

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR SUMMERTIME CATTLE COMFORT

Summer is officially underway, marking the beginning of a potentially stressful time for cattle. We all know that temperatures above 80 degrees can be a struggle for animals and humans alike. The warmer summer temperatures are particularly hard for cattle, who don't sweat as effectively and rely on respiration to stay cool.

Essentially, cows have to work harder to overcome the heat, decreasing efficiency and feed intake with increased stress levels. That's why it's essential for cattle producers to implement a plan to keep their cattle cool, healthy and productive throughout the summer.

Here are some tips for promoting cattle comfort in the hottest conditions.



DO

DO keep your cows properly hydrated

Cattle naturally drink more water during the summer months, so make sure you're constantly providing clean and contaminant-free water. Constantly check the quality of the water, as cattle will avoid water with contaminants, such as excrement or debris. Keep the water cool by ensuring all water lines are covered by grass.

DO provide proper shade and ventilation

Cattle need somewhere to go that's out of the sun, especially dark-haired cattle. Allow access to open buildings, trees or other sources of shade. For cattle in enclosed buildings, make sure all fans are working to maximize air flow.

DON'T

DON'T feed cattle when it's too hot

This is easier said than done during the summer, when it can be hot throughout the day. Cattle simply won't eat as much when they're hot. Adjust feeding time so it takes place during the cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or after sunset. This will help ensure feed consumption even on the hottest summer days.

DON'T ignore the bedding and other breeding areas

Bedding plays a critical role in keeping your cows comfortable throughout the year, especially in the summer. Keep the bedding dry and clean to minimize the risk of flies gathering and laying eggs.

DO

Know the signs of heat stress in cattle

Most importantly, cattle producers must be able to identify when cattle are undergoing heat stress. Below are the six stages of heat stress, according to the USDA Agricultural Research Service.

STAGE 1

Elevated breathing rate, restless, spend increased time standing

STAGE 2

Elevated breathing rate, slight drooling, most animals are standing and restless

STAGE 3

Elevated breathing rate, excessive drooling or foaming, most animals are standing and restless, animals may group together

STAGE 4

Elevated breathing rate, open mouth breathing, possible drooling, most animals standing, animals may group together

STAGE 5

Elevated breathing with pushing from the flanks, open mouth breathing with tongue protruding, possible drooling, most animals standing and restless

STAGE 6

Open mouth breathing with tongue protruding, breathing is labored, and respiration rate may decrease, cattle push from flanks while breathing, head down, not necessarily drooling, individual animals may be isolated from the herd



BOOST YOUR FLY CONTROL EFFORTS WITH AN IPM PROGRAM

While these tips will help to keep your cattle cool, healthy and productive throughout the summer, additional steps can be taken to avoid a loss in production and protect the well-being of your cattle.

Flies on cattle can cause reduced weight gain and decreased feed efficiency. To keep cattle performing their best and to maintain control of your bottom line, put an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program into place. It is important to use a variety of control methods to prevent and manage disease spreading fly populations.

To have a comprehensive IPM program, include several of the following tactics:

- **Improve cultural practices** to reduce fly resting, feeding, and breeding sites through regular cleaning and upkeep of decaying organic matter like manure, old bedding and spoiled feed in facilities and surrounding vegetation.
- **Support natural predators and parasites**, such as predatory or dung beetles, as well as parasitic wasps and nematodes.
- **Incorporate various physical techniques**, like fly traps and sticky tapes to monitor fly activity and hinder adult flies migrating from surrounding areas.
- **Use sprays or baits** to control adult flies where they feed and rest.
- **Utilize insect growth regulators**, including feed-through solutions such as ClariFly® Larvicide and Altosid® IGR products to keep larvae from developing in treated manure and emerging as adult flies.

Central Life Sciences understands the detrimental losses that these insects pose for cattle, employees and your bottom line. With products scientifically tailored to insect behavior at pinpoint locations, our Starbar®, ClariFly® Larvicide and Altosid® IGR products can help you keep your cattle healthy and comfortable all season long.



Altosid, ClariFly, ClariFly Larvicide with design, and Starbar are trademarks of Wellmark International.

