

## Emergency Procedures for Floods and Flash Floods

Dr. Keith Bramwell, Poultry Specialist, Dr. Frank T. Jones, Poultry Section Leader, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and Phil Tacker, Extension Engineer

### Home Preparation for Floods

If you live near water or in an area that is prone to flooding, some simple advance preparation will help you to be ready.

1. Have an emergency plan for your family to quickly and safely exit your home or farm. This plan should include:
  - a. Shutting off utilities (electricity, gas, water)
  - b. Locking houses
  - c. Providing for the survival of livestock
  - d. Keeping current on the latest emergency procedures
  - e. Methods to secure outside items such as trash cans, lawn mowers, tools, buckets, etc., to prevent them from washing away and causing hazards
  - f. Methods to ensure that the family gets the emergency supplies
2. Store emergency supplies in sealed plastic boxes or bags in an easily accessible location. Supplies should include:
  - a. A battery-powered radio with extra batteries
  - b. Basic first aid supplies for all family members
  - c. A sufficient supply of nonperishable foods and water (1 gallon per person) to keep the family and pet(s) fed for 3 or 4 days
  - d. Can opener
  - e. Candles, dry matches and flashlights with extra batteries
  - f. Chlorine bleach, 2% iodine or chlorine tablets for purifying water
  - g. Protective water-repellent clothing and footwear
  - h. Blankets for each family member
  - i. Mosquito repellent
  - j. Personal hygiene items
  - k. Infant supplies
  - l. Prescription drugs or medicines
3. These materials should be on hand if you intend to build a temporary sand bag dike:
  - a. Sand
  - b. Sand bags
  - c. Shovels
  - d. Plastic sheeting
  - e. Lumber
4. Fire hazards increase during floods and fire departments may be unable to respond to fires. Address any hazards that could result in a fire. This includes:
  - a. Turning off gas, electricity and water
  - b. Securing gasoline and other flammable material containers to prevent leakage

### Farm Preparation for Floods

If a flood is eminent, move to higher ground IMMEDIATELY. If limited time is available, take care of animal needs, then equipment concerns and then supplies, in that order. BE CERTAIN that you have enough time to accomplish tasks and safely reach higher ground.

1. Move livestock to open areas relatively free of obstacles.
2. If there is inadequate time to move livestock, open gates and barn doors so animals can escape.
3. Leave building doors and windows open at least 2 inches to equalize water pressure and prevent buildings from shifting.
4. Disconnect electrical power.
5. Move motors and portable electric equipment to high, dry locations.

6. Move machinery, fuel, pesticides, herbicides, feed and grains to high, dry locations.
7. Tie down lumber, logs, irrigation pipes, fuel tanks and other loose equipment or supplies.

### **Emergency Procedures During a Flood Threat**

1. Be especially alert for floods if you live in a flash flood area such as a mountain valley. If you suspect a flash flood, IMMEDIATELY GO to higher ground. Do not wait until you are instructed to move.
2. If you are advised to evacuate, do so immediately. NEVER disregard a flood warning or official evacuation advisory. Family safety is more important than protection of property or possessions. Evacuation in ordinary vehicles is much simpler and safer before flood waters become deep. Listen to radio broadcasts for evacuation directions and routes.
3. If you are the first to know about a flood, report the situation to authorities. However, report only what you know to be true. Do not pass along rumors.
4. Be ready to help with rescue operations if called upon.

### **Evacuation Safety Rules**

1. If advised to evacuate, do so IMMEDIATELY. Do not make last minute preparations unless you are absolutely certain you have time.
2. Move quickly and calmly. Don't take chances. Safely getting out of the storm area and to higher ground is your first priority. Automobiles may NOT be the safest and quickest form of transportation during a flash flood. If you live near a hill, walking up the hill might be the fastest way to safety.
3. If rising water suddenly traps you in a building or the house, move to the second floor and, if necessary, to the roof. Wear warm clothing and take a portable radio and flashlight with you. Do not try to swim to safety – wait for help.
4. When leaving the house or farm, avoid flooded areas if possible. Don't try to walk through flood water that is more than knee deep.
5. Know where you are going before you leave. Listen to radio broadcasts for evacuation instructions and use suggested evacuation routes. Other roads or potential short cuts could be blocked, washed out or have downed power lines.
6. If you have limited time for evacuation preparations, get the emergency supplies and GO.