

Summer Preparation Guide

# 8 Tips to Maximize the Efficiency and Longevity of Your Ritchie Automatic Livestock Waterers

## Low Maintenance Doesn't Mean No Maintenance

Ritchie waterers are engineered to be low maintenance and dependable, but you still need to do preventative maintenance to ensure that your waterer is operating efficiently and effectively year round. There is no hard and fast rule as to how often to clean and inspect your waterers – many factors, including how hard your water is, the location of the waterer, the air temperature, etc., can influence how often you need to perform this chore. Think about all the places in your home that use water and then ask yourself, would you clean your toilet just once a year? How about your shower or kitchen sink? Chances are you clean these surfaces on a regular basis, and your Ritchie waterer deserves the same attention.

With decades of field experience and farmer feedback under our belt, we present you with the top eight simple tips to help ensure your waterer is ready to operate at peak performance for many years.



Summer Preparation Guide: Tip 1

## **When Warm Weather Arrives, Turn Off Your Heater**

When the weather finally decides to change seasons and warm weather arrives, it is important that you either shut off power to the stainless steel heated waterer (at the unit or a circuit breaker – consult an electrician if you have questions) or remove the optional heating element from poly or stainless steel units.

### **Heated Units**

#### **Omni / CattleMaster / OmniMaster / EcoFount / UltraFount**

Heated units have thermostats that typically run between 40 and 60 degrees, and they will get activated every time the valve opens and cool water hits the trough. No one wants to pay to heat water in the summer, so save energy and money by turning off the heater or removing the heating element.

Remove all optional heating elements such as immersion heaters or self-regulating heat cables from your unit. Mineral deposits build up the longer these heating elements are in the water and can lead to corrosion. Clean the heating elements with a store bought calcium, lime and rust remover or soak for 24 hours in a 50/50 solution of white vinegar and water. Make sure to rinse off all chemical residue before storing your heating elements.

### **Insulated poly Ritchie waterers or fountains with optional heating components**

- Thrifty King CT1 / CT2 / CT4 / CT6
- WaterMatic 100 / 150 / 150S / 300 / 1000
- WaterMaster 54 / 54D / 90 / 96 / 600 / 800 / 1200
- Classic Equine by Ritchie AutoFount single and double drink

### **CAUTION:**

Consult your veterinarian if you have any concerns about a store-bought cleaner. Make sure to thoroughly rinse off any chemical or cleanser to eliminate any residue that might harm your livestock or affect the palatability of the water.

Summer Preparation Guide: Tip 2

## **Clean Up with Elbow Grease and a Brush to Eliminate Algae and Other Nasties**

Mother Nature is great at throwing farmers and ranchers curve balls. Heat waves can lead to the tell-tale signs of algae growth, or a cold snap can highlight your mineral scale build up. Eliminate the element of surprise and inspect and clean your Ritchie waterers on a regular basis.

Remove covers and use a brush (recommended) or a sponge to remove any debris or build up that may have collected in trough areas, valve chambers and the drain or drain plug. The more often you clean your waterer, the less likely you are to experience algae growth.

### **All Ritchie Models**

Remove covers and use a brush or sponge to remove any debris that may have collected in trough areas and valve chambers.

Pay special attention to the area under the float in the valve chamber where the immersion heater is housed when in use.

### **Energy Free Thrifty King**

#### **Models: CT1 / CT2 / CT4 / CT6**

For the Thrifty King CT units to operate properly in all weather, it is important to inspect and clean the water seals, also referred to as freeze tracks. There are no gaskets; the water seal is achieved by using water or vegetable oil in the freeze tracks. There are two different water seals that need inspection in every CT unit. The first water seal is along the top of the red valve chamber, and the second water seal is in-between the red cover and the yellow base. In newer models (post year 2000) that cover just drops into place. Whether it is after a cold winter or during the hot summer, it is vital that these tracks get a good scrub or wipe down to keep the tracks clean and ready for when cold weather strikes.

#### **PRO TIP:**

There are many commercial products that claim to reduce algae growth, but one of the best ways to stop algae is to clean your waterer regularly. Many Ritchie customers recommend a weekly or bi-weekly schedule to stay ahead of the algae. Ritchie waterers are all designed to be easy to clean, easy to drain and easy to access all components with minimal or no tools required.

Summer Preparation Guide: Tip 3

## **Inspect and Clean Your Valves, Floats and Drain Plugs**

### **All Ritchie Models**

The heart of every Ritchie waterer is our patented, innovative valve. Inside the body of the valve is a plunger with a rubber seat. As the float moves up and down, the float arm moves the plunger in and out and the rubber seat is the crucial component that shuts the water off. If this rubber seat gets coated with mineral or hard water deposits, then it can allow water to drip by until your unit will overflow. Depending on how hard or sandy your water is, you will need to inspect and clean these rubber seats on a regular basis. If you find build up, you can clean the rubber seat using a sponge and a store bought cleaner, or a mixture of 50/50 water and vinegar or hot soapy water. Once it is clean, flip the rubber seat over to re-use if necessary. It is advisable to have replacement rubber seats on hand. You can contact your local Ritchie dealer to order new ½ inch or ¾ inch rubber seats or you can contact Ritchie directly at (800) 747-0222.

### **PRO TIPS:**

- It is time to clean your rubber seat when your valve drips and fails to shut off completely.
- Every Ritchie waterer will need the rubber components serviced and changed during the life of the unit. Regular maintenance of the rubber components will also prevent those surprise leaks. The last thing you want to do is waste water, especially during hot and dry summers.

### **The Float**

Another key component of the valve is the float. Make sure your float is operating straight up and down and that it is not rubbing on a frame or trough. If you notice that the float is slightly askew, there is a simple fix. There is a rubber gasket between the valve body and the valve orifice that can sometimes become displaced and rotated off to the side which will cause the float to turn. Re-orientate the gasket, and the float should return to its correct position.

Inspect and clean the drain plug on a regular basis to help prevent slow leaks. Use a sponge and mild cleanser to clean the drain plug and rinse thoroughly. If you find that your drain plug or any of its components are damaged, contact your local Ritchie dealer to order a new assembly or a specific part.

### **CAUTION:**

It is not recommended that you use chlorine bleach to clean the rubber seats, valves, floats or drain plugs. Harsh chemicals like bleach can pit and damage the rubber or silicone parts in your valve or drain plug.

Summer Preparation Guide: Tip 4

## **Inspect for Water Leaks in the Water Source to Your Valve**

### **All Ritchie Models**

Once you have your water supply hooked up to your waterer, it is tempting to just set it and forget it. However, it is recommended that you inspect your hoses and clamps once a year to make sure they are not leaking, corroded or cracked.

### **Pro Tip:**

Ritchie recommends replacing your hoses and clamps every 5-10 years.

Summer Preparation Guide: Tip 5

## **Inspect Your Hardware**

### **All Ritchie Models**

(excluding Energy Free Thrifty King CT1, CT2, CT4, and CT6)

All Ritchie units have an access panel that is easy to remove and allows you to inspect the internal parts and hardware. Look for rust or any corrosion on the internal hardware as well as the external hardware used to bolt down the unit. Replace any corroded nuts, bolts or washers.

### **Pro Tip:**

Prevent damage by not overtightening your hardware and inspect your hardware at least once a year.

Summer Preparation Guide: Tip 6

## **Check The All-Weather Sealant**

Check the all-weather sealant around the base of the unit and the concrete pad to ensure no gaps have formed that would allow air to penetrate the underside of the unit. Replace the all-weather sealant if needed. Sometimes rodents and insects will damage these seals over time.

### **Pro Tip:**

During the colder months, make sure to inspect inside the unit to make sure no critters have taken up residence or caused damage.

Summer Preparation Guide: Tip 7

## **Keep Your R-Value Intact by Inspecting Your Sealed Polyethylene Units**

Thrifty King CT Models Rely on Perfectly Sealed Units to Maintain Energy Free Insulation Throughout the Winter

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Any damage to the sealed polyethylene can allow water to absorb into the insulating foam, turning your reliable Ritchie waterer into a giant sponge that eventually fails. Our poly units are tough and impact resistant but accidents can happen - a tractor removing snow could nick a corner, a screwdriver used to pry off a frozen cover can make a pin hole leak. Make sure to physically inspect your poly units by putting eyes and hands on the unit at least once a year, especially after a long winter.

#### **Pro Tip:**

If you find damage to your poly unit, contact your local Ritchie dealer immediately to help resolve the issue and preserve your waterer..

Summer Preparation Guide: Tip 8

## **Contact Ritchie Industries or Your Local Ritchie Dealer for Assistance**

If you run into any issues and need a little assistance or just need to order replacement parts, please feel free to contact Ritchie directly or through your local dealer.

Call Ritchie direct at (800) 747-0222 and ask for customer service. You can also view product support videos, read specification sheets and order parts direct online at **RitchieFount.com**

