NOVA SCOTIA NSFA FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

Pasture & Water Management in Drought

Quick Tips

Know Your Numbers
- In hot weather, livestock water needs can double.
- Monitor usage with a water meter — sudden spikes may mean leaks.

Water Conservation Hacks
- Fix leaks fast — check pipes, pumps, troughs, hoses weekly.
- Cover troughs/tanks — cut evaporation by up to 70%.
- Shade water sources — keeps water cooler & more palatable.
- Capture rainwater — from barn roofs into tanks/cisterns for non-potable use.
- Reuse water — e.g., dairy pre-cooler water for cleaning or irrigation.

Smart Irrigation
- Water early morning/evening to cut evaporation.
- Use drip/trickle systems — 30–50% less water use.
- Mulch around plants to lock in soil moisture.
- Use soil moisture sensors — irrigate only when needed.

Pasture Management for Drought
- Rotational grazing — rest paddocks to encourage regrowth.
- Keep stocking density ≤ 1 LU/ha unless nutrient plan supports more.
- Preserve “wet” pastures — graze later in season.
- Provide shade/shelter — reduces animal heat stress & excessive drinking.

Alternative Water Sources
- Lined ponds or dugouts (with approvals).
- Solar-powered livestock watering systems — keep animals out of watercourses.
- Water-sharing agreements — arrange with neighbours before drought hits.

Riparian Protection
- Maintain 5–30 m buffer zones along waterways to filter runoff & protect water quality.
- Avoid grazing livestock directly in watercourses to reduce contamination.

