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How much water do I need?

The annual water needs for a property will vary depending on where it is located, the type and number of livestock held and the number of people dependent on the supply. Other factors such as firefighting and crop spraying and general farming applications will also affect the volume needed.

The following table can help you estimate the volume of water required for your annual stock, domestic and general farming water needs for use on your property.

Estimates of annual water needs

STOCK TYPE	Description	(1) Consumption rate m3/head/yr	(2) Your stock numbers	(1)x(2) = Sub total m3
Sheep	Weaners	0.7 – 1.5		
	Adult dry sheep:			
	– grassland	0.7 – 2.2		
	– saltbush	1.5 – 4.4		
	Ewes with lambs	1.5 – 3.7		
Cattle	Lactating cows:			
	– grassland	14.6 – 36.5		
	– saltbush	25.6 – 51.1		
	Young stock	9.1 – 18.3		
	Dry stock (400 kg)	12.8 – 29.2		
Horses		14.6 – 18.3		

DOMESTIC WATER	Description	m3/person/yr or area	Persons/Area	Sub total m3
Household	House – without septic	51		
	House – with septic	64		
	Septic only	13		

House Garden For each 1000 m2 or 0.1 ha	– coastal / tablelands	200		
	– slopes	400		
	– plains	600		
	– western	800		
	Description	m3 / unit	# of units	Sub total m3
	For each m2 of wash down area	5		
	For each sow – includes sow & progeny, drinking & wash down	90		
	– plunge per 100 head	0.6 – 1.4		
	– spray per 100 head	0.6 – 2.0		
	Herbicide/ insecticide per ha of crop	0.4		

STOCK TYPE	Description	(1) Consumption rate m3/head/yr	(2) Your stock numbers	(1)x(2)= Sub total m3
Firefighting (based on a single event)	– buildings per m2	0.125	0.8mm	82.8%
	– grass per m2	0.075		
Total Net Annual Water Requirement				m3

Note: This table provides an estimate of your net annual water requirement and is not recommended for designing farm reticulation schemes which are based on peak daily requirements.

To convert net annual water requirement into megalitres (one megalitre is a million litres or 1,000 kilolitres of water) use the following equation:

_____ m3 ÷ 1,000 = _____ Megalitres (ML)

Find out more

For information on assessing irrigation requirements and on water requirements for stock, go to the Primefacts on the NSW DPI Agriculture website:

- Water requirements for sheep and cattle
- Stock water – a limited resource

For more information

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