

Crooked Creek Farms and Hurricane Michael

Instructor's Guide

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Keywords:	herd health; herd management; brood/stocker cattle; leadership; natural disaster; planning
Student Learning Objectives:	<p>Upon completion of this case study, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe issues related to managing a beef cattle operation during and after a natural disaster. • Discuss leadership issues related to managing a beef cattle operation after being impacted by a natural disaster. • Develop an emergency management plan for Crooked Creek Farms. • Identify examples of the resiliency of those within the agricultural industry whom a natural disaster has impacted.
Estimated Time:	One week of instructional time, equating to (2) 50-minute classes and (1) 120-minute class, along with out of class time for researching and homework.
Background:	<p>Crooked Creek Farms, owned and operated by Steve (Beaver) Yoder, is a stocker cattle and brood cow farm located in Altha, Florida, which is about 50 miles from Panama City. Between 1995 and 2013, Beaver Yoder transitioned from dairy farming into operating 500 acres of row crops and 800 acres of grazing land for his 900 head of beef cattle. More recently he has switched to solely focusing on running cow/calf pairs, preconditioned, and stocker beef cattle on grazing land he contracts with other area farmers and ranchers. He now purchases un-weaned and weaned calves and older cattle to precondition in the fall, grazes them on harvested row crop and re-seeded winter forage fields throughout the winter until mid-spring, when he will sell those cattle and purchase again in the summer.</p> <p>Things were going well for Yoder until the fall of 2018 brought in a Category 5 hurricane. Hurricane Michael formed October 7, 2018 and made landfall on October 10th. The eye of the hurricane passed directly over Panama City and the Panhandle, accompanied by 160 mph winds, 9–14-foot storm surges, significant damage to the shorelines, power outages, and \$25 billion in damages. Michael was still a Category 4 by the time it had reached the Alabama/Georgia state line and did not downgrade to a tropical storm until the middle of Georgia. Beaver Yoder’s operation suffered structural damages, long-term animal health impacts, and 21 days of power outages. After working through the cleanup and continuing the rebuilding process, Beaver Yoder and his family will, eventually, recover from this natural disaster and true test of strength and dedication.</p>

	<p>In this case study, students will critically think through issues related to managing a beef cattle operation, during and after, a natural disaster. Students will also be asked to think about how leadership skills were or could have been beneficial to the rebuilding and recovery process and how an emergency management plan could be implemented in the event of another hurricane or natural disaster.</p>
<p>Using this Case Study:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of Case Study: Discussion-based format – students will engage with the case study through the main character, Beaver Yoder, owner/operator of Crooked Creek Farms. • Instructional Format: Problem-based learning – students will be asked to think through the situation Beaver Yoder found himself in; specifically, how he handled the situation and dealt with it with leadership skills or how the absence of those skills affected the recovery process. • This case study will be presented in a face-to-face environment or can easily be modified to fit the needs of an online digital format. Paper-based and multi-media materials have been developed for the presentation of this case study. • There are videos and photos incorporated throughout the case study to provide first-hand information on Crooked Creek Farms. • This case study was developed for students to cooperatively work in groups of 3–5. This case study can also be modified to provide an individualistic learning experience. • There may be information students will need to independently obtain and research to accurately formulate a solution for this case study.
<p>Leadership Frames:</p>	<p>Based on the four-frames of Bolman and Deal’s (2013) model for analyzing leadership instances encountered by individual citizens and organizations, this case study will discuss the four frames of leadership and encourage students to incorporate the four into their solution to the case study’s issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The symbolic frame focuses on culture, values, and symbols representative of the organization. How did the hurricane influence Crooked Creek’s values and mission? How could those changes influence their decision-making process? • The political frame focuses on internal and external organizational relationships. Students should be able to recognize how industry-specific organizations aided in the recovery process, i.e. Cattlemen’s Association. • The human resources frame focuses on training and skill development. Students will be able to identify if there were or could have been any beneficial training implemented to better manage preparation and clean-up after a severe weather event. Did cattle develop any different diseases or need treatments that might require caretakers to have specific training or instructions?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The structural frame focuses on an organization’s organization. Students should identify if there are structural changes needed within Crooked Creek Farms to maintain profitability while still in recovery.
Suggested Teaching Outline:	<p>Day 1 Delivery Format: 50-minutes Face-to-Face Lecture, Videos, & Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Study Overview • Background <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ History ○ Contractual grazing/Panhandle grazing • Discussion – What might be some challenges or benefits to grazing beef cattle in the Panhandle compared to other forms of livestock? • Homework – Describe how Crooked Creek Farms’ contractual grazing arrangements with row croppers works. What are some advantages and disadvantages to this type of arrangement? <p>Day 2 Delivery Format: 50-minutes Face-to-Face Lecture, Videos, & Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Hurricane Michael and the resulting damage and destruction to the Panhandle/Panama City area • Damage specific to Crooked Creek Farms • Overview of Leadership Frames • Discussion – What leadership challenges do you think Beaver Yoder experienced before, during, and after the hurricane? • Homework – Determine what the day-to-day animal care responsibilities are for a grazing beef farm and what supplies might be necessary for daily operation, care, and management. <p>Day 3 Delivery Format: 120-minutes; short lecture to introduce problem; group work, facilitator moves from group to group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the problem – Crooked Creek Farms would like your assistance to create an emergency preparedness/management plan. You should consider the needs of the livestock and the individuals caring for them, along with their own families and homes. Provide three recommended changes you would implement for the next natural disaster. • Break students into groups of 3–5 to create a proposal for Beaver Yoder of Crooked Creek Farms by addressing the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the requirements for successfully grazing beef cattle in the Florida Panhandle? ▪ How would your proposal be different if this were an equine or dairy farm?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal care/feed/water • Containment/fencing/buildings • Electricity/generators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Symbolic Frame Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How is being a rancher symbolic? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ag is good to ag/farmers rallying around each other ▪ How do you think cultural views such as pride and independence impacted his decision-making abilities and resilience? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amish culture & values ▪ Do you think Beaver values his family's history with the farm? ▪ How do you think Beaver's relationship with everyone, not only close friends and family, impacted their response and recovery? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lick tubs, salt blocks, pallets of water, fencing/building supplies being donated ○ Political Frame Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How did the state and department of agriculture help in the recovery? ▪ Who had the power in this situation? Who or what political powers made decisions? ▪ What roles did FEMA and FSA play in preparation and recovery/rebuild processes? ○ Human Resources Frame Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are there trainings that could have been beneficial for Crooked Creek Farms? ▪ How do you think the inability to make decisions in the 'heat of the moment' impacted the experience? ▪ Can you identify what resources were made available to Beaver prior to and post event? ○ Structural Frame Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What were some communication channels utilized? Were there channels missing or that could have been relayed differently? ▪ What were some difficulties that Beaver, and others faced when working with policies for disaster aid? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the responses, each group should complete an emergency management plan for Crooked Creek Farms.
Assessment:	The submitted emergency management plans and students will be assessed based upon the rubric that has been provided for this case study.

Resources Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Videos –• Photos –• NOAA Hurricane Michael tracking graphic• Location of Crooked Creek Farms pastures and farmstead• Bolman and Deal’s Four-Frame Leadership Model
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Individual Situation/Experiences

Beaver’s situation was unique because he did not have employees; it was only family. However, it was still a concern that he needed to ensure that they were taken care of. The dilemma he faced was the promises made by FEMA and the local authorities. They promised that they would be there to help farmers recover and rebuild from the hurricane. However, once the news media moved on, so did the attention from the authorities. The locals were forced to clean up the highway and the main roads in and out of town within their county themselves, without the help of government vehicles and highway departments.

Strong/Compelling Statements Used in Interview:

- It’s just grit.
- The better an operation is before a disaster, the better they will be afterwards.
- We can do better together than we can do apart.
- Minimize risk.
- Cull heavy to focus on the best.
- There has to be some diversity in order to survive.
- Even after the buildings are repaired/replaced/rebuilt the scars that the trees bear will forever be a reminder of what happened. The youth pass by those scars everyday on their way to and from school, some were not even alive when Michael went through but see the damages and just don’t understand.

<https://www.al.com/hurricane/2019/10/hurricane-michael-anniversary-a-look-back-at-a-category-5-monster.html>

