Winter storms can be stressful to livestock, especially those kept outdoors. Wind chills and prolonged cold increases their need for shelter, food, and water. Dehydration can be a great hazard during winter storms. Prepare now to protect your livestock during winter storms.

**Before a Winter Storm**

- **Develop an emergency plan of action.**
  - How will you get feed supplies in the case of road closures?
  - How will you supply water with freezing temperatures?
  - Plan ahead for emergency or alternative heat sources (e.g., for poultry facilities).
  - How will a power outage or fuel shortage impact the care and well-being of my livestock? What back up plan would you use?
  - Have well maintained backup generators for livestock production operations.
  - How will needed services (e.g., milk pickup) be provided? Or what will you do if needed services are not provided due to road closures?

- **Maintain an inventory.**
  - Keep a current list of all animals on your farm.
  - Include their location and any records of vaccinations, testing and ownership.
  - Make sure animals have some form of permanent identification (e.g., ear tags, tattoos).
  - Establish a list of suppliers, truckers, and people that can help with the animals, if needed.

- **Set up shelter or windbreak areas for animals kept outdoors.**
  - Shallow open front sheds
  - Windbreaks or timber-covered lowlands
  - Solid sided feed wagons can serve as temporary wind protection; place plywood or bales of straw under wagon to block the wind.

- **Winterize any building that may provide shelter for your livestock.**
  - Check roof structure and stability to hold the heavy weight of accumulated snow and ice.
  - Repair any roof leaks.
  - Install storm shutters, doors, and windows.

**During a Winter Storm**

- **Provide food.**
  - Haul extra feed to feeding areas.
  - Check mechanized feeders in case of power outages; provide for emergency feeding procedures.
  - Provide enough space for all animals to get to the feed.

- **Provide water.**
  - Remove ice buildup around waterers.
  - Use heaters in water tanks.
  - If pipes freeze or power is out you may need to haul water to animals.

- **Provide shelter.**
  - If possible, move animals to an indoor shelter or building, especially the young.
  - Provide additional bedding to keep animals insulated from the ground and keep them dry.
  - Place sand or other non-toxic gritty material on icy feedlots to provide good footing.
  - Ensure heaters are working properly and are located in an area with adequate ventilation.

- **Ensure adequate ventilation in the building.**
  - If mechanically ventilated facilities are not functioning properly, animals could suffocate from lack of oxygen.
  - Open vents to facilitate natural air flow.
  - Clear ice and snow from vents.

**Cold-Related Illnesses**

- **Frostbite**
  - Extremities (ears, tail) are particularly subject to frostbite. Male reproductive organs may be affected and impair animal fertility. Frozen or chapped teats will impact milk production.
  - Signs may not be immediately obvious or show for several days and may include white, waxy or pale appearance to affected area, sioughing of freeze-damaged tissue.

- **Hypothermia**
  - Signs: extreme shivering • increased respiration • confused, erratic or clumsy behavior; especially young animals.

For more information and resources, see [www.Prep4AgThreats.org](http://www.Prep4AgThreats.org)

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