

**SOUTH DAKOTA ANIMAL INDUSTRY BOARD  
SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release:** Monday, July 21, 2014

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**Help Keep Cattle Comfortable in High Heat**

PIERRE, S.D.—Recent high temperatures and above-average humidity have created unfavorable conditions for South Dakota livestock. Livestock owners are encouraged to continue efforts to keep cattle and other livestock comfortable using all available resources. Cattle with dark hides, fat cattle, and ill animals are all at greater risk of heat stress. Once heat stress sets in, preventative measures are less effective.

“Producers should be on the lookout for signs of heat stress, such as elevated breathing rate, open-mouth breathing, and excessive drooling,” said Dustin Oedekoven, state veterinarian. “Producers should contact the Animal Industry Board or their local veterinarian if they have increased death loss or have questions regarding heat stress.”

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture and the Animal Industry Board recommend the following measures:

- Avoid moving livestock unless absolutely necessary. If cattle must be handled, plan to complete the work as early in the morning as possible.
- Ample water should be made available under shaded areas, when possible. Cattle may consume as much as 50 percent more water during hot weather to regulate their body temperatures. Cattle will drink more water if the water temperature can be maintained below 80 degrees. Sprinklers may also help keep cattle cool and producers should use large droplets, because a fine mist can add to the humidity. In addition, pen mounds in the feedlot should be wet down in the evening to allow cattle a cool place to lie down and dissipate body heat.
- Shade should be provided in well-ventilated areas. It is important that a sufficient area of shade is available so the cattle do not bunch up while competing for cool spots. Airflow may be obstructed by vegetation, buildings, haystacks or windbreaks. Biting insects also should be controlled to reduce stress.
- Cattle produce metabolic heat from digestion. Changing feeding patterns so that a majority of the feed is provided after the heat of the day will assist in keeping cattle cool.

Additional information may be found at:

<http://igrow.org/news/managing-feedlot-cattle-during-a-heat-wave/>

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/Main/docs.htm?docid=21306>

Agriculture is South Dakota's No. 1 industry, generating \$25.6 billion in annual economic activity and employing over 115,000 South Dakotans. The South Dakota Department of Agriculture's mission is to promote, protect, preserve and improve this industry for today and tomorrow. Visit us online at <http://sdda.sd.gov> or find us on Facebook and Twitter.