

Stock Water Tanks and Troughs are Better

If you are a livestock producer, then ensuring quality water for your stock is of high priority. [Research shows](#) that cattle provided with fresher water will drink more, eat more and ultimately gain weight more quickly.

Dams are often a main source of water for livestock. They can be a great way of capturing and storing water but need to be properly built and maintained. Since they are open, they are prone to contamination from stormwater run-off and livestock entering the water. They can also experience high evaporative losses during Summer that results in poorer quality water.

Given this, restricting stock access into water sources helps to maintain a good quality of water, and prolongs the usage life of the dam or stream. During times of water abundance and hotter and windier weather where water can quickly evaporate, rainwater can be stored in [stock water tanks](#) for dryer seasons as predicted by the Bureau of Meteorology.

[Two Canadian studies](#), Williams et al. in 2002 and Lardner et. al. in 2005, revealed a clear link between water quality and cattle weight gain. That is, increase water quality lead to increased weight gain in stock. This is mostly attributed to the palatability of the water, which encouraged the cattle to drink more, enabling them to eat greater amounts of feed. This lead to the cattle with cleaner water gaining more weight.

Taking the Water to Livestock

It was also found that when dam water was pumped to a trough, cattle gained more weight suggesting that cattle might prefer to drink from a trough and avoid entering a dam. So rather than letting stock drink direct from dammed surface water, it would be better to give stock direct access by piping the water to [livestock troughs](#).

While it might be more costly to setup a stock water system, transporting water around a farm through a reticulation system improves production. Once a suitable watering system is in place, you can also match your grazing system with the drinking needs of your stock according to the season and the amount of feed provided.



Source: [Sheep Drinking, Peripitus](#)

Key Benefits of Reticulating Water to Troughs

- Providing water to stock in a trough improves water quality, since livestock are not entering their drinking water.
- Studies show stock prefer to drink out of a trough as the water is cleaner, more palatable and usually easier to access.
- When stock drink more water, they eat more food which leads to higher weight gains.
- Reticulating water throughout the farm and to troughs, allows pasture utilisation to be better managed and used for improved grazing.

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