

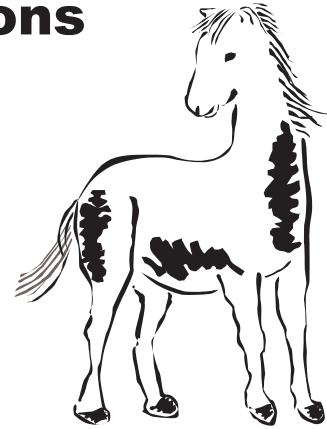
## Hurricane Preparations For Horse Farms

With the possibility of a hurricane once again hitting the North Carolina coast, horse farm owners need to be prepared.

1. Get the name(s) of the REINS (Regional Equine Information Network System) Coordinating Agents and volunteers serving as Equine Disaster and Emergency Management Coordinators from your county Extension center. Ask if a disaster/emergency equine management plan exists for your area. REINS organizations will serve as the lead equine contact during an emergency/disaster within an area.

For more background information, visit the REINS Web site ([http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an\\_sci/extension/horse/hhreins.htm](http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an_sci/extension/horse/hhreins.htm)) and the Extension Horse Husbandry Web site ([http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an\\_sci/extension/horse/hhmain.html](http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an_sci/extension/horse/hhmain.html)).

2. Put together an emergency stable first aid kit that includes the following:
  - Knife
  - Adhesive tape
  - Scissors
  - Duct tape
  - Nylon or cotton rope



- Extra halters
  - Clean towels
  - Antiseptic and soap
  - Leg wraps
  - Topical antibiotic ointments
  - Tranquilizers
  - Pain relievers
  - Bandages
  - Bee sting kit
  - Insect repellent
  - Flash light and batteries
3. Consider how you will protect your horses if a hurricane were to hit your area. Are your barns and buildings in good repair and located on high ground? If the barn might be damaged by high winds or flooded, your horses might be better off on high ground in a pasture. Or will you evacuate your horses? More detailed information on evacuation is included on pages 2 and 3.

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## If a Hurricane May Be Coming

1. Secure structures on your farm:
  - Move loose objects indoors.
  - Tie jumps and poles together.
2. Fill all water tubs, and store drinking water.

If possible, you need a 7-day supply. Allow 20 gallons of water per horse per day. Line garbage cans with plastic bags and fill with water. Note: After a hurricane has hit, finding clean drinking water is one of the most difficult dilemmas as water sources tend to be contaminated.
3. You should have a 7-day supply of feed and hay on hand. Place feed bags on pallets and cover them with water-repellent tarps to reduce the likelihood of water damage.
4. Bed all stalls including aisleways where pastured horses will be tied during the storm. Store additional bedding in plastic bags indoors.
5. Place fly masks on pastured horses to reduce the incidence of eye injuries from flying debris.
6. Secure a generator (4 horsepower or greater) for use as an electrical reserve unit. Make certain the generator is large

enough to run your water pump while providing electrical outlets for a refrigerator and lights. Store a large supply of gasoline.

### Identify your horses

Most feed stores carry blank cattle ear tags. Using a permanent marker, write your name, delivery address, phone number(s), and horse's name on a tag. Braid the tag into each animal's mane or tail.

Consider spray painting

your phone number in white or blaze orange paint on both sides of the barrel or hip of your horse.

Microchips inserted in the neck muscle are also excellent way to identify an animal.

It also may be helpful to have pictures, identification and/or registration papers on your animals should you need to verify ownership. Be sure to store these items in an area that will remain dry.

If practical, evacuate yourself and your horses well in advance of the storm to a

**Four permanent sites are available for the evacuation of horses. All require a current negative Coggins. Please do not reserve accommodations unless you will be able to use it.**

- Pioneer's Harness Track, Southern Pines, (910) 692-8640. Stall is free; owner to supply feed, bedding, and water. Feed store located in town. Must sign release form.
- NCSU Veterinary Equine Research Center (VERC), Southern Pines, contact Dr. Jim Hamilton at (910) 692-8640. Use of stalls or paddocks is free; owner to supply feed, bedding, and water. Feed store located in town. Must sign release form.
- Senator Bob Martin Eastern Agricultural Center, Williamston, contact Brian Dygert at (252) 792-5802. Stall is free if a mandatory evacuation is declared. If horse owner evacuates voluntarily, there is a \$3 daily stall charge. Owner must supply feed, bedding, and water; limited bedding available (\$3.50 to \$5.00 per bale). Feed store located in town. **MUST CALL FOR RESERVATIONS.** If the facility is not in use, 296 stalls are available.
- Governor James B. Hunt Horse Complex, Raleigh, contact Wesley Watt, NC State Fair manager or Sherri Bridges, Horse Complex secretary, at (919) 821-7400 or (919) 733-2145. Four hundred and eighty-five stalls are available to horse owners at no charge during declared emergency situations. Horse owners must supply feed, bedding, and water. **MUST CALL IN RESERVATIONS TO CONFIRM STALL AVAILABILITY.** Please be aware that the Hunt Horse Complex typically serves as a National Guard/Emergency Preparation site. On occasion, the governor has closed the facility to the general public so that it can be used by emergency workers. If the facility has been closed, it will not be available to horse owners.

safe holding area. Get a list of approved sites from your REINS coordinating agent within 48 hours before any intense weather. It is extremely difficult to pull a horse trailer during gale-force winds! Also, your normally docile mount may become upset and difficult to handle with the environmental changes. Loading a horse during extreme weather may be impossible.

Be aware of rapidly rising water. If you are located in an area prone to flooding, evacuate your animals with a 7 days of feed and bedding before the storm. If you are unable to evacuate, remove horses from flood-prone stalls and barns, and move them to higher ground prior to the threat of rising water. Horses trapped in stalls or barns with hinged doors is a leading killer of animals immediately following a major storm. If you cannot move them to higher ground, leave your animals in a pastured area. Place fly masks on them to reduce the incidence of eye injuries from flying debris.

If your barn is well constructed, leave your horses inside to minimize injury from flying debris. For example, pole barns with post cemented in the ground and block barns and roofs with a history of routine maintenance that were built according to code do well in storms.

If your barn is poorly

constructed or in poor repair, leave your horses in a naturally protected well-fenced pasture area.

- select a low area protected by rises; make certain the area will not be subject to flash flooding; avoid streams, ponds, etc.
- keep horses away from shallow rooted trees or trees damaged in previous storms.
- keep horses away from dilapidated structures to minimize injuries from flying debris.

If you halter your animals, make certain that the halter will break if caught on an object.

Secure and store temporary fencing materials to permit quick, temporary fence repairs. Select fence systems that do not require electricity. Permanent repairs can be made later.

Obtain film for your camera and camcorder to document storm damage. If time permits, take pictures of your structures before the storm. Review your insurance policy to determine storm coverage; then document damage accordingly.

### **Recovering After the Storm**

In many cases, wind and rainfall from the storm does not create as many problems as the after affect of the storm. You may face prolonged power interruptions,

blocked roadways, downed trees (often across fencing and structures), and increased populations of biting insects. The following recommendations will help you recover and protect your horse's health.

1. After the storm has subsided, immediately check your horse's welfare.
2. Take pictures of storm damage to facilities, fences, and roadways.
3. Be aware of the possibility of cyanide poisoning due to the ingestion of wilted wild cherry (*Prunus* species) leaves, twigs, bark, or seeds and/or red maple leaves (*Acer rubrum*). Symptoms include: weakness, excitability, grasping for breath, poor coordination, collapse, convulsions, constipation or diarrhea, bloody urine, and death. Symptoms may result if as little as 1 or 2 cups of leaves are consumed on an empty stomach.
4. If your power is out, persistently notify the power company. Tell them how many horses you have, and explain the importance of electricity to their well-being. If possible, make a personal visit.
5. Contact the local fire department and request water delivery. Most fire departments will accommodate, if you have a large

number of horses and you are experiencing a prolonged power outage. Make certain you have several tubs available to hold the water.

6. Check your horse's vaccination schedule against diseases caused by biting insects. Horses should be vaccinated annually for Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis (EEE). The increased mosquito population that occurs immedi-

ately after a storm has typically resulted in an increased incidence of encephalomyelitis. Horses located in areas with high mosquito populations should be vaccinated twice per year, 6 months apart.

Contact your county extension agent for information concerning storm-related agricultural assistance programs for livestock and horse owners.

Emergency situations may force you to make the difficult, but practical decision of putting human life above that of your horse. You must care for yourself first and your animals second. The horse has demonstrated a remarkable survival ability in the face of natural disaster, one which far exceeds those of humans.

You may find additional information at [www.cals.ncsu.edu/an\\_sci/extension/horse/hhmain.html](http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an_sci/extension/horse/hhmain.html)



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