

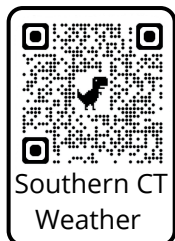
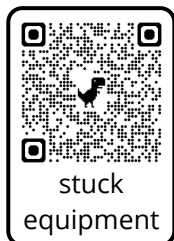
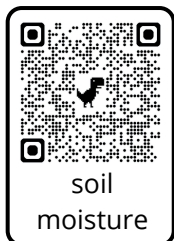
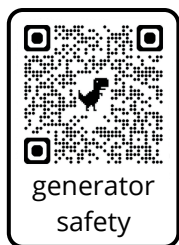
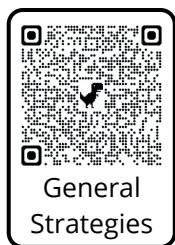
Extreme weather events and seasonal changes can pose risks for farm operations. Use this checklist as a guide for immediate actions when extreme spring weather is forecast and as major seasonal shifts occur. Reference the **General Strategies** page for additional steps.

AT THE START OF THE SPRING SEASON

- ☐ Review the **General Strategies** checklist
- ☐ Review all written contingency plans with staff/family, including a plan for evacuating and shelter-in-place for staff and livestock
- ☐ Keep extra feed on hand in case you are unable to reach your hay supplier or the feed store for a few days
- ☐ Ensure that trailer tires are inflated
- ☐ Ensure that generators & chainsaws are operable. Scan the QR code below to learn more about **generator safety**
- ☐ Have your veterinarian's number on paper and in your phone
- ☐ Harvest and/or farm income data may be required to apply for compensation for losses from catastrophic weather events.
- ☐ Review your record keeping systems to ensure data is adequately recorded throughout the season

ABOVE AVERAGE SPRING TEMPERATURES

- ☐ Ensure greenhouse and high tunnel roll-up sides and fans are operable; begin venting before daytime temperatures climb
- ☐ Use circulation fans in greenhouses to prevent leggy seedlings
- ☐ Ensure adequate fertility for earlier-than-normal development of orchard and perennial crops
- ☐ Ensure adequate clean drinking water for livestock. Locate water receptacles in shaded places when possible.
- ☐ Consider the likelihood for high spring temperatures when scheduling shearing for fleece-bearing animals
- ☐ Remember that warm spring weather may not persist; average or cold temperatures may return



MUD SEASON

Consider how to avoid or lessen the impact of mud. As spring progresses, snow melts, frozen winter soil begins to thaw at the surface, and a slick layer of mud can form on top of the frozen ground. Mud can become quite deep and problematic as the ground further thaws and spring rains fall. When possible house livestock on higher ground in living barns and temporarily relocate equipment yards to decrease traffic around barns.

- ☐ Prepare mud-prone areas while the ground is still fully frozen, except in areas where heavy rains would wash away material
 - ☐ Lay stone, woodchips, or straw as needed
 - ☐ Use pallets or planks as walkways in very muddy areas, being mindful of how livestock will navigate the area
- ☐ Be mindful of the freeze/thaw cycle from night to day
 - ☐ Consider completing chores in the morning before the ground thaws
 - ☐ Be sure to put away tools and equipment used during the day so they don't freeze into the mud overnight
- ☐ Avoid using heavy equipment in muddy and saturated areas to prevent soil compaction, rutting, and getting stuck in the mud
 - ☐ Evaluate if a field is dry enough to bring in a tractor. If you can form a ball of soil and/or squeeze water out of the soil, the field is too wet
 - ☐ Scan the QR code below to **learn more about assessing soil moisture**
 - ☐ Extracting stuck vehicles or equipment can be complicated and dangerous. Damage, injuries, and fatalities can result when tow chains or straps break, or when equipment moves unpredictably
 - ☐ Scan the QR code below to **learn more about safely extracting stuck equipment**
- ☐ Manage and/or remove manure on a daily or weekly basis during the spring season to avoid muddy and unhealthy conditions for livestock, especially young stock with developing immune systems
- ☐ Contain animals as needed to prevent excessive mud fouling
- ☐ For animals fed outdoors, raise feeders off the ground to reduce contamination by animal waste

BEFORE POSSIBLE HIGH IMPACT EVENTS

- ☐ Visit **Southern Connecticut Weather** for comprehensive forecasting for the entire state. Scan QR code below
- ☐ Photo-document standing crops, pasture, poultry flocks, and other vulnerable sources of farm revenue in case of losses
- ☐ Review response plans with family/staff

LATE SPRING FROST

- ☐ Scan the QR code below for records of last spring frost through the **National Weather Service (NWS)**. Keep in mind frost damage can occur at temperatures higher than 32° depending on site conditions
- ☐ Review critical temperatures for fruit and vegetable crops
 - ☐ Be aware that newly emerged seedlings are more temperature sensitive than seedlings with true leaves
- ☐ Scan the QR code below for information on **soil temperatures and vegetable seed germination**
- ☐ Scan the QR code below to learn more about **critical temperatures and frost protection for orchards**
- ☐ Identify frost pockets and susceptible crop varieties
- ☐ Set up and/or service frost protection equipment including sprinkler systems, pumps, and frost fans for orchards
- ☐ Cover susceptible vegetable and flower seedlings with row cover as needed

EXTREME WIND

- ☐ Be prepared for power outages. Refer to **General Strategies**
- ☐ Fill all water tanks for crops, animals, and people
- ☐ Ensure working generators and/or gas/diesel water pumps to provide for livestock and irrigation water during extended outages
- ☐ Unplug extension cords and other electrical equipment when possible to mitigate fire risk
- ☐ Collect/secure anything that could become airborne
- ☐ Secure outbuildings, closing all doors, windows, ventilation boards, or other openings
- ☐ Seal up greenhouses and high tunnels, as temperatures allow
- ☐ Remove or add additional sandbags/weights for row cover
- ☐ Repair and/or drive additional posts for trellised crops like brambles or peas to prevent blow-down. Posts are more likely to fail when soil is saturated
- ☐ Move animals, equipment, and supplies away from trees
- ☐ Trim hanging branches and remove deceased trees
- ☐ If strawberries are still covered, check that straw is still in place after high winds
- ☐ After an extreme weather event, confirm that no trees, branches, or leaves that may be toxic to livestock have fallen in paddocks/pens
- ☐ Walk fence lines and inspect buildings to ensure that no damage has occurred

EXTREME RAIN AND FLOODING

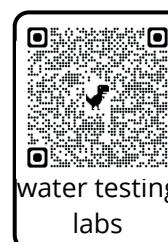
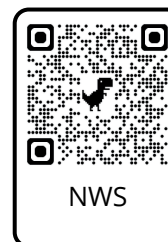
While flooding is a year-round risk, conditions in the spring can result in harder-to-predict flooding patterns. Factors to consider when assessing the risk of flooding include ice dams on rivers and streams, snow melt, whether the ground is frozen, and rainfall amounts.

EXTREME RAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- ☐ Be mindful that distant rains can flood local rivers and streams, and that any low-lying area, including urban areas, can flood rapidly
- ☐ Ensure all drainage is clear, both on the land and buildings
- ☐ Manage manure piles to minimize run-off
- ☐ Monitor manure pit levels and develop a plan if there will not be enough 'freeboard' space until overflow
- ☐ Consider delaying direct seeding and delayed or split fertilizer or pesticide applications
- ☐ Move animals, equipment, & supplies out of flood zones and areas likely to become muddy or under water

HEAVY RAIN ON FROZEN GROUND

- ☐ Water will pool and possibly freeze in low-lying areas. Move equipment off fields that may flood and freeze
- ☐ Be aware that shallow wells may be more prone to contamination by runoff when the ground is frozen. Scan the QR code below for **water testing labs** to monitor your wells.
- ☐ Store manure and compost piles under cover (roofs or tarps) to prevent nutrient leaching and runoff. Consider surrounding piles with straw bales to contain runoff



ICE STORMS

- ☐ Trim overhanging branches near structures or fences
- ☐ Prune susceptible fruit trees as feasible
- ☐ Check high tunnels and greenhouses for ability to handle ice load
 - ☐ Tighten loose nuts on trusses and cross members
 - ☐ Greenhouses can be heated to shed ice
 - ☐ Scan the QR code below to learn more about **protecting high tunnels and greenhouses**
- ☐ Keep sand or non-toxic ice melt handy for walkways/work areas

HAIL

- ☐ Move vulnerable equipment under cover
- ☐ Provide shelter to vulnerable animals
 - ☐ Young poultry may not seek cover on their own; contain within coop or cover chicken tractors
- ☐ Move seedling trays under cover
- ☐ Harvest vulnerable crops as possible

DROUGHT

We associate drought with warm temperatures, but lengthy dry periods can also occur in the spring.

- ☐ Scan the QR code below to **monitor drought**
- ☐ Ensure irrigation systems are operable, including pumps, filters, and delivery systems as there may be the need to irrigate sooner than normal
- ☐ Monitor water quality of surface water used for irrigation and livestock hydration
- ☐ Monitor dug wells and have an alternative source for providing water to animals if the well goes dry

ELEVATED FIRE RISK

- ☐ Review MANAGING FIRE RISKS in **General Strategies**. Brush fires are becoming more common in spring with high winds, low humidity, and dry leaf litter
- ☐ Clear dead leaves, brush, grasses, straw, and other flammable materials from areas surrounding buildings and work areas where sparks, flames, or hot equipment might be present
- ☐ Always have a water source handy when doing work that could make sparks, such as cutting metal, or when hot equipment could come in contact with flammable materials
- ☐ Reduce the fire risk of heat lamps by ensuring that that cords are free from damage; that outlets are clean and free from debris; lamps are away from flammable materials and walls.
- ☐ Scan the QR code to learn more about **heat lamp safety**
- ☐ Avoid burning during dry, windy days
- ☐ Scan QR codes to **monitor fire risk & sign up for alerts**

TORNADOES

While highly impactful tornadoes are uncommon in the Northeast, they do occur and their infrequency can make them more dangerous if they are not considered a possible threat.

- ☐ A Tornado Watch means there are favorable conditions for tornado formation – stay alert!
- ☐ A Tornado Warning means a funnel cloud has been sighted - time to seek shelter!
- ☐ Scan the QR code on **tornado safety** to learn how to seek shelter from a tornado
- ☐ Do not risk your life trying to protect equipment, structures, livestock, or crops when a tornado is imminent

BLACK BEARS

Black bears can be problematic, especially when they emerge from dens in the spring.

- ☐ Scan the QR code below for guidance on creating a plan to **protect livestock from bears**
- ☐ Scan the QR code to learn more about **livestock guardian dogs**
- ☐ To better understand management and regulations, scan the QR code for an **in-depth look at bears and agricultural damage** in Connecticut

