



Protecting Livestock During a Flood

■ **Guidelines for Safe Shelter and Evacuation**

Unconfined livestock can usually take care of themselves during floods. Do not let them become trapped in low-lying pens. A number of safety precautions, as outlined below, can be taken for animals housed in barns during a flood. Above all, be sure animals are evacuated before floodwaters enter barns and other enclosed livestock areas. Animals sometimes refuse to leave during a rapid rise of water and may drown.

■ **Keeping Livestock High and Dry**

In broad, level flood plains where floodwaters are seldom deeper than 3 or 4 feet, you may need to construct mounds of soil on which livestock can stay until floodwaters recede. Try to locate the mounds where they will not be washed away by fast-flowing water.

■ **Think Essentials, Safety in Barns**

Provide feed and water. Water is essential. Thirsty animals will try to break out to get to floodwaters. If clean water is in short supply, limit feed intake.

If animals are housed with machinery, fasten bales of straw in front of sharp edges and protruding parts such as cutter bars or crank handles. (Do not use hay, because animals will eat it.) Try to cover wooden paddle wheels on combines or choppers, since these parts can be dangerous.

Block off narrow passageways where animals would be unable to turn around. A few heavy animals in a narrow dead end can be dangerous both to themselves and the building.

Be absolutely certain that herbicides, pesticides and treated seeds are not even remotely accessible to livestock, and are stored where floodwater will not contaminate livestock feed or water.

Turn off electricity at the main switch. Livestock could damage electric fixtures, causing fires, or electrocutions.

If there is a possibility that dairy barns may become inundated, drive cattle out of the barn. During rapid rise of water, cattle often refuse to leave the barn and may drown inside if the water rises high enough. For this reason, begin evacuation measures before flood waters reach your location.