Heat Lamp Safety

As temperatures grow colder, warmth becomes critically important to the health of newborn animals and chicks, particularly during their first few hours of life. Heat lamps offer a temporary solution with the potential to improve positive outcomes. Taking steps to ensure proper installation, maintenance, routine inspection, and safe use are essential to prevent barn or enclosure fires. Here are a few tips to get started:

Quality Equipment and Alternatives

- Choose a high quality, safety certified heat lamp designed for commercial use, with a ceramic socket.
- Use bulbs with the appropriate wattage and follow manufacturer instructions.
- Consider alternatives such as radiant heat panels and brooder plates that provide warmth without using an exposed bulb.

Secure Heat Lamps Properly

- Use a sturdy, nonflammable chain and an independent secondary attachment to prevent the lamp from falling.
- Never rely on the manufacturer's clamp alone to secure a heat lamp.
- Position lamps where animals cannot knock them over or become tangled in cords.

Heat Lamp Placement

- Maintain a safe distance between heat lamps and all combustible materials, following the manufacturer's clearance requirements.
- Position heat sources so animals can move away from the warmth when needed.
- Remember that animals can move bedding underneath or toward a heat source.

Equipment Inspection & Safety

- Inspect previously used bulbs, fixtures, plugs, and electrical cords for damage and/or dust/cobwebs/feathers before before using them again.
- Plug heat lamps directly into appropriately protected electrical outlets and refrain from using extension cords.
- Regularly inspect equipment for exposed wires, damaged cords, loose sockets and cracked bulbs.

Preparedness

- Check heat lamps frequently and avoid leaving them operating without appropriate monitoring.
- Install working smoke detectors and keep an ABC rated fire extinguisher accessible near the coop, enclosure, or barn area.
- Make sure everyone in the household knows their personal safety comes first and to call 911 if a fire occurs.

Learn more at SonomaCart.org or theAnimalShelter.org

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