



Hurricane Harvey: Inside the Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Logistics Division

The Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Logistics Division provides warehousing, manufacturing, freight transportation and fleet management services, as well as agricultural oversight and management of the agency's land resources.

Land resources are used to produce fresh vegetables, grain, hay and the cotton used to manufacture offender clothing. MAL manages and operates several food processing plants and livestock production facilities that provide the canned vegetables, eggs and various finished meat products to feed the offender population. MAL's Fleet and Freight Transportation section has oversight of approximately 2,200 active vehicles, including 200 tractor trucks and 450 tractor trailers, as well as several thousand trailers and other equipment. In preparation and response to Hurricane Harvey, MAL's dispatch offices coordinated more than 135 freight hauls and truck drivers logged approximately 32 thousand miles.

Even before the command center began 24-hour operations the morning of August 25, MAL Director Bobby Lumpkin and his team were working behind the scenes to coordinate staff and stage supplies and equipment in areas that were expected to be impacted by Hurricane Harvey. Pallets of emergency supplies, such as flashlights, batteries and rain gear were staged in unit warehouses, additional food, bottled water, ice, water tanks,

cots and sandbags were shipped to affected areas, and bulk fuel levels were monitored more closely. In addition, MAL staff began to monitor food, mattresses and necessity item supplies at units that could potentially receive evacuated offenders.

Once offender evacuations began, MAL staff at the emergency command center coordi-

requests for supplies to the proper location." He continued, "If the Wynne Unit needs additional supplies because they've received additional offenders, our job is to find how to meet that need."

During all of this, the safety of livestock also needed to be taken into consideration. In all, 5,730 heads of cattle, 629 heads of swine



Flooding at the Ramsey Unit Ag office.

nated the transport of food and mattresses to units receiving offenders. They also provided agency wrecker services, and strategically placed high profile vehicles to assist with flood responses. Lumpkin explained, "By maintaining our position at the command center, we were able to act as a conduit for information from the field and route

and 54 horses, as well as hay and feed were moved to higher ground or relocated to other units to avoid low water areas.

Through it all, Lumpkin praised the work of the frontline staff. "They worked tirelessly and showed incredible dedication and perseverance. We had some staff who came to

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work even though the roadway was flooded – their house was flooded.” He went on to describe their dedication to their job duties. “They worked under some incredibly difficult conditions yet still manage to exhibit the agency’s core values of Courage, Commitment, Integrity and Perseverance.”

As of November 1, most Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Logistics operations affected by the hurricane have returned to normal. Some animals were relocated to other areas of the state until waters recede from flooded pastureland, and most damage on agency farmland affected roads, bridges and fencing has been repaired. Lumpkin estimates the MAL will need to replace several miles of non-security fencing around the perimeter of pastures and crops.

The agency’s cotton crop sustained the greatest loss. Lumpkin estimated that more than 2,500 acres of cotton were lost to flood waters. “While cotton is used in our sewing

operations to produce offender clothing and necessity items, we always have an inventory on hand from the previous crop season. We will just need to be strategic with our supply going forward.” MAL staff is working to restore farmland for future crops.

Lumpkin credits extensive planning and training, and effective lines of communication for the agency’s successful navigation through an unprecedented storm, “If we’ve learned anything from previous storms, it’s that we have to expect the unexpected, and our agency as a whole has done an excellent job preparing for situations like this.” ▲