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Livestock Hurricane Preparation Plan

Preparation- have a plan

It is important to make a disaster plan before a threat occurs. This will allow for quick action and reduce the stress of both owners and animals. Decide in advance how you will cope various types of disaster, such as hurricanes or tornadoes. If you are able, an evacuation plan is the best way to ensure the safety of your animals in any disaster. Streamlining the process of hooking up, loading, and leaving is crucial to a calm and timely evacuation.

Questions to consider

- How many animals do you have? Can you transport all of them at once?
- Will your horses load quickly and easily into a trailer?
- Do you or a neighbor need to collaborate to evacuate all livestock?
- How many exits are there from your property?
- Are you familiar with the roads in your area? Do you have a planned evacuation route?
- Can your vehicles travel on those roads with a loaded trailer?
- Are there multiple people in your household able to drive a vehicle with a loaded horse or livestock trailer?
- Can you safely harbor your own and/or others' livestock on your property in a storm?
- Does your horse(s) have an up-to-date Coggins and vaccination records?
- Do your animals have proper identification?

Make a phone tree

Keep a list of friends' and neighbors' phone numbers, so that you can coordinate with them and offer or receive help in an emergency. Keep it updated, and check it annually for accuracy. Speak to those in your group and have an approximate plan in place if you or a neighbor know you will need assistance in an emergency.

Create a livestock evacuation kit

Your kit should include feed, water, medications, halters and leads, care instructions (feed and medication amounts), emergency contact numbers, and important papers (veterinary records, proof of ownership, digital photos). If possible, have animals microchipped so that they can be identified, and keep their microchip numbers with the records in your kit as well. Ensure the contents (medication and feed especially) are always fresh and ready to go.

Be aware

- Pay attention to weather forecasts and reports- events such as hurricanes usually come with warning, giving you time to prepare if you are aware of the situation.
- During the storm season, plan ahead according to the weather- if a hurricane threatens, begin preparations immediately. Don't wait until the storm has formed; have everything ready the moment it becomes a possibility so that if you do need to evacuate, you are ready to load the horses or livestock into the trailer and head out.

If you aren't home

Designate a friend or neighbor to tend your livestock in case you are away when an emergency occurs. Familiarize them with your animals, evacuation plan, and evacuation kit. Make sure they have your emergency contact information and will be in town while you are gone.

Precautionary measures

Providing food, water, and shelter will go a long way to keeping livestock safe. Even if evacuation isn't an option, ensuring that basic needs are met will give your animals a good chance of keeping themselves safe. Some steps you can take:

- Build a strong shelter, on high ground if possible. It should be able to endure high wind and rain while staying dry. It should be big enough to accommodate all livestock. Each animal needs an area approximately 4 times its own body size.
- Have adequate food and water. Keep enough on hand to sustain them for several days.
- Assess farm safety- know what areas of your farm tend to flood, or where dead trees or branches are likely to fall in heavy winds. Have a plan to deal with these possible dangers.

Evacuation

Where to go

Evacuating livestock can be difficult, and potential evacuation locations must be determined before a threat occurs. Large animal evacuation centers are sometimes organized at fairgrounds or event centers during a widespread disaster. However, they can be chaotic and slow to organize. If at all possible, going to a private facility or farm will be less stressful for both you and your animals. Reach out to horse owners in other areas, and see if you can reach an agreement with them to accommodate one another's animals in case of emergency. This will enable you to act quickly if a disaster does occur.

When to go

If you are evacuating with your horses or livestock, it is imperative that you leave as early as possible, even before an official evacuation order is given. A clear evacuation plan will go a long way toward ensuring a smooth and timely departure. If you wait until the last minute to evacuate, emergency management officials may require you to leave your horses or livestock behind.

Keep in mind that if the disaster includes strong winds, you must leave the area before the windspeed reaches 30 mph. Horse trailers can be overturned by strong gusting winds. If there are high winds, it is best to leave your horses and livestock outside. There is a larger danger of a structure falling on them if they are in a barn, and they will be better able to find their own safe place if they are outside.

Before leaving

- Have a charged cell phone and bring a charger.
- Ensure that your tow vehicle has a full fuel tank, correct hitch, jack and tire iron.
- Check the tires, lights, turn signals and brakes on both the trailer and tow vehicle, and have a spare tire for each.
- Take digital photos of each of your animals from all sides that clearly show their markings. If they get lost, this will give you a better chance of finding and identifying them.
- Mark your horses with your name and phone number, and address if possible. Some options are to write it with a livestock crayon, shave the information into the coat with clippers, attach a neck band, or braid a temporary ID tag into the horse's mane. This will help reunite you if your horses are lost or separated.
- Leave a notice at your property for law enforcement or rescue officials that your animals have been evacuated, including your contact information.

What to bring

- Extra halters and lead ropes
- Buckets and at least 5 gallons of water per animal
- Feed and hay
- All essential medications
- Coggins and vaccination records
- Fly spray
- Check with evacuation location- may need additional medical records
- Livestock markers- mark all animals with your name and phone number, in case they get loose
- Flashlight
- Snacks
- First aid kit- both human and equine
- Toilet paper

What to do if you can't evacuate

If you don't have your own trailer to transport your horses, contact friends and neighbors to see if they have open slots in their trailer and can haul horses for you in case of an emergency. Make a plan with them before a threat occurs, so that you won't be rushing to find transportation at the last minute. If you are not able to haul your horses to safety for any reason, you can still take precautions to make them as safe as possible at home during a disaster.

If your horses must stay at home

- Make sure they have a large supply of clean water available- enough for several days
- Stockpile hay, and store it up off the ground to avoid flooding
- Mark them each with your name and phone number, and an out of town emergency contact (in case local phone lines are down)

The leading causes of death in large animals during a disaster are collapsed barns, dehydration, electrocution from power lines, and fence failure. Advance preparation can greatly decrease the odds of an animal being injured.

Stay informed

- For road conditions- call 800-452-9292
- Texas Department of Transportation- <http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/traffic/safety/weather/hurricane.html>
 - o TxDOT Facebook and Twitter feeds will be updated regularly and deliver the most recent information on storm preparedness, road condition and evacuation orders. Follow the link for a number of resources on evacuation routes and traffic reports.

When evacuating animals, you'll want to stick to established highways, especially if there is a risk of flooding. In rural areas, roads can be flooded or muddy in bad weather, and you may become trapped if you don't consider a safe evacuation route to follow when hauling livestock.

Evacuation Centers: this list is not exhaustive, but gives options for evacuating horses in an emergency.

Brackenridge Main Event Center 284 Brackenridge Pkwy Edna, TX 77957	(361)782-7272	375 stalls, will take horses. This would get you out of the storm surge, but moving further inland is ideal in a bad storm.
Brazos County Expo Center 5827 Leonard Rd Bryan, TX 77807	(979)823-3976	\$20 per horse for the entire stay. Includes 1 bag of shavings, water and stall. No outside shavings allowed, additional bags are for sale on site.
JB Wells Arena 2301 CR 197 Gonzales, TX 78629	(830)672-6558	Have a heavy event schedule so call before coming, but they will try to accommodate everyone, no charge.
Retama Animal Hospital 17555 Old Evans Rd Selma, Texas 78154	(210)651-6375	Will only board if animal is injured.
Rose Palace 25665 Boerne Stage Rd, San Antonio, TX 78255	(210)698-3300 Don: (210)834-0609	525 stalls, have events but would accommodate as best they could. \$25/night per horse, possible discount in disaster situation.
Somervell County Expo Center 202 Bo Gibbs Blvd Glen Rose, Texas 76043	(254)897-4509	Will be opening stalls. There is a day charge plus shavings, but charges may be waived in case of an emergency.

Large Animal Checklist

Tow Vehicle

- Fuel tank full
- Tires inflated
- Correct hitch

Trailer

- Tires inflated
- Lights, turn signals and brakes
- Spare tire, jack, tire iron

Home address: _____

Total number of animals: _____ Mares _____ Geldings _____ Foals _____ Stallions _____ Other

Evacuation destination: _____ Phone Number: _____

Supplies

- Halters and leads
- Fly spray
- Medications and instructions
- Hay, feed, water, and buckets
- Tool kit
- Potable water
- Flashlight
- Gloves
- Snacks
- Toilet paper
- First aid kit- equine and human
- Cell phone charger
- Coggins and vaccination records
- Funding allowance for emergency vet care and/or boarding

Actions

- Take digital photos
- Charge cell phone
- Mark animals with phone numbers
- Leave notice for emergency responders that animals have been evacuated

Traffic and evacuation reports from Texas Department of Transportation- <http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/traffic/safety/weather/hurricane.html>

For road conditions call 800-452-9292