



Protect Your Pets and Livestock from Extreme Heat Exposure

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Contact: Leann Duwe, Public Information Officer
(608) 224-5005, leannm.duwe@wi.gov

Editor's note: A high resolution image about car heat dangers for pets is available at <https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents/CarHeatDangers.pdf>

MADISON – Due to the forecasted heat this week, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is reminding pet and livestock owners to take extra steps to protect their animals from exposure to extreme levels of heat. Owners should keep their pet at home in the shade, air conditioning, or a cool basement. If you have livestock, make sure they have plenty of shade and water.

Heat stroke is a threat for both pets and livestock, and can be fatal even with prompt treatment. Pets that have already suffered heat stroke once are more susceptible, as are animals that are very young or very old, have health problems, are overweight, or are snub-nosed. Signs of heat stroke in small animals include panting, staring or stupor, breathing difficulty, an anxious expression, refusal to obey, warm dry skin, fever, rapid heartbeat, vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, and collapse. In large animals, signs of heat stress and stroke may include restlessness, stumbling, increased heart rate and salivation, panting, collapse, and convulsions. If you see any of these signs, call your veterinarian immediately.

For pets, move the animal out of direct heat and get them wet however you can – such as towels soaked in cool water, with a hose, or in a wading pool. If you use towels, it will be most effective on less hairy parts of the body, like a dog's belly and legs. Even if the animal seems to revive after a few minutes, get it to a veterinarian, because its temperature may rise again or fall well below normal. For cattle and other large animals, hosing them down with water may be effective until the veterinarian arrives.

Tips for pet owners:

- Never leave an animal in a parked vehicle, even for a few minutes. Even with windows open a few inches, the temperature in a parked car may hit 120F within minutes. When running errands, leave your dog home. When traveling, stop at places where your pet can get out of the vehicle.
- Provide fresh, cool drinking water at all times – including in your vehicle when you are traveling.
- Outdoor kennels must be well-ventilated and shaded, with water in bowls that will not tip.
- Do not exercise pets on hot days or warm, humid nights.
- Clip long coats to about an inch - shorter clips or shaving can leave dogs vulnerable to sunburn.

Tips for livestock owners:

- Avoid transporting animals in heat over 80F with high humidity.
- Park vehicles loaded with livestock in the shade.
- Deliver animals at night or in early morning, and use wet bedding to transport hogs in hot weather.

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- Provide well-ventilated air space in farm trucks, barns, or any enclosure.
- Provide fresh drinking water at all times, and provide shade in resting, eating, and watering areas.
- Use a water sprinkling system to cool animals.

For more information about how to protect your animals for extreme weather, visit https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/PetsWeather.aspx. DATCP's Division of Animal Health monitors animal health and disease threats, promotes humane treatment of animals, and provides licensing and registration regulation for animals in Wisconsin.

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