

Protecting Livestock During a Flood

GUIDELINES FOR SAFE SHELTER AND EVACUATION

Unconfined livestock can usually take care of themselves during floods. Do not let them become trapped in low-lying pens. A number of safety precautions, as outlined at right, can be taken for animals housed in barns during a flood. Above all, be sure animals are evacuated before floodwaters enter barns and other enclosed livestock areas. Animals sometimes refuse to leave during a rapid rise of water and may drown.

KEEPING LIVESTOCK HIGH AND DRY

In broad, level flood plains where floodwaters are seldom deeper than 3 or 4 feet, you may need to construct mounds of soil on which livestock can stay until floodwaters recede. Try to locate the mounds where they will not be washed away by fast-flowing water.

THINK ESSENTIALS, SAFETY IN BARN

- ◆ *Provide feed and water.* Water is essential. Thirsty animals will try to break out to get to floodwaters. If clean water is in short supply, limit feed intake.
- ◆ *If animals are housed with machinery, fasten bales of straw in front of sharp edges and protruding parts such as cutter bars or crank handles.* (Do not use hay, because animals will eat it.) Try to cover wooden paddle wheels on combines or choppers, since these parts can be dangerous.
- ◆ *Block off narrow passageways* where animals would be unable to turn around. A few heavy animals in a narrow dead end can be dangerous both to themselves and the building.
- ◆ *Be absolutely certain that herbicides, pesticides and treated seeds are not even remotely accessible to livestock,* and are stored where floodwater will not contaminate livestock feed or water.
- ◆ *Turn off electricity* at the main switch. Livestock could damage electric fixtures, causing fires or electrocutions.
- ◆ *If there is a possibility that dairy barns may become inundated, drive cattle out of the barn.* During rapid rise of water, cattle often refuse to leave the barn and may drown inside if the water rises high enough. For this reason, begin evacuation measures before a state of emergency.

Additional resources:

Weather-reporting services, such as the National Weather Service, to predict the severity of flooding; your local emergency government office; your county agricultural agent