

## **“WATER—THE MOST IMPORTANT NUTRIENT FOR LIVESTOCK”**

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Everyone knows the importance of water in basic animal husbandry, right? While it is basic and elementary animal science, it just happens to be one of the most overlooked and under valued part of livestock production. Don't get caught off-guard being complacent with water management. You must realize that nothing works at an optimum level in animal nutrition if this area is compromised. Your show lamb or goat requires large quantities of H<sub>2</sub>O even in the wintertime to digest and assimilate all the nutrients of your ration, hay and supplements. Sheep and goats do not like to consume very cold water. Many times, they just drink enough to get by in frigid temperatures. Consider the location of your water buckets and troughs for cold weather consumption. Placement in sunny areas during the winter months can help make the water more appealing to your livestock. It is imperative that you are diligent with cleaning and keeping water fresh at all times. Sheep and goats are notorious for limiting their own water intake because its cold, icy or dirty. Automatic waters are great, but not if you're allowing them to stay dirty and neglected. Keeping ice broke and good access to the water trough is essential during the cold winter months. Use of heat lamps located a few feet above your water trough can keep them from icing up and help with daily water consumption. Be sure electric cords are situated safely to protect your children and animals from being shocked. I like the infrared lamps for this because infrared heat focuses on objects below and they focus more heat energy on the water trough. Remember poor water management can result in increased problems with urinary calculi, digestive upset and bloat from constipation, lower feed efficiency, lower energy and poor performance on the track and in the show ring. Feeders stay on top of your water management this winter and reap the rewards of healthier show animals. Thank you and good luck with your show stock!