

NEWS | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | July 23, 2021

Livestock water quality is important in drought conditions

BISMARCK, N.D. – North Dakota is still in drought status. When rainfall is sparse, salts and other naturally occurring chemicals become more concentrated and can even reach toxic levels. Therefore, the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality recommends livestock producers test their water sources and monitor them throughout the grazing period. Depending on those results, testing may be more frequent. The North Dakota State University Veterinary Diagnostic Lab provides livestock water testing and microscopic identification of blue-green algae, salinity, nitrates, sodium, sulfate, bacteria, and a host of other parameters. Information on how to collect water samples and water quality laboratories is located at <https://tinyurl.com/stockwatertesting>.

Producers should also consider the water source. Tank water may be preferable to low-level stock ponds. Cattle cannot wade into tank water. A controlled water source is a permanent, dependable water source with less sediment and animal waste consumption.

The Drought Disaster Livestock Supply Assistance Program offers cost-share assistance to livestock producers with water supply shortages caused by drought through the North Dakota State Water Commission. Eligible livestock producers in drought proclamation counties may qualify for up to \$4,500 in cost-share assistance for new rural water system connections, new pipeline extensions, pasture taps, and associated labor, materials, and equipment rentals for work completed by the producer to develop new water supply projects. Producers may apply online at <https://tinyurl.com/onlinelivestockwaterassistance> or complete and print a fillable application at <https://tinyurl.com/livestockwaterassistanceform>.

Reach out to your local NDSU Extension agent to learn more about sampling livestock water at <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/extension/directory/counties>.

Better water quality means a healthier herd.

Photos of Hereford bulls and a Black Angus herd are available for public use at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/nddeq/>. Please credit Peter Wax.

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