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**Heat Lamp Safety**

With colder temperatures and some areas of southeast Kansas getting a few snow flurries recently it is starting to feel more like winter than fall. During cold weather, heat lamps are often used to provide extra warmth in addition to straw in an animal shelter. While heat lamps and straw do a great job of keeping animals warm, the combination can also increase the risk of fire. However, the chance of a fire can be reduced if precautions are taken.

There are many factors that affect the quality of a heat lamp. To help prevent a fire, use a quality made heat lamp. When purchasing heat lamps try to avoid ones that are poorly made and have short thin cords, poor connections to the fixture, and unreliable attachment points for hanging. Additionally, heat lamps that are fully enclosed, with a cage around the bulb, will help prevent the chance of a fire starting if the heat lamp were to fall. If you have a heat lamp that is not fully enclosed, you can use wire mesh and attach it to the heat lamp to make your own cage to cover the bulb.

Installing the heat lamp securely is also very important, while it is convenient to hang heat lamps up with bailing twine, livestock can chew through the twine causing it to fall. It is safer to hang them up in a more permanent fashion using chain or wire. Never hang the lamp from its cord. When hanging the heat lamp, make sure it is a safe distance from the bedding and animals have room to move under and around the lamp without hitting it. In addition to using a quality made heat lamp and installing it securely, use hard glass bulbs. Stay away from bulbs made out of thin glass, as hard glass bulbs are less liking to shatter and break if the heat lamb were to fall.

While safely using a heat lamp will hopefully avoid a fire happening, it is always a good idea to keep a fire extinguisher in your house or barn so if a fire does start you can hopefully stop it from spreading.

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