

Storm Season is Here: Be Prepared

Since the Storm Season is upon us and the possibility of bad weather can come anytime, there are several preparations that horse farm owners can enact prior to a storm to enhance your situation:

1. Establish your informational resources
2. Secure structures on the farm. Move loose objects indoors, fill all water tubs, tie jumps and poles together.
3. Store drinking water & fill all water tubs.(if possible a seven day supply) allow for 20 gallons water/horse/day Note: This is one of the most difficult dilemmas to overcome during the clean up period when water sources tend to be contaminated. You may want line garbage cans with plastic bags and fill with water.
4. Have a 7 day supply of feed and hay. Cover with water repellent tarps and place on pallets to reduce the likelihood of water damage.
5. Bed all stalls including aisle ways for pastured horses to be tied during storm. Store other bedding in plastic bags indoors.
6. Secure a generator that can handle your water pump, electrical outlets for a refrigerator and lights. Also make sure you store a supply of gas.

7. Place fly mask on pastured horses to reduce incidence of eye injuries from flying debris.

8. Identify all horses with name tags braided into manes or attached to halters. Consider spray painting your phone number in white or blaze orange paint on both sides of your horse. You can include name, delivery address, phone numbers, and horse's name. Most feed stores carry blank cattle ear tags which can be written on with a permanent marker. Microchips inserted in the neck muscle are also excellent way to identify an animal. In some instances, it may be helpful to have pictures, identification and/or registration papers on your animals should you need to verify ownership. Be sure to store these items in an area that will remain dry.

9. If practical, evacuate yourself and horses well in advance of storm to a safe holding area. It is difficult and dangerous to pull a horse trailer during high winds. Note: Your normally docile mount may become upset and difficult to handle with the environmental changes. Loading a horse during extreme weather may be impossible.

10. If your barn is well constructed leave your horses inside to minimize injury from flying debris. Be aware of rapidly rising water. If you are located in an area prone to flooding, evacuate your animals with a seven day feed/bedding supply prior to the storm. If you are unable to evacuate, remove horses from their stalls and barns to higher ground prior to a rising water threat. Horses trapped in stalls or barns with hinged doors are a leading killer of animals immediately following a major storm. If you are unable to coordinate a move to higher ground,

leave your animals in a pastured area.

11. If your barn is poorly constructed or in poor repair, leave your horses in a naturally protected well-fenced pasture area. Select low area protected by rises (elevations), make certain the area will not be subject to flash flooding, avoid streams, ponds etc., If horses are left outside leave in a naturally protected well fenced area. and keep horses away from shallow rooted trees or trees which had been damaged in previous storms. So keep horses away from old dilapidated structures to minimize flying debris injuries.

12. Secure and store a good supply of temporary fencing materials for repairs. Utilize fencing that will contain horses without electricity. Permanent repairs can be made at a later date.

13. Obtain film to document storm damage. It is suggested that you take pictures of horses, barn, equipment and house, now for insurance purposes. Review insurance policy to determine storm coverage then document accordingly

14. Maintain a emergency first aid kit for you and your horses.
(include the following: Knife, Adhesive Tape, Scissors, Duck Tape, Nylon/Cotton Rope, Extra Halters, Clean Towels, Antiseptic, Soap, Leg Wraps, Topical Antibiotic Ointments, Soap, Tranquilizers, Pain Relievers, Bandages, Bee Sting Kit, Insect Repellent, Flash Light & Batteries)

15. Have vaccinations up to date. (keep all copies of

records/documentation with you) This is very important due to diseases caused by biting insects. Horses should be vaccinated annually for Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis (EEE). The increased mosquito population that occurs immediately after a storm has typically resulted in an increased incidence of encephalomyelitis. Horses located in areas with high mosquito populations should be vaccinated twice per year, six months apart.

After the Storm

1. Check on horse's welfare. Check area for possible toxic tree branches. Be aware of the possibility of Cyanide Poisoning due to the ingestion of wilted wild cherry leaves, twigs, bark or seeds and/or red maple leaves. Symptoms include: weakness, excitability, grasping for breath, incoordination, collapse, convulsions, constipation or diarrhea, bloody urine, and death. Symptoms may result from as little as 1-2 cups of leaves on an empty stomach.
2. Assess storm damage to facilities, barns, fences, roadways and photograph.
3. If power is out notify the power company and advise them of the number of horses on your farm and importance of electricity to their well being.
4. If water is needed contact local fire department and request water

delivery. Make sure you have tubs on hand!

5. If you have a need during/after a storm that assistance is needed notify Emergency Management and they will notify the County Animal Response Team

6. Make sure you let me know of your situation and so I can give you information concerning storm-related agricultural assistance programs for livestock/horse owners.

FEEDING STRATEGIES FOR HORSES RECOVERING FROM A NATURAL DISASTER

http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an_sci/extension/horse/recover.htm