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D.V.C. Newsletter

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Cold Weather Considerations for Livestock

Winter weather can be a challenge for livestock producers. Here are several things we can do to keep animals healthy and comfortable when dealing with rain, sleet, snow, ice, and freezing temperatures:

- Encourage water consumption from a clean, reliable water source.
- Ensure increased energy requirements are met, especially for pregnant or lactating animals in cold/wet conditions. Assess body condition during pregnancy exams and feed accordingly.
- Protect outdoor animals from wind chills by supplying access to an enclosed barn or windbreak for shelter.
- Provide clean, dry bedded areas to insulate animals from the cold ground. Avoid overcrowding and supply adequate ventilation to lower the levels of ammonia and other gasses that can cause respiratory damage.
- Minimize accumulation of mud to avoid foot and hoof diseases. Mud and moisture will also increase the amount of body heat lost during cold weather.

Addressing the special nutritional, environmental and health needs of livestock in the winter will help ensure optimal animal welfare and performance. With rising costs of production leading to challenging livestock profitability, preventing problems is more economical than treating them.

Calving Meeting

**Join our veterinarians at a meeting for tips on managing the upcoming calving season
Lunch will be provided.**

When:

**Thursday, February 13th 2014
10:45am-1:30pm**

Where:

**Buzzy's
414 Main St
Welton, IA 52774**

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Cold Weather and Dairy Calves

The bitter cold winter weather is hard on people, equipment, and animals. The most susceptible animals on the Dairy are pre-weaned calves. For every degree the temperature drops below 60° F, maintenance energy requirements increase by 1%. Therefore in sub-freezing temperatures, 2 quarts of 20/20 milk replacer twice daily doesn't provide enough calories to allow for maintenance requirements and growth. Not only will calves lose weight, immune function will be impaired and the calf will be at a greater risk for scours and pneumonia. Extra calories can be administered by an extra feeding; giving more volume at each feeding, switching to a winter calf replacer, or feeding pasteurized waste milk. Also, providing fresh quality calf starter and warm water after each feeding will increase energy intake. To reduce maintenance energy requirements, keep bedding dry and deep enough to cover the calf's legs, and use calf jackets if available. Straw is the ideal bedding as it allows calves to cover their extremities and reduces heat loss.

Don't forget your pets! Cold Weather Care for Companion Animals:

It is tempting to assume that, because they have a layer of fur, dogs and cats will do fine in colder weather. However, this is not always the case. Small dogs and cats in particular are more susceptible to cold temperatures. Regardless of your pet's size, the tips of ears and tails, the lips and the pads of the paws are all susceptible to frostbite. During periods of extreme cold, animals of all sizes are at risk of developing hypothermia, a potentially life-threatening drop in body temperature. Hypothermia begins with vigorous shivering, lethargy, weakness and light pink gums. As it progresses, the pet will experience collapse, decreased shivering, pale gums, and stiff joints & muscles. In severe cases, pets will become unresponsive & stiff with cold swollen extremities. The heart rate and breathing will slow, and pupils will be dilated and unresponsive. If any stage of hypothermia is suspected, bring your pet to a warm area and contact a veterinarian immediately.

When pets are outdoors, they should have shelter available at all times. This should be an area that is covered and dry and allows your pet to get out of the wind. A well constructed dog house with a door flap or a partition to block the wind is suitable for short periods on mild to moderately cold days. The house should be large enough for your pet to turn around in comfortably, but small enough to hold in body heat. An insulated dog house is even better. Any type of warm bedding is acceptable for this enclosure (straw, old blankets or towels, etc.), but it must be kept dry. Bedding should be checked frequently and replaced if it gets wet. If your pet is shivering noticeably, huddled up or trying to get inside, he is too cold and should be brought to a warmer area immediately. It is also important to maintain access to water. Dehydration is just as big a problem this time of year because animals lose moisture breathing the dry winter air. Cold temperatures also mean that your pet's water bowl can freeze in a matter of hours. Combat this by supplying fresh water frequently when your pet is outdoors. You can also purchase heated water bowls that will prevent freezing.

Exercise presents its own set of challenges during the winter. Ice or crusted snow can be rough, resulting in cuts or abrasions to the paws. Slips and falls can also cause soft tissue injuries or even broken bones. Avoid walking your pet on icy sidewalks or steps. If there are no clear areas, it may be best to simply forgo any long walks that day. Snow can also clump in the fur between the pads of the paws, leading to trauma or frostbite. It is a good idea to inspect your pet's paws every time it comes indoors. Snow and ice should be carefully removed with a warm cloth.

February is Dental Health Month:

Book a dental cleaning for your pet this month and receive a **10% discount** on all canine and feline dental services! (Does not include merchandise, medications or anesthetic services)