



## **Proposal for the establishment of a Emergency Preparedness Plan for Animals within the Scenic Rim Region**

In Queensland due to our Geographic and Climatic Considerations we can be subject to floods and fire catastrophes. When such a catastrophic event overwhelms a community, the first instinct for many is to grab their loved ones and head to safety. Many Queenslanders couldn't likewise imagine leaving their animals behind but haven't included the necessary preparations in their own emergency plans.

Emergencies come in many forms, and they may require anything from a brief absence from your home to permanent evacuation. Each type of disaster requires different measures to keep pets safe. The best thing a person can do for their pets/Livestock is to be prepared.

The likelihood that you and your animals will survive an emergency such as a fire or flood, Cyclones or terrorist attack depends largely on emergency planning done today. Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, is assembling an animal emergency supply kit and developing a pet care buddy system. Whether you decide to stay put in an emergency or evacuate to a safer location, you will need to make plans in advance for your pets. Keep in mind that what's best for you is typically what's best for your animals. If it is not safe for you to stay, it is not safe for them either.

Listed below are some basic steps any Queenslander can do to ensure the safety of their pets.

## **Get a Rescue Alert Sticker**

Most Australians will want to take their pets with them during a major evacuation. However there may be circumstances where this is not practical. In this event you should let any rescuer or authority know what animal is inside the residence. You can imagine the surprise of a fireman if during checking your home to ensure safety of its occupants he comes across an angry dog or a collection of venomous snakes.

In the United States several agencies offer a free emergency pet alert sticker<sup>1</sup> for your home. This easy-to-use sticker will let people know that pets are inside your home. Make sure it is visible to rescue workers, and that it includes:

1. the types and number of pets in your household; 2) the name of your veterinarian; and 3) your veterinarian's phone number. If you must evacuate with your pets, and if time allows, write "EVACUATED" across the stickers.
2. You can easily make this notice up yourself if such a sticker is not available.

## **Arrange a Safe Haven**

Arrange a safe haven for your pets in the event of evacuation. **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR PETS BEHIND.** Remember, if it isn't safe for you, it isn't safe for your pets. They may become trapped or escape and be exposed to numerous life-threatening hazards. Contact your veterinarian for a list of preferred boarding kennels and facilities in your area.

1. Ask your local animal shelter if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets (When animals become lost during a disaster, they often end up at a local shelter).
2. Identify hotels or motels outside of your immediate area that accept pets.
3. Ask friends and relatives outside your immediate area if they would be willing to take in your pet<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex.a.

## **Evacuation Preparation**

If you must evacuate your home in a crisis, plan for the worst-case scenario. If you think you may be gone for only a day, assume that you may not be allowed to return for a week. When recommendations for evacuation have been announced, follow the instructions of local and state officials. To minimize evacuation time, take these simple steps:

Keep an Evacuation-Pack and supplies handy for your pets. Make sure that everyone in the family knows where it is. This kit should be clearly labelled and easy to carry. Items to consider keeping in are attached.<sup>3</sup>

You may wish to also consider stocking up on the items you may need during a disaster now, so you do not get caught unprepared. Such as One-week supply of food. One-week supply of fresh water. If officials declare your household water unfit to drink, it's also unsafe for your pets. Medication. If your animal takes medication, a replacement supply may not be easily available following a disaster.

Comfort your animals they will appreciate your calm presence and soft, comforting voice if they are stressed following a disaster or while evacuated, and you may find it comforting to spend time with them, too.

### **Choose “Designated Caregivers”**

This step will take considerable time and thought. When choosing a temporary caregiver, consider someone who lives close to your residence but not so close to be affected by the same emergency situation. Consider people who have met your pet and have successfully cared for animals in the past. He or she should be someone who is generally home during the day while you are at work or has easy access to your home. A set of keys should be given to this trusted individual. This may work well with

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<sup>2</sup> *Red Rover from crisis to care 06/13 info@redrover.org*

<sup>3</sup> *Annex.1.*

neighbours who have pets of their own—you may even swap responsibilities, depending upon who has accessibility.

### **Special Considerations**



### **Special Considerations for Birds**

1. Birds should be transported in a secure travel cage or carrier.
2. In cold weather, make certain you have a blanket over your pet's cage. This may also help reduce the stress of travelling.
3. In warm weather, carry a spray bottle to periodically moisten your bird's feathers.
4. Have recent photos available and keep your bird's leg bands on for identification.
5. If the carrier does not have a perch, line it with paper towels that you can change frequently.
6. Keep the carrier in as quiet an area as possible.
7. It is particularly imperative that birds eat on a daily basis, so purchase a timed feeder. If you need to leave your bird unexpectedly, the feeder will ensure his daily feeding schedule.
8. Items to keep on hand: Catch net, heavy towel, blanket or sheet to cover cage, cage liner.

## **Special Considerations for Reptiles**

9. A snake may be transported in a pillowcase, but you should have permanent and secure housing for him when you reach a safe place.
10. Take a sturdy bowl that is large for your pet to soak in. It's also a good idea to bring along a heating pad or other warming device, such as a hot water bottle.
11. Lizards can be transported like birds (see above).

## **Special Considerations for Small Animals**

12. Small animals, such as mice and guinea pigs, should be transported in secure carriers with bedding materials, food and food bowls.
13. Items to keep on hand: Salt lick, extra water bottle, small hide box or tube, a week's worth of bedding.

## **Helping Pets Recover after a Disaster**

Your pet's behavior may change dramatically after a disaster, becoming aggressive or defensive. Be aware of their wellbeing and protect them from hazards to ensure the safety of other people and animals. Watch your animals closely and keep them under your direct control as fences and gates may have been damaged. Pets may become disoriented, particularly if the disaster has affected scent markers that normally allow them to find their home<sup>4</sup>.

Be aware of hazards at nose and paw or hoof level, particularly debris, spilled chemicals, fertilizers and other substances that might not seem to be dangerous to humans. Consult your veterinarian if any behavior problems persist.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.readyforwildfire.org/Animal-Evacuation/>

A microchip is the best way to reunite lost pets. Your pet should also be wearing up-to-date identification at all times. Include your cell phone number and the phone number of a friend or relative outside your immediate area. If your pet is lost, you'll want to provide a number on the tag that will be answered even if you're out of your home.

Practice loading your pet into a carrier and vehicle. If you're away find a friend who can evacuate your pet along with its Grab and Go Bag. Remember, you are ultimately responsible for the wellbeing of your pet in an emergency. You now have the tools and resources to assist you in meeting this responsibility. Your pet will thank you for it and one day just might save your life in return!

## Agricultural Animals



### Introduction

Animals are as important to some people as any family member. When disasters strike they affect the wellbeing of animals, and the public has justifiably asked "Who's looking out for the animals? What plans do we have for them? What about the horses and the cattle? Safeguard your animals, your property and your business by taking precautions now, no matter what the risks are in your area. Do you know how to protect your farm animals from risks posed by natural disasters, including collapsed barns, freezing weather, flooding, dehydration, and electrocution? From barn fires to hazardous materials spills to natural disasters, emergency situations often call for special measures to shelter, care for, or transport farm livestock, and poultry.

Although the consequences of emergencies can be similar, knowing the risks specific to your community and your region can help you better prepare. It is even more important to be aware of the risks in your area if you live on a farm with livestock and poultry.

### Plan to shelter in place

If you remain on your property during an emergency, you will need to decide whether to confine large animals in an available shelter or leave them outdoors. Survey your property for the best location for animal sheltering. Ensure that your animals have access to high areas in case of flooding, as well as to food and clean water.

If your pasture area meets the following criteria, your livestock may be better off out in the pasture than being evacuated. A safe pasture has:

1. Native tree species can uproot easily.
2. No overhead power lines or poles.
3. No debris or sources of blowing debris.
4. No barbed wire fencing.
5. At least one acre (0.4 hectares) of open space. Livestock may not be able to avoid blowing debris in smaller spaces.

Ensure that you have enough food and essentials supplies for you and your family for at least 72 hours (three days). If your property does not meet these criteria, consider evacuating your animals, but only on the advice of your veterinarian or local emergency management officials.

### **Plan to evacuate**

1. Contact your local emergency management authority and become familiar with at least two possible evacuation routes. Familiarize all family members and employees with your evacuation plans.
2. Arrange in advance for a place to shelter your animals. Plan ahead and work within your community to establish safe shelters for farm animals, such as fairgrounds, other farms, racetracks, and exhibition centers.
3. Ensure that sufficient feed and medical supplies are available at the destination.
4. Be ready to leave as soon as an evacuation is ordered. In a slowly evolving emergency, like flooding, plan to evacuate at least 72 hours before anticipated high point.
5. If you will be hauling a high-profile trailer such as a horse trailer, it may not be possible to evacuate heavy loads safely in high winds. Also, once the emergency



hits roads may be restricted to emergency service vehicles and not open to traffic.

6. Set up safe transportation. You will need to have access to trucks, trailers, and other vehicles suitable for transporting each type of animal, along with experienced handlers and drivers. You may need access to a portable loading ramp to load, or unload, animals.
7. If animals are evacuated to a centralized location such as a fair ground for shelter and will co-mingle with other animals of unknown health status try to:
  - Make sure your animals have sufficient identification (e.g. ear tags or brands) to be able to tell them apart from others.
  - minimize the contact among animals from different premises.
  - protect feed and water from contact with wild animals and birds. Verify the health and vaccination status of animals which must be co-mingled.
  - handle any mortalities in a manner to minimize the possible spread of contagious diseases.
  - monitor the health and wellbeing of the animals on a daily basis, whether sheltered in place or evacuated. Seek appropriate veterinary medical advice and services on suspicion of an animal disease problem.
  - Accommodation will need to include milking equipment for dairy cows (as applicable). Milk may need to be stored separately from cows of other herds. Milk “pickup” companies should be notified where to pick up the milk.

### **Prepare a farm emergency kit**

Make an emergency kit so you have emergency supplies in one location and let everyone know where it is. Check and update contents regularly. Include the following items and personalize according to your needs:

1. Current list of all animals, including their location and records of feeding, vaccinations, and tests. Make this information available at various locations on the farm.
2. Supplies for temporary identification of your animals, such as plastic neckbands and permanent markers to label animals with your name, address, and telephone number.
3. Basic first aid kit.
4. Handling equipment such as halters, cages, blankets, and appropriate tools for each kind of animal. Include bolt-cutters to quickly free animals in an emergency.
5. Water, feed, and buckets. Tools and supplies needed for sanitation.
6. Emergency equipment such as a cell phone, flashlights, portable radios (with weather radio band) and batteries. Other safety and emergency items for your vehicles and trailers.
7. Food, water, and emergency supplies for your family<sup>5</sup>.

### **Backyard poultry evacuation kit**

Leg bands with an emergency telephone number and photos of birds can help you identify them if they escape or get lost.

Feed and water for 7 -10 days. Vitamin and electrolyte packs (stress packs) may help ease stress.

Sufficient feeders and waterers for the number of birds.

Detergent, disinfectant, gloves and other cleaning supplies for cleaning cages.

Feeders and drinkers.

Extra absorbent bedding material (newspapers can work temporarily) to line cages or temporary coops.

If evacuating chicks, consider their special needs (heat, food, equipment).

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<sup>5</sup> *Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA)*

## Equine and livestock evacuation kit



7-10-day supply of feed, supplements, and water

Bandanas (to use as blindfolds)

Batteries (flashlight, radio)

Blankets

Copies of veterinary records and proof of ownership

Cotton halter

Duct tape

Emergency contact list

First aid kit

Flashlight

Fly spray

Grooming brushes

Heavy gloves (leather)

Hoof knife

Hoof nippers

Hoof pick

Hoof rasp

Instructions

Diet: record the diet for your animals.

Medications: list each animal separately, and for each medication include the drug name, dose and frequency. Provide veterinary and pharmacy contact information for refills.

Knife (sharp, all-purpose)

Leg wraps and leg quilts

Maps of local area and alternate evacuation routes in addition to GPS (in case of road closures)

Non-nylon halters and leads (leather/cotton)

Nose leads

Plastic trash cans with lids (can be used to store water)

Portable livestock panels

Radio (solar, hand cranked and/or battery operated)

Rope or lariat

Shovel

Tarpaulins

Trash bags

Twitch

Water buckets

Wire cutters

### **Equine identification**

- microchip
- tattoo
- halter tag
- neck collars
- leg band
- brand
- mane clip
- luggage tag braided into tail or mane
- clipper-shaved information in the animal's hair
- livestock marking crayon, non-toxic, non-water-soluble spray paint, or non-water-soluble markers to write on the animal's side
- permanent marker to mark hooves.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.avma.org/public/EmergencyCare/Pages/Large-Animals-and-Livestock-in-Disasters.aspx>

## How zoos protect and evacuate animals during wildfires

Within the Scenic Rim Region there are several small private and one large Zoos. Not all animals can be safely evacuated. With fires in the bush becoming increasingly common, zoos must prepare for disaster. In California the wildfires have put planning for fire emergencies at the forefront, zoos across that country are ramping up their plans to protect their animals from catastrophe.

This month two Zoos have hit the headlines in America, Los Angeles Zoo is home to more than 1,400 mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles many of them endangered species and Santa Barbara Zoo came very close to being wiped out by fire.

Zoo staff carried out the following actions and it suggested that Wildlife parks, Zoos and private wildlife rescuers (*many of whom have large numbers of animals they are rehabilitating in private small holdings*) here do the same.

Staff from the above Zoos have a list of priority animals, those that are highly endangered, genetically very valuable for breeding programs, or are the type of “ambassador animals” that bring in visitors. Those are the animals they attend to first in an emergency.

Other animals were relocated (birds and some small primates) to the parking lot which was sheltered from the smoke. Transport crates to transport large animals, although initially considered was rejected as many animals cannot cope with the stress of being crated and moved. Many are not trained to go into crates, like birds or small mammals, and moving such big or dangerous animals such as a Giraffe or Lion is a logistical nightmare, particularly in a hurry<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2018/11/zoos-protect-animals-fire-disaster/>

## Annex.1.

### Emergency Preparedness for Pets



Is your family prepared for a major emergency, evacuation or natural disaster? How about your pets? Making arrangements before the chaos of an emergency can increase your pet's chances of survival and greatly reduce the fear and anxiety your pet will experience<sup>8</sup>.

Create a pet emergency survival kit (Grab n' Go Bag). Keep your pet's kit with your family's emergency survival kit for quick and easy access.

Some items to include:

- Towel/blanket with your smell on it
- Basic pet first aid kit
- Can opener
- Fresh water and canned food
- Any medication that your pet may need
- Current vaccination records
- A photo of your pet in kit or mobile phone – can prove ownership
- Remember to pack poop bags!

Store your Grab and Go Bag in a pet crate. Check the kit twice a year (an easy way to remember is to do it when you check your smoke alarms bi-annually) to ensure freshness of food, water, and medication, and to restock any supplies you may have "borrowed" from it. A microchip is the best way to reunite lost pets. Your pet should also

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<sup>8</sup> FEMA R-7 2017 [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

be wearing up-to-date identification at all times. Include your cell phone number and the phone number of a friend or relative outside your immediate area. If your pet is lost, you'll want to provide a number on the tag that will be answered even if you're out of your home. Practice loading your pet into a carrier and vehicle. If your away find a friend who can evacuate your pet along with its Grab and Go Bag.

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Annex. A



Sample of type of Emergency card you can leave in your window for emergency services to see.