

## The Acid / Base Basics of Heat Stress

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During heat stress several things occur that leads to an acid / base disturbance. This is important as any prolonged disturbance can lead to a decrease in performance. In most cases, including sodium bicarbonate or S-Carb® during times of heat stress is beneficial, reducing the acid / base disturbance. The following is an overview of the events during heat stress.

Increased respiration (Panting) leads to a decreased CO<sub>2</sub>

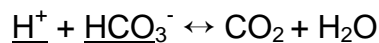
Short Term (less than 2 hours) Compensatory reaction is:  $H^+ + HCO_3^- \rightarrow CO_2 + H_2O$   
this aids in maintaining CO<sub>2</sub> levels, but results in an increased pH  
and decreased HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>

This state is *RESPIRATORY ALKALOSIS*

To compensate (longer term) Renal compensation is to retain H<sup>+</sup>, and excrete HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>

this results in *COMPENSATORY METABOLIC ACIDOSIS*

The additions of sodium bicarbonate or S-Carb to the feed increases circulating HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> resulting in:



increases from buffer addition

increases from renal retention

as CO<sub>2</sub> increases, respiration decreases, HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> rises, pH declines and acid / base balance returns toward normal.

Periods of extreme, prolonged heat stress may exceed compensatory capacity resulting in death or permanent damage. However, in most situations periods of heat stress are less than 24 hours, with cooling at night alleviating some problems. Electrolyte balance may also be an issue during times of heat stress, and balancing for dietary electrolyte balance is recommended.