



Identifying Your Farm Water Sources and Storage Options

Having access to an adequate amount of water throughout the whole year is an essential requirement for successful farming. It doesn't matter if you grow crops or rear animals to provide food, wool or other products, good quality water is essential for the welfare of your farm and business profitability.

This article will focus on farming water storage needs, which forms a crucial part in your fuller farm planning. It is important to get this right in the beginning, as working out and adding storage later tends to be more difficult and expensive.

Water Supply and Storage Options

When considering your farm water supply and storage needs, you should first perform an audit to [calculate your water requirements](#).

Once you have an estimate of your farm's water needs, your audit should identify available water sources in your area. You'll need to work out what water supply and storage options are appropriate to you, however some options to consider include:

1. Harvesting rain water into rainwater tanks
2. Pumping ground water into a bore water tank
3. Using private dams to capture water runoff
4. Pumping water from a creek or river into a header tank

Harvesting Rain Water into Rainwater Tanks

If you are in an area that receives substantial rainfall each year, then rainwater can be harvested from shed roofs and stored in rainwater tanks. The advantage that rainwater has over other sources is that it is generally very high quality and suitable for stock drinking.

Capturing rainwater from roofs into tanks is more efficient than using dams to capture runoff. With a dam, the surrounding soil needs to be soaked before water is collected. There is also minimal evaporation from storage tanks, although such is quite significant with open reservoirs of water such as dams.

Additionally, no licences are required to store water in a tank, although you should check with your local council for any building permits are necessary to install new sheds and tanks.

When considering the size of a tank it's important to estimate how much rainwater will fall, calculate the volume of rainfall collected from a roof, where your tank water will be used and how of it is necessary. You should also factor in a drought strategy should the rain dry up and alternative water sources, that might include needing to transport in water on the odd occasion using [cartage tanks](#).

Pumping Ground Water into a Bore Water Tank

Before drilling a hole in the ground to tap into an underground water supply, you will need to initially identify whether ground water is available on your property, at what depth underground, how much is available and water quality.

Bore water should be initially tested and checked at regular intervals for quality since there is a real risk of contamination from sewage, agricultural run-off and the like.

Unlike rainwater harvesting, the use of bore water is governed by regional and council government regulations. You should check your local government for water licence requirements and permits. For more information on bore water, we recommend reading [Queensland Government's general guide on accessing bore water](#).

Using Private Dams to Capture Water Runoff

Private dams can be a great way to capture and store water, but if you make use of them then they need to be properly built and maintained. As such, they normally require an operating licence, and sometimes a surface water use works licence.

Because dams are an open water source, they are prone to contamination from stormwater run-off, stock or wild animals and pesticides. Dam water is normally suitable for irrigation and stock, but you should regularly test your dam water quality to ensure water quality remains high.

Dam water can experience high evaporation loss, especially during the summer months of the year, so you may want to consider pumping it into storage tanks during high periods and utilising such as a backup water source.

Pumping from Waterways into a Header Tank

Surface water or waterway sources include rivers, creeks and streams. Rainfall accounts for most of the water flowing in surface waterways, but can also be created by springs where underground water rises to the surface.

Waterways are a limited resource and so you often need a licence to tap into them. This typically means entering into an agreement with your rural water authority. Such helps to ensure fair water use by all who depend upon the same rivers and creeks for their own farming needs.

Clean surface water is suitable for most farm and household uses and should ideally be pumped into a storage tank to protect against evaporation. Pumping into a header tank, a tank installed at a high location, can allow you to pressure water using gravity into troughs and where it is needed throughout your property.

An additional consideration is the type of pump you will need, and whether there is power near the river or creek. So, you may need to consider running electricity to the pumping site, consider a windmill or easier options might be a fuel (petrol/diesel), solar or airwell pump.

If interested in using rainwater tanks as part of water storage needs, we offer very competitive multiple water tank options. [National Poly Industries](#) loves to help Australian farmers and service the agricultural industry. We understand how important having a reliable water supply is and won't let you down.

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