



# Acreage Answers

## Stress: It Does a Body Good

By Ruth Freeman, Family Resource Management Specialist,

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Stress is the body's response to anything you see as overwhelming. Unmanaged stress is an increasing characteristic of Americans that can lead to health problems.

Stress is a natural and normal part of our day. Without some stress we would not have the energy for living. Stress can cause us to push a little harder in an athletic competition, and it can motivate us to complete a project at work. Stress causes us to react quickly when there is an emergency by pumping adrenalin into our system.

Stress can be caused by negative or positive factors. A job promotion, company coming for the holidays, a death, or illness in the family can all be stressors. Usually it is not the big things that cause us the most stress, it is the day-to-day hassles, which seem to pile up and become intolerable. When stress is not handled properly unhealthy responses develop.

Signs of Stress	Ways to Manage Stress
▶ Sadness or irritability	▶ Exercise regularly
▶ Lack of interest or pleasure in activities	▶ Balance diet
▶ Significant appetite or weight variations	▶ Learn to say no
▶ Changes in sleeping habits	▶ Share feelings with a trusted friend
▶ Daily fatigue or lack of energy	
▶ Feelings of worthlessness or guilt	
▶ Headaches, heartburn or indigestion	

The Iowa Concern Hotline 1-800-447-1985 can tell you how to find professional help. If you do not have insurance coverage for mental health services, funds are available through a special project made possible from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Iowa State University Extension is collaborating with mental health service providers to deliver information, education, and counseling services to rural families.

Check out E-Answers at [www.e-answersonline.org/](http://www.e-answersonline.org/) for more information about stress and how to deal with it. Two good articles are from the NASD (National Safety Data Base) and include a study guide.

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Cooperative Extension



Please share *Acreage Answers* with your acreage neighbors. Call your local ISU Extension office to be placed on the mailing list for *Acreage Answers* and to give us suggestions for future articles.

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Acreage Answers is available  
on the web at  
[www.extension.iastate.edu/polk/ag](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/polk/ag)

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Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating.

## Dormant Seeding Native Grass



By Steve Lekwa, Director  
Story County Conservation

Dormant, or frost, seeding of native grasses and forbs is becoming more popular. It involves planting late in the fall when there's no chance of seed germination. Soils have usually cooled enough by late October, but planting can proceed until the snow flies. Seed then stratifies naturally in the soil over the winter and is ready to germinate when conditions are right in the spring, giving the new seedlings the longest possible first growing season. Forbs, or native flowering plants, seem to prefer dormant seedings over the old standard late spring or early summer planting time. Grasses may not do quite as well as they would in a spring planting.

Site preparation is the same regardless of the season. Seed beds should be weed free, and competing perennial vegetation must be controlled either through tillage or by using Roundup. Soil should be firm and may require some compaction prior to planting if tillage was done. Cultivated seed beds might benefit from a layer of clean straw mulch to help avoid winter and spring erosion, but no-tilled seed beds should be fine without mulch. Soybean stubble makes an excellent seed bed with no additional preparation if it's not too rough.

## Winter Care for Pets

By Dr. Pat Rohret, DVM, Adel

Shelters for your outdoor pet should be sized so that the pet's body heat keeps the shelter warm. Shelters should be insulated or heated and have a door positioned out of the wind.

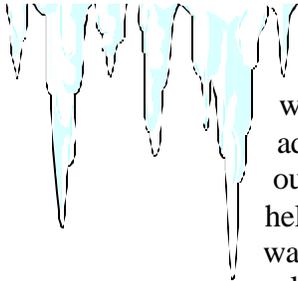
Sleeping on the floor in a garage is not adequate. Pets should have a warm bed off the concrete floor.

Outside dogs can use an insulated doghouse with insulation on the floor. Cats can use a Styrofoam™ cooler with a large hole cut in one end. This hole needs to be large enough so that the cat's breath does not build up inside the cooler, causing it to be damp. A 6- inch by 10- inch opening is about right. These coolers or "cat condos" can provide excellent shelter for cats for very little cost. If you have several cats, more than one condo is necessary.

Water sources should be heated to provide constant access to unfrozen water. Heating units designed specifically for pet water bowls are available at many pet stores.



A warm house, a little extra food, and unfrozen water can help keep your four legged friends in good shape through the winter months ahead.



# Protecting Your Livestock Water from Freezing

By Greg Brenneman, ISU Extension Ag Engineering Specialist

Whether you have one dog or 50 head of cattle, you need to provide them with water all winter long. In many cases, the easiest way to keep the water from freezing is to use submersible electric heaters. For pets or a few head of livestock, smaller units are available for \$20 to \$100. For safe operation, you must have a power supply with a third wire ground.

For larger animal numbers, electric or liquid propane gas heated livestock waterers are available for \$300-\$600.

Energy-free waterers are also available for new installations. These waterers' channel heat up from the ground below and use lots of insulation to conserve the water's energy. If properly adjusted, they seem to work well in Iowa. Expect to pay \$450 to \$700 for energy-free waterers. An important factor is to have the waterer sized to the number of livestock so that they drink enough water to keep it working.

Providing protection from the wind, having the

waterer in the sun, and adding insulation to the outside of a water tank can help conserve heat and keep water available longer during cold weather. When adding insulation, be sure to protect the insulation from animal chewing, manure, and spilled water.

## Snowmobile Etiquette

By Rod Slings, Recreational Safety Program Supervisor, Iowa DNR

Heading out for a day of snowmobile riding can be a great way to spend a winter afternoon. Iowa snowmobile clubs work hard to promote safe and considerate snowmobiling. Reviewing snowmobile crash reports shows that alcohol plays a major part in the cause of accidents. It impairs the operator's judgment when driving on snow and ice.

If you choose to travel on ice, remember that open water can result in tragedy. You are not only putting yourself in jeopardy, but those who are coming to your rescue – good Samaritans and fire and rescue workers.

Do not operate the snowmobile too fast for the conditions. Most snowmobile crashes could be avoided if the operator would reduce his speed in poor conditions such as blowing snow, reduced



visibility, and unfamiliar terrain. Be aware of the weather conditions before heading out. Stay on trails and respect private property. People do not appreciate snowmobiles cutting through their yards. These actions can give all snowmobilers a bad name.

Snowmobiling can be an enjoyable activity when done in a responsible fashion and can be a great way to see Iowa's winter wonderland.

To register your snowmobile and to get a booklet with rules and regulations go to the recorder's office at your county courthouse.



## Pond Sites

by Kent Turner, Federal Soil Conservation Technician

The demand for water has increased tremendously in recent years, and ponds are one of the most reliable and economical sources of water. Water adds variety to a landscape and further enhances its quality. A pond visible from a home, patio, or entrance road increases the attractiveness of the landscape and often increases land value.

Selecting a suitable site for your pond is important. Preliminary studies of watershed size, topography, and soils investigation are needed before final design and construction is completed.

(continued on next page)



For economy, locate the pond where the largest storage volume can be obtained with the least amount of earthfill. A good site generally is one where a dam can be built across a narrow section of a valley, the side slopes are steep, and the slope of the valley floor permits a large area to be flooded. Such sites also minimize the area of shallow water. Avoid large areas of shallow water because of excessive evaporation and the growth of noxious aquatic plants.

Do not overlook the possibility of failure of the dam and the resulting damage from sudden release of water. Do not locate your pond where failure of the dam could cause loss of life; injury to persons or livestock; damage to homes, industrial buildings, railroads, or highways; or interrupted use of public utilities.

For ponds where surface runoff is the main source of water, the contributing drainage area must be large enough to maintain water in the pond during droughts. However, the drainage area should not be so large that expensive overflow structures are needed to bypass excess runoff during large storms. As a general rule of thumb, ponds with relatively steep watersheds require 20-25 acres

of watershed for every one acre of surface area. Flat to moderate watersheds require 25-35 acres of watershed for every one acre of surface area.

To maintain the required depth and capacity of a pond, the inflow must be reasonably free of silt from an eroding watershed. Land under permanent cover of trees, grass, or forbs is the most desirable drainage area. Cultivated areas protected by conservation practices such as terraces, conservation tillage, strip-cropping, or conservation cropping systems are the next best watershed conditions.

Contact your county Natural Resource and Conservation Service for more information. Look under United States Government in the phone book for the phone number.

## Check Out These Web Sites

by Mary Ann deVries, Polk County Horticulturist

A cold night outside and a warm computer inside. What a perfect combination for doing some traveling without leaving home. For your browsing pleasure, here's a list of garden-related Web sites collected from some well-known Iowans.

**Richard Jauron**, Horticulture specialist and host of ISU's call-in garden *Hortline*, admits that he relies on the *Ohio State University*

*Plantfacts* to locate up-to-date factsheets and bulletins available from other universities:  
[plantfacts.ohio-state.edu](http://plantfacts.ohio-state.edu)

**Cindy Haynes**, Extension Horticulturist, refers us to the very special *National Gardening Association* Web site which overflows with garden wisdom:  
[www.garden.org](http://www.garden.org)



**Susan Hurst**, garden writer and lecturer from Des Moines, has a great Web site called *Iowa Gardener*. This is the place to visit if you're looking for news on local gardening events and organizations all around Iowa:  
[www.iowagardener.com](http://www.iowagardener.com)

**Teva Dawson**, director of the Des Moines Community Gardens program, likes *National Gardening Association's Kids' Gardening Web site*:



[www.kidsgardening.com](http://www.kidsgardening.com)

**Eldon Everhart**, ISU Extension Horticulture Specialist, reminds us that learning can be lots of fun with the *MadSci Network*. This site

puts together “the collective cranium of scientists to answer science questions.” I bet you can’t stump them!

[www.madsci.org](http://www.madsci.org)

Eldon also relies on *BioTech's* life science dictionary:

<http://biotech.icmb.utexas.edu/search/dict-search.html>

**Kelly Ulrick**, park ranger at Saylorville Lake, shares the *Iowa Reptiles and Amphibians* site with us.



If you like close-up pictures of snakes, turtles and such, you’ll love this place!

[www.herpnet.net/Iowa-Herpetology/index.html](http://www.herpnet.net/Iowa-Herpetology/index.html)

**Patty Judge**, Iowa’s Secretary of Agriculture, selected *USDA for Kids* as one of her personal favorites. Here you’ll find a wide range of topics from nutrition to ag facts, all presented in kid-appropriate formats. If you have children in your life, you’ll want to check out this site:

[www.usda.gov/news/usdakids/index.html](http://www.usda.gov/news/usdakids/index.html)

Of course, Secretary Judge couldn’t leave unmentioned the *United States Dept. of Agriculture Home Page* another helpful resource:

[www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)

**Dr. Eileen Robb**, native plant authority and radio host, had trouble picking only one Web

site. However, the *Brooklyn Botanic Garden's* Web site is one she uses often. Eileen likes the fact the BBG offers information for beginning and experienced gardeners alike:

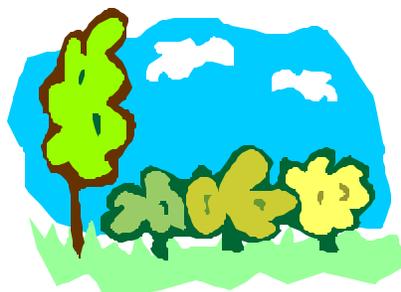
[www.bbg.org/gar2/index.html](http://www.bbg.org/gar2/index.html)

**Paul Wray**, ISU Department of Forestry, is pleased to direct fellow tree lovers to the ISU Forestry Department Web site. It offers lots of tree topics plus a useful key to Iowa trees:

[www.ag.iastate.edu/departments/forestry/ext/ext.html](http://www.ag.iastate.edu/departments/forestry/ext/ext.html)

**Jeff Iles**, chairman of the ISU Horticulture Department, describes the ISU campus as “one of the most beautiful in the country.” The *Trees and Shrubs of the Campus of Iowa State University* site provides a photo tour of campus plus a list of 100 beautiful trees and shrubs that grow there:

[http://project.bio.iastate.edu/trees/campustrees/isu\\_trees.html](http://project.bio.iastate.edu/trees/campustrees/isu_trees.html)



**Donald Lewis**, ISU Extension Entomologist, knows lots about creepy things. He

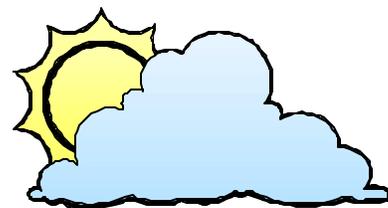


feels a good Web site for buggy topics is the *Entomology Index of Internet Resources*:

[www.ent.iastate.edu/List](http://www.ent.iastate.edu/List)

**Mohamad Khan**, retired ISU horticulture field specialist and radio personality, wants to share the ISU *Horticulture and Home Pest News* Web site. The site offers a search engine where you can type in most any garden topic and it will return concise advice. It’s almost as good as talking to Mohamad himself!

[www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews](http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews)



**Elwynn Taylor**, ISU Extension weather expert, likes the *National Weather Service* site, where you can view current weather conditions around Iowa or click on radar to see what’s coming:

[www.crh.noaa.gov/dmx](http://www.crh.noaa.gov/dmx)

The worldwide web is a nearly endless source of information. However, be sure to protect yourself from misinformation that turns up too often. Stick to sights that are sponsored by reliable organizations, educational institutions, or other government agencies.