

**Texas County
Soil and Water Conservation District**

Simple Farming Made Simple

**Local Tips on How to Deal with Ozark Farming
Problems and Concerns**



LIVESTOCK WATER

Water is recognized as one of the most important nutrients for your livestock even though it is also usually the cheapest. Just like feed, the quality of water and its location can affect animal performance and influence their consumption. Adequate good quality drinking water may be one of the most important management tools you can use in our pasture system.

A long time promoter of good livestock water systems, Dan Divine, District Conservationist NRCS for Texas, Wright, and Dent Counties has long contended that "When water and feed supplies are short and the need is great, it will be far easier to buy and provide good feed than it will be to buy and provide good livestock water.

In determining how you are going to manage your pastures and your watering system here are some key points that you should keep in mind:

- How much water do I need to furnish per head per day
- What size of tank should I install
- Where should by watering tanks be located
- How far are cattle traveling to drink
- How much more water will I need in the Summer than in the Winter

Water Quality is a key factor that you must always keep in mind. Some of our local ponds turn into cess pools during the summer and ice rinks in the winter. Water gets so putrid that cattle only drink if it is the only water source they have. Sharp cattle managers are quick to notice the difference in their cattle when moved away from these poor watering sources and given good clean water.

The cost of an average pond fenced and with tank installed ranges from \$2000 to \$3000 Dollars so more and more farmers are looking at wells and pipelines as a better and far more dependable source of livestock water.

Planning the watering system for your livestock

Determining How Much Water is Needed

- Beef Cows-----10-15 Gallons daily needed
- Dairy Cows----- 20-25 Gallons daily needed
- Calves -----1 to 1 1/2 gallons per 100 lb body weight

Example: Fifty Beef Cows with 300 lb calves would need

Cows $50 \times 15 = 750$ Gallons of water per day
Calves $50 \times 1.5 = 225$ Gallons of water per day

Daily Requirement for this Herd would be 979 Gallons

If the herd watered twice a day, you would need to have 500 gallons of water available during their watering period

If they stay around the tank for 30 minutes and your are using a 100 gallon tank then you will need to have the capacity to pump another 400 gallons during this period or 13 gallons a minute. Most water lines furnish from six to ten.

Size to tank and time of refill can be hidden problems during real not weather. so when possible, it is best to have addition tank space available during the summer.

Social Order of the Herd

Don't forget a major influence on water consumption is the social order of the herd. In open pastures, there is usually a herd leader that moves the herd to water. Going to water is a natural social function of the herd. Going back to pasture is another one. If the leaders go back to pasture before water is available, the rest may follow without drinking an adequate amount of water and performance will decrease.

Other Factors that influence water consumption

Temperature: Water should be kept cooler than in the air temperature in the summer and drinkable in the winter

What's in the tank? Manure, grass, rats, feed stuffs, dead cats, fence posts, all seem to wind up in the drinking tank. Keep it clean. If you wouldn't drink it, don't expect your cattle too.

Don't make cattle stand in their drinking water.

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The Texas County Soil and Water Conservation District

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