Livestock can be lost, injured, or killed during a wildfire. Take the following actions to protect your livestock before a wildfire occurs and speed recovery after a wildfire has passed.

Before a Wildfire

- **Maintain detailed livestock records.**
  - Possible indemnity payments may be based on verifiable livestock records.
  - Records should be backed up in multiple locations, including digitally.
  - Records should be kept for multiple years of production.
  - Include the location of animals and fences on your property.

- **Use clearly distinguishable identification methods.**
  - Make sure animals have some form of permanent identification (ear tags, tattoos, electronic microchips, brands, etc.).
  - Pictures of animals, especially high-value animals such as horses, should also be maintained.

- **Employ land use practices that discourage fire spread.**
  - Limit weeds, debris, or highly flammable trees and bushes in fencerows.
  - Remove woody debris piles in a timely manner.
  - Remove non-native species that may not be suited for your environment.
  - During times of high fire danger or dormant vegetation, practice general fire prevention.

During a Wildfire

- **Above all, ensure the safety of your family and yourself in a wildfire situation.**

- **If it can be done safely, allow for animal movement.**
  - This could mean opening gates, cutting fences, or herding livestock into areas of lower fire risk (e.g., wheat pasture).

- **Proactively corral animals to prepare for off-farm movement.**
  - During a Red Flag Warning, some animals, such as horses, could be corralled to allow for fast movement.
  - If you have a vehicle designated for moving livestock, consider having it hitched to a trailer in a position to quickly load and evacuate animals.
  - Only consider this option if you have ample time.

- **Once you leave your property, do not return until told to do so by first responders.**

- **Communicate with neighbors and/or first responders.**
  - If animals are left on your property after you evacuate, let neighbors and first responders know to be on the lookout for your animals.

- **Use emergency identification methods.**
  - If animals are set loose, you can be creative with short-term identification methods.
  - Some producers have used spray paint to add personal identification marks on animals set loose during a wildfire situation.

After a Wildfire

- **Document livestock losses.**
  - Take pictures of dead livestock where they lay.
  - Document the location of livestock where they are found.
  - Do not move livestock until approved by insurance or local, state, or federal authorities.

- **Practice safe and humane euthanasia methods.**
  - Animals may be severely injured after a wildfire and need to be humanely euthanized.
  - Work with local officials to determine the safest and most humane means of euthanasia.

- **Dispose of carcasses.**
  - After documentation has taken place, check with local or state authorities for proper disposal methods (e.g., burial, rendering, composting, etc.)

- **Accept emotional or mental health assistance.**
  - Losing livestock can be a traumatic experience. Accept emotional or mental health resources that may be available after an incident.
  - Seek out help for dealing with long-term emotional stress.
  - Understand that grieving is a natural process after experiencing a major disaster.

- **Apply for federal assistance.**
  - Federal assistance related to wildfire losses may be available depending on the scope of the incident.
  - This information will be available from your local extension agent or FSA office.
  - State FSA offices can be found at https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/index.

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