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## **PROVIDING WATER TO PASTURED LIVESTOCK CRITICAL**

Water distribution to livestock is one of the most critical parts of good grazing management. Plentiful, reliable, good quality water is essential for grazing livestock. Without good water, it doesn't matter how effective other grazing management practices are.

Water location is very important because animals resist traveling far from water. They graze very little when they are more than a half mile from water in rough country or a mile away on flat land. Ideally, cattle should never need to walk more than 1,000 feet to obtain water. If the cattle have to travel far they will spend less time grazing and burn off weight from walking. They also will graze distant areas incompletely.

Poor water distribution also transfers nitrogen, phosphorous and other nutrients away from grazing areas because manure and urine are deposited near water sites or along the path to water. Nutrients in these deposits are concentrated and wasted in areas with little grass. A more uniform distribution of these deposits will grow more grass.

Digging more ponds, windmills, wells and dugouts will help distribute water, but they can be expensive and only can be put in certain locations and can't be moved. Pipelines are a good alternative. They can be put almost anywhere and are less expensive than most would expect. The pipe and frost-proof trenching can often be purchased for less than \$1.00 per foot. Pipe can be left on the ground to save trenching costs if it only is needed during the growing season.

Over time, these improvements pay for themselves with better grass and improved animal performance.

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