

Hurricane Disaster Plan 2008

Each horse owner can make the entire hurricane season more manageable with just four items understood and planned for:

1: Formulate a written disaster plan

How many horses and other critters do you have to get into a safe environment during a storm? Do they need to be evacuated? Do you need equipment to move them? Do you have equipment that can be used by others? Where can you go? What do you take? If you stay put can you adequately care for the animals? Is your property safe for horses – the leading cause of death is collapsed barns!!! Do you have a hand pump on your well so you can get water even if the power fails? Kidney failure due to dehydration is another leading cause of death. Where are the power lines located on your property, do they cross pastures? Electrocutation is another potential killer. Is your fencing secure – have you replaced old boards, removed barbed wire? Barbed wire will shred anything in its way when it's pushed by 75-mph winds. What is on your property that needs to be stored or tied down – chain down your propane tanks, picnic tables, etc.

Have an emergency supply kit on hand: Flashlights, battery operated radio, extra batteries, fire extinguishers, chlorine bleach, blankets, extra clothes, ready to eat food, first aid supplies, water, prescription medicines, eyeglasses and cash. Each property should have ready access to gasoline, chain saws, ladders, shovels, pry bar, come-along, metal cable or strong rope, block & tackle, wire cutters, tool box and camping gear.

For each and every horse have a halter and lead rope – keep an extra handy too. Make certain that each horse has the halter secured to his or her head, with identification on it. Do NOT attach their coggins or registration to their halter – if possible put some reflective materials on it for better visibility. Have coggins and any pertinent papers available and current in case you decide to move horses.

How do you recover your horses if you have to leave them? If you take them somewhere or if they get loose? Make certain that you have current photos of you horses, particularly of their markings that will be specific to them. Take a current photo of you with your horse so authorities will see both you and the horse in the photo – it is the simplest and most effective way to claim your own animal. During Katrina the vets found one person coming in and claiming horses over and over – he ended up taking several 17 hand hunter horses and then sold them. None of them were his.

Coordinate with your vet. How do you reach him if the phones are down?

2: When do you need to go if you have to move out???

Plan to go if you are in a flood prone area. Go before the winds reach 40 mph sustained wind speed – WAY BEFORE!! A fire engine, loaded with water is about as sturdy as a vehicle can get but they are grounded with winds at this level. They are not safe to move in these winds, and neither are you. Watch the weather reports and go long before your trailer will be unstable in the gusts. Plan to be gone 48 hours before the storm is scheduled to hit your area. If you have portable fencing take it with you.

3: How much feed and water do you take?

Try to take 2 weeks supply of food and water for each animal when you leave, or have that much safely stored on your property if you are staying. Take a bucket for each animal if you leave the farm – where you are going may not have any for you to use. Take hoses too. During Katrina at the Lamar Dixon Show facility they had 450 evacuated horses but only two buckets!!!

Make certain your horse will be provided for. Horses will drink between 12 and 18 gallons of water per day. Keep 2-liter jugs full of water in the freezer – they'll help keep the rest of the freezer cold when power fails and be available to drink when needed. Fill all water tanks on property full, fill boats, canoes, dumpsters with water – it will prevent them from blowing around and be a source of water later on. Put jumbo trash bags in trashcans and fill with water – one large trashcan will hold enough water for one horse for four days. Use bleach to purify water – 2 drops of chlorine bleach per one quart of water - let stand 30 minutes before using.

4: Take medical supplies

that will be needed for your horse if they are currently taking any medication. Take enough for 2 weeks at least, make certain it is in watertight container/baggies and marked clearly with dosage information, horse's name, description of horse and medication name. Take sedatives that your vet has prescribed for nervous horses. Fly Spray, wipes and towelettes all will be valuable as the mosquito population will be huge until the area dries out. Hand Sanitizers are useful too.

TIME FRAME FOR PREPAREDNESS – what do to before Hurricane Season and during

May – walk all pastures and secure/repair all fencing. Secure all areas of property. Have vet update coggins and vaccinations (West Nile, EEE, VEE and Tetanus minimum with Rabies recommended) on horses and all other critters too. Check with vet about Microchip identification, tattoos or brands as identification. Take current photos of animals all four sides and on with you in a photo with your animal. Update your written disaster plan. Check <http://www.doacs.state.fl.us> for equine shelter information

June – Check tires on trailers and trucks. Keep gas tanks and gas cans full. Check generators for functionality. Get 4x8 sheet of plywood for sign – Paint NEED HELP on one side and SAFE on the other. Finish all fencing repair. Gather items needed for survival kit, medical kit and travel gear for horses/animals and place it all in one location so you can grab and go when needed. Put trashcans under downspouts to collect rainwater.

When a storm is imminent in your area and you have decided to stick it out it is recommended that you turn your horses out into a large fenced area. Since barn collapse is the leading killer of horses it is not the best choice for your horse. During Wilma the vets had problems convincing trainers at Calder Race Track to keep halters on horses and that led to problems when the horses got loose or in extracting horses from damaged area and stalls. In Katrina, Dr. Zimmel explained that horses were kept secured in their stalls but that the storm surge was so great that the water level rose in the stalls from 9 inches to 12 feet deep in less than 8 minutes drowning all of the horses in their stalls.

Turn Electric off to the barn and fencing.

Make certain that you have the current identification photos (including the one with you in it) available so you can easily identify your horse should it get out and be recovered. Keep halters with any reflective materials on your horses at all times to keep them visible if they should roam. Cheryl Turner suggests painting directly on your horse with paint sticks in neon colors or reflective paint to aid in the visibility. She also had the unique idea to clip your name and phone number into your horse's hair coat so you can

be notified when someone recovers your horse. If your horses do wander you can check www.thehorse.com to see if someone has located them or to post notices that you are seeking the horses return.

Once the storm has passed take the plywood sign you have standing by and post it in a visible area so low flying aircraft can see if you are SAFE or NEED HELP. Place it so it is visible to aircraft and rescue units if possible.

The leading causes of death have been noted previously but on occasion you will have a horse end up in the swimming pool, bitten by water moccasins or fire ants. Snake bites must be treated with antivenin - no other options there. Call on rescue services for swimming horses, contact vet for the bites.

Other items can be addressed and treated by the owners/caretakers. Cuts –stop the bleeding, clean area well, if it needs sutures you have about 4-6 hours to get that done. If you are going to suture, clip the area around the wound and suture. Apply triple-antibiotic (NOT the one with the pain-relieving properties, just the antibiotic). Eye problems – excessive tearing, closed, swollen, - flush with saline, check lids for any debris under them and have eye checked by vet. Scratches are not visible without applying a stain to the eye and can cause the loss of the eye if not properly treated. Apply cold water to any swollen area if it is available.

There still is not a horse shelter in Seminole, Orange, Osceola, or Volusia counties as listed on the Sunshine State Horse Council website (www.sshc.org) so these facilities are greatly needed for Central Florida. The only pet friendly shelter in Seminole County is Lyman High School and that is only for house pets.

Please note that for the first 24 hours of any emergency situation the county is on its own. Only after the first 24 hours have passed can they request additional support from the state.

Here's some websites to check out

www.weather.gov/os/hurricane/index.shtml

www.aaep.org/emergency_prep.htm#own

www.doacs.state.fl.us/ai/pdf/Emergency%20Equine%20Sheltering.pdf

www.floridahorse.com/hurricane/hurricane.html

www.sshc.org/evac/dbinfo/htm

www.floridadisaster.org/index.asp

<http://radar.weather.gov/radar.php?rid=evx&product=NOR&overlay=11101111&loop=no>

www.santarosa.fl.gov/emergency/

www.flstart.org

The next Equine lecture is scheduled for August 13, 7:00pm with our guest speaker Joel McQuagge. Topic for the evening will be Saddle Fit and Pad Selection. Joel is well qualified as he is the Horse Teaching Unit Faculty Supervisor for UF/IFAS. The University of Florida Department of Animal Sciences operates the Horse Teaching Unit three miles south of campus. This 65 acre farm is being developed to teach the Equine student many aspects of the industry with a hands-on practicality. The wide

range of exposure includes breeding, training, marketing, farm management and health care. The HTU site also serves as a location for Extension functions such as judging contests and horsemanship clinics.

The final lecture for the year is scheduled for October 22 and the guest speakers will be David Johnson and Larry Smith of the Seminole County Property appraiser's office. David Johnson is the Property appraiser while Larry Smith is the Agriculture Specialist. They will be discussing Agriculture exemptions for Horse properties.

A Special Thanks to:

2008 Equine Lecture Series – Hurricane Preparedness

Notes by Pam Knapp

June 11/2008 at 7:00pm

Hosted jointly by the Seminole County 4-H Extension Office, the University of Florida Veterinary Science – Equine Division, Sara Irrgang and Suzanne Buchanon of Compton, Kane & Associates, a Wachovia Securities Financial Network.

This lecture, Hurricanes and How to Prepare, was the third in a series of five lectures to be conducted in 2008. After getting requests for this topic since 2006 I was a bit disappointed in the turn out for the lecture, but it was wonderful that those who did make the lecture were treated to an up close discussion with 2 of Seminole County's finest livestock personnel. Shane Michaels, our resident Livestock agent in Seminole County led the way with Cheryl Turner providing tips from the Animal Control Department. Cheryl explained that local vets all participate via a network for disaster assistance and that all efforts are coordinated from county to state levels. Local vets, with assistance from county Animal Control, will assist when a farm floods stranding horses and other livestock, but as more farms and ranches are affected and disaster areas are declared, the various levels of Vets are deployed to triage and treat animals. This is all part of the ESF-17 response system – Emergency Support Function which is an office in the county. This also consists of DART (Disaster Animal Resource Team), SART (Search and Rescue Team) all the way up to VMAT. In worst case scenarios, a Katrina and Wilma type storm, the VMAT is fired up and becomes the first line of defense. VMAT (Veterinary Medical Assistance Team) is usually deployed when a Federal disaster is declared and it consists of three semi trailers containing all the medical equipment, supplies and diagnostic items possible to care for all sorts of animal. The crew also includes enough vittles, water and other needed items to keep this vet city working for weeks on end to assist with the variety of animals that can get to them.