

Farming in the Heat

Heat stress occurs when the body must work too hard to cool off. The body's core temperature gets too high for the body to cool off quickly enough.

What is Heat Stress:

Heat Cramps

- When a person is sweating heavily and replacing water but not salt.

Heat Exhaustion

- When the body temperature increases.
- Symptoms: heavy sweating, thirst, weak & fast heart rate, feeling tired, weak and/or dizzy.

Heat Stroke

- When the body rapidly depletes its water and salt supply.
- Symptoms: red dry skin, high body temperature, rapid heart rate, difficulty breathing, headache, confusion, weakness and nausea & vomiting.
- Quickly lead to seizures, unconsciousness, and the heart may stop beating.
- Requires immediate medical attention.

How to Prevent Heat Stress:

-Even though you are short staffed and have a mountain of work to do on the farm, be sure to incorporate rest breaks throughout the day. Take breaks in a shady area.

-If possible, organize the heavy work for the cooler parts of the day such as morning and evening and do less laborious work in the heat of the day.

-Drink water frequently. Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink. Avoid alcohol and caffeinated beverages, which deplete the body of fluids.

-Eat regular, light meals throughout the day. Replace salt if you are sweating a lot, you can do this by lightly salting your food. If you are required to limit salt intake in your diet, check with your doctor before adding salt.

-Take your time when moving from a cool area to a hot one, such as leaving an air-conditioned vehicle, equipment, or tractor cab. Your body needs time to get used to the temperature. The same goes for getting into a hot vehicle, equipment, or tractor cab as it can be a shock to the system. Cool them down before entering.

-Dress in loose, comfortable light-colored clothing made of light fabrics such as cotton. Cotton cools the body 200 times faster when it is wet than any other fabric.

-Layer your clothing so you can add and take off items of clothing as the temperature changes.

-Wear a hat with a wide brim when working under the sun.

-In humid conditions, take more frequent breaks as it takes longer for the sweat to evaporate to cool the body.

-Workers taking medication should check with a pharmacist to see if they are more susceptible to heat illness.

-Train workers on the signs and symptoms of heat stress and how to mitigate the hazard.

Treating Heat Stress:

Heat Cramps	Heat Exhaustion	Heat Stroke
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Move the worker to a shady area and loosen clothing.• Drink lightly salted fluids.• See a doctor if the cramps persist.• Allow the worker to rest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Move the worker to a shady area and loosen clothing.• Start cooling the worker very quickly by fanning and pouring cool water over them. Add a cool damp cloth to the back of the neck.• Have the worker drink salted water, if available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A very serious, and life-threatening condition and workers need to seek medical help right away.• Call 9-1-1, and begin cooling the worker as quickly as possible. Pour cool water or immerse them in water if possible.• If unconscious, do not give the worker water.