



Wellbeing of Livestock During Winter Season

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As winter is arriving, the severe weather conditions such as low temperature, ice, sleet, and snow can be a cause for concern. Livestock farmers and agricultural workers face challenges during this season. To help ensure the well-being of your livestock and prepare for whatever winter may bring, here are some essential tips for protection of animals.

Keep them covered

Extreme temperatures can lead to various issues in your livestock, including hoof damage, frostbite, and increased calf birth weights. Providing shelter is crucial for protecting them from severe weather and freezing conditions.

If your sheltered area is insufficient to accommodate all your livestock, consider implementing a scheduled rotation system to ensure each animal gets some relief from harsh weather. Alternatively, if indoor shelter space is limited, you can use windbreaks as an alternative solution. This can involve utilizing a row of trees, a fence, a hedge, or a screen to effectively create a refuge for your livestock against the biting winter winds.

Have extra feed ready.

As temperatures fall, the appetites of your livestock tend to increase. To maintain their body temperature in cold conditions, animals like cattle, horses, and dogs may need to consume up to double their usual feed intake because they expend more calories to stay warm. Given this, it's advisable to consider offering nutritional supplements to ensure they receive all the essential nutrients necessary to maintain their health during the colder months.

Keep ears and noses warm of your animals.

Frostbite commonly affects livestock, particularly in areas that are most exposed to cold weather, such as the ears and nose. If providing shelter is challenging or you need to rotate shelter due to limited space, it's crucial to take steps to prevent frostbite. Ensure that you help dry any damp or wet areas of your animals' bodies, as moisture can rapidly lead to frostbite in these vulnerable regions.

Special care of young ones

Lambs, calves, and foals are especially vulnerable to cold temperatures so be aware of the wind chill factors and ensure your livestock's young have a safe, warm place to take shelter. If shelter is limited, be sure to protect the youngest and most vulnerable animals first. If no official shelter is available, providing simple windbreaks to help keep the young out of the harsh, biting wind can mean the difference between life and death.

Be proactive.

Preparation ahead of the winter season ensures that both you and your flock are well-equipped for whatever challenges lie ahead. Establish a comprehensive plan, construct suitable shelters, and organize shelter rotation schedules to ensure clear guidelines for everyone, ensuring readiness in the event of adverse winter weather conditions.

Regardless of the winter's uncertainties, proactive preparation can be the decisive factor between the survival and well-being of your livestock. Take necessary precautions in advance to ensure you are ready for whatever challenges winter weather may bring.