

Farm animal and livestock preparedness

Overview

Emergencies and disasters such as barn fires, blizzards or floods, are a common risk in many parts of Alberta.

Know the risks

Identifying the hazards helps you prepare and reduce the impact when sudden events do occur.

Common hazards include:

- Overland flooding from nearby creeks, rivers, canals and lakes.
- Out of control fires in nearby grasslands, forests, and farm structures such as barns.
- Severe storms such as extreme wind, tornadoes, heavy rain, and blizzards.
- Hazardous waste spills and the release of dangerous goods.
- Diseases and/or pests that affect animals and crops.

Make a plan

A plan can help you cope with the stress of an emergency or disaster. Consider the following when creating your plan:

- Build a map. Outline the buildings on the property and include key services (power and water sources), access points, equipment locations, and dangerous chemical storage. Post your map in each building.
- Set a meeting place or muster point in case an evacuation is ordered. Make sure everyone knows the location(s) and ensure that there is feed, water and shelter for any animals you can evacuate. Consider seasonal weather impacts.
- Create safe transportation methods. If possible, practice loading and transporting your animals.
- Ensure animals are visually identified (ear tags, tattoos, etc.) whenever possible. Create a file with all animal identification and ownership records.
- Create an emergency contact list. Include neighbours, animal handlers/transporters, veterinarians and feed suppliers. Post in each building.
- Store all records (animal ID, contact lists and site map) onsite, offsite and digitally.

- Work with your local Director of Emergency Management to learn what type of help will be available.

Find out where your community will post information and updates during an emergency. Download the [Alberta Emergency Alert](#) app for critical, life-saving alerts.

Traceability Protects! Register your livestock and poultry with Alberta Agriculture's Traceability program to help local authorities protect your animals during emergencies. [Register online.](#)

Know when to stay or go

For your safety, authorities may direct you to shelter in place or to evacuate. It is important to follow all directions and to stay informed as the situation and directions can change quickly.

Shelter in place with animals

Shelter in place orders can last a few hours or a few days. If time permits and depending on the situation, you should confine animals to a shelter or leave them to pasture.

Keep in mind, if animals are confined to one shelter, aggressive behavior and outbreak of contagious diseases is a risk.

Evacuating with animals

If ordered to evacuate, you may only have minutes to gather your belongings. Have a plan so you are ready.

If time permits:

- Animal evacuation requires time and the right equipment (e.g., corrals, shoots and trailers).
- Haul feed and water to the evacuation location if it isn't already there.
- Consider the need for shelter. Extreme cold and heat can be harmful to animals.

Livestock evacuation information is often shared by the local authority when an evacuation is ordered.

Evacuating without animals

There may be situations where an evacuation is sudden. If this occurs:

- Ensure animals have a visual identifier. Use a semi-permanent livestock marker to put your cell number or a unique mark on their bodies.
- Leave a minimum of 72 hours of feed and water that does not need power to function (e.g., electric waterers).
- Open gates or reroute fencing to create a large area for unrestricted movement and help avoid hazards.
- Keep barn doors closed to prevent animals from going back inside where they can be trapped.
- Connect with your emergency contacts about care and feeding for the animals.
- Ensure handling equipment and tools are readily available for first responders to free animals if they become trapped.

Build a kit / Gather supplies

Emergencies and disasters can last a few hours, or a few days. It is a good idea to keep enough supplies on hand to last a minimum of 14 days. Store your supplies together in an easy to access place.

Household emergency supplies

- Water (drinking, cooking and hygiene).
- Food (non-perishable with high protein).
- Battery-powered/crank radio/flashlight or [Weatheradio](#) in case of a power outage
- Documents, identification, and cash.
- Personal supplies and medication.

Animal emergency supplies

- Feed and water that does not require power
- First aid kit and supplements.
- List of medications, veterinarian records, animal identification, health and sale records and proof of ownership.
- Handling equipment (e.g., ropes, cages, halters warm bedding and fence cutters).

For more information

You can find more information about preparedness through [Alberta.ca](#) or by contacting your community's Director of Emergency Management.