

# Ready, Set, Go!

## Wildland Fire Preparedness for Farmers & Ranchers



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**I**t is not a question of **if**, but **when** the next major wildland fire will occur. And, as wildland fire continues to intensify as the fastest growing fire problem in the United States, it is important to remember the specific considerations that farmers and ranchers face. Wildland fire is now a year-round reality in the nation and the areas most at risk may be farm and ranch properties. Many

agricultural properties border natural areas or have access challenges that are difficult to protect from an advancing wildland fire.

This **Ready, Set, Go! for Farmers & Ranchers**, brochure is designed to help these audiences meet these challenges and protect their property, livelihoods, families and personal safety.

## Defensible Space

**Greatly increases your safety and reduces fire damage!**

**D**efensible space is a buffer zone created by the removal of weeds, brush and other natural vegetation between structures and the wildland urban interface (WUI). Creating defensible space can decrease fire damage to structures and allow space for firefighting operations.

Landscaping plans that include non-combustible materials or fire-resistant plants and regular maintenance can contribute to the creation of defensible space.

**Special consideration should be given to wind-driven embers which can travel up to a mile ahead of the flame front.** Take care to regularly inspect or replace outside screens and ventilation points.

**“ Unmanaged vegetation between and around homes, farms, or livestock structures increase the risk of wildland fire spreading. Pre-fire planning, fuel management and sufficient fuel breaks allow firefighters the space they need to fight wildland fires. ”**

Farm and ranch properties may require very large areas of defensible space due to the surrounding vegetation and topography. **Additionally, agricultural assets such as feed, packing boxes, mulch, and fuel supplies are particularly susceptible to flames or wind-driven embers.** Livestock and equipment are also at risk. As a result, farmers and ranchers must carefully assess their property, paying particular attention to fire history and topography to determine how much defensible space is needed. Your local fire department can assist in your risk assessment review of your property.

## Contact your local Fire Department today!

IAFC's Community Wildfire Readiness initiatives and associated programs are funded in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service.



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## Become a fire-adapted community!

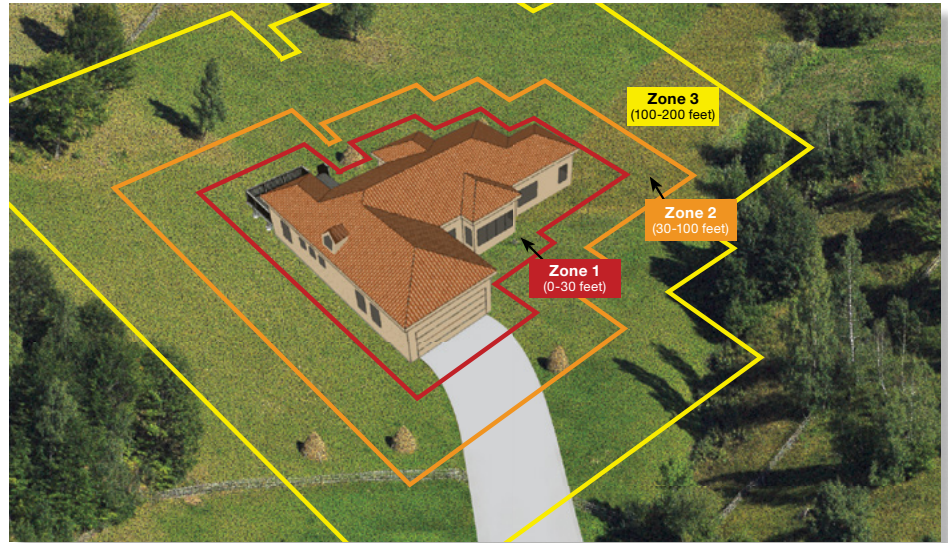
Learn how you can make a difference and protect yourself and community!

Visit [www.iafc.org/CWR](http://www.iafc.org/CWR) to learn more about fire-adapted efforts and simple actions you can take to prepare!

# Ready, Set, Go!

**D**efensible space can be created by removing vegetation that is next to or near resources at risk. In addition, the impact on assets can be reduced by using fuel breaks, strategic grazing, and landscaping plans with non-combustible materials and fire-resistant plants.

Special attention can also be given to wind-driven embers that are carried ahead of the fire front. These embers have the potential to be carried both short (100-200 ft.) and long distances (~1 mile) depending on current weather conditions. Embers that land in orchards, on roofs, and in feed or fuel storage facilities can start destructive fires.



**Take action! Create your personal defensible space with the help of the RSG National Action Guide. Contact your local fire department or visit [www.wildlandfireRSG.org](http://www.wildlandfireRSG.org).**

## Orchards & Groves

**F**ruit trees are susceptible to damage from wildland fires in two ways: crop damage and long-term damage from burned trees. A wildland fire driven by wind can rapidly overcome an orchard, destroying both fruit and trees in the process.

Activating irrigation systems can be extremely effective in preventing a fire from spreading into a grove. For best results, the systems should be activated well ahead of the arrival of the fire to ensure leaf litter is thoroughly soaked. High winds may cause power companies to shut off power in certain areas, so it is critical to soak the leaf litter while there is still power to the pumps.

However, the best method to prevent an advancing wildland fire from reaching an orchard or grove is to create defensible space. This allows firefighters to use water, backfires, bulldozers or other methods from reaching the property.



**Woodpiles around orchards serve as a landing zone for wind-driven embers and can worsen the fire.**

### To prepare for a wildland fire, farmers and ranchers should:

- ☐ Remove leaf litter around tree trunks.
- ☐ Create defensible spaces around the orchard.
- ☐ Have spare gate keys, combinations and property maps available for firefighters.
- ☐ Clearly mark water tanks, ponds and other water supplies available for fire department use.
- ☐ Clearly mark roads that firefighters might have to use.
- ☐ Apply sprinkler water for as long as possible.

## Livestock & Rangeland Operations

**I**t is often impossible for many ranchers to evacuate their livestock due to the number of animals they have on their property. As a result, ranchers should consider establishing relatively safe havens for their animals through rotational grazing. Intensive-managed grazing near ranch houses, barns or equipment areas can provide defensible space for those assets and create an area where livestock can be better protected from the main body of the fire.

### To prepare for a wildland fire, farmers and ranchers should:

- ☐ Know fire history and typical fire behavior of the area.
- ☐ Establish and maintain firebreaks around pastures.
- ☐ Create defensible space around all structures.
- ☐ Clear vegetation around fuel tanks.
- ☐ Create a livestock evacuation plan.
- ☐ Ensure proper registration and branding of livestock.
- ☐ Have spare keys, combinations, and property maps available for firefighters.
- ☐ Clearly mark water tanks, ponds, and other water supplies available for fire department use.

### If a wildfire is approaching, livestock operators should:

- ☐ Open and unlock gates so livestock can escape flames.
- ☐ Evacuate animals (saddle horses, breeding stock, etc).
- ☐ Close all doors and windows in barns and other structures.
- ☐ Shut off propane tanks.



Moving livestock to previously grazed areas will help protect them against an advancing wildland fire by acting as a defensible space.

## Row Crops

**D**amage from wildland fire is typically minor in row crops. But, because many row crop farms are in close proximity to natural vegetation, farm workers, buildings and equipment could be in danger. Farmers should take defensible space precautions around the farm house and other structures.



Wildland fire can come fairly close to your property. By creating defensible space, you can reduce your chances of damage.

### To prepare for a wildland fire, farmers and ranchers should:

- ☐ Store farm supplies safely.
- ☐ Create a safe zone clear of vegetation for equipment.
- ☐ Have spare gate keys, combinations, and property maps available for firefighters.
- ☐ Properly mark all storage areas used for chemicals.
- ☐ Create an evacuation plan for all farm workers.

# My Personal Wildland Fire ACTION PLAN

## Ready, Set, Go! Safety Checklist

### Ready (Before a fire occurs)

#### Prepare you and your family:

- ☐ Create a wildland fire Action Plan, visit [www.wildlandfireRSG.org](http://www.wildlandfireRSG.org).
- ☐ Know your evacuation routes.
- ☐ Keep emergency supply kits on ranch and in personal vehicles.

#### Prepare your property:

- ☐ Ensure your address is clearly marked and visible from the street.
- ☐ Establish and maintain firebreaks around your pastures and structures.
- ☐ Create defensible space around all structures.
- ☐ Clearly mark water tanks, ponds, and other water supplies available for fire department use.
- ☐ Reinforce bridges to ensure that fire engines or bulldozers are supported.

#### Prepare your livestock:

- ☐ Create a livestock relocation/evacuation plan.
- ☐ Ensure proper registration and branding of livestock.
- ☐ Establish a contingency plan for feeding livestock if grazing land is destroyed.

### Set (As the fire approaches)

- ☐ Monitor local radio or television stations for weather updates.
- ☐ Load vehicles with emergency supplies and valuables.
- ☐ Alert family and workers of any changes in the situation.
- ☐ Turn on irrigation.
- ☐ Open gates so livestock can escape and to give access to firefighters.
- ☐ Relocate livestock.
- ☐ Close all doors and windows and turn on all lights in homes, barns, and other structures.
- ☐ Shut off propane tanks.

### Go! (Act early)

- ☐ Leave early enough to avoid being caught in the fire.

Remember! During a wildland fire, responding engines may not be from the immediate area or have local knowledge. Clearly marked addresses and water supplies save valuable time.

#### If you are trapped or unable to evacuate:

- ☐ Call 9-1-1 immediately.
- ☐ Wear long sleeves and pants made of natural fibers, such as cotton. Boots, gloves, hats, goggles, and bandanas are also helpful against smoke and embers.
- ☐ Stay hydrated.
- ☐ Patrol your property for fires.
- ☐ Take refuge inside a structure, away from outside walls.
- ☐ Place wet towels under doors to keep smoke and embers out.

Remember! The best thing you can do is evacuate and let firefighters do their jobs. If you choose to stay, understand that severe fire behavior could prevent firefighters from rescuing you or your family.

Contact your local fire department to learn more about how you can become fire-adapted and to get your own copy of the Wildland Fire Action Guide.  
Visit [www.wildlandfireRSG.org](http://www.wildlandfireRSG.org) & [www.IAFC.org/CWR](http://www.IAFC.org/CWR) today!