Business continuity consists of keeping people safe and employed during a disaster and making plans to keep the business running during and after a disaster, which history tells us requires planning. This presentation will introduce you to the concepts of business continuity as it relates to animal disasters.

Learning Objectives
- Recognize the impact an animal disease outbreak can have on business
- List the basic process for developing a business continuity plan
- Identify risks to your business following an animal disease outbreak

Following this presentation, you will be able to recognize the impact an animal disease outbreak might have on your business, list the basic process for developing a business continuity plan, and learn how to identify risks to your business following an animal disease outbreak.

Impact of Animal Disease
- How will you or your business be impacted by an animal disease outbreak in your state, your county, within 5 miles?
- Are you prepared to handle the impact an animal disease outbreak could have both financially and mentally?

If an animal disease were to occur in your state, your county or within 5 miles of your business, how will your business be affected? Are you prepared to handle the financial and mental impacts an animal disease outbreak could have on your business?

Some other considerations in the event of an animal disease outbreak include, would stop movement orders and road blocks impact your business? Often times these steps are put in place until more is known about the disease and how it is spread. Even if it is temporary, it could impact your financial bottom line. Are animal owners your customers or suppliers? How long can you continue earning an income if their business is halted? Does the agriculture market impact your business? Even if you are not a livestock owner, do you live close enough to animal operations that might be in a control zone? How will that affect your business? Will your customers be able to reach you? These are all valid concerns and real situations that have occurred in disease outbreaks. Prior to a disaster, it may be hard to comprehend the impact.

Prior to Disaster
- “It will never happen to me”
- “It won’t be that bad”
- “I have insurance”
- “The government will take care of me”
- Preparation and planning are essential for businesses to survive a disaster

Prior to a disaster, some of the thoughts business owners may think include “It will never happen to me”, “If disaster strikes, it won’t be that bad”, “I have insurance in case anything bad occurs” and “The government will take care of me if a disaster occurs”. As we know, disasters can and do happen and the only thing we can predict is that disasters are unpredictable. The definition of disaster contains words like catastrophe, calamity, great loss and destruction, an uncontrolled crisis. That alone means it will be bad and preparation and planning is imperative for businesses to survive. Insurance and the government are not always going to be able to assist in the capacity that is needed. Take responsibility for the success of your business by establishing a business continuity plan.
Many in the disaster response field use the YOYO philosophy to encourage planning. YOYO stands for **You’re On Your Own**. For small emergencies, like equipment problems or an endemic disease outbreak, we manage our own affairs for our home or business with help only from our insurance carrier. Planning for these events includes having insurance and money set aside to lessen the hardship. In emergencies that are larger or more challenging, we will rely on local resources to help. Examples include life threatening situations, such as when an ambulance is needed or local police or firefighters are called in. As you continue up the slope and the situation grows, State and Federal authorities become part of the response and provide additional resources. In foreign animal disease outbreaks, State and Federal responses will occur as quickly as possible. However, if the event grows or is very large, local, State and Federal resources are quickly expended because the demands are overwhelming and you are back to YOYO. Surviving and recovering from the upper right YOYO depends on being prepared both in your family and your business. Graphic illustration by Dani Ausen, Iowa State University.

Local resources will be needed at all levels of response. Depending on the severity or scale of the incident, State and Federal resources will be available. As the severity and scale escalates, these resources will be strained and a greater demand for local resources will occur. This is often referred to as the YOYO (Your On Your Own) philosophy. The list on the right indicates local resources that may be requested throughout a response to an animal health emergency.

In order to get through the YOYO phase, planning is imperative. Planning is a way to protect your family, employees, your pets and/or livestock, your property/business, and allow critical community resources to more readily help those who have special needs or are most severely impacted. This allows you to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

The basic elements in developing business continuity plans involve analyzing your risks by identifying the hazards that might impact you (foreign animal diseases), determine what the consequences will be to you and/or your business if there is an outbreak of that disease, and evaluate you or your businesses vulnerabilities to the disease. Using this information along with the resources and plans you have, you develop an emergency operations plan and mitigation strategies.
How do you get started and make a business continuity plan? The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has outlined the process to help you accomplish this important task. Businesses small and large should have a plan because animal agriculture’s impact is widespread and deep. The first step is to establish a planning team. This team will analyze capabilities and hazards by looking at internal plans and policies in place, meet and understand the people and plans of local government in your area, and identify government codes and regulations that will influence your plans. The planning team will also identify critical products, services and operations such as facilities and equipment, supply needs – especially those from a sole source, lifeline services – water, electric, etc, essential personnel for a facility to function, identify internal resources and capabilities – personnel, equipment, back up systems and review insurance policies. Some of these will not be impacted by an animal disease outbreak but it is good to plan for all kinds of disasters. The planning team will also conduct a vulnerability analysis. They must determine and evaluate what emergencies could occur in your facility and in your community, how might disease enter, how much customer base would be impacted by a bovine disease, poultry disease, swine disease…. What has happened in other places and what were the vulnerabilities. Using this information, a plan can be developed and that is discussed next.

FEMA has outlined the important components of a business continuity plan. The planning team should go through each component and address the issues. Source: Emergency Management Guide for Business and Industry: A step-by-step approach to emergency planning.

**Business Continuity Plan**
- **Direction and control**
- **Communications**
- **Life safety**
- **Property protection**
- **Community involvement**
- **Administration and logistics**

Using this information, a plan can be developed and that is discussed next.

**Direction and control** – this part of the plan outlines who is in charge and what system they will use to help manage the resources and make decisions. Depending on the size of the business, this can be simple or more sophisticated. This should include the plan to be followed, the duties of personnel, and what information needs to be gathered to make decisions.

**Communications** – this part of the plan outlines how employees and others will be educated and trained about the plan, how each employee will know what their role is in the plan, and how employees will be notified of a disaster. Communications should also be prepared to discuss expectations.

**Life safety** – this is directly related to communication and identifies someone in charge of safety. This person must be prepared to communicate about the safety of employees regarding the disease outbreak. Employees and their families will need to know what the risks are to them and their pets. Protecting the health and safety of all people and animals is a first priority. Photo depicts training people about avian influenza – what it is, how birds are affected, how people can protect themselves. (Source: DB Weddle, DVM, Iowa State University)

**Property protection** – this part should address biosecurity, specifically, what will be the process for restricting movement on and off a property?

**Community involvement** – it is important to be involved with the planning for response in the community. If your business is going to be impacted by an outbreak, participating as a responder to aid in the response and recovery helps get business back together as quickly as possible. Plan ahead and have employees participate in the responder training. How could your business make adjustments to help in the response since you are not functioning in a normal manner? For example, if you run a warehouse with agricultural products and there is a stop movement order placed on trucks, you could offer to serve as a location for supplies or stockpiled goods. Get to know local and state officials that will be making decisions about movement and restoration of business. Discuss your business capabilities with them so they understand what role or risk you pose to the disaster.

**Administration and logistics** – ensure you have complete and accurate records for review by officials or the insurance company if needed. Other things to think...
about before an event include the overall plan, training and exercising, pre-approved purchase requisitions for emergencies, stockpiling key supplies, and how you will access back-up power and maintain communications. During and after an event make sure you keep telephone logs, detailed record of events, record any injuries, be able to account for personnel, notify family, prepare press releases, and pre-approved purchase requisitions are still needed. The final part of the plan relates to recovery and restoration and will be discussed next.

Some things to consider in planning for recovery and restoration includes how will your business be impacted in the long run. Are there important contacts and plans that should be made with customers, suppliers, etc. prior to an event that will help in the recovery period? Are there contractual arrangements with vendors, equipment needs or facility needs that should be made before a disaster? What will the management flow be in a disaster are there options for people to work from other locations Is your insurance adequate and appropriate? What services do you have for your employees to support them through a disaster and following a disaster? Employees are the most important asset. Planning for support of mental and emotional health before, during and after an animal disaster is important. FEMA has a list of important operations for resuming business – some of which apply to an animal disease outbreak and others apply to a disaster like a flood, hurricane, earthquake, etc. Begin by establishing a recovery team, ensure the safety of personnel, conduct employee briefings, keep detailed records (record all key decisions, take pictures), establish notification procedures – families, insurance, government agencies, repair/restore property, conduct investigation – include appropriate gov’t agencies, salvage operations – damaged or undamaged, insurance adjuster information retained, inventory damaged goods, repair equipment, assess value of damages and impact on business interruption, and contact customers and suppliers. Source: Emergency Management Guide for Business and Industry: A step-by-step approach to emergency planning. (Photo source: DB Weddle, DVM, Iowa State University)

In summary, it is your choice of whether or not to invest the time and energy into creating a business continuity plan. If you choose not to make a plan or make a poor plan, your risk tremendous loss. According to Small Business Administration and FEMA study of small business impacted by federally declared disasters, 43% of businesses never reopen and of the 57% that reopen, 29% of these go out of business in two years (for a total of 16.5%). In all, that is an attrition of 59.5% of all business that existed prior to a disaster. Take time to establish a plan so your business can recover – the investment is worth it. FEMA’s estimate is for every dollar spent on planning, $7 are saved from disaster loss. Make a good plan and practice it. It greatly increases your chances of recovery with a functioning business. Well established plans may even grow your business post-disaster.

Planning Pays Off

- No or poor plan can result in losses
- In the event of a major disaster
  - 58% of businesses die
  - 43% never reopen
  - 29% that reopen close in 2 years
- For every $1 spent on planning, $7 saved from disaster loss (FEMA)

Resources

- Emergency Management Guide for Business & Industry
  - www.fema.gov/business/guide/index.shtm
- Small Business Administration
  - Disaster preparedness and recovery information for businesses
  - www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance/index.html
- Association of Contingency Planners
  - 1-800-445-4ACP
  - www.ACP-International.com
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