

PLANNING FOR ANIMALS

HAYLEY SQUANCE - MINISTRY FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES



Planning for the welfare of animals in an emergency requires involvement from all animal owners, farmers, the primary industry and the myriad of professionals and organisations that care for animals small and large. The Ministry for Primary Industries has hosted two Taranaki workshops in the past six months to build a picture of the arrangements for animal welfare in the region.

Hayley Squance, animal welfare regional coordinator for MPI, has been leading this work. A qualified vet technician, Hayley is associate dean and part of the vet emergency team at Massey University. She is currently working towards her PhD in this field.

The wellbeing of animals is intrinsic to their owners' wellbeing. Experience shows many people will not evacuate their homes in an emergency without their animals, often putting their own lives at risk. Having a plan for your animals in an emergency will reduce risk to yourself and them. MPI has great resources for animal owners here.

What to consider:

- Helicopter rescue may not take dogs.
- Assistance animals must be able to go into a Civil Defence Centre (CDC).
- The Ministry for Social Development (MSD) provides tags for assistance animals. These are preferred a CDC.
- Share stories with animals.
- People who are socially isolated or vulnerable might prefer to talk about their animals rather than themselves. Animals can be a protector. Don't separate them, consider how to keep them together.
- 83% of people would risk their lives to save an animal.
- Open gates with stock can impede an evacuation. Only open gates inside a farm.
- Many lifestyle block owners don't understand pasture management and won't de-stock in drought.
- Use intelligence from other organisations, e.g. Fonterra's warm milk may suggest electricity is out in some areas.
- Birds and aviaries – how will people evacuate their birds?
- In public communications, use the mana of farmers to deliver messages. (In the Waikato, the chair of PISG delivers messages.)
- The number of lives lost should include animals. Don't say no lives have been lost, if animals have died. Say, "No human lives have been lost."