



REGIONAL ADAPTATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM | PROJECT SUMMARY

Planning for Livestock Safety During Extreme Events

ACCORDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE projections, farmers in the Cowichan Valley and across Vancouver Island will be facing increased risk of extreme weather events including flood, drought and wildfire. Having a plan in place to manage through these kinds of events can help protect infrastructure and livestock, and reduce the impact and disruption to the farm.

In the Cowichan Valley, livestock producers and local government have contributed to a regional emergency management plan for agriculture, as well as a planning template and guide to assist producers with mitigating risks protecting livestock before, during and after an extreme event or emergency occurs.

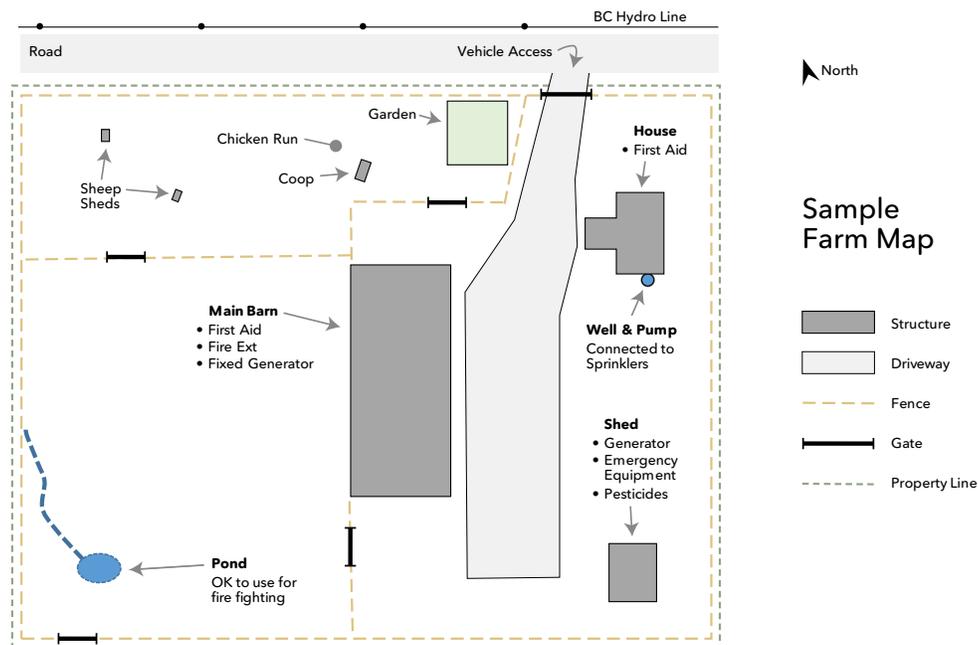
Led by the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) Public Safety Division, with support from the BC Agriculture & Food Climate Action Initiative, the planning template was piloted with five Vancouver Island farms before being shared with another 12 producers in a workshop setting.

PROJECT	<i>Livestock Relocation & Management Plan</i>
LOCATION	<i>Cowichan Valley</i>
COMPLETION	<i>2017</i>
PROJECT LEAD	<i>CVRD Public Safety Division</i>
FUNDING PARTNERS	<i>Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, BC Ministry of Agriculture, CVRD Public Safety Division</i>

“It’s definitely a benefit to the farmers to be in control in an emergency. They know their needs and their animals best,” says Sybille Sanderson, Emergency Program Coordinator for the CVRD. “This template provides them with the tools to think their way through an emergency in advance so they can make the best possible decisions for their farm animals and operations.”

Laurie Belanger (pictured above) developed an emergency preparedness plan for her mixed livestock operation as part of the project. Belanger runs a herd of 25 Dexter cattle, as well as sheep and horses, on her farm near Duncan.

“The maps are really good. In an emergency you can hand it over to somebody and say ‘open this gate, this gate and this gate,’ and they’ll know where to go.”



“It is really important to have a plan in place. Have a phone list of people to call, and a place to take your livestock if you have time to move them,” says Belanger. “Lots of people have the information in their heads, but if something happens to you, it doesn’t help.”

Getting the information out of her head and onto paper was a significant part of the process, including the phone list and a detailed map of the farm that identifies gates and pastures. As part of the plan, Belanger made arrangements with producers further afield who can take her livestock in the case of an emergency, and developed a back-up plan for if she can’t evacuate her animals and has to manage them on-site.

“The maps are really good. In an emergency you can hand it over to somebody and say ‘open this gate, this gate and this gate,’ and they’ll know where to go,” she says. “The process got me thinking about other things, like showing people where the water bibs and hoses are, marking the hoses and putting sprinklers on the roof. Where are the wells? Where are the outbuildings? Which ones do you want to save? You can’t do everything yourself, so you need a plan.”

Planning for additional workshops is underway and the template is available to download at: www.bcagclimateaction.ca/regional/vancouver-island/

Projects like this are part of the work being delivered by the BC Agriculture & Food Climate Action Initiative (CAI). CAI develops tools and resources to assist BC farmers and ranchers with adapting to impacts of climate change. CAI’s Regional Adaptation Enhancement Program provides up to \$300,000 to implement priority projects identified in each regional adaptation strategy.

www.BCAGClimateAction.ca

The BC Agriculture & Food Climate Action Initiative (CAI) was launched in 2008 by the BC Agriculture Council to enable a proactive and pan-agriculture approach to climate change issues. CAI is currently supported by the BC Agricultural Research & Development Corporation and the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC, with funding provided by the Governments of Canada and British Columbia through Growing Forward 2, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

The photo in this handout is courtesy of Tamara Leigh.

