

REMOTE WATERING SYSTEMS: A SMART INVESTMENT IN GRAZING MANAGEMENT

Livestock producers are turning to remote watering systems as a practical way to improve pasture productivity, herd health, and bottom-line efficiency. Whether powered by solar, wind, or nose pumps, these systems offer control over livestock movement and access to fresh, clean water while preserving water quality and riparian edges of water sources.

One of the biggest advantages of using remote water systems is better forage utilization. When cattle have reliable water throughout a pasture, they graze more evenly and avoid overusing areas closest to dugouts or shade. This reduces pasture pressure, encourages regrowth, and ultimately improves carrying capacity. Over time, producers see stronger forage stands and reduced weed invasion.

Remote watering also helps protect soil and water quality. Direct access to wetland edges or dugouts often leads to bank erosion, nutrient loading, and poor water quality. By pumping water to a trough, cattle stay out of sensitive areas, improving water cleanliness and supporting long-term sustainability. Sustaining a healthy riparian area additionally provides habitat for wildlife species and protects aquatic habitat.

Herd health is another major benefit. Cattle prefer clean water and tend to drink more of it, leading to better weight gain and improved condition. Remote systems can also reduce the risk of algae-related health issues, foot rot from accessing muddy dugouts lines and cattle falling through ice in winter.

Producers often discover labour savings as well. With portable troughs and temporary fences, pastures become easier to manage, rotations happen faster, and cattle can be moved precisely where they're needed.

While setup costs vary, many producers recover the investment through increased forage productivity, improved gains, and longer-lasting pasture health. For ranches looking to expand grazing capacity, reduce environmental impact, or



A solar powered remote water system and riparian area exclusion fence.

better utilize marginal land, remote watering systems are a practical and profitable tool.

The Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds supports the adoption of rotation grazing beneficial management practices including remote watering systems powered by a renewable energy source and fencing infrastructure through the Saskatchewan Watershed Environmental Agriculture Program (SWEAP). Fencing and watering systems projects require the submission of a rotational grazing plan. SAW has Grazing Specialists available to develop the grazing plan at no charge to the producer. Applicants will work directly with SAW's Agri-Environmental Coordinators to apply to SWEAP. Funding for this project has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-food Canada through the Agriculture Climate Solutions- On Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF).