

# Texas Dairy Matters

*Higher Education Supporting the Industry*

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## DON'T FORGET DRY COW COOLING

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Heat stress on dry cows impacts their performance, both before and after calving. Outward effects are reduced dry matter intakes, decreased calf birth weights, suppressed passive immunity, and increased metabolic disorders.

What can we do for far off dry cows, those cows that are more than 21 days from freshening?

1. Feed them 25 pounds of good quality silage, if available.
2. Feed quality forage with at least a calculated net energy of greater than .55 mcal/lb. of dry matter.
3. Keep forage length long enough to maintain rumen fill and minimize risk of displaced abomasum after the cow calves.
4. Maintain body condition scores of at least 3.5, but don't let cows get fat.
5. Provide a high quality vitamin and trace mineral package.
6. Keep plenty of clean, fresh cool water available at all times.
7. Construct shades to provide relief from the sun. Orient shades with the long axis north and south so the sun can naturally dry the area under the shade.
8. Finally locate your dry cows in an area that will encourage continued dry matter intakes during periods of high heat.

Implement these management techniques to reduce the drop in production associated with summer freshening cows.