



COLD STRESS IN BEEF CATTLE

Cattle tolerate cold temperatures well if acclimated. However, calves, cattle in poor condition, wet cattle, and those fed a low-energy diet are more sensitive to cold stress

WHAT IS COLD STRESS?



Cold stress or hypothermia occurs when the body's temperature drops below average (38°C). Beef cattle in Alberta can usually handle -20°C in the winter, assuming calm winds (or shelter from the wind), good body condition, and a dry winter coat. However, if cattle still have their summer coats, are in poor body condition, and if they don't have access to shelter, then they cannot handle such low temperatures. Furthermore, small calves lose body heat faster than adults and cannot handle as low temperatures.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS?



Shivering (but cattle may stop if worsens)



Low rectal temp (< 35°C)



Cold mouth



Not suckling (calves)

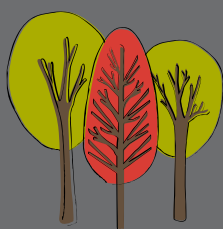


Unable to get up



Frostbite

WHAT CAN I DO?



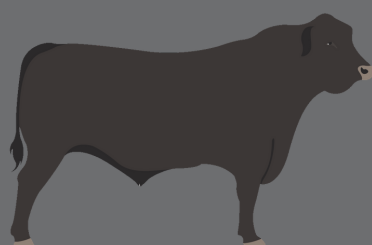
Protect from the wind



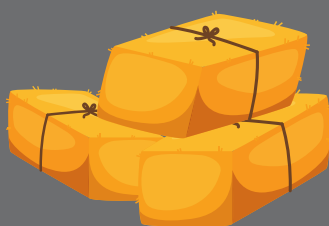
Provide water*



A winter feeding protocol with additional high energy feed



Keep cattle clean & dry



Bed cattle well



Monitor the weather

*Using snow as a sole winter water source is not appropriate in all geographic areas. Contact your local beef cattle specialist or your veterinarian for advice.

LEARN MORE!



NATIONAL FARM ANIMAL CARE COUNCIL
CONSEIL NATIONAL POUR LES SOINS AUX ANIMAUX D'ÉLEVAGE

The Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle
1.1 Protection from Extreme Weather - Page 8



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