



# NEWS LINE

For Release January 29, 2009

## **Livestock need up to 50 per cent more energy in extreme winter conditions**

### **Average cow needs 50 ice cream pails of snow daily if snow is only source of water**

There's a lot to consider in assuring livestock get through the winter in good condition. This is especially the case when producers rely on snow or dugouts for a source of water, says Ray Fenton, Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) livestock care veterinarian. "A cow's daily water requirement is 7 - 10 per cent of its body weight. Thus, a 1,200 pound cow needs to consume about 50 ice cream pails of snow daily. That's a tall order. Only strong healthy animals can accomplish this without detrimental effects to their health"

Fenton urges producers to have a back-up plan in place to supply supplemental water when snow supplies aren't sufficient. He says the best winter watering system is a continuous water supply but if the water source is a dugout, precautions are necessary to prevent a disaster similar to the one that occurred two years ago when a large number of cattle fell through the ice and drowned.

"Cattle will seek out water sources. When watering holes freeze or drift over, cattle will push and crowd when water deprived."

Fenton says he observed an excellent winter watering system where a narrow ditch was extended from the centre of a large pond of water to the side of the pond. The pond was fenced off and two watering holes were provided in the narrow ditch ice. It was completely safe for the cattle and it provides water all winter.

### **--PLEASE CALL 1-800-468-7021 TOLL-FREE FOR VOICE CLIPS --**

AFAC scripts and clips are also available at [www.afac.ab.ca](http://www.afac.ab.ca)

#### **Clip No. 1:**

There's a lot to consider in assuring livestock get through the winter in good condition. Sufficient water is a prime concern. Ray Fenton, Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) veterinarian, says a cow's daily water requirement is 7 - 10 per cent of its body weight which means a 1,200 cow requires about eight gallons of water daily in winter weather. If snow is the source for water, a large amount is needed:

(13... "health.")

#### **Clip No. 2:**

The best winter watering system is a continuous water supply but if the water source is a dugout, Fenton stresses precautions are necessary to prevent a disaster similar to the one that occurred two years ago when a large number of cattle fell through the ice and drowned:

(15... "ice.")

#### **Clip No. 3:**

Fenton says he observed an excellent watering system. He explains:

(15... "winter.")

Anyone who notices animals in distress is asked to call the ALERT LINE 1-800-506-2273.

**For further information contact:**

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