

Are you at risk from floods?

New South Wales has a long history of floods. Some of these have been severe, costing an average of \$128 million damage annually.

Approximately 28% of the land area of New South Wales is subject to flooding. According to the Australian Water Resources Council, rural losses in terms of average annual actual damages are approximately equal to that of total urban losses.

The effects of flooding on rural property owners include losses to livestock, crops, fencing, buildings, personal items, farm equipment and machinery. While damage to crops and fences is usually unavoidable, there is the potential to reduce losses particularly of livestock, irrigation equipment, houses and sheds.

As a rural property owner or manager you may have experienced many floods. It is important to be aware that larger floods than those previously experienced can occur in your area.

Even if your property is not directly affected by flooding, you may be isolated and require assistance such as the supply of essential items and feed for livestock.

While in many cases evacuation will not be necessary, you should consider evacuation as an option if severe flooding is predicted. Deciding to remain in your home when it is inundated or surrounded by floodwaters can be dangerous.

Flooding may last for weeks. Your home may become a refuge for vermin, snakes and spiders. There may be no water, sewerage, power, telephone or other services for several weeks and you may be unable to call for help in an emergency.



Rural Properties
FloodSafe

Stay informed

Your local SES unit can give you information on what you can do to reduce the effects of flooding on your family and your property. This brochure and general information on preparing for floods and storms can be found on the SES website at www.ses.nsw.gov.au

The NSW Department of Primary Industries can also provide information for rural producers affected by severe floods. The NSW Department of Primary Industries website at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au has a range of articles relating to the effects on flooding on rural producers.

Your local council may be able to provide you with information on how flooding affects your property.

How you will be advised of a coming flood

Flood information including flood forecasts, road closures, and advice on evacuations and property protection will be broadcast over local radio stations.

In some areas Flood Bulletins are sent out by the SES using faxstream or telephone tree systems. Contact your local SES to find out how you may be advised.

For emergency help in floods and storms call the SES on

132 500

For life-threatening emergencies call 000

To volunteer or for FloodSafe and StormSafe information call

1800 201 000

Your local SES unit is:



NSW State Emergency Service (SES)
Level 3, 6-8 Regent St
Wollongong 2500

www.ses.nsw.gov.au

Brochure printed June 2008



How to help protect your household and property from floods

When flooding is likely (Flood Watch)

A Flood Watch is issued by the Bureau of Meteorology when flooding is likely. You should be prepared to act should flooding occur.

- Listen to your local radio station for information, updates and advice
- Lift household items and farm equipment on to benches and tables placing electrical goods on top
- Secure objects that are likely to float and cause damage
- Locate important papers, valuables and mementoes. Put them in your Emergency Kit and take them with you when you evacuate
- Check sheds and outbuildings and relocate waste containers, chemicals and poisons well above floor level
- Check if your neighbours need help
- Locate and prepare pets for possible evacuation
- If isolation is likely, have sufficient non-perishable food, essential medications fuel and other necessities to last two weeks. Do not forget pet food and stockfeed
- Move livestock to high ground where they can be provided with feed for the duration of the flood
- Relocate fodder supplies to high ground
- Move farm equipment and relocate pumps to high ground

During a flood (Flood Warning)

A Flood Warning is issued by the Bureau of Meteorology when flooding is about to happen. Flood Warnings provide a predicted flood level and time at which a river will reach that level. Flood Warnings are issued in relation to gauges along rivers.

- **Never drive, ride or walk through floodwater** – this is the main cause of death during floods as water may be deeper or faster flowing than you think and may conceal hidden snags and debris
- Remember the safety of your pets and any other animals You are responsible for their well-being. The NSW Department of Primary industries may be able to assist you
- Keep listening to a local radio station for further information, updates and advice
- Keep in contact with your neighbours
- Be prepared to evacuate if advised

If evacuation is required

Take your Emergency Kit with you.

Turn off the electricity and water as you leave and turn off and secure gas bottles.

You should leave well before roads to high ground are closed by floodwater. You can go to friends or relatives who live in flood-free areas, or you can go to an evacuation centre.

The Department of Community Services (DoCS) may establish evacuation centres in your area where help will be available including:

- temporary accommodation
- financial help
- personal support
- refreshments and meals
- clothing and personal needs
- help in contacting family and friends

Where evacuation is necessary and you have livestock, you should notify the NSW Department of Primary Industries with details of:

- a contact person, telephone number and an alternate contact number
- the location, type and number of animals
- your handling facilities – yards, loading ramps, stock crates
- availability of fodder/food
- potential problem animals such as unbroken horses and guard dogs
- any veterinary medication or health problems
- whether you have a suitable vehicle for transporting the animals
- whether you can transport the animals to a designated safe area or refuge
- whether, after the immediate danger period or evacuation, you have any alternative accommodation for your pets or agistment for your livestock

You should also advise the SES or other emergency services that you are evacuating.

Pets

Pets may be taken to the temporary evacuation centre. They may stay there with you or be collected by the various animal welfare organisations and cared for until the danger has passed.

Do not leave your pets behind. Put them on leads or in pet carriers. Dogs should wear a fixed collar with an identification tag. Animal carriers should be labelled with the owners details. Take feed and water with you as well as any medications for your pets.

How the SES can help you

The SES is responsible for responding to floods in NSW. This includes planning for floods and educating people about how to protect themselves and their property.

During floods the SES will provide flood information, safety advice and arrange for the delivery of essential supplies to people isolated by floodwater. Where appropriate, the SES will conduct evacuations and undertake flood rescue.

How the NSW Department of Primary Industries can help you

Under the Agricultural Services Functional Area Supporting Plan, the NSW Department of Primary Industries is responsible for coordinating animal relief services for livestock, wildlife and companion animals.

The NSW Department of Primary Industries is responsible for agriculture and animals in floods. Local agricultural coordinators in each area are responsible for planning, implementing and coordinating relief programs.



Prepare yourself

Some practical measures you can take right now include keeping a list of emergency numbers near the telephone and assembling an Emergency Kit.

Your Emergency Kit should contain at all times:

- Portable radio with spare batteries
- Torch with spare batteries
- First aid kit (with necessary supplies)
- Candles and waterproof matches
- Important papers including emergency contact numbers
- Copy of any emergency plans for your property
- Waterproof bag for valuables

When flooding is likely, place in your Emergency Kit:

- A good supply of required medications
- Important mementos and photographs
- Any special requirements for babies and the disabled, infirm and/or elderly
- Strong shoes
- Suitable food and drinks
- Farm records

