



**To: Newsroom Directors and Assignment Editors**

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## **State Veterinarian puts livestock and small flock owners on alert** **Latest reports indicate that hurricane Irene may cause wind and flood damage in Delaware**

Dr. Heather Hirst, State Veterinarian, is warning livestock and small flock owners that according to latest weather reports, hurricane Irene may adversely impact Delaware. Dr. Hirst urges animal owners to review their emergency plans in preparation for high winds and flooding. Dr. Hirst states, "I cannot stress enough the importance of pre-planning and preparation. Think about where you might be able to move animals in case of flooding. Evaluate your outbuildings for how well they might withstand hurricane winds. We have seen animals injured and killed in the past when they were trapped in buildings that collapsed during high winds."

The Delaware Animal Response program, under the supervision of Elainea Goldthwaite, has put together recommendations for livestock owners that can be implemented before the emergency or disaster strikes. Dr. Hirst urges all livestock owners to become familiar with the following recommendations and put them into action as hurricane Irene approaches.

### **DAR recommendations for livestock and small flock owners before emergency or disaster strikes**

- Check and secure all buildings and enclosures. Repair or secure loose boards, doors, window covers, tin sheeting, wire, and equipment that may blow around in high winds and injure or kill livestock and backyard poultry
- You may decide to keep your animals indoors, but it is also critical to consider the relative safety of a large enclosed pasture. Whether you decide to keep your animals indoors, or within the confines of a large enclosed pasture, it is critical to consider the relative safety of each option in relation to your individual situation
  - If you decide to confine or shelter your livestock indoors, be sure to consider the structure strength and how it will hold up during high winds and torrential rain
  - If you decide to give your animals the option of moving outside of their barn/stable during the storm:
    - Survey your property to find the best location to confine your animals
    - Do not let animals become trapped in low-lying pens which may be subject to flooding
    - Area should be large enough to provide animals space to move around to avoid blowing debris
    - Area should have no overhead power lines or poles
- Provide alternate water sources in case power is lost and pumps and automatic waterers are not working after the disaster.
- Whether you shelter animals indoors or out in the field, have enough food and water on-hand for 7 days

- Move feed to higher ground to prevent moisture and mold contamination
- Mark animals with an identifier so they can be returned to you if lost. Identifiers may include ear tags with the name of farm and/or phone numbers, brands, paint markings on hooves or coat, or clipped initials in the hair coat. Leg bands can be used for backyard poultry identification
- Stock up on basic veterinary supplies and if time allows, make sure livestock are current on vaccinations
- If you decide to evacuate your livestock, determine several locations the animals could be taken, several routes to these locations and the entry requirements for each. Make arrangements in advance with the owner/operators to accept your animals and be sure to contact them before taking the animals there. Locations that could be used for evacuation are private stables, race tracks, fair grounds, equestrian centers, private farms and humane societies.
- **For more information on emergency preparedness for pets, livestock, and poultry, contact:**

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