



Management of dairy animals during winter season

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The main challenges faced by the farmers during winter season about management, production and health of the animals. The dairy animals are housed in the shed that minimize the impact of environmental temperature fluctuations on the animals. The temperature in the animal's room is only a few degrees higher than the temperature outside the shed. When temperature starts to decline in winter particularly we get closer to 10°C, it is time to think about what effect this is having on animal's productivity and efficiency. Like the all mammals are warm blooded and need to maintain a constant core body temperature. The normal temperature of cow is around 38°C (101.5°F) and animals do not have to expend any extra energy to maintain their body temperature. At the lower end of this range normal metabolic process supply enough heat to maintain body core temperature. The animals within their thermoneutral zone, many modify their behavior, such as seeking shelter from wind, and respond over the long term by growing a thick hair coat for winter, without affecting their nutrients requirements. The animals are exposed to wind it is important to adjust for the effective temperature and take appropriate step to ensure that the animals maintain body temperature. In winter season water, possibly lukewarm should be clean and available four times a day at their drinking time of animals. In winter to protect animals from a sudden drop on temperature, keep the animals in a covered shed/ area during the night.

If the animals have not vaccinated against foot and mouth disease (FMD), haemorrhagic septicemia (HS), black quarter (BQ), Enterotoxaemia this must be done with the contact of veterinarian. In this month's animal should be provided essential salt or mineral mixture in appropriate quantities must be mixed with feed and given to the animals. In this season animals require upto 20 per cent more feed. Advice to the farmers, the quantity of green fodder provided in limited quantities in the animal feed if you supply more green fodder it increase the chance of occurrences of acidosis and diarrhoea.



The bedding material in the animal sheds must be kept dry and changed every day. The farmers should also aware in winter season to store or procure fodder due to shortage in this month. In some state like Kashmir or Himachal Pradesh, heavy snowfall in this season clod breeze and frost in it is imperative that all necessary steps be taken to protect livestock from this inclement weather. The weak and sick animals should be covered with sack cloth to protect them from the cold.

The blanket can also be used to retain body heat for individual animals. At the same time, during the night, all the animals should be housed in a covered shelter. Avoid keeping animals in a damp area, as well as protect them from smoke from fires which are lit to provide warmth. Take adequate care to prevent occurrence of mastitis in animals so advice to the farmers complete milking must be done.

In this season to maintain the body temperature of animals in milk they should be fed with mixture of oil cakes and jaggery. This is right time to deworm the animals. The cattle in good condition with a thick fat are better able to withstand the winter than thin cattle. The fat layer acts as another insulating layer between the animal's core and environment. It is generally accepted that for every 1°C drop below the lowers critical temperature there is an approximately 2% increase in energy requirement.

There is key management in winter season:

Monitor the weather, Protect animals from cold wind, Bedding to the animals, Keep animal clean and dry, Provide feed like grain and hay, Provide lukewarm water, Cover the body of animal with gunny bag made upto jute, Provide oil cake (Mustard or Linseed).

In lastly we cannot control the weather but we can do everything reasonably possible. To increase or maintain the production by the dairy animals in winter season, so farmers are advice to take precaution and protect the animals in this season.

