



FROM PLAN TO PRACTICE: RUNNING ON-FARM CRISIS DRILLS

Turning your farm crisis plan into action





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WELCOME & OBJECTIVES

- Why have a crisis plan?
- Why practices and drills matter?
- How to conduct tabletop drills?
- Let's try it out.
- Questions?

MIDWEST DAIRY RESOURCES

- 2024 webinar and resources
- midwestdairy.com/farmers/crisis

Farmer Crisis Handout

FARMER'S GUIDE FOR NAVIGATING A CRISIS



While we might not be able to predict a crisis, we can prepare for one. Now is the time to think about protecting your farm.

PROACTIVELY

Completing an on-farm crisis preparedness plan is the most important first step. During a crisis emotions run high, so having a plan prepared in advance can help you tackle the crisis at hand. Midwest Dairy has resources to help create a crisis plan available on MidwestDairy.com.

Here are some key considerations for a crisis plan:

- **Designate an Internal Crisis Response Team:** Identify roles and responsibilities for this team and review them regularly.
- **Create an emergency contact sheet:** Include 911, farm address, farm owner, and herdsperson. Post it in a highly visible place.
- **Develop a list of stakeholders:** Include groups or individuals directly affected by your farm, along with the person who will be responsible for each during a crisis.
- **Review on-farm security protocols:** Understand access points for activists, consider security cameras, and review visitor check-in policies.
- **Institute biosecurity plans:** Tailor plans to fit your current operation. For example, consider having all service personnel wash boots between farms, having plastic booties on hand so guests can cover their shoes, and limiting access to certain parts of your farm like calf housing.
- **Know your digital footprint:** List all farm web/social media presence. Set Google alerts for your farm and family name.
- **Get to know your local emergency responders:** Invite police, sheriff and firefighters to the farm to become familiar with your business, facilities, access points.
- **Take advantage of FARM program resources:** The FARM Program provides resources and tools to improve best management practices in five areas – Animal Care, Antibiotic Stewardship, Biosecurity, Environmental Stewardship, and Workforce Development.

LOOKING FOR MORE?

For more information, please visit www.midwestdairy.com or contact your Midwest Dairy Farmer Relations Manager.

NAVIGATING THROUGH A CRISIS

Follow the steps outlined below

FIRST HOUR

- Assess the situation. Immediately contact the authorities/911 if the situation involves the health or wellbeing of a farmworker.
- Enact the farm crisis plan. Alert all crisis team members and make sure they know their roles.
- Call your processor/cooperative and call your Midwest Dairy Farmer Relations Manager.
- Contact all employees and inform them about the situation.
- Identify an area on the farm where the team can meet and work during the crisis.
- Work with Midwest Dairy as applicable to help support your crisis response.

THE NEXT HOURS

- Contact your stakeholder list (veterinarian, State Veterinarian, nutritionist, government agencies and others on the crisis list who need to know about the situation, assist in the team's response, or direct to additional resources).
- Contact the farm's insurance agent and legal representation if appropriate.
- Develop communications plan.
- Evaluate the need for additional resources.
- Plan for tomorrow and determine immediate steps needed if crisis worsens.

ONGOING

- Keep Midwest Dairy informed.
- Monitor social media accounts.
- Respond to media requests with the help of Midwest Dairy.
- Keep a record of everyone the farm team talks with about the situation; what the call entailed, key learnings gained and the tone of the conversation.
- Summarize at the end of each day an overview of the day's activities and share it with the team. This should include: the list of conversations, steps taken, and decisions made.

HOW WE CAN HELP

Midwest Dairy can often be a support in preparing for a crisis and during a live crisis.

Midwest Dairy has additional planning resources available at www.midwestdairy.com/crisis, including:

- Templates to help create an on-farm crisis plan
- Crisis Preparation Training Materials
- A virtual media-training course.

In the event of an on-farm crisis, we can help:

- Convene and support local officials.
- Help draft and review media statements.
- Monitor media and social media and help respond as appropriate.
- Help prepare spokespersons.

Contact Sheet

FARM CRISIS CONTACT SHEET

If a crisis occurs, contact the farm owner first. Farm experts and others who can help are listed below. Remember to make your Midwest Dairy Farmer Relations Manager one of your first calls!

Farm Contact Information	
Farm Owner:	Phone:
Herdsperson:	Phone:
Farm Address:	

Extended Farm Team	
Veterinarian Clinic:	Phone:
Farm Veterinarian:	Phone:
Cooperative Field Rep:	Phone:
Nutritionist:	Phone:
Milk Hauler:	Phone:
Other:	Phone:
State Veterinarian:	Phone:



For general emergencies, call: 9-1-1

On Farm Crisis Workbook

Farm Crisis Plan Workbook

Jack Family Dairy



Tailor the following list of roles and responsibilities to fit your farm's needs and situation.
Note: Additional stakeholder templates can be found in the Templates Appendix on page 26.

ROLE: GENERAL MANAGER/TEAM LEADER

NAME: Colby Jack

CELL PHONE: 123-867-5309 HOME PHONE: 123-456-7890

EMAIL: jack@jackfamilydairy.com

PERSONAL EMAIL: colbyjack@gmail.com

BACKUP CONTACT: Monty Jack

RESPONSIBILITIES (PREPARATION)

- Provide leadership
- Protect your dairy farm's reputation
- Create and maintain crisis response plan
- Designate CRT and assign roles
- Other responsibilities:

Host yearly meeting with crisis response team to review plan

Add responsibilities here.

RESPONSE TO CRISIS

Assess the situation to determine if it's an issue or a crisis. See Assessment Appendix on page 22.

- Contact appropriate authorities as needed
- Obtain information from the appropriate government agency and/or industry leaders
- Serve as liaison with authorities, owners, investors and stakeholders
- Gather CRT and provide a summary of facts
- Work with the CRT to confirm roles and responsibilities, analyze the situation and identify the desired outcome
- Assign someone to track and record a timeline of every step taken. This is important as you will not remember all the details and decisions made as the situation unfolds
- Delegate day-to-day responsibilities, including decision-making
- Contact legal representation, if necessary
- Review stakeholder liaisons
- Schedule and lead daily team meetings/updates
- If appropriate, review biosecurity measures already in place
- Work with your communications leader (identify who this is on your farm) to determine the best spokesperson(s)

WHAT IS AN ON-FARM CRISIS

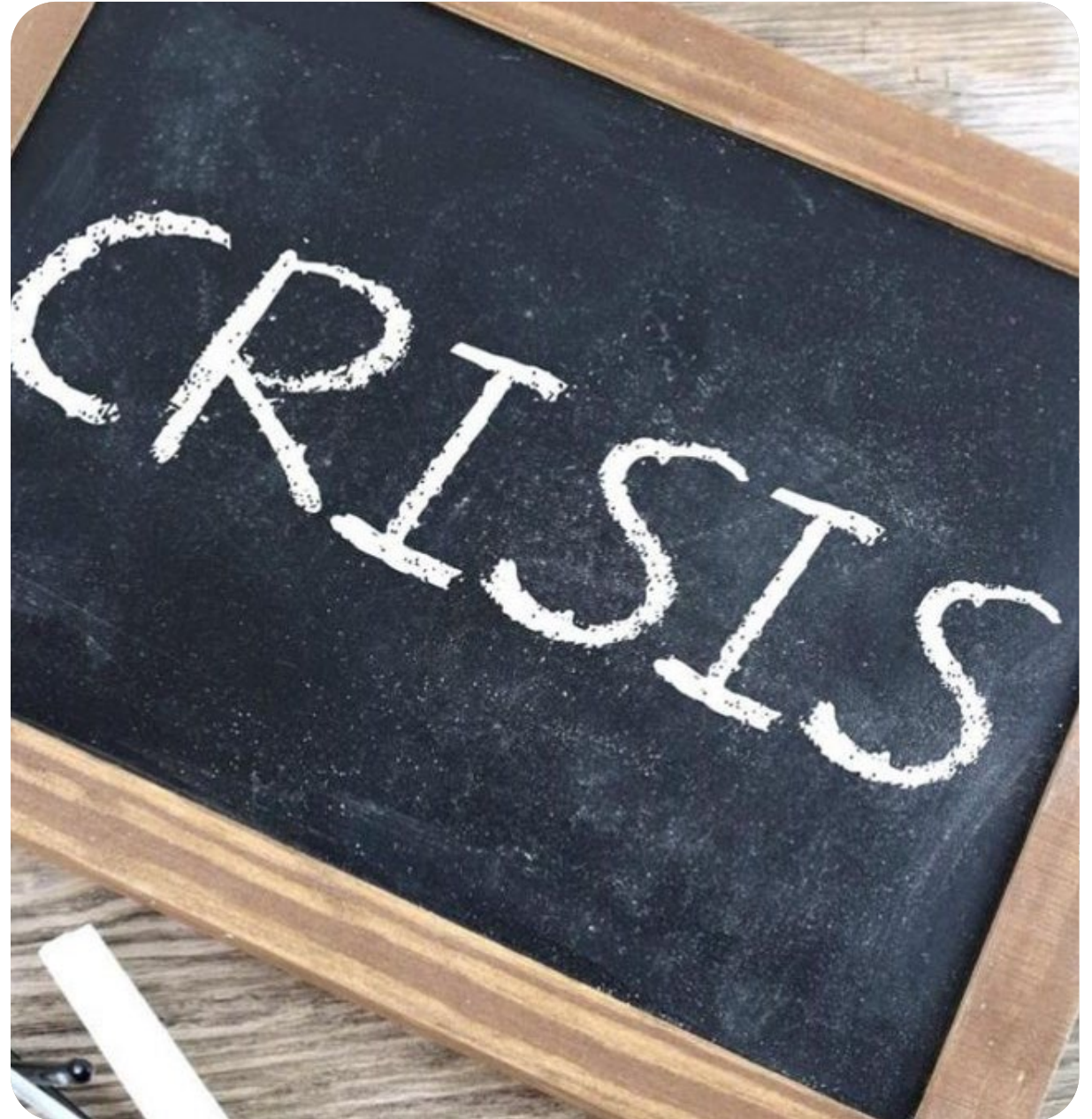
Issues Vs. Crisis

- Examples of issues:
 - School milk delivery disruption
 - General activist activity
 - Anti-dairy media
- Categories of on-farm crises:
 - Animal disease
 - Bioterrorism
 - Farm accident
 - Milk Safety
 - Severe weather/disaster



WHY PREPARE?

- What happens on one farm, can happen on any farm
- Helps you respond quickly & efficiently
- Developing actions on the fly is costly
- Minimizes instability & disruption
- Proactively communicates to employees & stakeholders



Farm Crisis Plan Workbook

Add Farm Name Here



CORE COMPONENTS OF A CRISIS PLAN

- Internal responsibilities
- On-farm security
- Media planning
- External support
- Practice and training





WHAT MIDWEST DAIRY CAN DO

- Support coop/local officials
- Provide crisis planning consultation/support materials
- Help draft media statements
- Monitor media/social media
- Help respond to the media as appropriate
- Help prep spokespeople
- Coordinate assistance with national organization



WHAT MIDWEST DAIRY CAN'S DO

- Develop a crisis plan for you
- Manage your preparation
- Develop your communications plan
- Assist or comment on legal matters
- Recommend specific professional resources (law firms, PR agencies, etc.)





WHY PRACTICE?

The Case for Crisis Drills

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BENEFITS OF ON FARM CRISIS DRILLS

- Improved response time
- Better communication
- Identifies gaps
- Builds confidence
- Demonstrates compliance





THE POWER OF PRACTICE

- Simulate urgency in a safe setting
- Even short sessions pay off
- Helps new employees
- Keeps plans fresh





QUESTIONS?



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HOW TO CONDUCT A TABLETOP DRILL



WHAT IS A TABLETOP DRILL

- A low-stress, discussion-based exercise where your team walks through a crisis scenario step-by-step to test your plan and identify improvements.



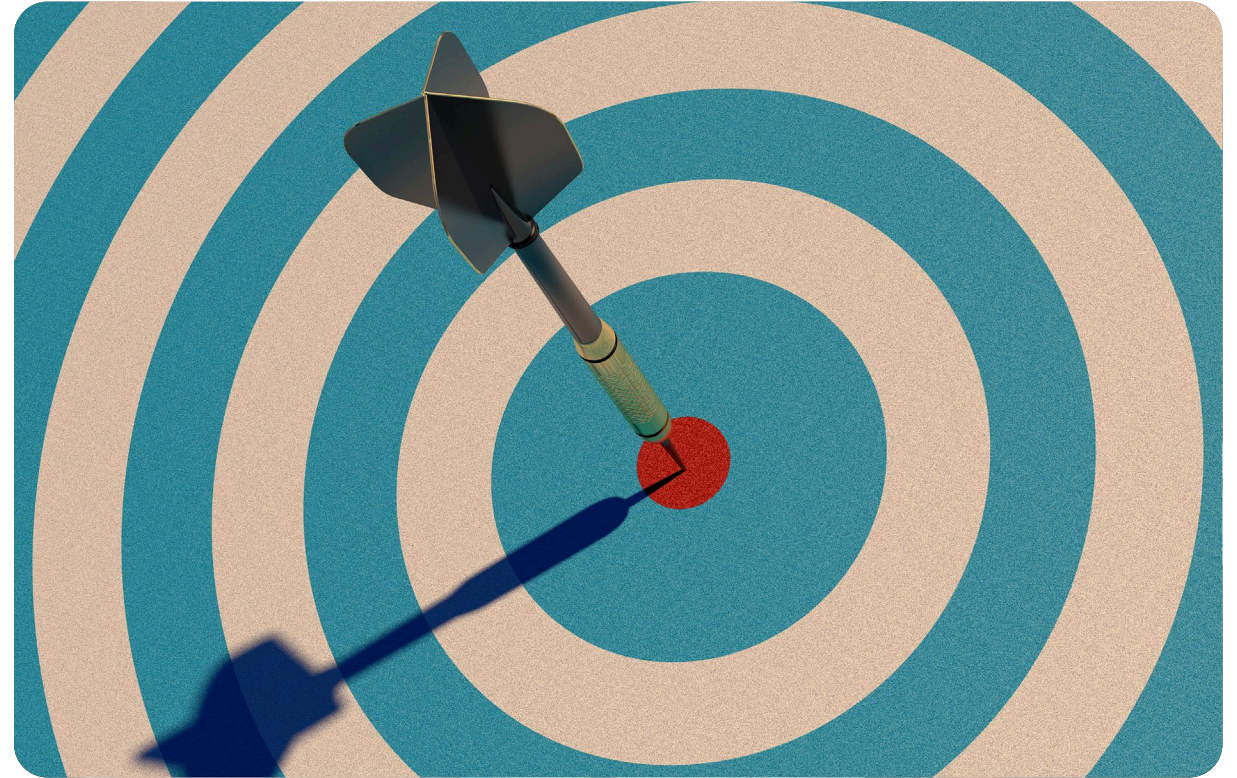
STEPS TO CONDUCT A DRILL

- Choose a scenario
- Gather your crisis team
- Review your plan
- Walk through the timeline
 - What happens first
 - Who's notified
 - What communication goes out
- Discuss and document
- Debrief and revise



TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE DRILLS

- Keep it positive
- Make it realistic – but not overwhelming
- Encourage everyone to participate
- Practice one scenario at a time
 - Quality over quantity
 - Throw in some wrenches
- Switch up roles
- Repeat regularly
 - Two or three times a year is ideal





WHAT TO INCLUDE IN A SCENARIO

- A short, realistic situation
- A trigger event
- Key impacts
- Decision points
- Uncertainties
- Recovery phase
- Reflection

REFLECTION: PRACTICE INTO PROGRESS

- Every drill should end with reflection and discussion.
- Identify what worked well — and where confusion or gaps occurred.
- Document all feedback before it's forgotten.
- Develop a short written *action plan* that includes:
 - Improvements or updates needed
 - Who is responsible for each action
 - A target date for completion



GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE DISCUSSIONS

Step 1: Assess and Activate

- Who is the first person to identify the issue and activate the plan?
- Who do employees contact first, and how?
- What immediate actions should be taken in the first 15 minutes?
- What backup options exist if primary systems fail?



GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE DISCUSSIONS

Step 2: Contain and Communicate

- Who handles internal communication among staff?
- Who contacts your cooperative, veterinarian, or milk hauler?
- What messages should (and shouldn't) be shared publicly?
- Who is authorized to speak to the media or neighbors?



GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE DISCUSSIONS

Step 3: Recover and Review

- How will you document what happened and what was lost?
- Which partners should be notified after the event?
- What improvements or training needs were identified?
- When will you update your plan and review it again?

Debrief tip: Ask “What worked?” “What was unclear?” and “What will we do differently next time?”





QUESTIONS?



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PRACTICE SCENARIOS

SAMPLE SCENARIOS TO TRY

- Manure Spill Near Waterway
 - How do you contain it and notify neighbors/agencies?
- Barn Fire During Evening Milking
 - How do you evacuate animals and alert responders?
- Activist Impersonating a Job Applicant
 - How do employees respond and report it?
- Power Outage During Extreme Heat
 - What's your backup plan for ventilation and milking?
- Animal Health Emergency
 - Who contacts the veterinarian, and how is biosecurity managed?
- Blizzard or Ice Storm Impacting Operations
 - How do you maintain animal care, milk storage, etc.?

LET'S TRY ONE

A detailed black and white line drawing of a cow, likely a Holstein, standing and facing forward. The cow has a white body with large black patches. It is positioned in the center-right of the frame against a solid yellow background. The cow's head is slightly tilted, and it has a calm expression. Its legs are thin and straight, and its tail is visible on the left side.A stylized splash of white milk at the bottom right corner of the image. The splash is dynamic, with several droplets and a sense of movement. The Midwest Dairy logo is integrated into the splash, with the word "MIDWEST" in a small, sans-serif font above the word "Dairy" in a larger, cursive script. A small trademark symbol (TM) is at the end of "Dairy".

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WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS

- Create your plan
- Schedule your first tabletop drill within 30 days.
- Document what you learn and update your plan.
- Visit **MidwestDairy.com/crisis** for workbook templates and crisis resources.
- Stay tuned for future Midwest Dairy webinars and training opportunities.





QUESTIONS?



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THANK YOU