

DANR Guide to Disaster Preparedness

Why prepare emergency plans for animals?

When disasters strike, animals as well as people need to be safely relocated. Californians value their pets and livestock, but are often unprepared for sudden disasters such as earthquakes, fires and floods. Local emergency plans are usually limited to evacuating people, and emergency shelters for humans deny admission to pets for health and safety reasons. Large animals require specialized transport and holding areas, which may be difficult or impossible to arrange during a sudden disaster. No one wants to leave animals behind, but when people are unwilling to enter a shelter or refuse to evacuate during an emergency, they remain at risk, could be arrested, and place rescue workers at risk.

Effective, well-rehearsed strategies for pet and livestock safety must be in place before a disaster occurs. Disaster preparedness can mean the difference between undue loss and suffering of animals, which adds additional trauma to human victims, and *successful evacuation and care for both people and animals.*

But how do we go about developing a workable, comprehensive plan to deal with animal issues? It is obvious that government agencies alone do not generally have the personnel available to respond to animal emergencies. Therefore, it is imperative that your county develop good working relationships with government emergency response agencies, support agencies and individuals involved in animal care.

Objectives of the DANR Guide

This guide is intended to provide useful information about developing a disaster response plan, about disaster preparedness training and resources, and to stimulate your thoughts on how Cooperative Extension can engage in local disaster mitigation activities or become involved in training youth to responsibly support community needs.

Private veterinary practitioners have been identified in each county to coordinate medical services, but during a crisis they need assistance with communication, triage, transportation and shelter. The UC system has facilities throughout California capable of providing temporary shelter for livestock, and Cooperative Extension Advisors have a network of contacts enabling them to find necessary resources that may be unavailable to others.

There are many ways DANR participants can choose to become involved in disaster preparedness:

- Identify a disaster coordinator within each County Office (with special focus on Livestock, 4-H, and Human Resource Advisors), and develop a structured disaster service team.
- Provide disaster preparedness education materials and presentations, and identify training and certification opportunities.
- Provide volunteer training and coordination for organizations such as 4-H, FFA and Scouts through Cooperative Extension in conjunction with local agencies.
- Develop a system of shared resources—including communications resources—throughout California that could be used during a disaster in any area.

The DANR guide offers selected information, animal care procedures and emergency-related forms that show many types of disaster preparedness activities in which individuals and groups can become involved at the local level. Check the references listed in this guide for more elaborate information on disaster preparedness and emergency response.

Contact your CVMA veterinary coordinator (see page 17), county OES official, or OES animal services coordinator (see the county government section of your telephone book) for further information on how to be ready to offer support during an emergency or to build a disaster preparedness program.

Your comments are invited and are most welcome. Please inform us of any corrections or omissions, and please share with us any activities you pursue as a result of this effort.

On the World Wide Web

The *DANR Guide to Disaster Preparedness* is also available online at the URL below. Information and sample forms may be downloaded, reprinted and freely distributed for educational purposes and for use in setting up disaster volunteer programs in your area. However, further *publication* of the material in this guide requires permission from the copyright holders.

DANR Guide to Disaster Preparedness:

www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/vetext/INF-DI_DANRGuide.html

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