



## HOT HUMID WEATHER THREATENS PETS, LIVESTOCK

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MADISON — Dangerously hot, muggy weather predicted for the coming week is prompting Wisconsin's humane veterinarian to remind owners of pets and livestock to take a little extra care to protect their animals.

"Dogs and cats don't perspire, they pant, and panting isn't very effective in extreme hot weather," says state humane officer Dr. Yvonne Bellay of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. "They can't provide their own ventilation or water. They can't get out of a hot car or airless room. It's all up to people."

Heat stroke is a very real threat to animals, and can be fatal even with prompt treatment. Pets that have already suffered heat stroke once are more susceptible, as are animals that are very young or very old, have health problems, are overweight, or are snub-nosed. Signs of heat stroke in small animals include panting, staring or stupor, breathing difficulty, an anxious expression, refusal to obey, warm dry skin, fever, rapid heartbeat, vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, and collapse.

"If you see any of these signs in hot weather or if your pet's been left in a vehicle – which should never happen -- call your veterinarian immediately," Bellay says. "In the meantime, get the animal out of direct heat and get it wet however you can – with towels soaked in cool water, with a hose, in a wading pool. If you use towels, it will be most effective on less hairy parts of the body, like a dog's belly and legs."

Even if the animal seems to revive after a few minutes, get it to a veterinarian, because its temperature may rise again or fall well below normal, she adds.

"As always, prevention is the best medicine," Bellay says, and offers these tips for pet owners:

- **Never** leave an animal in a parked vehicle, even for a few minutes. Even with window open a few inches, the temperature in a parked car, may hit 120 degrees within minutes, so just a 10-minute stop may be dangerous. Opening the windows a few inches doesn't provide enough cooling. If you're running errands, leave your dog home. If you're traveling, make your pit stops at places where your pet can get out of the vehicle.
- Provide fresh, cool drinking water at all times – including in your vehicle when you're traveling.
- Outdoor kennels must be well-ventilated and shaded, with water in bowls that will not tip.
- Don't exercise pets on hot days or warm, humid nights.
- Groom your pet. Clip long coats to about an inch -- shorter clips or shaving can leave dogs vulnerable to sunburn.

In large animals, signs of heat stress and stroke may include restlessness, stumbling, increased heart rate and salivation, panting, collapse, and convulsions. For livestock owners, Bellay advises:

- Avoid transporting animals in heat over 80 degrees with high humidity.
- Park vehicles loaded with livestock in the shade.
- Deliver animals at night or in early morning.
- Use wet bedding to transport hogs in hot weather.
- Provide well-ventilated air space in farm trucks, barns, or any enclosure.
- Provide fresh drinking water at all times.
- Provide shade in resting, eating and watering areas.
- Use a water sprinkling system to cool animals.###