

Cold Weather, pet peeves, cats and hypothermic goats

I have had a long day....

As some of you know I am a vet tech for a mixed animal practice.. I have been planning my gripes all day.. here they are..

* In this cold weather.. check your livestock, pets, any animals that are outside 2-3 times a day.. make sure they have open unfrozen water and access to it at all times. Check everyone and make sure that they are eating and drinking and have proper shelter to get out of the wind and the weather.. it doesnt have to be heated. A 3 sided shed away from prevailing winds is usually adequate. We had to deal with many animals at work today with severe dehydration as they have not had access to water in the last few days. Even try to put water out for the wild birds a few times a day. If you have calves or lambs/kids to be born soon, make sure you check MULTIPLE times a day and you have a warm stall to take them to if there is any problems.. that you have colostrum you can heat up and learn how to tube PROPERLY!.. have a stash of old blankets and towels you can pop into the dryer to warm animals with. 2 liter bottles you can fill with hottish water to slide between the back legs near the femoral artery to warm the animal faster.

* If you have an animal off feed and listless.. TAKE ITS TEMPERATURE.. you have a thermometer if you have animals, right? Know the temp for your livestock species.. is the temp low? We had a goat that was listless, was not eating...the temp on her goat was 97F.. it ought to have been 101-103F.. it was hypothermic.. I had her bring it into her house and warm it up for a few hours.. get some feed into it and put it in her stall bedded down with lots of hay (we dont have straw in this country-honest) and put a vest on the goat with a fleecy wool on the inside to help maintain body temperature..

* Spay and neuter your pets.. even if they are 'merely barn cats'.. at this point.. I almost advocate the rubber boot and pocketknife method.. (dont though).. I had to euthanize 6 cats today.. a litter of a mom cat and her 4 kittens that were now 4.5 months old and had been on the waiting list at the SPCA to be taken in since the kittens were 7 weeks old. Before you hate the woman who brought them in, they were strays that showed up at her house and didnt leave after the kittens were born.. and I know for a fact that she tried what she could to find homes for them and tried to get the SPCA to take them.. The other cat was a cat the lady could no longer keep and it was a registered Silver Persian.. she also couldnt find a home for it and the SPCA could not take it either.

* Meaning to stress this again.. water is an animals most important and cheapest FEED. They will drink without eating, but they will not eat without drinking. Just as they need water in hot weather, they need it in the winter to make their "thermostadt" work properly. If it freezes.. water for 20 mins in the morning.. again at noon and again before bedtime.. in the case of my rabbit crocks.. I ket them have water 15 mins 3x a day and when the 15 mins were up I dumped the water into a waste bucket.

* Watch out for frostbite.. we had a cat who came in for another problem today, but last year it got its ears frostbit off.. it had NO ears.. it is common for it to happen to baby calves here too.. they actually have 'calf hats' to protect ears. Watch all your animals for the 1st sign of distress. In this cold weather it is a killer.

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