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Emergency Preparedness for Farm Animals



Canada 

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This publication was produced by Public Safety Canada in collaboration with: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Environment Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association and the provinces and territories.

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INTRODUCTION

Do you know how to protect your farm animals from risks posed by natural disasters, including collapsed barns, freezing weather, flooding, dehydration, and electrocution?

From barn fires to hazardous materials spills to natural disasters, emergency situations often call for special measures to shelter, care for, or transport farm pets, livestock, and poultry.

Safeguard your animals, your property and your business by taking precautions now, no matter what the risks are in your area. Additional information and assistance can be provided by your veterinarian.

This brochure is intended to address interruptions in normal services due to the consequences of natural hazards and emergencies. It does not address animal disease emergencies. For information on prevention, preparation or response to animal disease emergencies contact your veterinarian, your provincial agriculture representative or the local office of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency at www.inspection.gc.ca.

STEP 1: KNOW THE RISKS AND GET PREPARED

Although the consequences of emergencies can be similar, knowing the risks specific to your community and your region can help you better prepare. It is even more important to be aware of the risks in your area if you live on a farm with livestock and poultry.



Plan to Shelter in Place

If you remain on your property during an emergency, you will need to decide whether to confine large animals in an available shelter or leave them outdoors.

Survey your property for the best location for animal sheltering. Ensure that your animals have access to high areas in case of flooding, as well as to food and clean water.

If your pasture area meets the following criteria, your livestock may be better off out in the pasture than being evacuated. A safe pasture has:

- Native tree species only. Exotic trees uproot easily.
- No overhead power lines or poles.
- No debris or sources of blowing debris.
- No barbed wire fencing. Woven wire fencing is best.
- At least one acre (0.4 hectares) of open space. Livestock may not be able to avoid blowing debris in smaller spaces.



Ensure that you have enough food and essentials supplies for you and your family for at least 72 hours (three days).

If your property does not meet these criteria, consider evacuating your animals, but only on the advice of your veterinarian or local emergency management officials.



Plan to Evacuate

- Contact your local emergency management authority and become familiar with at least two possible evacuation routes. Familiarize all family members and employees with your evacuation plans.
- Arrange in advance for a place to shelter your animals. Plan ahead and work within your community to establish safe shelters for farm animals, such as fairgrounds, other farms, racetracks, and exhibition centres.
- Ensure that sufficient feed and medical supplies are available at the destination.
- Be ready to leave as soon as an evacuation is ordered. In a slowly evolving emergency, like a hurricane, plan to evacuate at least 72 hours before anticipated landfall, especially if you will be hauling a high profile trailer such as a horse trailer. It may not be possible to evacuate heavy loads safely in high winds. Also, once the emergency hits roads may be restricted to emergency service vehicles and not open to traffic.
- Set up safe transportation. You will need to have access to trucks, trailers, and other vehicles suitable for transporting each type of animal, along with experienced handlers and drivers. You may need access to a portable loading ramp to load, or unload, animals.

- If animals are evacuated to a centralized location such as fair grounds for shelter and will co-mingle with other animals of unknown health status try to:
 - Make sure your animals have sufficient identification (e.g., ear tags or brands) to be able to tell them apart from others.
 - minimize the contact among animals from different premises.
 - protect feed and water from contact with wild animals and birds. Verify the health and vaccination status of animals which must be co-mingled.
 - handle any mortalities in a manner to minimize the possible spread of contagious diseases.
 - monitor the health and well-being of the animals on a daily basis, whether sheltered in place or evacuated. Seek appropriate veterinary medical advice and services on suspicion of an animal disease problem.
 - Accommodation will need to include milking equipment for dairy cows (as applicable). Milk may need to be stored separately from cows of other herds. Milk “pickup” companies should be notified where to pick up the milk.

Whether you evacuate or shelter in place, make sure that you have adequate and safe fencing or pens to separate and group animals appropriately.



When Leaving the Farm

- Ensure that the electricity on the farm (typically on a power pole into the farm) is turned off.





Get Prepared

- Make sure every animal has durable and visible identification and that you have proof of ownership for all animals.
- Reinforce your house, barn, and outbuildings with hurricane straps and other measures. Perform regular safety inspections on all utilities, buildings, and facilities on your farm.
- If possible, remove all barbed wire and consider re-routing permanent fencing, so that animals may move to high ground in a flood and to low-lying areas during high winds.
- Identify alternate water and power sources. A generator with a safely stored supply of fuel may be essential, especially if you have milking equipment or other electrical equipment necessary to the well-being of your animals. Generators should be tested regularly to be sure they will work when needed.
- Install a hand pump and obtain enough large containers to water your animals for at least a week. Be aware that municipal water supplies and wells may be contaminated during an emergency.
- Properly plug any abandoned water wells on the site. The exact method for this varies according to provincial/territorial regulations. Regardless of method, the intent is to prevent contaminated water from entering the groundwater. Production wells should also be checked to see that they are secure from flood waters. It may be necessary to decontaminate wells after a flood.
- Secure or remove anything that could become blowing debris; make a habit of securing trailers, propane tanks, and other large objects. If you have feed troughs or other large containers, fill them with water before any high wind event. This prevents them from blowing around and also provides an additional supply of water.
- If you use heat lamps or other electrical machinery, make sure the wiring is safe and that any heat source is clear of flammable debris.



- Label hazardous materials and place them all in the same safe area. Provide local fire, rescue and emergency management authorities with information about the location of any hazardous materials on your property.
- Remove old buried trash — a potential source of hazardous materials during flooding that may leech into crops, feed supplies, water sources, and pasture.
- If there is a threat of flooding, ensure that in-ground manure pits or cisterns are kept at least half full of water or other liquid to ensure that they are not damaged or “floated” by rising groundwater.
- Chemicals should be stored in secured areas, preferably on high ground and/or on shelving off the ground. These areas should be protected so that chemical spills will not result in any runoff or seepage.





STEP 2 : MAKE AN EMERGENCY PLAN

Make an emergency plan to protect your property, your facilities, and your animals. Create a contact list of emergency telephone numbers, including your employees, neighbours, veterinarian, poison control, local animal shelter, animal care and control, transportation resources, and local volunteer organizations.

Include an out-of-town contact person who is unlikely to be affected by the same emergency. Make sure all this information is written down, and that everyone on your farm and your contact person has a copy.

Review, test and update your emergency plan, supplies, and information regularly.



STEP 3: PREPARE A FARM EMERGENCY KIT

Make an emergency kit so you have emergency supplies in one location, and let everyone know where it is. Check and update contents regularly. Include the following items and personalize according to your needs:

- Current list of all animals, including their location and records of feeding, vaccinations, and tests. Make this information available at various locations on the farm.
- Supplies for temporary identification of your animals, such as plastic neckbands and permanent markers to label animals with your name, address and telephone number.
- Basic first aid kit.
- Handling equipment such as halters, cages, blankets and appropriate tools for each kind of animal. Include bolt-cutters to quickly free animals in an emergency.
- Water, feed and buckets. Tools and supplies needed for sanitation.
- Emergency equipment such as a cell phone, flashlights, portable radios (with weather radio band) and/or Weatheradio, and batteries. Know the weather radio broadcast frequencies and local weather information telephone numbers.
- Other safety and emergency items for your vehicles and trailers.
- Food, water and emergency supplies for your family.



For more emergency preparedness information or to order brochures, visit **www.GetPrepared.ca** or follow **@Get_Prepared** on Twitter.

For more information on emergency response where animals are implicated in natural or human-induced disasters, visit the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association website at: **www.canadianveterinarians.net**

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