Summer Heat Can Stress Farm Animals Too



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Summer is officially here and so is the heat and humidity. Like humans, livestock are feeling it too. Producers livestock thriving in the summer heat.

"When you get a combination of heat and humidity, it can cause concern for livestock," said Matthew Dixon, agricultural meteorologist for the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, go by what is called a 'livedetermine what level of con- comfortable for horses. cern farmers and pet owners need to have for their ani- heat stress by scheduling es horses' need for salt, bemals."

The index helps producers know when heat stress could create a problem for their animals so they can be even more vigilant in making sure animals have the necessary resources to combat and withstand the conditions. The state has already experienced days in the dangerous and emergency livestock heat stress categories.

thing producers can do is provide cool, clean water and



should have options to keep shade," said Jeff Lehmkuhler, often to help maintain water UK beef specialist. "It's also balance. a good idea to avoid workduring periods of danger or emergency heat stress."

Horses have difficulty regulating their body temperature when temperatures exceed 90 degrees. If humid-Food and Environment. "We ity is high, the temperature because they are using water doesn't even have to reach for milk production as well stock heat stress index' to 90 degrees to make life un- as body temperature regula-

"Horse owners can reduce activities during the cooler cause they lose the mineral part of the day and making sure horses have plenty of water," said Bob Coleman, UK equine extension specialist. open as possible to allow air "If you do transport horses to circulate. Fans can make a during the cooler part of the big difference, and sprinkler day, give water before, dur- systems that periodically ing and after transportation spray a cool mist on the anito reduce the risk of dehy- mals are also beneficial. dration."

non-working horses will ity during extreme heat can "The most important double their water intake be significant, and egg produring hot weather. Owners should allow them to drink

"If you let them drink often, ing or transporting animals it can relieve the horse's urge to drink a lot of water after exercise, and they need to gradually drink after a workout," he said. "Also, remember lactating mares have special water requirements, tion."

during sweating.

For dairy cattle, it is important to keep buildings as

Poultry are especially Coleman added that even prone to heat stress. Mortalduction and hatching rates can drop.

"Since the birds don't have sweat glands to help get rid of excess body heat, they have to pant to cool down," said Jacquie Jacob, UK poultry extension project manager. "It's important to make sure chickens are in well-ventilated areas and they have access to clean, cool water at all times."

The UK Agricultural Weather Center provides statewide and county-spe-Hot weather also increas- cific weather information. alerts, livestock heat stress conditions and more. To view the index for a specific location, go to http://weather.uky.edu/ukawc2.php or click a specific location from the Kentucky map you see at http://weather.uky.edu. Call 723-4557

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