

DISASTER PRPAREDNESS

by Dr. Laura Harris

Disaster can strike without warning and in a variety of ways. Are you prepared to evacuate and care for your animals if the worst happens?

The best way to protect the animals that depend on you is to have a disaster plan for your pets and livestock. Different types of disasters require different responses. Familiarize yourself with the range of possible problems in your area.

In the event of a disaster, if you must evacuate, the most important thing you can do to protect your animals is to evacuate them, also.

**Never leave your animals behind.
Remember, if your home is unsafe for you,
It is unsafe for them.**

Your animals depend on you to be prepared in the event of a disaster situation. Keep in mind that animals are not allowed in Red Cross Shelters. You must plan ahead so that not only do you have a place to take them where they will be safe; but you must have emergency supplies, food and water available both en route and at your destination.

Below are some suggestions on what emergency/evacuation supplies to pack:

Livestock/horses:

- 48 to 72 hours worth of feed that stores well (pellets or cubes)
- Potable water (minimum 10 gallons per animal per day)
- Water and feed buckets
- Blankets if appropriate for the weather
- Halters and lead ropes
- ID papers / photos / proof of ownership for each animal
(Micro-chipping provides permanent ID)
- Vaccination and Coggins test records
- Routine medications
- First aid kit (see suggestions on CE page of this website)
- Disinfectants (Lysol or bleach)
- Towels

Pets (cats and dogs):

- Leash and collar or harness

ID tags (consider micro-chipping pets)
Medical information, vaccination records, rabies certificates
Regular food and water for 48 to 72 hours
Food and water bowls
Routine medications
Photo of each animal with name and owner contact information on back

In addition to the above evacuation supplies, fill out an emergency reference sheet for each animal, whether livestock or small animal.

Animal name: _____

Species: _____ Breed: _____

Age: _____ Sex: _____ Color: _____ Weight: _____

Rabies tag #(dogs): _____ Microchip #: _____

Medical needs/problems: _____

Owner name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone #s (home/cell/work): _____

Alternate contacts (name/telephone): _____

After you gather the above supplies, identify your destination for the animals and method of transportation.

Try to find a friend in another area that can house your animals in an emergency.
Designate a neighbor or friend that will take responsibility for evacuating your animals if you are not at home.
Keep vehicles well maintained including tires, and fueled.
Keep trailers well maintained – check tires and floors.
Know what evacuation route is best from your home and have at least one alternate route planned.
If you cannot evacuate all of your animals in one trip determine how many

trips will be required and how long each trip will take to take the animals to safety

With any luck at all, all of your disaster preparedness planning will be a huge waste of time. But, if a crisis ever presents itself, you will be able to evacuate your animals without injury or loss of life.