

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Livestock And Horse Owners Urged To Prepare For Dry Weather

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With the [2015 drought](#) still on his mind, Department of Agriculture (D.O.A.) Commissioner Carlos Robles in a release issued today urged livestock and horse owners to start taking steps to reduce the effects of what he said was an advancing dry weather season.

"With the hard lessons learned from the drought in 2015, farmers and horse owners need to take action to ensure that food and water are available for their animals during the dry weather," Mr. Robles said.

Bethany Bradford, director of Veterinary Services, explained, "Sheep, goats, cattle and horses are at risk for malnutrition, disease and death when pastures dry out. Additional

measures are required by the owner to feed and water animals properly."

Mr. Bradford encouraged farmers to focus on providing protein for pasture animals. "Quality feed such as alfalfa cubes, rabbit pellets, fresh tan and leguminous vines provide excellent protein for animals which results in better overall health," he said. "I recommend that you spend wisely on protein and read labels. More importantly, reduce your herd to a manageable and affordable size for the amount of land that you have and feed you can provide."

Mr. Robles advised farmers to protect pastures and remove animals before the grass is overgrazed. "Taking good care of your pastures now will allow you to use them for longer periods of time and reduce your feed bill in the future," he said.

For more information on preparing for the dry weather season, contact D.O.A. Veterinary Services on St. Croix at 778- 0997 and on St. Thomas at 774-5182.