

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact: Adaven Rohling  
Diversified Agriculture and Natural Resource Agent, Wildcat Extension District  
adaven@ksu.edu, (620) 331-2690

## **Keeping Your (Chickens) Cool**

While we have enjoyed some cooler days recently, the summer heat will be here soon. Now is the time to evaluate your chicken coop/run and prepare to help your chickens stay cool during the summer. To stay cool during hot weather, chickens need shade, water, and a well-ventilated chicken coop. Shade can be provided in a variety of ways, including trees or building shade structures. When making shade structures, it is important to ensure they are well ventilated to keep fresh air circulating.

While it is important for chickens to always have access to clean, fresh water, it is especially important in the summer. Placing waterers in the shade will help keep the water cooler, encouraging chickens to drink more. If chickens are roaming a larger area, placing a few waterers in shady spots throughout the area will help encourage them to drink by making it more convenient. Ice cubes, or frozen water bottles, can also be added to help keep the water cooler. An additional way to help chickens stay cool on extremely hot days is to provide water in shallow pans that they can wade in to cool their feet. Just make sure the water is changed daily to keep it clean and prevent coccidiosis.

During hot weather, chickens often eat less. Because of their decreased appetite, it is best to limit the number of treats and food scraps chickens are given to help ensure they eat enough of a feed ration to meet their nutritional needs and support egg production. If treats are given, those that are not very filling and provide hydration are best. A few treats that help provide hydration are cutting fruits and vegetables up and freezing them in blocks. Feeding chickens during cooler parts of the day, such as early in the morning or late in the evening, will also help encourage them to eat.

When it comes to nesting boxes, it is important to ensure the coop has plenty of ventilation to promote air circulation and reduce the risk of hens overheating. If a hen is trying to be broody (set on eggs to hatch chicks), it is best to discourage her by collecting eggs as soon as possible. Hens that are broody are more likely to become heat-stressed because they tend to only leave the nest box a couple of times a day for food and water.

Chickens do not sweat; they cool themselves by panting. Chickens that are heat-stressed may pant heavily and hold their wings away from their body. If this behavior is seen, take the chicken to a cooler area with plenty of shade and water. Signs of heat exhaustion in chickens include panting hard, holding their wings away from their bodies, a paler waddle and comb, and being

very lethargic. When a chicken has these symptoms, it is at risk of heat exhaustion and needs to be cooled down quickly. To cool them down quickly, place their body in a bucket of cool water (make sure their head is above the water) and place them somewhere cool until they have completely recovered.

It is much easier to prevent heat stress than to treat it. Providing chickens with plenty of shade and cool water will help them avoid heat stress on hot summer days.

For more information, contact Adaven Rohling, Diversified Agriculture and Natural Resource Agent, Wildcat District, at 620-331-2690 or [adaven@ksu.edu](mailto:adaven@ksu.edu).

###

K-State Extension is a short name for the Kansas State University Cooperative Extension Service, a program designed to generate and distribute useful knowledge for the wellbeing of Kansans. Supported by county, state, federal and private funds, the program has county extension offices statewide. Its headquarters is on the K-State campus in Manhattan. For more information, visit [www.ksre.ksu.edu](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu). K-State Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.