

Supplementing Your Beef Cowherd

About this time of year many of you questions about supplementing the cowherd. My response is based on the status of the cowherd and forage conditions. Dry pregnant cows in mid gestation have the lowest nutritional needs. Depending on the amount and quality of the grass, a protein supplement may be all that is needed. Cows that have calves at side will require additional protein and energy, adding to the cost of supplementation. One other factor I consider is cow fatness or body condition. Cows that are in good body condition will require less supplementation than cows that are thin. If you test your hay or forage you might find that it is the only supplement you need, that it meets the nutritional requirements of your cows. More likely than not however, it will be deficient. However at least you will know what you need to supplement with, and more importantly how much. Feed costs are a large part of cow expenses and knowing what is needed and how much to feed can reduce that cost considerably. In addition to feeding the right amount of supplement and saving money you improve the performance of the cow's fertility and milk production and her calf's growth. You will have to supplement more energy when it is cold and wet than when it is just cold but dry. The amount of standing forage you have due to stockpiling or grazing will also affect your feed costs. Protein supplementation when deficient can improve the digestibility of poor-quality roughages significantly. Form of supplementation is less important than cost per unit of nutrient. When supplementing protein (but not energy), the amount can be doubled or tripled and fed every other or every third day reducing travel and labor. Whenever possible feed should be placed in bunks or troughs to minimize waste and reduce cost. Once you know what and how much you need, consider labor and travel in your costs. Suggested additional reading (all at beef.tamu.edu)

<http://animalscience.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2012/04/nutrition-body-conditionnutrition.pdf>

<http://animalscience.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2012/04/beef-factors-and-feed.pdf>

NUTRITIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF BEEF CATTLE

Winter is around the corner and we many of us have started supplementing beef cattle. The question is: Do you really need to be? When determining the needs of beef cattle there are many different factors that all play a role. Those include size of cow, whether she is dry, nursing, stage of gestation, maturity, body condition score, forage conditions, weather conditions, etc. However many times we decide to supplement cows when supplements are not actually needed.

So how do we determine whether supplements are needed or not? The first thing is you need to know the nutritional requirements of a cow. The second thing is the nutritional value of your forages, hay or feedstuffs.

For example: A 1000 pound dry cow in the middle trimester of pregnancy would need 18.1 pounds of dry matter intake, 7.0 % crude protein (1.3 lbs), 49% TDN (8.8 lbs), 0.18% calcium and 0.18% phosphorus.

A 1000 pound cow producing 10 lbs of milk/day and 3-4 months postpartum will require 20.2 pounds of dry matter intake, 9.6% crude protein (2.0lbs), 57% TDN (11.5 lbs), 0.28 calcium and 0.22 phosphorus.

Once you know the nutritional values of your pastures, forages and feedstuffs you can calculate whether supplementation is needed or how much supplementation is needed. Remember the above numbers are just averages for a 1,000 pound cow for maintenance only and no weight gain. This is one of many tools that can be utilized to help you in determining management decision for your beef cattle herd.

ERATH COUNTY Women in Ag Group

Purpose – to provide women in Erath County with education through meetings and interactive events and trips.

Who can come – women in agriculture, producers, and allied industry representatives.

Meetings – Once a month during lunch time. Meetings will involve activities such as agricultural speakers for education and trips for activities and interactive education about different agricultural industries.

INTERESTD?

Please scan the QR code and fill out the short survey!



Horse Manure Composting

If you are interested in helping to identify key areas to focus on for development of an equine manure composting online course. Please complete the survey below as soon as possible. It will close soon. Link Below.

[https://urldefense.com/v3/https://tamuag.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cYgO8D53YuePH5I_!!KwNVnqRv!FbOoeHGSeZCPfD-k5T-amNos5-EcRPIfHSgDxAUuWhPv3XDijjib1T_LdA9bcZQPpeb4mKfV4EVFQy7KXWC\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://tamuag.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cYgO8D53YuePH5I_!!KwNVnqRv!FbOoeHGSeZCPfD-k5T-amNos5-EcRPIfHSgDxAUuWhPv3XDijjib1T_LdA9bcZQPpeb4mKfV4EVFQy7KXWC$)

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