

Emergency Preparedness and Safety for Farms and Rural Property Owners Workshop

By Heloise Dixon-Warren, Moose Meadows Farm

On the weekend of January 19/20th, FARMED hosted a workshop in partnership with multiple other agencies and organisations on the topic of **Emergency Preparedness and Safety**. This workshop was a follow up to the Wildfire Tour FARMED hosted in the fall and provided participants a chance to dive deeper into the topic of wildfire, FireSmarting, and the overall topic of emergency preparedness. The main objective of the workshop was to provide an opportunity to connect with the various agencies and organisations involved in emergency preparedness so as to better understand their role and how it connects to our role as private land owners / farmers. It was about solving the puzzle and better understanding what we as farmers / rural property owners can do to be better prepared for an emergency.

The workshop consisted of each of the following presenters speaking for 20 minutes each to provide information on the role of their organization during an emergency:

BC Wildfire (Matt Duran)
FireSmart BC (Ted Traer)
Ministry of Agriculture and Foods (Nicole Pressey)
Cariboo Regional District Emergency Services (Stephanie Masun and Kathlyn Sage Gordon (BC Fire Warden)
Integris Credit Union - Insurance (Gayle Perison)
AgSafe BC (D'anais Jacques and Reg Steward)
Pet Safe Coalition of Canada (Debbie Knabke)



The afternoon consisted of introducing the participants to the process taken to develop a **"Farm and Ranch Wildfire Plan"** (<https://firesmartbc.ca/farm-and-ranch-wildfire-preparedness/>) While the original plan was for participants to use the afternoon to work on their Plan, we found time short due to the extensive questions asked of the presenters and time limitations. The participants in attendance were mostly from the North Cariboo with the Baker Creek community well represented. One participant traveled from Dunster (west of McBride) to join us as she had attended similar workshops but was interested in how this particular one was set up with multiple presenters.

The take away from this workshop was that emergency planning and preparedness is complex, multi-faceted, and requires a collaborative approach with many individuals and agencies working closely together for success. We also learnt that there are many resources and programs available to assist farms, ranches, and rural property owners

to be as prepared as possible for an emergency.

Below are a 5 take away "facts":

FIVE FACTS

1) Premises ID (PremID)

PremID is a way of linking poultry and livestock, including bees, to specific geographic locations. PremID became mandatory on July 1, 2022 for poultry and livestock producers and supports fast and accurate responses to non-disease emergencies that threaten livestock, such as floods, forest fires, or environmental contamination events. Anyone responsible for the care of a farm animal(s) should have a PremID for the location where the animal is kept.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/programs/premises-id>

2) Funding Available for Bonafide Farms

Extreme Weather Preparedness for Agriculture Program is now open for applications. There are 4 Streams: Wildfire Preparedness Stream, Flooding Preparedness Stream, Extreme Heat Preparedness Stream and Innovation Project Stream

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/programs/extreme-weather-preparedness>

3) Emergency Information Tubes

AgSafe BC works closely with WorkSafe BC to support safety for farms and ranches. On the AgSafe BC website, resources are provided that are an important part of building a emergency response plan for agriculture operations in BC as well as being included in a standard Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) program, for both small and large employers. One recommendation is for farms and ranches to have an Emergency Information Tube that includes emergency contact information and an Informational Map of your property. The information you provide in an Emergency Information Tube can help make emergency responders' work more effective and efficient, and possibly help save lives. High visibility Emergency Information decals are available for order through the AgSafe BC. AgSafe Regional Safety Consultants and Advisors can assist with any questions you have about building your Emergency Information Tube.

<https://agsafebc.ca/tools/emergency-planning-resources/wildfires/#InfoTubes>

4) Emergency Support Services (ESS)

During an emergency event, ESS may be offered to an evacuee for a short period of time. There are eligibility requirements for ESS. ESS may include the following:

Primary services include temporary lodging, food, clothing, and incidentals (such as toiletries)

Specialized services include emotional support, health services (such as first aid), pet care, and transportation. Homeowner or tenant insurance may provide greater support than the ESS program. It is recommended to check with your insurer to determine what may be available to you.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-management/preparedbc/evacuation-recovery/ess-how>

5) Livestock Relocation Emergency Relocation

Provincial support for livestock relocation during emergencies is available to support commercial agricultural producers in the province. This is for both bonafide and non-bonafide farms.

Note: If you are a non-farm business owner of livestock or pets you should ensure you have the appropriate plans in place to care for your animals during an emergency.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/business-market-development/emergency-management/livestock-relocation>

Thank you for the following agencies and organisations for sponsoring this Workshop:

Canadian Red Cross
Community Resource Investment
City of Quesnel/Forestry Initiative Centre
FARMED / North Cariboo Agricultural Marketing Association
BC Wildfire Service
FireSmart BC
Ministry of Agriculture and Foods
Cariboo Regional District Emergency Services
Integris Credit Union - Insurance
Pet Safe Coalition of Canada
AgSafe BC
Bouchie Lake Country Store



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