

Emergency Management FACTSHEET



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Livestock Sector Emergency Preparedness Tips for Flooding

If you operate a farm or ranch in British Columbia, you know about the many natural hazards that can affect your business. For example, if your operation lies within an area subject to flooding, your business could be severely affected in the short and long term. The BC Ministry of Agriculture has worked with the livestock industries to develop Emergency Management Guides for producers to be as prepared as possible for events such as floods. Please visit <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/emergency/> for links to the beef, dairy and pork guidebooks.

Considerations to mitigate impacts:

- The British Columbia Premises ID program allows for rapid notification of livestock and poultry producers during emergencies. To register, visit the following website: http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/foodsafety/bc_pid.htm
- Put together a list of people, including livestock haulers, who can assist on short notice in the event that livestock need to be relocated.
- Secure copies of insurance policies and other essential farm documents.
- Make sure to have several on-farm and off-farm contact persons with knowledge of or access to all relevant and updated essential information about your farm (contacts, animal identification, relocation information if applicable, location of fuel and chemical storage containers, electrical power shut-off)
- Keep a supply of materials such as rope, sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting and lumber handy for emergency waterproofing. Keep an updated list of local suppliers of those items.
- Protect farm equipment, feed and hay supplies; move to high ground, where possible.
- Remove all chemicals and store away from any flood levels. Pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers may cause pollution and even poisoning.
- Ensure that your wellhead is protected by a surface seal and a cap to prevent downward movement of water and contaminants. Be ready to turn off the electricity to your well pump just prior to the flood.
- Abandoned water wells should be plugged. A qualified well driller registered with the Province of BC must be hired to plug a well.
- Shut off electrical power to areas where flooding is imminent. Keep in mind that wet hay may spontaneously combust due to natural composting processes. High priority areas should consider storing hay away from buildings in the event that the hay storage catches fire after the flood waters have receded.
- Propane and fuel storage containers should have their valves closed and the tanks should be chained to a secure anchor.
- Milk tanks should be anchored firmly or filled with water to ensure they will not float away in floodwaters.
- If your livestock operation is located in a flood plain, investigate the availability of alternative livestock accommodation on higher ground. Consider moving some animals, especially non-milking stock, in the days leading up to potential flooding.
- Consider arrangements for temporary milking of dairy animals.

- Dangerous stock, such as bulls, should be relocated well before livestock relocation becomes necessary.
- All cattle should have positive identification. Keep a record of your animal identification in case animals from different herds have to share a relocation site.
- Mark your animals (not poultry) with livestock marking pencil, using initials or herd letters.
- Notify your dairy representative, milk hauler, processor, feed representative and veterinarian of a planned destination if relocated.
- Pork and poultry producers should consider making arrangements with marketing organizations or processors regarding the sale of animals that are approaching market weight.
- Poultry producers should consider moving birds to the top floor in two-storey barns, if space is available.

Manure Pits:

- If field conditions are suitable, manure pits should be emptied and the manure spread to land two weeks prior to expected flooding.
- Prior to flooding, in high priority areas and in regions where high water tables are expected, manure pits should be filled with water to the half way point to prevent the bottom of the manure pit from breaking due to increased hydrostatic forces.

If your farm is above a flood plain, you should:

- Make sure that you have adequate feed, bedding material, dairy supplies, medications, etc. on hand for an extended period.
- Purchase extra fuel in case of prolonged power disruptions.
- Be prepared where possible to assist other livestock producers who may have to evacuate from the flood plain.

For more information about emergency preparedness, please contact the Ministry at AgriServiceBC@gov.bc.ca or toll-free: 1-888-221-7141 and visit the BC Ministry of Agriculture website at: <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/emergency/>