



The impact of winter storms on farms can involve a number of issues. Farm buildings can be damaged due to heavy snow or ice accumulation. Power failures or fuel shortages can impact animal production. Prepare now to protect your farm during winter storms.

Before a Winter Storm

- **Stay informed.**
 - Monitor for severe winter weather in your area at the NOAA National Weather Service. <http://www.weather.gov/>
- **Know the terminology.**
 - **Winter Storm WATCH:** Severe winter conditions, such as heavy snow and/or ice, are possible for your area in the next 12 to 36 hours. Prepare now!
 - **Winter Storm WARNING:** Severe winter conditions are expected in the next 12-24 hours; 4-6 inches of snow or sleet, or 1/4 inch or more of ice is expected. Seek shelter immediately!
 - **Blizzard WARNING:** Snow and strong winds (gusts up to 35 mph or greater) will combine to produce a blinding snow (near zero visibility), deep drifts, and life threatening wind chill; expected to occur for three hours or longer.
- **Be prepared for power outages or conditions requiring you to remain at home for several days.**
- **Develop an emergency plan for water and feed resources.**
 - Obtain emergency supplies of forage and grain.
 - Identify emergency resources for water.
 - Have a list of suppliers, truckers, and people that can help with the animals, especially if normal working conditions are disrupted.
- **Stockpile emergency materials.**
 - Standby electric generator for emergency power
 - Sandbags, shovel, road salt or ice melt
- **Winterize any buildings that may provide shelter for your family, livestock or equipment.**
 - Install storm shutters, doors, and windows.
 - Caulk and weatherstrip doors and windows.
 - Check the roof structure for its ability to hold heavy weight accumulations of snow and ice.
 - Repair any roof leaks.
 - Add insulation, insulated doors, storm windows, or thermal-pane windows.
 - Insulate any water lines that run along exterior walls so they will be less likely to freeze.

During a Winter Storm

- **Stay informed.**
 - Listen to local news and weather channels for situation developments and road closures.
- **Have an emergency plan in place for farm workers.**
 - Have shelter and extra food, water, and blankets.
- **If you are caught outside during a storm,**
 - Try to find a shelter out of the wind.
 - Stay dry and cover all exposed parts of your body.

After a Winter Storm

- **Stay safe during cleanup.**
 - Wear sturdy shoes or boots, layered clothing, hat and gloves.
 - Avoid overexertion. Strain from the cold and the hard labor could cause a heart attack - a major cause of death in the winter.
 - Pace yourself, work slowly, and rest frequently.
 - Make sure you have good footing when lifting the snow shovel.
 - Take your time and lift small amounts.
 - Lift snow/shovel properly to avoid back injuries.
- **Use caution with gas powered equipment.**
 - Dangerous carbon monoxide can be generated by gas-powered equipment as well as alternative heating sources.
 - Use these items only in well ventilated areas.
- **Account for your inventory.**
 - Note any livestock losses.
 - Check buildings and fences for damage (e.g., downed power lines or trees, accumulated snow or ice).
 - Take photographs of all damage for insurance or emergency assistance purposes.

Development of this educational material was by the Center for Food Security and Public Health with funding from the Multi-State Partnership for Security in Agriculture MOU-2010-HSEMD-004. June 2010

