



LIVESTOCK

MOSES ORGANIC FACT SHEET

Protect Livestock in Hot Weather

When high temperatures and heat indexes are forecast, farmers need to take precautions to protect livestock.

Easy access to clean, cool water:

Your animals will need more water in the heat. So be sure tanks are clean and full. Make sure your piping system is working and able to keep up with the increased use. If you fill by hand, double your normal check/fill times.

Animals often will congregate around the tank—make sure all of them can access it. If necessary, break up larger groups into separate smaller groups with their own tanks. This allows easier access to water and reduces the heat load.

Shade:

Animals should have access to shade or shelter during the hottest part of the day. Dark animals, large animals, pregnant animals, those with heavy coats, older/younger animals and sick animals have a lower tolerance to the heat. Watch them for signs of stress and remove them to shelter/shade if needed.

Hogs are especially sensitive to heat and sun. If you have pastured hogs, make sure they have a place to wallow and shelter to get out of the sun.



Hogs are especially sensitive to heat. Keep them cool with a misting/sprinkler system.

Air Movement:

In the barn, you should be using fans to keep the air moving. Open barn doors and windows to take advantage of the prevailing wind. Heat, humidity and no air movement is a deadly combination. Animals in movable pens, like poultry, should be oriented so the wind flows through the open sides.

Misting/Sprinkling:

Evaporating water is a great way to reduce heat stress. Sprinklers can help or simply spray the legs/bodies of the animals periodically. Hogs cannot sweat, so spraying them will help immensely. There are now commercially available fan/misting systems that can greatly reduce temperatures in a small area. These can be highly effective in barns and holding areas.

Other Considerations:

Avoid transporting animals in extreme heat. If you absolutely must, travel during the cooler hours, transport fewer animals than the trailer's capacity and stop frequently to check the animals for signs of stress and to offer fresh water.

Signs of heat stress in animals:

- panting
- increased respiration rate
- increased water intake
- loss of appetite
- listlessness/lethargy
- increased salivation

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The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) provides education and resources to farmers to encourage organic and sustainable farming practices. To learn more, please see:

www.mosesorganic.org

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