

Dairy and Livestock Farm Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Guide for Maine Farmers

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Adapted with permission from Ontario County, New York Cooperative Extension

How well could you deal with an unexpected catastrophe at your farm?

This fact sheet contains tip sheets and checklists to help you prepare for and recover from an on-farm or community disaster, especially if you are unfamiliar with emergency management limitations regarding livestock. In many cases, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Maine Department of Agriculture Conservation and Forestry, and your local Emergency Management Agency will be your first point of contact for insights and education to help you be prepared. This packet is intended to be a supplement to your own plans and research about personal emergency preparedness.

Bottom line

As an owner of commercial or hobby livestock, you are fully responsible for taking action to shelter and provide for all livestock under your care or control in


an emergency. Police, EMS personnel, Fire Departments and American Red Cross will provide services to assist in human life saving and sheltering, and usually cannot help with animal care.

Disaster preparedness for livestock is cost-effective, necessary, and can significantly improve how quickly your farm can recover from an unexpected incident.

Dairy cattle
Beef cattle
Horses & Mules
Sheep & Goats
Poultry
Swine
Exotic livestock
Small livestock



Most Likely Community and Farm Disasters in Maine


	Effects on Farm and Livestock	More likely
Sustained severe temperatures (extreme heat or cold)	Injured livestock Loss of water resources Decreased production	
Winter storm (Late October through mid-April)	Power outages lasting for days Deep snow Wind damage / downed limbs Hazardous or impossible travel Severely cold temperatures indoors and in barns	
Severe thunderstorm (Mid-April through November)	Extended power outage Barn damage or other unusable facilities Flooding in barn and turn-out areas Wind or hail damage Injured livestock	
Traffic / vehicular emergency	Injured livestock Roaming or trapped livestock Personnel injuries or fatalities	
Livestock disease outbreak	Restricted and quarantined facilities Limited personnel Decontamination and biosecurity measures	
Barn fire	Damaged or unusable facilities Injured livestock	
Local chemical spill or hazardous material release	Complete personnel evacuation Chemical exposure Livestock fatalities and injuries	
Explosion / collapse at or near the farm	Complete or partial personnel evacuation Damaged facilities Injured livestock	
Agri-terrorism	Damaged facilities Disease transmission Farm product contamination Feed contamination Loss of farm personnel Roaming livestock	
Radioactive material release	Contaminated livestock & livestock products Quarantined personnel	

Localized flooding is possible anytime during the year.

Maine Livestock Emergency Readiness Checklist

- _____ **Contact list:** Prominent posting of who to contact in an emergency - farm owner, alternative farm caretaker. Cell phones and landline numbers should be listed.
- _____ **Back-up power:** Farm has an independent generator for essential power needs.
- _____ **Back-up fuel:** Farm has a 2- or 3-day supply of fuel for generator and essential equipment.
- _____ **Fire extinguishers:** Farm fire extinguishers are charged and placed for immediate control of small fires.
- _____ **Insurance:** Farm insurance coverage is up-to-date to include perils to buildings and livestock.
- _____ **Animal identification:** Each animal has identifying tattoo or tag.
- _____ **Water:** Livestock water supply available for 2 or 3 days during power outage.
- _____ **Feed:** Livestock feed supply available for 2 or 3 days without restocking.
- _____ **Veterinary contact:** Office and emergency contact for veterinarian is ready and handy.
- _____ **On-farm veterinary aid:** Animal first-aid supplies, medications, blankets, gloves, and sterile fluids.
- _____ **Animal halters and lead ropes:** Extra materials for large and small livestock handling available.
- _____ **Equipment:** Tractors, trucks, and skid-steer machinery are fueled and moved to an open space for ready access.

Maine Livestock Response Scenarios

	Description	More likely
Sheltering in place (all disasters)	Animals and farm personnel / family all remain at farm before, during, and after disaster event. Farm becomes self-contained for a short period of time, relying on its own water, power, food, and heat.	
On-site livestock evacuation (barn fire, flood)	Livestock are relocated to safer areas on the farm grounds or nearby, such as turn-out pastures, alternate barns, and temporary holding areas.	
Evacuate family and pets off-site without livestock or other large animals (storm, collapse, toxic spill)	The farm is temporarily abandoned by all but one to four personnel who will provide feed, shelter, and safety to livestock periodically.	
Complete farm evacuation (extensive building damage)	All livestock, pets, and people evacuate the farm property to a designated site. Livestock are methodically transported and sheltered in alternate location off-farm.	
		Less likely

Maine Livestock Emergency Planning and Recovery — Dairy Farms

Remember: A disaster that directly affects a dairy farm in Maine can happen whether or not the owner or herd managers are there. The two keys for dairy farm emergency planning are

- 1) Have dependable and adequate back-up power, and
- 2) Make sure employees know what to do.

Back-up power for the dairy:

You will be more flexible in dealing with a disaster if you use two or more generators for separate functions. For example, use one generator exclusively for the milk parlor - vacuum, basic lights, and computer controls. Use a second generator for feeding and water - well pump, water pump, augers, and mixers. If needed, use a third generator for alley scraping and manure removal equipment.

- Service generator(s) and make sure they are operational.
- Run the generator under a load for a couple of hours at least every two months.
- If using a PTO-type generator, make sure the tractor being used has no fuel or oil leaks to prevent fire hazards.

Dairy farm employees:

There are several steps you can take to keep yourself, your farm, and your livestock safer during disasters. Make sure you notify workers and family members about what they are to do. They might not know, even if it is obvious to you. Take an extra step to designate emergency responsibilities among farm workers and family members. This will spread the load of effort when the skies are menacing and you are out of time.

Dairy farm employees need to know:

- How to contact you or a designated farm manager
- What is expected in an emergency situation
- How to shut down equipment in an emergency
- How to operate equipment under back-up power

General dairy farm disaster preparedness tips:

- Have on hand materials to be able to build some temporary fence or panels to make corrals.
- Calf hutches that are not in use should be stacked together if possible or anchored.
- Have extra tarps or shade cloth available to cover equipment if roof is blown off or to provide temporary shade.
- Fill up all tractors, vehicles, generators and storage containers with fuel.
- Put extra tires on top of silo tarps to help hold down plastic.
- Move round bales from low-lying areas to an area that is readily accessible.
- Remove calves from calf hutches made out of plastic or fiberglass if possible. If not, anchor the hutches down.
- Have a supply of intra-mammary mastitis treatment, broad spectrum antibiotics, electrolytes and calcium solutions, antiseptics, bandages, needles and syringes.
- Have some cash on hand (often credit cards will not work).
- Try to work with milk hauler and marketing co-op to have the least amount of milk in bulk tank possible in advance of severe weather.
- Make sure you have a plan for handling animal mortalities.
- Make sure you store hazardous chemicals in a secure location and keep an inventory of materials that you can provide to first responders.
- Fill fuel tanks (both storage and tractors) if possible ahead of a pending storm.

Maine Livestock Emergency Planning and Recovery — Livestock Farms

Remember: A disaster that directly affects livestock in Maine may occur whether or not the owners are there.

Non-dairy livestock farms in Maine include pastured beef farms, milking and meat goat herds, grassbased poultry, sheep farms, and several small-scale hog farms. These are smaller, family operations, with no or few employees, scattered through every town. The ability to manage livestock in a disaster will vary considerably.

Nearly all these farms will shelter-in-place in a disaster or move livestock onsite to safer areas. Some will require a moderate level of assistance for the care, feeding, and watering of the livestock if their own resources become overwhelmed. Many livestock owners will easily network with other owners if communications are available in an emergency.

The most common animal response situations will be:

- Owner not present nor available before, during, or after a disaster.
- Escaped or stranded livestock emergencies.
- Owner unable to manage basic animal husbandry due to loss of power, inability to travel, or mass livestock injuries or fatalities.

Tips for livestock owners in Maine:

- **Write your contact information in a conspicuous place** outside livestock holding areas, such as a placard near a barn entrance or a pasture gate. If you at an off farm job, make it easier for the emergency personnel to get in touch. Designate a back-up contact person and include their phone number in addition to your own. The minutes saved can make a big difference for your farm.
- **Survey your property** for the best location for animal confinement during deep snow, flooding, hazardous travel, or power outage. Identify food (hay, bagged feed) and water sources (pond, stream) that do not rely on electricity, which could be lost during an emergency.
- **Identify all of your livestock clearly** (brands, ear tags, nose prints, tattoos) and make your inventory is current. You can designate which of your animals are of higher priority if your resources become stretched too thin. Unnecessary animals may need to be culled in an emergency and it is better if this choice has been made ahead of time.
- **Stock up with extra supplies** as winter starts — extra water, extra feed, and if possible, extra bedding. You can always use these supplies after a few months once the threat of winter stranding is over.



Emergency Contacts for the Farm

Complete this sheet and have it posted conspicuously in the barn, stables, and other livestock areas.

Farm owner contacts:	
Home phone:	
Barn phone:	
Cell phone/pager:	
Alternate farm caretaker: (neighbor, off-site family member)	
Home phone:	
Cell phone/pager:	
Farm veterinarian name:	
Sheriff Department:	
Name/phone of local fire department:	
Livestock hauler (if used):	
Emergency Management Agency:	
Maine Department of Agriculture Conservation and Forestry:	
State veterinarian:	
University of Maine Cooperative Extension contact:	



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