

Power Failures on the Farm

A power failure or fuel shortage can cause problems on farms, but being prepared can minimize the seriousness of these problems. There are three areas of concern:

- Poultry and Livestock
- Equipment
- Storing Milk and Cream

Poultry and Livestock

To protect poultry and livestock during a power failure, you should provide four essentials: ventilation, water, heat and food.

Ventilation

- Ventilate shelter.
- Do not close buildings tight to conserve heat, since animals could suffocate from lack of oxygen.
- Because oxygen will eventually be used up in mechanically ventilated production facilities, clear debris from all vents. The open vents to facilitate natural air flow.
- Poultry facilities should be equipped with knockout panels for emergency ventilation.
- In dairy facilities, open doors or turn cows outside.

Water

- Provide all animals, especially cattle, need plenty of water.
- Your water pump may possibly be driven with a small gasoline engine and a belt. Otherwise you will need to haul water.
- If you have an outside source of water, cattle can be turned out.
- Whatever the source of water, make sure it remains clean so animals can drink it.
- If no water is available, dairymen can feed cows their own milk as a last resort.

Heat

- Provide heat. Use camp stoves and heaters as emergency heat sources for brooders.
- Plan ahead to have this equipment ready when needed.

Food

- Provide feed. Animals need extra energy for body heat during prolonged severe weather, especially if they are unsheltered.
- Mechanical feeders will be inoperable during a power failure. Provide for emergency feeding procedures.
- Use pelleted cake or cake concentrate for emergency feed.

Equipment

- Unplug or turn off all electric equipment to prevent damage when power is restored.

Storing Milk and Cream

- You can use the intake manifold on the tractor engine as a vacuum to operate milkers that do not have a magnetic pulsator.
- Request that the dairy pick up milk as soon as possible.
- Consider adding a standby power generator to handle vital electrical equipment on the dairy.
- Even if you are short of extra milk storage facilities, do not store milk in stock tanks or other containers such as bathtubs. Dairy plants may not accept milk that has been stored in anything other than regular milk storage containers.
- Check with your local dairy about the policy regarding emergency storage of milk and cream.
- Check your tank for souring each time you add milk to it. If you are unable to cool your milk or have it picked up. This check could mean the difference between losing all or only part of your milk supply.