CLAIMS

1. An animal watering valve for delivering a fluid from an automatic water system to an animal housed in a cage, the valve comprising:

a valve body and an end cap defining distal and proximal portions, respectively, of a fluid channel through the valve; and

an actuator configured to open and close the valve, the actuator disposed at least in part in the fluid channel and comprising a plastic material,

wherein the end cap comprises a jam-preventing opening to prevent debris from jamming the valve, the jam-preventing opening configured so that no direct path is provided into the fluid channel of the valve and only a narrow and tortuous pathway into the fluid channel of the valve is provided even when the valve is open, and

wherein a portion of the actuator is disposed in the jam-preventing opening of the end cap, the portion of the actuator disposed in the jam-preventing opening of the end cap comprising a metal or other material that is animal chew resistant.

2. The valve of claim 1, wherein the narrow and tortuous pathway is provided by a lateral surface disposed in the fluid channel, which surface abuts a lower shoulder of the end cap when the valve is closed.

3. The valve of claim 1, wherein the portion of the actuator disposed in the jam-preventing opening of the end cap comprises stainless steel.

4. The valve of claim 1, wherein the jam-preventing opening includes an angular surface tapering inward from a proximal end of the valve.

5. The valve of claim 1, wherein a proximal end of the actuator is substantially even with a proximal end of the valve.

6. The valve of claim 1, wherein at least one of the valve body and the end cap comprise a plastic material.

7. The valve of claim 1, wherein at least one of the valve body, the end cap, and at least a portion of the actuator are injection molded.

8. The valve of claim 1, further comprising a valve shield configured to fit over at least a portion of the valve, the valve shield comprising a metal or other material that is animal chew resistant.

9. The valve of claim 1, wherein the valve is constructed of materials that can withstand temperatures of up to about 270 degrees Fahrenheit.

10. The valve of claim 1, wherein the valve is constructed of materials that have chemical resistance properties.