

# **Crisis in the Agriculture Realm**

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# Who am I?

- Communications Manager, BC Dairy Association.



# What is a crisis?

## Definition of a crisis:

### *noun*

a time of intense difficulty, trouble, or danger. "the current economic crisis"  
synonyms: emergency, disaster, catastrophe, calamity; more.

a time when a difficult or important decision must be made.  
"a crisis point in history"

- synonyms: critical point, turning point, crossroads, watershed, moment of truth, zero hour, point of no return, doomsday
- the turning point of a disease when an important change takes place, indicating recovery or death.



How has this changed amidst modern consumer concerns?



# Scouting motto.. “be prepared”.

- While you can't predict a specific crisis cropping up, what you can do is build a responsive and flexible internal infrastructure that will allow your organization to quickly and efficiently navigate unforeseen issues.



# Public Relations.

- Amidst most crisis issues, Public Relations is an outward priority. This ensures consumers have an informed and positive understanding of your organization.



# Public Relations

- A crisis is a subset of public relations communication that protects and defends an organization when faced with a public challenge to its reputation.



- Chilliwack Cattle Sales - June 2014, public outcry, immediate reaction needed.





Mitigated situation by implementing a risk communication and crisis management plan.

- Press releases.
- Website video update's from Chairman.
- Newspaper, radio and TV interviews.
- Ongoing updates with key industry stakeholder groups.

# What steps can you take?

- Don't wait for a crisis to hit your industry before you establish response protocols.

- Develop an internal structure for reacting to issues. Establish a chain of communication. Set internal tasks. Who is helming the response? Who establishes speaking points and interacts with the media? Who will be the physical representative to media? If an issue takes place, who needs to be notified and in what order?
- Develop a list of key contacts (listed with their contact information) which you can use as a quick reference in the event of an issue. This reference document will save critical time when navigating an issue.
- Assure that the internal person tasked with media interaction is properly media trained and able to handle themselves amidst media pressure.

# Step 1: Understanding your risk

- You cannot defend something you are uninformed about.
- Communicate with all potential parties involved (SPCA, Ministry of AG, Producer in question, Processor groups, national industry body).

## Step 2: Identify your audience

- Who needs information to develop an educated opinion about this issue (consumers, producers, SPCA, media).
- Different audiences need different information.

## **Step 3: Who will be your spokespeople?**

- Who is going to be the face of this risk to each audience.
- Each spokesperson has to be informed on the nature of their audience
- Spokespeople have to appeal to their audience in a transparent and relatable manner.
- Supporting these spokespeople through scenario planning.

# Step 4: Execution of your plan

- Be prepared for the unexpected.
- Show genuine concern because it is an issue
- Demonstrate an eagerness to implement meaningful change.
- Offer a landing spot for concern and frustration.

# How to react to different crisis levels

- Nothing is the same and everything has the potential to blow up.
- Be prepared at all time, develop a crisis management plan.
- Know your risks.
- Try to catch things ahead of time.
- Follow up so it doesn't happen again.



- The key to strong crisis and issue management is internal advance planning to create a structure for response.
- Secondly, a flexible approach is needed so that this structure can be adapted for response to any issue.

Questions.