

NC PORK COUNCIL UPDATE
Statement From Deborah Johnson, CEO
October 14, 2016

"As farmers deal with historic and life-threatening floods, the Waterkeeper Alliance has deliberately exaggerated the environmental impact posed by hog farms in the wake of Hurricane Matthew. Here are the facts as of Friday afternoon: There have been no reported hog lagoon breaches. There are 11 hog farms where floodwaters have inundated lagoons, but the majority of the wastewater will remain in the lagoons as flood waters recede.

"While people across North Carolina are working hard to protect lives and property, the Waterkeeper Alliance is exploiting this tragic situation to push their anti-farm agenda. They remain focused on farms while ignoring the environmental impact of spills from municipal waste systems and runoff from thousands of other sources.

"The number of hog lagoons that have been flooded represents less than ½ of one percent of North Carolina's 2,100 permitted hog farms. It also represents a decrease of nearly 80 percent when compared to the number of lagoons (50) that were flooded during Hurricane Floyd. This shows that the proactive steps we have taken since Hurricane Floyd are working.

"We urge the media and public to view allegations from the Waterkeeper with great skepticism."

UPDATED STATUS: HOG LAGOONS

Through 2pm Friday, there have been no reported breaches of hog lagoons. According to the NC Department of Environmental Quality, 11 farms across Eastern North Carolina have lagoons that have been inundated with flood waters. This is a situation where the lagoons did not overflow or breach; the lagoons remain intact but are underwater as a result of flood waters coming onto the property.

Understanding The Difference Between Breaches vs. Inundation

When a hog lagoon is breached — the lagoon walls give way and can no longer hold back the wastewater — the contents of the lagoon are typically washed away and emptied into the surrounding fields.

By contrast, a lagoon that is underwater remains intact. The floodwater runs over the lagoon and carries away only a small portion of wastewater that is heavily diluted. Most of the wastewater remains in the lagoon and the environmental impact is greatly minimized.

UPDATED STATUS: ANIMAL MORTALITY

Through 2pm Friday, it appears that fewer than 3,000 swine were killed during Hurricane Matthew based on reports received by the NC Pork Council. Only one farm lost any swine due to flooding.

FLOYD VS. MATTHEW: COMPARING THE DAMAGE

The flooding caused by Hurricane Matthew rivals — and in some cases exceeds — that which occurred during Hurricane Floyd. The impact on hog farms from this storm has been much less significant.

Impact on Hog Lagoons

Hurricane Floyd: 50 Lagoons Flooded, 6 Lagoon Breaches

Hurricane Matthew: 11 Lagoons Flooded (Estimate), 0 Lagoon Breaches Reported

Animal Mortality

Hurricane Floyd: 21,474 Swine Deaths

Hurricane Matthew: Fewer Than 3,000 Swine Deaths (Estimate)

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