



A wildfire can significantly disrupt your farming operation, both during and after an event. By taking steps before a wildfire, this disruption can be limited and recovering from a major incident may be expedited.

Before a Wildfire

- **Monitor and determine the risk of wildfire in your area.**
 - The National Weather Service monitors fire weather and conditions and posts forecasts, current hazards and fire situations. Information is available at <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/ridge2/fire/>.
- **Practice proper rangeland management.**
 - Clear brush or debris piles on an annual basis.
 - Limit growth and spread of highly volatile plant life, such as cedar trees.
 - Keep fence rows and ditches from being overgrown with seasonal weeds, trees, or bushes.
 - If applicable, practice safe seasonal controlled burns.
- **Store equipment in safe locations.**
 - Store fuel, chemicals, tractors, trucks, and other flammable equipment in areas that are fire resistant.
 - Maintain a fire-resistant plot for this purpose.
- **Keep up-to-date records.**
 - Maintain equipment, chemical, and hay/forage inventories.
 - Take regularly updated pictures of farm equipment and structures for reference in case of a loss.
 - Back up your records off site or in a digital location.
- **Protect hay or forage supplies.**
 - If possible, do not store all of your hay, forage, or feed supplies in the same location.
 - Much like your home, create and maintain a defensible space around any barns or feed storage structures.
 - Limit weed and grass growth around hay stored outdoors.
- **Alter day-to-day activities.**
 - Avoid burning on days with high fire danger.
 - Do not use welders during windy and dry conditions.
 - If you are burning, take precautions to create fire breaks and let your local fire department know when and where you will be burning.

During a Wildfire

- **Listen to local officials.**
 - While efforts can be taken to minimize on-farm losses during a fire, the most important step is to listen to local officials for evacuation notices.
 - If an evacuation order is given, leave immediately.

- After evacuating, let firefighters know about any potentially hazardous materials on your property that may be impacted by fire (e.g., farm chemicals, diesel, pressurized cylinders, or highly combustible material such as hay or forage).
- **Move equipment.**
 - If time permits, equipment can be moved to ground that is either fire-resistant or concrete.
- **Assist with water access.**
 - Rural firefighting efforts often struggle with access to adequate water supply. Notify first responders in advance of accessible fill sites on your property.
- **Build fire breaks.**
 - If it can be done safely, creating fire breaks on your property using a plow, disc, or other implement can slow or stop the spread of fire.
 - Only consider this option if fire behavior and spread rates are somewhat predictable. In some cases, fire behavior will be so extreme that this is not a viable option.

After a Wildfire

- **Contact your insurance agent for farm related losses.**
- **Take pictures and document damage to equipment, crops, or structures.**
 - After a fire, take pictures noting the date, time, and location that the damage occurs.
 - In a widespread incident, it may be several days before insurance adjusters can make individual visits—pictures create ground truth for what happened and when.
- **Be careful moving damaged structures or burned hay.**
 - Wooden structures that have been damaged or destroyed by a wildfire may smolder for days or weeks after the initial fire is over.
 - Moving or removing hay that has been tightly stacked can lead to reignition once bales are exposed to oxygen.
- **Determine eligibility 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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