

Column Name- The Heartland Minute

By: Lindsay Shorter

K-State Research and Extension Greenwood County

Agriculture Extension Agent

“Failing to Plan is Planning to Fail”

“Hind Sight is 20/20....”

“It’ll never happen to us....”

“We’ll just handle it as it comes”

All quotes I have heard thrown around when I discuss having a Farm Emergency Plan in place. As we have seen around Eureka in the past few weeks, and as Kansans, we know to never underestimate Mother Nature. We never think the worst case scenario will ever happen to us, and to our operation. But every year that thought process fails someone.

There are steps you can take before disaster hits, and one of which is creating a Farm Emergency Plan for your family and your operation. There are many things that your emergency farm plan can include some of which are:

- Make a map/sketch of your farming operation, this may be useful to first responders entering your operation who are unfamiliar with the layout. Things to include in this map are:
 - Buildings and Structures
 - Where hazardous materials are housed (pesticides, fertilizers, fuels, etc.)
 - Shelter Locations
 - Where shut offs are located for electrical power, gas, and water
 - Indicate where livestock are housed
 - Include roads that run directly in front of your property and include the names of those roads, also include geographical features such as streams, rivers, and creeks
- Carry a first aid kit, flashlight, battery operated radio in all farm equipment
- Carry a cell phone or portable radio to contact family or farm employees
- Know how to contact each other in the event of severe weather, especially if you are in separate locations
- Establish shelter locations on your property
- Secure structurally unstable materials (lumber, logs, equipment, fuel tanks)
- Secure loose equipment and materials that can be dangerous if they become airborne (buckets, tools, etc.)
- Know how to turn off electrical power, gas and water supplies for buildings on the farm
- Stockpile emergency materials such as: Plywood, lumber, nails, hammer, saw, wire, rope, etc.
- Have fire extinguishers at all barns and in all vehicles

- Secure a food supply for livestock
- Have a gas powered generator in case of power failure
- Make a list of your farm inventory, including:
 - Livestock (species, number of animals, identifying numbers, etc.)
 - Crops (Acres, type)
 - Machinery and equipment (make, model #, etc.)
 - Hazardous substances, and where on your farm they are located (Pesticides, fertilizers, fuels, medicines, other chemicals)

We all hope and pray we never have to utilize our emergency farm plans, but I would much rather have it and not need it, than need it and wish I had taken the time to create it. As agriculture producers the equipment and materials we use on a daily basis carry some risk. While we all take as much precaution as we can, there is always a chance of accidents. And when you combine Mother Nature in the equation, unfortunately, we have no control over the outcomes. So my suggestions to all agriculture producers, is to always have a plan. Because failing to plan, is planning to fail.

If you need assistance in beginning your Farm Emergency Plan, feel free to stop in the office and we can help you begin the process.

For more information regarding Agriculture and Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, or K-State Research and Extension call the office at 620-583-7455, email me, Lindsay Shorter, at lindsayshorter@ksu.edu, or stop by the office which is located inside the courthouse. Be sure to follow K-State Research and Extension- Greenwood County on Facebook for the most up-to-date information on Extension education programs and the Greenwood County 4-H program.