



Extreme heat situations can be hazardous to your livestock, horses and poultry. Reduced production, heat-related illnesses, even death can occur. Protect your animals during extreme heat situations.

Before Excessive Heat Situations

- **Establish cool housing or shaded areas.**
 - Adequate shade is important and can be provided by trees, buildings or sunshades.
 - Ensure building roofs are high enough to allow for air movement.
- **Prepare access to water.**
 - Animals will require more water during extreme heat conditions – up to twice as much as normal.
 - Ensure animals always have access to cool, clean water.
 - Shade above ground water lines or tanks to keep water cool.
 - Additional watering tanks may be necessary; if possible provide these in advance so animals can become used to multiple water sources.
- **Improve ventilation.**
 - Install fans, open windows, front of stalls or roof ventilation to increase air movement in buildings.
 - Cut tall vegetation 150 ft back from perimeter of holding pens.
 - Consider building earth mounds to minimize bunching of animals.
 - Increase floor space per animal or reduce the number of animals in an area.
- **Prepare for power outages.**
 - High summertime temperatures increase energy demand for cooling; overloaded energy systems can result in power outages.
 - For more information, see the Power Outage handouts in this manual.

During Excessive Heat Situations

- **Provide cool, clean water.**
 - Check water delivery systems periodically for plugs or other problems.
 - Monitor the water temperature and keep it cool.
 - If possible, keep in a shaded area.
- **Keep animals cool.**
 - Spray with oscillating sprinklers; water can have a cooling effect for animals.
 - Run water on the ground to keep hooves cooled.
 - Run water across roofs of buildings where animals are housed to cool the area.

- **Control biting insects.**
 - Flies and other insects are more active in warm weather; animals may increase their activity trying to avoid these insects and risk overheating.
 - Reduce insect breeding areas by:
 - Removing weeds/brush
 - Removing standing pools of water or mud
 - Removing manure
- **Feed later in the day**
 - Do not feed animals during the hottest periods of the day.
 - Shift feeding toward the evening after peak day temperature.
 - Cover feed bunks to prevent spoilage from heating in the sun.
- **Avoid or limit handling of animals.**
 - Processing or working animals can elevate body temperature.
 - Avoid handling during mid-day.
 - If animal must be handled, work them early in the morning (prior to 8 AM – not after 10 AM) and if possible in a shaded facility or area.
 - Ship animals at night or early morning (e.g., arrival time before 7 AM).
 - Cool animals after exercise with sprays of water.

Heat-Related Illness

- **Monitor your animals frequently for heat-related illness.**
 - Signs of heat stress can be subtle initially, so watch animals closely.
 - Animals with darker fur (e.g., black haired beef cattle) may be more susceptible.
 - **Signs of heat stress:** increased respiration rate or panting
 - excessive salivation
 - elevation of head to make it easier to breathe
 - open mouth breathing
 - If your animals are showing signs of heat stress:
 - Contact your local veterinarian immediately!
 - Move animals to the shade immediately.
 - Offer plenty of cool, clean water.
 - Spray them with cool water, especially on the legs and feet, or stand them in water.
 - Increase air movement around them.
- **Sunburn.**
 - Animals can get sunburned just like people, especially their ears and noses.
 - Animals with pink skin are at greatest risk.

Development of this educational material was by the Center for Food Security and Public Health with funding from the Multi-State Partnership for Security in Agriculture MOU-2010-HSEMD-004. June 2010

