

## Using Surface Water in Farming

Surface water is the common term used to describe water can be found above ground on the land. Common sources include water from rivers and creeks or a water reservoir such as a dam or lake. This water is replenished from rainfall and run-off flowing into valleys and natural folds in the land.



*Source: [Farm Dam, Stephan Ridgeway](#)*

### Usage Rules and Regulations

Surface water is a limited resource so each state government in Australia have their own rules regarding its use, especially if taken from water ways and non-privately owned sources.

These rules ensure the sustainability of the water and exist to protect the environment and wildlife as well as other landowners who might depend upon the water supply also.

To make use of surface water you may need to enter into a water agreement with the state government or local water authority and obtain a licence that entitles you to use up to a certain amount of water.

### Accessing and Storing Surface Water

Surface water is normally pumped from rivers and creeks to properties through pipes that lead to your property where it is needed. Depending upon the dryness of a season, quantity of water available and evaporation rate, it may be a good idea to keep some of your surface water in a backup water tank.

To aid in delivering water to where it is needed on your property you have the following options:

- **Pressure pump system** – pumps can either be powered by electricity, windmills, solar or fuel (petrol and diesel). You will need to decide which the best setup for your needs. Electricity and fuel powered might be less expensive initially, but more costly over time. Compared to windmills and solar powered pumps which may cost more upfront but are more cost-effective over time.
- **Gravity feed system** – if your water supply is located higher than where you will use the water, you could implement a gravity feed system, which uses gravity to move the water without the need for electricity.

- **Header tank** – these are located on higher ground or a platform and uses gravity to pressurise the water and deliver it to where it is needed. You will still require a pump to fill the header tank, but the header tank system reduces the workload of your pump, saving energy costs.

## Surface Water Quality

Surface water should always be tested and treated as necessary before using with irrigation, stock, household or other farm activities. Problems that would otherwise result include poor plant growth, blocked irrigation and/or stock water pipes, or sickness and even death of livestock.

Testing your water in an accredited laboratory will help you identify any water quality problems that need correcting. Problems may be chemical or organic or physical and issues may surround pH levels, iron, hardness, corrosion, salinity, sodicity, turbidity, algae, bacterial growth and colour, taste and odour. For more information, read our related article "[Evaluating the Quality of Your Farm's Water Sources](#)".

Clark Tanks work closely with many farmers to supply [reliable water storage](#) with fittings appropriate to your water source and usage.

---

If you have found this article helpful, contact Clark Tanks to discuss your needs.  
**Phone:** 1800 252 758 **Website:** [www.clarktanks.com.au](http://www.clarktanks.com.au)

---

**Web version (current):**  
[www.clarktanks.com.au/knowledge-base/using-surface-water-in-farming/](http://www.clarktanks.com.au/knowledge-base/using-surface-water-in-farming/)

**If you found this helpful, visit our knowledge base for more articles:**  
[www.clarktanks.com.au/knowledge-base](http://www.clarktanks.com.au/knowledge-base)

**Disclaimer:** The information in this document is general and provided solely on the basis that users will take responsibility for verifying the accuracy, currency and completeness of all relevant representations, statements and information. No user should act on the basis of any matter contained in this publication without considering and, if necessary, taking appropriate professional advice upon his or her own particular circumstances.

While Clark Tanks tries to ensure that the content and information is accurate, adequate or complete, it does not represent or warrant its accuracy, adequacy or completeness. Clark Tanks and any associates are not responsible for any loss suffered as a result of or in relation to the use of this information. To the extent permitted by law, Clark Tanks excludes any liability, including any liability for negligence, for any loss, including indirect or consequential damages arising from or in relation to the use of this information.



This article by [Clark Tanks](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 Australia license](#).

You are free to copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format under the following conditions:

- 1. Attribution** – You must give credit to Clark Tanks, provide a link to the Web version of this article or to <http://www.clarktanks.com.au/>, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.
- 2. No Derivative Works** – If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you may not distribute the modified material.



## You get more out of a Clark Tank

Clark Tanks is the country's premier brand of polymer rainwater tanks. Manufacturing since 1997, Clark Tanks are designed and built to last in tough Australian conditions. As an Australian owned and operated company, Clark Tanks is committed to providing quality products designed to meet the needs of rural and residential Australia.

Contact us today for a FREE quote 1800 252 758

[www.clarktanks.com.au](http://www.clarktanks.com.au)

Queensland  
18304 Warrego Hwy Dalby QLD 4405  
P (07) 4660 6800 F (07) 4669 8041

New South Wales  
1 Cardiff Pl Bathurst NSW 2795  
P (02) 6334 2720 F (02) 6334 2750

Victoria  
2 Dawson St Moama NSW 2731 (Echuca VIC)  
P (03) 5480 0900 F (03) 5480 0600