

Preventing Heat Stress In Your Horse

Their large body size, coupled with the athletic work they are asked to do while covered with leather tack, mean horses are especially sensitive to heat stress. Proper care can help prevent heat stress during Fair.

Prevention:

- Horses should be offered water every 15 minutes while working or warming up, and should have water available constantly at all other times. Horses should be allowed to drink **AS MUCH AS THEY WANT**
- Whenever possible remove tack as soon as your class is over. Do not allow the horse to stand around with tack on. The tack prevents the horse from cooling itself
- In between classes provide shade and/or fans. Stalled horses should have fans
- Hose the horse down to cool it, but remember to scrape off the water or it can cause them to get hotter
- Horses can also be sponged with water or alcohol. A good rule is to continue sponging until the water coming off the horse is cool
- Horses doing moderate work (for example showing walk/trot only) can be given 1 table-spoon twice a day of table salt in feed to encourage water intake. Horses doing hard work (speed, jumping, etc) should receive a commercial electrolyte supplement

Identifying heat stress: Take a **rectal temp if you see any of these signs**

- * a working horse who is not sweating
- * rapid or labored breathing for more than 5 minutes after work has ceased
- * stumbling, depression, or abnormal behavior
- * lack of interest in water or feed after working

IF rectal temp is over **102 .5 F, veterinary assistance should be sought for the horse**
While waiting hose the horse with cold water and recheck temp every 15 minutes
Offer plain water and water with electrolytes in it



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