

## A Solution to Icy Waters!

In the Winter frozen ponds and streams can pose a health hazard to thirsty livestock. Frozen water is not accessible by animals. Animals may injure themselves attempting to break the ice or may venture out onto the ice with dire consequences. Some animals may not drink enough water if their water source is constantly re-freezing or if the available water is very cold. In horses this can lead to impaction colic—a serious and sometimes life threatening condition.

Allowing horses, cows, and other livestock access to surface waters creates a water quality concern. Livestock will typically breakdown the pond or stream banks and cause erosion when they access the water. They will also graze right up to the edge of the water body. Fencing animals 35 feet away from the water eliminates erosion from livestock traffic and creates a protected grass or tree buffer to slow down and filter runoff water in a storm. A buffer can effectively utilize and trap soil, manure, fertilizer, and other pollutants that will naturally move downhill toward the water during a rainstorm.

If you currently rely upon surface waters such as ponds or streams to water your livestock consider a installing a heated, automatic water trough through the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practice (BMP) Cost Share and Tax Credit Program. A water trough type of your choice can be installed with 75% funding provided by the State if you are willing to fence your animals 35 feet away from surface waters. The following practice elements are also cost-shared at the 75% rate, if needed:

- Water and electric lines to water troughs
- Gravel and filter fabric at trough sites to eliminate mud
- Pond/stream-side fencing (many types available)
- Interior fencing and gates to create a rotational grazing system
- Multiple automatic water troughs to create a rotational grazing system
- Installing a new well to serve livestock (if needed)
- A hardened gravel or concrete pad for winter feeding

All living things thrive on ample quantities of clean water. Provide your animals with a clean, consistent source of water by installing a heated, automatic water trough. Install fencing to buffer ponds and streams on your property to protect water quality for aquatic life in waterways. Call the District to learn more at (703) 594-3621.