Livestock safety during bushfires

Livestock owners are reminded of measures to take in case of the threat of fire on their property. Planning should start well before the bushfire season and be part of on-going property management. While caring for livestock and other animals before and after a bushfire is essential, personal safety should be considered as a first priority on all occasions.

Commencement of the bushfire season

- A plan should be prepared detailing where to put stock in the event of a fire.
- A ‘safe paddock’ close to the homestead or yards, should be hard-grazed or slashed (size, water access, and secure fencing of the paddock are important to consider). This paddock should be reserved for use in the event of a bushfire.
- It is important there is good identification of stock primarily by ear tags in case of fences being destroyed and stock escaping.
- Photographic records of valuable stock are useful to keep.
- Ensure insurance is current and adequate for the value of your stock.

Before a bushfire comes through

- All livestock owners in the vicinity of a fire should assess the safety conditions that prevail for their livestock.
- Livestock should be moved to the ‘safe paddock’, or an area of the property where dry grass, timber or anything that might fuel a fire is at a minimum.
- Assessment and movement of livestock should be implemented well in advance of a fire front passing through the property.

After a bushfire passes

- Livestock should be carefully assessed for burns or injury after the fire front has passed, and it is safe to do so.
- Veterinary advice should be sought for any livestock that may be suffering from burns or other injuries after fire.
- Ensure dead animals are appropriately disposed of to minimise disease risks and impacts on the environment, water courses, etc.
- Ensure permanent or temporary fencing is adequate.
- Provide surviving livestock with access to good quality clean water, suitable fodder, and shade if possible.
- Animals recovering from burns should be placed in a separate paddock or yard where they can be inspected regularly and nursed well.

Companion animals

Companion animals should be kept indoors during a fire, and veterinary advice sought for injured animals.
PIRSA regional offices

For information on accessing a Property Identification Code (PIC) or assistance with assessing livestock exposed to a fire, please contact the PIRSA office nearest to you:

- Clare: (08) 8842 6222
- Glenside: (08) 8207 7900
- Kingscote: (08) 8553 4949
- Mount Gambier: (08) 8735 1300
- Murray Bridge: (08) 8539 2112
- Nuriootpa: (08) 8568 6400
- Port Augusta: (08) 8648 5160
- Port Lincoln: (08) 8688 3400
- Struan: (08) 8762 9100

Further information

Further information is available from the:

- Care of Pets and Livestock Fact Sheet
- Horses and Bushfire Fact Sheet
- Bushfire Survival Tips for Horse Owners

RSPCA SA (www.rspcasa.org.au)
- Pets in Emergencies

- Emergencies and Your Pet