

Warm weather is finally here, and it's time to prepare livestock barns for summer ventilation rates.

Every spring livestock producers add seasonal planting and other outdoor activities to their already busy schedules; but with higher temperatures and humidity, comes a reminder to inspect all barn ventilation systems. Ensure all fans are uncovered, operational and that all air inlets will open to allow maximum airflow capacity.

Now is a great time to inspect fan control systems in barns, remove winter fan shutters, unlock or open air inlets, and test cooling systems. A leaf blower and dust mask can be used to clean off months of accumulated particle debris before test running equipment. After inspection and cleaning, a simple way to test ventilation systems is to grab a thermal probe with your warm hand – this should set the barn's ventilation controller through its ventilation stages toward maximum fan capacity or open curtains/sidewalls in naturally ventilated systems. Variable speed fans should wind-up to maximum speed. Large single speed fans should engage as the perceived temperature in the room, or barn increases and air inlets should open accordingly. If fan motors, blades or shutters need maintenance or replacement, service should be scheduled as soon as possible.

Naturally ventilated barns have control systems that run chimney fans and lower sidewall panels or curtains. These systems need to be inspected and possibly cleaned or lubricated as they may not have opened fully for several months. Manually operated systems need to be inspected and moved to summer settings. Bird exclusion screens should be repaired or replaced. Store the winter fan shutters or closure panels in a safe place away from livestock and note the condition of curtain panels and other equipment as they may need repair before they are once again called into service next fall. Be sure to inspect cooling systems in poultry and hog barns. Cooling pads are a great way to lower peak summer temperatures in poultry barns, and spray or drip coolers work well in hog barns. Complete cleaning and maintenance before use.

Thunderstorms and tornados are a power outage risk. Properly functioning alarm systems and generators are important preventative measures. High temperatures from equipment or power failures resulting from storms can put your animals at risk. Make sure that electronic thermostats are linked to an alarm system and set the alarm to a realistic temperature. Check alarm system notifications to ensure that email or text alerts are reaching the correct recipients.

Warm temperatures and humidity must be considered when making decisions about livestock transportation. Recommended loading density charts are available from various commodity groups, as well as Farm & Food Care, which consider the size of the compartment and weather conditions. Always take the daily anticipated high temperature into consideration for both the farm and destination when doing calculations. The livestock weather safety index for market hogs, for example, reduces loading density by either 10 or 25 percent as the combination of temperature and humidity increases above a baseline of 23 degrees Celsius as the expected daily high. Transportation density charts are available for

many species including dairy, veal calves, beef cattle, weaning and market pigs, sheep, goats, and horses. To minimize the risk of heat stress animals should be loaded during the cool, early morning hours and the trucks should be as open as the temperature for the day dictates. Temperature can rise dramatically in a truck that is not moving. Contingency plans should be in place in the event of unexpected road work or traffic delays during road and bridge construction season. Animal welfare during summer transport has received a lot of public attention in recent years, and it is more important than ever to be diligent.

Livestock production is a year-round business, but the summer's heat, like winter's cold, requires adjustments to equipment and procedures. Special considerations must be made to ensure animal comfort and productivity. Take some time to check your equipment and review procedures with family and staff to ensure that your livestock barns and transportation systems are ready for summer.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer!

Sincerely,

Animal Care Staff at Farm & Food Care

**Resources Related to warm weather transport:**

[Ontario Pork: Livestock Weather Safety Index](#)

[Chicken Farmers of Ontario: Loading and transportation of Broiler Chickens in Ontario during Extreme Heat and Humidity](#)

[Chicken Farmers of Ontario: Important Protocol information for Ontario poultry industry during extreme summer temperatures](#)

[CFIA: Transporting animals during hot and humid weather](#)