

Respirator fit testing in Crookston April 6

To limit exposure and ensure worker safety, EPA's Worker Protection Standards mandate that those that handle, mix and/or apply certain pesticides obtain a respirator fit test before wearing a pesticide label-required respirator. The herbicide Engenia™ and the insecticide Lorsban™ are two of the pesticides that require users to wear respirators.

In anticipation of a growing need for rural fit testing opportunities, staff from the University of Minnesota Extension's Pesticide Safety and Education Program have teamed up with respirator experts from 3M to provide fit tests for up to 42 farmers at the Crookston Eagle's Club, 105 S Broadway in Crookston on Friday, April 6.

Farmers can bring their own respirator and be tested at no charge; alternatively farmers can try on and purchase a respirator on-site.

Four sessions of testing will be held at noon to 1:00 p.m., 1:00-2:00 p.m., 2:00-3:00 p.m., and 3:00-4:00 p.m.

To reserve a testing time contact, Angie Peltier at apel-tier@umn.edu or call 218-281-8692.

Please note that a person must be healthy enough to wear a respirator. Passing a medical evaluation is legally required before one can obtain a respirator fit test. While some family physicians provide this service, there is also an option to complete an online medical evaluation. Note that while 98% will pass the online exam, some medical conditions like asthma or high blood pressure may require an in-person follow-up appointment. Contact Angie to receive a weblink providing access to up to two free online medical evaluations per farm courtesy of 3M.

How to protect livestock in extreme weather

Extreme weather is seldom fun for anyone. Although people often have the means to escape inclement weather, animals are at the mercy of their caregivers.

Protecting animals during extreme weather is not restricted to domesticated pets. Those who have livestock on their properties must recognize that these animals will need various levels of care as well.

Animals such as chickens, cattle, goats, and llamas can be adversely affected by extreme weather. Individuals can heed these safety guidelines to avoid subjecting such animals to the stress, discomfort and illness that can result from exposure to extreme weather.

Suitable shelter

One of the best ways to safeguard livestock from extreme weather is to ensure they have a place to escape the elements. Animals can get sunburned and may overheat, so make sure shelters can block the sun's rays on hot days while also allowing for air to circulate through the

dwelling.

It's also key that the shelter be capable of accommodating all of the animals at the same time.

Livestock shelters do not have to be complicated. They can be as elaborate as a barn or as simple as carports or tarps and shade cloth.

Fresh water

Access to fresh, clean water is also essential. Dehydration can set in, particularly for animals with thick coats or those that are young or elderly. Animals tend to expend a lot of energy to cool down or stay warm, so they will need an ample supply of water to remain hydrated and healthy.

Standing water can become a breeding ground for parasites and insect larvae. Therefore, change water frequently to make sure it is sanitary. Some farm experts advise aerating troughs to help prevent algae growth or mosquito infestations. A small amount of raw apple cider vinegar may help as well. However, always discuss water sanitation methods with a veterinarian before testing them out on farm animals.

Mold-free feed

Hot, humid temperatures can cause mold to grow on hay and

other feed sources. Cows do not like to eat moldy hay and it can make horses ill. The University of Minnesota Extension says horses are particularly sensitive to dust from mold spores and can get a respiratory disease similar to asthma in humans called recurrent airway obstruction, or RAO, which is often referred to as heaves.

Hay needs to be dried out before it is fed to animals. Any feed should be stored in cool, dry conditions and inspected before being dispersed to livestock.

Hair cut

Wooly animals may benefit from a shear prior to the onset of hot weather, advises the Maryland Small Ruminant group. Do not shear too short. For instance, a one-inch fleece can dissipate heat and help the sheep keep cool.

Rest

Livestock should not be worked and handled during the heat of the day. Their productivity levels may be diminished, and the extra exertion may affect their health. Rest will help them stay happy and healthy until the extreme weather has subsided.

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