



## Keeping Animals Safe in Summer Storms and Other Disasters

**Planning and preparing are key to making sure you and your animals stay safe in stormy weather. Our safety tips and checklists can help.**

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Lightening, thunder, hail and strong winds.

The symptoms of summer weather bring with them concerns about your safety and the safety of your animals on the farm.

The second Saturday in May is widely considered Animal Disaster Preparedness Day.

To help you in planning your response to rough weather, we've compiled information from several sources.

### To Shelter or Not to Shelter Animals

Many livestock owners say it's best to turn your farm animals loose, especially if the barn or shelter is not tornado safe.

They'll avoid injury in case an unstable structure threatens to come down around them. Others say if you can get them to a tornado-safe area, keep them indoors.

Read more about sheltering your farm animals.

### Planning Ahead

Knowing that your household and animals are prepared for an emergency, such as fire or destructive weather, gives you peace of mind, which is better than the finest insurance policy, writes Kathleen Ewing in "Get Out Now!" from the January/February 2007 Hobby Farms.

From her article, here are tips and checklists to help farm and livestock owners prepare for disasters.

### Getting Started

In any successful evacuation, the initial steps begin months before the actual event.

Kay Adrissi, former Emergency Management Director for Garfield County, Colo., recommends creating a written emergency plan. This plan should include drawing and posting maps of escape paths from each building.

Post beside your exit point a checklist of items from your home, office or barn that must go with you. Practice your plan. Designate escape routes and destinations as well as alternatives for both. Fine tune the plan and make certain your family and everyone else who lives, works or boards at your facility is familiar with it.

Create an emergency "go-bag" for each person in the household. A change of clothes, sturdy shoes, prescription medications, spare glasses, battery-operated radio and flashlight. Anyone with special needs should be provided for--diapers, formula, hearing aid batteries, etc.

Develop a Support Team by arranging reciprocal agreements with friends, promising that you will come to their aid with your truck or trailer if they will come to yours.

Make sure your animals are familiar with the trailer you will use and that they load willingly into it.

As your last act before leaving, tape a sign with the word "EVACUATED" printed in large, dark, block letters to your front door. At the bottom of it, write the telephone number where you can be contacted as well as the number of your out-of-area contact person.

### Prepare Your Animals

If disaster threatens, be prepared to evacuate animals at a moment's notice: Keep a phone list of your network of helpers beside the phone



Keep pets crate-trained and larger animals schooled on loading into trailers or trucks

Have a "go-bag" ready for pets, including food and water containers, as well as special food or medications

Bring small pets indoors

Have identification and contact information on each collar or halter

Mark stalls or pens--both front and rear exits--with a splotch of paint or colored ribbon to designate priority animals

Train your animals to leave through all exits of stalls or pastures

Keep gas tanks full and vehicles pointed toward the road

Keep trailers hitched and close to stable or loading pens

Decide ahead of time what you will do if any animal balks

#### Suggested Household Evacuation Checklist

Create a checklist of items you consider essential and keep the items accessible. Mark off items as you load them into vehicles so no one will waste time searching. Keys (Always keep in the same place when not in use) Purses and wallets  
Cash and credit cards Cell phone and charger Go-bags Organizer (addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses) Copies of insurance documents and birth certificates Other important documents Prescription medications Family photographs  
Computer software and back-up media (tapes, CDs, jump drives) Valuable jewelry and family heirlooms Weapons and ammunition (to prevent being looted or exploding)

The Humane Society of the United States offers additional information, including disaster preparedness for livestock and other animals, as well as training opportunities.

~ Excerpts from "Get Out Now!" by Kathleen Ewing, January/February 2007 Hobby Farms.