

Create a livestock emergency plan now for less stress later  
By Emma Feuz & Jake Hadfield

The recent hurricane affecting the southeastern U.S. has left destruction in its wake, and I can't help but think of the challenges livestock producers in the region are facing. This situation has brought livestock emergency planning to the forefront of my mind. Natural disasters are unpredictable and can create chaotic, stressful situations, where it's easy to overlook crucial details. To help reduce this stress, the USDA recommends creating an emergency plan for livestock. Taking a few simple steps in advance can make a significant difference.

The specific precautions you take will depend on the type and number of livestock you have, as well as the severity of the disaster. However, starting with the basics is a good approach.

**Assemble a preparedness kit.** Include essentials such as feed, water, medications, identification documents, and any other necessary supplies. Regularly check and update the kit to ensure everything is ready when needed.

**Understand your area's risks** and know when evacuation may be required. Plan where you'll take your livestock and how you'll transport them. It's also wise to designate someone to handle these tasks if you're not home when an emergency occurs.

**Assess your property's safety** on a regular basis. Ensure you have sturdy shelters that can withstand extreme weather. Stock enough feed and water to last several days in case you can't reach your animals immediately. Provide warm bedding for winter, and have cooling options available for hot weather.

**Ensure all livestock have identification.** This will be crucial in keeping track of your animals during an evacuation or if they get separated during the disaster.

If you have more questions about livestock emergency preparedness, stop by the Utah State University Extension office or call (435) 623-3450 for assistance.

**Reference:**

USDA. (2016). *Do you have a plan for your livestock should disaster strike?* United States Department of Agriculture. [USDA Livestock Preparedness Fact Sheet](#).