

WATERING SYSTEMS

Several fits for frost-free nose pumps

Nose power is all that's needed for these off-site water systems

By Michael Thomas

Across North America operators from equine centers to commercial cattle operations are discovering the merits of Frostfree Nosepumps as a viable and reliable all-season option to deliver water to all classes and age of livestock.

These systems utilize geothermal heat from the ground to operate without freezing, and the manual piston pump is operated by the animal itself.

As an animal pushes a paddle with its nose to reach the water at the rear of the bowl, a piston pump brings approximately one half litre of water to the bowl. A foot valve at the bottom of the pipe holds the water in the system. When the animal is finished drinking, the paddle retracts to the forward position, leaving the bowl nearly empty. This prevents the bowl from freezing.

Rimbey Alberta farmer Jim Anderson developed pumps for his own beef herd several years ago. The systems are still built on the family farm, and today with more than 2,000 systems in service across North America.

OFF-SITE WATERING FOR CATTLE

As cattlemen strive to improve forage grazing systems, feeding systems,



Most classes of livestock — beef, dairy, horses — can operate Frost Free Nose Pumps, and with a slight modification can even supply water to young calves.

and remove cattle from riparian areas, the need for remote watering systems grows. Frostfree Nosepumps have solidly joined wind and solar as viable and reliable options for stock water.

Kip Panter, who ranches near Richmond, Utah and recently retired from the position of director of the Poisonous Plant Research Lab at Utah State University, was approached by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to fence his cattle away from a creek on the ranch.

The project involved fencing off the creek and building corrals. NRCS provided the money for the material and Panter provided the labour.

He installed nose pumps and is pleased with their performance. "The cattle always have clean water," says Panter. "No algae develops

because they don't have any water standing in them. The cattle drink the pans dry, so there's no water left in the pans to freeze. I'm down by the river in the coldest spot in Cache Valley. We've been down to -40° and the nose pumps have not frozen."

HORSES FIGURE THEM OUT TOO

Getting into the Northern Ontario region at Little Current on the north-east side of Manitoulin Island, Kyla Jansen, says the nose pumps work great for horses, especially when electricity wasn't available. She may have been the first horse owner to break the skepticism surrounding the use of nose pumps.

Jansen operates a riding stable on her farm and boards horses as well. There are between 30 and 35 horses on the farm year round. When Jansen bought the farm, a little over 15 years ago, she inquired about bringing electricity to the farm. "They quoted the hydro was going to be \$160,000 just to bring in the poles," says Jansen. "That wasn't going to happen."

Jansen installed the first nose pump 15 years ago, a second 10 years ago, and is currently planning to install a third system. "The pumps have far exceeded my expectations," she says.

The nose pumps also had a good fit for horses and cattle in B.C.'s Peace River Region. "Our ranch is kind of spread out, and we don't have a lot of

infrastructure in places where we need winter water," says Jodi Kendrew, an equine veterinarian and rancher near Dawson Creek. "We've put in waterlines, but we don't have any electricity. We tried a few different options. Of the electricity-free winter waterers, the nose pumps are the least problematic, hands down."

Kendrew installed the systems in 2002 and put horses on them very shortly after installation. "We started with some saddle horses in the summertime. We pumped the water for them a couple times to show them how to do it. Within three or four days they had it figured out."

CREEP WATER FOR SMALL CALVES

And young calves can benefit from water produced by the nose pumps, as well. Brendon Anderson, a farmer near Rimbey, Alberta, and a son of the designer, designed a system for his calves.

"My dad was always of the opinion that small calves didn't need a creep waterer because the cows produced all of the fluids that the calf needed," says Anderson. He was nervous, especially with my first-calf heifers, particularly if there were concerns about producing enough milk.

While the young calves aren't tall enough, and muzzle not strong enough to operate the pumps

directly, Anderson added a creep watering system to his nose pumps for summer use, and other producers have followed his lead. "We just tapped into the supply under the hood of the pump," he says. "Next we built a triangular pen off of the back of the hood and put a trough in the corner nearest the hood."

Anderson tapped an 11/32-inch hole in the supply line under the hood and threaded in a barbed fitting. He ran tubing from the fitting to a float valve in the trough. He constructed the trough from a 50-gallon drum. As mature animals work the pump to get water, some it follows the added supply line to the calf trough.

"I think a lot of the calves do get enough from their mothers, but there are always a few that go in there and get a drink," he says. It's just right for me. It gives me piece of mind that the water is in there, if they need it."

INSTALLATION

Proper installation for a trouble-free nose pump will be covered in Part 2, of this two part series.

For more information contact Jeff Anderson through their website at: www.frostfreenosepumps.com. **GM**

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THE MARKETS

Calf market will feel the pinch come fall

It will take time to work burdensome beef supplies through the U.S. system



MARKET UPDATE Jerry Klassen

Alberta fed cattle prices have traded in the range of \$162 to \$166 throughout February and March, but the market is poised to grind lower during the second quarter due to the large year-over-year increase in second-quarter beef production.

Fed cattle are poised for a \$15 to \$20 drop over the next couple of months as the market functions to encourage demand. Feeder cattle prices have been grinding lower since the beginning of the year. Yearling steers weighing 900 pounds were trading in the range of \$190 to \$195 in the late December, but during the last week of March, similar-weight cattle were only averaging \$155 to \$158 in Western Canada. We've seen a \$40 drop in the heavier-weight categories.

Lighter-weight feeders and cattle fit for grass held up fairly well for

the first couple of months of 2018 but have dropped about \$20 throughout March. Calves weighing around 550 pounds were as high as \$240 in late February, but have since traded in the range of \$220 to \$225. More recently, retaliatory tariffs from China have included a 25 per cent tariff on U.S. pork, which has psychologically spilled over into the beef complex. Uncertainty regarding NAFTA along with other potential trade barriers has also set a defensive tone for feedlot operators shopping for replacement cattle.

MORE BEEF COMING ON BOARD

Cattle-on-feed inventories as of March 1 were 11.7 million head, up nine per cent from last year and February year-over-year placements increased seven per cent. Given the larger cattle-on-feed inventories, second-quarter beef production is projected to be up 800 million pounds from year-ago levels. Larger beef supplies in the second quarter will result in lower fed cattle prices.

Seasonally, beef demand peaks in mid March and then starts to decline in the summer. During 2018, the northeastern U.S. experienced four major snowstorms within three weeks affecting 20 to 25 per cent of the U.S. population. Beef demand was not as strong as anticipated due to slower restaurant and retail traffic. However, wholesale beef prices held up fairly well. Looking forward, the U.S. domestic market needs to absorb an additional 700 million pounds in the second quarter. The market has some work to do.

Since January, the feeder market has been anticipating this surge in second-quarter beef production. It appears that the live and feeder cattle futures made seasonal highs in February but have since dropped sharply. Remember, it's a futures market. Traders are always anticipating conditions three to five months forward. This is why cattle producers need to have a good idea of the fundamentals to plan their marketing strategy accordingly.

Feedlot margins have been quite favourable so far in 2018, but this will

change in the second quarter. Those high-priced yearlings and calves from last fall are not looking very profitable. Feedlot margins from May through August could be in red ink by \$200 to \$300 per head. This is not going to sit well for yearling and feeder cattle prices in August and September. Calf markets this past winter held value until March. I'm still expecting yearling supplies this fall to be below year-ago levels but feedlot buying power will be limited because of the negative margins through the late spring and summer.

Rising feed grain prices have also wreaked havoc on the feeder market. Barley prices have risen about \$40/mt since last fall and we could see further upside in the summer. A year-over-year decline in U.S. corn acres will make the feed grain complex extremely sensitive to growing conditions. The corn and barley markets have a high probability of incorporating a risk premium of \$20/mt to \$40/mt due to the uncertainty in production.

NAFTA and U.S. trade uncertainty has feedlot operators on the defensive.

President Trump's tax cuts were favourable for beef demand because personal income increased, but trade barriers or tariffs will lower U.S. consumer confidence and raise unemployment. The costs of trade tariffs multiply (sometimes exponentially) throughout the economy and offset any gains from tax cuts.

Very simply, tax cuts are irrelevant if one doesn't have a job. Milton Friedman stated "Tariff benefits are visible because a small number of workers are protected; however, tariff harm is invisible because people have lower income, but they don't know it. In time of war, we blockade our enemies in order to prevent them from getting the goods from us. In time of peace, we do to ourselves by tariffs what our enemy does to us in time of war!" **GM**

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