



# *Farm Emergency Plan* Guide to Completing the Template

Cowichan Valley Regional District

Comments on the Farm Emergency Plan Template and Guide can be sent to:

Sybill Sanderson  
Emergency Program Coordinator, CVRD  
ssanderson@cvrld.bc.ca

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## **Disclaimer**

The Governments of Canada and of British Columbia and the Cowichan Valley Regional District are committed to working with industry partners. The Farm Emergency Plan Template and Guide have been prepared to serve as an aid for developing plans to avoid or reduce adverse consequences that might otherwise occur for farmers in the event of a disaster. We cannot ensure that by following these guidelines and plan that a farmer can avoid bodily injury or property damage. Therefore, we make no warranty, expressed or implied, nor assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, product or process disclosed and assume no liability for any injury, death, or property damage which may occur in connection with any disaster.

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# *Farm Emergency Plan*

## Guide to Completing the Template

### Overview

Creating a farm emergency plan is an essential step in preparing for major emergencies or disasters. An emergency plan focuses on actions farmers can take before, during, and after an emergency to protect their business.

A farm-specific emergency plan could help you in many ways. An emergency plan:

- Helps farm producers make decisions now while there is time to calmly consider options, and collect specific information that may be difficult to obtain in a crisis.
- Informs family members, farm staff, neighbours, and first responders how they can help during an emergency.
- Helps producers intending to return to the farm during or after an evacuation order.
- Reduces harm to farm operations, assets, and livestock.
- Demonstrates “due diligence” when negotiating with insurance providers.

The CVRD offers this *Guide to Completing the Farm Emergency Plan Template* to encourage farmers to protect themselves, and to prepare for events where they may require assistance.

The *Template Farm Emergency Plan* makes use of Microsoft Word, allowing farmers to create a farm emergency plan by filling in their specific information. Farmers can then edit and print their own plans and update them regularly.

The Guide and the Template work together to focus on the critical decisions and actions that should be addressed before an emergency occurs. The Guide refers to specific parts of the Template Plan. Resource links are listed at the back of the guide to streamline updating of links.

Each recommended action is identified by a checkbox () in both the Guide and the Template. Place a check mark in the box as you complete each task. Once you complete your farm emergency plan, retain this Guide to periodically update the plan.

#### **Key Messages**

1. Farmers are ultimately responsible for their livestock, and must consider animals in planning for emergencies.
2. A completed Farm Emergency Plan identifies risks and provides opportunities to reduce those risks.
3. A completed Farm Emergency Plan is the best way to mitigate and prepare for an emergency on the farm.
4. Government financial assistance is limited and only covers losses that are not commercially insurable.

## Title Page and Header

Begin preparing a Farm Emergency Plan by adapting the Title Page contained in the Template to your specific circumstances. The Title Page should identify the farm. The farm name should be added to the Header so it appears at the top of each page.

### Consider the following steps:

- 1. Insert an electronic image of the farm's logo, if there is one, at the top of the page. If not, simply delete the box.
- 2. Include the farm name in the title on the Title Page, replacing the underline and removing the word Template.
- 3. Insert a photo image of the farm in the box at the bottom of the page. This image could also be a map or any type of graphic that represents the farm.
- 4. Add the date the plan was completed or updated to the bottom of the Title Page.
- 5. Add the farm name to the header at the top of Page 1 in the Template.

## Part A: Before an Emergency

### 1. List of Hazards

It is important to understand the types of major events that are likely to affect farm operations. Threats to farms in the Cowichan Valley may include a range of natural hazards and infrastructure failures, such as forest fire, flood, severe winter weather, earthquakes and prolonged power outage. Much depends on the location and farm activities.

#### To learn more about the types of emergencies in the area, consider these actions:

- 1. Download and review the *Cowichan Valley Emergency Preparedness Workbook* from <https://www.cvrld.bc.ca/DocumentCenter/Home/View/890>.
- 2. Talk with your neighbours about hazards that have occurred in the area in the past. Knowing the history is a good starting point.
- 3. Talk with the CVRD Emergency Program about hazards in the area. Then check the hazards that could affect the farm in the list provided in the Template.
- 4. Contact the Ministry of Agriculture for more information on hazards in the area. Check the Ministry's website for information.
- 5. Complete *Section 1. List of Hazards*, by placing a checkmark in the box for each hazard that may affect the farm. Specify any additional hazards of concern.

## 2. Farm Information

Basic information about the farm helps outside organizations provide the assistance that may be needed during an emergency. *Section 2* of the Template offers a simple table that can be used to record essential information about the farm and the people associated with it.

To coordinate livestock relocation, if required, the CVRD will need the farmer ID number or to confirm that the livestock operations have “farm” classification under the BC Assessment Authority. Ensure details are recorded accurately and printed clearly. Farmers may later want to share this information via email, fax or photocopy during an emergency.

### Consider the following steps:

- 1. Record the essential information about the farm in *Section 2. Farm Information*.
- 2. Take photographs and video of important farm assets to document their existence and condition, noting the time and date the images were collected.
- 3. Store essential farm records and images in a fire-resistant filing cabinet or at an off-farm location. Consider backing up electronic files using cloud storage services in Canada.

## 3. Emergency Contacts

An important step in preparedness is identifying people and organizations that can assist when needed. Creating a list now saves time during an emergency, and allows the farm to quickly engage others in responding to an emergency that threatens the farm.

Although mobile devices can carry important contact information, they may not always be available. A printed list of emergency contacts ensures ready access and allows others to assist in responding to a farm emergency. The Template suggests some common emergency contacts; include any additional contacts.

### Take these steps to include emergency contacts in the Farm Emergency Plan.

- 1. Use *Section 3. Emergency Contacts* in the Emergency Plan to prepare a list of emergency contacts for the farm.
- 2. Meet with your neighbours, farmer institutes, and agriculture associations each year to discuss available space and equipment. Arrange text messaging among farmers so you can help each other quickly in an emergency.
- 3. Check with each person or organization in the list at least annually to confirm the contact information.
- 4. Make several copies of the *Emergency Contacts* and keep them in different locations including a personal vehicle. Add key contacts to mobile phones.

## 4. Farm Maps

Maps are essential for preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies. Maps are also very useful for engaging agencies such as the local fire department, utility response teams, or the provincial Wildfire Service.

Some farmers may wish to sketch a simple farm map using graph paper. Paper maps may also be obtained from your local government office, such as the municipal or regional district office.

One way to create a farm map uses the Cowichan Valley Regional District Web Map service. This GIS mapping function can display a farm and save a screen image to provide a base map. See the CVRD Web Map application at:

<https://www.cvrld.bc.ca/2025/Maps-GIS>

If you live in North Cowichan, you can use their base maps, located at:

[http://maps.northcowichan.ca/mnc\\_public/](http://maps.northcowichan.ca/mnc_public/)

The BC Assessment Authority offers property data, including basic maps. Farmers can search for their properties by address, Roll Number, Plan Number, or PID at:

<https://evaluatebc.bcassessment.ca/>

Readily available resources, like Google Earth (a free, downloadable program) allow farmers to zoom in to every section of a farm, and to tag, label, and draw a boundary around a piece of property. To download Google Earth, see:

<https://www.google.com/earth/>

### **Actions for preparing a map for the farm emergency plan include the following.**

1. Obtain or create a base map of the farm, showing at least the following elements:
- Property boundaries
  - Access roads
  - Surface water, including ponds and streams
  - Hydro lines

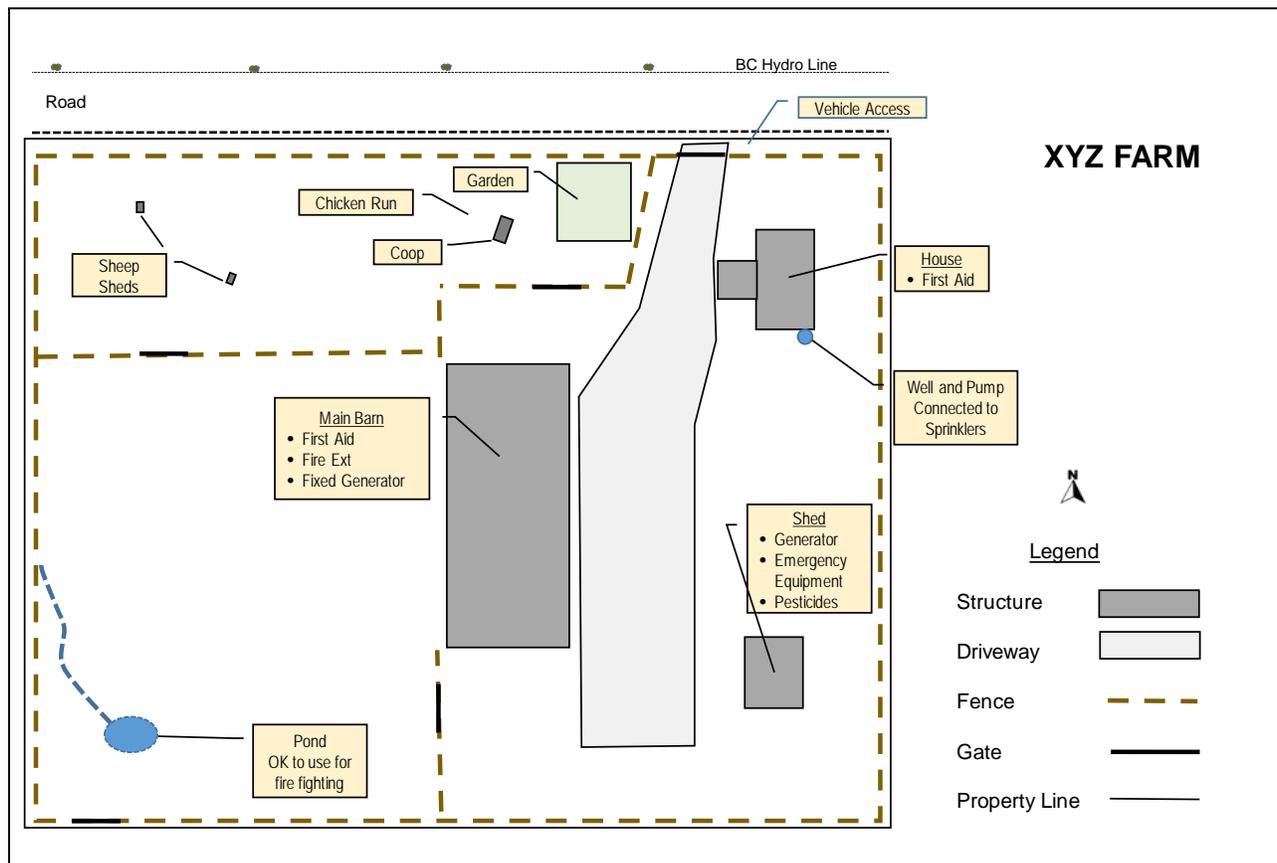
There may be value in creating one large scale map to show the adjacent properties and access routes, as well as all property lines. A second small-scale map may show details that are important to helping others protect your farm.

Consider using the grid provided in the Template to sketch an outline of the property and key elements.

2. Add important farm features to the map and label each item, including:
- Fences
  - Gates
  - Structures, including main house, barns, and sheds
  - Pastures, corrals
  - Wells and pumps
  - Surface water that is suitable for fire suppression
  - Hazardous areas on the farm, such as manure holding ponds and pesticide storage locations

- 3. Show on the map the equipment and locations that could be useful in an emergency, including:
  - Fire extinguishers
  - First aid kits
  - Sprinkler kits
  - Animal loading areas
  - Tractor and plow implements
  - Hazard-reduced areas (cleared land), safe places to shelter livestock
- 4. Include a legend to define any symbols on the map. Add a North arrow.
- 5. Make several copies of all maps and include one set in *Section 4. Farm Maps*.

### Sample Farm Map



## 5. Livestock Inventory

An up-to-date farm and livestock inventory is especially important during an emergency. An inventory will help farmers manage decisions during response, such as whether to shelter-in-place or to relocate livestock, and inform others who offer help.

Also, loss compensation through commercial insurance or other program requires documentation of the animals on hand prior to impact.

Note: The farm may already have an inventory process that keeps the livestock information current, and this may change frequently for some farmers. Consider adding a copy of your existing records as an appendix to your farm emergency plan.

**If you do not have a current inventory, consider these steps in preparing one:**

1. Identify the current number of animals on the farm property by type, using *Section 5. Livestock Inventory* of the Template.
2. Prepare a list of animals by name, gender, and registration number, and attach the list to the Emergency Plan.
3. Ensure all animal identification records are secured in a fire-resistant filing cabinet or at an off-farm location, and that records will be available when necessary.

## 6. Farm Vehicles and Response Equipment

Understanding the types of vehicles and special equipment that may be available in an emergency helps you plan for successful response. This equipment may help farmers respond to small emergencies, relocate livestock to safety, operate water pumps and electrical equipment, or perform other functions that would safeguard the farm.

A complete inventory of any equipment is imperative for insurance purposes. Use the template to identify functions for equipment in the event that some responders may not be familiar with the equipment.

The Template includes space to record vehicles and equipment on the farm and with nearby neighbours. This list may also help farmers share equipment among their neighbours during an emergency.

**Account for available vehicles and response equipment by following these steps:**

1. Use *Section 6. Farm Vehicles and Response Equipment* to include a list of personnel, livestock trailers, heavy equipment, and other equipment available from neighbours.
2. Discuss this list with farm neighbours to confirm the equipment they may be able to share before and during an emergency.

## 7. Risk Reduction

Farmers can undertake many actions before an emergency occurs to reduce the likelihood or impact of disaster on the property. The most effective actions are targeted to specific hazard types, such as sandbags for flooding or clearing vegetation to reduce forest fire threats.

### 7-1 Reduce Nearby Combustible Materials

This section focuses on forest fire because it is one of the most likely hazards to damage farms in the Cowichan Valley, and because there are proven methods for reducing the risk. Removing combustible vegetation and other materials around farm structures is one of the most effective ways of protecting the farm. Removing combustible materials around animal barns is especially important if the structure may be used to shelter livestock during a forest fire.

Reducing fuels is best done in advance of a fire so the debris may be removed from the area and disposed. A large farm may benefit from a forest fire risk assessment by a qualified expert. For more information on reducing combustible materials, see *The Home Owners FireSmart Manual*, published by the BC government, at: [www.bcwildfire.ca/Prevention/firesmart.htm](http://www.bcwildfire.ca/Prevention/firesmart.htm)

#### Check the actions below to take before a forest fire strikes:

1. Prepare an aerial photo or map of the farm and draw lines that are about 10 meters and 30 metres around all structures.
2. Show on the map the combustible materials within 10 metres of farm structures that could be removed to reduce risks, including:
  - Trees and shrubs
  - Hay bales
  - Woodpiles, deadfall
  - Propane and other fuel tanks
  - Other combustibles
3. In the area between 10 m and 30 m around each structure, identify on the map the combustibles that could be removed, such as:
  - Trees to increase spacing (i.e. conifers are combustible)
  - Low branches that could allow ground fire to spread to canopy
  - Deadfall
4. In the Template under *Section 7-1 Reduce Combustible Materials*, write down the actions that should be taken to remove combustible materials within 10 metres of farm structures, and between 10 m to 30 m. Options for reducing combustibles include:
  - Remove trees, bushes and overhanging limbs within 10 m of buildings.
  - Thin trees to 3-6 m spacing.
  - Remove deadfall within 10 – 30 m of farm structures.
  - Clear vegetation from critical fence lines to 4 m.
  - Maintain 10 m fuel free buffer around corrals.
5. Dispose of cut vegetation safely, in compliance with local burning bylaws and approved disposal methods. Discuss with the CVRD any large-scale vegetation reduction efforts on the farm to ensure you have the proper permits.

## 7-2 Use Fire Resistant Materials

Farmers can reduce risk by increasing the amount of fire-resistant building materials used on farm structures. Barns that rely on cedar-shake roof materials are especially vulnerable to wind-blown burning branches and radiant heat produced in a forest fire. Replacing wooden roof materials with asphalt shingles, clay tile, or metal materials increases fire resistance and reduces the chance of structure fire. The *Home Owners FireSmart Manual* contains good advice on how a farmer can increase fire resistance through the choice of building materials.

### Consider the following actions to improve fire resistant construction:

1. Identify the roof and siding materials on all farm structures. Pay attention to barns and other structures that will be used for livestock shelter during a forest fire threat.
2. In *Section 7-2 Fire Resistant Construction*, record the actions that would improve the fire resistance of the exposed building materials. Some options for fire resistant construction include:
  - Ensure buildings have metal or asphalt roofs.
  - Ensure buildings have non-flammable siding (e.g., metal or concrete).
  - Close or screen eaves and vents with 3 mm mesh.
  - Replace wooden fence posts with metal.

## 7-3 Plan for Sprinkler Protection

If the farm contains flexible irrigation systems, sprinklers may provide additional structure protection. Fire brands and burning branches can travel 2 kms ahead of a forest fire. Just having green fields or a wet fuel break around farm structures may not provide enough protection. Sprinklers help create a wet environment around farm buildings. Sprinkler systems are particularly important where animals will be sheltered, such as pastures or barns.

If sprinklers or hoses are limited, determine the priority of farm structures to protect ahead of time. For example, dairy barns that will contain animals when a forest fire threatens, such as a loafing barn, should be given the highest priority. Farmers could put sprinkler equipment in place at the beginning of each fire season, or leave the system permanently installed.

### Consider the following actions to set up the sprinkler systems for farm protection:

1. Determine if existing farm sprinkler equipment is sufficient to create a humid envelope around all farm structures, or at least critical buildings, during forest fire.
2. Using *Section 7-3, Sprinkler Protection*, identify the priorities of farm structures that should be protected by sprinklers.
3. For more information on setting up structural sprinklers, contact the BC Office of the Fire Commissioner, 250-952-4913, 1-888-988-9488, or email to [OFC@gov.bc.ca](mailto:OFC@gov.bc.ca).
4. For homes and smaller buildings, consider the Wildfire Automated Sprinkler Protection (WASP) kits available through the CVRD. Check the CVRD website and search for the term “FireSmart.”

## 7-4 Secure Large Items

During major earthquakes, normal everyday items can become deadly hazards as they get thrown around. The actions listed below can help to reduce earthquake damage.

**Consider these actions to protect your equipment, personnel and animals:**

- 1. Secure hot water tanks and water structures to ensure they do not fall over as water is a critical resource and wells/community water systems may not work.
- 2. Identify and secure large items to studs that could fall over and injure people or animals in a major earthquake.

Consider items such as:

- Storage shelving
  - Large machinery
  - Storage containers

- 3. Ensure that sharp implements and chemicals, fertilizers, etc. are stored properly so that they will not become hazards for workers or animals.

Consider items such as:

- Bleach and ammonia – together they become a very toxic vapor
- Knives, blades, and cutting machinery
- Fertilizers and pest control and insecticides

- 4. Upgrade farm structures to increase likelihood that they will remain standing following major earthquakes.

Priority structures to upgrade may include:

- Barns
  - Living quarters
  - Water tanks

## 7-5 Reduce Falling Hazards

Consider these actions to reduce severe windstorm damage.

- 1. Identify trees that are not healthy and have them felled before they fall in a storm.  
Use the FireSmart Manual to prioritize which trees to fell or limb near buildings.
- 2. Ensure that roofs, gutters and overhangs are properly maintained to withstand major storms.
  - Consider metal roof where appropriate and ensure it is properly secured
  - Gutters need to be cleaned or protected with gutter guards
  - Periodically check support structures to ensure they are stable and not degrading.  
Use pressure treated woods, reinforced concrete etc.

## 8. Commercial Insurance

Private insurance is available to cover livestock losses from many farm emergencies. Coverage may include temporary livestock relocation, livestock injuries or mortalities, and infrastructure losses (i.e., barns, fences, and equipment).

As an important step in managing risk, producers in BC should understand what is covered under their insurance policies and what may be excluded. For example, are your losses covered if livestock are harmed indirectly in a natural disaster? Talk with your insurance broker or agent.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada can help CVRD producers find available coverage for business losses through private insurance programs. Its member companies represent approximately 90% of the property and casualty insurance market in Canada. Their website: <http://www.ibc.ca/bc/>

## 9. Backup Power

Farms likely depend on electrical equipment that could be vulnerable to power interruption. Many disasters including earthquakes, severe winter storms, and forest fires have the potential for triggering prolonged power outages throughout the region. It is therefore wise for farm producers to anticipate prolonged outages and to take steps before disaster strikes to protect critical systems.

Essential farm systems requiring electrical power may include:

- Dairy milking systems
- Feeding systems
- Refrigeration equipment
- Shed ventilation
- Water pump
- Sewer system
- Freezers

**These actions are needed to set up the backup power systems for farm equipment:**

1. Identify the available backup power supply equipment that could be used in a prolonged power outage.
2. Use *Section 9. Backup Power* to identify the priorities for farm equipment that should be supported by backup power systems.

Note: Protect yourself and the community around you by ensuring that any generator backup systems are properly installed to ensure no back-feed into the power grid. Electrical systems must be wired to exclude regular electric power.

## Part B: During an Emergency

### 10. Information Sources in an Emergency

One of the first steps in any emergency is to learn as much about the situation as possible from a credible source. In forest fire emergencies, local governments work closely with the BC Wildfire Service to contain and control forest fires, but fire behaviour can change rapidly. Factors that influence forest fires include winds, humidity, temperature, the types of vegetation being burned, and the slope of the land.

If a major emergency threatens populated areas, the local government will consider issuing an Evacuation Alert, or an Evacuation Order. Here are some terms to know:

**Evacuation Alert** – Under an Evacuation Alert, people have time to collect their family members and personal items, and to prepare to move to a safe area. Farmers may also have enough time to protect their farm and livestock. Some emergencies advance quickly and will not allow time for an Evacuation Alert.

**Evacuation Order** – If an Evacuation Order is issued, everyone must leave immediately. Farmers may be able to leave livestock to shelter in barns or move them to open fields. The important thing is to quickly get everyone to safety. In some cases, farmers may be allowed to return to their farms for short periods to attend to their animals, although this is not guaranteed.

**Evacuation Rescind** – A Rescind is issued when the Incident Commander determines it is safe for residents and livestock to return home. The CVRD will provide information to returning residents on potential hazards and safety precautions.

The status of the Evacuation will be communicated via the local news media, perhaps through an evacuation notification team, and the CVRD website. Social media may also be utilized when available and staffed. It is important to follow instructions and evacuate when ordered to do so. Life safety is top priority and emergency responders will not be allowed to endanger their lives to rescue anyone who does not evacuate.

This section of the Farm Emergency Plan includes contact information for the current sources of information, including local media, the CVRD and BC Wildfire Service.

#### Use these steps to adapt the Template to create a Farm Emergency Plan.

1. Use *Section 10, Information Sources in an Emergency* in the Template to confirm the news and authority sources to consult in an emergency.
2. Register with the CVRD Emergency Alert system. In the case of a major emergency, the CVRD Alert will inform you by: 1) Telephone call, 2) Text message, and/or 3) Email, depending on your preference. Register for the system at:  
<https://www.cvrld.bc.ca/2276/Emergency-Alert-Registration>
3. Review the *Cowichan Valley Emergency Preparedness Workbook* for more information on evacuations. See: <https://www.cvrld.bc.ca/DocumentCenter/Home/View/890>

## 11. Decision Guide for Livestock Protection

The calm period before disaster strikes is a good time to explore some options for protecting livestock from an emergency, such as a forest fire. Consider these four options in selecting the best way to protect the animals:

**Option 1: Shelter livestock in barn.** This option means keeping animals in a structure on the farm, such as a barn, where they will be protected while farm personnel evacuate. This may be the best option if FireSmart measures, sprinklers and other protections are in place at the time of the emergency.

**Option 2: Move livestock to an on-farm outdoor location.** Under this alternative, some or all animals would be moved to a pasture, open field, or other outdoor area that would provide protection from the threat.

**Option 3: Relocate livestock off the farm.** Relocating livestock means moving them off the farm and away from danger. In a situation where a forest fire threatens a large area, this may require moving animals out of the region.

**Option 4: Free the animals.** In some situations, it may be best to open gates and cut fence to allow animals the freedom to protect themselves. This may be the only option if there is no time for other options, it is safe to do so, and the freed animals would not endanger others, such as motorists on a roadway.

There are risks with all the options, but the producer should select the approach with the greatest chance of success, all things considered.

*Template Section 11. Decision Guide for Livestock Protection* should be used when an emergency presents itself. Farmers may wish to adopt a different option for each type of animal. For example, cows may be allowed to shelter in barn, while horses may be relocated.

**Take these actions to ensure the Farm Emergency Plan reflects the available options for livestock protection.**

1. Use the *Template Section 11, Decision Guide* to confirm the options that are available for livestock protection during an emergency, such as a forest fire.
2. Refer to *Sections 12, 13, 14 and 15* of the Template to help determine viable alternatives for livestock protection.

## 12. Checklist for Sheltering Livestock in Barn

Sheltering animals in a barn means moving or confining the animals to a protected structure on the farm. Considering a forest fire threat, a protected barn or shed is one that has:

- Reduced combustible materials around 10 m from farm structures
- Fire resistant materials
- Sprinkler protection, with suitable water pumps and backup power

**Consider these actions to confirm that sheltering-in-barn would protect livestock.**

- 1. Determine if there is a structure or site on the farm where animals will be protected from the forest fire.
- 2. Determine if animals that are sheltering in place will have access to food sources, water, and ample living space. **An evacuation order may be in place for many days, and farmers may not be allowed to return even temporarily to tend to animals due to extreme risks.**
- 3. Identify any actions in *Section 12. Checklist for Sheltering Livestock in Barn* of the Emergency Plan that are needed in an emergency to shelter livestock in a barn.
- 4. Show on the map for the Farm Emergency Plan any structures that may be used for sheltering livestock.

### **13. Checklist for Moving Livestock to On-farm Outdoor Location**

Depending on the farm layout, there may be an outdoor location where animals can escape the threat. Such protected areas may include a pasture that can be wetted with sprinklers, a heavily-grazed area, or a plowed field.

An outdoor area used to shelter animals should be:

- At least 0.5 ha in size
- At least 100 m from nearest timber
- Free of combustible fuels (mowed, grazed to stubble, plowed, or irrigated)
- Free of barbed-wire fence
- Free of overhead powerlines or other falling hazards
- Have enough water and feed for 3 days
- Have more than one route in and out

**Confirm that moving animals to an open field would provide protection.**

- 1. Determine if there is a site on the farm where animals can be moved to protect them from a forest fire.
- 2. Determine if the animals will have access to food sources, water, and ample living space.
- 3. Record the actions in *Section 13. Checklist for Moving Livestock to On-Farm Outdoor Location* of the Emergency Plan that must be followed to move animals to an on-farm open area.
- 4. Show on the Farm Emergency Plan map all locations that may provide protection for outdoor animals.

## 14. Checklist for Relocating Livestock

Relocating animals off the farm may be appropriate, depending on characteristics of the emergency, the level of preparedness, the type of animal, and the time available.

Identifying a “buddy farm” ahead of time is one of the most important steps in preparing for livestock relocation. A buddy farm is one that has agreed to receive and care for animals from the threatened farm. Arranging for the trucks, trailers, drivers, and handlers needed to transport animals is also important to complete before an emergency strikes.

**Note that farmers will only be allowed to relocate livestock during the Evacuation Alert phase, when time is available.** During an Evacuation Order, the RCMP will strictly enforce traffic flows that move residents to safety, and will not allow livestock movement.

**If relocating livestock is a potential option, complete the following actions.**

- 1. Determine which animals are suitable for relocation, considering loading time requirements for different species. Record which animals should have priority for relocation in case time is short, using *Section 14. Checklist for Relocating Livestock*.
- 2. Prearrange one or more off-farm sites (including buddy farms) for the livestock. Include name, address, and contact information for each location in the Emergency Plan.
- 3. Select a method for quickly identifying farm animals that are not already clearly identified attached. Some “just-in-time” methods include paint on hooves and collaring.
- 4. Determine transport equipment required to move selected animals, appropriate loading facilities, and ability to maneuver haulers in and around the farm.
- 5. Indicate on the Farm Map the locations for loading the different types of animals.
- 6. If possible, identify the individuals or organizations that can haul the livestock to the off-farm relocation sites, and turnaround time for multiple trips. Use *Section 13, Checklist for Relocating Livestock* to record hauler contact information.
- 7. For each animal type, list the special feed, water, medications, and care that should be available at the relocation site. Indicate who will provide for these items.
- 8. Recognize special planning requirements for relocating certain livestock, especially milking herds. (i.e. buddy farm locations, milking capacity, transport challenges)

Note: If relocating livestock in an emergency is not possible, animals may still be adequately safeguarded by protecting structures ahead of time (e.g., FireSmart barns and structures).

A *Livestock Relocation Plan for Producers* is provided in the template for completion at the time of livestock evacuation.

If a broad geographic assessment of significant risk to livestock has been determined and relocation during the evacuation alert phase is supported by the Province, evacuation notification will indicate that relocation is recommended. Please complete the *British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture Application for Livestock Relocation Assistance Form 514A* **only if relocation assistance is required**. Fax to 250-746-2563.

## 15. Checklist for Opening Gates, Cutting Fences to Free Animals

In some situations, such as rapid fire spread, the best thing may be to free the animals to green space or pasture. Animals will most often seek safety if unconfined. The Farm Emergency Plan should identify if it is safe to free your animals and how to do so, such as where to open gates and to cut fences that direct animals away from roadways and populated areas.

Freeing animals may present risks to people nearby. The degree of risk depends on the location of the released livestock and proximity to busy roadways and routes that may be used for evacuation of people. Carefully evaluate these risks when considering the opening of gates and cutting of fences in an emergency, because you may be held responsible for damage caused by animals that are let free. The key test will be what a reasonable and prudent person would do with your experience and knowledge.

Note that emergency response crews should be informed if any large animals are freed, such as cattle and horses. They may be able to help protect the animals and other people from harm.

**If freeing animals is a suitable option, consider the following actions.**

- 1. Determine which gates should be opened, and indicate them on the Farm Map.
- 2. Identify where fences may be cut or opened to allow animals to escape to pasture. Show these locations on the Farm Map.

## 16. Checklist to Create a Fire Break

If time allows, farms will gain additional protection from fire breaks that impede the spread of ground-based fire. Using a tractor and plow implement, for example, farmers can create a reduced-vegetation strip around the perimeter of the farm, or around farm structures.

**Consider the following actions to help with creating a fire break when needed.**

- 1. Review the checklist in Template *Section 16. Checklist to Create a Fire Break*, to ensure it describes the areas to be plowed.
- 2. Prepare a rough sketch of the areas to be plowed to provide fire breaks.

## 17. Checklist to Deploy Sprinklers

If sprinkler deployment is possible (from *Section 7-3*), there are a few steps to take now to ensure the Farm Emergency Plan provides the proper guidance in an emergency.

**Consider the following actions to ensure the Plan assists with sprinkler activation.**

- 1. Review the checklist in Template *Section 17. Checklist to Deploy Sprinklers*, to ensure it includes all steps needed to quickly set the system in operation.
- 2. The best instructions are ones that have been tested. Take the time to set out the selected sprinkler systems and record the steps as if instructing someone who has offered to help.

## 18. Checklist for Operating Backup Generator

If alternate power systems are available on the farm, prepare the instructions in *Section 18* of the Emergency Plan to allow them to be set up and activated quickly.

**Take these actions to include the proper instructions for operating backup generators.**

1. Review the checklist in *Section 18. Checklist for Operating Backup Generator*, to ensure it includes all steps needed for quick operation.
2. Test the instructions and ensure all the equipment can be easily located.
3. Ensure that grid-based electric systems are disengaged when the backup generator system is operational.

## 19. Checklist for Personal Evacuation

When the local government or Province issues an Evacuation Order, all persons must leave the defined area. Road access to the evacuated area will be secured by the RCMP, and you will not be allowed to return without a permit. The Farm Emergency Plan should anticipate how separated family members and farm staff can check with each other once they have dispersed.

Evacuated persons are encouraged to register at a local Reception Centre, even if they do not need assistance. This can assist with family reunification, later emergency care, and current emergency and recovery information.

Use *Section 19. Checklist for Personal Evacuation* to prepare a checklist of actions that should be taken before leaving the farm.

**Consider the following actions to prepare for personal evacuation.**

1. Consult the *Cowichan Valley Emergency Preparedness Workbook* or the Template for contents of a home Grab 'n Go Kit. Make a list and assemble the items in a kit. Keep this kit in a vehicle or other location for ease of access, availability.
2. In addition to the Kit, prepare a list of farm-related items that should be taken. Add these items to *Section 19. Checklist for Personal Evacuation* in the Farm Emergency Plan. Such items may include:
  - Handling equipment such as halters
  - Cages
  - Blankets
  - Appropriate tools for each kind of animal
3. Identify a single person outside the region that members of the family and farm staff can contact if they are separated during the evacuation.

## Part C: After an Emergency

### 20. Checklist for Damage Assessment

Once the danger has passed in an emergency, the local government or Province will rescind an Evacuation Order and allow residents to return to their homes and farms.

If the farm has suffered any damage, there are several actions that can be taken to reduce the impact and to speed recovery. This section of the Farm Emergency Plan contains reminders of things to do after an emergency.

**The following steps help clarify actions to take in assessing damage after a farm disaster.**

- 1. Consider the checklist shown in the Template, at *Section 20. Checklist for Damage Assessment*, and make any revisions that would better suit your farm.

### 21. Insurance Information

Major emergencies may have catastrophic consequences for an individual farm. Some damage may be unavoidable, regardless of the level of preparedness.

Farmers in BC have access to several approaches to managing these financial losses, as noted below. Refer to the specific links for detailed program information.

**Commercial Insurance** – Insurance plays an important role in protecting the farmer from low-probability, high-consequence disasters such as forest fires and severe storms. Coverage may include losses due to livestock injuries or mortalities, temporary livestock relocations, and infrastructure losses (i.e., barns, equipment and fences).

Farm insurance coverage likely includes the cost of relocating livestock in an emergency, both during transportation and at relocation sites, depending on the specific policy. Insurers will likely reimburse farmers for transportation and other costs incurred by actively protecting their animals. Some insurers cover fences. Check with your agent or broker for details.

**Federal/Provincial Government, Risk Management Programs** – The federal and provincial governments provide a suite of cost-shared risk management programs for the agricultural sector. *AgriRecovery* provides a coordinated government framework for disaster relief on a case-by-case basis. Funding may be available for losses not covered by other programs, and may be cost-shared between the provincial and federal governments. More information on these risk management programs is available at:

<http://www.agr.gc.ca/eng/?id=1398968999929>

**Provincial Disaster Financial Assistance** – Under the *BC Emergency Program Act and Regulations*, farmers may be eligible for disaster financial assistance for losses incurred in events for which insurance was not available. For details, see the information from Emergency Management BC at:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/emergency-response-and-recovery/disaster-financial-assistance>

Insurance, provincial risk management programs, and disaster financial assistance represent the last lines of disaster defence. Insurers and governments at all levels expect farmers to take reasonable steps to protect their farms and livestock, and to not rely only on disaster recovery programs.

Risk reduction efforts before an emergency, combined with a farm emergency response plan and insurance, provide the breadth of protection needed by farmers and livestock owners in the Cowichan Valley.

**Use the following steps to initiate insurance and other loss coverage.**

- 1. Record the basic insurance information for the farm, using *Section 21. Insurance Information*.
- 2. Review the farm insurance policy with the company agent or broker, including the following points:
  - a. Is the potential loss of livestock covered if animals are moved from the farm to a safe location due to the threat of a natural hazard?
  - b. Are the costs of transportation, feed, water, and veterinary care for animals relocated during an emergency covered under the policy?
  - c. Does coverage include the costs of returning animals to the farm after the emergency has ended?
  - d. Does coverage include the costs of repairing farm fences and gates after damage due to natural hazards?
  - e. Does coverage include losses due to prolonged power outage due to a primary emergency, such as a forest fire?
  - f. What steps should be taken when damage occurs?

Record the answers in the space provided for “Key Coverages and Exclusions” in *Section 21* of the Farm Emergency Plan.

## 22. Checklist for Recovery

Recovering from a disaster, such as a wildfire, may take months or even years. Much depends on the extent of damage and the degree of collaboration that draws the community together.

Following a significant disaster, the Cowichan Valley Regional District will continue to share information and coordinate resources within the region.

**Follow these steps to consider the disaster recovery phase of an emergency, and the potential actions for the farm.**

- 1. Review the actions in *Section 22. Checklist for Recovery*, and make any amendments and additions that suit the farm.
- 2. If you are planning ahead with neighbours to assist each other, note these neighbours and the type of assistance each of you may be able to provide. Include their contact information in *Section 3: Emergency Contacts* for quick reference.
- 3. Speak with members of farmer institutes and agriculture associations that support farms with livestock within the region, and enquire about their ability to assist in disaster recovery.
- 4. If your farm is damaged, consider reconstruction in ways that protect livestock and farm operations from future threats, such as including combustion resistant building materials for structures and fences.

## *Part D: When Farm Emergency Plan is Complete*

Once all the steps are completed in preparing the Farm Emergency Plan, it is time to make sure the plan is available and will be used as designed.

**Consider these steps in finalizing the Emergency Plan.**

- 1. Make sure all the critical elements of farm information (including maps and response plans) are included in the Emergency Plan, both in electronic and paper format.
- 2. Finalize the Table of Contents for the Emergency Plan. Click on the Table and then on the tab "Update Table."
- 3. Make multiple copies of the Emergency Plan, and store copies in different locations around farm buildings, with one copy in a personal vehicle. Also, add an electronic copy to an off-site location, such as a family member or in Canadian cloud storage.
- 4. Ensure that all family members and farm personnel understand the contents of the Farm Emergency Plan and know where to find it. Talk it over with them so all understand the steps needed to protect the farm from a major emergency.

Because farm operations and contacts are likely to change over time, it is important to review and update the Farm Emergency Plan at least once each year. Revisit each section of this Guide to confirm essential information and your choices.

## Part E: Additional Resources

The *Farm Emergency Plan Template* and *Guide* complement other emergency guidelines, reports, and documents that may be of interest, accessed through the websites shown here.

- **Agriculture Sector Flood Preparedness** – The Ministry of Agriculture offers this website on farm flooding, including links to the BC River Forecast Centre.  
<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/farm-management/emergency-preparedness/flood-preparedness>
- **BC Climate Action Initiative** – The BC Agriculture & Food Climate Action Initiative supports farms in adopting a proactive approach to climate change issues.  
<http://www.bcagclimateaction.ca/>
- **BC Emergency Preparedness Tips** – The BC Ministry of Agriculture offers a 4-page guide on emergency preparedness for livestock and crop producers.  
[http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/farm-management/emergency-management/factsheets/900\\_200-3\\_emergency\\_preparedness.pdf](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/farm-management/emergency-management/factsheets/900_200-3_emergency_preparedness.pdf)
- **BC Environmental Farm Plan** – The BC Agricultural Research and Development Corporation manages a program that enhances the sustainability of any farm.  
[www.bcac.bc.ca/ardcorp/program/environmental-farm-plan-program](http://www.bcac.bc.ca/ardcorp/program/environmental-farm-plan-program)
- **BC Wildfire Service** – This website offers information about fire bans and current forest fire threats, including the Cowichan Valley region.  
<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status>
- **Emergency Management Guidebooks for Producers** – The Ministry of Agriculture has prepared three emergency management guides for specific commodity groups.
  - Beef – [http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/farm-management/emergency-management/beef\\_emergency\\_management\\_guide.pdf](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/farm-management/emergency-management/beef_emergency_management_guide.pdf)
  - Dairy – [http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/farm-management/emergency-management/dairy\\_emergency\\_management\\_guide.pdf](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/farm-management/emergency-management/dairy_emergency_management_guide.pdf)
  - Pork – [http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/farm-management/emergency-management/bc\\_pork\\_emergency\\_management\\_guide\\_march2015.pdf](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/farm-management/emergency-management/bc_pork_emergency_management_guide_march2015.pdf)
- **FireSmart Protecting Your Community** – In addition to the *Home Owners FireSmart Manual*, this comprehensive guide offers tips on protecting livestock and feed crops.  
<https://www.firesmartcanada.ca/images/uploads/resources/FireSmart-Protecting-Your-Community.pdf>
- **Planning for Livestock Relocation During an Emergency Factsheet** – This 2-page guide lists specific actions to take when considering livestock relocation.  
[http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/farm-management/emergency-management/factsheets/91\\_900400-1\\_planning\\_for\\_livestock\\_relocation\\_during\\_an\\_emergency\\_july\\_2016.pdf](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/farm-management/emergency-management/factsheets/91_900400-1_planning_for_livestock_relocation_during_an_emergency_july_2016.pdf)