

Lack of Water Caused Salt Poisoning

Hard to believe that if you accidentally leave the water off for cattle, that there is a risk of them dying when you turn it back on.

They will drink so much that their brains swell, they act like nervous ketosis or some other brain disease, and they will die. This doesn't occur unless water deprivation is over a day or two, especially when it's hot. The same thing happens when too much salt is added to a ration, especially if other feed choices are limited. We recently had a case of this. It's several hours later that the nervous symptoms occur. Then they go down and can die. The animals with the least symptoms seemed to respond to treatment, the down ones didn't. If you accidentally shut water off, introduce it slowly and over several hours or longer, and make sure the boss animals don't drink it all.

The salt poisoning incident is similar to grain overload with steer stuffers. If the steer feeder runs out of feed or bridges for two days, and a hot grain ration is reintroduced, I've seen down and dead steers the following day. Like salt poisoning, they don't respond well to treatment.

Deadly Dairy Cows?

The CDC created this diagram pictured at left to advise people working with farm animals and testing for H5N1. Seriously, this is what CDC employees spend their day thinking about...protecting you from deadly dairy cows? I actually saw a veterinarian in a publication dressed like this while taking milk samples to test for avian influenza. Six people have contracted avian influenza since this crisis started. More people have been struck by lightning and some have died. Is it time we ban going outside?

Protect Yourself From H5N1 When Working With Farm Animals

H5N1 is a bird flu virus that could make you sick. Wear recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) when working directly or closely with sick or dead animals, animal feces, litter, raw milk, and other materials that might have the virus.



Wash hands with soap and water, then put on PPE in this order:

1. Fluid-resistant coveralls
2. Waterproof apron, if needed for job task
3. NIOSH Approved® Respirator (e.g., N95® filtering facepiece respirator or elastomeric half mask respirator)
4. Properly-fitted unvented or indirectly vented safety goggles or face shield
5. Head cover or hair cover
6. Gloves
7. Boots

Scan to learn how to put on and take off a respirator



Testing to Move Animals Across State Lines

When moving animals across state lines, it's not just avian influenza that requires testing. Every state in the United States has its own set of rules for shipment.

TB testing is the biggest bottleneck. Some states require testing in animals as young as 6 months. The process of TB testing can take as long as two weeks. Please don't call us Thursday morning and say you need an interstate for shipping animals on Friday because it isn't going to happen.

We have to get permission in advance from the state veterinarian for the date you want to test animals. A TB test has an injection day and three days later a read day, so Wednesdays and Thursday don't work.

Youngstock must go through a chute twice. You need gates and lots of help. Every animal needs an official state ID. With just a few animals this is a process, with large numbers it takes a lot of planning.

As soon as you plan to ship or sell any animals, please include us in your plans. You might be lucky and we could say you're good to go and we can just write the health papers.

"Small Town USA": It's Not Just a Song...

It's not just a Justin Moore song, it is a way of life and an attitude. We, in rural Wisconsin, are by Hillary Clinton's definition the flyover zone. I'm on a committee for bovine veterinarians tasked to try to figure out how to attract more veterinarians to rural America. Recently the accounting profession, faced with the same issues of recruiting for small town employment did a study and found that young people that didn't grow up in a rural environment aren't happy in a rural environment. Of course, there are outliers and the term rural covers a broad area. Rural Nebraska with no lakes, rivers, or state parks is a lot different than rural central Wisconsin.

I think Emma and I would be considered outliers. I grew up on the edge of Detroit, a true shit hole if there ever was one. But I had a high school classmate with a dairy farm and several classmates that had crop farms. I never heard of FFA or 4-H until I moved to Waupun. Most of my friend's fathers worked in the auto industry, which ran Detroit in the 1970's. Personally, I'm glad more people don't want to live in small towns, because soon they wouldn't be small towns.

As a dairy client told me 40 years ago, "If you can't pee off your front porch at noon, you don't live far enough in the country."

Alfalfa Field or Airfield?

Ken and Bonnie Beck in Horicon do such a great job with field prep when seeding alfalfa that they are the preferred landing site for EAA airplanes with engine failure. The Georgia pilot pictured at right was ecstatic with the smooth landing, as was his buddy who followed him down. Becks had just taken a crop off the field. The plan was to remove the wings and truck the plane back to Georgia.

