

March 22, 2019

FLOOD RESOURCES

The flooding will go down in Nebraska history as the worst in half a century. The worst flood in Nebraska, according to the National Weather Service, is the 1935 Republican River flood as the top flood in Nebraska history, with 94 deaths, 341 miles of highway destroyed and 307 bridges damaged or destroyed. On May 30, 1935, “as much as 18-24 inches of rain fell in eastern Colorado and southwestern Nebraska.”

I had my fair share of flood damage first hand in 1993. My parent’s home south of Nemaha, the Nemaha River breached the dike and turned their home into an island. Flood waters entered an open ended sewer system (I know that’s not legal but that’s what people do when home sewer systems plug up until they are fixed!) and with the rising waters we had five feet of filthy flood water and sewer water in the basement of the home. As every citizen in DeWitt knows, cleaning up after floods, disinfecting and drying out homes and buildings is a huge chore.

One of the things on the farm and acreages that is often not thought of is testing well water after a flood. If your private drinking water well has been impacted by flood water, your water supply may have been contaminated with pollutants carried in the flood water. In addition, wells can be contaminated by surface water runoff, even if the surrounding area is not flooded. Do not use the water for cooking, drinking, or brushing teeth until laboratory analysis confirms it is safe. There are water treatment options including shock chlorination of the well to kill the bacteria. Wells at greatest risk of contamination from flood water or surface water runoff include the following five examples:

- 1) Wells located in well pits.
- 2) Dug wells or any wells that do not have a watertight casing.
- 3) Wells that do not have watertight caps.
- 4) Wells that lack a grout seal in the annular space.
- 5) Wells that were submerged with flood water or surface water runoff.

We have sterile water test bottles at our office for testing for E. coli in the water using the Grand Island Department of Health lab. Please stop by and we can hand those out to you with instructions how to test your well water.

If you have had livestock losses, beyond normal, you need to call the Farm Service Agency (FSA) office within 30 days of the storm event. The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) is offered by FSA to provide producers an avenue to recover financial losses of livestock but inventory records are needed.

For more information, contact your FSA office or go to: <https://go.unl.edu/livestocklip> UNL Extension is pushing out information to help. Please use or share the website <https://flood.unl.edu> It’s a key resource full of science-based information. If you are in the situation of dealing with flood cleanup or are volunteering to help someone who now has access to a flooded home or business, a great resource is:

<https://www.extension.purdue.edu/floodpub/index.html>



Knowing the legal rights, benefits and resources available to low-income survivors of a disaster is crucial to recovery. Legal Aid of Nebraska can help. Apply online at disaster.legalaidofnebraska.org/apply, or call the Disaster Relief Hotline at 1-844-268-5627.

When disasters occur, there are always people who try to profit off of the needs of others. Fraudulent funding schemes are popping up on the Internet. To find a legitimate agency for monetary and other goods and services donations, contact 211 (simply dial 211 or dial 866-813-1731).

Randy Pryor, Extension Educator

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension in Saline County · 306 West 3rd Street, Wilber, NE 68465

Phone (402) 821-2151 · Fax (402) 821-3398 · e-mail: randy.pryor@unl.edu