

Plan Ahead Be Prepared



Natural disasters such as flash floods, hurricanes or forest fires and man-made problems, such as gas explosions, leaking tank cars, and terrorist incidents can arrive with little, if any warning. By developing a disaster action plan for yourself and your animals, you can improve the chances that all of you can make it through a disaster safely. The nature of the emergency may determine whether to shelter in place or evacuate the area. Contact your County/Local Emergency Management Coordinator and/or Agricultural Extension Specialist for the most current update and recommendations. Their numbers can be found in the blue pages of your phone book. Public service announcements during a disaster may also instruct you on the best course of action. If a disaster should occur, remain calm and follow your disaster action plan.

Take Steps to Protect Your Livestock

Take a careful look at your property. Identify the best place for your animals in each type of disaster you can foresee. Make arrangements with a trustworthy neighbor for horse and livestock care and/or evacuation procedures in the event that a disaster occurs when you are not home. This person should have access to your animals and be familiar with them.

Check for alternate water sources in case a disaster causes power outages, and pumps and automatic watering systems stop working. Test-run backup generators and make sure they are full of fuel.

Have enough fresh water and feed for 48 to 72 hours.

Prepare for the possibility that you might have to evacuate your horses or livestock from your property. Find several alternative locations and check the entry requirements for each. Locations that could be used for emergency evacuation include private stables, racetracks, fairgrounds, equestrian centers, private farms, and humane societies. During an emergency, your local or county Office of Emergency Management may be able to provide you with a list of available animal shelters or locations.

Make arrangements for your animals in advance with the proper facility. Logistically plan how, and with what, you will relocate your animals.

Keep trailers and vans well-maintained, full of fuel and ready to move at all times.

Permanently identify each animal by tattoo, microchip, brand, tag, photographs (front, rear, left and right side) and/or drawing. If a disaster strikes before you can identify your animals in these ways, paint or etch hooves, use neckbands or paint your telephone number on the side of the animal before you move it.

Place a permanent tag on each halter. Include your name and phone number along with the animal's name.



Prepare an ID packet that contains a record of each animal's age, sex, breed, and color; special feeding instructions; documentation of any medicines with dosage instructions and the name and phone number of the veterinarian who dispensed the drug; and any other identification you can take with you when you evacuate.

Be sure all vaccinations and medical records are in writing and up-to-date. Check with your veterinarian as to what other immunizations are advisable. Keep copies in a resealable plastic bag, in the disaster travel kit, along with the name/phone of your animals' veterinarian.

Prepare an emergency disaster travel kit consisting of:

- plastic trash barrel with lid, a water bucket
- leg wraps, fire-resistant non nylon leads and halters, cotton rope
- first aid items, portable radio and a flashlight with extra batteries, a backup generator
- sharp knife, wire cutters, tarpaulins, lime and bleach
- ID (photos from all sides, microchip, tattoo, and/or registration papers) in the re-sealable plastic bag (see above). Place duplicates in travel trailer.
- medical records and medications or special diets, emergency cash

Keep your insurance coverage current on your property and animals for the types of disasters you may encounter.

During disasters you may wear different or unusual clothing, so condition your animals to strange appearances ahead of time. Acclimate your horses and livestock to trailers and vans.

Develop a priority list of which animals to save if all cannot be saved. Familiarize all farm personnel with the list in case you are not there when a disaster occurs.

Listen to the Emergency Broadcast System station on your portable radio for information about how to locate horse and livestock care providers offering services during the disaster and for any special instructions on how to protect your animals.

If you evacuate and take your animals with you, take all records, the animal's emergency disaster travel kit and sufficient feed and water for a minimum 48-hour period. Call ahead, if possible, to make sure that your emergency location is still available.

If you must leave your animals unattended at home, leave them in the area most appropriate for the type of disaster anticipated, such as high ground in a flood.

Leave enough water for the length of time you expect to be gone. Automatic watering systems will fail if power is lost.

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What to Do When an All-Clear Sounds

- Be careful about leaving your animals unattended outside after a disaster. Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered and your animal could be easily confused and become lost.
- In addition, sharp objects, downed electric lines, fallen trees and other debris, or contaminated water could present real danger to your animal. Raccoons, skunks or other wild animals may have entered the area and could present danger to your animals.
- Place your animals in a secure area. Be sure fences have not been damaged.
- If any animals are lost during the disaster, contact veterinarians, humane societies, stables, racetracks, equestrian centers, surrounding farms and other facilities that might house animals. Be prepared to identify and document ownership when claiming lost livestock. The United States Department of Agriculture Missing Pet Network at www.missingpet.net may be of assistance.
- Listen to the Emergency Broadcast System for information released by your local emergency management office about locating lost animals.
- Check with your veterinarian, the New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association or the New Jersey Department of Agriculture for information about any disease outbreaks that may occur as a result of the disaster.
- Consider establishing security measures on your farm to protect it from looters and exploiters.
- If you find someone else's animal after the disaster, isolate it from your animals until it is returned to its owner or examined by a veterinarian.
- Use extreme caution when approaching and handling unknown or frightened animals. Work in pairs when handling strange animals.

For More Information

Visit: njhomelandsecurity.gov

- NJ Department of Agriculture
www.NJ.gov/agriculture
- NJ Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force
www.NJ.gov/oag/dsptf
- Humane Society of the United States
www.hsus.org/disaster
- NJ Veterinary Medical Association
www.njvma.org



plain talk on Protecting Livestock

New Jersey's guide to protecting your livestock in the event of a disaster

