

South Australia's Farmers Urged to Prepare for Heat

02 January 2014

AUSTRALIA - Livestock owners are being urged to ensure they take special care of their livestock during the next few days as severe to extreme temperatures are forecast across most of South Australia.

Chief Veterinary Officer, Roger Paskin, said wherever possible, stock should be moved to shaded areas with shelter from hot northerly winds. Ample cool water is an essential ingredient for successfully keeping stock healthy during extremes of temperature.

"It sounds obvious but it is however worth repeating: animals of all kinds need shade, wherever possible, to protect them from searing sun and wind," Dr Paskin said.

"Also, they need good supplies of cool water; animals can drink up to double their normal intake during hot weather.

"Keep drinking troughs large and clean, especially when moving stock into a fresh paddock as evaporation may make trough water become saline and undrinkable.

"Feeder pipes should be buried to help with temperature control and to prevent breakages.

In hot weather, troughs should be inspected daily to ensure they are working correctly.

"Keep animals away from dams which may become boggy and a danger for any stock seeking water.

"During hot weather, livestock should be checked daily to ensure they're coping with the heat. Just like humans, heat stress can be fatal for animals. The first signs of heat stress may include panting and drooling and stock may also be restless and start bellowing."

Dr Paskin said that livestock owners who were not living on their properties – or were away on holiday – should ask neighbours to check regularly on their animals and water troughs.

"Stock movements during hot weather should be minimised – both on-farm and off-farm," he said. "If there is no way of avoiding stock movements, then it should be carried out during night or early morning, when it's relatively cooler.

"Transporters of livestock should also have in place contingency plans to handle unexpected breakdowns, especially during hot weather. They must also be aware of updated, national welfare laws governing the movement of livestock, information on which is available at: http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecuritysa/animalhealth/identification_movement/transporting_livestock

"Poultry too are very susceptible to heat and if they're kept in a shed that isn't fitted with an effective cooling system, then the shed should be cooled by wetting the shed or hanging wet hessian in breezeways. Birds will need access to plenty of cool water.

ThePigSite News Desk