

Hurricane Preparedness

Dr. Alaina Cross– Alaina_cross@ncsu.edu
North Carolina State University

Hurricane season is upon us. The Southeastern US is no stranger to hurricanes, and this year is predicted to be potentially more active than recent years. Here are some tips to help prepare your horses and your farm for a storm.

Before the Storm

Vaccinations: All horses should have a tetanus toxoid vaccine within the last year. Due to the increase in mosquitoes after massive rainfall, all horses should also receive West Nile Virus and Eastern/Western Encephalitis vaccines at the beginning of the hurricane season.

Coggins Test: A negative Coggins current within 12 months will be necessary if the horse needs to be evacuated to a community shelter or across state lines.

Health Certificate: A health certificate (completed by your veterinarian) is required to cross the state line. This may be necessary if you live in a region that is near a state border. A health certificate is valid for 30 days.

Identification: Each horse should have at least 2 forms of identification (in case one is lost). Make sure to have proof of ownership, including recent photos of the horse that show any identifying marks/scars/coloration, ready in the event that you need to claim a loose horse. Examples of possible identifying methods include:

- ⇒ A well fitted breakaway halter (a regular halter can get trap a horse and possibly strangle them!) with contact information (can be in the form of a luggage tag, a metal ID tag, a zip lock bag secured with duct tape to the halter)
- ⇒ A luggage tag with ID braided into the mane or tail (make sure it is water proof).
- ⇒ Livestock marker - write your phone number on the horse's hindquarters with a waterproof livestock marker
- ⇒ Microchip
- ⇒ ID bands that go around the horse's neck

Evacuation Plan: Hurricanes generally give us at least a day's notice or two before coming into contact with land. Make sure that you have a written evacuation plan for your horses, especially if you are in a low-lying area, a flood plain, near water, or are near the coast. If you will be in the path of the hurricane, it is highly recommended to evacuate prior to the storm, as transportation with horses when wind gusts are over 40mph is hazardous. Decide at which point you will evacuate (for a category 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 storm?). Also prioritize NOW which horses will be evacuated and in which order if you will have to make more than one trip.

- ⇒ Determine two evacuation centers (in opposite directions). For a list of evacuation centers in your state, contact your Equine Extension Specialist.
- ⇒ Ensure that your truck and horse trailer are ready for travel (tires in good condition, etc.). Ensure that the vehicle is full of gas.

Water: Power loss often occurs with hurricanes, and many horse farms may find that they are unable to provide water to their horses during an outage. Each horse should have 12-20 gallons of water stored per day. Store a minimum of 72 hours of water for all horses on the property. Fill all available water troughs. Be creative with your water resources! Line garbage cans and various storage bins or muck buckets with plastic contractor bags and fill them with water. Consider a generator to run the well if you have large numbers of horses. Keep chlorine bleach on hand to add to contaminated water if necessary. To purify water, add two **drops** of chlorine bleach per **quart** of water and let stand for 30 minutes.

Feed: Store a minimum of 72 hours of feed and hay (seven days is best) per horse. It is very possible that roads will be closed because of down power lines, washout, and trees and that you will not have access to feed for a