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IFPTI Fellowship Cohort VIII: Research Presentation

Summer Williams
Specialized Tools Used by State Food Protection Regulatory Agencies During Response to Natural Disasters

Summer Williams
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Background

Extreme 4K Video of Category 5 Hurricane Michael
Background
Background
Background

• Specialized tools are vital items that assist with response efforts in a food safety disaster

• These can vary from GIS mapping databases to strike team “go kits” or even something as simple as a checklist
Problem Statement

Specialized Tools That Can Benefit State Food Protection Regulatory Agencies During Response To Natural Disasters May Not Be Commonly Known.
Research Questions

1. What types of natural disasters have resulted in response from state food protection agencies?

2. What specialized tools do state food protection agencies use in response to natural disasters?

3. What costs are incurred for these specialized tools?
Methodology

Developed a survey for jurisdictions in their response to disaster

Utilized Survey Monkey and email lists from the Directory of State and Local Officials (DSLO)
Study Population

U.S. 2018 Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters

Results

- **38** state food protection agencies responded
- **97%** have exercised or responded to a natural disaster in the past five years
97% utilize the Incident Command System
73% use GIS mapping systems
Results

- **68%** reported utilizing communication tools other than phone or email.
  - Radio systems and social media are the most common communication tool
- **34%** have a “go kit” for response
Results

Other specialized tools reported:

• Hazard vulnerability assessment tools
• Inspection system capabilities for emergency response tracking
• Off grid power sources
• Mobile response equipment
Other specialized tools reported:

- Guidance documents such as a damage assessment form
Conclusions

- Most common specialized tool reported in the survey was the use of the Incident Command System.
  - Essentially no cost to the agency.
  - The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) offers numerous online courses through their National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) website for free.
Conclusions

• States are underutilizing social media in disaster response

• Alert notification systems are a great tool

• No inexpensive answer on communication without phone or internet service
Recommendations

1. Provide nationwide outreach about the importance of preparedness for a natural disaster

2. Develop a checklist for “go kits” for natural disaster response

3. Develop a damage assessment form specific to food safety

4. Promote awareness of this project so information and/or training can be provided to agencies where needed
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Questions?

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