



Returning home after a bushfire

It helps to think ahead about what the physical environment might look and feel like when you return home.

When you return home you will need to check the environment's suitability for your animals, which includes:

- ☐ assessing food supply
- ☐ checking for water contamination
- ☐ removing debris
- ☐ checking fences.

When safe to do so, assess animals for illness or injury sustained during the fire.

Bringing evacuated animals home

When the all clear has been given to return home, first return without animals that have been evacuated so that damage can be assessed and the property can be prepared for their return.

In particular, check for fallen or falling electrical poles and wires before returning horses and livestock to paddocks.

Ensure that the ground has completely cooled before returning animals to paddocks.

After a natural disaster the environment will have changed and as a result animals may become disorientated, frightened, and aggressive during this time. Take care when releasing them.

Initially, monitor animals at least daily to ensure they are eating properly, have not sustained further injuries and are settling in. Monitor animals for signs of after effects – smoke inhalation and burns can manifest symptoms days after the fire.

Managing food and water

The most important consideration in the short term is to ensure your animals have access to safe drinking water and a reliable food source.

- Do not allow animals to drink water that is stagnant as it could contain high levels of bacteria, ash, debris or other dangerous contaminants. Dispose of contaminated water and replenish with fresh drinking water. Information about treating contaminated farm dams can be found at agric.wa.gov.au.
- Ensure livestock have access to good quality feed and/or suitable pasture.
- Ration any existing unspoilt feed until new feed can be accessed. Be cautious of food items stored in refrigeration, as power supplies may have been interrupted and food spoiled.
- Visit agric.wa.gov.au for information about how to access animal food supplies in your area.

Important disclaimer

The Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the State of Western Australia accept no liability whatsoever by reason of negligence or otherwise arising from the use or release of this information or any part of it.

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