Livestock can become injured or die during thunderstorm situations. Debris displaced by high winds, or hail - especially large sized pellets - can cause injury to animals left outdoors. Lightning can kill animals when they are near a fence or tree that receives a lightning discharge. Protect your livestock during thunderstorms by following the following guidelines.

Before a Severe Storm

- **Maintain an inventory.**
  - Keep a current list of all animals on your farm; include their location and any records of ownership.

- **Have identification for all animals.**
  - Make sure animals have some form of permanent identification (e.g., ear tags, tattoos).

- **Prepare an emergency kit.**
  - Severe storms can lead to power outages, animal escape or injury, have the following items on hand: Handling equipment (e.g., halters, nose leads) ● water, feed, and buckets ● medications ● tools and supplies needed for manure cleanup ● safety and emergency items for your vehicles and trailers.
  - Have well maintained backup generators or alternate power sources for livestock production operations.

- **Ensure a safe environment.**
  - Assess the stability and safety of barns and other structures.
  - Remove dead trees or objects from fields or livestock areas that may serve as potential flying debris.
  - Fence off or remove single trees in pastures to prevent animals from congregating under them; ground any trees left in pastures.
  - Ground wire fences. Current can travel up to two miles through a wire fence, which could be harmful to both livestock and humans.

During a Severe Storm

- **Be aware animal behavior may change before, during and even after a disaster.**

- **Livestock safety.**
  - If possible, bring animal into a barn or shelter well in advance of a storm.
  - Make sure they have plenty of food and water.
  - Keep them away from areas with windows.
  - NEVER leave animals tied up or restrained outside.

After a Severe Storm

- **Assess your animals and building structures.**
  - Survey damage to your barns and other structures; assess the stability and safety.
  - Examine your animals closely; contact your veterinarian if you observe injuries.

- **Clean up safely.**
  - Gather and dispose of trash, limbs, wire, and damaged equipment that could harm livestock.

- **Provide non-contaminated feed or water.**
  - Provide clean, uncontaminated water.
  - Do not feed flood damaged or moldy feed or hay.
  - Do not use any feed or forage that may have been contaminated by chemical or pesticides.

- **Animal disposal.**
  - Record any animal deaths.
  - Dispose of dead carcasses.
  - Check with your state or local authorities for proper disposal methods for animal carcasses.

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.