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Hot-Weather Tips for the Coolest Animals on the Show Circuit

Summer time can really heat up. Not only with an increase in temperature, but also humidity and wind velocity play a role in ambient conditions that affect show animals. Heat stress can manifest in several ways in animals on feed for show.

- Some of the adverse affects of excessive heat are:
 - Poor growth performance
 - Depressed immune system
 - Infertility in bulls, rams, bucks, boars and other intact male animals
 - Loss of bloom or body condition
 - And most importantly, reduction of feed intake, which contributes to all of the above.
- Animals eat to meet their energy requirements. As temperatures increase, animals' energy requirements decrease. So the best way to keep animals on feed during the heat of the summer is through reduction of body temperature. This can be done in a number of ways:
 - A fan, or some type of sufficient air movement to cool the animals
 - A mister and fan that blows water-cooled air across the body surface of the animals
 - Feeding during cooler periods (early in the morning and in the evening when the temperature begins to decrease)
 - Feeding fibrous feedstuffs (hay, etc...) to ruminants in the evening. Fiber generates more heat during digestion than do non-fibrous feeds
 - Also, fat creates less incremental heat and actually works to keep the animals cooler during periods of heat stress. As voluntary feed intake decreases, you may try to compensate by using soybean oil, corn oil or some type of fat. This will improve growth rates during heat stress and help retain bloom and freshness
 - Sheep and goats get rid of excess heat much like dogs do (through their mouths by panting). However, hogs do not perspire nor pant. Hogs rely on air movement across their bodies to remove heat. So, it is important to keep fans and/or misters on showpigs during periods of high temperature and/or high humidity
 - Some ingredients help with cooling during heat stress. We've already mentioned that fat creates less heat when digested. Research has shown that TASCOS® is an ingredient that helps to lower body temperatures during heat stress. It is included in all HONOR® and Show Chow® beef feeds, lamb feeds, HONOR® Champion Drive Topdress, and in HONOR® Powerfill
 - Keeping drinking water as cool as possible will also help lower body temperatures. At the very least, keeping the water source or supply out of direct sunlight will help keep the water at suitable temperatures. Remember that water intake is directly related to feed intake. So if water intake is reduced for whatever reason (temperature, freshness, cleanliness or availability) feed intake and growth performance will be adversely affected.