



\*\*This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online <https://ksre-learn.com/mud-management>

**Note to editors:** A photo to accompany this story is at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ksrecomm/54268278080>

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### **Cattle Chat: Managing mud**

K-State beef cattle experts share how mud can negatively impact cattle health

*[By Lisa Moser](#), K-State Research and Extension news service*

MANHATTAN, Kan. — As rising temperatures melt the snow, what often follows are areas of mud. Just as it is hard for people to walk through a muddy path, it is also a challenge for livestock, say experts in the Kansas State University Beef Cattle Institute, speaking on a recent [Cattle Chat](#) podcast.

“Mud management is important because it can negatively impact the health and performance of cattle — particularly young cattle,” K-State veterinarian Bob Larson said.

K-State beef cattle nutritionist Phillip Lancaster said when cattle walk through mud, there is a decrease in their performance and an increase in their maintenance requirements.

He added: “When cattle have mud caked on their haircoat and it is damp and cold, cattle lose a lot of body heat, and so cattle have to burn a lot more energy to maintain their body temperature.”

Along with changes in performance, cattle standing in mud can also have hoof issues, K-State veterinarian Brian Lubbers said, adding that these issues can develop even if cattle are standing in mud as shallow as their pasterns.

“Hairy heel wart and foot rot are two of the conditions that cattle maintained in a muddy environment can develop,” Lubbers said. “If cattle stand in a wet spot for extended periods, the hoof wall can lose its integrity and become soft and that can lead to other hoof issues such as sole abscesses.”

Mud isn’t always the result of too much rain or snow melt, Lubbers said.

“If cattle are densely stocked in a pasture, the urine can also create a muddy environment,” he said.

To manage the mud, the experts suggest that producers fill the muddy areas with rocks or gravel to provide more solid footing. In some cases, it might make sense to pour concrete, Larson said.

K-State veterinarian Brad White suggests producers look at moving hay to different areas of the pasture to keep mud from accumulating around the feeder.

“It is also important to feed hay in a place where there is good drainage to reduce the amount of mud that the cattle have to deal with,” White said.

To hear the full discussion, listen to [Cattle Chat](#) on your preferred streaming platform.

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**FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS:** Links used in this story Beef Cattle Institute Cattle Chat podcast, <https://ksre-learn.com/cattle-chat-mud-management>

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