



# Animals affected by a volcanic eruption

## Advice for livestock, lifestyle block, horse and pet owners

Your animals are your responsibility. You need to include them in your planning in the event of an emergency. The following information will help you prepare to ensure the welfare of your animals in a volcanic eruption.

### Evacuation plan

Look after yourself, your family, any workers, and your neighbours. Ask for help if you need it.

If you have to evacuate, take your pets with you – if you can do so safely – or take them to a safe shelter place.

When planning, consider the time needed to collect and transport your animals. If you think you are in a risk area, taking action to evacuate and being prepared is essential. Discuss with your neighbours including them in your evacuation plan, as they may be able to assist if you are unable to access or return to your animals.

If you have livestock or horses in paddocks near waterways (streams, rivers, etc.) that have the potential to flood from lahars, move them to higher ground.

High-value stock or vulnerable stock (e.g. stock close to giving birth, young stock) should be moved to areas which will be easily accessible in case they need assistance, supplementary feed or veterinary treatment.

### Containing livestock

If you stay on your property, check all stock are contained and that fences have not been damaged or affected by power cuts (in the case of electric fences).

If you need to move your stock consider moving them to higher ground on your own property, moving them to a neighbour's property if they're able to contain them, or evacuate to another area.

Make sure your stock have access to clean feed and water in their new contained space until they can be returned to their paddocks.

Ensure animals are not contained in areas at risk of flooding from lahar water surges (such as rivers or valleys).

Large-scale evacuations maybe co-ordinated by organisations such as Federated Farmers and dairy companies.

### Safe shelter

Make sure your animals are not contained in any shelters or paddocks that are in the pathway of lahar or pyroclastic flows.

If large deposits of ash are present check building roofs as the excess weight may cause collapse.

Volcanoes located close to the sea may trigger a tsunami following an eruption. If your property is located close to the sea, if there is a risk of a tsunami, quickly evacuate yourself and your animals to higher ground away from the shoreline.



See full First Aid Kit  
checklist [here](#).



## Animal injuries

In an eruption animals may panic and flee to escape the situation, breaking through any obstacles in their way. Check your animals for wounds – they may just look like a small hole or a tear.

Unlike people, animals tend to hide their pain making it difficult to detect. Even subtle changes may be an indicator of pain. Pay attention to changes in appetite, movement, excessive grooming and or aggressive behaviour.

If your animal has volcanic ash on their coat or eyes, remove it immediately by washing with water. The ash is highly abrasive and may cause damage to the eyes, excess warmth, and bacterial infections if not removed.

Make sure your animal does not consume ash as it may lead to toxicity, extreme teeth wear, ulcerations to the mouth and intestinal system.

Volcanic debris, mud, or ash may be extremely hot and should be avoided. Be aware of the dangers from intense radiant heat – it can kill animals.

## Contaminated water

Small amounts of volcanic ash, mud or debris even several kilometres away may cause contamination to water sources.

Check water tanks supplied by roof collection and troughs are free from ash. Ensure animals do not have access to water that could potentially be contaminated (such as rivers, ponds, or troughs). Do not allow animals access to water unless you are sure it is safe.

## Feed and water

Move animals out of paddocks that could be affected by lahar waters or volcanic debris as soon as you safely can. The most common scenario is ash fall. Contamination can still occur long after the initial eruption.

Get water and feed to your animals as soon as possible.

Give your pets bottled or boiled water.

Check machinery such as water pumps as they may be impaired by ash.

Allow enough food and water for at least five days. Most animals need 60ml/kg/24 hours each to sustain hydration levels.

Prioritize feeding to high priority animals – high-value stock or vulnerable stock (e.g. stock close to giving birth, young stock).

Winds and rain may distribute contaminants making pastures unsafe for your animals to consume. Stored feed may be contaminated by ash or debris. If you are unsure of contamination seek alternative feed. Make sure you have supplemental feed available for your animals.

Volcanic ash contains high levels of substances such as sulphur and fluoride which may be toxic to stock and contaminate pastures. Pay special attention to ensure stock do not ingest ash through their feed or water supply. Malnutrition is a serious threat to your animal's wellbeing, make sure a safe high nutritional feed is available.

Soil and pasture growth can be severely affected by volcanic ash and acidic rain. Toxic chemicals may significantly change soil characteristics such as pH balances. Pastures and plants may either die or be contaminated. The rehabilitation length of soil and plants is dependent on the amount of ash and rain deposited. Soil testing and trusted pasture advice is highly recommended.

## Fire risks

During an eruption hot ash or rocks may cause fires to break out.

If there is the potential of fire evacuate yourself and animals as soon as possible.

Volcanic ash conducts electricity when wet. To avoid the risk of fire, take care to ensure machinery and electrical equipment is free from ash before use.

Safe areas should be away from dense vegetation, scrub, bush or forest. Safe areas should be fenced, have water supply, short pasture, and protection from radiant heat. See our **Fire factsheet** for advice: [www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/26533/](http://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/26533/)



## Support and assistance

Contact your local Civil Defence Centre [www.civildefence.govt.nz/find-your-civil-defence-group/](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz/find-your-civil-defence-group/) for:

- general advice and assistance
- general information about road access and telecommunications
- assistance with evacuating your animals
- help in finding alternative shelter options (animal shelters, sale yards or showgrounds). See GNS for advice about volcanic ash fall [www.gns.cri.nz/Home/Learning/Science-Topics/Volcanoes/Eruption-What-to-do/Ash-Impact-Posters](http://www.gns.cri.nz/Home/Learning/Science-Topics/Volcanoes/Eruption-What-to-do/Ash-Impact-Posters)

Federated Farmers (**0800 327 646 (0800 FARMING)**) may be able to help if you need assistance in sourcing water and supplementary feed, finding a safe place to contain your stock or pasture advice.

If you think your animals have sustained internal or external injuries, are contaminated by ash, have ingested toxic chemicals, or are having respiratory problems then contact your veterinarian as soon as possible.

If you need help to reinstate fencing, contact your local Civil Defence Centre, the Rural Support Trust **0800 787 254 (0800 RURAL HELP)** or Federated Farmers on **0800 327 646 (0800 FARMING)**.

For animal welfare advice or assistance contact Ministry for Primary Industries (Animal Welfare) phone **0800 00 83 33**.

For farmer support, contact the Rural Support Trust on **0800 787 254 (0800 RURAL HELP)**.

Fire and Emergency Service – Dial **111**.

Police – Dial **111**.

Local Animal Control – contact your local Council.

## Reporting lost animals

Identification may be difficult if an animal's ID tag has been torn off in their attempt to flee in an eruption.

If you find a farm animal and are not sure about ownership, contact your Local Council Animal Management or SPCA.

If you find a pet animal that needs immediate medical attention, please take it to your local veterinarian or SPCA.

If you need help with animal rescue, contact your local SPCA, Council or Civil Defence Centre.

If you find injured native wildlife contact Department of Conservation. For non-native species contact your local veterinarian or SPCA.

If you have lost or found a pet post the details on [www.lostpet.co.nz](http://www.lostpet.co.nz), the New Zealand Companion Animal Register **0508 LOSTPET (0508 567873)** or a local veterinarian.

**For more information about preparing and planning for your animals in an emergency, visit [www.mpi.govt.nz/animals-in-emergencies](http://www.mpi.govt.nz/animals-in-emergencies)**

