

Livestock Owners Guide for Disaster Planning

Planning and Preparing for Livestock Disasters

Assess the most likely disaster that may affect you and your livestock and prepare for that event. Develop a disaster action plan for natural and manmade disasters such as floods, fires and earthquakes. Your ability to act quickly and decisively may make the difference between life and death for your livestock and your family. The nature of the disaster may determine whether you shelter in place or evacuate. Have your local Emergency Manager and Extension Specialist contact information so you can get current information and recommendations on available shelters and status of the disaster or emergency. Public service announcements during an emergency will give you similar information.

Steps to Protect your Livestock

- Assess your property and identify the best place to shelter your animals with the possible disaster. Make arrangements with a neighbor or friend who know the animals to shelter them for you if you are gone.
- Check alternate water sources. A power outage may occur in a disaster. Test generators and ensure they have enough fuel.
- Have enough water and feed for 48-72 hours. If you must evacuate, have water containers with water and feed available for the number of animals evacuated.
- Prepare for possible evacuation of livestock from your property. Find alternate locations, such as private stables, racetracks, fairgrounds, equestrian centers, private farms and humane societies.
- Make arrangements for your animals in advance. Know where you would bring your animals and contact the persons in charge of the facility.
- Practice loading horses and other livestock that would be evacuated, so they load easily and are familiar with the trailer. Have proper loading facilities for commercial herds of livestock.
- Keep trailers and vans well maintained, fueled and ready to travel at all times.
- Permanently identify each animal by tattoo, microchip, brand, tag or photograph. Place a permanent tag on each halter that includes your name, phone number and the animal's name. If a disaster strikes suddenly, a temporary and quick method of identifying is by painting or etching the hooves, use a neckband, or paint your telephone number on the animals before you move them.

- Prepare an identification packet that includes up-to-date vaccination and medical records. The packet should include the animal's complete description and/or registration papers, and any medication the animal is on with the name and phone number of the attending veterinarian. Your name address and other contact information should also be in the packet. The information should be kept in a sealable plastic bag.
- Keep insurance on property and animals current.
- Develop a priority list of which animals to save or evacuate if all cannot be saved. Inform farm personnel and others who will move your animals in your absence.
- Listen to the Emergency Alert System. Include a portable, battery-powered radio in your disaster travel kit.
- If you must leave your animals unattended at home, leave them in an area appropriate for the type of disaster, for example, on high ground in a flooding situation.
- Leave enough water for the anticipated length of time expected to be gone. Automatic watering systems will fail in a power outage.
- If you evacuate and take your animals, take all records, the emergency disaster travel kit (see travel kit list below) and sufficient feed and water, for a minimum of 48-72 hours.

Emergency Disaster Travel Kit

- Plastic trash barrel with a lid and a water bucket
- Leg wraps, fire-resistance non-nylon leads and halters, cotton rope
- Portable radio, a flashlight with extra batteries, and a backup generator if possible
- Sharp knife, wire cutters, tarpaulins, water, soap and bleach for sanitizing
- Identification packet and medical records (see above)
- Emergency first aid kit for animals to include: bandage scissors, duct tape (place on hoof, not around leg), hoof knife, disposable gloves, livestock chalk, thermometer, large syringe for flushing wounds, tweezers or forceps, twitch for horses, cotton pads or rolls (disposable diapers make excellent bandage material), elastic tape, polo wraps, vetrap or other self-adhesive wrap, antibiotic ointment, betadine or disinfectant, electrolytes, hydrogen peroxide, saline solution for eye flush, wound powder to stop bleeding.
- Emergency cash, food and water for the family