

Looking after pets and livestock during a power cut



Pets

We recognize that when you have pets and livestock you need to have peace of mind that they are protected against the effects of a power cut.

The information we've provided below gives general advice however for specific information, or details about more unusual animals, we recommend that you contact your local pet shop or supplier.

Tropical Fish

Most tropical fish will not experience much stress if the power is only off for a short length of time.

Mains-operated air pumps, filters and heaters used in many fish tanks won't work while the electricity is off.

Fish suppliers recommend a cheap bubble up filter that can be run off a battery powered air pump for use during a power cut. Using an ordinary bicycle pump is a cheaper alternative to aerate the water. You will need to do this regularly while the power is off.

If power is off, it is wise to disturb the water surface for 5 minutes each hour by filling a jug with tank water then pouring it back in, making as much movement as possible.

Without a heater, the water temperature in the tank will fall, especially in cold weather.

Battery powered heaters are also available from pet shops. It may be an idea to have one of these available in case you are affected by a power cut. For insulation wrap the tank in blankets and if possible, fill hot water bottles with warm water and place them around the outside of the tank.

Livestock

Ventilation, heat, light and food are the main things to consider when caring for livestock if your electricity supply is interrupted.

Ideally, electrically-operated fans should switch to generator power if there is a power cut. If you do not have a generator available, use automatic drop-out flaps in the building to provide natural ventilation. You can also increase air circulation by fully opening ventilation flaps and doors.

Young animals are particularly vulnerable in cold weather so provide extra insulation and straw for bedding. Consider moving animals you feel are especially at risk to temporary accommodation with bottled gas heating.

Most hens need a good source of light to lay productively. Consider obtaining a generator to provide enough lighting for feeding, inspection and service.

If you use automatic feeding, make a contingency plan for manual feeding. Try to keep enough food stock for your animals in reserve, especially in winter, so you'll still be able to feed them if your electricity is interrupted.

Mains electric fencing won't work in a power cut. If you feel this might be a problem, consider buying a battery powered unit to provide an alternative source of electricity.