



Government of the United States Virgin Islands
Department of Agriculture



ST. CROIX: #1 Estate Lower Love, Kingshill, V.I. 00850 • T: (340) 778-0997 • F: (340) 778-0997
ST. THOMAS: #7944 Estate Dorothea, St. Thomas, V.I. 00802 • T: (340) 774-5182 • F: (340) 774-1823
ST. JOHN: #11 Estate Carolina, Coral Bay, V.I. 00830 • T: (340) 776-6274 • F: (340) 693-5065

News Release

For Immediate Distribution

AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT REMINDS COMMUNITY OF INCREASED THREAT OF DISEASE TO LIVESTOCK DURING WET SEASON

September 21, 2022 US Virgin Islands – The Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture (VIDA) is reminding livestock farmers about the increased threat of disease to animals caused by the wet weather. 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.

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. 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.

According to Dr. Bethany Bradford, Director of Veterinary Services for VIDA, “Wet manure causes the release of ammonia into the air. The ammonia can irritate the animals’ lungs and cause pneumonia. Farmers should make every effort to keep their animals out of mud and manure; fix leaking roofs; and provide drainage for water run-off 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.

Farmers are encouraged to contact the VIDA’s 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) 642-7320, St Thomas at (340) 774-5182, or St. John at (340) 423-9022.

###