

IS YOUR FARM FLOOD READY?

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration. (NOAA) is forecasting a strong or “super” El Niño for California. County emergency managers and water agencies are preparing for the rainy season. **Are you preparing your farm and livestock?**



Floods move fast. Heavy rain and flash floods can develop with little or no warning.



Livestock take time. Often there isn't time to evacuate or move animals to higher ground.



A plan pays off. Contact the **County Office of Emergency Management (OEM)** to know how their plans include your farm and what they can do for you in a disaster.



BEFORE

Mitigate risk and prepare a plan ahead of severe weather



MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF FLOODING

Identify risks in your area, secure your property and take preventive action to minimize damage.

- **Know your risk** on the [MyHazards Mapping Tool](#) or your county's Hazard Mitigation Plan, and check the [FEMA Flood Map Service Center](#).
- **Identify vulnerable areas** on or near the farm:
 - Nearby creeks, rivers or drainage areas;
 - Low-lying areas with poor natural drainage;
 - Drought-stricken areas;
 - Areas below or downstream from burn areas: most at risk of flooding and mud and debris flows.
- Maintain functional drainage systems.
- Build earthen berms before a flood for protection.
- Per the **State Water Resources Control Board**, farms are required to use berms, dikes and uphill diversions to keep floodwater out of animal confinement and manure storage areas. Check county code for local rules.
- Avoid overcrowding animals in low-lying areas.
- Keep access routes clear and/or reroute fencing in low pens so animals can move to higher ground.
- Repair structures and infrastructure that could cause damage or injury.
- Stack feed and hay on higher ground and cover it to prevent water damage.
- Store fuel and chemicals securely; keep large containers and barrels upright to prevent spills.
- Regularly check and maintain vehicles and livestock trailers.

PLAN YOUR EVACUATION

- Identify higher ground in each pasture.
- If high ground is limited, plan to relocate to fairgrounds, auction facilities, sale barns, racetracks, equestrian centers or neighboring farms on higher ground.
- Arrange trucks and trailers suited to each type of animal, with experienced handlers and drivers.
- No transport? Plan in advance with licensed haulers or neighbors.
- Practice loading horses and livestock so they stay calm.
- Refer to Department of Water Resources [Flood Risk Notification](#), sign up for your county's flood alerts and keep a weather radio.
- Form a buddy system with neighbors or nearby farmers.



PACK AN EVACUATION KIT

- **At least 3-7 days of feed and water**, and include feed pans, buckets for water and supplements.
- **Handling supplies:** rope/lariat, halters/leads, cleaning supplies, knives, portable fencing if needed.
- **Basic medical supplies** and medications.
- **Papers in a waterproof bag:** medical/vaccination records, proof of ownership, brand registrations and recent Coggins tests.



ID & RECORDS

Keep records current and on hand in case animals are separated or relocated.

- Ear tags, brands, microchips, tattoos.
- Photos or video of animals and equipment (for ID and insurance).
- Proof of ownership and brand records.
- Herd inventory.
- Vaccination records and veterinary contacts.



STOCKPILE ON-SITE SUPPLIES

Flooding can cut off water, feed and supplies. Plan to be self-sufficient for extended periods.

- **7-30 days** of feed and clean water that doesn't rely on automatic waterers.
- Store supplies in several locations on the farm.
- Basic animal health supplies.
- Sandbags and plastic sheeting.
- A well-maintained gas-powered generator for power outages or fuel shortages.





DURING

Respond early; response time can be limited

Start evacuating early during a rainstorm, while moving livestock is still possible. If you wait, human safety has to come first, and animal welfare can't be ensured.



- Move cattle out of high-risk pastures.
- Stage trailers and equipment early so you can move quickly.
- Check fencing and access points.
- An **Evacuation Warning** gives animal owners extra time. Use it to leave early.
- **Identify a relocation site.** Your County OEM, Animal Care & Control or local livestock organizations can help coordinate transport and sheltering.
- During a proclaimed emergency, the County Agricultural Commissioner or County OEM may coordinate transport.
- **Can't evacuate?** Move animals to higher ground. If high ground is limited, turn livestock out into larger, safer unconfined pastures rather than leaving them trapped in low barns or pens.
- Shut off utilities and propane tanks if significant flooding is expected.
- Sign up for your county's **Livestock Agricultural Pass**. Check on livestock only after officials declare it safe; a pass doesn't guarantee re-entry.
- Document and compile all expenses and losses for insurance and financial assistance programs.



HUMAN SAFETY FIRST

Do not move animals through moving water. Don't take unnecessary risks by checking on livestock during a storm. Stay alert to rising water, hazardous debris and downed power lines.



AFTER

Recover and get operations running again quickly



- **Assess the farm** for damage and safety concerns: debris, standing water, contaminated floodwater and wet feed.
- **Dispose of hay exposed to floodwater.** It is unsafe to eat and can cause hay fires.
- Make emergency repairs to fencing and facilities before animals return.
- Check animals thoroughly for injuries and make sure shelters are secure and functional.
- Follow **County Health Department** protocols for carcass disposal and use **licensed dead animal haulers**.
- Secure vulnerable equipment.
- Clear standing water.
- **Contact insurance providers.** Up-to-date documents make working with adjusters easier.
- Use financial assistance programs such as U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) **Farm Services Agency (FSA) Disaster Assistance Programs**.
- Access mental health resources designed for farmers.

PUT YOUR PLAN IN WRITING

Because of their size and shelter and transport needs, livestock need a written emergency and evacuation plan. It ensures quick, organized action in severe weather and helps to reduce animal stress and injury. Your plan should include:



Response steps for different weather events



Veterinary and emergency service contacts



Evacuation routes that avoid flood-prone areas



Safe zones on your property

Department of Water Resources flood map

water.ca.gov/Programs/Flood-Management/Community-Resources/Flood-Risk

FEMA Flood Map Service Center

msc.fema.gov/portal/search

MyHazards Mapping Tool

myhazards.caloes.ca.gov

USDA FSA Disaster Assistance Programs

fsa.usda.gov

Local Health Departments

cdph.ca.gov

County Office of Emergency Management

[Livestock Agricultural Pass](#)