Farm Animals in the Winter

This winter science lesson is perfect for kids age 5 – 8 or so! Read the lesson pages, and then make a Lift-the-Flap page with facts about farm animals in the winter.

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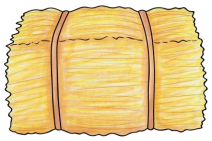
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How Do Farm Animals Stay Warm in the Winter?



- Grow a thicker winter coat that they will lose in the spring
- Extra hay - digesting hay creates heat that warms them from the inside
- Stand next to each other for warmth
- Stand in the barn to get out of the wind

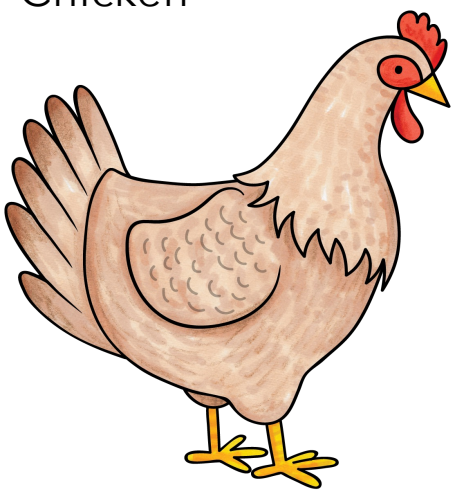
- Grow extra fur that they will shed in the spring
- Snuggle on the couch with blankets
- Demand endless petting and cuddles

- Feathers contain a natural oil that makes them waterproof
- Downy feathers trap heat near their bodies
- Natural body temperature is high: 104 – 106
- Roost with their feet tucked under them to keep warm

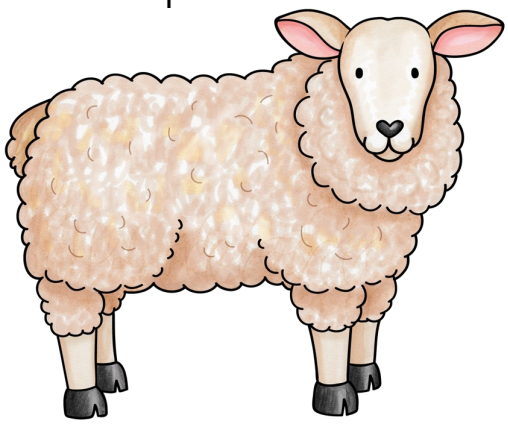
- Grow a thicker winter coat, including wool
- Lanolin makes their wool resist rain and snow
- Digesting hay creates body warmth
- Huddle together in a shelter to get out of the wind

Cut on the solid lines to cut out each animal.

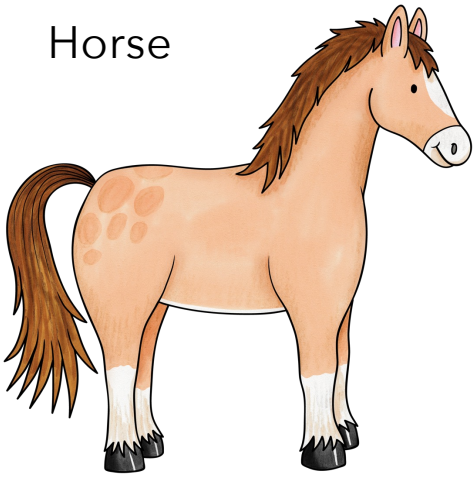
Chicken



Sheep



Horse



Dog



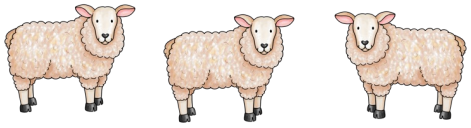
How Do Farm Animals Stay Warm in the Winter?

Horses:



- Horses grow a thicker winter coat with soft hair near their body and longer hairs that are coarse and coated with oil to resist water.
- Tiny muscles make the horse's hairs stand up straight on their bodies, which makes their coat even warmer by creating insulating air pockets.
- Digesting hay creates warmth from the inside out. The hay ferments in their gut as bacteria breaks it down, and this chemical process creates (releases) heat.
- Horses also stay warm by standing close to each other and standing in the barn to block the wind.
- On really cold days, some horses wear blankets. Many horse owners only blanket their horses if the temperature is near freezing or if the wind is blowing. However, older horses or underweight horses may need a blanket even if the temperatures aren't quite that low.

Sheep:



- There are two types of sheep – wool sheep and hair sheep. Both types of sheep grow a thicker winter coat, but wool sheep are best suited for cold climates. However, hair sheep still do a great job of staying warm in cold weather!
- Lanolin in sheep wool makes the wool resist water so that rain and snow doesn't soak in.
- Digesting hay also warms sheep in the same way it warms horses.
- Sheep need a shelter where they can get out of the wind and rain.

Chickens:







- Downy feathers next to their skin insulate them and keep them warm.
- They can also fluff their feathers to create air pockets and increase their natural insulation.
- They roost with their feet tucked under them to keep warm.
- Chickens huddle together to keep warm.
- A chicken's natural body temperature is quite high – 104 – 106 degrees! So this also helps them stay warm in cold weather.
- Chickens actually have an easier time in the winter than in the summer. In the summer, they are unable to take off their down coat!

Dogs:

- Some breeds of dogs, such as Huskies and Great Pyrenes, grow a two-layer winter coat. They have a dense coat of soft hair that provides insulation close to their bodies, while a coarser outer coat of hair the blocks wind and rain.
- Dogs naturally burn more calories in the winter, which helps keep their body warm. They may need to be fed a bit extra, especially if they spend a lot of time outside.
- Indoor dogs love to cuddle with blankets!
- Breed, size, and body condition make a big difference in how dogs tolerate cold weather. Puppies, underweight dogs, small dog breeds, and older dogs may not tolerate the cold as well as larger dogs with plenty of fat on their bodies. Fat acts as insulation.





Pigs:

- Pigs have a lot of body fat, which acts as a very effective insulation layer.
- Providing straw for bedding keeps them warm and gives them something to burrow into.
- Pigs benefit from a shelter that keeps out the wind and rain.
- Eating high-fiber hay warms them through the digestion process.

