

# Planning for Livestock Disasters

Any disaster, whether it's a flood, hurricane, tornado or earthquake, can catch you off guard and leave you in danger. It's important to have a plan in place ahead of severe weather to protect your animals and livestock.

## Prepare with a Livestock Evacuation Kit

- Include feed, water, supplements, supplies (medications, rope/lariat, halters/leads, cleaning supplies, knives, etc.), and papers (veterinary records and proof of ownership).
- Review your kit regularly to ensure contents, especially feed and medicines, are fresh.

## Plan What You Will Do in an Emergency

- Determine if you are able to evacuate (based on the type of disaster and the safety and stability of the shelter).
- Determine where you will go if you have to leave (Identify friends or relatives who could house livestock during the disaster, including fairgrounds or other livestock evacuation locations).
- Determine how you will evacuate (Decide how livestock will be transported/housed and prearrange an evacuation site).

In case you are not home:

- Designate a neighbor to tend to your livestock (This person should be familiar with your livestock, know your evacuation procedures, know where your evacuation kit is kept, and have your emergency contact information).
- Make sure livestock has some form of identification (microchip, ear/leg tag, leg band, tattoo etc.).

## Stay Informed

- Plan to stay if it's safe to do so, or leave if ordered to evacuate.
- When disaster strikes, follow instructions of local emergency management to safeguard you, your family, and your livestock.



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Think ahead and try to implement some of these precautionary measures:

- **Build a strong shelter.** Make sure you have a sturdy shelter that can protect animals and livestock from the elements. It should be able to sustain high winds and heavy rain and keep them all dry. Consider building it on high ground to avoid flooding. A livestock shelter should provide enough space for each animal.
- **Adequate food and water.** Provide adequate supplies for animals and livestock. This will be important if you aren't able to reach them for a day or so. They should have plenty of food and a steady supply of water to sustain them throughout a severe weather event.
- **Warm bedding.** During a blizzard or extremely frigid weather, warm bedding is essential for all livestock. Heavy rains also can make the air cold and moist. Make sure that there is adequate bedding for each animal whether it gets used or not. Replace it when needed.
- **Adequate cooling options.** Excessive heat can be hazardous. Make sure shaded areas are available and provide an adequate amount of water.
- **Take photos of everything.** Documentation is critical when applying for federal assistance. Photograph herd losses and building damage. Ideally, have images of a healthy herd and other "before" photos to help with comparison of images after the disaster. Lots of information is always better than little or none.

Additionally, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service maintains the National Animal Health Emergency Response Corps (NAHERC), a group of veterinary support personnel who respond to disease outbreaks and other disasters that affect livestock, poultry, companion animals and wildlife.

You can learn more about NAHERC at [www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/emergencymanagement/ct\\_nahercmanagement/ct\\_naherc](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/emergencymanagement/ct_nahercmanagement/ct_naherc).



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