

## NEWS COLUMN

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### **Roof Snow Load Considerations**

Most roofs are designed to handle the snow load of a typical winter.

According to ag engineers and university research just because one roof goes down, doesn't mean every roof is at risk of collapse. Roof failure is often times not too much snow but rather a case of poor design. Most roofs are designed to withstand average snowfall events. Unusually large snow falls such as the one last week may fall outside the average though. Most house roofs in the eastern Dakota's are built to hold 30 to 40 pounds of snow per square foot. Agriculture buildings usually are not designed to the same specs because risk of damage or injury from collapse is considered lower. Ag buildings should be built to hold from 25 to 35 pounds of snow per square foot. Experts also encourage individuals to check their insurance policy as sometimes failure due to excessive snow load is not covered on ag structures without a purchased rider.

Snow load standards may not have been in place when older homes and barns were erected but if those buildings have withstood the test of time they likely will withstand normal winter loads.

Also added into the equation is the snow type as it can vary greatly. Fluffy, light snow may only weigh 7-10 pounds per cubic foot. Average snow will weigh 15 pounds per cubic foot and drifted, compacted snow weight is 20 plus pounds per cubic foot.

If excessive snow loads are a concern you should inspect the rafters and trusses. If they are bending down or flexing, the structure is at risk. Look for deep piled snow caused by other buildings or trees. Structures that have more than one level often take on more accumulations.

Whether or not to remove snow off a roof often comes down to an educated guess. If you feel there is an excessive amount on the roof it is often better to be proactive and remove it. If you decide to remove snow remember not all the snow has to be removed. You are simply trying to reduce the weight so only ridding 1/2 to 2/3rds the amount is enough. Remember going up on any roof in snowy, icy conditions can be hazardous. Metal roofs are more of a danger. In addition, do not ignore power lines. Cold temperatures make shingles brittle so as you step on them they can break reducing the life of your roof. The decision to shovel off a roof is a case-by-case consideration.

### **Beef Cow Winter Management Meeting Rescheduled**

SDSU Extension Beef Specialist, Cody Wright of Brookings will be the featured speaker at an afternoon meeting in Sioux Falls Friday January 8<sup>th</sup>. This meeting was to be held December 22 but was postponed due to the poor pre-holiday weather conditions. Starting time will be 1:30 PM at the Minnehaha County Extension Office, 220 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, east of the courthouse complex.

Dr. Wright will discuss the safe utilization of moldy feeds. With all the excess moisture in 2009 it has led to an abundant amount of poor quality, moldy hay. In some areas the corn crop has also been affected with moderate to high levels of molds and toxins. This all can have adverse to harmful effects on the cow herd including feed refusal and reproductive failure.

Other topics of discussion at this meeting will include cow mineral requirements, pre-calving nutritional considerations, body condition scoring, and management of the young cow.

This meeting is free of charge and open to anyone who is interested in beef herd management.

Questions regarding this program should be directed to Lincoln County Extension Livestock Educator Jeff Lounsbery at (605) 764-2756.