

Prepare NOW for Spring Flooding

An Agriculture Producer's Guide

Flooding can be dangerous to livestock and crop health. Flooding can make for difficult access and hinder transportation efforts. If you sustain severe damage to your crops or livestock, contact your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) for more information.

Preparation Guidelines for your farm or ranch:

- Turn off electrical power to all buildings that could flood.
- Move or prepare to move important documents. <https://extension.psu.edu/readyag-workbook>
- Keep an inventory of livestock and machinery.
- Prepare a list of hazardous or potentially hazardous substances.
- Move livestock to higher ground and be sure you have access to feed.
- If you have dairy cattle, develop plans for moving cows to temporary milking facilities and learn about emergency milk pick-up services available in your area.
- Place riprap on the banks of earthen manure storage areas where flowing water may erode berms. <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/flood/media-resources/news-releases/before-the-flood/prepare-your-farm-for-flooding>
- Ensure all animals have some form of identification that will help facilitate their return.
- Evacuate animals whenever possible. Arrangements for evacuation, including routes and host sites, should be made in advance. Alternate routes should be mapped out in case the planned route is inaccessible.
- The evacuation sites should have or be able to readily obtain food, water, veterinary care, handling equipment and facilities.
- Arrange vehicles and trailers needed for transporting and supporting each type of animal. Also make available experienced handlers and drivers.
- If evacuation is not possible, a decision must be made whether to move large animals to available shelter or turn them outside.
- Have an emergency power source such as a standby generator. This is critical if you have livestock confinement buildings that need ventilation.
- Move machinery, feed, grain, fuel and agricultural chemicals, such as pesticides and herbicides, to higher ground.
- Move motors and portable electric equipment to a dry location if possible.

If you have a well, septic system or propane/fuel tank:

- Take steps to reduce the chance of contaminants entering your well. If the well is likely to be affected by the flood, turn off the electrical power to the well and seal it by installing a watertight cap or cover. If you don't have time to install a watertight cap, cover the top of the well with heavy plastic sheeting and secure it with electrical or strapping tape or some other type of waterproof taping material. Don't use duct tape because it is not waterproof.
- If your septic system's drain field may be flooded or saturated, plug all basement drains and drastically reduce water use in the house. Don't run water from a basement sump pump into the septic system or let water from roof gutters or the sump pump discharge into the drain field.
- Plug floor drains if flooding is occurring near the house because water can flow back through the septic system.
- Install check valves in floor drains. Unbolt toilets from the floor and plug the drain pipe. Plug shower drains and washing machine drains to prevent backup.
- Anchor fuel and other tanks to keep them from moving with the floodwaters.
- Determine whether underground tanks are engineered to keep them from lifting out of the ground if the contents are lighter than water.

Additional flood preparedness and disaster programs:

<https://extension.sdstate.edu/available-disaster-resources-given-recent-weather-events>

<https://extension.sdstate.edu/tags/flood-resources-agriculture>

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/index>

<https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/disaster-preparedness-farm-animals>

Additional resources:

<https://dps.sd.gov/emergency-services/emergency-management>

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