

## Considerations for CNG Farmers Following a Flooding Event

This document serves as a resource for CNG farmers to use when a serious flooding event occurs on-farm. It includes important information regarding flooding and farm certification, resources about flood recovery practices, and a self-assessment to help farmers determine whether or not their land is at high risk for post-flood contamination issues. CNG is here to help, please don't hesitate to reach out for support and additional guidance.

### Post-Flood Guidance

1. Direct crop contact with floodwater: Any crops that were in direct contact with floodwaters cannot be sold as CNG and, according to the FDA, should not be sold at all since the risk of pathogen contamination is so high. More conservative guidance recommends also destroying any crops growing within 30 ft of flooded areas.
2. Replanting after flooding: Farmers should wait to replant in flooded areas until 60 days after the flooding. Growers who would like to replant earlier, can plant after 30 days, but must obtain soil tests that show no E. coli or fecal coliform contamination.
3. Evaluating long-term contamination: Because of the high volume of water present during flood events, serious soil contamination that would affect a farm's certification is rare. However, the risk of soil contamination varies widely based on upstream and surrounding sources of contamination. Farmers should go through the CNG Soil Contamination Assessment Form (below) to determine whether or not additional action needs to be taken regarding soil contamination due to flooding.
4. Informing CNG: At some point in the recovery process growers should contact CNG and provide an update on the flood event and what steps are being taken to remediate flooded areas. Growers who have determined, using the assessment form, that they are at high risk for soil contamination should reach out as soon as possible.
5. Seek local/regional guidance: Following a natural disaster, it's important to seek guidance from organizations in your area, as they will have the most regionally appropriate recommendations and may, in some cases, have remediation funding available. Reach out to your local NRCS (Natural Resource Conservation Service), Soil and Water Conservation District, agricultural extension offices and other agricultural support organization offices.
6. Remediate fields: Steps should be taken to drain floodwaters, remove debris, and remediate soils by increasing organic matter, reducing compaction, and cover cropping.

## **Soil Contamination Assessment**

Use this self-assessment to evaluate your flood response, identify sources of potential contamination surrounding your farm and determine your risk of soil contamination.

1. Describe the flood damage to your fields. Which areas and crops were affected?
2. What happened to edible crops that came into contact with floodwaters? Were they sold, composted, fed to animals, etc.?
3. Identify any potential upstream or surrounding sources of contamination. Common examples include: sewage treatment plants, feedlots, chemical plants, mines, large scale conventional farms, etc.
4. Determine if there is any evidence of contamination on your soil. Examples include: oily residues, strange, chemical/oily smells, diseased/stunted/misshapen crops or weeds, issues with newly seeded or planted crops.

**Based on your answers to the above questions, answer the following to complete the assessment:**

1. Have you sold any crops that came into direct contact with, or were within 30 feet of, floodwaters?
2. Are there any harvestable plants still growing within 30 ft of floodwaters?
3. Were any of your flooded fields replanted within 30 days of the flood event?
4. Did you identify any surrounding or upstream sources of potential contamination in your area?
5. Have you observed any evidence of soil contamination described above?

CNG members who answered “yes” to any of the above questions are asked to please reach out for further guidance: [certification@naturallygrown.org](mailto:certification@naturallygrown.org).

## Resources

Experiencing a flood event can cause a ripple effect throughout your farm business. Not only do fields, soil, and even water sources need to be remediated, but the financial and mental health implications for farmers are significant. In addition to seeking help from CNG (email [certification@naturallygrown.org](mailto:certification@naturallygrown.org)), check out the resources below.

### *Field Remediation*

[Farming After the Flood](#), Soil Science Society of America—Quick-read factsheet.

[What are the Best Management Practices On-Farm After a Flood](#), Western Growers—Best practices, including field remediation and FDA considerations.

[Repairing Flood-Damaged Farm Fields](#), Iowa State University—Detailed remediation practices.

[Flooding and Organic Certification Webinar](#), eOrganic—Video outlining organic certification considerations after a flood event, but towards the end, great remediation advice. Find PDF of slides [here](#).

### *Financial*

NRCS [Disaster Recovery](#), Natural Resource Conservation Service—Grant programs to help farmers recover from natural disasters and increase the resiliency of their operations.

[FSA Disaster Assistance](#), Farm Service Agency, USDA—Emergency loans, crop loss assistance, farmland remediation funding, and other recovery programs.

### *Mental Health*

[988 Suidide and Crisis Relief Hotline](#), 988 Lifeline—A 24/7 free, confidential hotline for anyone experiencing a mental health crisis or in need of counseling support.

[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#): 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

[Crisis Text Line](#): Text “CONNECT” to 741741

[Farm Stress and Mental/Behavioral Health](#), AgriAbility—List of mental health resources for farmers.

[Mental Health Resources A-Z](#), Rural Minds—A list of organizations that provide mental health support and resources for farmers and folks in rural areas.