

Take-Home Message

When you decide that breaking up the ice in your horse's water tank two or more times on every cold day has gotten old, remember that there are several ways you

can keep that water from freezing in the first place. From something as simple as a drop-in heater to a fully self-contained heated waterer or tank, there is a solution for every situation to ensure that your horse gets fresh water in ample supply without hauling warmed buckets—even when it's freezing outside. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Heather Smith Thomas ranches with her husband near Salmon, Idaho, raising cattle and a few horses. She has raised and trained horses for 45 years and as a freelance writer has published 12 books and more than 5,400 articles for horse and livestock publications. She is a member of American Horse Publications, American Agricultural Editors Association, and Livestock Publications Council.

WHEN ELECTRICITY ISN'T AVAILABLE

Frost-Free Nose Pump

If there's no electricity available, a unique solution is a watering system in which the animals "pump" their own water from a source below the frost line—where ground heat keeps water unfrozen. Jim Anderson (Rimbey, Alberta) invented it to water cattle on land with no electricity for a well pump or heater.

His innovation is a piston pump, like the old hand pumps with a handle to push up and down. He modified the top so cattle could use their noses to push a lever to operate the pump.

Julie Anderson, a rancher in British Columbia, uses the system for her horses. "There was only one time I had to help them," she says. "When the temperature dropped to 40 below, ice on the surface of the metal built up to where they couldn't push the lever. But it only took me two minutes to tap out the ice so it would work again."

"It might be a little harder to train horses to use this than cows," says Anderson. "Cows naturally push at something with their nose, whereas horses are more likely to use their teeth. The drinking area



COURTESY, JIM AND JACKIE ANDERSON

Cattle and horses learn to "pump" their own water when there's no electricity available to run a water pump or heater.

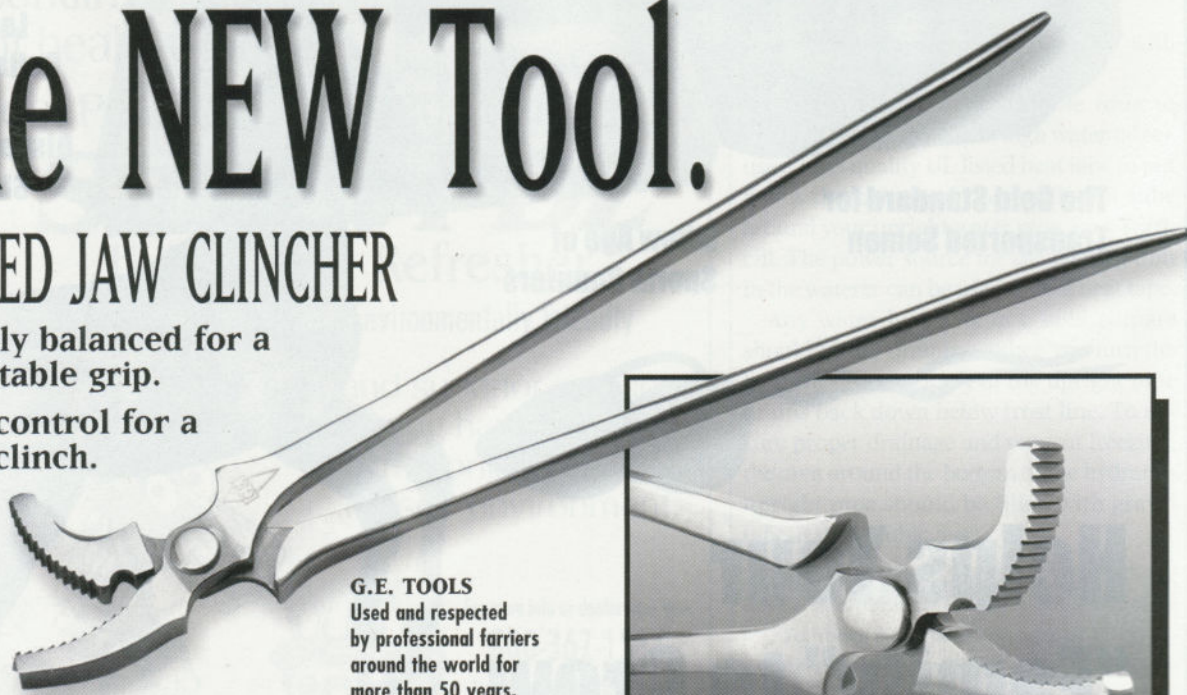
is slanted so the animal puts its nose to the back to drink the last of the water—right where it needs to push the lever in order to pump more water. As they drink the water, they push against the lever and it doesn't take them long to get the connection—and they push on it to pump in more water. For more information on nose pumps, contact Jim Anderson at 866/843-6744 or see his website www.frostfreenosepumps.com.—Heather Smith Thomas

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