
Cold Weather Guidelines for Large Animals Open

When temperatures plunge below zero, owners of large animals and livestock producers need to give extra attention to their animals. Prevention is the key to dealing with hypothermia, frostbite and other cold weather injuries in livestock.

Making sure your livestock has the following to help prevent cold-weather problems:

- Shelter
- Plenty of dry bedding to insulate vulnerable udders, genitals and legs from the frozen ground and frigid winds
- Windbreaks to keep animals safe from frigid conditions
- Plenty of food and water

Take extra time to observe livestock, looking for early signs of disease and injury. Severe cold-weather injuries or death primarily occur in the very young or in animals that are already debilitated. Cases of weather-related sudden death in calves often result when cattle are suffering from undetected infection, particularly pneumonia. Sudden, unexplained livestock deaths and illnesses should be investigated quickly so that a cause can be identified and steps can be taken to protect the remaining animals.

Animals suffering from frostbite don't exhibit pain. It may be up to two weeks before the injury becomes evident as the damaged tissue starts to slough away. At that point, the injury should be treated as an open wound and a veterinarian should be consulted.

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