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Monitoring bone metabolism in sheep

Sheep are commonly used as animal models in experimental orthopedic research studies. Biomarkers of bone metabolism have been used as a noninvasive measure of the bone turnover process in these studies. The main limitation for the application of these biomarkers is their biological variability. Circadian and seasonal variations have already been studied in humans as well as in sheep, but no studies of the short-term variability of biomarkers of bone metabolism in sheep have been published to date. Sousa *et al.* assessed whether the serum levels of common biomarkers of bone metabolism in adult sheep showed significant short-term biological variability over a 12-week period. Such variability should be taken into account when interpreting changes in biomarkers of bone metabolism as reflective of changes in bone cellular activity in sheep.

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The 'who' of contingency planning

Disasters large and small can have catastrophic results. Facilities therefore should have plans in place that cover all contingencies. A contingency plan defines the actions to be put into effect when things don't go as expected. A conscious effort must be made to consider the human elements of the plan, because the ability to plan and prepare for, respond to and recover from a disaster relies completely on the interest, skills, training and flexibility of personnel. Donaho discusses how to select people with the necessary skills and physical and mental abilities to carry out the disaster response effort and how to include in the contingency plan protections for personnel before, during and after an event. Understanding these issues can help facility managers to build a more effective plan, ultimately ensuring faster recovery and long-term success.

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