmission occurs as much or more through touch (contact with contaminated objects) as through air dispersion (through coughing or sneezing).
- Persons contracting the virus will be infectious for a period of time before the onset of symptoms, during the illness, and for a period of time even after symptoms have disappeared. USDA will follow Health and Human Services guidance on medical issues and amend its actions as necessary based on new guidance.

4. DEFINITIONS

2009-H1N1 Influenza – a new influenza virus subtype that is easily transmitted from human to human. While there is some evidence to suggest that older people may have a limited immunity due to exposure to similar strains during childhood, the vast majority of the U.S. population does not have any immunity and remain highly susceptible to contracting the virus.

Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP) --The ability of USDA to continue to perform its mission. In the broadest sense, our ability to perform Primary Mission Essential Functions and Mission Essential Functions, as well as important business essential functions including support to the NRF.

National Security COOP- a– An all-hazards means of assuring that disruptions of operations will not prevent performance of the government's essential functions. Federal agencies are required to develop all-hazards COOP plans for conducting essential functions from an alternate facility, within 12 hours following a disruption. However, COOP plans must contain procedures that ensure the plans can be implemented, if called for, during a pandemic.

Critical Infrastructure Facility (Formerly Mission Critical Facility) – a designation given to certain USDA facilities based on a mission review and other security evaluations.

Epidemic – a pronounced clustering of cases of a disease within a short period of time.

Essential Employees – those employees identified as being necessary for the continued performance of essential functions and services. Agencies must inform employees identified as essential in advance, so that they can be prepared to support and sustain essential USDA functions and services during a pandemic. Essential employees are expected to remain in contact with their agencies during any emergency.

Essential Functions and Services – those critical functions that enable USDA, at each organizational level, to provide vital services; maintain the safety and well being of the general public; sustain the agricultural economic base; protect the nation’s food supply; deliver Federal nutrition assistance programs; support social order and well-being; and meet national and international responsibilities in a national emergency.

When identifying essential functions and services, program managers should take into account collaborative relationships with State and local governments, industry partners, stakeholders, and other Federal departments. Program managers should take into account the time of the year that a discrete service must be provided, or a discrete function performed, to support overall program delivery requirements.

Evacuation Order – The Secretary of Agriculture may order evacuation of one or more employees from their worksite upon an official announcement by Federal, State or local officials, public health authorities, and/or tribal governments, of a pandemic health crisis affecting certain geographic areas. The Secretary of Agriculture may delegate authority to one or more designated officials to order the evacuation of agency employees, employees assigned to certain geographic areas, or employees in certain components/divisions of an agency.

Evacuation Pay – The Secretary of Agriculture has authority to grant evacuation pay to employees who are ordered to evacuate their regular worksites and work from home (or an alternative location) during a pandemic health crisis. An evacuated employee may be assigned to perform any work considered necessary during the period of evacuation without regard to the employee’s grade or title. Failure or refusal to perform assigned work may be a basis for terminating evacuation payments, as well as disciplinary action.

Government Function – the collective functions of a Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office as defined by statute, regulations, presidential direction, or other legal authority.

Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza – a plan published by the White House Homeland Security Council that provides comprehensive guidance for Federal, State, local, and tribal governments, and private sector planning and response. Among other things, the *Implementation Plan* directs that each Federal

department and agency must prepare its own operational plans focused on employee health and safety and preserving the capacity to perform its mission during a pandemic.

Influenza – a viral respiratory disease spread mainly by tiny droplets that are released when an infected person sneezes or coughs. Seasonal flu outbreaks occur most often in late fall and winter. Once people have been infected by a certain strain of flu, they develop immunity. However, with many different types of flu virus circulating around the world, each year the population may be faced with new strains causing seasonal flu. The flu virus continually changes, mutates, and evolves into new forms.

Human Capital Plan – a plan required by the President’s Management Agenda that guides USDA towards improvements in human capital. As part of the development of this plan, USDA human resources personnel have determined mission-critical job series and evaluated flexibilities.

Local 2009-H1N1 Pandemic Operations Plan – a plan prepared by each USDA location outlining local preparedness, response, and recovery in accordance with the USDA 2009-H1N1 Plan.

Mission Critical Position – a designation given to certain job series requiring increased attention to staffing and recruiting as part of the Human Capital Plan developed under the President’s Management Agenda.

Mission Essential Functions (MEFs) – the limited set of agency-level Government functions that must be continued throughout, or resumed rapidly after, a disruption of normal activities.

Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (MAC)—A formalized structure developed to work in conjunction with the Incident Command System and Area Command to facilitate interagency coordination. Within USDA this group is chaired by the Chief of Staff to the Deputy Secretary. The Special Assistant to the Secretary serves as Vice Chair. The group consists of senior representatives from Mission Areas, Agencies, and Staff Offices that provide significant support to issues or incidents, or have jurisdictional or functional involvement in them.

National Essential Functions (NEFs) – the functions the President and the Nation’s leadership focus on to lead and sustain the National during a catastrophic emergency.

National Response Framework – issued in September 2007, this Framework replaces the National Response Plan, both of which were developed under the leadership of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The Framework and annexes establish a comprehensive, all-hazards approach to enhance the ability of the United States to manage domestic incidents. USDA has both lead and support responsibilities under this Framework. Should an incident requiring Federal coordination occur during a pandemic, USDA would take on responsibilities that support the broader Federal response. The

Framework and annexes can be found at:
<http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nrf/mainindex.htm#>.

National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza – a plan, developed by the Homeland Security Council, that outlines the approach the Federal Government will take to prepare for and respond to a pandemic (www.pandemicflu.gov).

Pandemic – a worldwide epidemic.

Pandemic Influenza – a worldwide outbreak of a new influenza virus that infects and can be transmitted between humans, and to which humans have little or no immunity.

Primary Mission Essential Functions (PMEFs) – department and agency Mission Essential Functions (MEFs), validated by the National Continuity Coordinator, that must be performed in order to support performance of National Essential Functions (NEFs) before, during, and in the aftermath of an emergency. PMEFs need to be performed continuously or resumed within 12 hours of disruption.

Quarantine – an action placed in effect by local health authorities that places restrictions on people and their movement in and out of a home, a neighborhood, a community, or other geographical designation. During a human pandemic influenza, a quarantine could be a tool used by local officials to prevent further spreading of a disease.

Social Distancing – an infection control strategy that reduces the duration, frequency, or intimacy of social contacts in order to limit the transmission of influenza. Social distancing may include, for example, increased use of telework, placing employees on shifts, and canceling of large gatherings.

Telework – working at locations other than the workplace, such as an employee's home or at a telework center, using telecommunications.

USDA Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Pandemic Action Officers – A senior Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office official appointed by the Subcabinet to work with the USDA Pandemic Coordinator to assure local operations plans are developed and in place that focus on employee safety and health, and business continuity.

Wave – a period during which an outbreak of pandemic influenza occurs within a specific community or a larger geographic area. Waves include periods of time of rapid increase of disease occurrence, peak occurrence, and decline toward more normal levels. Waves can last several weeks to several months. An influenza pandemic would be expected to occur in several waves.

5. USDA ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section outlines the roles and responsibilities of senior officials, Mission Areas/Agencies/Staff Offices, Pandemic Action Officers, Local Pandemic Coordinators and individual employees and families during the planning and implementation phases of a pandemic.

Secretary/Deputy Secretary of Agriculture – Designate a USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator; approve waivers or special human capital authorities as necessary to protect employee safety and health and ensure continuity of essential functions and services.

USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator – The Chief of Staff to the Deputy Secretary has been appointed by the Deputy Secretary to lead USDA efforts to develop pandemic operations plans to protect employee safety and health and ensure continuity of USDA essential functions and services.

In support of the USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator role, the MAC Group assists in coordination, resolves issues, and adjudicates critical resources. The MAC Chair establishes policies, facilitates coordination among the USDA Mission Areas, Agencies, and Staff Offices related to the response to the pandemic, and provides special delegations of authority needed to empower local managers to protect employee safety and health and ensure business continuity. The Assistant Secretary for Administration (ASA) serves as executive liaison to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. The ASA will implement the Incident Command System to plan and manage a headquarters pandemic incident.

Subcabinet Members – Exercise line authority for protecting employee safety and health and the continuity of essential functions and services. The Subcabinet will provide leadership for human pandemic planning by appointing representatives to the MAC Group, designating Pandemic Action Officers and Local Human Pandemic Coordinators (if applicable), and overseeing the development of operations plans. The Subcabinet will ensure essential functions are continued during the summer/fall 2009-H1N1 and subsequent waves.

Departmental Administration Offices – the Assistant Secretary for Administration is supported by the following Departmental Administration offices:

Director, Office of Human Capital Management – Supports the USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator by developing policies on human resources flexibilities to facilitate implementation of human pandemic operations plans; requests any necessary waivers or additional delegations necessary from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management for employee compensation; delegates authorities as necessary to support local operations; serves as a resource on leave, hours of work, compensation, and safety and health issues.

Director, Office of Operations – Supports the USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator by serving as Local Human Pandemic Coordinator for all USDA Headquarters locations and facilities in the National Capital Region (NCR).

Director, Office of Security Services – Coordinates COOP activities in support of human pandemic planning; coordinates the Incident Command System for headquarters emergency programs including human pandemic planning and response; directs operations of the USDA Operations Center; and provides timely updates and guidance for USDA personnel through the employee emergency information “BePrepared” Website (<http://www.usda.gov/da/beprepared>).

Office of Communications – Works with the USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator to develop communications concerning pandemic influenza; and to provide support and technical expertise in reviewing internal (employee) communications going to all employees.

Office of the Chief Information Officer – Leverages technology to support implementation of the operations plans and develops plans for maintaining information technology (IT) operations during periods of high absenteeism. Expedites consideration of any needed IT waivers, provides technology support for special or altered business operations during a pandemic; provides guidance to employees on IT security measures in connection with expanded telework; facilitates corporate planning and communications with Mission Area IT leadership to sustain technology operations during a pandemic.

Office of the Chief Financial Officer – Provides guidance and direction to ensure continuity of payroll and time and attendance systems.

Office of the General Counsel – Provides legal advice concerning any waivers, regulatory changes, or temporary modifications in the way USDA manages its human capital and accomplishes its essential functions and services during a pandemic.

Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Pandemic Action Officer – A senior USDA official appointed to assure operations plans are developed and operational that focus on employee safety and health and business continuity.

Local Pandemic Coordinator – Coordinates preparedness, response, and recovery for USDA facilities; uses planning guidance provided to develop local plans to be used in conjunction with the local Occupant Emergency Plans; coordinates with stakeholders and local governments; exercises delegated authorities to protect employee safety and health and ensure continuity of essential functions and services.

Employees and Families – Stay informed and be prepared. Employees should take common sense steps to stop the spread of a flu virus. Employees and their family members with computers should immediately bookmark - both on their work and home computers - www.flu.gov for up-to-date information on the disease, how to prevent its

spread, and how to treat it; and www.usda.gov/da/beprepared/ for USDA updates and information. These two Websites will be key conduits for information before, during, and after a pandemic.

6. PANDEMIC COMMAND AND CONTROL STRUCTURE

7. USDA PLANNING ACTION ITEMS

The United States and the world have experienced the first wave of the 2009-H1N1 Pandemic. Within the United States, we are anticipating the second wave may start as early as late August 2009 and may peak in the September/October timeframe before a vaccine is available. This section defines what needs to be done now and accomplished by September 15, what is expected during the second wave, and what may need to be accomplished in the lull before the next wave.

To be accomplished by September 15:

- Review and update Agency and Local Pandemic Plans.
- Place all USDA offices on pandemic alert status and prepare to implement pandemic operations plans.
- Ensure that local operations plans are complete and instructions are provided to all employees concerning the continuity of essential functions and services.

- Continue to follow normal flu season protocols until such time as Headquarters issues new guidance.
- Be prepared to implement revised protocols when directed.
- Communicate with employees to keep them informed of the progress of the pandemic and remind them of health guidelines and steps they should take to protect themselves and their families.
- Ensure three (3) deep delegations of authority for critical personnel.

On order from USDA Headquarters when absenteeism begins to impact operations:

- Mission Areas/Agencies/Staff Offices provide daily Situation Reports (SITREP) through Agency channels.
- Coordinate with State and local officials, local health officials, Federal Executive Boards, partners, and stakeholders in implementing the Local 2009-H1N1 Pandemic Operations Plan; implement measures to ensure continuity of essential functions and services.

On order from USDA Headquarters when the second wave appears to be abetting:

- Assess impact on USDA operations from previous pandemic wave and report through Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Pandemic Action Officers to USDA Operations Center.
- Survey and compile lists of employees who were infected in the first wave and recovered, and those who have received vaccinations (thus acquiring immunity in subsequent waves).
- Adjust local plans based on knowledge gained and lessons learned.
- Adjust three-deep delegations of authority for essential employees based on employee health status.

Appendix A

MAINTAINING ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AND SERVICES

1. PURPOSE

This appendix is designed to guide USDA Pandemic Action Officers through the process of identifying and prioritizing their essential functions and services within their mission responsibility or facility to maintain business continuity. It also provides ideas for addressing those essential functions and services that are vulnerable to disruption in the face of an influenza pandemic.

USDA will employ a tiered approach to prioritizing essential functions and services during an influenza pandemic. As the pandemic progresses and staff attrition rates impact the ability to perform all normal business functions, the lowest priority functions will not be performed. These essential function tiers are:

- Tier I – Primary Mission Essential Functions (PMEFs)
- Tier II – Mission Essential Functions (MEFs)
- Tier III – Government functions identified by each Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office

The essential functions in Tier I have been approved by the White House, and in Tier II have been approved by the USDA Chief of Staff. Mission Areas, Agencies, and Staff Offices are to periodically examine, and redefine if required, their government functions in Tier III in the context of a pandemic which may span a period of up to nine months. Updated lists of essential functions and services should be shared with local planners so that local operations plans can address support for the broad essential functions and the local essential functions and services that must be maintained during a human pandemic.

2. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Pandemic Action Officers and Local Human Pandemic Coordinators should work with managers to:

For Immediate Review and Update

- Review and revise plans and procedures for continuation of functions and services through pandemic events. Plans and procedures should extend beyond the USDA Primary Mission Essential Functions and Mission Essential Functions identified for COOP, which were predicated on continuing operations for 30 days, as a human pandemic is likely to span many months.
- Identify and *prioritize* Tier III government functions and services to determine those most critical in the event employee absenteeism reaches 30 percent.
- Consider seasonal essential services and develop strategies to execute these services.

- Identify mission critical employees and ensure redundancy in employee skills and knowledge by cross-training.
- Determine which essential functions and services may be performed using telework and other social distancing techniques versus those that must be performed on-site.
- Require contractors who provide support that is integral to your delivery of essential services to present a plan to you on how they will meet their contractual obligations during a human pandemic.
- Develop a tracking process to monitor employee illness and absenteeism during the next wave and prepare to report through channels to Agency Administrators and Office Directors.
- Identify employees and equipment required to perform services and ensure cross-training among employees.
- Develop delegations of authority and orders of succession that are at least three deep to take into account the expected rate of absenteeism.
- Plan for geographical dispersion of delegations of authority and orders of succession, taking into account the regional nature of an outbreak.
- Disseminate delegation and succession information to local and headquarters staff.
- Identify records needed to sustain operations for more than 30 days and ensure records can be accessed electronically from remote locations or provide hard copies.
- Identify and plan for maintenance of vital systems that rely on periodic physical intervention/servicing.
- Identify and test critical systems that support connectivity internally and to key stakeholders.
- Test and exercise social distancing techniques, including telework capabilities, to address impacts of a reduced staff on facilities and essential services. Develop detailed guidance for geographically rotating essential services, operations, and leadership as applicable.
- Identify stakeholders to include other Federal departments and agencies (D/As), local, State, and tribal authorities. Invite stakeholders to participate in tests.
- Develop plans to resume all business activities.
- Test interoperable communications both internally and with stakeholders.
- Test telework impact on internal network and telecommunications systems.
- Update all vital records and databases (including all pre-deployed vital records and databases).
- Test procedures for each location to prepare and disseminate the status of its mission operations.
- Begin to track local USDA leadership.

During the Second Wave and Subsequent Waves

The human pandemic will not necessarily affect all parts of the country equally or at the same time. Offices should take their lead from local health authorities and alert the Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Pandemic Action Officer.

Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Pandemic Action Officers and Local Pandemic Coordinators should prepare to:

- Execute human pandemic plans and implement social distancing procedures.
- Coordinate implementation with USDA Headquarters, other Federal D/As, and State, local, and tribal governments.
- Provide daily reports on the mission-capable status of USDA facilities and the ability to perform essential functions and services.
- Continue to track leadership/successors.
- Maintain daily contact with other geographical sites that can back up your essential services if needed (devolution).
- Verify reconstitution capabilities.
- Track employee attendance daily and report as required.
- Execute delegations of authority and orders of succession as needed.
- Monitor the impact of telework on the internal network and telecommunications system. Continue updating as necessary.

After the Second Wave and Before the Subsequent Wave

A human pandemic will likely come in waves. This stage focuses on evaluating capabilities to continue to perform your functions and preparing for the next wave.

Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Pandemic Action Officers and Local Pandemic Coordinators should take the lead to:

- Implement business recovery/resumption plans.
- Assess any damage to facilities/infrastructure.
- Replace personnel as needed and conduct training as required.
- Continue tracking employee absenteeism and test communications.
- Assess impact on essential services and adjust plans based on knowledge gained and lessons learned.
- Update delegations of authority and orders of succession as needed.
- Monitor the impact of telework on the internal network and telecommunications system. Continue updating as necessary.

- Conduct training to ensure continued capability to perform essential functions and services.
- Continue to track leadership/successors.
- Maintain daily contact with other geographical sites.
- Execute reconstitution plans. Review plans and adjust as required to prepare for the next wave.
- Assess any injury/illness to employees (and customers), and damage to facilities.
- Begin documenting the effects of the human pandemic influenza and actions taken; secure all properties and records.

USDA Primary Mission Essential Functions (PMEF)

Number	NEF Supported	PMEF	Agency/M A Responsible	Interdependencies
1	6 & 8	Ensure the safety of designated segments of U.S. food supplies and protect U.S. agricultural health	APHIS/MRP; FSIS/FS; OIG	FSIS: APHIS; HHS; FDA; Foreign Govts; DHS; State/local APHIS: DHS; EPA; USDA agencies; State/local; Private Sector OIG: DHS; DOJ; FBI; State/ local; law enforcement agencies
2	6 & 8	Coordinate with State, local, and voluntary organizations to provide food for shelters and other mass feeding sites, and continue commodity support and nutrition assistance programs	AMS/MRP ; FNS/FNCS	FNCS: AMS; FSA; FSIS; FDA; FEMA; State/local; NGAs; Non-Profits; State EBT; Advocacy partners AMS: FSA; FNS
3	6	Lead and coordinate allocation of fire and aviation assets in response to fires on Federal lands	Forest Service/NRE	Forest Service: DOI; DOC; DoD; DHS; FEMA; EPA; State/local; Emergency Response agencies
4	8	Provide public safety and security support for the protection of critical Government resources such as National Forests and Grasslands	Forest Service/NRE; OIG	Forest Service: DOI; DOJ; DEA; ATF; OSHA; NIOSH; State/local OIG: DHS; DOJ; FBI; State/ local law enforcement agencies

USDA Mission Essential Functions (MEF) – 2008

#	Mission Essential Function	Agency/MA Responsible
aphis1	Provide executive leadership and overall direction for safeguarding U.S. animal and plant resources from destructive pests and diseases	APHIS/MRP
aphis2	Maintain and strengthen American foreign policy to safeguard the health of animals, plants, and ecosystems of the Nation	APHIS/MRP
ams1	Collect, analyze, and disseminate time-sensitive agricultural market information at the local, regional, national, and international levels to promote the efficient and orderly marketing of agricultural products	AMS/MRP (Market News)
ams4	Provide objective and comprehensive ‘benchmark’ data on food-borne pathogens in fresh fruits and vegetables for use in food safety decision-making and risk modeling	AMS/MRP (Microbiological Data Program)
ams7	Enhance intelligence of the status of the food supply transportation system; analyze and address problems in the distribution and transportation of agricultural products in commerce, for rural producers, ancillary agribusiness and exporters	AMS/MRP (Transportation Services Program)
ams10	Provide on demand user-fee grading services to segregate commodities based on their economically important attributes to increase returns to producers of quality products, and to evaluate and confirm production or manufacturing process conformance to internationally recognized quality assurance protocols administered by AMS	AMS/MRP (Agricultural Commodity Grading Services)
ams11	Remove marketplace surpluses of perishable non-price supported commodities to stabilize process, and to meet domestic and international feeding program needs	AMS/MRP (Commodity Purchase Services Program)
gipsa1	Issue Official Inspection and Weighing Certificates	GIPSA/MRP
gipsa2	Prohibit deceptive practices and criminal acts with respect to the inspection and weighing of grain and provide penalties for violations	GIPSA/MRP
gipsa3	Assure fair competition and fair trade practices	GIPSA/MRP

#	Mission Essential Function	Agency/MA Responsible
gipsa4	Safeguard farmers and ranchers, and protect consumers and protect members of the livestock, meat, and poultry industries from unfair, deceptive, unjustly discriminatory and monopolistic practices	GIPSA/MRP
fns1	Administer the Food Stamp Program at State and local levels, including determination of eligibility and allotments, and distribution of benefits to include the Disaster Food Stamp Program	FNS/FNCS
fns2	Commodity ordering and distribution for domestic nutrition assistance programs and disaster relief	FNS/FNCS
fns3	Manage hold and recall actions for FNS nutrition assistance program commodity foods	FNS/FNCS
fas1	Generate global agricultural production estimates	FAS/FFAS
fas2	Weekly and daily reporting of U.S. agricultural export sales	FAS/FFAS
fsa1	Purchase and deliver processed commodities programs, such as the National School Lunch, Commodity Supplemental Food, Food Distribution on Indian Reservations, and Disaster Assistance programs	FSA/FFAS
rma1	Validation of crop insurance company policy data input under the Standard Reinsurance Agreements	RMA/FFAS
rma2	Ensure Approved Insurance Providers receive escrow payments	RMA/FFAS
rma3	Accounting operations reports	RMA/FFAS
rma4	Delivery of actuarial data	RMA/FFAS
rma6	Conduct reviews to ensure program integrity and comply with IPIA Act	RMA/FFAS
rma7	Review, recommend, and impose sanctions for program violations	RMA/FFAS
rma8	Provide executive leadership and overall direction in administering the delivery of crop insurance programs and other risk management tools to farmers and ranchers via a Standard Reinsurance Agreement with the private sector	RMA/FFAS
rma13	Provide leadership to administer the delivery of a sound system of crop insurance and risk management educational tools. Oversee programs to partner with public and private entities to deliver risk management education to farmers and ranchers	RMA/FFAS

#	Mission Essential Function	Agency/MA Responsible
ars1	Rapidly provide research information and access to laboratory network in response to potentially catastrophic incidents affecting food and agriculture	ARS/REE
csrees1	Working in partnership with States and territories through their land-grant institutions, rapidly provide research, education, and extension information in response to potentially catastrophic incidents affecting agriculture, food, human health, and communities	CSREES/REE
ers1	Protect usability of ERS information systems/analytic base	ERS/REE
nass1	Data collection, data capture, & data cleaning activities for surveys contributing to essential Agricultural Statistics Board (ASB) reports. Essential surveys: Dairy Product Prices, Agricultural & Objective Yield, Cattle on Feed, Agricultural Prices, Cotton Ginnings, Grain Stocks, Hogs & Pigs, Cattle, Prospective Plantings, Small Grain Summary, Winter Wheat Seedings & acreage.	NASS/REE
nass2	Preparation and release of essential ASB reports. This function involves data analysis, summarization, estimation, ASB Board activities, and release dissemination. The essential ASB reports are Dairy Product Prices, Agricultural and Objective Yield, Cattle on Feed, Agricultural Prices, Cotton Ginnings, Grain Stocks, Hogs & Pigs, Cattle, Prospective Plantings, Small Grain Summary, Winter Wheat Seedings and acreage.	NASS/REE
fsis1	Safeguarding the public health by ensuring re-inspection of imports and high-risk import inspection	FSIS/OIA/FS
fsis2	Ensuring that emergency hiring can be conducted, if necessary, to fully staff federal establishments – thereby protecting the public health	FSIS/OM/FS
fsis3	Providing timely emergency notices and directives in order to ensure that FSIS is able to assure that the meat, poultry, and processed egg supply is safe, wholesome, and unadulterated	FSIS/OPPD/FS
fsis4	Communicating essential information to FSIS personnel and constituents in order to support the continued safety and security of meat, poultry,	FSIS/OFO/FS

#	Mission Essential Function	Agency/MA Responsible
	and egg products	
fsis6	Providing, supporting, and maintaining essential information and reporting systems necessary to ensure that COOP procedures are tracked and inspection is directed (and results reported) in order to protect the public health	FSIS/OPEER/FS
fsis7	Providing, supporting, and assisting in managing emergency incidents through COOP – so the Agency can continue to operate to protect the public health	FSIS/OFDER/FS
fsis8	Providing support to field operations to ensure that all product submitted for testing is analyzed and reported in a timely manner, thereby protecting the public health	FSIS/OPHS/FS
fsis9	Ensuring that all employees are familiar with and can use the Agency-Employee Tracking Procedures, so that FSIS can plan and perform essential functions in an emergency situation	FSIS/FS
nrsc1	Provide soils information for selection of suitable sites for disposal of dead animals	NRCS/NRE
rd1	Improve/increase quality of life in rural America by providing credit and technical assistance to develop and support essential public facilities and services (water and sewer systems, electric and telecommunications systems, housing, health clinics, emergency service facilities)	RD
rd2	Promote and improve economic opportunity and development in rural America through capital enhancement. Investing in (loans and grants) businesses and economic infrastructure	RD
rd3	Support Federal disaster response capability through the National Response Framework to save lives, reduce suffering, and promote family, community, and business recovery throughout the Nation that has been overwhelmed by the impact of a major disaster or emergency, regardless of cause (Primary ESF 14; Support ESFs 6 & 12)	RD
rd4	Administer rural credit and financial assistance programs including emergency assistance to critical firms supporting agricultural needs of the Nation	RD
oce1	Advise the Secretary of Agriculture on economic implications of policies and programs for U.S. food and fiber system and rural areas; coordinate,	OCE/WAOB

#	Mission Essential Function	Agency/MA Responsible
	review, and approve monthly World Agriculture Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report, a Principal Federal Economic Indicator.	
oig1	Under Inspector General Act of 1978, conduct and supervise investigations relating to the programs and operations of USDA. Investigations utilize specific law enforcement authorities, tools, and techniques to conduct investigations and prevent fraud, waste, and abuse	OIG
oig3	Under Public Law 107-203, Wildland Fire Investigation Team (WFIT) conducts investigations in the case of each fatality of an officer or employee of the Forest Service that occurs due to wildfire entrapment or burnover. WFIT can also assist with emergency operations in an incident command	OIG
oig4	Established in 1990, the Department of the Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) supports law enforcement by analyzing information required under the Bank Secrecy Act. FinCEN database provides one of the largest repositories of information available to law enforcement in the country	OIG
oig5	Membership of the National Joint Terrorism Task Force (NJTTF). An OIG special agent is assigned to the FBI's NJTTF on a full-time basis. The agent attends threat briefings regarding terrorist intelligence, then follows up with appropriate USDA agency based on the information received	OIG
oig6	Under Inspector General Act of 1978, conduct and supervise audits relating to the programs and operations of USDA. Audit examines the economy and efficiency of USDA programs and operations, including program results, compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and fair presentation of financial reports	OIG
ocio1	Provide Continuity of Operations Plan/Continuity of Government communications services	OCIO
ocio2	Manage the telecommunications enterprise network, services, and operations	OCIO
ocio3	Manage the data centers, computer services, and support operations for USDA's Administration offices and various agencies	OCIO

#	Mission Essential Function	Agency/MA Responsible
ocio4	Manage the Department-wide intrusion detection system	OCIO
ocio5	Manage the Department-wide computer incident reporting process as required by OMB	OCIO
ocio6	Perform National Communication System (NCS) ESF #2 (communications)	OCIO
ocio7	Support the Forest Service for National Response Framework Emergency Support Function #4 (Firefighting)	OCIO
ocio8	Manage eAuthentication, Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 (HSPD-12), and AgLearn infrastructure, services, and operations	OCIO
ocfo1	Payroll/Personnel Services, including, 1) the processing of time and attendance data; 2) the processing of manual payments and quick service requests; 3) the verification and calculation of pay; 4) the reconciliation, certification, and disbursement of the payroll; 5) payroll call center support; and 6) providing Human Resources Line-of-Business services. This function also includes the support activities required to sustain the activity (data center, facility management, etc.)	OCFO
ocfo2	For mission critical systems, directs the development and operations of an integrated information technology architecture for financial and other systems delegated to OCFO in accordance with Departmental guidelines	OCFO
ocfo3	Advises the Secretary and General Officers on the financial aspects of planning, development, and execution of Departmental policies and programs	OCFO
ocfo4	Serves as key official for the Department for the financial aspects of all Department programs and activities with other executive branch agencies, the Congress, and the private sector	OCFO
ocfo5	Establishes programs, policies, standards, systems, and procedures to improve financial management and operations efficiency and effectiveness	OCFO
ocfo6	Directs effective recording and accounting of USDA expenditures	OCFO
ocfo7	Guides & directs travel management programs, including policy & coordination with external	OCFO

#	Mission Essential Function	Agency/MA Responsible
	customers	
ocfo8	Establishes policies & procedures to ensure effective internal controls of the expenditure of USDA funds	OCFO
ocfo9	Directs and oversees the operations of the Departmental Working Capital Fund	OCFO
ocfo10	Administers the OCFO's Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights programs	OCFO
ocfo11	Funds Control Management (vendors payments, payment certification, intra-government payments and collection, and vendor file maintenance)	OCFO
ocfo12	Revenue and receivables	OCFO
ocfo13	Guides and directs programs to improve collection of delinquent debt, including management of the accounting for credit programs	OCFO
ocfo14	Financial Reporting (Interface Reconciliation, General Ledger Maintenance)	OCFO
ocfo15	Financial Reporting (FACTS I and II)	OCFO
ocfo16	Financial Reporting (Consolidated Financial Statements)	OCFO
ocfo17	Funds Management (Fund Balance with Treasury; reconciliation of FM-6652 & FM-6653)	OCFO
ocfo18	Property Management (personal and real)	OCFO
oppm1	Provide real and personal property logistical support	OPPM/DA
oppm2	Provide essential procurement support to DASO offices and Departmental COOP	OPPM/DA
oppm3	Provide support to the Asst Secretary for Admin (ASA); provide overall direction of procurement activities; provide the necessary authorities & special procurement authorities based on public need	OPPM/PPD/DA
oppm4	Ensure continued availability and operation of the Department's IAS & PCMS systems	OPPM/DA
oppm5	Respond to emergency oil or hazardous material spills or threats involving hazardous materials including briefings and Congressional inquiries	OPPM/DA
oppm6	Provide support, as requested, to the National Response Framework (NRF) in regards to ESF 10 and ESF 11, when needed	OPPM/DA
oppm7	Fund emergency cleanup of hazardous materials on sites under jurisdiction, custody, or control of	OPPM/DA

#	Mission Essential Function	Agency/MA Responsible
	USDA agencies	
oppm8	Coordination of USDA Radiological Emergency Response	OPPM/DA
oppm9	USDA Radiation Safety Program Management	OPPM/DA
oss1	Assures that USDA Continuity activities are consistent with HSPD-20, FCDs 1 & 2, & NCSD 3-10	OSS/CPD/DA
oss2	Oversees operational readiness of OSEC ERF	OSS/CPD/DA
oss3	Activities/operates USDA CEOC	OSS/CPD/DA
oss4	Ensures that USDA Continuity teams are operationally ready	OSS/CPD/DA
oss5	Ensures operational status of USDA Devolution site	OSS/CPD/DA
oss6	Supports activation/deployment of USDA Continuity teams	OSS/CPD/DA
oss7	Staffs Watch Office functions at OSEC ERF	OSS/EPD/DA
oss8	Maintains interoperability with other Federal Executive Branch department/agency Operations Centers and USDA ERFs during a Continuity emergency	OSS/EPD/DA
oss9	Provides physical security support at the OSEC ERF during Continuity operations	OSS/POD/DA
oss10	Provides personal security and document control support at the OSEC ERF during Continuity operations	OSS/PDS/DA
oss11	Provides intelligence support at the OSEC ERF	OSS/PDS/DA

Appendix B

PANDEMIC PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR USDA MANAGERS

1. PURPOSE

This planning guidance has been prepared for USDA Managers to help address workforce issues, including safety and health, associated with a pandemic and mitigation of the effects on USDA employees and the performance of essential functions and services.

This appendix addresses the following areas:

- Planning and readiness
- Designating emergency personnel
- Dismissal and closure procedures
- Status of non-emergency personnel
- Sample guidelines for communicating with employees
- Methods of employee communications
- Employee awareness of changes in building operations
- Pay and staffing flexibilities

Section 1: Telework Capability Questionnaire, provides questions to determine the current telework capability of critical employees and to prepare them for teleworking.

Section 2: Personnel Tracking, provides guidance/samples in the development of specific tracking issues that managers should address in preparedness for an influenza human pandemic.

Section 3: Hiring Flexibilities and Pay Options, provides a synopsis of authorities and alternatives available in developing contingency staffing plans.

2. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

For Immediate Review and Update

Each USDA location is responsible to design, update, and carry out plans to take into account and respond to the pandemic influenza threat that USDA employees are most likely to face. These plans interact with and impact human capital management. USDA Managers should be familiar with the many human capital resources and flexibilities that exist to assist managers and employees in an emergency.

With leadership from Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Pandemic Action Officers and Local Pandemic Coordinators, managers should work with Human Resources staff to:

- Identify essential functions that must continue to be performed to support Department/Agency identified services during a human pandemic. Note that these functions may vary by time of year. See USDA 2009-H1N1 Plan, Appendix A, “Maintaining Essential Functions and Services.”
- Identify and designate primary and alternate personnel critical to support Department/Agency essential functions during a human pandemic. These designations should be “three deep.”
- Inform these critical personnel in writing that they could be requested to work during periods when non-essential personnel are not working in order to perform essential functions either from their normal work location or from an alternate work location via telework. Attach this documentation to their telework agreement.
- Ensure critical personnel have the capability to telework from their home or an alternate work place. See Section 1 “Telework Capability Questionnaire.”
- Create a notification roster with the names/phone numbers (office, home, cell, BlackBerry™, pager, etc) of critical personnel and their alternates. Test the call notification procedures at least monthly.
- Create a similar notification roster of non-critical personnel so that they can be contacted during the course of a human pandemic and apprised of the latest information as it relates to their health, work status, and resumption of normal operations, as well as being told to report for work or remain at home.
- Plan to account for all employees, determine their work status, and to relay information regarding status of the workplace. See Section 2 “Personnel Tracking.”
- Designate backup Time and Attendance (T&A) personnel and ensure that both primary and backup personnel have the capability to process T&As from an alternative work location.
- Conduct exercises simulating a human pandemic influenza in your area. Include critical personnel, local health authorities, local service providers and contract personnel in these exercises.
- Ensure that representatives of local bargaining units (unions), local service providers, employees with special needs, personnel with disabilities, and contractor personnel are included in your planning process.
- Arrange to provide employee benefits counseling and processing without direct contact between the employees and the benefits counselors (e.g., email, phone, etc.).
- Focus on positive reinforcement of roles among your employees as the approach to ensuring that critical personnel report to their designated worksite.

- Communicate how, and how often, employees are expected to remain in contact with their supervisor during any closure situation.
- Inform employees that in the event of a severe second wave they might be instructed not to report to work.
- Agencies in Washington, D.C., should follow the *Washington, DC, Area Dismissal or Closure Procedures*, or USDA-specific information published on www.usda.gov/da/beprepared.
- Work closely with your servicing personnel officer as there are no fixed solutions that will automatically apply to all situations.
- Encourage employees to familiarize themselves with government-wide and local preparations for and mitigation of pandemic influenza (www.humanpandemicflu.gov), USDA-specific employee information (www.usda.gov/da/beprepared), and the information that is available in *A Federal Employee's Emergency Guide*, at the OPM Website (www.opm.gov).
- Distribute copies of USDA's "Human Pandemic Planning Checklist for USDA Employees and Family Members" to all employees, when available.
- Advise employees of support services available through agency Employee Assistance Programs.
- Contact potential hire/re-hire candidate pool and ascertain their availability and willingness to begin work during a pandemic.
- Complete arrangements and/or procurements to enable extended telework capability.

Activities specific to Local Human Pandemic Coordinators:

- Plan to use the building public address system, closed circuit television system, or Agency intranet to keep employees informed and updated.
- Establish and disseminate written procedures for dismissal or closure to employees.
- Other metropolitan areas should coordinate dismissals or closures with Federal Executive Boards where available.
- Coordinate with local health and/or government officials who are responsible for establishing local quarantine policies.
- Consider the following activities to support communications with employees:

- Convening town hall type meetings with subject matter experts in attendance to make presentations and answer questions.
- Solicit employee comments and suggestions on your human pandemic planning.

During the Second Wave and Subsequent Waves

The second wave of the pandemic will not necessarily affect all parts of the country equally or at the same time. Offices should take their lead on implementing local procedures from local government and health authorities. Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Pandemic Action Officers and Local Pandemic Coordinators should take the lead to:

- Communicate with local health authorities to determine if and when it will be appropriate to recall additional personnel to work at their normal worksite or at an alternate worksite if a pandemic continues.
- Follow dismissal or closure procedures as recommended by local health authorities or as announced by the Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office, Department of Agriculture, or U.S. Office of Personnel Management. In metropolitan areas, coordinate with local Federal Executive Boards.
- Should unexpected circumstances occur during the course of responding to a pandemic, be prepared to take prudent actions in order to carry out essential functions and services. If applicable, at some reasonable point in time after the action is taken, provide the union notice and meet any bargaining obligation post-implementation.
- Disseminate information to employees about local human pandemic preparedness and response plans and procedures—including deviations as necessary from normal operating procedures.
- Institute flexible work hours, shifts, and telework as appropriate to maximize social distancing and decrease the potential to spread the virus. The requirement for telework agreements is waived at this stage for newly designated teleworkers.
- Grant administrative leave for sick employees as required. Authority for extended administrative leave may be granted depending on the severity/duration of the human pandemic. See Section 3 “Hiring Flexibilities and Pay Options.”
- Fill critical needs in accordance with your hiring plan. Keep your higher level organization informed of inability to keep your facility open or accomplish your essential functions.
- New hires (those holding low risk, non-sensitive positions) may commence work without a background check. However, you will need to request a National Agency Check Inquiries (NACI) no later than 14 calendar days after appointment.

- See Section 3 “Hiring Flexibilities and Pay Options” and consider one or more of the following to fill critical staffing needs:
 - Excepted appointments
 - Reemploying Annuitant
 - Reemploying Buyout Recipients
 - Existing Direct-Hire Authority for certain permanent positions
 - Direct-Hire Authority
 - Contracting with a temporary employment firm
 - Contract with former employees via personal services contracts
 - Competitive service appointments of 120 days or less

- Consider one or more of the following pay options when necessary to continue essential functions and services:
 - Overtime pay
 - Lifting the bi-weekly premium pay limitation

- Develop and maintain a list of lessons learned and actions taken in this and previous stages for evaluation when discussing preparations for the next wave.

After the Second Wave and Before the Subsequent Wave

The pandemic will likely occur in waves. This stage focuses on evaluating capabilities to continue to perform essential functions and services, and preparing for the next wave. Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Pandemic Action Officers and Local Human Pandemic Coordinators should:

- Assess any injury/illness to employees (and customers), and damage to facilities.
- Begin documenting the effects of the human pandemic and actions taken; secure all properties and records.
- In the absence of higher level guidance, the Field Facility Manager is authorized to initiate reasonable and prudent responses necessary to continue operations at his/her facility.
- Commence hiring actions to backfill personnel lost in the pandemic.
- Conduct training as required. Review efficacy of plans and adjust as required to prepare for the next wave.

Section 1

TELEWORK CAPABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Managers and supervisors have the authority to permit employees to telework in an emergency situation even if no formal agreement is in place. However all employees should be asked the following questions to determine their current telework capability and to prepare critical employees for teleworking:

- Do you telework (either regularly or occasionally)?
- Do you currently have a telework agreement in place?
- Are you designated a Mission Critical/Emergency employee?
- Do you have a personal computer at home?
- Do you have a government-furnished computer at home?
- Do you have a government owned computer with broadband access that you could use at home?
- Have you been issued a government BlackBerry™ or other wireless email device (e.g., palm Treo™)?
- Do you have internet access at home (DSL, Satellite or Cable)?
- Are you currently able to access your official email from home?
- If you currently telework from home, do you use the computer to **access** data that you have been told, or understand, is sensitive? If so, do you have a government-owned computer, which is required to **store** this data?
- If you telework, have you completed the computer security training required by the USDA Office of Chief Information Officer, in its cyber security manual for telework, DM-3525-003?
- Do you currently telework from an equipped telework center?
- What equipment would you need to continue working from your home during a human influenza pandemic; e.g. laptop, fax, printer, phone card, internet provider, etc.

Section 2

Personnel Tracking

Managers and supervisors should account for their employees before and throughout a pandemic:

- Gather as much contact information for your employees as possible (e.g. office, home, cell, pager, email, etc.). Be sure your next higher level of management also has this information.
- Notify employees to keep contact information (supervisor's work and home phone numbers) in a prominent place where family members can find it in order to report employee illness.
- Supervisors should initiate a follow up for any unscheduled employee absence.
- Supervisors should follow up with sick employees at least weekly to ensure they are receiving proper medical care.
- If supervisors become ill, employee tracking becomes the responsibility of the next higher level of management.
- Location managers should maintain a running count of employees who are at home either caring for family members or who are ill themselves. This information should be passed to higher organizational levels at least weekly or as requested.

Section 3

HIRING FLEXIBILITIES AND PAY OPTIONS

Most of these authorities are presently available to USDA managers and are flexibilities that could be used during all seven stages of pandemic preparedness, response and recovery. Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers will be notified should authority levels be modified for use during the pandemic.

Authorities requiring approval from the Director, Office of Human Capital Management, the Assistant Secretary for Administration, the Secretary of Agriculture, or the Office of Personnel Management, will be pre-positioned by the USDA Pandemic Coordinator for expedited approval.

ITEM	STATUS/COMMENTS
Excused Absence (Extended Leave)	The Secretary of Agriculture has authority to grant extended administrative leave.
Emergency Leave Transfer Program	The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) can approve establishment of Department-wide programs to solicit donations for future distribution to affected employees.
Overtime Pay	Agencies have authority to pay overtime. Departmental Administrations' Office of Human Capital Management has authority to waive the bi-weekly maximum pay limitation.
Hazardous Duty Pay/Environmental Differential	Agencies have authority to determine if hazardous duty pay for general schedule employees and environmental differential pay for prevailing rate (wage grade) employees is warranted due to exposure to hazards, physical hardships, or working conditions of an unusually severe nature.
Emergency Critical Hiring	Agencies may make 30-day appointments in the excepted service to fill a critical hiring need. These appointments may be extended for an additional 30 days. CTAP, RPL and ICTAP requirements do not apply to these appointments.

Direct-Hire Authority	<p>Agencies may use current OPM direct hire authority to make competitive service, career-conditional, term, or temporary appointments, as appropriate. In all cases, agencies must adhere to the public notice requirements in 5 U.S.C. 3327 and 3330 and all ICTAP requirements. Eligible positions in USDA are:</p> <p>Veterinary Medical Officer, GS-701-9 / GS-13 Animal Health Technician, GS-704-2 / GS-10 Plant Protection and Quarantine Officer, GS-436-5 / GS-13 Plant Protection and Quarantine Aid/Technician, GS-421-2 -5 / GS-7 General Biological Science, GS-401-9 / GS-13 Biological Science Technician, GS-404-2 / GS-7 Microbiologist, GS-403-9 / GS-13 Entomologist, GS-414-9 / GS-13 Botanist, GS-430-9 / GS-13 Plant Pathologist, GS-434-9 / GS-13 Ecologist, GS-408-9 / GS-13 Chemist, GS-1320-9 / GS-13</p>
Temporary Employment Firms	<p>Agencies may contract with private sector temporary employment firms for 120 days to meet emergency staffing needs. Contracts extensions beyond 120 days are subject to displaced employee procedures.</p>
120 Day or Less Competitive Appointments	<p>Agencies may make competitive appointments for 120 days or less without clearing CTAP and ICTAP. However, use of this program <u>may</u> identify one or more well-qualified displaced Federal employees who are available for immediate employment.</p>
Re-Employment Listing (RPL)	<p>Agencies have authority to select current and former employees from the RPL for temporary, term, or permanent competitive service appointments.</p>
Telework	<p>Agencies may authorize employees to telework from an alternative worksite (home, satellite office, Telework Center) one or more days a week. Requirement for telework agreement waived at Stage 5.</p>
Contract Personnel	<p>Agencies must schedule a National Agency Check Inquiries (NACI) no later than 14 calendar days after an individual begins work under the contract, but only if the duties are designated as low-risk, non sensitive from a national security standpoint.</p>
Re-employing Annuitants (with salary offset)	<p>Agencies have this authority.</p>
Re-employing Annuitants (without salary offset)	<p>The Department must request this authority from OPM.</p>

Rehiring Retirees or Others who Left the Government via a Buyout.	The Department must request this authority from OPM.
Temporary Emergency Needs Appointments (up to 1 year)	The Department must request this authority from OPM.
SES Limited – Term Emergency Appointments	The Department must request this authority from OPM.

Note: In the above chart, Agencies refers to USDA Mission Areas, Staff Offices, and Agencies.

Appendix C

FACILITIES PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR USDA MANAGERS

1. PURPOSE:

This appendix has been prepared for USDA facility managers and their staffs to help address facility issues associated with the planning for a pandemic and mitigation of the effects on USDA employees and other occupants of facilities, whether USDA-owned, or GSA-leased and privately managed. Each facility manager should closely coordinate with the Local Pandemic Coordinator. Additionally, procedures for the facility manager may vary depending on whether the facility is USDA-owned, or GSA-leased and privately managed. A USDA facility manager may be an Agency or Staff Office program manager who has the same responsibility to mitigate the effects of a human pandemic on occupants of USDA facilities, including privately controlled space.

Social distancing is a key principle in operational planning for a pandemic. The human resource is critical to the continuity of essential functions and services, but it is also the most vulnerable to a pandemic. Social distancing involves infection control measures that reduce the duration, frequency, or intimacy of social contacts to limit the transmission of influenza. Each USDA facility manager should include social distancing strategies while managing each respective facility. For example, social distancing may include increased use of telework, placing employees on shifts, and the canceling of large gatherings. Social distancing strategies have been incorporated into the following set of checklists.

For USDA facilities that also serve as COOP Emergency Relocation Facilities (ERFs), the COOP Point of Contact (POC) must coordinate with the ERF facility manager, the Site Support Manager, and the Local Pandemic Coordinator to ensure pandemic planning for the facility includes provisions for social distancing, infection control measures, and stockpiles of supplies for continuity operations during a pandemic.

2. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

For Immediate Review and Update

Facilities managers should do the following steps:

- Identify your Local Pandemic Coordinator(s), as designated by occupant USDA Mission Area, Agency or Staff Office.
- Establish a Facility Pandemic Planning Coordination Team, led by the facility manager and responsible for developing a facility operating plan. The facility plan is a sub-set to the local operations plans developed by the Local Human Pandemic

Coordinator. Include the following, as applicable to your situation (facility manager or program manager in privately owned space):

- Local Human Pandemic Coordinator
 - Local/community health and safety representatives (e.g., emergency management, public health, fire, and police)
 - USDA occupant emergency program representative(s) (if you are not the program manager)
 - Landlord representative/property management
 - Police/Security staff (if not furnished by landlord)
 - Safety/Occupational staff (if not furnished by landlord)
 - Housekeeping staff (if not furnished by landlord)
 - Receptionists/Clerks/Telephone Operators staff
 - COOP POC and Site Support Manager, if facility serves as a COOP Emergency Relocation Facility (ERF)
 - Other support staff, as necessary
- Review lessons learned if captured during past participation in emergency responses and the experiences of your local staff from other major emergencies and disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina.
 - Identify facility functions or services that are vulnerable to disruption by high absenteeism. Include special use areas of the facility, if applicable:
 - Day care center
 - Fitness center
 - Cafeteria and other food services
 - Health unit
 - Prioritize the vulnerabilities and develop contingency strategies accordingly, to mitigate impact of absenteeism running as high as 30 percent. See Appendix B.
 - Review logistical support to keep buildings and facilities open:
 - If your facility is a complex of buildings, determine whether functions and services can be transferred between buildings to provide greater separation of personnel and/or consolidation of equipment and supplies for more efficient managing and securing of assets (e.g., IT servers)
 - Identify necessary support staff to maintain the facility
 - Locate current, online (to ensure it remains current) local health guidance for the operation of facilities and the safety of employees
 - Prioritize sanitation/custodial services and supplies (cleaning agents, disinfectants, etc.); assume that all services (e.g., custodial) will have the same peak 30 percent absenteeism rate
 - Determine which facilities functions and services are critical and must be done, and determine which functions and services can be put aside. Be sure to include

- emergency response and statutorily required program functions (See Appendix A “Maintaining Essential Functions and Services,” for additional guidance)
- HVAC systems should not require any special handling, since HVAC systems have not been shown to promote the spread of viruses
 - Identify special equipment and supplies (masks, antiseptic solutions, hand gel sanitizer, gloves)
 - Determine alternate source(s) for critical supplies (assume suppliers being unable to provide supplies during a human pandemic)
 - Revise inventories, as necessary, to maintain a 3-month stock of essential supplies, including: soap, paper towels, toiletries, hygiene items, anti-septic wipes, cleaners (alcohol-based, since anti-bacterial-based are not effective against viruses)
 - Establish protocols for sanitizing work areas
 - Evaluate the practicality of setting up hand wash/sanitizing stations at all entrances to the facility and food service areas
 - Plan security measures to protect the integrity and safety of structures, employees/visitors, equipment, and supplies
 - Identify and plan for maintenance of vital systems that rely on periodic physical intervention/servicing (e.g., HVAC systems, elevators, plumbing, security systems, etc.).
 - At the direction of the Local Pandemic Coordinator, implement social distancing guidance (see Annex B, “Human Pandemic Planning Guidance for USDA Employees & Family Members,” for additional information on practices/considerations).
 - Educate employees/visitors on social distancing (do not shake hands, keep your distance; do not share cell phones, office phones, pens, etc.)
 - Plan for telework and shift work for facility staff
 - Start education of staff in social distancing practices
 - Consult <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/> for useful information on Pandemic Influenza and <http://www.usda.gov/da/beprepared/> for USDA employee information, including Pandemic Influenza
 - Develop a listing (include name, address, phone and fax numbers) of emergency services and share with your Local Human Pandemic Coordinator. Include:
 - Police Department (local/neighborhood cities)
 - Sheriff’s Department (local/neighborhood counties)
 - Fire Department (local/regional)
 - Paramedic/Rescue Squads (city/county)
 - Air Ambulance (local/regional)
 - Hospitals (local/regional/Veterans)

- Urgent Care Facilities
 - American Red Cross (city/county/State locations)
 - Community Centers (city/county)
 - National Guard Center
 - Medical Emergency Information Hotline
 - Offices of Emergency Services (city/county/State)
 - Security Services (Alarm & Guard Companies)
 - Transportation Services (airport/taxi/car rental/armored car services)
 - City/County Offices (administration/unions/building inspector/hazardous materials/health department/health & safety inspector/mental health/public information & works/schools/transportation)
 - Federal Offices (USDA Operations Center and partners, and as applicable: FBI, CDC hotline, Local Human Pandemic Coordinator, and Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officer)
 - Utilities (electric/gas & oil/sanitation & sewer/telephone/water)
 - Contractors and vendors (e.g., building and reconstruction/electrical/glass/grounds keeping/facilities/custodial/plumbing/locksmith and safe/office supplies and forms)
- Prioritize the work/work areas. Consider eliminating or decreasing levels of effort such as:
 - Policing the outside areas
 - Buffing the floors
 - Cleaning individual offices (would become an individual responsibility)
 - Focus on places where people are touching things (computers, phones, door knobs, etc.) and keep them clean.
 - There are no special cleaning requirements for offices vacated by sick personnel other than ensuring that the offices are not occupied for at least 12 hours.
 - Focus cleaning on bathrooms, kitchens, and other places where moisture exists that can support viruses.
 - Provide **monthly** Facility Status reports to Local Pandemic Coordinator, for mission critical facilities, and include status of:
 - Operational capability (systems and structure)
 - Facility staffing (e.g., staffing level and health issues)
 - Suppliers (adequate, insufficient, problems)
 - Emergency problems
 - Public infrastructure (e.g., utilities, phones, etc.)
 - Local public/support services (problems)

- Prepare to quickly increase frequency of Facility/Staff and Mission Status reports to **biweekly**.
- Educate employees/visitors—put up posters throughout the facility (corridors, doorways, elevators) that show how to conduct business safely in the building.
- Refresh the plans on reducing the number of people working together: consider shift work or telework for facilities staff.
- Review work at home implementation for facilities staff.
- Reduce face-to-face meetings where possible—use teleconference calls or video teleconferences.
- Draft schedule for shift work for other than normal times (to reduce people to people contact, i.e., the workforce operates over a 24-hour period, instead of, for example, all working from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) to correspond with the needs of the Mission Area, Agency or Staff Office.
- Review preparatory implementation plans for selective closures in facilities, such as cafeterias, meeting rooms, large assembly places, day care centers, fitness centers, and auditoriums.

During the Second Wave and Subsequent Waves

The second wave will not necessarily affect all parts of the country equally or at the same time. Offices should take their lead from local health authorities. Facilities managers should consider the following and keep the Local Pandemic Coordinator informed:

- Increase frequency of Facility/Staff and Mission Status reports to **daily**.
- Issue letters to employees/occupants advising them of personal issues, such as alternative day care for children, and safety measures, such as social distancing, for the workplace.
- Close assembly and common areas to minimize contacts among employees/visitors.
- Consider closing or modifying the cafeteria.
- If practical, set up hand wash/sanitizing stations at all entrances to the facility and food service areas.
- Issue guidance on the use of gloves (for special operations such as guard force, receptionists, janitorial service, mail handlers, etc.). In general, use gloves for handling material previously handled by other people.

- Provide support for employees working from home or teleworking.
- Implement shift schedules in your plan.
- Permanently secure internal building doors, other than those under fire management, in the open position (to preclude touching the doorknobs) for common areas such as lobbies, conference rooms, rest room, and other high-use areas.

After the Second Wave and Before the Subsequent Wave

A human pandemic will likely come in waves. This stage focuses on evaluating capabilities to continue to perform essential functions and services, and preparing for the next wave. Facilities managers should consider the following and keep the Local Human Pandemic Coordinator informed:

- Employees should follow general and specific emergency guidance addressing employee and customer safety first.
- Begin documenting the effects of the human pandemic and actions taken; secure all properties and records.
- Field facility manager should contact the Local Pandemic Coordinator, who in turn will contact respective intermediate Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Pandemic Action Officers, who in turn will contact the USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator, with a Damage Assessments and Actions Taken Report; and act on instructions received.
- In the absence of higher-level guidance, the field facility manager is authorized to initiate reasonable and prudent responses necessary to resume/continue operations at his/her facility.

Appendix D

COMMUNICATIONS WITH USDA EMPLOYEES AND STAKEHOLDERS

1. PURPOSE

This checklist has been prepared for Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Pandemic Coordinators and Local Pandemic Coordinators as an aid in helping to define the vertical and horizontal communications that will be required during a pandemic.

2. COMMUNICATION METHODS AVAILABLE DURING PANDEMICS

Type	Definition	Recommended Use
Telephone Systems		
Home Telephone Service	Basic home telephone service to receive and send calls.	Always
Cellular Telephones	Basic cellular service in local and nationwide calling network.	Always
Telephone Notification Cascade (Phone Tree)	Pre-planned list of employees arranged by office to exercise their call up.	Always
Automated Telephonic Emergency Notifications Systems	Automated system that sends an emergency announcement message activating an emergency plan or providing emergency messages to Agency users office, home and cell phones, e-mail systems, and PDA devices.	Always Provides immediate notification to Agency employees and emergency staff loaded on the system. System can be programmed to transmit daily updates in Pandemic Status if necessary. Also facilitates social distancing of employees during Pandemic Period.
Text Messaging	Basic cell phone text messaging service to send and receive short digital text messages on cell phones and personal data assistants (PDA) devices.	During a Pandemic Alternative method communications by personnel with cell phone text messaging.
Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP)	Type of phone system that transmits voice and data over phone system.	During a Pandemic
Teleconferencing	Process of communicating with several personnel via one telephone line.	During a Pandemic Facilitates social distancing of employees during a Pandemic.
1-800 Hotline Information Number	Toll-free nationwide telephone number that employees can use to hear current Pandemic Alert status of Agency or to leave a message as to their status.	During a Pandemic Good method to keep employees informed of current Pandemic Status. Heavy use expected during a pandemic.

Type	Definition	Recommended Use
Government Emergency Telephone Cards (GETS)	<p>Telephone priority calling system developed by the National Communications System (NCS). It allows personnel to increase their call's priority during an emergency by inserting a "PIN" number.</p> <p>For additional information on this NCS capability log onto www.ncs.gov.</p> <p>GETS User Assistance Numbers: 800-818-GETS (800-818-4387) or 703-818-GETS</p>	<p>During a Pandemic</p> <p>Provides priority calling for Agency Leadership to stay in contact during the Pandemic Period when communication systems may be overloaded.</p>
Information Technology (IT)-Based Systems		
Websites	<p>Department and Agency Internet and Intranet Websites with critical Department information in a variety of areas.</p> <p>Consult http://www.pandemicflu.gov/ for useful national information on Pandemic Influenza and http://www.usda.gov/da/beprepared/ for USDA-specific information.</p>	<p>During a Pandemic</p> <p>Can be used during all Pandemic Periods</p>
Teleworking via Virtual Private Network (VPN)	<p>Method used to communicate via either high-speed dial-up, DSL, or broadband cable over high-speed Internet from home or office.</p>	<p>During a Pandemic</p> <p>Facilitates social distancing of employees during Pandemic Period</p>
PDA Devices	<p>Handheld Personal Data Assistant (PDA) device used to send and receive e-mail messages and do limited word processing.</p>	<p>During a Pandemic</p> <p>Facilitates social distancing of employees during Pandemic Period</p>
Instant Messaging	<p>Internet-based instant text messaging system that facilitates online dialogue between users.</p>	<p>During a Pandemic</p> <p>Facilitates social distancing of employees during Pandemic Period</p>
Video Teleconferencing	<p>IT-based system that allows transmission of live full motion images between PCs or VTC centers.</p>	<p>During a Pandemic</p> <p>Facilitates social distancing of employees during Pandemic Period</p>
Wireless PC/LAN Systems, WiFi and Broadband Systems	<p>Allows PC connectivity for users without the use of cable connectivity thus allowing users to spread out in a facility. Also expedites installation time for PC systems.</p>	<p>During a Pandemic</p> <p>Facilitates social distancing of employees during Pandemic Period</p>
Public Address System	<p>An electronic amplification system used as a communication system in public areas.</p>	<p>During a Pandemic</p> <p>Good method to keep employees informed of current Pandemic Status.</p>
Media-Based Systems		
News Media Releases (print, television, radio)	<p>Local news media coverage of an event with possible live remotes being conducted at Agency facilities.</p>	<p>Always</p> <p>Good method to use to keep employees informed at home.</p>
Internal Television Networks	<p>Internally controlled television channel upon which emergency messages or live remotes may be shown.</p>	<p>Always</p> <p>Can be used during all Pandemic Periods</p>

NOTE: The above list contains a number of highly technical telephone and IT-based communication systems in use today; however, not all employees will have the listed communication and IT system capabilities. Most will have basic office and home telephone and cell phone service. Primary means of emergency notification may be through Emergency Telephone Notification Cascade “Phone Trees.” Managers at all levels need to be aware of this and plan accordingly to transmit emergency information as quickly as possible and to assist employees during a pandemic. Section 508 requirements apply to assure that employees who are hearing or vision impaired have access to electronic information.

3. COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS

Managers and employees must work together to ensure necessary contact numbers and means of communications are available during a pandemic period. The contact numbers can be contained in any form from an Office “Phone Tree” to a USDA-wide Automated Emergency Notification System that sends out a broadcast message to thousands of personnel with multiple types of communications systems. The method is not as important as having the correct information of the person being contacted.

A key factor in maintaining operations during a pandemic is the ability of an organization to maintain proper “social distancing” during a human pandemic incident. To do this, a Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office must have the capability to use the above listed Communication System Methods to stay in contact with their employees and keep their Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office operating during a pandemic emergency.

Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Pandemic Action Officers and Local Pandemic Coordinators are encouraged to use the USDA Target Center (202-720-2600) as a resource for communication tools for persons with disabilities. The Target Center Website at <http://www.usda.gov/oo/target/> will be updated to include current information.

For Immediate Review and Update

- Update employee information including all forms of emergency contact—home telephone, cell, personal e-mail.
- Establish emergency communications plans and revise them periodically. Plans should include identification of key contacts (with backups), chain of communications (including suppliers and customers), and processes for tracking and communicating business and employee status.
- Evaluate if employees have the telephone and IT equipment necessary to work from remote/home locations.
- Ensure Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office PDA devices are updated with the latest contact information. This update is very important for the Senior Leadership’s communications devices.
- Plan for the activation of telework and shift work for facility staff.

- Consult <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/> for useful information on pandemic and <http://www.usda.gov/da/beprepared/> for USDA employee information, including pandemic influenza.
- Develop strategies if telephones are overloaded to contact employees (i.e., text messaging, VoIP, TTY, email, websites, and instant messaging).
- Anticipate employee fear and anxiety, rumors, and misinformation, and plan communications accordingly.
- Disseminate information to employees about your human pandemic preparedness and response plan.
- Develop platforms (e.g., hotlines, dedicated websites) for communicating human pandemic status and actions to employees, vendors, suppliers, and customers inside and outside the worksite in a consistent and timely way. Include redundancies in the emergency contact system.
- Identify community sources for timely and accurate human pandemic information (domestic and international) and resources for obtaining countermeasures (e.g., vaccines and anti-virals). Pass this information to employees who may be ill at home or have ill family members.
- Encourage employees to log onto the Ready America Website (www.ready.gov) to give them samples and templates for the development of Family Communication Plans.
- Provide guidance to employees in the preparation of Family Communication Plans. Family Communication Plans should include such information as names, dates of birth, social security numbers, important medical information, out-of-town contacts and e-mails, school and work address and evacuation locations, and where to meet in an emergency. In addition you should list contact information for doctors and pharmacists and medical insurance information.
- Working with your Public Affairs Office, set up preplanned procedures for local radio and television stations to receive and air Department/Agency work status to the general public.
- Initiate emergency notifications to make contact with employees and test communications systems.
- Monitor employee location, especially those out of country, to ensure the location of each employee is captured in case it becomes necessary to determine their status.
- Send employees, who do not have personal e-mail service, update messages via telephone broadcast, which they can receive on a voicemail system.
- Encourage use of your Agency 1-800 Hotline Service and the USDA Hotline # 1-800-932-1902.

During the Second Wave and Subsequent Waves

The human pandemic will not necessarily affect all parts of the country equally or at the same time. Offices should take their lead from local health authorities and alert the Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Pandemic Action Officer.

Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Pandemic Action Officers and Local Pandemic Coordinators should prepare to:

- Disseminate regular human pandemic status updates so employees know the frequency of the update and where to go to find information on the latest update.
- Do not hold congregate meetings—use teleconference or videoconferences—with major department heads and Agency Leadership to discuss communications plans.
- Reduce number of people working together—use shift work or telework.
- Work from home, if authorized.
- Use shift work for other than normal times to spread out people contact time (i.e., the workforce operates over a 24-hour period, instead of all together from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.).
- If a manager is operating a Response Cell or Emergency Operations Center (EOC), ensure you rotate personnel out so they have time to be with their families and take care of family business.
- Encourage use of your Agency 1-800 Hotline Service and the USDA Hotline # 1-800-932-1902.
- Ensure dissemination of work-related time and attendance status (i.e., such as placing personnel on Standby status).
- Use cell phone text messaging and internet instant messaging to conduct meetings and disseminate information to employees and Senior Staff.

After the Second Wave and Before the Subsequent Wave

A human pandemic will likely come in waves. This stage focuses on evaluating capabilities to continue to perform essential functions and services, and preparing for the next wave.

- Ensure IT departments post the regular update to Agency Websites (internet and intranet) in a timely manner. Check the <http://www.usda.gov/da/beprepared/> for all the latest updates.
- Request employees to inform you if they plan to temporarily move to other parts of the country.

- If a manager is operating a Response Cell or Emergency Operations Center (EOC), ensure you rotate personnel out so they have time to be with their families and take care of family business.
- Encourage use of your Agency 1-800 Hotline Service and the USDA Hotline # 1-800-932-1902.

4. COMMUNICATION TRAINING CHECKLIST

The success or failure of a Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office’s ability for managers to communicate with their employees and for employees to stay in contact with the Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office hinges on the amount of training conducted on the emergency communications systems. Managers cannot wait until the day of the emergency to train and test communications capabilities. Employees should continually update their contact information to ensure that managers have their correct contact information. This will ensure a rapid and accurate emergency communications capability.

The following communications training checklist items provide guidance that managers and employees should consider in conducting effective and useful training in preparation for the next and subsequent Pandemic waves.

- Conduct monthly Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Emergency Telephonic Notification Tests during duty and non-duty hours to test the ability of the Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office to contact all employees. Record the results of the number of personnel contacted, by what method, and time it took to contact them.
- Train employees to update their contact information with their supervisors. Ensure all supervisors can contact their employees.
- Plan for the activation of telework and shift work for facility staff.
 - Incorporate use of telework into the way your Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office does business by allowing authorized employees to telework from their homes or telecommuting facilities
 - Ensure employees have correct telework log-in user IDs and password credentials to access Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office IT systems. Work with your IT department to publish easy to use telework user instructions
 - Work with your IT departments to ensure “teleworkers” have the proper hardware and software home PC system or government-issued laptop configurations to use telework
 - Ensure the IT department has planned for the correct system capacity to accept numerous telework log-ons
- Start education of staff in social distancing practices. See section 4, “Definitions,” for social distancing examples.
- Conduct quarterly “all-hands” Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office communications training “new technology” classes that will teach employees and emergency staff how

to stay in touch with the Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office via the listed systems in Section I of this checklist.

DRAFT

ANNEX A

USDA SUPPORT OF A BROAD FEDERAL RESPONSE

1. PURPOSE

This Annex is intended for Human Pandemic Coordinators at all levels, who may be called upon to support a response to an incident requiring Federal coordination, during a pandemic. USDA is required to support various Federal response plans, including the main Federal response coordinated under the *National Response Framework (NRF)*. The *National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza Implementation Plan* calls for specific USDA responsibilities in responding to a pandemic, which, for USDA, focuses on the animal health aspects that could lead to a pandemic. Like support to other Federal responses, it may be required during a pandemic, when offices at all levels are struggling to maintain their normal functions.

2. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS (Outlined in Stages)

For Immediate Review and Update

- Review your office responsibilities and actions required to support Federal response plans, including the pandemic implementation plan and NRF. Your office will have been notified previously of its involvement, if any, in the implementation plan.
- Review with key personnel the scope of actions that your office has been involved in, in past occurrences when a national level plan was activated.
- Identify personnel, other resources, and skill sets that must be maintained to provide support to national level plans.
- Develop a standing list of personnel who could serve as an ancillary workforce to continue essential functions, if key personnel are deployed in support of a Federal response, or conversely an ancillary workforce to deploy or function in support of a Federal response. Consider contractors, employees in other job titles/descriptions, and retirees.
- Develop a training plan to ensure ancillary work force can perform functions assigned. Consider Incident Command System training available on line through AgLearn.
- Develop and plan for scenarios likely to have an adverse effect on capabilities to provide support to a Federal response during a human pandemic.
- Develop a communications plan tailored to support a Federal response. This should include communications with the ancillary work force and entities that you expect to interact with in support of a Federal response.

- Develop and implement exercises/drills to test local pandemic response plans and procedures; and, based on the results, periodically revise the plans/procedures.
- Reconfirm availability of ancillary work force and update telephone numbers.
- Complete or conduct refresher training on Federal response, including NRF, responsibilities.
- Re-verify contact points in communications plan.

During the Second Wave and subsequent waves

The human pandemic will not necessarily affect all parts of the country equally or at the same time. Offices should take their lead from local health authorities and alert the Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Pandemic Action Officer.

Mission Area/Agency/Staff Office Pandemic Action Officers and Local Pandemic Coordinators should prepare to:

- Update personnel on the status of the human pandemic. Note that the USDA Website <http://www.usda.gov/da/beprepared> will have daily updates on the spread of the influenza and guidance from USDA Headquarters.
- The Department of Health and Human Services or the Department of Homeland Security will have the lead on implementation of a Federal response to a pandemic.
- Execute support to a Federal response, if and, when directed.
- Coordinate with State, local, and private sector entities, as necessary, the re-distribution or reassignment of specified mission-related resources (e.g., reallocation of equipment and supplies from the National Interagency Cache System relative to support of firefighting or priority ESF #9, Urban Search and Rescue, efforts).
- Disseminate information to employees about local pandemic preparedness and response plans and procedures – including deviations as necessary from normal operating procedures.
- Implement procedures for each operating location to prepare and disseminate reports addressing status of Federal response mission operations and personnel, including modifications necessitated due to the pandemic.
- Collaborate with State, local, and tribal entities to track the status of the pandemic and to be apprised of any modifications to their Federal response mission-related capabilities and plans.
- Keep key leadership apprised of any impediments to being able to perform a Federal response support mission.

- Maintain list of lessons learned for evaluation in subsequent waves.

After the Second wave and before the subsequent wave

This stage focuses on evaluating capabilities to continue to perform your functions and preparing for the next wave.

- Assess any injury/illness to employees (and customers), and damage to facilities.
- Begin documenting the effects of the human pandemic and actions taken; secure all properties and records.
- Field Facility Manager should contact the Local Pandemic Coordinator who in turn will contact respective intermediate District/Agency Pandemic Influenza Coordinators who in turn will contact the USDA Pandemic Coordinator with a Damage Assessments and Actions Taken Report; and act on instructions received.
- In the absence of higher level guidance, the Field Facility Manager is authorized to initiate reasonable and prudent responses necessary to continue operations at his/her facility.
- Commence hiring actions to backfill personnel lost in the human pandemic.
- Conduct training as required.
- Replace assets consumed in support of a Federal response.

USDA Support of the *National Response Framework (NRF)*

A brief overview of USDA primary and support responsibilities, under annexes to the *NRF*, is presented in the following three charts.

For the full Framework and annexes, visit <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nrf/mainindex.htm#>

USDA Responsibilities as Primary Agency

Emergency Support Function	Scope	Support Agencies
ESF #11 Agriculture and Natural Resources [Other primary agency: DOI—for natural and cultural resources and historic properties protection and restoration.]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision of nutrition assistance. Includes determining nutrition assistance needs; obtaining appropriate food supplies; arranging for the delivery of the supplies; and authorizing disaster food stamps. ▪ Animal and plant disease and pest response. Includes implementing an integrated Federal, State, local, and tribal response to an outbreak of a highly contagious or economically devastating animal/zoonotic disease; an outbreak of a highly infective exotic plant disease; or an economically devastating plant pest infestation. Ensures, in coordination with ESF #8, Public Health and Medical Services, that animal/veterinary/wildlife issues in natural disasters are supported. ▪ Assurance of the safety and security of the commercial food supply. Includes the inspection and verification of food safety aspects of slaughter and processing plants, products in distribution and retail sites; and import facilities at ports of entry; laboratory analysis of food samples; control of products suspected to be adulterated; plant closures; foodborne disease surveillance; and field investigations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DOC ▪ DoD ▪ DOE ▪ HHS ▪ DHS ▪ DOJ ▪ DOS ▪ DOL ▪ DOT ▪ EPA ▪ GSA ▪ USPS ▪ American Red Cross
ESF #14 Long-Term Community Recovery and Mitigation [Other primary agencies: DOC; HUD; Treasury; SBA; and DHS (also ESF Coordinator)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Activated for large-scale or catastrophic incidents that require Federal assistance to address significant long-term impacts in the affected area (e.g., impacts on housing, businesses and employment, community infrastructure, and social services) ▪ In the case of USDA, provide emergency loans for the agricultural sector, technical assistance for agricultural market recovery, rural housing, technical assistance for resource conservation, and technical and financial assistance for emergency watershed protection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DoD ▪ DOE ▪ HHS ▪ DOI ▪ DOL ▪ DOT ▪ EPA ▪ TVA ▪ American Red Cross

USDA/Forest Service (FS) Responsibilities as Primary Agency

Emergency Support Function	Scope	Support Agencies
ESF #4 Firefighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enable the detection and suppression of wildland, rural, and urban fires resulting from, or occurring coincidentally with, an Incident of National Significance. ▪ Manage and coordinate firefighting activities, including the detection and suppression of fires on Federal lands, and provide personnel, equipment, and supplies in support of State, local, and tribal agencies involved in rural and urban firefighting operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DOC ▪ DoD ▪ DHS ▪ DOI ▪ EPA

USDA Responsibilities as a Support Agency

Emergency Support Function (ESF)	USDA, other than Forest Service	USDA/Forest Service
ESF #1 Transportation Primary Agency: DOT		X
ESF #2 Communications Primary Agency: DHS/NCS		X
ESF #3 Public Works and Engineering Primary Agencies: DoD/USACE; DHS/FEMA	X	X
ESF #5 Emergency Management Primary Agency: DHS/FEMA	X	X
ESF #6 Mass Care, Housing, and Human Services Primary Agencies: DHS/FEMA; American Red Cross	X	X
ESF #7 Resource Support Primary Agency: GSA		X
ESF #8 Public Health and Medical Services Primary Agency: HHS	X	X
ESF #9 Urban Search and Rescue Primary Agency: DHS/FEMA		X
ESF #10 Oil and Hazardous Materials Response Primary Agencies: EPA; DHS/USCG	X	X
ESF #12 Energy Primary Agency: DOE	X	X
ESF #13 Public Safety and Security Primary Agencies: DHS; DOJ	X	X
ESF #15 External Affairs Primary Agency: DHS/FEMA	X	

ANNEX B

HUMAN PANDEMIC PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR USDA EMPLOYEES & FAMILY MEMBERS

1. PURPOSE

This annex assists USDA employees and their families in preparing for the second and subsequent waves of the 2009-H1N1 Pandemic by providing a comprehensive guide to the most current information and recommendations available from Government sources engaged in pandemic planning as resources for employees to aid in their preparation, response and recovery.

2. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR FAMILIES

Be prepared to stay at home if you are ill with influenza. Information on taking care of ill people at home will be posted on www.flu.gov.

- It will be important to have extra supplies on hand during a pandemic, as you may not be able to get to a store or stores may be out of supplies. You should have a reserve of at least a two-week supply of water and food; however, if the pandemic is severe, community disruption may last for a longer period. If community water supplies are not suitable for consumption during a pandemic, your local water utility or public health authorities will notify the community.
 - Periodically check your regular prescription drugs to ensure a continuous supply in your home
 - Have any nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including a thermometer, pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, and other over-the-counter medicines that you and your family use on a regular basis
 - Talk with family members and members of your household about how they would be cared for if they become ill and about what will be needed to care for them in your or their home—including, people in your household with special needs, in case the services they rely on are not available
 - Designate one person in the household who could be the caregiver if anyone in the household becomes ill with influenza. Develop an alternate plan for someone to be the caregiver if that person becomes sick
 - Talk with neighbors, friends, and family about your plans for staying at home if you or someone in your household is ill. Share ideas
 - Ensure that each household has a current list of emergency contacts in your community, including mental health and counseling resources

- If you have children in your household, make plans for their care if officials recommend dismissal of students from schools and closure of childcare programs.
 - Plan and arrange now for who will care for children if schools and childcare programs dismiss students and children during a pandemic
 - Plan for an extended period (up to 12 weeks) in case the pandemic is severe
 - Do not plan to bring children to the workplace if childcare cannot be arranged
 - If you have children in a college or university, have a plan for the student to relocate or return home, if desired, or if the college/university dismisses students, at the onset of a severe pandemic
 - Plan home-learning activities and exercises. Have materials, such as books, on hand
 - Public health officials will likely recommend that children and teenagers do not gather in groups in the community during a pandemic
 - Plan recreational activities that your children can do at home
 - Find out now about the plans at your child's school or childcare facility during a pandemic
- In a severe pandemic, parents may be advised to protect their children by reducing out-of-school social contacts and mixing with other children. Although limiting all outside contact may not be feasible, parents may be able to develop support systems with co-workers, friends, families, or neighbors, if they continue to need childcare. For example, they could prepare a plan in which two to three families work together to supervise and provide care for a small group of infants and young children while their parents are at work (studies suggest that childcare group size of less than six children may be associated with fewer respiratory infections).
- Become familiar with social distancing actions that may be used during a pandemic to modify frequency and type of person-to-person contact (e.g., reducing hand-shaking, limiting face-to-face meetings, promoting teleworking, liberal/unscheduled leave policies, and staggered shifts).
- Talk to your employer
 - Talk to your employer about the pandemic influenza plan for your workplace to include issues about benefits, leave, telework, and other possible policies to go into effect during a pandemic
 - Ask your employer about how your employer will continue during a pandemic if key staff cannot come to work
 - Plan for the possible reduction or loss of income if you are unable to work or your place of employment is closed. Consider maintaining a cash reserve

- Check with your employer or union about leave policies for workers who are ill, live in a household with someone ill with pandemic influenza, or have to take off work to take care of children.
- Find out if you can work from home.
- Discuss alternative ways of holding meetings at work, including, for example, teleconferences, during a pandemic.
- Find out how you will receive information from your employer during a pandemic
- Prepare backup plans in case public gatherings, such as community events and meetings and worship services, are cancelled.
 - Talk with others in your community about other ways of communicating during a pandemic if public gatherings are cancelled
 - Plan for recreational activities that you and your household members can do at home if community gatherings are cancelled during a pandemic
 - Discuss with your faith-based organization or place of worship their plans for communicating with members during a pandemic
- Prepare backup plans for taking care of loved ones who are far away.
- Find volunteers who want to help people in need, such as elderly neighbors, single parents of small children, or people without the resources to get the medical help they will need.
- Think of ways you can reach out to others in your neighborhood or community to help them plan for and respond to a pandemic.

3. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

<http://www.flu.gov/>

One-stop access to U.S. Government avian and pandemic flu information, from the Department of Health and Human Services. Contains important health and safety information concerning pandemic influenza, with material targeted for specific groups such as families, travelers, workers, communities, and health professionals.

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/individual/checklist.html>

A checklist that will help you gather the information and resources you may need in case of a flu pandemic.

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/>

Latest information on the facts about previous flu pandemics, and key facts about bird flu and the avian influenza A (H5N1) virus from the Centers for Disease Control.

http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/avian_faqs/en/index.html

Avian influenza - frequently asked questions from the World Health Organization.

http://www.opm.gov/pandemic/pandemic_guide/index.asp

A guide for Federal employees from the Office of Personnel Management.

<http://www.usda.gov/da/beprepared/pandemicflu.htm>

Latest USDA Pandemic Guidance.

<http://www.ready.gov/america/index.html>

Family planning advice for how you will contact one another; how you will get back together; and what you will do in different situations from the Department of Homeland Security.

Additional information is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Hotline: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636). This line is available in English and Spanish, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. TTY: 1-888-232-6348. Questions can be e-mailed to cdcinfo@cdc.gov.