



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.

After a Winter Storm

- **Animal disposal.**
 - Record any animal deaths.
 - Check with your state or local authorities for proper disposal methods for animal carcasses.
- **Check fences and buildings for damage from downed tree branches, contact with downed power lines, or inoperable electric fencing.**
- **Monitor animals daily for signs of illness dehydration, frostbite or hypothermia.**
 - If any of these conditions are suspected, SEEK VETERINARY CARE IMMEDIATELY!

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

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