

Farm Disaster Preparedness Certificate Course

The Need

As a nation we depend on farms to produce a constant supply of safe, nutritious food. In addition, U.S. agriculture is a significant contributor to our economy, international trade, and cultural identity. Natural or man-made disasters can have a substantial impact on the safety and security of our nation's food supply and economic health. On most family farms disaster preparedness measures are often a low priority due to the high demands of farm life.

Education to improve disaster preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery has been difficult to access.

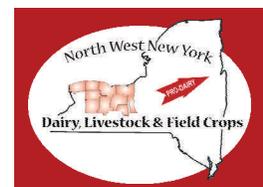


Extension's Response

In collaboration with Jim Ochterski of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County, The NWNY team developed a program intended to help farm owners in New York State plan for and manage disasters that are likely to occur in the Northeast. Extension worked closely with insurance companies to determine the top five primary claims that occur in the region. These were incorporated into the program as primary topic areas which include 1) Farm vehicles on the road, 2) Fire or structural collapse, 3) Storm damage, 4) Crimes and chemicals, and 5) Livestock management, injuries, liabilities, and biosecurity. Emphasis was placed on practical actions that producers could take to mitigate the effects these disasters. In addition, farms that complete the training program receive a dated certificate to provide to their insurance carrier making them eligible for up to a 10% discount on their farm's annual insurance premiums. This concept is similar to the defensive driver course and has received approval from the New York Extension Disaster Education Network as well as multiple insurance companies, including Farm Family and Nationwide Insurance.

The Results

By providing incentives through a reduction in insurance premiums, producers are more likely to participate in the program. In addition, participants complete both a pre-class and post-class disaster preparation behavior assessment. Results of this assessment show that following the class, the participants are much more aware of and more likely to engage in meaningful practices to reduce the risk and impact of a disaster on their farms. This should reduce participants' overall vulnerability to natural or man-made disasters and improve the long-term viability of agricultural operations in New York State. For more information visit the website at: <http://emergencypreparedness.cce.cornell.edu/Pages/default.aspx>



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