

Consider livestock comfort on hot days, too

UNIVERSITY PARK — When it's too hot for people, livestock may be even more uncomfortable. A temperature level of 80 F may be the point to take action, says Joseph A. McCurdy, Penn State Extension agricultural engineer.

"In most cases, good shade and plenty of water along with plenty of air circulation are the keys to animal comfort. Give dairy cows either shade with trees or artificial shade. If they are kept inside, mount extra fans to blow over their backs," he recommends.

Exhaust fans with a total air capacity of 200 cubic feet per minute per cow are recommended for winter ventilation in stall barns. These same fans can be used for summer use. Additional circulating fans of about equal capacity can be added in the litter or feed alley to augment the circulation. The general air movement should be down wind. This can be controlled by opening up on the windward side and closing next to the exhaust fans, McCurdy says.

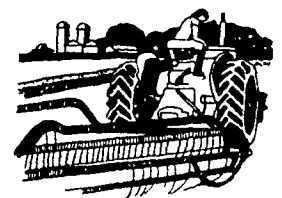
Movement of air discourages flies and makes an ideal place to feed cattle during the heat of day. In most cases, water sprays do not work well with cattle. They raise humidity — a major cause of cow discomfort, he notes.

"Pity pigs when they are uncomfortably hot. Born without perspiration glands, there aren't many ways they can turn for cooling comfort," McCurdy says, pointing out some things farmers can do to keep pigs cool during hot spells.

"Provide a mist sprayer if hogs are on concrete. Turn it on whenever temperature climbs past 75 F. It needn't be fancy — a garden hose with good pressure will do the job for small pens.

"Provide at least one drinking cup for every 20 hogs.

"Provide 8 square feet of shade for each 200 pound hog in lots; 12-15 square feet for mature sows and boars. Add 6 square feet of extra shade per hog in confinement feeding setups."



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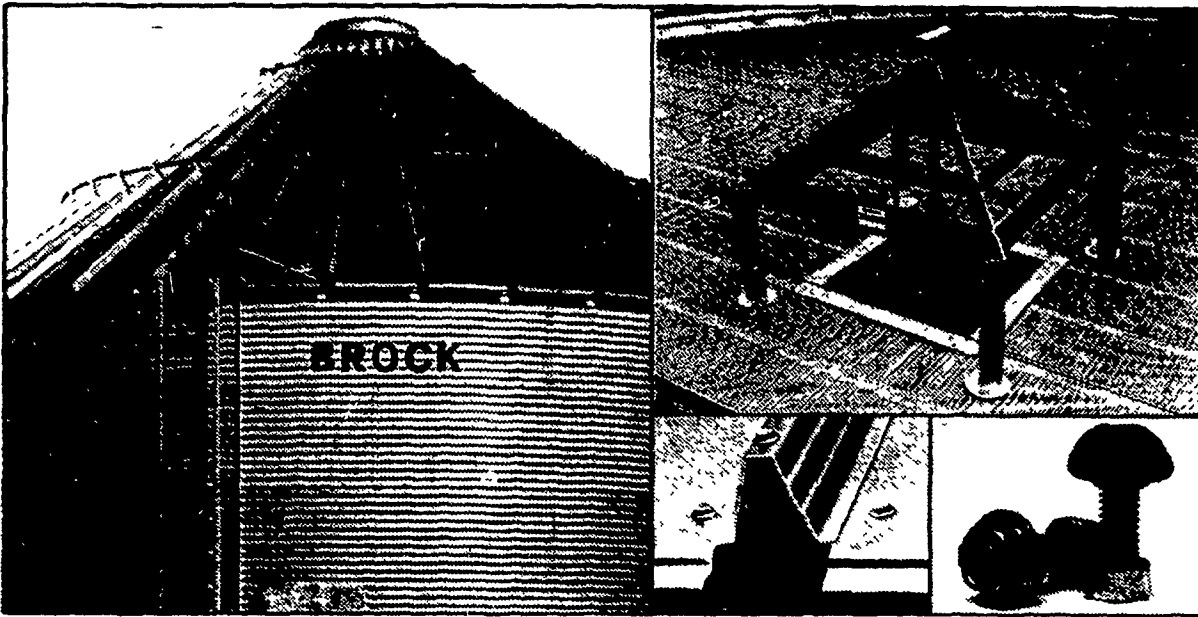
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