

How to Keep Your Show Animals Cool When Summer is Heating Up

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New Mexico summers can get very warm, so we must make sure our show animals stay cool and hydrated during the summer months. Here are some tips on doing so.

- **Water-** Water is the best way to keep livestock cool, and it is also their most important nutrient. Make sure that water is always available. Plus, make sure the water is fresh and clean. An animal may be thirsty, but if the water is dirty or stagnant that animal might not drink enough causing dehydration.
- **Shade-** Adequate shade is necessary for your livestock projects. Shade can make your animal feel 10-15 degrees cooler. Make sure that your animal can reach shade during all hours of the day. Pigs specifically need a lot of shade because they cannot sweat and retain their body heat. Also, if sunburnt badly it causes their body temperature to raise thus making them even hotter. It is encouraged that hog pens be fully shaded.
- **Ventilation-** Air flow is important to keep livestock cool. Air flow could be making sure your barn or pen design allows air movement, but also it can be fans. Fans can really help with the heat on those hot summer days. Barns with air conditioning is the most ideal, but livestock can still stay more than cool without AC.
- **Rinsing-** Rinsing or spraying down livestock can help them not overheat. Once or twice a day is encouraged, but when it gets really hot you may need to do this more often. This practice can also help with skin and hair quality as well.
- **Spraying Pens-** Spraying down pens with water will lower the surface temperature of the pen, and it will help keep the animal cool for a while. Spray down shavings, cedar fiber, dirt, etc. You also might considering spraying the pen or barn walls if they are not insulated. Be mindful to not make the pens sloppy. Overly damp pens could lead to fungus problems in certain species.
- **Misters-** Misters are a great way to make sure moisture is constant all day. They can also be attached to fans to really get livestock cooled down. Make sure to constantly check for drips or clogs. A small drip could result in a big mess at the end of the day.
- **Avoid Peak Hours-** Working and exercising our livestock is a crucial part of the project; however, try to avoid exercising your animal during the hottest parts of the day. Try working them early in the morning, late afternoon, or in the evening.
- **Clipping / Shearing-** Rough shearing sheep and goats will help them not overheat. Also, clipping a steer or heifer's head can help them release some of their internal heat easier.
- **Electrolytes-** If an animal is dehydrated or could become dehydrated, provide them with an electrolyte solution.
- **Ice-** If you are traveling or it is extremely warm, throwing a chunk of ice in with your stock can help them from overheating, and can even encourage them to stay hydrated.

Keeping your livestock cool helps them eat more, gain more, and can result in added hair growth. Take the time to make sure they are comfortable during the hot summer days. If it is too hot for you outside then it is too hot for them!



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