

Extreme weather events and seasonal changes can pose risks for farm operations. Use this checklist as a guide for immediate actions when extreme summer weather is forecast and reference the **General Strategies** page for additional steps.

At the start of summer

- ☐ Review the **General Strategies** checklist
- ☐ Review all written contingency plans with staff/family, including a plan for evacuating and shelter-in-place for staff and livestock
- ☐ Plan for keeping extra feed on hand in case you are unable to reach your hay supplier or the feed store for a few days
- ☐ Ensure that trailer tires are inflated
- ☐ Ensure that generators and chainsaws are operable
- ☐ Have your veterinarian's number written down and in your phone

Before any possible high-impact weather event, photo-document standing crops in case of losses.

Extreme rain

- ☐ Be mindful that distant rains can flood local rivers and streams, and that any low-lying area, including urban areas, can flood rapidly
- ☐ Move animals, equipment and supplies out of flood zones and areas likely to become muddy
- ☐ Clear debris from gutters as well as drainage ditches, culverts, and access roads to prevent washouts or flooding
 - ☐ As high volume rain events become more common, be aware that culverts and other drainage that were adequately sized in the past may no longer handle extreme rains
 - ☐ Monitor culverts and other drainage during intense rainfall to inform needed improvements, as safety allows
- ☐ Manage manure piles to minimize run-off
- ☐ Consider delaying direct seeding and fertilizer or pesticide applications when intense rain is likely
- ☐ See "Managing Flood Risks on Farms" for more information



High ozone levels

- ☐ Monitor current ozone levels and recent trends here
- ☐ In advance of high ozone levels, irrigate susceptible crops and avoid foliar sprays to reduce damage
- ☐ Schedule outdoor work for early morning or late evening (ozone peaks mid-afternoon)
- ☐ Educate staff on symptoms of ozone exposure: coughing, shortness of breath, chest tightness
- ☐ Learn sensitive crops and their symptoms



The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 - November 30. Hurricanes can bring torrential rain, flooding, extreme winds, and extended power outages. Prepare your farm at the beginning of hurricane season with the following tasks.

- ☐ Review **Preparing for power outages, impassable roads, downed trees** in the **General Strategies** checklist
- ☐ Have materials on hand to secure farm structures, such as plywood, tie downs, tarps, and sandbags
- ☐ Repair infrastructure that would be vulnerable to high winds, such as roofs, high tunnels, or missing siding
- ☐ Keep extra gas/diesel on hand and store safely (use up stored fuel and resupply with fresh)
- ☐ Check trailer tires, generators, and chainsaws
- ☐ Have at least a week's worth of feed on farm
- ☐ Review contingency plans with staff/family

When there is a forecasted hurricane

- ☐ Follow the above guidance and guidance for **extreme rain** and **extreme wind** below
- ☐ Ensure all back-up systems are operable
- ☐ Harvest market-ready crops

Extreme wind

- ☐ Collect/secure anything that could become airborne
- ☐ Secure outbuildings, closing all doors, windows, ventilation boards, or other openings
- ☐ Seal up greenhouses and high tunnels, as temperatures allow
- ☐ Add additional sandbags for row cover or remove row cover
- ☐ Drive additional posts for trellised crops like tomatoes or peas to prevent blow-down; posts are more likely to fail when soil is saturated
- ☐ Forage and grains may lodge; harvest before high winds if possible
- ☐ Fill all water tanks for crops, animals, and people
- ☐ Move animals, equipment, and supplies away from trees
- ☐ Trim hanging branches and remove deceased trees
- ☐ Unplug extension cords and other electrical equipment when possible to mitigate fire risk




Tornadoes

- ☐ A **Tornado Watch** means there are favorable conditions for tornado formation – stay alert!
- ☐ A **Tornado Warning** means a funnel cloud has been sighted – time to seek shelter!
- ☐ Do not risk your life trying to protect equipment, structures, livestock, or crops when a tornado is imminent

Thunderstorms

- ☐ Refer to **wind, rain, and hail** prep
- ☐ Keep in mind that thunderstorms can develop rapidly and unexpectedly
- ☐ Complete all outside tasks in advance so no one is outside during a thunderstorm. If you do get caught out in the open during a thunderstorm:
 - ☐ Get off the tractor if feasible – leave it in the field
 - ☐ Seek shelter as quickly as possible
 - ☐ Leave behind any tools that conduct electricity
- ☐ Unplug equipment or have surge protectors
 - ☐ Be prepared for power outages; identify necessary uses of electricity and determine a back-up plan or purchase a generator

Extreme heat/Heat waves

- ☐ Review heat stroke/exhaustion and dehydration symptoms with staff/family 
- ☐ Plan the workday around the heat. Schedule work and frequent breaks to accommodate the heat. Use this table as a guide 
- ☐ Minimize time working alone so all staff help with monitoring for and addressing any signs of heat illness
- ☐ Be sure staff/family are adequately hydrated and have regular water & shade breaks. Provide electrolyte powders or beverages in addition to water
- ☐ Find additional heat safety resources here 
- ☐ Monitor livestock for heat stress and dehydration
- ☐ Know the signs of heat exhaustion for your species/breeds
 - ☐ Avoid working animals, especially during daily peak temperatures
 - ☐ Provide livestock with additional watering stations and shade/ventilation
 - ☐ Avoid handling or transporting livestock on hot days unless necessary. If needed, move animals during cooler parts of the day, like in the evening or early morning
 - ☐ Check livestock frequently to ensure they have access to clean water
 - ☐ Provide electrolytes to livestock as needed
- ☐ Schedule shearing of sheep and other fiber-producing animals before summer to give them enough time to grow enough staple to avoid sunburns while minimizing overheating concerns
- ☐ Irrigate crops thoroughly before the heat wave begins
- ☐ Evaluate the need for shade cloth on greenhouses and high tunnels


Learn more about emergency preparedness through the UConn Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN)





Hail

- ☐ Move vulnerable equipment under cover
- ☐ Provide shelter to vulnerable animals
 - ☐ Young poultry may not seek cover on their own, contain within coop or cover chicken tractors
- ☐ Move seedling trays under cover
- ☐ Harvest vulnerable crops as possible




Drought

- ☐ Monitor drought here 
- ☐ Know the symptoms of dehydration in livestock; monitor and treat appropriately
- ☐ Irrigate judiciously, being mindful of well/water body capacity and possible depletion
- ☐ Focus irrigation on high-value or drought-sensitive crops
- ☐ Reduce tillage and maintain residue to conserve soil moisture
- ☐ Monitor irrigation and livestock watering sources for quality, especially surface water
- ☐ Manage grazing to prevent damage to pasture. Consider implementing supplemental feeding during low pasture availability

Wildfire smoke

- ☐ Monitor air quality here 
- ☐ Monitor inside ventilation if animals are kept in buildings such as barns, as a decline in general air quality may increase risk of respiratory challenges
- ☐ Time the workday around the smoke, which tends to be worse in the early morning and later afternoon for distant fires
- ☐ Keep masks on hand. Note that masks must be N95 or better. KF94, KN95, medical, and cloth masks do not protect you from wildfire smoke
- ☐ Find additional wildfire smoke safety resources here 

Elevated fire risk

- ☐ Review **Preparing to manage fire risks in the General Strategies** checklist
- ☐ Monitor fire risk  ☐ Sign up for alerts 
- ☐ Clear dead leaves, brush, grasses, straw, and other readily flammable materials from areas surrounding buildings and work areas where sparks, flames, or hot equipment might be present
- ☐ Take care to prevent heat buildup in baled hay. Learn more here 
- ☐ Always have a water source handy when doing work that could make sparks, such as cutting metal, or when hot equipment could come in contact with flammable materials