

## *the leading causes of death in large animals were:*

**Collapsed barns** - owners thought their animals were safer inside.

**Kidney failure due to dehydration** - wandering animals were deprived of food and water for days.

**Electrocution** - horses seek the lowest areas; in many cases this was a drainage ditch. Power lines over drainage ditches were blown down during the storm.

**Fencing failure** - wandering animals, unharmed during the storm were entangled in barbed wire or hit and killed on the roadways after the storm.

## *debris caused the most severe injuries . . . . .*

Barbed wire entanglement and collapsing barns caused injuries resulting in euthanasia for many horses.

Infection was common in many lacerations and puncture wounds, as prompt wound treatment was impossible.

Don't keep your animals in the barn to prevent debris injury. Debris injuries were severe, but in many cases treatable. If your barn collapses **-and there is no way to insure that it won't** - large animals have no chance to save themselves and are likely to panic if they can't follow their instincts.

## **Guidelines for Disaster Preparedness**

The first step is to consider your own evacuation. If you live in a storm surge flood plain or a mobile home, you must evacuate. Flood plain maps are available from your county government.

Whether or not you evacuate, you may want to consider evacuating horses if they are maintained in pastures or small pastures in urban areas where they will be unable to avoid debris and collapsing buildings. If you decide you must evacuate ... **DO NOT TRY TO EVACUATE WITH YOUR LIVE-STOCK TRAILER UNLESS THERE IS SUFFICIENT TIME!** If you cannot **BE ON THE ROAD 2 HOURS BEFORE THE STORM IS DUE TO HIT**, you could easily be caught in traffic and high winds. Traffic on the highways will be moving very

hours before a storm.

**REMEMBER**, a fire engine, loaded with water - a very stable emergency vehicle - is considered "out of service" when sustained winds have reached 40 mph. Therefore, long distance evacuation is not recommended as the storm may move faster than you anticipate.

Evacuating your animals out of the area may be too dangerous, but there are alternatives. **MAKE PLANS NOW** to move your animals to a safer area relatively near your home. Before hurricane season begins, make sure all animals have current immunizations and Coggins tests and take the necessary papers with you if you must evacuate. Locate a safer area within your county and make arrangements now to move your animals to this location - then assist the receiving property owner in developing a disaster plan! A **WRITTEN DISASTER PLAN** will help you and your animals survive.

## **Develop a Specific Disaster Plan for Your Country Property**

### *Develop a Written Plan . . . . .*

START WITH THE FARTHEST POINT OF YOUR PROPERTY AND MOVE IN TOWARD THE HOUSE, listing all the things that need to be done. When you write your plan, consider the following guidelines:

- Install a hand pump on your well **NOW**. You will never make a better investment.
- As you landscape your property, use native plants. Nature has evolved these species to weather hurricanes. They will be much less likely to uproot and become debris.
- **THINK DEBRIS!** Store and secure everything you can. Turn over and tie down picnic table or any thing else too big to store.
- Get mobile home tie downs to secure vehicles and trailers - in the middle of the largest open area away from trees and buildings.
- Your Family Disaster Supply Kit should include: flashlight, battery operated radio, extra batteries, fire extinguishers, chlorine bleach, blankets, clothing, ready to eat food, first aid supplies, water, prescription medicines, eyeglasses and cash.
- Have on hand a box packed with halters, leads,

matches, gasoline, chain saw, ladder, ax, shovel, pry bar, come along, metal cable, block and tackle, wire cutters, tool box and camping gear. (Don't Bring Flammable materials into the house.)

- Keep 2 liter soda bottles filled with water in the freezer. They can be thawed in the refrigerator when electricity fails to help keep the refrigerator cold. They can be used as a source of water as they thaw. Well water will not become contaminated unless your well is submerged by flood waters. City water becomes contaminated because purification systems fail. To purify water, add 2 drops of chlorine bleach per quart and let stand for half hour.
- Fill any large vessels (row boats, canoes, feed troughs, dumpsters, etc.) with water. This may help to prevent them from becoming debris and provides a source of water for animals after the storm. Pool water and collected water should be kept chlorinated for human and animal consumption.
- Shut off main electrical breakers and close gas and water valves. Unplug appliances and turn off air conditioning.
- Chain your propane tank to the ground with tie down stacks and label it "propane". Label any hazardous material containers on your property.
- A two week supply of animal feed and medications should be brought in to the house and stored in water proof containers.
- Photograph or video property and animals, and take film/tape with you if you must evacuate.
- Zip lock bags make good waterproof storage for photographs, important papers, etc.

## **DON'T GO OUT DURING THE STORM !!**

**If you are dead or injured, you can't help your animals.**

## THE SAFEST PLACE FOR LARGE ANIMALS TO WEATHER A STORM IS IN A LARGE PASTURE.

*It should meet as many of the following guidelines as possible:*

- It should be free of exotic trees
- It should have no overhead power lines.
- It should be well away from areas that might generate wind driven debris.
- It should have both low areas that animals can shelter in during the storm (preferable a pond), and higher areas that will not be flooded after the storm.
- It should have woven wire fencing.

## LONG RANGE DISASTER PLANNING

### *Fencing . . . . .*

- The clear winner is woven wire. It acts like a volleyball net; in some cases falling trees don't even break it down. It helps stop debris. It doesn't pull apart in high winds. Animals are less likely to get caught or tangled in it.
- Board fencing blows down and becomes debris. If you use it, back it with woven wire.
- Avoid using barbed wire. It cuts horses to ribbons and is easily torn down by flying debris.
- Lay out your fence lines to keep animals away from power lines.
- Each year in May, replace rotten fence posts and make fencing repairs so your fences are as strong as possible for the start of Hurricane Season on June 1.

### *Building Construction . . . . .*

- Having a well built barn helps it from becoming debris. Never think it is safe enough to protect your animals.
- A simple, well strapped open pole barn with a flat roof or a hurricane reinforced concrete barn is least likely to blow down.
- Prefab trusses may not hold up. If you use them, make sure they have hurricane clips and are properly braced.

- Roofing material should be roll roofing or properly installed metal. Shingles and tile become small lethal weapons which pastured animals cannot avoid. Large sheets of anything are more easily avoided by animals.
- Consider pre-fitted, properly anchored plywood or some form of hurricane shutters for all windows and doors. Roofs are torn off when wind enters a building. Taping only prevents flying glass.

*When any Atlantic or Gulf of Mexico storm is named, all Floridians should take it seriously, watch it closely and begin implementation of their pre-written Disaster PLANS.. Review and update your Disaster Plan with your family on a regular basis.*

**from Final Report of The Dade County Grand Jury - Spring Term A.D. 1992 Filed, December 14, 1992**

*"A Major failing of all Floridians has been our apparent inability to learn and retain the important lessons previous hurricanes should have taught us. Andrew's most obvious lesson was that we were not prepared for this hurricane, neither as individuals nor as a community. This mistake must not reoccur."*

### *More information . . . . .*

If you would like more information, will need assistance in locating an evacuation site or if you can accept large animals needing evacuation, visit the SSHC Emergency Equine Evacuation Information web site at [www.SSHC.org/evac](http://www.SSHC.org/evac) or contact:



**The Sunshine State Horse Council, Inc.**

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[www.SSHC.org](http://www.SSHC.org)



## DISASTER PLANNING FOR COUNTRY PROPERTY

*Survival of the fittest will always be the directive of natural law. We can never change that, but we can learn how to live with it. The first step in our survival is to learn how to take care of ourselves.*

*We have prepared the contents of this publication in coordination with certified Disaster Planners, Emergency Management, the American Red Cross and the survivors of Hurricane Andrew. We are committed to the concept of Disaster Planning for the State of Florida.*

**THE SUNSHINE STATE HORSE COUNCIL, INC.**



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