

Emergency Management FACTSHEET



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Planning for Livestock Relocation During an Emergency

Emergencies and disasters like wildfires, droughts, floods and disease can occur with little warning and have devastating consequences. Livestock producers, like all business managers, need to have a comprehensive strategy to manage these risks and are strongly advised to develop an emergency preparedness plan for their farm. The BC Ministry of Agriculture has worked with the livestock industries to develop Emergency Management Guides for producers who would like to be as prepared as possible for such events such as floods. Please visit <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/emergency/> for links to the beef, dairy and pork guidebooks. This factsheet has been developed to help you prepare a livestock relocation plan.

Things to consider for your livestock relocation plan under all hazard conditions:

- 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
- Is your farm business insurance up to date and what does it cover? In general, insurance is available for livestock injuries or mortalities, temporary livestock relocations, infrastructure losses (barns, buildings, milking equipment, etc.) and for other farm losses. Check and confirm with your broker as to what is or would be covered.
- Is relocating your livestock necessary? In many cases, arranging for producer re-entry and the care, feeding and shelter in place (on farm or on range) may be the best strategy for your livestock.
- If relocation becomes necessary, and depending on the nature of the emergency, producers should investigate shelter and feeding sites that may be available nearby and/or with neighbours.
- Make sure the relocation site is suitable to your needs, is readily accessible and of minimal risk to becoming a high risk zone if the emergency event were to extend to a larger area.
- Identify and record access and egress routes for your livestock.
- Purchase extra supplies for use at the relocation site – marking pencils, rope halters, washtub for cleaning equipment, feeding buckets, etc.
- Compile a list of resources you will need that can assist on short notice with relocation – livestock haulers, stock trailers, loading chutes, portable corrals, etc.
- Ensure all livestock have positive identification and these records are up to date – ear tags, brands or tattoos as a minimum.
- Make plans to relocate any dangerous livestock, such as bulls, well before relocation becomes necessary.
- Relocations can stress your livestock and reduce the animal's ability to withstand infections. Relocations may also require your livestock to be mixed with others thereby increasing exposure to possible infections to which they may have little or no resistance. In advance, discuss with your veterinarian how your livestock can best be protected if they have to be relocated and what medications you should have on hand. As well, review the herd's vaccination program and individual animal vaccination status.

- ❑ In some cases, the various animals of a production system cannot be combined in or moved on common liners, so be prepared to address how this will be handled.
- ❑ Consider making arrangements with marketing organizations or processors regarding the early sale of animals that are approaching market weight.
- ❑ Before you leave, protect your residence, equipment, feed and hay supplies, infrastructure (barns, corrals, fencing, etc.), in case re-entry is delayed and for recovery of farm operations.

Animal Welfare Considerations

Most often the responsible action by a farmer facing an imminent threat of flooding of livestock premises is, if possible, to relocate the livestock. Any relocation plans and actions during an emergency must also include consideration of the welfare of animals at risk, i.e. suffering that would be incurred by abandoned animals.

In cases of animal welfare contraventions during a flood event, the BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has indicated it would consider whether livestock producers had documented evacuation plans in place and had followed them to the best of their ability.

Support for livestock relocations under larger (or declared) emergencies:

Emergency Management BC and the Ministry of Agriculture have developed a Policy to support Local Authorities with livestock relocations under specified conditions. Emergency Management BC will reimburse Local Authorities and First Nations for their response costs related to helping livestock owners move their animals to safety during an emergency. For support with livestock relocation, farm business operators must request assistance directly through their local authority EOC. For more information on this Policy, please see <http://www.embc.gov.bc.ca/em/policy/livestock.html>

The animal relocation process has three key stages, linked to the need to alert and evacuate people from a hazardous area:

Evacuation Alert: A warning is issued about an imminent threat to life and property, and people are asked to be ready to leave on short notice. This is the best time to relocate livestock and other animals, before roads are needed for human evacuation.

Evacuation Order: When the population is determined to be at imminent risk, an evacuation order is issued and people must leave the area immediately. Local police or RCMP enforce evacuation orders. Transportation routes may be restricted for the use of human evacuation, and may not be available for livestock transport.

Evacuation Rescind: An evacuation order or alert is rescinded when it is determined to be safe for residents to return home. This is the time to return animals, as well.

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/>