Livestock Safety in Extreme Heat & Drought

Nova Scotia Farm Quick Reference

Heat Stress Risk Levels

Risk Level	Temp & Humidity Example (°C)	Action
Safe	< 24°C with moderate humidity	Normal monitoring
Alert	24–27°C with moderate humidity	Increase checks, prepare cooling measures
Danger	27–29°C with moderate humidity	Provide shade, cool water, reduce handling
Emergency	> 29°C with moderate humidity	Immediate cooling, stop handling/transport

Signs of Heat Stress

- Cattle/Horses: Fast breathing, panting, drooling, lethargy, reduced feed intake, weakness, collapse.
- Sheep/Goats: Fast breathing, panting, drooling, lethargy, reduced feed intake, weakness, collapse.
- Poultry: Panting, wings out, reduced egg production, sudden deaths.
- Pigs: Lying spread out, heavy panting, no appetite.

Water is the #1 Defence

- Unlimited access to cool, clean water.
- Check supply multiple times daily.
- Add extra troughs to reduce crowding.
- Ensure automatic drinkers can meet peak demand.

Shade & Shelter

- Use trees, portable shades, shelters.
- Maximize air low – don't block breezes.
- For all livestock: improve ventilation, lower stocking density.

Feed & Handling

- Feed during cooler hours (early morning/evening).
- Avoid moving animals in midday heat.
- Check pastures for toxic plants & high nitrates in drought-stressed forage.
- Avoid freshly cut, heating silage at midday.

Drought Precautions

- Rotate pastures, prevent overgrazing.
- Monitor ponds for algae blooms.
- Test well water for salinity/minerals.
- Have an emergency water hauling plan.

Remember: Even healthy animals can decline quickly in heat. Act early – prevention saves lives.

Contact your veterinarian or provincial agriculture office for urgent concerns.

Check Environment Canada for heat warnings.