

Feedlot and Livestock Water Use

Managing water for all Minnesotans

Reliable water supplies are critically important to families, farmers, businesses, and Minnesota's economy.

Minnesota's water supplies, while plentiful, are not unlimited.

Minnesota laws require the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to manage water resources to ensure an adequate supply to meet long-range seasonal requirements for domestic, agricultural, fish and wildlife, recreational, power, navigation, and quality control purposes. The

DNR Water Appropriation Permit Program exists to balance both protection and use of our water resources. In order to manage our groundwater for all Minnesotans and the natural resources that depend on this same water, the DNR needs to understand how much water is being pumped from each aquifer throughout the state. In areas where groundwater supplies are potentially limited or at risk of overuse, this information is even more important.



How do I know if I need a permit for water use at my feedlot?

A DNR permit is required if you use more than 1 million gallons per year or 10,000 gallons on any given day of surface water or groundwater. A [DNR area hydrologist](#) in your area can help you determine if a permit is needed for your operation. Additionally, you can contact the DNR water permits and reporting staff at 651-259-5724.

General Permit or Individual Permit?

There are two types of DNR water use permits for livestock watering. The permit your facility qualifies for depends on the amount of water used at your facility. You will need,

- **An individual water use permit** if your feedlot operation uses more than 5 million gallons of water per year or your pump rate will exceed 100 gallons per minute (gpm), or a
- **A general permit for livestock watering** if your feedlot operation uses between 1 and 5 million gallons of water per year and your pump rate will be under 100 gpm. Some exceptions apply.



Most feedlot operations will qualify for the DNR General Permit for Livestock Watering since most operations in the state use between 1 and 5 million gallons of water per year. Though you need to annually report your monthly water use, you need only pay a one-time application fee. There is no fee when you report your water use at the end of the year if covered by a DNR general permit.

What is the process for getting a water use permit?

All water users can complete an application through the DNR's online permitting tool called MPARS – [Minnesota DNR Permitting and Reporting System](https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mpars/index.html) (<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mpars/index.html>). If you need any assistance completing the application, contact your local [DNR Area Hydrologist](#) and they can assist you. If you need to install a well, please follow the instructions for the Preliminary Well Construction Assessment at the link below. This assessment by the DNR is required before drilling a well that would require a water use permit.

http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/watermgmt_section/appropriations/permits.html.

Livestock Water Use Permitting

Several years ago the DNR feedlot water use permitting requirements changed due to new legislation. Many water users were not aware of the changes to permit conditions, including the need for feedlot owners to apply for a DNR water use permit and to report their water use annually. DNR is working to inform livestock operations of these requirements. This includes working in partnership with County Feedlot Officers wherever possible. The timing of the effort throughout Minnesota will vary depending on the estimated number of livestock operations, location to sensitive natural resources, and available groundwater supplies.

If you own or manage a livestock operation, you don't need to wait to be contacted. We encourage you to apply for a water use permit in MPARS and begin reporting your monthly water use as well. If you have any questions contact your [DNR Area Hydrologist](#) for more information.