



Summary of Agency Responsibilities in support of Texas Forest Service for Firefighting Emergency Support Function

Texas AgriLife Extension Service is an agency of the State of Texas focused on knowledge transfer to a variety of audiences and is a part of the Texas A&M System. In emergency management AgriLife Extension's role is to support and assist the lead state agency for Firefighting, the Texas Forest Service, in concert with other state agencies and county, federal, and local governments. The primary resource to be utilized for this support is AgriLife Extension's 500+ county Extension agents jointly employed by state and county jurisdictions serving all 254 Texas counties. These county Extension agents are supported by 150+ Extension specialists associated with 18 departments and units in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and College of Veterinary Medicine at Texas A&M University. County Extension agents and Extension specialists provide essential information and public education to rural and urban Texans, communities, and businesses relative to wildfire prevention and recovery.

Texas AgriLife Extension Service is a member of the State Emergency Management Council. The agency has the capacity to mobilize its Headquarters Operations Center in College Station; activate up to eight Incident Resource Teams comprised of 88 Extension specialists and activate more than 500 county Extension agents. Texas AgriLife Extension Service can be of best benefit through three phases of crisis (Preparedness, Mitigation and Recovery) and is committed to providing science-based education and reliable information to the public.

A Texas AgriLife Extension Service role is to act as an educational support agency for the Texas Forest Service and other agencies involved in the Firefighting emergency support function.

Texas AgriLife Extension Service during preparedness, mitigation and recovery phases of Emergency Management will commit to the following.

1. Engage the Texas A&M AgriLife Communications unit to fortify Texas Forest Service by disseminating public information via its daily news services and educational resources at <http://agnews.tamu.edu/> and <http://agrilifebookstore.tamu.edu> and the agency's Emergency Management website <http://texashelp.tamu.edu> . Incident related news will be coordinated with the Texas Forest Service Public Information Officer.
2. Engage county Extension agents to raise public awareness regarding wildfire prevention and suppression via presentations and through local programming and contacts, which include newsletters, news columns, radio and television segments, and county Extension Web sites.
3. Engage Extension specialists (located on the Texas A&M University campus and at 12 Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Centers across the state) to further highlight wildfire prevention, suppression, and recovery strategies via Extension communications channels and upcoming programs, as well as incorporating information into curricula where possible.

4. Make Texas Forest Service wildfire prevention and suppression information available for use by Regional Program Directors who coordinate educational programming with county Extension agents and Extension volunteers involved in the Extension Master Naturalist and Master Gardener programs and throughout the Texas 4-H and Youth Development program.
5. County Extension agents serve on the United States Department of Agriculture County Emergency Board (CEB) in each county and charged with estimating agricultural economic losses and supporting a county judge's request for disaster declaration related to agricultural impacts.
6. Maintaining representation at the State Operation Center workstation 24/7 in Austin as when activated.
7. Activate the Extension Headquarters Operations Center in College Station as needed.
8. Strengthen the communication among county judges, county commissioners, and the State Operations Center.
9. Engage in State Operations Center and Texas Forest Service incident teleconferencing, preparedness exercises, situation reporting, and after-action reporting as needed.
10. Encouraging and facilitating volunteers from AgriLife Extension to provide non-firefighting support activities at Area Command Centers during extended deployment of Texas Forest Service personnel, as needed.
11. Promote mitigation demonstrations, presentations and programming efforts, to better prepare for, mitigate, manage, and recover from potential wildfire disasters.
12. Require all county Extension agents and specialists to receive training in National Incident Management System and Incident Command System.
13. Serve as expert and scientific media spokespersons in relevant fields of study.
14. Represent the agency at local EOCs and Joint Information Centers as needed.

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