



Tire tank waterer in use.

(U of A System Division of Agriculture photo)

## Old Tires Get New Life As Livestock Watering Holes

**LITTLE ROCK, ARK.**

Old tires are getting a new life as watering holes for Arkansas livestock. Jesse Bocksnick, Sebastian County extension agent, said he's seeing increased interest in watering tanks made from used tires. As the state continues to dry out, he's received more calls about the tire tank waters.

"They're a good a good option for producers who are hooked to city water or have a good well system," Bocksnick said. "And a few in the county have been putting these systems in," he said.

"They can keep water where the cattle can get to it, without getting in it, so the water is always clean," he said. "They also allow you to use rotational grazing and for producers to use the grass better."

Water sources such as these are increasingly important during drought. Moisture that would've been supplied by lush pasture is gone as grasses dehydrate.

Len Williams, a cattle producer in the Sebastian County community of Dayton, found the tire tanks a great way to fix two problems with one solution. He's set up two tire tanks that are fed by a spring.

"That spring was running continuously and it formed a ditch across my place," he said. "I had a bad erosion problem and I'll bet that ditch was a foot to a foot-and-a-half across."

"This has really helped," he said. In addition to fixing the erosion issue, the cattle also prefer the tire tanks to the stock pond, which Williams said is getting nastier as the drought shrinks the pond.

The tires are an inexpensive solution too.

"Tire dealerships are more than happy to give these tires away rather than having to pay a disposal fee," said Kenny Simon, extension program associate-forages for the U of A System Division of Agriculture. Plus "all the plumbing supplies, including the full flow float valves, can

be picked up at the local hardware or feed store."

Missouri farmers have used the tires for close to 20 years. "In Arkansas, it's been going on about the last 10 years and in the last five, it's really increased in popularity," he said. "Some of that has to do with the National Resource Conservation Service doing cost-share on the tire tanks through the EQIP program."

EQIP stands for Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

Simon said that in addition to being inexpensive and a good way to recycle, tire tank waterers are durable and freeze resistant.

Among the considerations for setting up a tire tank waterer:

- Use bias ply, not steel-belted tires. Select the right size for your needs.

- Carefully select the location, the proper height for the livestock being watered and ensure its level.

- For areas of heavy use, producers might consider surrounding the tank with landscape fabric topped with 3-4 inch diameter river gravel.

The tires have to have the sidewall, or bead, cut out and the bottom filled with concrete.

And that's where Williams said that's where he has his only problem with the tire tanks:

"I wish I could find a better way to cut the bead out of the top of them," he said with a laugh.

For more information about tire tank waterers, contact Kenny Simon at 501-671-2179, or [kSimon@uaex.edu](mailto:kSimon@uaex.edu), or contact your county extension office.

Here is a factsheet that talks some about tire tanks [www.uaex.edu/Other\\_Areas/publications/PDF/FSA-3128.pdf](http://www.uaex.edu/Other_Areas/publications/PDF/FSA-3128.pdf)

Another link to NRCS publication that talks about watering systems.

[www.mo.nrcs.usda.gov/news/pubs\\_download/out/Watering%20Systemslow.pdf](http://www.mo.nrcs.usda.gov/news/pubs_download/out/Watering%20Systemslow.pdf) . Δ