

### **Modern Conveniences Help Farmers Fight Cold** **News**

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Raising livestock in the cold can be stressful for producers, but it is not as bad as it used to be.



Troy Disselhorst, who runs a cow-calf operation south of Palmyra, Mo., remembers when he would drive a tractor without a cab.

“We would drive from one farm to the other and set out hay, and you’d freeze on the way back,” he said.

“It’s not quite as bad as it was 25 years ago. Technology has gone a long way. Most of these cab tractors have heaters. You’re still out in it, because you have to get out and do stuff, but if you want to go from one farm to the next or go across the way and drop a bale, you don’t have to go without a cab.”

Temperatures across West-Central Illinois and Northeast Missouri are forecasted to dip into negative numbers tonight, with single digits for a high on Thursday. The up-and-down weather pattern will reach the 30s at the start of the weekend.

Disselhorst said with the cold, raising cattle becomes more time consuming.

“You have to keep a closer watch on them,” he said. “A lot of people still chop ice on ponds to water their cattle. So you have to make sure when it’s below zero, you have to chop ice every day or you have to make sure your heaters are working so the cattle all have water.”

The most important thing when raising cattle during a cold snap is to provide shelter and good quality feed.

“You want to make sure there is a place they can get out of the wind, because it bothers people and animals are the same,” he said.

With the cold, the feed provides them with the energy they need.

“The colder it is, the more they’ve got to generate energy to produce heat to keep going,” he said.

Disselhorst said while single-digit temperatures are not ideal to raise cattle, temperatures around 40 degrees with rain are worse.

“Last year, I would have said my February, March and April calving was the worst I ever had,” he said. “Thirty-five and 40 degrees with rain is probably the worst you can possibly have when putting calves on the ground.”

Also being affected by the change in temperatures are movers, who consistently deal with being indoors and outdoors.

Bob Casburn, owner of Quincy Storage and Transfer, said movers at his firm prepare by making sure they layer and also monitor equipment. While most moves occur between May and October, he says they see an uptick after the holidays when people might move after their children finish the school semester.

“You’re going in and out of the house all day long, and when you first get there, you’re still chilly,” he said. “After you’ve been outside carrying furniture in and out for an hour or two, you start to work up a sweat and you start taking some layers off.”

Movers have to be careful in winter when entering homes. This means crews will bring extra floor runners to cover carpet and hardwood floors.

Casburn said equipment must be checked to make it will work.

“We start about a half-hour, 45 minutes early just to get the equipment warmed up,” he said. “We make sure the airlines haven’t frozen up overnight or the brakes frozen up or the diesel fuel gelled.”

Drivers making a long-distance run will actually take an additional half-gallon of diesel fuel and an extra fuel filter.

“If they get halfway over there and the fuel starts to gel up on them, they can always take the fuel filter off and put on a clean one and add some warm diesel fuel,” Casburn said.

He said with long-distance moves drivers have to be cautious about the different blends of diesel fuel, which differs between cold- and mild-winter regions. One of Casburn’s drivers is taking a shipment to Georgia and Florida.

“The drivers try to anticipate those kind of things,” Casburn said. “It’s just not pleasant conditions, this last cold snap.”