



Alternative Livestock Watering

Off-stream watering of livestock is a method of providing water to animals while protecting riparian areas and preventing water pollution.

Riparian refers to the buffer areas of moist soils and water-loving plants adjacent to streams, lakes, and wetlands. They typically start at the edge of the water and extend to areas where water-loving plants would not thrive.

Livestock can damage fragile riparian areas by trampling banks and loosening sediments, contributing manure to water, and eating beneficial vegetation vital for shade, wildlife habitat and insect food.

Watering livestock using best management practices will require totally excluding animals from the water source, or limiting access of the water to a small area, thus reducing impacts.

Total Exclusion: With total exclusion, animals are fenced away from the water source except where they need to cross. Crossing sites usually require a bridge, culvert, or armored crossing and one of the following:

- ~ Off-stream watering tanks—these require electricity, plumbing, and a nearby water source.
- ~ Ram Pumps—ram pumps use the force of the water coming downstream, or head, to pump water into a holding reservoir. No electricity is required.
- ~ Pasture Pumps—pasture pumps require a one-inch sturdy hose into the water source. They are operated by the animal and can pump water about 125 feet away from the stream and uphill about 25 feet. They are relatively inexpensive can be relocated.\

Partial Exclusion: With partial exclusion, animals still have access to drinking water; however, they have limited and protected access to the water source by using the following practices:

- ~ Armored rock pads—armored rock openings use rock, fabric, and logs to create a pad where livestock can stand without stirring up sediments to help minimize
- ~ Openings created with the fence which can either allow access all the time or can be opened and closed. Most designs are built with a V or U formation of the fence into the stream.

Note: Construction work in streams may require a Hydraulics Project Approval (HPA) permit from Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. Please contact your local conservation district for more information.