



Fact sheet on Fire Risks for Animal Owners, Farmers and Growers

17 December 2025

Dry weather brings an increase in fire risk. In New Zealand, the wildfire season usually runs from October through until March each year. But wildfires can occur any time in the right conditions.

Plan ahead

- It's important to have a plan that includes managing the risks for wildfire and fire in general.
- Wildfire can move fast, so your plan needs to be able to be implemented quickly.
- Be prepared to evacuate people, your pets, and livestock in an emergency.
- Have a plan for where animals and livestock can be moved to that reduces their risk should a wildfire occur.

Think of the fire risk

- For those visiting or working on your property, ensure they are aware of the fire risk, and how they can prevent a wildfire occurring.
- Monitor daily and seasonal forecasts, and extreme weather (particularly windy conditions) and fire risk conditions. On-farm weather stations can be useful.
- Think about activities you might be planning to undertake for the day and, based on the fire danger, consider if it is still a good idea or if it's better to do it earlier in the day or on another day when the fire risk is lower.
- Clear any flammable plants and vegetation (particularly grass) away from buildings, gutters and other infrastructure (for example, electric fence units and water pumps).
- Mowing or grazing roadsides, including internal boundaries to reduce the grass can help reduce the risk of wildfires spreading onto your property.
- Consider ploughing a "fire break" around particular assets to slow or stop fire progress.
- Avoid storing all your dry feed in one place or storing dry feed along roadside boundaries as there can be increased risk of feed catching fire if a wildfire occurs.
- If making hay, don't rush the process. It is critical to make sure hay is free of excess moisture before baling or storing. Get advice if you are unsure.
- Ensure farm equipment is well maintained. Broken exhausts, rubbing metal parts and vegetation build up around moving or hot parts can cause wildfires.
- Make sure accessways are clear and wide enough for fire trucks and that rapid numbers are clearly visible.

- Use irrigation water efficiently, plan for restrictions, and keep water reserves, including for firefighting.
- Have a spray rig, water cart or similar ready to go that can help in the event of a wildfire.
- If you have a pond, water tank, irrigation system or another source of water that can be used for firefighting make sure these can be easily accessed by a fire truck, are free of hazards, and have signage showing their location.
- Animal owners should be vigilant about their animals as well as themselves and the people on the property and be able to locate them quickly in an emergency.
- If using fire (for example, burning rubbish or land management), always check on the “[checkitsalright](#)” website first and follow the advice this provides, including getting a fire permit if one is required. Even a small fire can quickly escape if not properly managed. Always extinguish burn piles with water when the fire is finished, never bury it or leave it to burn out.
- Speak to your insurance provider about what is covered in the event of a wildfire, noting fences, shelterbelts and irrigation can be expensive to replace. There are a range of policy options for rural properties.

In a wildfire

- Please follow any requirements to evacuate.
- If you have to leave your animals behind in a wildfire, make sure they are in a safe place well away from any fire risk. Consider opening gates to allow easy access to safer areas for stock.

Fire and Emergency New Zealand resources

Check fire risk conditions – www.checkitsalright.nz

To arrange for a fire permit – www.firepermit.nz

Protecting your home –

<https://fireandemergency.nz/outdoor-and-rural-fire-safety/protect-your-home-from-outdoor-fires>

Protecting your rural property –

[Rural property checklist | Fire and Emergency New Zealand](#)

Hay baling guide –

<https://www.fireandemergency.nz/assets/Documents/Files/fenz-1413-hay-safety-fa2-nobleed.pdf>

Protecting your animals in emergencies –

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/animals/animal-welfare/animal-welfare-emergency-management/preparing-animals-for-emergencies/>

Animals affected by fire –

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/26533-Animals-affected-by-fire-Advice-for-livestock-lifestyle-block-horse-and-pet-owners>