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.

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