

POULTRY FARMERS DISASTER TIPS

ARE YOU PREPARED?

How well are you prepared for a natural disaster? While there are no remedies to stop 100% of possible damages, many things can be prepared in advance to help cope with a natural disaster. Proper planning before a disaster occurs can decrease the severity of the impact and can help a poultry producer return to normal operating conditions quickly and safely.

WHAT TYPES OF NATURAL DISASTERS ARE LIKELY TO OCCUR?

Hurricane season (June 1-November 30) can bring high winds, torrential rains, flooding, and tidal surges in coastal areas. Cold winter weather forecasts can lead to ice storms or heavy snow which can not only block roads, but may lead to overloading of roof structures and eventual building collapse.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PREPARE?

Gathering information is a good place to start preparing. Prepare a list of all important contacts with emergency contact numbers, such as: local police and fire department, local emergency management office, hospital, physician, school, integrator and flock supervisor, feed supplier, fuel supplier, propane supplier, equipment maintenance company, insurance company, extension office, electric company, phone numbers for family and neighbors, etc. Gather important materials, such as: standard operating procedures, material safety data sheets for chemicals in use, maintenance manuals for equipment, financial information, insurance policy, etc. Prepare a checklist, they are helpful for remembering information during a stressful situation.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PREPARE?

Chickens can't wait for water, feed, heat, and ventilation, these basic needs will need to be met. Normal feeding may be interrupted during an emergency. Depending on feed availability and open roads, companies will prioritize which farms get feed first. The correct feed may not always be available, but take what you can get. It may be necessary to ration feed, feeding only enough for maintenance and reducing hours of light. Are you prepared for your generator to run continually for 2-3 weeks? Your generator should be designed to match demand and capable for extended operation. Make sure your generator is properly maintained and load tested weekly. Keep your generator fuel tanks full. Keep spare parts on hand, including several extra fuel filters.

TOP PRIORITY TASK

Chickens can't wait for water, feed, heat, and ventilation. These are basic needs for the birds that must be met. Feed Availability and possible road closures, may interrupt normal feeding routines during an emergency and companies will prioritize which farms get feed first. The correct feed may not always be available, but take what you can get. It may be necessary to ration feed, feeding only enough for maintenance and reducing hours of light. Are you prepared for your generator to run continually for 2-3 weeks? Your generator should be designed to match demand and capable for extended operation. Make sure your generator is properly maintained and load tested weekly. Keep your generator fuel tanks full. Keep spare parts on hand, including several extra fuel filters.

SAFETY IS YOUR TOP PRIORITY

Do not enter collapsed or damaged buildings until their structural integrity can be verified. Consult your integrator or Department of Agriculture representative if your chickens are trapped inside collapsed poultry houses and may have to be euthanized. Biosecurity is still important, but not at the expense of safety. In severe weather, appropriate clothing and footwear takes precedent. In all emergencies, personal safety and the safety of your family are top priority. Do you have an emergency supply of food and water? Are your prescription medications filled? It is also important to keep extra batteries on hand to operate flashlights and radios.

If you are advised to 'stay put' during the crisis, you should be aware of the possible disruption of many essential services as outlined here:

- **Electricity** - have you got a generator? Fuel?
- **Water** - your hens will need access to safe, clean water.
- **Food** - you and your flock need to eat!

RUNNING OUT OF FEED

- If for a day or so, chickens can exist on a variety of other foods; it's not ideal but won't harm them, however might stop them from laying eggs.
- Oatmeal, corn, and cat food/ dog food can help in a pinch
- Bread, fruits, leftover meats, and greens
- Take a picture of feed tag or make a copy.

TRANSPORT

- Couple of days of fuel for vehicles and equipment
- Invest in plastic transport cages
- Have in mind destination to move your flock.

IDENTIFICATION

- Invest in color leg bands in case you send flock to a neighboring farm
- livestock marking crayon, non-toxic, non-water-soluble spray paint, or markers to write on the animal's side

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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