

Monitoring Remote Livestock Watering Systems

Some livestock producers use remote watering systems as an alternative to watering directly out of creeks, dugouts, and springs. Since these systems can be far from the power grid batteries are typically used to power these remote watering systems. Producers have been reluctant to adopt this technology because of the need to check the systems for battery recharge and pump functionality and due to a general distrust in the technology itself. Failure of either the batteries or the pump would leave livestock without water for extended periods of time.

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, with funding from the *Growing Forward 2* Stewardship Program, identified existing alarm systems that could be installed on remote livestock watering sites and evaluated a small selection of these systems.

Methods

Three alarm systems were chosen to install on remote watering sites. These included the Beacon Light, Cellular and Satellite systems. Producers using remote livestock watering systems were identified and asked to participate in the evaluation of these alarm systems. The alarm systems were installed at the remote watering sites and configured to notify the producers in the event of low water levels in the trough and/or low battery voltages. The producers provided feedback on the effectiveness of the monitoring systems.

Results and Discussion

Initial feedback from producers testing these systems has been favorable. Producers appreciate that the monitoring system alerts them when problems occur. This gives the producers more confidence in their remote watering systems and allows them to reduce the frequency of site visits required to check on the remote watering systems.

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development will continue to test the monitoring systems on livestock watering networks and collect producer feedback. A factsheet is currently being developed to provide producers with information on monitoring systems for remote livestock watering sites.

If you would like more information on this project, contact Ken Janzen at ken.janzen@gov.ab.ca.