

County of Santa Clara

Department of Agriculture and Environmental Management
Agriculture Division



San Jose Office

1553 Berger Drive
Building 1
San Jose, CA 95112
(408) 918-4600
Fax (408) 286-2460

South County Office

80 W. Highland Avenue
Building K
San Martin, CA 95046
(408) 201-0640
Fax (408) 683-4247

<http://www.sccagriculture.org>

Santa Clara County Livestock Pass Program

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Purpose

The purpose of creating a county-based “Livestock Pass” program is to provide a uniform way of identifying vetted commercial livestock producer owner-operators and managers to firefighting personnel, California Highway Patrol officers, Sheriff’s deputies, other law enforcement officers, and other emergency personnel. Possession of a Livestock Pass during a wildfire or a similar disaster may allow the rancher limited emergency access to restricted areas for the purposes of:

- 1) Feeding, watering, or caring for livestock sheltering in-place or
- 2) Evacuating livestock

Access to restricted areas will be at the discretion of emergency personnel; possession of a Livestock Pass does not guarantee access to restricted areas. The Livestock Pass shall not be used to obtain emergency access to care for pets, collect household items, or for any purpose other than those specifically stated above. Livestock Pass cards are intended for distribution to eligible ranchers before a disaster.

Program Administration

The Santa Clara County Division of Agriculture will administer the Livestock Pass program for Santa Clara County. Program administration will include processing applications, confirming eligibility, printing, and distributing Livestock Pass identification cards, record keeping, and renewal notification. Santa Clara County will honor Livestock Passes and Ag Passes issued from other counties in California.

Livestock Passes are valid up to 2 years. The Pass shall expire on December 31st, the following year of issuance.

Eligibility

Livestock Passes shall be issued to commercial livestock producers (owner-operators and operation managers). A commercial livestock producer must own at least 20 head of cattle, sheep, goats, honeybee hives, or other Livestock permissible by the Division of Agriculture, that reside in Santa Clara County for at least part of the year. A Livestock Pass shall not be issued to any individual who does not meet the requirements listed above.

Eligibility will be confirmed by one or more of the following:

- 1) Operator identification number issued by a county agricultural commissioner.

- 2) Assessor's Parcel Number confirming agricultural zoning for the property or properties upon which access is sought.
- 3) Agricultural land lease documentation.
- 4) Williamson Act enrollment documentation.
- 5) Documentation from the USDA Farm Services Agency attesting that the applicant is a commercial livestock producer.
- 6) Current registration of a livestock brand with the Bureau of Livestock Identification; brand inspector may confirm eligibility based on number of cattle owned.
- 7) Letter of Authorization from ranch owner

Santa Clara County Livestock Pass Program Description

To receive a Livestock Pass, each person must sign a liability waiver. A livestock pass may be revoked at the discretion of the Santa Clara County Agricultural Commissioner. A Pass holder may no longer be eligible to hold a livestock pass if they violate the conditions contained herein or if they refuse or fail to follow emergency personnel instructions. Notification of pass revocation shall be given within 2 weeks of decision.

Application

Each individual interested in obtaining a Livestock Pass shall be required to complete an application through the Santa Clara County Division of Agriculture.

Training

Participation in a, not to exceed, 4-hour initial training is mandatory to obtain a Livestock Pass. The training curriculum will be approved by CAL FIRE and conform to California State Fire Marshal requirements. One-hour refresher trainings are required to renew a Livestock Pass. Fire safety training is best performed in person however online trainings are being considered. Initial trainings and refresher training courses may be offered in the future years between January 1 and June 30.

Conditional Access

Possession of a Livestock Pass does not grant any rights or privileges and does not guarantee the cardholder access behind road closures. Access is at the discretion of onsite emergency personnel and is situation dependent. Access will not be granted outside of daylight hours. All persons must depart the restricted area by the same route as entry. An escort may be required in any instance. Onsite emergency personnel may place a limit on time spent behind any road closure. Evacuating residents and preserving human life takes precedence over livestock evacuation and care.

Insurance and Risk

Access in an area closed to the public during a disaster may affect the coverage of the passholder's property liability insurance, vehicle or equipment insurance, and worker's compensation coverage. Each Livestock Pass holder should be aware that hazardous conditions may exist at any location behind the road closure. Program administrators, collaborators, and trainers shall not be liable for injury or death of any person participating in activities resulting from the inherent risk of entering a disaster area.

Modifications and Revisions

Modifications and revisions to the Santa Clara County Livestock Pass program shall be made at the discretion of the Santa Clara County Division of Agricultural office pending approval and review by the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office, CAL FIRE, Santa Clara County Fire Department, and County Counsel.

All pass holders shall be notified of modifications and revisions and a public comment period of no less than 30 days shall be provided. Notices shall also be sent to the Santa Clara County Farm Bureau and the Santa Clara County Cattlemen's Association.

Participating Partners/Agencies

- Santa Clara County Division of Agricultural
- CAL FIRE
- Santa Clara County Fire
- Santa Clara County Office of Emergency Services
- UC Cooperative Extension
- Sheriff's Office and other local law enforcement agencies
- Santa Clara County Animal Care and Control Services
- Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors
- Santa Clara County Counsel
- County Executive Office
- California Highway Patrol
- Santa Clara County Farm Bureau
- Santa Clara County Cattlemen's Association

Livestock Pass and Identifying Documents

Each Livestock Pass shall include:

- 1) Pass holder name
- 2) Photo of pass holder (see sentence below)
- 3) Ranch/Operation Name
- 4) Expiration Date
- 5) Seal or Logo of authorizing agency and signature of issuing officer

A Livestock Pass is not valid unless presented with proper government-issued photo ID, including driver's license, Real ID, or military/Gov't issued ID