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Dept. of Agriculture Reminding Livestock Farmers of Increased Threat of Disease to Livestock During Wet Season

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Livestock. By. GETTY IMAGES

The V.I. Dept. of Agriculture is reminding livestock farmers about the increased threat of disease to animals caused by wet weather.

According to the release, Agriculture Commissioner Positive T. A. Nelson recommends that all farmers fix leaky roofs and improve drainage in and around animal pens during the rainy season to reduce standing water, mud, and wet manure.

The department said wet and muddy pens and pastures put animals at risk for many health problems. Mud can cause foot damage and lameness which prevents animals from moving around to eat and graze. Stomach worms thrive in wet manure and on muddy pastures where they can cause disease and even death in infected cattle, sheep, goats and pigs, D.O.A. said. To reduce exposure to worms, farmers should delay letting sheep and goats out on pasture in the mornings until the sun has dried off the dew.

“Wet manure causes the release of ammonia into the air. The ammonia can irritate the animals’ lungs and cause pneumonia,” said Dr. Bethany Bradford, director of Veterinary Services the Dept. of Agriculture. “Farmers should make every effort to keep their animals out of mud and manure; fix leaking roofs; and provide drainage for water runoff away from pens and paddocks. Allow all animals, including pigs, access to dry areas such as concrete flooring or wood pallets to prevent disease.” To neutralize the ammonia smell, Dr. Bradford recommends using white lime. White lime is available from concrete suppliers and hardware stores and can be spread directly onto wet manure to control the ammonia smell.”

The department encouraged farmers to contact its Division of Veterinary Services about using deworming medications effectively to reduce worm infestations before animals get sick.

For more information, call the Division of Veterinary Services on St. Croix at (340) 6427320, St Thomas at (340) 7745182, or St. John at (340) 4239022.