

## **How Much Water Do Those Cows Need?**

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Most cattle producers fully understand the importance of water. After all, providing an adequate supply of clean, fresh water is the cornerstone of animal husbandry and there are very few things that compare to the feeling of finding thirsty cows grouped around a dry tank. Water is important and, in situations where the water supply is limited or water is being hauled (i.e. grazing crop residues), one of the first questions we find ourselves asking is “how much water do those cows need”? The old rule of thumb is that cattle should consume 1-2 gallons of water per 100 lbs. of bodyweight. Water consumption increases linearly as ambient temperature increases above 40° Fahrenheit such that cows require an additional gallon of water for every 10-degree increase in temperature. Additionally, lactation also directly increases the amount of water required by beef cows. The publication “Estimating Water Requirements for Mature Beef Cattle” summarizes the daily water requirements of beef cows of several different body weights, milk production levels and ambient temperatures. <https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3303.pdf> For more information, please contact the local K-State Research and Extension Office. K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.