

AG NOTES

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COLD WEATHER

I'm not going to talk about the cold weather, although I would prefer it not get into the 20's. But there are some things we need to discuss.

Outside animals that are developed outside can make it with ample food, water, and shelter. Let's look at what ample is.

In the matter of ample food, it's enough for the animal to maintain itself. These critters can produce enough body heat to protect themselves from freezing, but they have to have enough of their particular food requirements for their body to metabolize.

If it's hay for ruminants and equines, they do better on grass hays, because these are higher in carbohydrates and their systems produce more heat from such feeds. But they have to have sufficient amounts to do it. Cows and horses may need 2-3% of their body weight, depending on the hay and the animal's size and condition. Some are thin and some are fat, just like humans, so there is a difference in need.

And if there is a nursing baby, they'll need to increase that amount by as much as 35%. Add to that blowing cold wind and precipitation, and it'll go even higher. That where we might need to add some grain to the diet. Don't tell me how much protein it has, tell me how much crude fat or energy it has. That's where the body heat comes from.

Ample water in freezing temperatures means access to non-frozen water at least two times a day, and more often than that if weather is really bad. So fresh water provided in any way necessary is what we are talking about. Water is as important in producing body heat and avoiding dehydration. It is necessary. If you've got animals, it is up to you to do what ever you have to for providing fresh water. Ample fresh water.

Ample shelter varies in definition. For some, it may mean a structure. For others, it may mean a windbreak. For large animals such as cattle and equines, they'll do fine in a windbreak. They'll turn their backends to the wind, get behind a natural structure like a tree or bank, and they'll do fine, as long as they have ample feed and water.

For some of the smaller animals, they'll need some dry shelter like a doghouse or barn or chicken house, etc. Small animals have a faster heat loss exchange due to their size, so they may need more attention. And don't forget the ample water and appropriate feed.

Animals are a privilege to own, but they are also a responsibility.

FACT CHECK

I got fact-checked last week! I see this in the national media about someone fact-checking someone on what they said. Since I am not running for office of any kind, I thought I was immune to fact-checking. Nope, I was wrong!

I wrote an article that passed on comments from two major land-grant universities with big agricultural programs about a topic that I had gotten some calls on after a storm, i.e. wilted leaves and cyanide poisoning. I thought it was important way back in May after the storm event. I included some of the details from the written publications and noted the authors and the publications produced through their extension/research funding.

Now days, it seems there is some nice person somewhere always checking something. My fact-checker is a distinguished professor in a biological science department at a state university in New York.

He sent a fact-check email to the T-G, and they passed it on to me. I'm not sure if he has any experience with livestock production, but I was passing facts about one thing with animals and he fact-checked me to let me know that there is another form of the same thing. The fresh leaves can also release cyanide. I have never had a call about animals consuming the fresh leaves from limbs above the animals, but I have had calls about wilted leaves. Makes sense, though. It takes fresh leaves to make wilted ones, just need a good storm to blow down the limbs to allow access.

It took six months to be fact-checked, but I'm glad to know better now. To be sure, my article was about wilted leaves, and it was correct on all counts. He just wanted to make sure that we all know that fresh leaves can release cyanide, too.

I may be wrong every now and then, but I do work hard to be correct within the context of the subject and article. I rely only on research-based information from other universities, particularly those land-grant institutions with reputations of excellence within agriculture. I may miss something, but I try hard to be as accurate as possible while being concise.

Fact noted, sir! Thank you. Maybe I can return the favor and pass on a fact to you some day.

SIGN-UP

The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Tennessee has extended its application deadline for producers and landowners who are interested in implementing conservation practices to improve natural resources on their farm or forest land. Funding is available through the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and the deadline to apply for fiscal year 2021 funding has now been extended to December 11, 2020.

"The extended application deadline will allow Tennessee producers more time to complete their EQIP applications," said Tennessee NRCS State Conservationist Sheldon Hightower. "EQIP places a priority on water quality, water conservation, and promotes soil health practices by offering financial and technical assistance to address these resource concerns on eligible agricultural land."

EQIP is an incentives program that provides financial assistance for conservation systems such as, but not limited to, animal waste management facilities, fencing, and water supply development for improved grazing management, riparian protection, and wildlife habitat enhancement. Applications for the EQIP program are accepted on a continuous basis but only applications received by the deadline will be considered for FY 2021 funding.

Applications can be made at the Bedford County office located on Midland Road next to the UT/TSU Extension Office. Applications must be received by close of business on Friday, December 11, 2020. Due to COVID-19 procedures, call 931-684-1441, Ext 3, to make an appointment.