

WINTER WATER TIPS



PHOTO BY GERALD VANDERVAALK

Cattlemen offer tips to keep water available in cold weather.

by Kasey Brown, associate editor

‘Walking in a Winter Wonderland’ is all well and good if you don’t have livestock relying on you for feed and water. For cattlemen, keeping water available for cattle is often a dreaded, but necessary chore. Here are three methods to try.

Springs

Gerald and Pat Vandervalk of Claresholm, Alta., Canada, build water troughs out of tractor tires, pipe and concrete to capture water from springs.

For a slower spring, they suggest partially covering the trough or using a smaller tire for less surface area to freeze. If it’s a slow flow and a small trough, Gerald puts a 90° angle in the pipe where the water comes in, which shoots the water across the surface so the water doesn’t freeze.

Read more about this method at www.angusbeefbulletin.com/extra/2018/11nov18/1118hn_WinterWater.html.

Nose Pumps

An innovative design works like a

well’s hand pump, but the cattle do the pumping themselves. Created by Jim Anderson, Anderson Farm, Rimbey, Alta., Canada, the Frostfree Nosepump Livestock Water Pump is a simple device that employs a mechanical piston pump to draw water from a relatively shallow water source in the ground below the frost zone. Geothermal heat from the well keeps the water from freezing.

Cattle do need to learn to use the system, but with small groups, they learn quickly.

Learn more at <https://www.frostfreenosepumps.com/>.

Water tanks

For water tanks, Brett Francis, Danville, Ky., says, “We put moving blankets over the drinker

when we’re thawing them with the truck exhaust. We always fill coolers with warm water and dump into the thermal pipe, and that thaws it sometimes.”

He says heaters have never worked for him. Warming the thermal tube with hot water seems to last a few days instead of thawing with a truck’s exhaust every day. ■

Above: A tractor tire, pipe and two overflow pipes keeps spring water from freezing by containing the moving water.

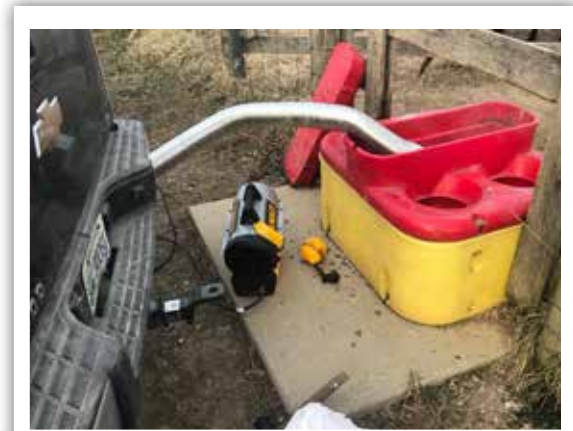


PHOTO BY JACOB TAMME

Be sure the area is well-ventilated when using a truck’s exhaust to thaw a water tank in winter. A cooler full of a warm water can also be used to warm the thermal pipe.



PHOTO BY JIM ANDERSON

Cattle must learn to use a nose pump waterer, but the waterer needs no electricity and draws water from below the frost zone.