Efficient Use of Livestock Waterers

Livestock waterers are essential to productive farm operations, because almost all farm animals are healthier and more productive with a readily available fresh water supply.

By providing a fresh water supply year-round, electric livestock waterers have helped increase farm production. But like all farm equipment, waterers require attention to ensure their safe and efficient use.

A typical waterer in central United States uses 300 to 1,200 kWhs per season ($24 to $96, based on $.08 per kWh over a five month season.) Regardless of the waterer type, there are several ways to reduce their energy consumption.

- Check wiring and insulation for damage, including insulation between the unit and the concrete pad or ground it sits on.
- Check electrical connections to heating elements and at grounding points. Be sure all are tight.
- Maintain a suitable water level by keeping floats properly adjusted. Too much water increases energy consumption through surface losses; too little can lead to freezing.
- Set the thermostat at 38 degrees to 44 degrees Fahrenheit and check the calibration by measuring the temperature of the water. Every degree above what is needed increases energy consumption.
- Make certain covers operate freely and close completely to minimize heat loss in winter.
- Provide ventilation of the enclosed compartment in the summer to help reduce deterioration of insulation, wiring and related equipment.
- Protect the waterer from winter winds by using a wind barrier.
- Caulk or otherwise fill openings in the water enclosure and between the enclosure and the foundation to prevent drafts and energy waste.
- Replace old waterers with new ones that have a thicker insulation and better heat retaining mechanisms.