April 2014

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CONTROL OF
ALGAE and MOSS
IN WATER TANKS
Control of Algae and Moss in water tanks

by

E. Crosby Howe and Deon D. Axthelm

Copper sulfate in low dilution for occasional treatment will help control both moss and algae in livestock water tanks. The recommended amount is 1/2 ppm (one-half part per million) in the water.

1. A convenient way to measure the copper sulfate is to dissolve 1 oz. in a pint of water using a glass jar or enamel pan. Do not use galvanized containers because the copper sulfate reacts with zinc in the galvanizing.

2. Determine the amount of water in the tank.
   a. To find number of gallons in circular tanks, square the diameter (D) in feet, multiply by the depth (H) in feet, and then multiply by 5.875.
      \[(D^2 \times H) \times 5.875\]
   b. To find the number of gallons in square or oblong tanks, multiply the number of cubic feet \((L \times W \times H)\) by 7.5.

3. Add 3 tablespoons of the solution from step 1 for each 1,000 gallons of water. Mix thoroughly.

4. Keep livestock away from treated tank water for 12 hours or more.

5. Water may then be discarded or used for watering livestock if necessary. After the copper sulfate treated water has been in contact with the moss or algae for 12 hours or more it is a good plan to empty the tank and give the tank a thorough cleansing. Two ounces of lye per gallon of water is a good cleansing solution. Rinse the lye from the tank and then refill for stock watering.

6. Treatment is only temporary and may need to be repeated as growth of algae or moss reoccurs.

Shade discourages growth of moss and algae.

The extra solution prepared in Step 1 may be saved for later use if the container is properly marked. However, it is generally better to discard the mixture since the cost is nominal. By discarding unused solution there will be no danger to children or animals.

It has been reported that copper plates suspended in tanks discourage algae or moss.

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