

Farm Safety During Cold Weather

Winter brings with it special cold-related problems on the farm. Many activities, such as feeding the cattle and scooping out the driveway must take place no matter what the temperature reads. Farmers must take special precautions so the cold temperatures don't take their toll.

The risk of injury varies depending on such factors as the temperature, wind speed, length of time outdoors, your physical condition and whether clothing is wet or dry.

There are several things you can do to prevent injuries caused by cold weather.

- Wear warm, loose-fitting, layered clothing, preferably wool. Also, wear water repellent outer garments.
- Wear mittens instead of gloves. Mittens allow your fingers to remain in contact with each other, enabling your hands to stay warmer.
- Cover head and ears. The head, neck, and ears lose heat faster than any other part of the body.
- Stay dry.
- Do not drink alcoholic beverages. Alcohol actually causes the body to lose heat more rapidly.
- Watch for frostbite and other signs of hypothermia.

If you suspect frostbite or hypothermia, it's important to:

- Seek immediate shelter in a warm place if you can't stop shivering, notice numbness, or become disoriented.
- Handle any frostbitten area gently. Don't rub it.
- Remove cold, wet, and restricting clothing and replace with dry items.
- Warm the body gradually, not by a stove or fire.
- Contact your local emergency medical services for help with frostbite or hypothermia.

Farm children are at risk whether they are helping out with the chores on the farm on a cold day or just enjoying the many adventures that might exist on a sunny, but bitterly cold day. Snowmobiling, sledding, or just having a snowball fight with grandpa, could be dangerous if simple, common sense is not used. Children may not be able to identify the signals of danger. Help them stay safe by monitoring their actions frequently. Winter can be a beautiful and fun time of the year to enjoy the farm, if precautions are taken to prevent the cold from endangering those who are experiencing its glory.

