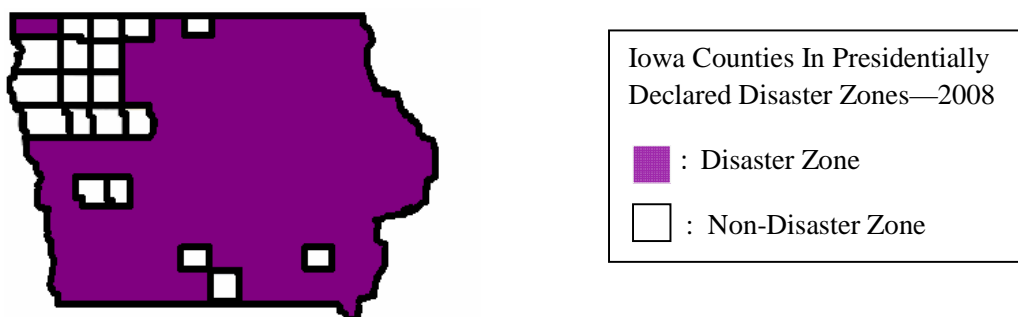


The Impact of the 2008 Iowa Floods on Livestock Sale Barns

This I-PRO Report examines the impact of the June 2008 flooding on business at livestock sale barns in Iowa. The information is based on interviews with several sale barn operators.

Methodology:

I-PRO surveyed ten livestock sale barns to determine the impact of the June 2008 flooding on businesses. Six of the sale barns were located in counties declared as disaster zones due to the summer flooding. The other four barns were located in counties outside of the declared flood zones. Below is a map detailing the counties that were disaster areas.¹



The interviews were conducted in mid-September via phone. The two initial questions asked were:

- 1.) Did your facilities sustain any physical damage, if so could you describe the extent of it?
- 2.) Has the flooding impacted the volume of your business?

Follow up questions were asked to extract a more specific response regarding the degree and nature of the floods' impact.

Findings:

SHORT-TERM IMPACT

¹ "Iowa Flood of 2008." [Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/iowa_flood_of_2008). 22 Oct. 2008. 25 Oct. 2008 <http://http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/iowa_flood_of_2008>.

Livestock barn operators both in and out of the flood affected areas reported no significant negative short term impact on business due to the flooding. In fact, five of the barns in the disaster areas reported an increase in livestock sales in the weeks immediately preceding and following the floods compared to sales at the same time in past years. They attributed this increase to farmers selling off animals in anticipation of the coming floods and the uncertainty of the floods on their stocks and livestock prices generally.

LONG-TERM PROJECTED IMPACT

Several auction houses did express anxiety about business in the months ahead. Specifically, there was concern that flood damage to many feed crop fields may lead to significant increases in the cost of feed grain. According to several sale barn operators, this, in turn, has caused some farmers to sell livestock they would have normally kept for reproduction. This may result in fewer livestock going to market next year, resulting in less business for sale barns.

This report was prepared in September, 2008 by the Iowa Policy Research Organization (IPRO), a non-partisan public policy undergraduate research group at the University of Iowa. For additional research on this or other issues, please visit our website at <http://www.uiowa.edu/~ipro>.