

Tornado Debris Hazardous to Livestock



31 years and 3 days after Andover and other parts of Butler County were hit with tornadoes, they were hit once again. I'm sure I'm not the only one that had a sense of Déjà vu. Residents across Butler County have been busy cleaning up debris from April 29th, and there's no doubt debris clean up and recovery will extend for years to come.

Livestock owners need to heed extra attention to their pastures, no matter how big or small, if you currently have or will have livestock in them. This applies not only to the people who took a hit from the tornado, but to all who own pastures in Butler County. I have found several pieces of insulation and other roofing paper in our pastures in North/Central Butler County over the weekend; tornado debris can travel for over

100 miles. It is important if you own pasture or running livestock (no matter what type), that you take some extra time the next few days to check your livestock thoroughly and clean up debris in your pastures.

If near or impacted directly by the tornado

- Injuries such as lacerations, puncture wounds, or other signs of injuries may be found on livestock
- Soreness following tornado as they may have been hit by flying debris
- If you have questions or concerns on your livestock, do not hesitate to contact your local veterinarian.

Pasture care and other helpful tips

- Debris – make thorough sweeps of pastures for debris such as insulation, lumber, nails, clothing, and any other items
 - Livestock can develop hardware disease from eating small pieces of metal
 - We also know livestock are curious creatures and will often eat anything that looks interesting; whether it's insulation, plastic, siding, clothing, etc. You name it, if it's out there they may very well try to eat it.
 - Livestock can experience gastro-intestinal problems from eating foreign objects.
 - Nails can create puncture wounds and foot problems. Check animals carefully if they start showing signs of lameness.
- Once you make one sweep, continue to make more. It is not uncommon to continue finding debris for months even a couple years following a tornado.

Hayfields & Farm Fields

- Fortunately, hay meadows are relatively short right now. You should scour the meadows thoroughly to insure all insulation and debris is picked up.
- If it is not picked up, insulation and debris may be baled or harvested and fed to livestock months later, creating health issues for them at that point.

Ponds, Rivers and Water Supplies

- Water supply for livestock should also be checked thoroughly. Remove as much debris as you possibly can.
- Some debris may float to the top and the use of a boat can help you retrieve the debris.
- Other debris will sink and will require extra work to remove from ponds.
- If livestock have access to walking into the water supply such as a pond or river, they may sustain injuries from debris in them.

When you are out cleaning up debris, remember to take appropriate actions to help protect yourself from cuts and puncture wounds. Quality thick soled shoes, gloves, jeans, and long sleeve shirts will be your friend. Ticks are thick already too, so be sure and take appropriate safety measures.

If you have questions, The Butler County Extension Office can be reached at (316) 321-9660.