On Being a Farm Wife (and other hazards) **Joyce Bupp**

Deal with it.

That's all any of us can do when we're smacked on the head with an onslaught of supercharged, blast-furnace sort of heat that has blanketed the area several times already in this stillyoung summer.

Stay out of the sun. Wear sunblock if you must be in it. Dress cool. Drinks lots...and lots...and lots of liquids, preferably water and not sugary belly-wash. Stay in air conditioning if you can. Or at least have a fan handy.

Those are all bits of advice we've become accustomed to hearing summer after summer, as the inevitable heat-haze-humidity strikes. But, while we humans can plug in our air machines of

various sorts in at least an attempt to beat the heat, many animals are just as uncomfortable as we are. And can't flip on the air conditioning.

Cows are extremely prone to heat complications, especially if their systems are under stress in any other way. They "go off" feed, neglect going to water troughs frequently enough because of the extra effort necessary, and lay panting with their tongues hanging out trying to rid their bodies of excess heat. Calving or sick cows are especially susceptible to high temperatures and must be carefully monitored for life-threatening effects from heat-related stress.

About half-way down through

the barn milking one blistering recent afternoon, I glanced up to see a cow-shape silhouetted against the brightness of the big open barn door. The silhouette had parked itself at obviously the most comfortable spot around, squarely in front of a humming, 30-inch free-standing fan blasting air down the center alley. Obviously this girl had figured out where the best air flow was — no matter if it blocked the flow to all the others.

Our fan hog turned out to be Hula, a cow with a touch of attitude who lives up to her name on a daily basis. Hula's persistent dancing whenever the milker is about to come off her udder would make a grass skirt sway with a vengeance — if she hadn't first chomped off the grass. You could almost see Hula sink into a pout as she was evicted from her parking spot in front of the fan and put back into a stall.

Earlier in the day, Derra Dog showed similar fan affinity. When you're an 80-pound Lab covered head to toe with thick hair, "dog days" are any stretch of hot, sticky, muggy, unbearable stretch of weather, not just those official ones in until August. From the first day a freestanding fan is pulled into the barn, Derra

plops squarely in front of it during chore time.

So it was a natural that she would similarly utilize the fan set up inside the front door of the house on the worst days. Panting heavily, and obviously in discomfort at the extreme heat one recent morning, Derra parked herself by the stilled fan and just stared at me with a pleading look in her eyes.

I got the message. As the fan blades began to spin, she plopped down in front of it, her head almost against the fan cage, closed her eves and left out a big sigh.

Even the young heifers, which tolerate heat better than mature, milking cows, all crowded into one small space in their big pen. It was directly in line with the air from still more fans blasting away. Never mind that all the hot air generated by the crowd piled together probably neutralized any cooling effect.

While the barn cats don't maneuver for fan space, they do beat the heat by finding a shady spot and simply sprawling out, stretched on their sides, to snooze. Some recent days, it looks like we've had cat wars. with casualties strewn about. One rattle of the cat food container, though, brings an instant stampede from the heat-warzone.

Unlike the cows, it has never, ever, gotten so hot that the cats don't come running in response to the rattle of the cat food container.

Apparently the appetites from some of their other nine lives just kick in.

Dehydration Caused By Illness?

COLLEGEVILLE (Montgomery Co.) - Children who are ill may lose fluids through diarrhea, vomiting, or both, can become dehydrated.

About 500 children die from illness that results from dehydration each year. Prompt medical attention and the use of oral rehydration fluids can prevent nearly all of the deaths, said Paula Peters, K-State Research and Extension, children's nutrition specialist.

Oral re-hydration fluids, which are sold in drug, grocery or other stores offering pharmaceutical supplies, are simple mixtures of water, salts and carbohydrates. Parents are encouraged to keep a bottle or two on hand, because an illness can begin during the night and dehydration can occur quickly.

When dehydration is caused by diarrhea, re-hydration fluids are preferred over plain water, fruit juice, chicken broth and sports drinks because they contain a balanced solution of sodium, chloride and potassium salts needed to replenish body fluids. If these salts, which are called electrolytes, are out of balance, many organs including the heart cannot function properly. Because children are small in stature, even a small fluid loss can upset the electrolyte balance, Peters said.



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