

## Water Requirements for Cattle

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The impact of water for livestock in a drought can be as dramatic or worse as the impact on feed and crops. Hot, dry weather increases the water needs of livestock and many times reduces both quality and quantity of water. Water is the most important nutrient for cattle. Cattle in good health can live for weeks without food but will die within seven days without water.

The amount of water an animal needs daily is dependent upon many factors. Size, age, stage of production, condition, and average daily temperature are all factors that influence an animal's water needs. Water requirements can nearly double when temperatures increase from 50 to 95 degrees F. The following Table can be used as a guide for water requirements for various classes of beef cattle and various temperatures.

Cattle Class	70 F	80 F	90 F
500 Lb. Calf	6.5	7.4	10.6
800 Lb. Growing Heifer or Steer	9.3	10.6	14
800 Lb. Finishing cattle	10.8	12.3	16.5
750 Lb. Pregnant heifer	9.0	10.3	14.6
Dry Pregnant Cow	10.8	12.4	17.6
Lactating Cow	16.3	17.9	21.6
Mature Bull	12.7	14.5	19.5

Compiled from 1996 NRC Requirements for Beef Cattle & Water Intake Rates of Cattle Journ.. An Sci, 15:722.

This table provides a starting point for producers to determine the water needs of their cattle.