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Clover Connection

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No major disruptions to ag trade expected at Houston shipping ports

COLLEGE STATION – No significant disruptions of agricultural commodities to Houston’s main shipping ports are anticipated after Hurricane Harvey dropped historic amounts of rainfall, according to a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service economist.

Dr. Luis Ribera, director of the Center for North American Studies at Texas A&M University in College Station, said Texas’ agricultural commodities should not have any long-term marketing effects.

“I do believe there might be some delays on some shipments of grain, cotton and beef, but it’s hard to tell because other ports can be used as well,” Ribera said. “There’s a Del Monte facility in Galveston (one of four facilities in the U.S.) that receives bananas, pineapples and melons from Central and South America on the import side that might be affected. We will just have to see how this plays out.”

Meanwhile, grocery outlets throughout the southeast region of Texas are working to get shelves restocked and provide items of immediate need, including bottled water.

“The major grocery chains have plans in place and are very responsive to situations such as hurricanes and other natural disasters,” he said. “I know that these grocery companies have a very good distribution system and suppliers that can fulfill shipments within three to four days in most cases.

“One thing that they may do also is reduce their inventory in other locations and send them to the locations that need the items. The main issues there are accessibility, how they can get there, and also electricity. Do they have it to run the stores?”

Some stores brought employees in from other states; distribution centers in other states are being utilized.

According to the National Weather Service, Hurricane Harvey has set a preliminary record, surpassing 50 inches for the greatest single-storm rainfall ever measured in the U.S. Additional accumulations for East Texas and southwestern Louisiana continue.

Many cattle auction markets in affected areas were closed as Hurricane Harvey reached landfall. Some are reopening this weekend, including Navasota Livestock Auction. Greg Goudeau said in email to clients “the calf market should be steady. The cull cow and bull market will be strong because of the recent floods.”

Both the Rosharon and Hungerford receiving pens are closed this weekend due to the high waters and pens full of evacuated cattle, though the Madisonville receiving pens will be open, he said.

Those seeking a large or small animal shelter/holding facility should call 2-1-1 or contact the emergency management department in the area you are seeking shelter. A list of shelters can be viewed at http://www.tahc.texas.gov/emergency/TAHC_SheltersHoldingFacilities.pdf
AgriLife Extension also has disaster recovery information available at <https://texashelp.tamu.edu/browse/disaster-recovery-information/>.

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