Water Quality Education for Beef Cattle Producers

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Scenario

- Most cattle drink from ponds or streams with full access
- Most producers don’t realize the loss due to poor water conditions
- More USDA programs are tied to a water quality program
- TVA is constantly looking for ways to improve water flowing into the TN river

Problems

Problems

Problems

Problems

Goals
Educate the Livestock Producer On

- Improving and protecting water quality
- Improving cattle performance
- Improving herd health
- Improving wildlife habitat
- Improving the public perception

Background

In 2000 Grant monies were made available through the Tennessee Dept. of Agriculture and the TVA for cost share funds to establish Alternative Watering Systems and Heavy Use Areas to help improve water quality flowing to the Tennessee River by, reducing access to streams and ponds. These monies were secured by the Chickasaw RC&D. The projects then were overseen by the local NRCS & UT Extension Service.

Background

- Grants were also available through the University of Tennessee to establish Water Systems and Heavy Use Areas for producer demonstrations and field days

Livestock Watering Alternatives

- Direct Access -- Streams
- Gravity Systems
- Ram Pumps
- Electrical Pumps
- Solar Pumps
- Public Water Sources

Heavy Use Areas

- Hay Storage Pads
- Concentrated Livestock Working Areas
- Around Watering Systems

Watering Systems? Will they work?

- How Reliable?
- Cost?
- Demonstrations
- 75% cost share

Watering Systems

Direct Access--Before

Watering Systems

Direct Access---After

Watering Systems

Stream Crossing

Watering Systems

Direct Access

Watering Systems

Stream Crossing

Watering Systems

Gravity Systems

Watering Systems

Ram Pumps

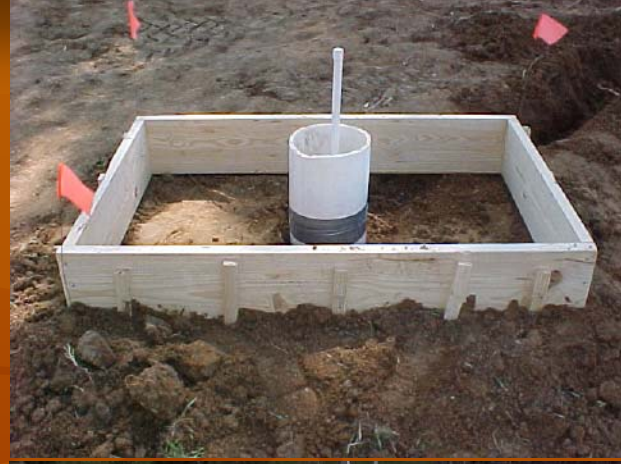
Solar Systems

Public Water

Watering System

Ball Water

Ball Water



By The Numbers

- Cattle prefer to drink from a water trough 92% of the time, over drinking from a stream
- Providing off-stream water sources reduced the time that cattle spent drinking from the stream by 87% without fencing cattle out of streams
- 77% reduction in stream bank erosion

Source: Ron Sheffield NCSU

Producer Meetings & Field Days

Take Home Message

- Water constitutes 60-70% of the animals body weight.
- Affects feed consumption
- Poor water quality = poor health
- Calves on cows increased gain by 9%
- Yearlings increased gain by 23 %
- 700 lbs - 861lbs = 161lbs x $.90 = $145.00
- 50 yearlings = $7,250.00

Thank You