

Livestock Ledger
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Keeping Swine Cool

Hot weather reduces swine performance more than cold weather, resulting in significant economic loss to the pork producer. While producers have little control over current depressed hog prices or certain disease outbreaks, steps can be taken to keep hogs, cool, comfortable, and efficient.

Hot weather usually does not result in death losses, but it can cause conception problems and subtle reductions in feed intake that result in significant drops in production. Reduced sow feed intake also can affect baby pig performance. Larger pigs (animal in gestation, farrowing, breeding, and finishing phases of production) begin to feel effects of heat stress about 70°F. If temperatures remain above 85°F for more than a short period of time, substantial losses in performance and in reproductive efficiency can result unless some type of cooling relief is provided.

Pigs dissipate little moisture through their skin — certainly not enough to rid themselves of excess body heat. Therefore, to relieve heat stress, they must depend upon heat dissipation to their environment in one or more of the following ways: convection, conduction, radiation, or evaporation. Evaporative cooling from the body surface also is possible if some type of artificial surface wetting is provided along with adequate air movement over the animals. Consult an agricultural engineer for more information.

Prevent Horse Hyperthermia

During hot summer weather, horse owners need to provide special care for their animals. Free

roaming horses are able to seek out favorable conditions that provide for their comfort during temperature extremes. Domestic horses, however, may not have the same freedom to find refuge during such times due to confinement in a horse stall. Heat and humidity does affect the horse and, in severe conditions, can result in death. For this reason, it is necessary that the horse owner provides extra care during hot weather to reduce stress and maintain the health and well-being of the horse.

Under normal conditions, the horse is able to cool itself by sweating. As sweat evaporates from the surface of the skin, heat is lost and the body cools. This cooling mechanism is not very efficient during periods of high humidity, however, because less moisture evaporates. High humidity, hot weather, poor stable ventilation, prolonged exposure to direct sunlight, overwork, transport, and obesity can all contribute to overheating a horse. This condition is often termed hyperthermia, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, heat stroke, or sunstroke.

Following are suggestions to help horse owners prevent hyperthermia:

- Strenuous riding activity should be limited to late evenings or early mornings when the temperature is cooler.
- Stabled horses should have adequate ventilation.
- Blankets or sheets should be removed from stabled horses during extreme heat.
- Fan(s) should be used in the barn or stall.
- Adequate shade should be provided for all outside horses.

- Horses with long hair should be clipped.

- The aisle of the barn can be sprinkled with water to aid in cooling in areas of low humidity.

- Horses should be transported at cool times of the day and be provided with adequate ventilation.

- Plenty of clean, fresh water should be provided. The amount of water consumed is influenced by many factors such as environmental temperature, humidity, diet and activity. At 0°F., the horse will drink about 1 pint of water per pound of dry feed. At 100°F., a horse will drink about 1 gallon of water per pound of dry feed consumed.

Immediately call your veterinarian in the event that your horse becomes overheated. It may be necessary for the horse to receive an intravenous injection of fluids.

Tips For Semen Handling

Artificial insemination (AI) has been and will continue to be the single most important tool for the genetic improvement of the cattle industry. With this in mind, the proper handling of frozen semen cannot be over-emphasized in a successful breeding program. Of course, semen handling is just one link in a chain of events that has to be conducted in a professional manner, starting with herd health, proper nutrition, good quality semen, accurate heat detection, and a competent AI technician.

Tim Schofield, president of North American Breeders, Inc. in Berryville, Va. offers the following tips that can help make AI easier and conception more successful.

- Keep an up-to-date inventory of the semen in your tank, especially which canister each bull's semen is in. This alone will decrease significantly the number of times the semen is exposed just trying to find the semen desired.

- Do not hold canes or canisters in the neck of the tank for more than five to eight seconds when transferring or moving semen from your tank. Handling techniques are more critical with French straws because of the surface-to-air exposure.

- Transfer the semen from the canes to the water bath as quickly as possible.

- Do not expose semen to direct sunlight or wind.

- Pen cows up in the breeding area before semen is thawed.

- Dry the unit thoroughly.

- Use a thermometer to prepare the water bath. (Both amps and straws require a 90-95 degree water bath. Amps require a 60-second thaw; and straws, 10 seconds.)

- In cold or wet weather, warm the insemination gun with a towel before loading.

- When using straws, cut the sealed end of the straw off squarely to prevent semen from leaking between the straw and the pipette or sheath.

- Protect the insemination gun from outside temperatures when walking to the breeding chute (place it under your jacket).

- Read the identification on the unit of the semen to assure you are breeding to the bull of your choice.

To ensure trouble-free service from your semen tank, avoid storing it on concrete and do not handle it roughly. Cracking the tank will result in a loss of vacuum and the chilling temperature of -320°F. required for proper semen storage.

Time To Think Ram Selection
The majority of the genetic improvement in a sheep flock results from proper ram selection. Selection of the ram starts with estab-

lishing a set of goals and outlining the performance criteria necessary to meet those goals. Purchases should be made from breeders or ram testing stations that provide appropriate performance data.

Records are essential, including immunization status, herd health management and medical history. Fertility evaluation (testicular size and spermatozoa quality) should be part of the selection criteria. Spermatozoa output is directly related to testicular size and weight, which in turn is correlated with body condition.

In ram lambs testicular growth correlates with body growth and levels off at maturity. The minimum scrotal circumference for a yearling (12-18 mo.) ram should be 33-34 cm. and 30-31 cm. for a ram lamb (6-9 mo.). The semen should have a minimum of 30 percent progressively motile spermatozoa, 75 percent morphologically normal spermatozoa, and no white blood cells.

A complete breeding soundness evaluation includes a thorough physical and conformational examination plus a negative ELISA test for B. ovis within 30 days of purchase. Purchased animals, regardless of the source, should be isolated for an observation period of 30 days prior to introduction into the flock. Contact your veterinarian for clarification of testing procedures described in this article and scheduling of a breeding soundness exam.

FARMER Sets Banquet

SOMERSET (Somerset Co.) — Senator Roger Madigan (R - 23rd Dist.), chairman of the state Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, will be the guest speaker at a fundraising banquet for FARMER to be held here on July 15 at the Ramada Inn, beginning at 7 p.m.

FARMER (Farmers Allied for Responsive More Effective Representation) is the bipartisan political action committee of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau (PFB). FARMER is dedicated to helping elect and keep "friends of agriculture" in the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

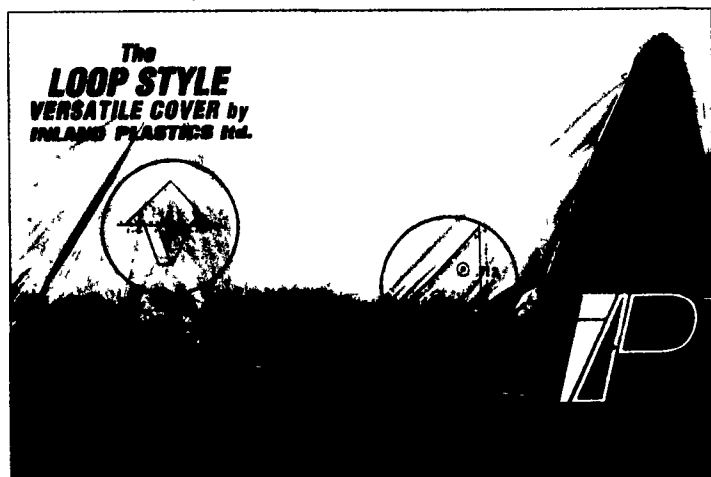
The event will include an all-you-can-eat dinner buffet. "The meeting room will only accommodate 100 people, so reservations will be on a first-come basis," Yahner said. The cost of the dinner is \$35 per person, or \$50 per person and spouse. "The meeting is open to both Farm Bureau members as well as non-members," Yahner said.

To order tickets, send a check, payable to "FARMER" to Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, P.O. Box 8736, Camp Hill, PA 17001-8736. Deadline for reservations is July 1.

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