

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture recognizes the significant impact to agribusiness due to the recent flooding. Many farms have crops and/or commodities that have been impacted by flood waters and we would like to offer the following information.

FDA offers the following guidance on crops and commodities exposed to flood waters:

"If the edible portion of a crop is exposed to flood waters, it is considered adulterated... and should not enter human food channels."

This applies to all food crops.

Source of Contamination

Another potential source of contamination from flooding can be found in well water systems. After a flood, the owners of household wells should take certain precautions to make sure their water is safe and their well is in good operating condition. An obvious concern is that flood water loaded with bacteria, chemicals or other pollutants may have gotten into the well. A less obvious concern is electrical shock if a non-submersible pump or any part of the well electrical system is flooded.

After a flood, one should:

1. Stay away from the well pump while it is flooded to avoid electrical shock.
2. Do not drink the water from the well or use it for washing to avoid becoming sick.
3. Get help from a qualified water well contractor or pump installer to:
 - Clean and turn on the pump
 - Flush the well
 - Disinfect the well
 - Perform any other necessary maintenance

Water wells are specialized systems that require knowledge and expertise to repair and disinfect. If your well has been flooded, use bottled water or boil your water until a qualified water well system contractor can check out your well system.

Keep Records

Keeping records of repairs, treatments, and accounted for losses is ideal. Any photographed/videoed documentation of loss is also encouraged. The Nebraska Department of Agriculture is offering On Farm Readiness Reviews to farms wanting an evaluation of readiness for post flood production. This is a visit to review your current farm practices, answer your questions and help you prepare for a future produce safety inspection. Any concerns you might have about lingering flood issues can be discussed and the NDA will work to provide additional technical assistance and feedback.

Contact Information

Your farm's success is the state's success. Your desire to provide safe, quality produce is important to us and part of our mission. Please reach out to the NDA for produce safety questions. For well water quality questions, contact the Water Well Standards and Contractors' Licensing Program as listed below.

Water Well Standards and Contractors' Licensing Program

PO Box 98922
Lincoln, NE 68509-8922
Fax: 402-471-6436
Phone: 402-471-4982

Lab Contacts

Main Laboratory - (402) 471-2122
For sample kits, press 2 (471-3935)
For assistance with private well questions, press 3 (471-6435)

Nebraska Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Consumer Protection Produce Safety Program

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