

Farm & Ranch Preparedness

Agriculture producers are at significant risk from natural disasters including droughts, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, and wildfires. Agriculture is also susceptible to terrorist acts that seek to damage property, destroy lives, and cause widespread economic damage. Agriculture producers must realize the effect disasters will have on family members and co-workers, as well as the impact on livestock, crops, farm structures, machinery, water and food supplies, and other bulk materials stored on the farm. They must also be prepared for the economic issues related to loss of life, property, or income that may occur. Farmers and ranchers who are prepared for disasters are more likely to preserve life and property. They will also minimize recovery time and resume productivity much faster.

A comprehensive accounting of livestock, property, or potentially hazardous substances is essential to farmstead disaster preparedness. Livestock may be killed, lost, or stolen during an emergency situation. Attach animal ID tags on all animals and note the ID number and description of the animal. Maintain a list of machinery and equipment, including make and model number. Keep an updated list of pesticides, fertilizers, fuels, medicines and other chemicals. During a disaster, these chemicals can wash into streams or contaminate food supplies, placing people and animals at risk.

Disaster Supply Kit

In addition to family disaster kits, agriculture producers should also keep on hand additional supplies to protect the farm. These include:

1. Sandbags and plastic sheeting, in case of flood
2. Wire and rope to secure objects
3. Lumber and plywood to protect windows
4. Extra fuel for tractors and vehicles in a safe location
5. Hand tools to assist in preparation and recovery
6. Fire extinguishers at all barns and in all vehicles
7. A safe supply of food to feed livestock
8. A gas-powered generator in case of power failure

Preparing the Farm

Planning ahead can minimize damage to livestock and property. You should:

1. Establish escape routes for cows, horses, sheep and other livestock to higher elevation in case of flooding.
2. Drive large animals out of barns that may be flooded.
3. Make sure livestock have a good source of food and water.
4. Move hay, machinery, fuels, pesticides, fertilizers and other chemicals out of flood-prone areas.
5. Turn off electrical power to machines, barns, and other structures that may become damaged or flooded.
6. Secure loose items, such as lumber, logs, pipes, machinery parts, and tools.

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Full article available at <http://texashelp.tamu.edu/005-agriculture/farmstead-preparedness-recovery.php>