

“We had the coldest winter in years (2014), and the cows were all comfortable and clean all winter. We bedded twice a week, and we didn’t have to deal with the logistics of getting any frozen sand in and out of the barn.”

*Mike Verhasselt,
Kaukauna, WI
(1,556 DCC Waterbeds)*

DCC Waterbeds stay comfortable year round Eliminate the headaches of frozen sand

People frequently ask us, do DCC Waterbeds freeze? In a barn with a stocking density around 1:1, the cows’ use of the beds ensures that they don’t freeze, even in very cold weather.

Rubber is a good insulator, holding in the cows’ body heat, and preserves the heat from the ground to provide a surface that continues to conform and support the cow comfortably and consistently throughout the year the water temperature is raised to a consistent, comfortable level, ensuring soft waterbeds during the winter months.

What about in a barn with a lower stocking density or in drafty areas of the barn?

If your stocking density drops in the winter, we suggest blocking off stalls to keep a 1:1 ratio, so the beds stay warm.

Cows generally won’t lay down in an exceptionally cold or drafty area of the barn, regardless of the stall surface. So ensure your barn is as buttoned up as it can be for the season.

If there are still stalls that are going to be exposed, we can recommend a non-toxic anti-freezing liquid to add to specific beds at a ratio of 1:3.

If DCC Waterbeds do happen to freeze in an empty barn, they are durable and it will not affect their future performance.

How does this compare to sand bedding?

Although sand doesn’t absorb water, water droplets will cling to the surface of each grain of sand when liquid enters the stall, when the sand is out uncovered in the elements, and/or in the sand reclamation/washing process.

In warm weather, producers count on evaporation or leaching to dry the sand and reduce the moisture content, but in the winter, the sand will not dry. The water droplets coating the surface of each grain of sand will freeze – and freeze together – creating frozen chunks of sand.

Frozen sand can cause numerous problems, including:

- Frozen sand makes bedding stalls very difficult.
- Frozen sand makes stalls inconsistent and uncomfortably hard to lie on.
- Cows avoid frozen beds. As acceptable beds go down, competition rises.
- Chunks of frozen sand in the front and/or back of stalls that may cause discomfort to the cow
- Chunks of frozen sand in the alley that may cause hoof pain similar to small stones.
- A large stockpile of frozen sand bedding outside, resulting in the inability to bed the cows during cold weather and leading to significant discomfort and dirty stalls.