

Massachusetts Farm Emergency Plan Template

Note: The information requested in this document is not intended for collection by anyone, it is for your personal use only. The items discussed are intended to aid you in developing your own specific plan relevant to your unique situation. There is an extensive amount of information included in this template, not all of it may be relevant to your specific situation or the type of animal species on your farm. This is a living document your comments and suggestions are welcome.

An emergency can strike your farm at any time. It's important to be prepared with information to assist emergency responders and others if called upon when a disaster like a fire, flood or disease outbreak happens. If you need assistance from your community contact your Public Safety Officials, i.e, emergency management director, police and fire.

Current operational procedures exist for local police, fire and emergency response teams, but many of the individuals involved in these units may have little experience or knowledge of the workings of a farm. Farms may have equipment, building structures, livestock bio-security measures, farm chemicals and fuels, power usage and generation, and other aspects of raising livestock and growing crops that require special attention by emergency responders.

This farm emergency plan will provide rapid information on the description and location of production facilities, animals and equipment to minimize the devastating effects of a disaster on your farm and provide additional safety information to emergency responders. Review and update this emergency list annually with your family and employees. **Make sure family members and employees are aware of the location of this emergency information, including being able to describe directions to the farm.**

Make copies of this emergency contact information and give to family members, employees and neighbors, and place a copy near all telephones.

Keep in mind that you may not be present when an event occurs on your premise. This fact alone highlights the need to include all pertinent information about your animals in an easily accessible location. Familiarize yourself with your local emergency planners.

Items to include in your farm emergency plan: **remember to update your plan as needed.** Not all of these items will apply to each individual situation.

- List of family members, employees or neighbors, who are familiar with your farm business. Keep communications open with your neighbors. (see appendix A)
- Telephone list to contact family members or employees. (see appendix A)
- List of emergency contacts. (see appendix A)
- Contact information of medical care provider. (see appendix A)
- Telephone contact list of farmers to help provide livestock care, emergency feed and water, power, etc. (see appendix A)

- Description of medical conditions or medical information of family members and employees. Consider providing this information to your local emergency services personnel.
- Description of location of the farm and directions from nearest major intersection. Why? An employee unfamiliar with the area may be the one that needs to direct emergency personnel to the farm.
- A general diagram of the farm that includes the possible location of chemical, fuels, livestock, equipment, overhead and buried utilities, etc. (see appendix B)
- Location of spare keys for vehicles or buildings.
- Contact information of businesses providing services such as veterinarian, heavy equipment, electricity, livestock and milk hauling, insurance, financial, etc. (see appendix A)
- List of suppliers of chemicals, fertilizer, drugs, etc.
- List of equipment essential to provide power to operate farm in the event of a power outage or natural disaster. Include equipment needed in the event of an extended power outage, such as well pumps, feed mill, egg processors, office systems (phones, computers, etc.), and generators. Educate all family members/employees regarding the operation of the emergency equipment. (see appendix A)
- If requesting assistance in obtaining help through your local emergency management agency i.e, generators, sandbags, etc, you will need specifics on the type and size you need. In regards to generators you need to know the size of the generator based on kilowatts.
- Description of location of important farm and personal documents. (see appendix A)
- Safe storage of farm and personal financial information in fire-proof boxes or off-site safe deposit boxes.
- Fire-proof backup files of computer records.
- Off-site meeting location and contacts for family and employees to gather following a disaster to assess the situation and coordinate response. (see appendix A)
- Leased Buildings. Contact information as to the owner of animals in leased building should be posted inside each leased building. A contact should be identified for each leased location, in the event of a natural disaster and you are unable to reach the premise.
- Census of animals on the farm by buildings. (see appendix C)
- Feed (type, quantity, etc.;;) and water (restricted, medicated, etc.;;) instructions for each building. (see appendix C)
- List of special circumstances regarding certain animals. List of medications, what, when, etc. (see appendix C)
- If animal or animal products are entering the food chain, please identify method for marking animals or products that need to be withheld. Predetermine a disposal method for your product in the event of a disaster preventing it leaving your premise, such as shipping milk, etc.
- Barn Fires, what will you do in the event of a fire? What precautions are you taking to prevent one?
- **Risk Assessment in the event of a disease outbreak. Your risk assessment activities will produce a list of relevant disease outbreak issues. Your discussion of these issues will lead to greater awareness and heightened skills for diagnosis and response when a disease**

emergency is apparent. The first step is often to understand just what kind of biosecurity/disease emergency is underway. (see appendix E)

- Request an energy audit for your farm, these are usually done at no charge to you. This can be accomplished by contacting your local electrical company, or the Department of Agricultural Resources Alternative Energy Specialist Gerry Palano at 617-626-1706.
- Do you have a disposal plan for mortalities?
- In the event of a natural disaster, could you implement your carcass disposal plan with limited resources, help, etc, or would you need an alternative site for disposal.

- Source of water, is it supplied by your local town or do you have a private well? Do you have a generator on the premise that can power your well pump? Inquire with your local Emergency Management Director (EMD) as to the likelihood of obtaining water from the fire/highway department in the event of a disaster.
- Compile and regularly update a complete list of all identification numbers and veterinary records for all animal species on premise. Don't forget Fido and Fluffy.
- To help with identifying problem areas in your plan, re-examine a recent disaster you were involved with and make a list of the obvious problems you encountered. (see appendix D)
- In the event of companion animals, backyard horses etc, do you have a plan in place to care for them in the event you are unable to.

Barn Owner/Lessee Information.

Barn owner/lessee information is also very important. This information ideally should be posted in the same location in everyone's barn. Inside the barn door on the left side, attached to the wall. This enables the fireman/first responder to quickly locate the owner/lessee. This packet of information shall include several sheets. The first sheet should be contact information (see attached sheet), listing the owner/lessee name, contact number (preferably cell number), and an alternate contact name and number. Grain suppliers should also be listed here. A census of all the animals in the barn should also be included on the first sheet. This packet of information will enable someone to care for the animal/s if the owner/lessee is sick, critically injured or cannot be located. You should have on hand at least a weeks worth of feed and water.

Grain barrels/bins need to be labeled, with a label or feed bag tag. It is very difficult to feed someone else's animals if you do not know what barrel/bin has what feed. Or perhaps you are told to use the green barrels and there are 4 green barrels in the barn all with a different looking (color, pellet or mash) type of feed.

In the event of a natural disaster, is there someone familiar with the animals located on that premise that could feed and care for them, if you or your personnel were unable to reach that location. Do you also have a power source available for that location, preferably located on site.

What you can do to help prevent Barn Fires

- Do not block roadways to your barn with tractors and other vehicles. Fire apparatus need a clear path to your barn.
- Dirt access roads need to be graded and maintained to allow for the passage of large and heavy fire trucks.
- Do not lock or obstruct farm gates.
- Farm roadway gates should be at least 12-16 feet wide.
- Do not store combustible materials in a barn that is used to house animals. If you do store combustibles in your barn, make sure the local fire department is aware of this.
- Is there an apartment or living quarters in your barn?
- Contact information packet should be posted in a location known to the local fire department, preferably in the same location in each barn in town.
- Install heat and smoke detectors in your barn.
- Fire extinguishers need to be inspected once a year.
- Pressurized water extinguishers are the correct type for extinguishing hay fires.
- Be aware of the location of fire hydrants in your area.
- If possible put in an electrical shut off on the outside of your barn. When you leave the barn turn off the power.
- If feasible post a weatherproof sign in a prominent location on your barn to emergency responders, to identify to them the number of animals in the building during the day and night. This applies mainly to equine and large animal operations. Thus preventing unnecessary entry into the barn in the event of a fire.