

## **Water Quality and Quantity a Concern During Drought**

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Drought conditions have resulted in water shortages and poor-quality drinking water for many of the region's livestock producers. Many ponds and sloughs normally used for water sources have dried up or become undrinkable.

During periods of high temperatures, livestock need greater quantities of water, with lactating animals having the greatest need. Poor-quality water results in lower water intake and reduced productivity. In some cases, livestock deaths have been reported due to poor quality water or water shortages.

Producers should check animals often during periods of hot weather. Pay particular attention to symptoms of heat stress, such as rapid respiration. Signs of dehydration or lack of water are tightening of the skin, loss of weight, and drying of mucous membranes and eyes. In cattle, the eyes will appear sunken and dull.

Water samples can be sent to a number of testing labs to determine quality. Commonly reported measures of water quality include total dissolved solids (TDS), as well as sulfates. Water with TDS concentrations greater than 10,000 parts per million can result in death.

More information is available in the publication "Livestock and Water" at <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/ansci/livestoc/as954w.htm>.

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