



Home and Barn Ready for Winter?

Winterize: Here's what to check to make sure your home, barn and equipment are ready for the deep freeze.

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Read This!

Sue Weaver's article "Chill Factor: Winterize your home, barn, livestock and equipment" offers the details and insight you need to get ready for winter.

If you haven't already taken precautions against the harsh winter weather, here are some winterization tips to add to your annual farm routine. More tips for you to stay warm and safe and your animals, too>> First and foremost, prepare for possible isolation in your home.

Have sufficient heating fuel—like a good supply of dry, seasoned wood for your fireplace or wood-burning stove—in case regular fuel sources are cut off.

Well ahead of the cold weather, shore up your home and barn to keep the warm air in, and the cold out by: Insulating walls and attics

Caulking and weather-stripping doors and windows

Installing storm windows or replacing old single-paned windows with newer double-paned models.

Maintain the exterior of your house, barn, shed or any other structure that may provide shelter for your family, neighbors, livestock or equipment by regularly: Clearing rain gutters

Repairing roof leaks

Cutting away tree branches that could fall on a house or other structure during a storm.

Top

Other tips for a successful winter around the farm: Ventilate barns—even in winter, animals need fresh air to reduce the risk of respiratory ailments. Resist the temptation to close every window and door in the barn. It's better to put an extra blanket on an animal if necessary than to keep livestock in a completely closed barn.

©Lesley Ward If a water pipe freezes Shut the water off immediately by closing the main valve. Do not attempt to thaw frozen pipes unless the water is shut off. Freezing often causes unseen cracks in pipes or joints. Take measures to thaw pipes immediately, or call a plumber for assistance. Open the cold-water faucet nearest the freeze to relieve pressure and reduce the likelihood of breakage. Keep the faucet open as the frozen area begins to melt. Running water through the pipe will help melt more ice in the pipe. Check all other faucets for additional frozen pipes. If one pipe freezes, others may freeze, too. Apply heat to the frozen pipe by either warming the air around it or by heating it directly. Hot water also can be used in some situations. Do not use an open flame to thaw pipes. It's a fire hazard and could damage plastic piping. Once pipes have thawed, turn the water back on slowly and check for leaks. If you are unable to locate the frozen area, if the frozen area is not accessible or if you cannot thaw the pipe, call a licensed plumber.

Top

Get someone to check your electrical wiring.

Insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing.

Keep fire extinguishers on hand, especially if using an alternate heating source.



Learn how to shut off water valves in case a pipe freezes or bursts.

Don't forget to protect valuable farm equipment from the ravages of freezing temperatures. Remember to: Lube the tractor engine.

Check the tractor's antifreeze.

Set aside a supply of fuel additive.

Keep your tractor full of fuel.

Check your farm truck's condition, especially the battery and ignition. Consider winter tires—you'll want reliable transportation when roads are icy or snow covered.

Don't forget to properly prepare and store large and small tools and equipment, too.

Livestock care reminders: Provide more food than usual, an adequate and dependable water source and a windbreak for animals that stay in a field or pasture. Consider keeping smaller animals and pets indoors. More

If buckets of water inside the barn freeze overnight, consider placing the bucket down inside an insulated housing. Heating elements that hook over the side of the bucket may be available. Check your local tack shops and feed stores.

Top