

February 2018
Biosecurity SA, PIRSA

Bushfires and Livestock: A Checklist for Before, During and After

PLAN AHEAD

If you own livestock, part of preparing a Bushfire Survival Plan for your family might include preparing options for how to deal with your livestock. Planning should start well before the bushfire season and is part of on-going property management.

Livestock such as sheep, cattle, goats, alpacas or horses are affected in bushfires by radiant heat from the fire, smoke inhalation, burns from walking over hot ground and other injuries that might be caused by panic, e.g. getting caught in fencing. Being prepared with a plan and ensuring other people are familiar with the plan will make it easier to deal with your livestock when fire threatens and you will know what to do if animals are injured.

The checklist on the following pages provides some options for you to consider as part of planning for how to deal with your livestock before, during and after a bushfire.

PREPARE A SAFE Paddock

Owners of free ranging livestock are encouraged to identify and prepare a 'safe' paddock prior to the bushfire season. A 'safe' paddock is one that;

- has adequate water supply without relying on electric pumps
- is easy to access, is well fenced and has adequate space
- is either irrigated or hard grazed to reduce the fuel load and
- is not surrounded by other combustible material like thick vegetation, tree lines or hay stacks.

Your options will depend on the size of your property, the number of livestock and where your animals are kept. You may wish to relocate individual animals of high value to a low fire risk property in another area on days of severe, extreme or catastrophic fire risk.

ENSURE YOUR PERSONAL SAFETY

Whilst caring for livestock and other animals before and after a bushfire is essential, personal safety should be considered as a first priority on all occasions.

Making a choice to move livestock when a bushfire has already started may be too late. Stock may be unsettled and consequently moving paddocks may take longer than normal when a fire is in progress. Enacting plans on high fire risk days before fires start is the safest option.

BEFORE THE BUSHFIRE SEASON

<p>Develop a plan for what to do with your livestock for both high fire danger days and if a fire threatens your property. Your plan should include what type of weather or situation will trigger you to act.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Establish a 'safe paddock' or identify the safest areas for your livestock to be, both on high fire danger days and if fire threatens.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Practice your plans to make it easier to do if fire threatens; ensure all family members, staff and neighbours are familiar with your plan.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Ensure your Property Identification Code (PIC) is current for all land titles and contact details are up to date (all properties that have one or more livestock must register a PIC).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Ensure all stock are identifiable to your property PIC. In the case of cattle, sheep and goats - National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) ear tags are easiest to trace. Other ear tags, brands or photographic records are in place where needed for other stock.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Ensure animal sheds or housing has sufficient area free of combustible material maintained around them, especially pig and poultry housing.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Establish contingencies for the provision of water and cooling should power be cut for more than a few hours.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ON HIGH FIRE DANGER DAYS

<p>1. <u>Enact your plan</u></p> <p>Relocate animals according to your plan. Do not shut animals in stables or small yards. Make sure that livestock can't access roads. It may be important to open some gates between empty paddocks and property driveways to allow clear and safe entry and exit points to the house if necessary.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. Horse owners - consider removing any flammable or metal equipment from the horse and writing your mobile number on each horse using crayons.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DURING A BUSHFIRE – IF A FIRE THREATENS

<p><u>Enact your Bushfire Survival Plan.</u></p> <p>Only move livestock to 'safe paddock(s)' or an open space with the least vegetation if there is time, don't leave it too late – ensure personal safety first.</p> <p>Monitor and assess the fire's progress via ABC radio, the CFS website or CFS Bushfire Information Hotline.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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AFTER THE BUSHFIRE HAS PASSED

<p>1.</p>	<p><u>Inspect livestock for burns or injuries</u></p> <p>Animal welfare is the responsibility of the owner or the person in charge of the animals. When it is safe to do so, carefully inspect your livestock for burns or injuries. If animals are injured seek veterinary assistance as soon as possible.</p> <p>PIRSA staff may provide assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inspection and assessment of injured livestock and their welfare • treatment of surviving animals • humane destruction • carcass disposal options 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2.</p>	<p><u>Care for surviving animals</u></p> <p>Enact your plan for backup water, feeding, ventilation, milking etc. if the power has failed.</p> <p>Animals recovering from injuries should be isolated so they can be inspected regularly. Surviving livestock, injured or otherwise, will need access to good quality clean water*, suitable fodder, and shade if possible. You may need to monitor them for several days.</p> <p>*Note: Sheep consume up to 10 litres of water per day each, cattle consume up to 50 litres of water per day, stock will consume even more water in very hot weather</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>3.</p>	<p><u>Disposal of carcasses</u></p> <p>Disposal of animal carcasses is the responsibility of the animal owner. Disposal must be done in a way that minimises disease risks and impacts on the environment (see the Environmental Protection Authority's information sheet 'On-farm disposal of animal carcasses')</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

FURTHER INFORMATION

Country Fire Service (www.cfs.sa.gov.au)

- General planning information - [Prepare for a fire](#)
- Prepare your home and property - [Pets and livestock](#)
- Care of pets and livestock - [Fact sheet](#)
- Horses and Bushfires - [Fact sheet](#)

Horse SA (www.horsesa.asn.au)

- Planning for horses - [My Horse Disaster Plan](#)
- Incidents involving a large animal - [Large animal rescue](#)

RSPCA SA - [Pets in emergencies](#)

PIRSA REGIONAL OFFICES

If you need advice about livestock following a bushfire either call the PIRSA Hotline (8207 7847) or the PIRSA office nearest to you:

- Clare: (08) 8842 6222
- Glenside: (08) 8207 7900
- Kingscote: (08) 8553 4949
- Mount Gambier: (08) 8735 1300
- Murray Bridge: (08) 8539 2112
- Nuriootpa: (08) 8568 6400
- Port Augusta: (08) 8648 5160
- Port Lincoln: (08) 8688 3400
- Struan: (08) 8762 9100