

# Disaster Relief

## *Tips for Handling Flooded Soils*

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- Open all drainage ditches.
- Remove debris from fields and pastures. Look carefully for partly hidden objects that could injure livestock or damage machinery. Check hedge and fence rows carefully.
- To prevent severe soil compacting, avoid running trucks and heavy farm equipment over wet soils unless the vehicles have special flotation tires.
- Encourage the growth of cover crops. Any type of plant growth is effective in drying very wet soils.
- It is usually not necessary to remove silt deposits. After soils are dry enough to work, level and incorporate silt deposits into original topsoil, if practical.
- Apply animal manure and incorporate into soil. Check with your county Extension agent for recommended application rates.
- The fertility level of flooded soils will probably change over a period of time. Do not guess at requirements. Take soil samples to determine new fertility levels. Follow recommendations. Allow for nutrients supplied by applied animal manures. When sampling silted fields, make sure the samples represent the soil mix that will exist after deposited silt is mixed with the original topsoil. Soils flooded by surges from coastal storms may have salt problems. Check with your Extension agent about soil testing for sodium, salt-tolerant plants, and remedial actions if soil has been flooded with salt water.
- Deep tillage and subsoiling can be useful or harmful. Check with your county Extension agent for advice concerning deep tillage and subsoiling.

Revised by **Dr. Larry Oldham**, Extension Professor, Plant and Soil Sciences, from the Disaster Handbook – 1998 National Edition, University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences SP 2431.

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