



Protecting Your Horses: Disaster Preparedness Review

You, the horse owner, are ultimately responsible for the survival and well being of your animals. The following are some ways to prepare your animals, and yourself, for a disaster.

- Identify your animals with one of the following:
 - permanent brand cards
 - brands, tattoos, microchips
 - current photographs
 - have tags attached to all halters
- Have a list of prearranged places:
 - where you can obtain veterinary care
 - housing, feed, and shelter for your animals.
- Develop a personal emergency preparedness plan.
- Practice evacuation, establish a family meeting place.
- Develop a list of phone contacts outside your area.
- Set up a telephone tree to help neighbors and friends.
- Train horses for transportation.
- Have a disaster kit for humans and animals.
- Have “HELP” and “OK” signs which can be seen from the road by disaster workers.

There are multiple types of disasters for which you should be prepared. Some of these disasters include floods, thunder and lightning storms, tornadoes, winter storms, and wildfires.

Wildfires are an ongoing threat in Colorado and seem to be the disaster that most people truly are not prepared for. Some things you can do to mitigate wildfire disasters are build with fire resistant materials, have sprinkler systems and smoke detectors for barns, be careful where you allow your farrier to hot shoe, store firewood and other flammables away from buildings, store hay and bedding in buildings away from horses, and livestock if possible, inspect barn wiring (rodent damage is common), properly dispose of manure and other wastes, and conduct fire drills.

To prevent fires, you can consult with a fire department to improve safety, You can do so by maintaining wide spacing between trees, cut back any vegetation over hanging buildings., maintain a 30-foot firebreak between buildings and vegetation (75-feet if in pine forest), and use cotton lead ropes and halters as nylon and other synthetic materials melt and can cause severe burns. Finally, keep fire tools handy such as ladders, buckets, shovels, axes, hoses, and rakes.

To get started with your preparedness plan, here are some contacts and sources of information.

- Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.Fema.gov/
- Your county's extension office
- CEC vets and staff

Be sure to update your reverse 911 number with your cell phone number. Contact your local county for information on this as each county differs.