



HAULING WATER FOR WATERING RANGE LIVESTOCK

Water sources for livestock, such as springs, dugouts and wells, are sometimes not located where the water is needed. In some cases, the most economical way of relieving this constraint is through transporting water from the source to the point of consumption by hauling truck or trailer-mounted water tanks out onto the range.

What do I need to haul water for range livestock watering?

Most producers who haul water for livestock use economical vehicles like old grain trucks with water tanks mounted on the chassis. Another option would be to use a trailer-mounted tank which could be hauled with available farm machinery like a tractor.

Trailer-mounted units have an advantage in that if only one vehicle is available for hauling, multiple trailer-mounted tanks can allow one unit to be left on the range while another is filled. Units that can be left on the range can also incorporate portable water troughs. If the hauling unit cannot be left on the range, there will be a requirement for storage tanks at the watering site to provide sufficient storage for two or three days water, in case of equipment breakdown.

Instead of hauling their own water, producers can also contract for custom water hauling services.

How big a water tank will I need?

The size of water tank required will depend on how many cattle are being watered and how many trips per day the operator is willing to make. Information that can assist operators in determining how much water will be required can be obtained from the PFRA fact sheet on Pastured Livestock Water Requirements.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of hauling water, and when will it make the most sense?

One advantage of hauling water for range livestock is that manure is generally kept on the pasture and can be fairly evenly distributed, rather than collecting in alleyways or near water sources. If vehicles for hauling the water can be obtained cheaply, then hauling water can be a more economical means of transport than pipelines. Although hauling water can be very labour intensive and time consuming, it can easily be incorporated into the daily routine of those producers practising intensive rotational grazing. For example, if the producer intends to go out and move cattle and fencing on a daily basis as part of an intensive rotational grazing scheme, then water and a portable trough or troughs can be hauled on the way out to do the other chores. This works especially well if the producer has two or more hauling units; a full unit can be hauled out and left on the pasture and the empty unit left on the pasture the previous day can be hauled back and re-filled after the herd has been moved.

How much will water hauling cost?

The major "costs" associated with hauling water will be associated with the vehicle used to do the hauling, and the time and effort required. If old grain trucks or other kinds of existing farm machinery like tractors can be used, then these costs can be minimized. Water tanks for mounting on a trailer or truck chassis are generally made of polyethylene, fibreglass or steel, and will cost between about \$0.60 and \$1.10 per Imperial Gallon (\$0.13 - \$0.25/L). Costs for custom water hauling will likely vary considerably, but a rough estimate would be \$25 to haul 1,000 Imp. Gal (4500 L) a distance of 13 to 15 miles (21-24 km).

The Bigger Picture

Hauling water from a central source to livestock on the range is only one of many options available to producers considering development of a livestock watering system. For additional information on water hauling, as well as additional information on total livestock water systems, contact your local PFRA office.

Truck-Mounted Water Tank With Integrated Trough



Trailer-Mounted Water Tank With Distribution Hose

UNIT CONVERSIONS

1 US gallon = 3.785 litres
1 Imp. Gallon = 4.546 litres

1 cubic metre (m³) = 1,000 litres
1 kilometre = 1,000 m = 0.62 miles

1 metre (m) = 3.28 feet