



## CRISIS PLAN

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# ORGANIZATION PROFILE



Founded in 1954 in Pella, Iowa, Bannerfield Farms began as a family-owned butcher shop. Today, we're a leading sausage brand, committed to quality, innovation, and empowering our community. Bannerfield Farms is privately-owned and employs 2,000 associates.

Bannerfield Farms is a proud sponsor of:



**"Other companies use their people to build a business, but at Bannerfield Farms, we use our business to build our people"**  
**-Ralph Hutchins**

## **Our Products:**

Bratwurst  
Italian Sausage  
Breakfast Sausage  
Kielbasa  
Snack Sausages  
Grillers  
Meatballs

## **Our Manufacturing Facilities:**

Pella, Iowa  
Fort Dodge, Iowa  
Holton, KS  
Momence, IL  
Hinesberg, VT

Bannerfield operates with a vision of fostering a culture of integrity and community engagement among its employees and stakeholders.

# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this crisis plan is to provide a structured approach to managing unexpected events that may impact Bannerfield Farm's operations, reputation, or stakeholder relationships. The following plan is to identify potential crises for the company and establish protocols to mitigate their impact, while maintaining Bannerfield Farms' reputation and keeping the trust of stakeholders. By identifying potential risks and establishing communication strategies, this crisis plan aims to protect Bannerfield Farm's integrity, maintain consumer trust, and continue business operations in the midst of a crisis.

## OWNERSHIP AND DISTRIBUTION

Those responsible for updating and managing the crisis plan will be the CMT (Crisis Management Team).

The crisis plan should be distributed to:

- CMT (Crisis Management Team)
- Department heads
- Executive leadership (CEO, CFO)
- Legal team
- Communications team
- Public Relations team

The crisis plan should be reviewed and updated:

- Once a year, for a comprehensive review.
- After a crisis, to understand what happened, what worked and what didn't.
- In case there is an element that could change Bannerfield business operations, like launching a new product, opening a factory or changing a supplier, for example.

**DATE CREATED: NOVEMBER 19TH, 2024**

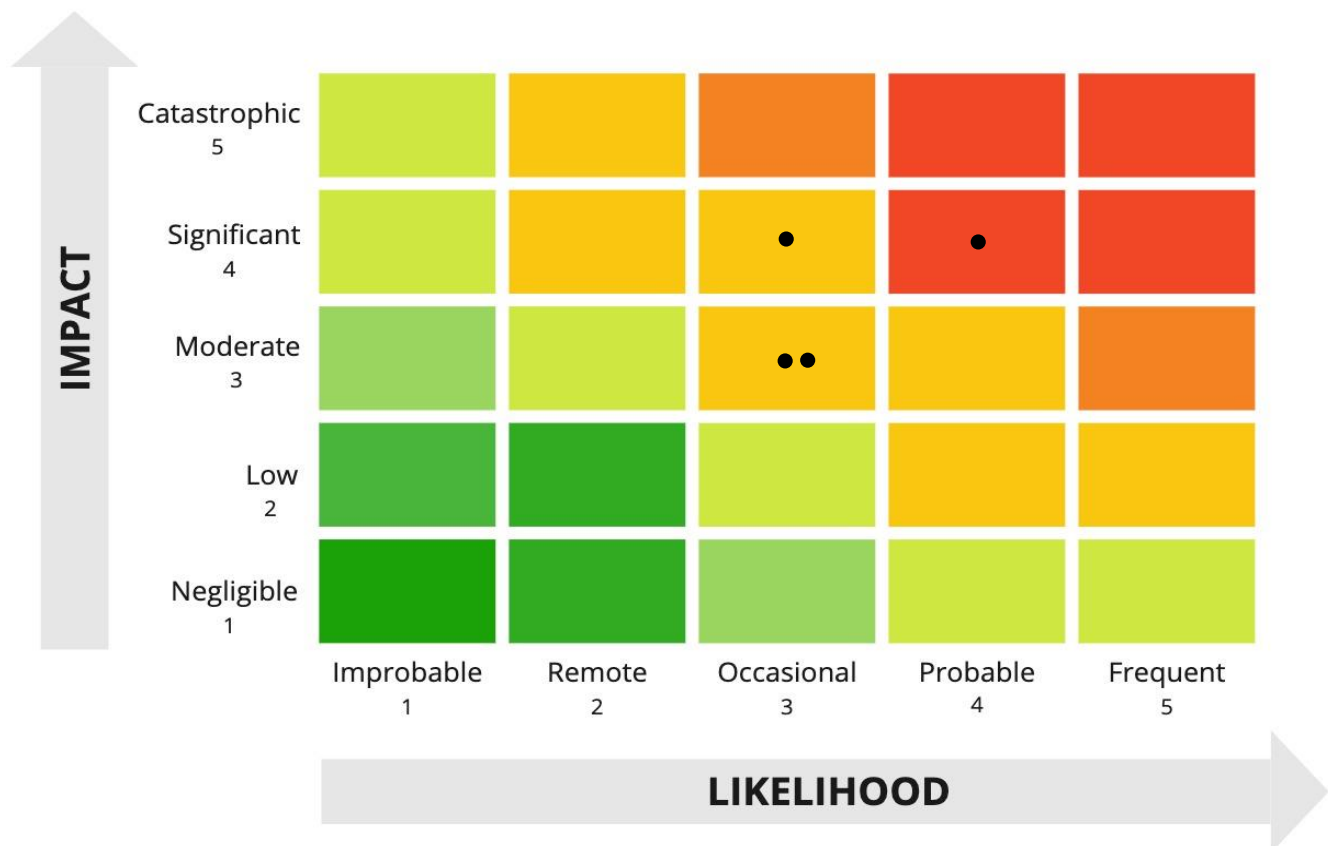
## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

*“We here at Bannerfield have a moral responsibility to create and maintain an environment that requires each member to fully develop their God-given talents and help others to do the same. We achieve this by living the Bannerfield Way.”*  
-Ronald Hutchins, Former CEO

- **Safety Above All:** The safety of our customers and associates are paramount. No aspect of business takes priority over human life.
- **Foster Community Trust:** Bannerfield Farms' bond with our community is invaluable. We are committed to honest communication with all stakeholders, making sure to provide accurate information and updates throughout crises.
- **Own Every Action:** Bannerfield Farms is committed to taking full responsibility for their actions and decisions during a crisis, acknowledging mistakes and implementing corrective measures.
- **Lead with Compassion:** Bannerfield Farms approaches crises with humanity, validating the concerns of affected consumers or communities and responding with compassion in communications and actions.

# BROAD AREAS OF RISK FOR BANNERFIELD FARMS

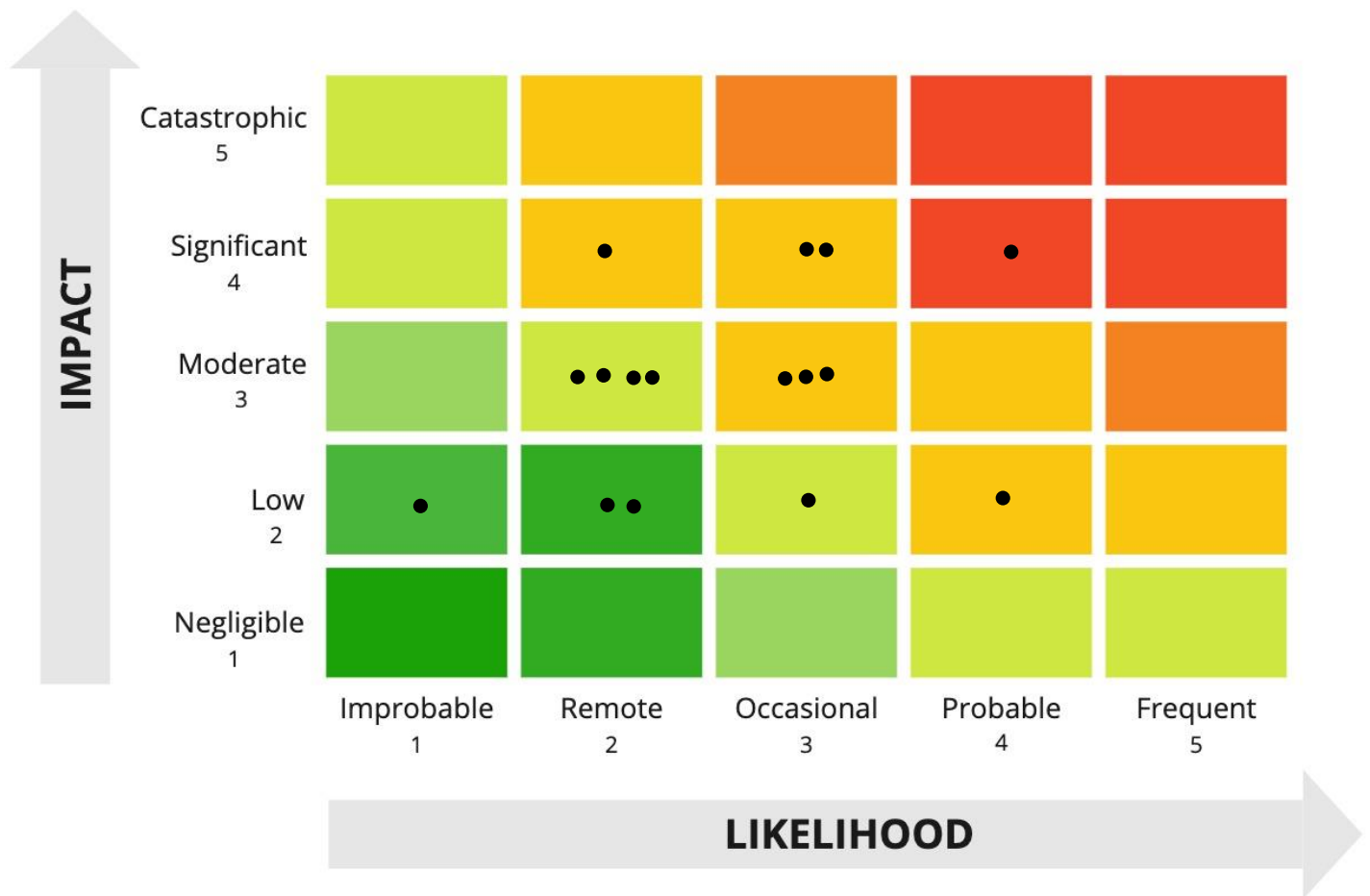
Cluster	Likelihood	Impact
Operational & Supply Chain	4	4
Workplace & Associate Safety	3	3
Compliance & Regulatory	3	4
Reputational Risks	3	3



# INDIVIDUAL AREAS OF RISK FOR BANNERFIELD FARMS

Individual Areas of Risk	Likelihood	Impact
Equipment Failure	4	2
Natural Disasters	4	4
Quality Control Issues	3	3
Supply Shortage Due to Disease	3	4
Equipment and Operational Hazards	3	3
Inadequate Workforce Training	2	3
Inadequate Emergency Preparedness	2	4
Conflicts Between Associates	1	2
Food Safety Violations	3	4
Environmental Regulations	3	3
OHSA and Union Safety Standards	2	3
Labeling and Advertising Issues	2	2
Partnership Misconduct	3	2
Community Relations	2	3
Associate Behavior	2	2
Product Quality Issues	2	3

# INDIVIDUAL AREAS OF RISK FOR BANNERFIELD FARMS



## Highest Risks for Bannerfield Farms

Natural disaster causing a supply chain disruption.

Disease among suppliers causing a supply chain disruption.

Food safety violations resulting in a product recall.

# BANNERFIELD FARMS' STAKEHOLDERS

Internal Stakeholders	External Stakeholders
<b>PRIMARY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Employees</b> Staff Production Workers, Management</li> <li>• <b>Leadership team</b> CEO CFO Other executives</li> </ul>	<b>PRIMARY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Customers - Consumers</b></li> <li>• <b>Suppliers</b></li> <li>• <b>Regulatory Entities</b> USDA, FDA</li> </ul>
<b>SECONDARY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Owners and Shareholders</b></li> <li>• <b>Department Managers</b> Sales Human Resources Communications Public Relations</li> </ul>	<b>SECONDARY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community</b> Residents of Pella, Iowa, and Surrounding Areas</li> <li>• <b>Media</b> Local and National News Outlets</li> <li>• <b>Health and Safety Advocates</b> PETA, Consumer Safety Organizations</li> </ul>



## Crisis Levels

### LEVEL 1: Minor Disruption - Low Threat

**Impact:** In a Level 1 crisis, the scale is limited to a small group of consumers or a single department or facility, with minimal impact on overall operations, finances, or reputation, and a low risk of escalation.

**Visibility:** Visibility remains low, attracting little to no media or public attention, allowing for resolution primarily within internal teams. Social media managers monitor online activity closely, ensuring that social media impressions stay within 10% of the typical range. Communication is limited to only essential parties, as the situation is generally manageable without broader outreach.

### Examples of

### Level 1

Routine product complaints, such as packaging defects.

Isolated quality control issues, such as spoiled products.

Minor operational delay, such as a labor shortage resulting in slowed production.

### Examples of

### Level 2

Compliance warnings from FDA for minor food safety violation, such as labeling issues, that are easy to fix.

Large number of product complaints around one specific product and/or sku number, with no risk of illness or death.

Operational delay that expands to a region and causes frustration but can be resolved in a timely manner (7-10 business days).

### LEVEL 2: Rising Threat - Moderate Threat

**Impact:** In a Level 2 crisis, the scale is expanded to affect a specific region, product line, or customer group, with moderate impact on operations or reputation and a higher risk of escalation.

**Visibility:** Visibility increases, drawing moderate media attention and social media engagement, with impressions between 10% and 20% of the typical range. The Crisis Management Team (CMT) is notified, and communication expands to key stakeholders. The response is managed by internal teams, with holding statements prepared and monitoring of socials to prevent further escalation.

# IDENTIFYING CRISES LEVELS

## Examples of

Nationwide product recall due to contamination, such as a listeria outbreak, affecting a specific product or factory. Contained to a single region.

Significant regulatory fines or compliance violations that attract public attention and disrupt operations but are not critical enough to threaten the company's survival.

## Level 3

### LEVEL 3: Significant Incident - High Threat

**Impact:** A Level 3 crisis involves a broad, high-impact issue that affects multiple regions, major product lines, or a large customer base.

**Visibility:** The situation poses a significant threat to Bannerfield Farm's reputation or operations and is likely to attract widespread public and media attention. Social media impressions may exceed 30% of the typical range, amplifying the crisis's visibility.

### LEVEL 4: Major Crisis - Severe Threat

**Impact:** A Level 4 crisis represents a severe, widespread event with nationwide or international impact that threatens the core business operations, the communities surrounding Bannerfield Farms factories and consumer safety on a large scale. It can lead to critical damage to the brand's reputation, major financial losses, and significant legal ramifications.

**Visibility:** The crisis attracts intense media attention and global social media coverage, creating high stakeholder scrutiny. Immediate, coordinated action is required to manage the crisis. This level demands full activation of the Crisis Management Team (CMT) and communication efforts across all channels. Media impressions may exceed 50% of typical range.

## Examples of

## Level 4

Massive global recall due to a widespread contamination with a highly dangerous pathogen like listeria, causing multiple deaths and illnesses across several countries, leading to severe public health concerns and legal ramifications.

International scandal involving the discovery of systemic abuse or inhumane treatment of animals in meat production facilities, sparking global outrage, protests, and calls for boycotts.

Technical error accident in which an associate is severely injured or dies within the workplace.

# CLASSIFICATION GUIDE

## 1. Impact on health and safety of associates or consumers

**Level 1:** Little to no impact on health and safety

**Level 2:** Moderate threat in a contained city or region

**Level 3:** threat to health and safety in multiple regions/cities

**Level 4:** Could be life-threatening

## 2. Impact on ability to conduct business

**Level 1:** Little to no impact, business continues as usual

**Level 2:** Little impact, able to restore normal operations within 1-6 business days

**Level 3:** Moderate impact, able to restore normal operations within 7-10 business days

**Level 4:** Significant impact, difficult to restore normal operations, 10+ business days

## 3. Impact on Bannerfield Farm's reputation

**Level 1:** limited short-term impact, visibility is low and contained

**Level 2:** moderate media/social coverage, doesn't extend beyond the region

**Level 3:** notable media/social coverage that extends through multiple regions, not national yet

**Level 4:** significant long-term impact, national media coverage, trending

# CRISIS CLASSIFICATION CHECKLIST

## Level 1

- ☐ No Injuries
- ☐ Minor operational impact (if any)
- ☐ No significant property damage or inventory loss
- ☐ Minimal or no media attention (media impressions stay within 10% of average)
- ☐ Low reputational risk
- ☐ Issue is fully controllable within regular operations

## Level 2

- ☐ Minor injuries (first-aid level treatment)
- ☐ Moderate operational impact (operations can resume with adjustments, adjustments last for 1-5 days)
- ☐ Limited property damage or inventory loss
- ☐ Localized media attention (media impressions exceed 10% of average impressions, but stay below 30%)
- ☐ Moderate reputational risk
- ☐ May need involvement of external resources to solve issue

## Level 3

- ☐ Multiple injuries (non-life-threatening)
- ☐ Significant operational disruption, including delays or suspension of production for 5-10 days.
- ☐ Noticable property damage or inventory loss with clear financial impact
- ☐ Widespread media coverage expanding to regional or mid major national outlets (media impressions exceed 30% of average impressions but stay below 60%.
- ☐ Moderate to high reputational risk, with targeted stakeholder communication necessary
- ☐ Collaboration with multiple external entities, such as emergency responders or insurance companies.

## Level 4

- ☐ Serious injuries or fatalities, requiring extensive medical response and support for affected individuals.
- ☐ Major operational disruption, including halting operations for 10+ days.
- ☐ Severe property damage or destruction of critical assets, with significant financial impact.
- ☐ National media coverage (media impressions exceed 60% of average impressions)
- ☐ High reputational risk, with potential long-term effects on brand trust and perception.
- ☐ Extensive support from external agencies (first responders, FDA, contractors, etc)

# CLASSIFICATION GUIDE EXAMPLES

Impact	Level 1: Low Threat Ex.	Level 2: Moderate Threat Ex.	Level 3: Significant Threat Ex.	Level 4: Severe Crisis Ex.
<b>Impact on health and safety of members or consumers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A minor swine flu outbreak disrupts pork production in a single Canadian facility.</li> <li>No health risks as the flu is not known to be transmittable to humans.</li> <li>Media coverage is minimal, and the issue is resolved quickly through alternative suppliers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The outbreak affects several farms in a single region, causing broader pork shortages.</li> <li>No health issues reported, but public perception begins to erode as stores face shortages.</li> <li>Media coverage is localized but is gaining attention on social media due to public concern about food safety.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The swine flu outbreak spreads to multiple farming regions in Canada, leading to widespread pork shortages and public concern.</li> <li>National media coverage emerges, focusing on the shortage and potential food safety risks.</li> <li>Moderate call center traffic. No health issues or injury reported yet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The swine flu mutates into a variant of a pathogen strain transmissible to humans, causing a national health crisis.</li> <li>Contaminated pork causes severe illnesses and fatalities in multiple regions</li> <li>Serious health issues, injury and/or death reported.</li> <li>Significant, sustained social, traditional, national, and international media coverage highlights the company's role in managing the outbreak</li> <li>Severe financial and reputational losses, with lawsuits and long-term brand damage. The crisis becomes life-threatening, requiring a public health response.</li> </ul>
<b>Impact on ability to conduct business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A minor accident (sprained wrist) on the production floor results in a non-serious employee injury</li> <li>The injured employee receives on-site first aid or a quick trip to the clinic and returns to work shortly after.</li> <li>Resolved within the day or resolves itself.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A production accident causes a moderate employee injury (a broken limb), requiring hospitalization and triggering an OSHA investigation.</li> <li>The accident leads to temporary production delays in the specific facility due to safety investigations and minor changes to equipment or procedures.</li> <li>Media coverage is local and limited to niche labor safety outlets and community news.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A serious production accident results in multiple employee injuries due to faulty equipment, triggering an OSHA inspection across multiple facilities.</li> <li>Significant operational disruptions across multiple locations as equipment is inspected or replaced. Public and internal pressure grows for leadership accountability.</li> <li>Media and social media coverage escalate nationally, focusing on workplace safety violations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A catastrophic production accident leads to multiple fatalities and serious injuries, sparking a nationwide OSHA investigation.</li> <li>National and international media extensively cover the tragedy, calling the company's safety standards into question.</li> <li>Severe financial losses from lawsuits and penalties, long-term reputational damage, and possible facility closures. The crisis fundamentally threatens the company's future.</li> <li>No signs of recovery in the short-term.</li> </ul>
<b>Impact on corporate reputation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A dissatisfied customer posts a negative review about slow customer service on a personal social media account.</li> <li>No widespread attention or engagement occurs, and the issue is resolved through a simple apology or compensation.</li> <li>No external awareness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An influencer with a moderate following shares a critique of Bannerfield Farm's marketing campaign, accusing it of being tone-deaf to a specific cultural or regional context.</li> <li>The post gains local or niche traction, with some negative comments and shares within a specific region or community.</li> <li>Media coverage remains minimal but begins to surface on smaller news outlets or blogs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A viral video from a high-profile influencer accuses Bannerfield Farms of false advertising or unethical practices (e.g., claims about product ingredients being misleading).</li> <li>The backlash spreads nationally, fueled by retweets, shares, and viral hashtags. traditional media outlets pick up the story, amplifying public scrutiny.</li> <li>trust in the brand erodes across multiple regions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A social media campaign accuses Bannerfield Farms of a severe ethical violation (using harmful labor practices and unsafe materials in products), leading to widespread outrage.</li> <li>The story becomes a global issue, with sustained coverage on social media and major news outlets.</li> <li>Videos show the practices, outraging the public.</li> <li>Activist groups and influential personalities amplify the backlash, calling for boycotts.</li> </ul>

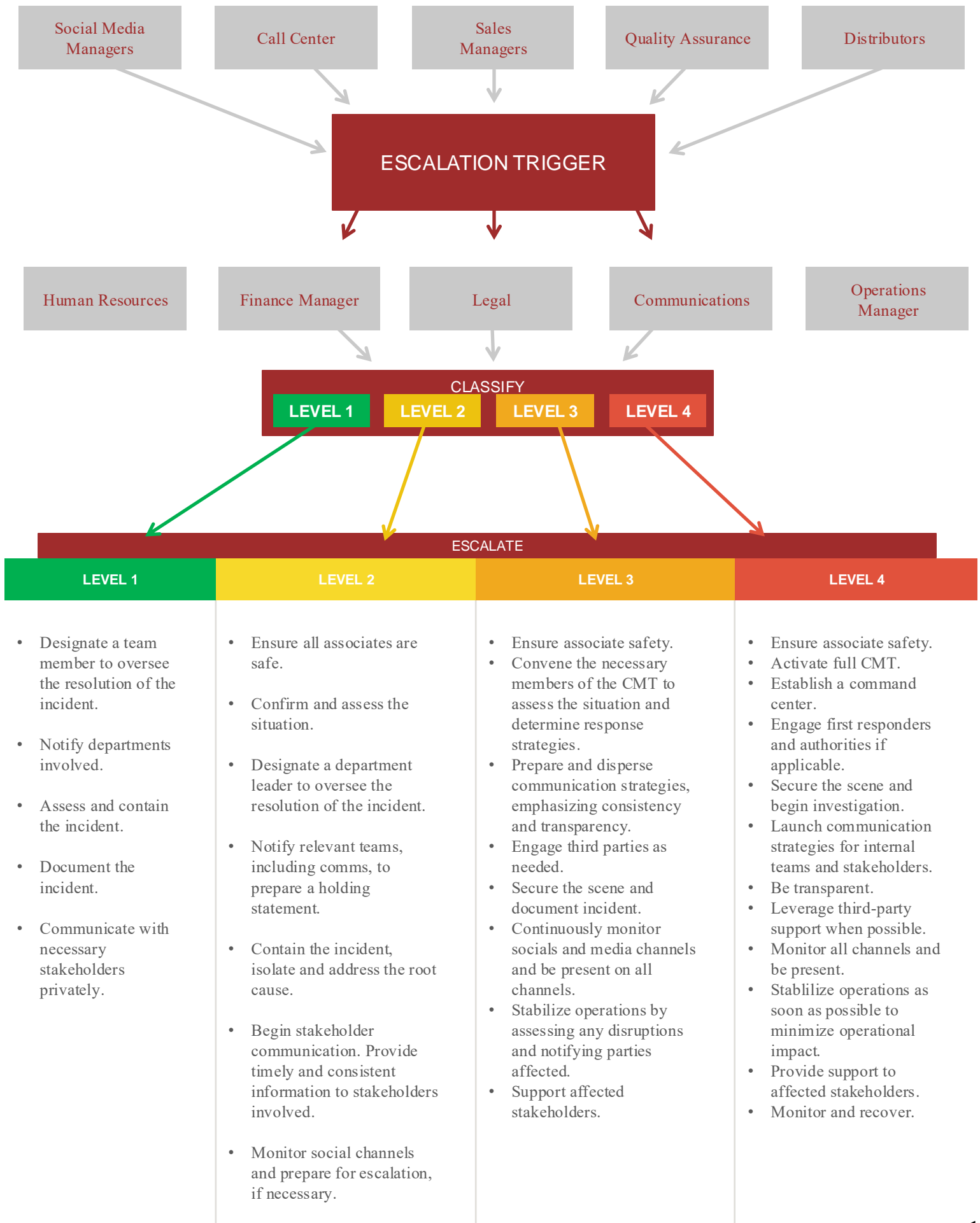
## ACTIONS AT EACH LEVEL

LEVEL 1: Low Threat	LEVEL 2: Moderate Threat	LEVEL 3: Significant Issue	LEVEL 4: Severe Crisis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign responsibility to relevant department.</li> <li>Document the situation for records, include timeline, key details and relevant parties.</li> <li>Implement a straightforward, low-resource solution to contain and resolve the issue.</li> <li>Monitor for escalation.</li> <li>Confirm there are no lasting effects on Bannerfield Farms' reputation or operations.</li> <li>Follow up and close out.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alert the CMT and relevant department heads. The full CMT is not needed, only those in related departments.</li> <li>Assess and document the scope of the issue.</li> <li>Communicate with affected stakeholders, be present, provide instructional information, as well as adjusting information.</li> <li>Collaborate with socials to track visibility.</li> <li>Prepare holding statements and share the holding statements across the affected departments to ensure consistent and clear messaging.</li> <li>Frequently monitor situation, requesting regular updates from party who identified the issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officially convene the CMT and discuss issue via call with subject matter experts and relevant department heads.</li> <li>Assign specific roles and responsibilities, suggestions for these roles can be found below.</li> <li>Assess scope and chance of escalation. Document all aspects of crisis, including regions affected and impact on product.</li> <li>Draft holding statements and use CMT to edit, ensuring consistent messaging. Be transparent and include instructional information and adjusting information for associates and other key stakeholders.</li> <li>Use multi-channel communication strategy to increase reach. Be present on all platforms.</li> <li>If applicable, notify regulatory agencies.</li> <li>Implement corrective actions. If the situation involves product flaw or safety issue, initiate recalls or halt production, situation dependent.</li> <li>Frequently monitor situation and request regular updates from each member of CMT on their assigned role.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officially convene the CMT and Bannerfield Farm's leadership in a dedicated command center in Pella, IA if possible.</li> <li>Analyze the scope of impact, regions affected, potential regulatory issues, and stakeholders affected.</li> <li>If product safety is compromised, initiate recalls, plant shutdowns, or distribution halts immediately.</li> <li>Reach out individually to affected customers, suppliers, partners, and regulatory agencies. Offer a dedicated support line or online resources for real-time assistance. Provide instructional information as well as adjusting information.</li> <li>Assign media trained, primary spokespeople for each channel and develop high-priority consistent messaging for associates, consumers, and the media.</li> <li>Frequently monitor situation and request regular updates from each member of CMT on their assigned role.</li> <li>Provide restitution suitable for the crisis to those affected.</li> <li>Begin restoration process.</li> </ul>

# ESCALATION TRIGGERS AND PROTOCOL

ISSUE CATEGORY	CRITICAL MASS OF MINOR ISSUES	IMMEDIATE ISSUE
<b>QUALITY AND SAFETY</b>  <b>Action:</b> Report to QA CMT rep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foreign objects found in product</li> <li>Disruptions in raw material sourcing</li> <li>Inconsistent flavor, texture, and appearance</li> <li>Improper package sealing</li> <li>Report of unusual Odor</li> <li>Package fill or function</li> <li>Ingredient sourcing</li> <li>Use of controversial ingredients</li> <li>Disruptions in raw material sourcing</li> <li>Employee complain about lax safety measures</li> <li>Equipment malfunction</li> <li>Allegations of expired product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incidents of choking hazards</li> <li>Multiple confirmed cases of illness</li> <li>Tampering or sabotage</li> <li>Discovery of contamination in products</li> <li>Foreign matter found in package</li> <li>Confirmation of toxic substances</li> <li>Inquiry from a regulatory agency</li> <li>Environmental/ammonia spill or release</li> <li>Recall linked to supply chain issues</li> </ul>
<b>LEGAL</b>  <b>Action:</b> Report to Legal CMT rep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Threats of legal action over product dissatisfaction, even if unfounded.</li> <li>Minor violations flagged during routine inspections</li> <li>Reports of potential non-compliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government-imposed sanctions or fines for failing to comply with industry regulations.</li> <li>Class-action lawsuits alleging harm caused by products or services.</li> <li>Discovery of illegal practices</li> <li>Legal action from employees or contractors citing harassment, discrimination, or unsafe working conditions.</li> </ul>
<b>CORPORATE REPUTATION</b>  <b>Action:</b> Report to Communications CMT rep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer complaints gaining traction online.</li> <li>Concerns over the company's stance on social or political issues.</li> <li>Competitors campaigns that position them as more ethical, sustainable, or customer-friendly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant backlash on social media greater than 10% of average impressions.</li> <li>Reporter inquiry about an issue</li> <li>Company name dragged into external scandal</li> <li>Activist campaign</li> <li>Investigative journalism exposing unethical practices</li> <li>Public boycotts</li> <li>Persistent negative reviews on platforms like Yelp, Google, or Trustpilot impacting reputation</li> </ul>
<b>INTERNAL</b>  <b>Action:</b> Report to HR CMT rep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal inefficiencies</li> <li>Minor injuries at facility</li> <li>increased turnover rates among staff</li> <li>Initial murmurs of workplace harassment or discrimination claims.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organized strikes or collective action due to unfair labor practices or safety concerns.</li> <li>Employee threat (violence, strike, etc.)</li> <li>Significant facility destruction (weather event, employee malfeasance, etc.)</li> <li>Failure to meet key production deadlines leading to significant financial losses.</li> <li>Allegations of misconduct or unethical behavior by senior leaders.</li> </ul>

# ESCALATION TRIGGERS AND PROTOCOL





# CMT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## Bannerfield Farms' Crisis Management Team

### QUALITY ASSURANCE

<b>Don Blakely</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leadership during the crisis and decision making</li><li>• Ensure alignment of crisis management efforts with Bannerfield values and objectives.</li><li>• Check on other CMT members</li></ul>
CEO	

<b>John Hills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess the impact of the crisis on manufacturing and production lines.</li><li>• Implement plans to minimize disruption in the production.</li><li>• Coordinate with suppliers to ensure the continued supply of meat and materials for Bannerfield products.</li><li>• Manage workforce allocation during a crisis, keeping safety and compliance.</li><li>• Work closely with the Safety Officer to implement necessary changes to operational procedures.</li></ul>
Operations Manager	

### COMMUNICATIONS

<b>Marie Johnson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop and implement the crisis communication plan.</li><li>• Provide updates that are clear, consistent, and timely to Bannerfield stakeholders.</li><li>• Monitor media coverage and social media for misinformation, cancellation or negative sentiment and respond to customer inquiries</li></ul>
Communications Team	
<b>Peter Morris</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coordinate press releases, social media updates and statements.</li><li>• Act as the spokesperson for the company and organize spokesperson interviews.</li><li>• Manage reputational risks.</li></ul>
Public Relations Team	

### LEGAL

<b>Robert Scott</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advise the CMT on the legal implications of their decisions during the crisis.</li><li>• Monitor and respond to potential legal risks, like lawsuits, a violation to regulations or product liability claims, for example.</li><li>• Make sure the company is respecting and up-to-date with industry-specific regulations, like food safety standards and laws that protect consumers.</li><li>• Prepare for potential litigation and represent the company in legal issues arising from the crisis.</li></ul>
Legal department	

# CONTACT SHEET: CMT

NAME	ROLE	CELL	OFFICE	EMAIL
CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM				
Don Blakely	CEO	(773) 111-2233	(773) 666-7788	donblakely@bannerfieldfarms.com
John Hills	Operations Manager	(773) 222-3344	(773) 777-8899	johnhills@bannerfieldfarms.com
Marie Johnson	Communications Team	(773) 333-4455	(773) 888-9900	mariejohnson@bannerfieldfarms.com
Peter Morris	Public Relations Team	(773) 444-5566	(773) 999-0011	petermorris@bannerfieldfarms.com
Robert Scott	Legal Department	(773) 555-6677	(773) 000-1122	robertscott@scottlaw.com

**Coombs, W. T. (2014).** *Ongoing crisis communication: Planning, managing, and responding* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

Katsaliaki, K., Galetsi, P. & Kumar, S. Supply chain disruptions and resilience: a major review and future research agenda. *Ann Oper Res* **319**, 965–1002 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10479-020-03912-1>