

Warmer Weather has arrived!

Well, the first good stretch of warm, sunny weather is upon us, and it is finally feeling like we have escaped the long, dreary, never-ending season of “Springer”. Before we know it, first cut will be coming off, and we’ll be complaining of the heat and blaming things happening in and around the barn on the annual “heat stress”, a complex issue that can seemingly affect so much when it comes to cattle health and management. Before getting into the thick of field work again, I think it is a good time to review a few tips and reminders to help minimize the effects the onslaught of hot weather can have on the herd.

- Adequate ventilation? Are the fans running well? Are there enough fans? Get down on cow level- in between cows if possible. Cows generate a lot of heat, is it comfortable to be between them, or does there need to be more air flow on/between them? Are the curtains in good working order? If automated, are they adjusting to the temperature appropriately?
- Adequate water? Cows drink ~115L of water/day, with high producing cows drinking around 160L/day, and in hot weather can be almost double this amount. Is there a good source of CLEAN water? Clean out the water troughs regularly and ensure water is flowing well- cows will drink up to 16L/min from a trough, so troughs should be able to provide 20L/cow/hour. Clean out and check all the water bowls- a flow rate of at least 4L/minute is a good rule of thumb.
- Adequate moisture control? Bacteria love warm humid environments, which makes stalls in the summer a prime place for growth, and an increased risk for mastitis. Make sure stalls stay clean AND dry- if using sand, check for stalls that have become dug out, and try to keep on top of any manure/urine pooling. If using straw or shavings, ensure the area underneath is actually dry, and the bedding isn’t just covering up the problem. A small amount of lime sprinkled on wet spots in the stall will keep things dry, while killing off bacteria.
- Adequate fresh feed? Just remember that feed can spoil substantially faster in the warm summer months. An increased frequency of feeding may be beneficial if possible- and don’t forget about the heifer feed!

All of the above should be taken into consideration for calves as well. Ensure they have access to clean water at all times, and keep grower fresh to keep from spoiling. If in

hutches, try propping the back up with a tire to allow for better air flow. Consider placement of hutches to ensure good drainage, shade, and air flow.

There are lots of things to think about this time of year, but hopefully by fitting in a few of these checkpoints, less stress will be on the cows, and therefore on you this summer!

Dr. Meredith Vair, DVM

Upcoming Stat Holdidays

The clinic will be closed Canada Day Weekend, July 1-3. As always, veterinarians will be available 24-7 for emergency service. The Saturday fee schedule will remain unchanged from non-stat weekends.

Fly Control

Have you heard the buzz? Large animal technicians are now offering fly prevention in combination with dehorning services. Ask your large animal tech for more information!

