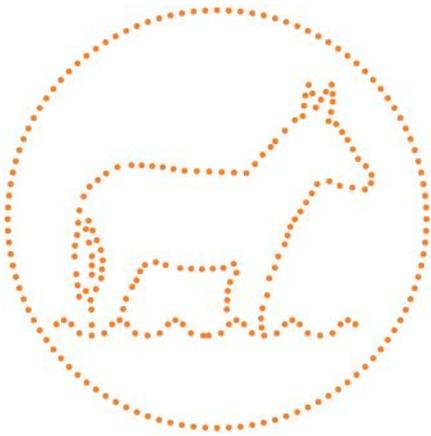




Disaster response

Frequently asked questions



1. Why is helping animals so important during disasters?

Animals experience the terrible effects of disasters that people do: injury, starvation, thirst, displacement, illness and stress. More than 1 billion of the world's poorest people depend on animals for food, transport and their livelihoods. Protecting animal's helps people rebuild their lives following a disaster. Animals need to be protected, just as people do. And our experience shows their needs are fundamentally linked. Helping animals helps people. For example, in India 70 per cent of the population - more than 800 million people - depend on agriculture and animal farming for survival.

2. Do you believe helping animals is more important than helping people in a disaster?

Our expertise is helping animals and we work alongside humanitarian organizations so that entire communities receive help when they need it the most. We've seen too many instances of people refusing to evacuate dangerous areas or going back into unsafe zones to try to help their animals because they are either considered members of the family or often their source of income. By helping animals, we are also helping the communities that rely upon them.

3. How long will you be on the ground during a disaster?

We work with local partners to assess what's needed. Every disaster is different. By acting fast now, we can provide immediate aid such as emergency veterinary treatment, food, evacuation of animals from danger, or reuniting animals with owners. Should we determine the needs are more long term, we will continue to work as long as we are needed. We help governments and communities to prepare for the future including putting into place risk reduction measures to help communities protect their animals in future disasters.

4. How do you decide which disasters you respond to?

After a disaster has been declared by a government, we monitor the impact and if necessary, deploy an assessment team to the area. Our staff liaises with government officials and veterinary associations to discuss any country-specific and regional requirements for disaster assistance. But we are constantly monitoring disasters and have a global network of disaster liaison officers in 3 regions from Africa, Asia Pacific to Latin America. They are our eyes and ears in the very earliest moments of disasters so we can prepare and be there when needs are most urgent. We coordinate our approach with other responding aid agencies and UN organizations to ensure the most effective response. By working with government channels, local communities and other organizations, we can understand their needs and decide how to best respond to animals affected.

5. Aren't you putting yourself at high risk to save animals?

The safety and security of our staff is always our top priority. We only enter an area once we have determined the danger levels and risks. Our work is very demanding, but it is also very rewarding to help animals when no one else can or will. We were all drawn to this work because animals matter to us and we care about protecting them.

6. The emergency shelters/evacuation zones aren't accepting pets or other animals. What is World Animal Protection doing about that?

We work with governments and local authorities to try to change that, by making sure animals are included in evacuation and emergency planning. For example, in 2011 in Fukushima Japan, animals were not allowed to be evacuated. We worked with Japanese animal welfare organizations to help address that urgent need and as a result hundreds of pets in the affected areas were housed safely until they could be reunited with their owners.

7. What if I must evacuate and cannot take my pet?

If you cannot take your pet(s) when you evacuate and must leave them in your home, put a sign on your door to let people know there are pets inside. Try to leave 3 days of food and water for them and place their medical records in a visible spot.

8. Why doesn't World Animal Protection respond to every disaster?

Through the generosity of our donors, we've responded to 13 interventions in 14 countries helping over 1 million animals in 2017. Unfortunately, we don't have resources to respond to all of them in person. However, we do reach out and offer advice, technical expertise and tips for animal owners even in disasters when we are not physically present. As a charity with limited resources, we must prioritize where we can be most effective helping animals. The more donations we receive from donors, the more we can respond and the more animals we can help.

9. Where are your disaster teams based?

Our disaster management teams are based in 4 different regions, from:

- Latin America
- Asia Pacific
- Africa

We are the only animal welfare organization that has a fully trained staff team that can respond to disasters within 24 hours. The teams that deploy to natural disaster zones are highly qualified veterinarians to disaster trained officers and experts specializing in disaster preparedness.

10. Why are you helping these animals if they are just going to get eaten in the end?

The fact is, a billion or more people make their living or survive based on farming. As an animal welfare organization, our concern is that these animals live the best possible lives free from hunger, thirst, pain, and suffering. We have found that most cases of animal cruelty are not intentional but are the result of people not understanding what animals need. In the vast majority of cases, farmers and animal owners are very happy to put into place more animal-friendly practices as they see the result: healthier, happier and more productive animals.

11. How does good animal welfare contribute to better food security?

Animal welfare is a vital element toward enhancing productivity. Poor animal welfare costs money, as a result of disease, overuse of antibiotics and other drugs, stress and injuries, which reduce growth, lifespan and output of milk or meat. On the other hand, better nutrition, veterinary care and better living conditions can improve both animal welfare and production yields. For example, chickens given enriched housing where they can exercise are less likely to be culled for lameness.

12. What type of work is World Animal Protection doing with the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC)?

In December 2012, World Animal Protection signed an agreement with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to work together to produce an animal management training module and a set of global project case studies to help embed animal welfare principles into the IFRC's work.

Since then we have run several training sessions with IFRC teams in Latin America, Asia and Africa, co-hosted an event in Geneva on the role of animals as a sustainable solution in humanitarian and development programs and developed risk reduction projects with the Mexican Red Cross.

Most recently, we closely collaborated with the Mongolian Red Cross, in a disaster response operation to help the thousands of animals and herders affected by the dzud in this country.

13. What is the benefit of the partnership with IFRC?

The partnership will help us to improve understanding of 'animal welfare' throughout the IFRC network so that humanitarian disaster response efforts can be better equipped to respond to the needs of animals and the people who depend on them. It will also help to place World Animal Protection as the leading authority on animal welfare amongst a key sphere of influence.