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Setting Records Isn't Always Positive

This last week has been an extreme tough in northeast Kansas and much of the county! The record heat wave, with dangerously high heat indexes, has taken a toll on plants, livestock and humans alike. It is with a heavy heart that I write this because I know so many have experienced animal death loss, which has some serious effects on the operational and human sides of operations. My intent is to help direct producers to resources available, hopefully some that you are already well aware of. I get the desire to not ask for help - I'm a stubborn, independent, proud producer myself; but I encourage everyone to reach out for assistance through channels available to help in tough times.

There are some very good tools that can help us to prepare, monitor and reference weather events and related heat stress. Two very important tools that can help managers monitor potential heat stress are: The [U.S. Meat Animal Research Center's seven-day forecast tool](#) which looks at; temperature, humidity and solar radiation. The second is the [Kansas Mesonet animal comfort index](#) that updates climate information hourly. In terms of the next topic of discussion, the historical weather data of Kansas Mesonet should prove to be useful, <https://mesonet.k-state.edu/weather/historical/>

Livestock producers impacted by the recent weather may be eligible for the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). LIP offers payments to eligible livestock producers for deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by eligible loss conditions, of which extreme heat qualifies. Eligible livestock includes: bison, cattle, equine, goats, poultry, sheep, swine and a long list of other animals. An owner or contract grower must file a notice of loss within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is first apparent as well as file an application for payment within 60 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss condition occurred.

It is recommended that producers document loss and provide a statement from a veterinarian verifying loss due to heat. Documentation of temperature, humidity and heat stress leading up to and through the loss event will likely need to be provided. The LIP national payment rate for eligible livestock owners is based on 75 percent of the average fair market value of the livestock. More information on USDA disaster assistance can be found at your local Farm Service Agency office or: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/index>

Kansas farmers, ranchers and their families are the backbone of this state, providing high-quality crops, livestock and dairy products. The stress that comes with this occupation can be overwhelming. Unpredictable weather, heavy workloads and financial worries can sometimes take their toll on farm families and lead to mental and emotional distress. Caring for your own health and wellness is often overlooked but is just as critical as caring for the business of your farm. There are resources available to help, notably the Kansas Ag Stress resources <https://www.kansasagstress.org/> If you need to talk to someone, call for free 24/7 support at 1-800-447-1985