

RESCUINGAnimals
FROM
DISASTERS

SAVING ANIMALS AFTER FLOODS



by Joyce Markovics

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Water, Water Everywhere

The winter of 2007 brought nearly four feet (1.2 m) of snow to eastern Iowa. A few months later, spring rainstorms pounded the area. The melted snow along with the heavy rains filled nearby rivers, causing them to swell and overflow their **banks**. Even though wall-like structures called **levees** had been built near the river banks to stop overflows, there was just too much water. In June 2008, some of the levees failed, causing water to spill onto farmland and wash away roads and buildings.

Nine rivers overflowed their banks in Iowa in 2008.



Jeff Boyer, a pig farmer in Oakville, Iowa, was worried about how the animals on his farm would survive the flooding. As Jeff waded through the rising water to get to his barns, he knew that he had to do something to save the 3,500 pigs that were inside. Jeff tried to set them free by shooing the animals out of the barns, but the water outside frightened them. It was then that Jeff was faced with a heartbreaking decision: **evacuate** or stay with the pigs. He and his family made the painful decision to leave. "It was the hardest thing I've ever done," Jeff recalled.

In Oakville, many pigs were trapped inside barns when their owners left them to save their own lives.



Iowa has
more pig
farms than any
other state.

"Little Pink Dots"

Five days after the flood, Jeff set out in a fishing boat to see what had happened to his pigs and farm. The boat zipped across what appeared to be a huge lake. However, it was not a lake. The water Jeff was moving through was actually thousands of acres of flooded cornfields. When Jeff reached his farm, he found most of it destroyed and **submerged** under several feet of water. Seeing no signs of life, Jeff was sure that all his pigs had drowned.



After the flood, over 17,000 acres (6,879 hectares) of farmland in Oakville, Iowa, was completely submerged, including dozens of pig farms. Many farmers used boats to see the destruction caused by the flood.



A few days later, Jeff got a surprising call. He was told that workers from an animal rescue group had spotted from their boat “little pink dots” along one of his barns. They counted between 250 and 300 pigs. When Jeff heard the news he said he was “just kind of **flabbergasted**.”

To escape from the floodwater, many pigs found safety on the roofs of submerged homes and farm buildings.

With the help of a **barge** and crane, Jeff and some other farmers pulled out as many of the surviving pigs as they could from the floodwater. Unfortunately, many were too sick or injured to be saved and were later **euthanized**.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joyce Markovics is an editor, writer, and orchid collector. She encourages anyone looking for a pet to consider adopting one of the many homeless animals living in shelters across the United States.

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SAVING ANIMALS AFTER FLOODS

When disaster strikes, people aren't the only ones in danger. Winter snowstorms and spring rainstorms hit eastern Iowa, causing rivers to overflow their banks in 2008. The swirling waters washed away roads and buildings—and also covered farms where thousands of pigs and other animals lived. Would anyone come to their rescue?

Look inside to meet the everyday heroes who have found ways to save animals from major floods in the United States and other parts of the world. These brave men and women have managed to rescue not only pigs and horses, but also pets such as dogs and cats and wild animals such as kangaroos and deer—sometimes even risking their own lives as they rushed in to help.

**SAVING ANIMALS AFTER
EARTHQUAKES**

**SAVING ANIMALS FROM
FIRES**

**SAVING ANIMALS AFTER
FLOODS**

**SAVING ANIMALS FROM
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