

ANIMALS

Resource Concerns

Livestock Water

Soil

Water

Air

Plants

Animals

Inadequate Habitat
for Fish and Wildlife

Livestock Production
Limitation

Feed and Forage

Livestock Shelter

Livestock Water

Energy

Livestock Production Limitation - Livestock Water

Quantity, quality, and/or distribution of drinking water are insufficient to maintain health or production goals for the kinds and classes of livestock.

What is it?

Water is an important but often overlooked nutrient for livestock. Water makes up over 98 percent of all molecules in the body and is necessary for regulation of body temperature, growth, reproduction, lactation, digestion, lubrication of joints, eyesight, and as a cleansing agent. Livestock water requirements are influenced by several factors, including rate of gain, pregnancy, lactation, activity, type of diet, feed intake, and environmental temperature.

Why is it important?

Water quality for livestock consumption can be detrimental based on several parameters, such as nitrates, sulfates, salinity, bacteria, pH, pesticides, and total dissolved solids. Water quantity and distribution of suitable water sources can affect livestock based on the basic need to meet daily intake requirements and issues related to grazing patterns and travel distance to water that may result in surplus/deficient forage availability and excessive/insufficient plant utilization. All of these ultimately affect livestock health and resource stability.

What can be done about it?

Water quality concerns, for both livestock health and the environment, can be addressed by limiting livestock access to ponds and water bodies or by installing watering facilities. Proper layout of water facilities will provide more even distribution of grazing that will enhance forage utilization. Animals do not graze or utilize areas that are remote from water sources and the size of the facility should be designed to avoid crowding. Having watering sites as evenly distributed as possible in a grazing system will help circumvent overused or underused areas of the pasture.

Livestock Water at a Glance

Problems / Indicators - Lack of water, poor water quality, poor distribution can affect livestock health	
Causes	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water availability is limited • Spring area trampled by livestock • Livestock in stream or pond creating potential health concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory, evaluate, and plan watering system for livestock type • Develop spring for livestock water and outlet for wet area for native plants and wildlife • Establish select watering points and construct watering facilities to move livestock away from streams and ponds