

Statewide Emergency Food Distribution: Bringing Stakeholders to the Table

Project Summary

In November 2008, The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) launched a project examining the agency's capabilities for responding to a large-scale disruption to Wisconsin's food distribution system. In the event of a large-scale food emergency, DATCP and its partnering agencies must have ready access to resources that will assure a safe and reliable supply of food and water to the public. However, because most of the food supply is privately held, DATCP realized that an effective response requires partnership with the food industry, volunteer organizations and various levels of government to coordinate planning efforts. The collaborative process began with a series of focus group meetings documenting:

- the roles of group participants within the food system
- the capabilities and vulnerabilities specific to each organization's continuity of operations
- opportunities and /or tools for minimizing impacts to food distribution at-large within the state

Participants were broadly chosen to represent a wide array of stakeholders from the food industry (food distributors and retailers), emergency response community (county and regional emergency management), county and state government agencies, volunteer organizations active in disasters (VOADs) and the Wisconsin National Guard. Focus Group meetings were structured to first identify each participant's capabilities and priorities for maintaining their continuity of operations, as well as their partnerships and networking abilities. The group then identified several likely disruption scenarios for framing discussions, and decided upon long-term power outage given the breadth of impacts presented by such an event. It became apparent that backup power, fuel and transportation are the most critical and interdependent resources for maintaining reliable access to food. The final meeting comprised a tabletop exercise involving an ice-storm and long-term power outage scenario where participants examined how and under what conditions they would maintain their operations focusing on backup power, communication, and access to fuel and transportation.

Following the suggestions made by participants, the attached resources have been developed as a starting point to assist those responding specifically to food emergencies:

- Lessons Learned
- Stakeholder Capabilities Table
- Food Emergency Resource Checklist
- All-Hazards Guidance for Food Distributors, Processors and Retailers
- an online community resource for public/private partners to communicate about events, post notices about industry- or agency-related food emergency information, training opportunities, preparedness information, contact lists, etc. (forthcoming)

Lessons Learned

I. Critical Resources

The process of food distribution consists of the reliable movement of food products from points of manufacture to warehouses and retail outlets, and the ability to maintain food supplies at points of distribution. Three interrelated resources are required to assure this process: power, fuel and transportation.

Power is needed to maintain operations across all sectors including food production and processing, warehousing (lighting, powering equipment, maintaining coolers and freezers), transportation (fuel cannot be pumped without power) and retail operations (coolers, freezers, registers, and lighting). In the absence of power, the need for backup generators is critical to maintain operations across sectors. To that end, protocols must be developed to inventory generators and prioritize their use to assure safe and accessible food supplies.

Fuel sources – primarily propane and diesel – are critical for backup generator use. Counties are encouraged to establish agreements with local fuel retailers to assure they receive priority access to fuel for maintaining their emergency operations. VOADs such as Red Cross and Salvation Army have long-standing agreements through their local chapters with many of the fuel retailers in their service areas.

Transportation needs identified by the group include unfettered access to roads, as well as protocols for transportation officials to prioritize food distributors when rerouting traffic. Potential transportation resources include privately-owned temperature-controlled trailers that could be used for storing perishable food supplies, as well as Red Cross emergency response vehicles for the distribution of food to stranded communities. Agreements between distributors and emergency response officials would facilitate access to these resources.

II. Capabilities and Vulnerabilities Across Sectors

Networking Capabilities

- County Emergency Management has, by and large, established agreements with their local VOAD chapters
- Strong partnerships exist among VOAD Groups and Industry: Reinhart FoodService, Wal-Mart, Sysco and Schneider National have extensive partnerships with VOADs such as America's Second Harvest, Red Cross and Salvation Army
- Industry (large distributors and retailers) are fairly self-sufficient re: power, fuel and transportation
- Wal-Mart's extensive national distribution network includes regional emergency supply warehouses and its own EOC. Strong community-level presence includes readiness to participate in local relief efforts
- The WI DOT Motor Carriers Division has access to the Motor Carriers Management Information System (MCMIS) a database for locating tractors and trailers that are licensed to operate in the state; it can serve as a sort of inventory for what might be available to either move or refrigerate volumes of food

Retail Vulnerabilities

- Many grocers do not know who their county emergency management directors or VOAD contacts are; county emergency managers are strongly encouraged to reach out to their local food retailers to close this gap
- Most retail stores and service stations are not generator-ready (without backup power they cannot maintain food supplies/provide fuel for local communities); follow-up discussions to include locating funding assistance or incentives to these retailers to install generator wiring
- Most grocers cannot operate cash registers and scanners without power, or safeguard against injury in an unlit facility
- Many grocers do not have information for how or where to donate food during emergencies; county emergency managers and VOAD outreach efforts could help to close this gap

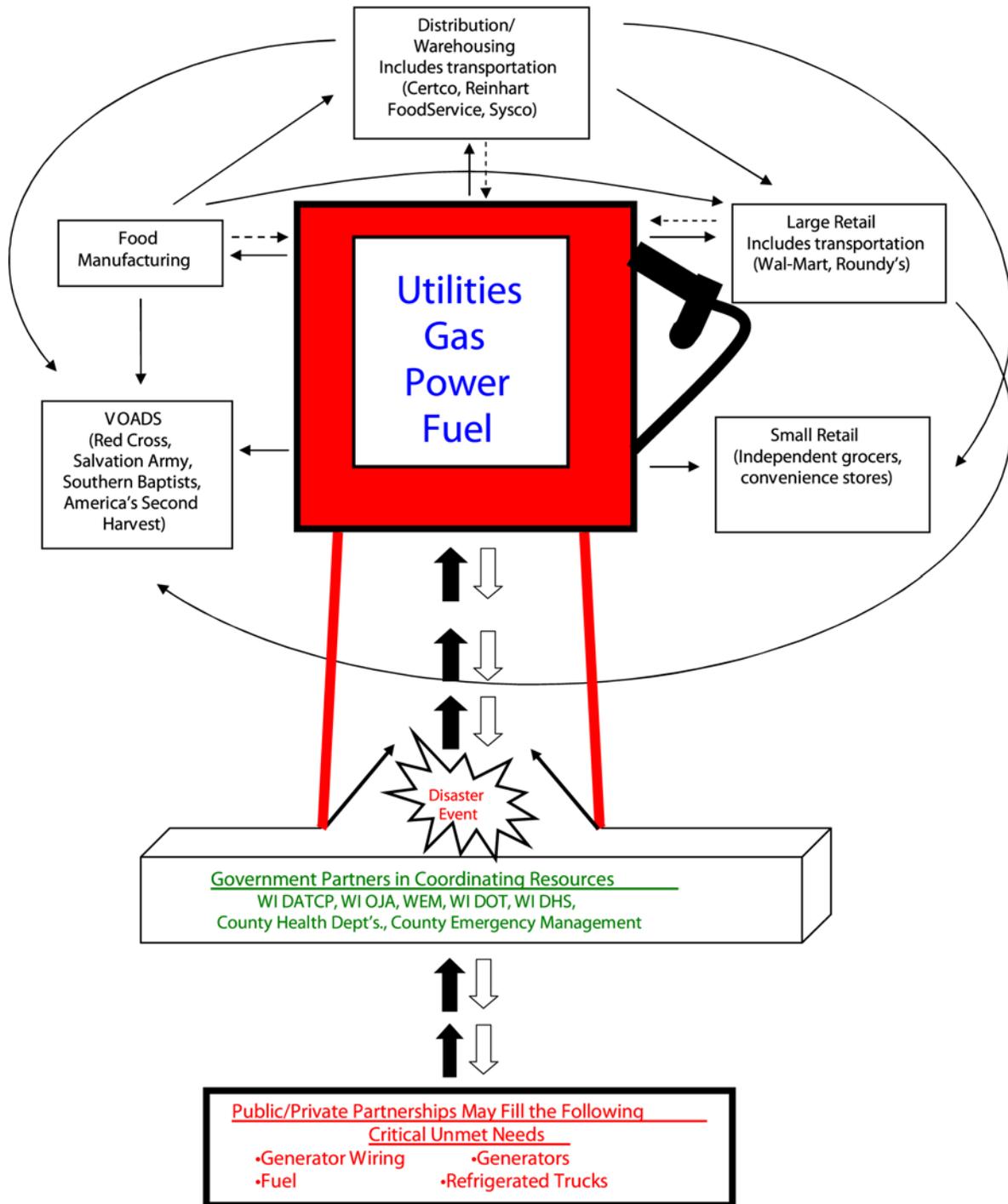
Transportation/Fuel and Power Vulnerabilities

- Fuel, transportation and backup power are interdependent
- Commercial fuel pumps cannot work without power
- With few exceptions, most gas stations lack backup generator power
- Backup fuel sources should be located locally with gravity-fed fueling systems
- Gas stations and first responders should have ready access to 5-gallon jerry cans and siphoning kits
- The majority of food distributors are dependent upon commercial fuel vendors
- Generator availability is limited/prioritization needed

III. Emergency Management Recommendations

- Establish contacts with local food and gas retailers, their emergency points of contact, and understand their capabilities and limitations for backup power and communication
- Establish partnerships with local food and gas retailers to prioritize food and fuel for first responders and relief efforts.
- Include food and gas retailers, distributors, utility companies, Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association members and radio stations in response plans and exercises
- Develop communication plans / educational materials to inform residents, industry and business about how they can access food and fuel resources

Emergency Food Distribution Stakeholder Relationships



This graphic shows the relationships between the various stakeholders involved in food distribution: manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, retail, and the volunteer organizations involved in mass feeding during emergencies. Power, fuel and transportation are interdependent, to the extent that gas pumps cannot operate without power; most food distributors rely upon commercial fuel supplies to transport food; and for long-term feeding, perishable food cannot be stored for any length of time without reliable power or backup generator and fuel (propane, diesel) supplies. It is important to note that the bulk of the critical resources identified by Focus Group participants are located in the private sector, and that during disasters government partners *may* coordinate access to these resources (through formal or informal agreements).

Stakeholder Capabilities and Responsibilities for Food Emergency Response

ORGANIZATION	GENERAL	RESOURCE CAPABILITIES
Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP)	Establishes and enforces rules governing the production, handling, display, sale, including retail sale, and distribution of foods that are needed to protect the public from the sale of adulterated or misbranded foods	Coordinating supporting agencies; communicating with industry, inspecting facilities (with some communities inspecting facilities via contract with DATCP)
Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM)	Determines the statewide emergency management plan providing for the safety of people and property; coordinate statewide response efforts	Communication; coordinating state-level resources for counties and regions
County Emergency Management	Coordination of resources and communications with local governments, networks, and volunteers	Communication; coordination
Department of Transportation (DOT)	Participates in Incident Command at the State and County Emergency Operations Centers; provides perimeter control and infrastructure security for roads and highways	Communication, coordination of state-level resources
DOT Statewide Traffic Operations Center (STOC)	Assesses roads, disseminates road conditions and re-routing information	Communication via 511 system, website and messaging signs on interstate and state highways
DOT Motor Carriers Division	Has access to the Motor Carrier Management Information System (MCMIS), tracks commercial movement of hazmat material	Provides outreach to shipping industry; maintains an inventory of licensed carriers operating in WI
DOT State Patrol	Supports the County and State Emergency Operations Centers with its incident mgmt. team, and works in partnership with DOT to perform reconnaissance and surveillance of road conditions; providing messaging outreach to shipping industry	Communication; coordination
County Sheriff	Supports the County Emergency Operations Center; works in partnership with State Patrol to perform surveillance and reporting of road conditions, traffic rerouting and perimeter control; if this involves a criminal act then County law enforcement would be lead investigatory role	Communication; some counties have fuel supplies but not SOP

ORGANIZATION	GENERAL	RESOURCE CAPABILITIES
<p>Department of Health Services (DHS)</p> <p>TEFAP Commodities Program</p>	<p>At the state agency level, DHS provides liaison staffing the State Emergency Operations Center; maintain a 24/7 on-call duty officer; PIO coordinates public health messaging</p> <p>DHS administers The Emergency Food Assistance Program, providing supplemental and surplus foods for low-income households; DHS subcontracts with DPI to allocate, warehouse and distribute available commodities on a monthly basis. Shipments are received on a monthly basis.</p>	<p>Communication</p> <p>Warehousing shared with DPI Commodities at three locations: Geneva Lakes Cold Storage, Darien (cold and dry warehousing; receives 39% of all TEFAP resources) Central Storage and Warehouse, Eau Claire (receives 36% of TEFAP resources) The Hunger Task Force, Milwaukee (receives 25% of TEFAP resources)</p>
<p>Department of Public Instruction Commodities Programs</p>	<p>DPI administers the National School Lunch Program (NSLP); the School Breakfast Program (SBP); Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) the Child and Adult Care Program (CACFP); and the After School Snack Program.</p>	<p>Warehousing shared with DHS Commodities located at:</p> <p>Geneva Lakes Cold Storage, Darien</p> <p>Central Storage and Warehouse, Eau Claire</p> <p>The Hunger Task Force, Milwaukee</p>
<p>County Departments of Public Health</p>	<p>Public health staff support County EOC; coordinates with VOAD groups in relief efforts; PIO communicates public health messaging</p>	<p>Communication; coordination; some inspection capabilities if under contract with DATCP</p>
<p>WI Department of Military Affairs (DMA)</p>	<p>Provides logistical and tactical assistance via formal request process through WEM; deployed by State EOC. Works closely with WEM.</p>	<p>Coordination, logistics and tactical support within 72-hrs of request; generators, fuel (12 storage tanks statewide), siphoning capabilities</p>
<p>American Red Cross Local Chapters</p>	<p>Staffs the State EOC; provides mass feeding, food distribution via emergency response vehicles and sheltering. Partners with Salvation Army, Southern Baptists and local VOAD groups.</p>	<p>ARC has 5 emergency response vehicles equipped with generators in-state, capable of serving 300 meals, and delivering 500-1000 prepared meals. Extensive agreements exist for access to fuel, generators, food and water</p>
<p>Salvation Army</p>	<p>Staffs the State EOC; provides mass sheltering, food preparation and feeding; partners with American Red Cross, Southern Baptists and many local VOADS</p>	<p>Salvation Army has mobile feeding units with generators; extensive agreements exist for access to fuel, generators, food and water</p>

<p>Southern Baptists Convention</p>	<p>Responds at the request of American Red Cross or Salvation Army; provides food preparation and mass feeding services, also provides mud-out, chainsaw and social service capabilities</p>	<p>1 mobile feeding unit in WI (located near Madison) capable of feeding 6000-8000 meals/day. Food distribution directly from feeding units or delivered via Red Cross emergency response vehicles</p>
<p>Feeding America (formerly America's Second Harvest)</p>	<p>National hunger relief charity distributing more than 11 million lbs. of food/year to 1,100 hunger relief agencies in the eastern half of WI.</p>	<p>Warehouses in Milwaukee and the Fox Valley. Cold and frozen storage capacity for 3,000,000 lbs. food; 1.5 million lbs non-perishables; fleet of 5 trailers, 1 box truck; partner with Schneider Trucking.</p>

ORGANIZATION	GENERAL	RESOURCE CAPABILITIES
<p>Certco Food Distributors</p>	<p>Distributes food throughout WI to independent food retailers with a full line of dry, frozen, canned and limited fresh food items. Under normal operations delivery turn-around is 4 -16 hours.</p>	<p>Located in Verona WI. Warehouse capacity 250,000 ft² including cold and frozen storage. Fleet size: 35 tractors, 55-60 trailers.</p>
<p>Reinhart FoodService</p>	<p>Institutional food distributor throughout WI with dry, canned, frozen and fresh foods. Receives and ships from three distribution centers in WI, Sunday-Friday. Owns multi-temperature fleet.</p>	<p>Three distribution centers: Oak Creek warehouse: 220,000 ft² (84,562 ft² dry; 29,416 ft² cooler 60,165 ft² freezer), Oak Creek fleet: 75 trailers Shawano warehouse: 128,000 ft² (62,712 ft² dry; 15,739 ft² cooler; 33,172 ft² freezer), Shawano fleet: 47 trailers LaCrosse warehouse: 124,000 ft² (55,420 ft² dry; 15,470 ft² cooler 33,850 ft² freezer), LaCrosse fleet: 47 trailers Owns fuel tanks with limited fuel supplies at each facility (no generator backup)</p>
<p>Sysco Foodservices Baraboo</p>	<p>Largest private food distributor in the US. Sysco Food Services of Baraboo serves institutions, restaurants and retail stores throughout WI with dry, canned, frozen and fresh foods. Owns a multi-temperature fleet.</p>	<p>Two distribution centers: Baraboo warehouse: 460,550 ft² Jackson warehouse: 400,000 ft² Fleet consists of 98 tractors and 114 trailers. Owns fuel tank, pump and generator. Has agreement with ARC Badger Chapter for emergency fuel access. Satellite communications with drivers</p>
<p>Kwik Trip</p>	<p>Wisconsin's largest convenience/gas retailer, with 220 stores statewide. Warehouse and production facilities located in LaCrosse. Owns a multi-temperature fleet.</p>	<p>LaCrosse Distribution center: 180,000 ft²; LaCrosse Ice Plant: 150,000 tons of ice/day (40,000 10-lb bags); Satellite production facilities include dairy, bakery and commissary; capable of producing large volumes of prepared foods for response efforts (i.e.: 20,000 sandwiches); Fleet size: approx. 100 tractor trailers. All new stores and some existing stores are wired for portable 80 kw generator and fuel system.</p>

ORGANIZATION	GENERAL	RESOURCE CAPABILITIES
Wal-Mart	Largest retailer in WI serving 58 supercenters, 25 discount stores, and 12 Sam's Clubs with full line of dry, canned, frozen and fresh foods. Owns vast multi-temperature fleet. Active role in all scales of emergency response.	Three Distribution Centers: Tomah: 873,000 ft ² Beaver Dam: 1.2 million ft ² Menomonie Newer facilities have solar powered lighting; most stores have generators, hand-held battery-operated scanners; on-site fuel sources located at distribution centers. National EOC at AK headquarters based on ESF structure; regional disaster center in IL can mobilize relief supplies to WI; local stores provide emergency supplies to local communities
Wisconsin Grocer's Association (WGA)	Professional association of food distributors and retailers; 356 independents (single-owner) and 110 corporate retailers (under the Piggly Wiggly, SuperValue, Cubbs and Roundy's retail brands). An effective conduit for communicating preparedness and connecting members to county emergency managers and VOADS.	Communication to members; establishing contacts for stakeholders at local level
Wisconsin Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association (WPMCA)	Professional association of 600 members at 2000 locations statewide. An effective conduit for communicating preparedness and connecting members to county emergency managers and VOADS.	Communication to members; establishing contacts for stakeholders at local level

Food Distribution Focus Group Participant List

Industry

Jennifer Badeau, Director of Regulatory Affairs
Wisconsin Petroleum Marketers & Convenience Store Association

Francis Esselman, Regional Reliability Manager
American Transmission Company

Nick George, President
Midwest Food Processors Association

Sharon Karlman, Corporate Vice President, Quality Assurance/Nutrition Services
Reinhardt FoodService

Michelle Kussow, Vice President, Government Affairs and Communication
Wisconsin Grocers Association

Betsy Kujat
American Transmission Company

Steve Loehr, V.P. Operations Support
Kwik Trip, Inc.

Matt Mathison, Vice President Technical Services
Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board

Jeff Maurer, Retail Grocer
Board Member, Wisconsin Grocer's Association

Lisa Nelson, Senior Manager Public Affairs
Wal-Mart Corporation

Joe Zietlow, Petroleum Procurement
Kwik Trip, Inc.

Volunteer Organizations

JK Strong
American Red Cross Badger Chapter

Terri Leece, Disaster Services Director
Salvation Army

Erika Zdroick, Food Resources Manager
America's Second Harvest

Brad O'Grosky, Disaster Relief Coordinator
Southern Baptists Convention

Wisconsin Dep't. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection:

Robin Schmidt, Agency Liaison
Jill Ball, Division of Food Safety
Christa Fisher, Exercise Coordinator
Kristin Gunther, Policy/Planning Analyst

Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Traci DeSalvo, Pandemic Planner, Public Health Preparedness Unit
Lisa Pentony, Influenza / Pandemic Preparedness Coordinator

Wisconsin Emergency Management:

Steve Haskell, Shawano County Emergency Management Director
Tanna McKeon, Green County Emergency Assistant Director
J. McLellan, Population Protection Planner, Dane County Emergency Management
Patrick O'Connor, Response Section Supervisor
Lois Ristow, WEM West Central Regional Director

Wisconsin National Guard

Captain Jason J. Crabb

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Paul Keltner, Bureau of Highway Operations
Joe Lacenski, COOP Incident and Pandemic Plans
Wes Voge, Bureau of Management Services
Sgt. Paul Wolfe, Division of State Patrol