

Delaware farmers urged to prepare ahead of storm

DOVER – Livestock owners should prepare now for possible weather effects from Hurricane Joaquin, Delaware agricultural authorities said Thursday.

“Being prepared is never wasted effort,” said Delaware Secretary of Agriculture Ed Kee. “The time to get ready is now, when things are calm, and not wait until the last minute.”

The Department of Agriculture recommends farmers take the following steps to prepare for any possible weather event:

Livestock and small flock owners

>> Check and secure all buildings and enclosures. Repair or secure loose boards, doors, window covers, metal sheeting, wire and equipment that could blow around in high winds.

>> Provide water and food. Make sure your animals have alternate water sources in case power is lost and pumps and automatic waterers are not working. Have enough food and water on hand for seven days. Move feed to higher ground to prevent mold contamination from flooding.

>> Mark animals. Identifiers for returning lost animals could include ear tags with farm name and phone numbers, brands, paint markings on hooves or coats, or clipped initials in hair coats. Leg bands can be used for back yard poultry.

>> Stock up on supplies. Make sure you have basic veterinary supplies on hand and that your livestock are current on vaccinations.

>> Study evacuation options. If you decide to evacuate your livestock, determine several locations that the animals could

be taken and map out several routes to each location. Make arrangements in advance with owners to accept your animals, and be sure to contact them before taking the animals there. It is best to evacuate at the first recommendation to do so.

>> Choose indoor sheltering or outdoor enclosed areas. If you decide to confine or shelter indoors, consider the structure strength and how it will hold up during high winds and torrential rain. If you give your animals the option of moving outside of their barn during the storm, survey your property to find the best location, do not let animals become trapped in low-lying pens, give them enough space to move around to avoid blowing debris and make sure the areas are clear of overhead power lines or poles.

Commercial poultry growers

>> Check your back-up generator. Make sure you have fuel for several days, and that automatic starting systems are ready to go.

>> Check propane gas. Make sure you have enough gas, and arrange an early delivery if necessary.

>> Check feed inventory. Arrange for an early delivery if necessary.

>> Have a back-up communications plan. Make sure cell phones are fully charged in case land-line telephone service is lost.

>> Think long-term. Be prepared to keep birds for longer than normal if processing plants are unable to operate. Make plans for larger-than-normal carcass disposal if necessary.

>> Check with your poultry company or flock supervisor regularly during any emergency situation.

#

Media contact:

[Dan Shortridge](#)

Director of Communications and Marketing
Delaware Department of Agriculture
302-698-4520