Preparing to Evacuate – What to Do on Your Farm

Ensure family safety first. Be certain you have enough time to get to higher ground before access is cut off. You should have a preplanned evacuation route. Also, designate a meeting place in case family members become separated. If you have time before you receive an evacuation order, the following precautions may help you protect your farm buildings, livestock, and equipment from flood damage:

1. If at all possible move machinery, bagged feed, pesticides and herbicides, and valuable tools to higher elevations.
2. Fill water tanks for livestock. Several days’ supply of water may be required.
3. Construct mounds of soil for livestock, or open gates so livestock can escape high water. Animals have been saved by providing them with bales of hay to climb on.
4. Animals swim well. The greatest problem for grazing animals will be fences and other obstacles. Try to drive stock through water that is free of obstructions. Long swims through calm water are safer than short swims through a swift current.
5. Leave building doors and windows open at least 2 inches to equalize water pressure and help prevent buildings from shifting.
6. If possible, move motors and portable electric equipment to a dry location. Move them to higher ground if possible. Wrapping them inside a heavy duty trash bag will protect them from water and mud.
7. Disconnect electric power to all buildings which may flood. If in doubt about how to disconnect power, call your utility company. Never approach an energized electric panel in standing water.
8. Dairymen who anticipate extensive flooding should:
   1. Check with Department of Health concerning approval of temporary milking facilities if needed.
   2. Try to obtain standby equipment or services for emergency milking and milk pickup.
   3. When possible, move grain out of reach of flood water.
   4. Predetermine the legal restrictions regarding dumping milk that cannot be picked up.
9. Tie down lumber, logs, irrigation pipes, fuel tanks, and other loose equipment or material that could float away.
10. Prepare immovable power units and machinery for flooding:
    1. Seal radiator openings (tighten caps and plug overflow).
    2. Remove air cleaners and carburetors; seal openings. Use material strong enough to withstand water pressure.
    3. Fill oil reservoirs. Plug breather pipes and openings.
    4. Fill bearings with fresh lubricant.
    5. Protect open gears, sprockets, pulleys and cutting edges of machinery with lubricant or rust inhibitor.
    6. Wrap motors with heavy duty trash bags and seal with wire ties. Coil electrical cables and put inside a trash bag with a tie around the exposed wire.