

Feed Options When the Grass Doesn't Grow

2008 Corn Silage and Forage Field Day

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“How Do We Feed Cows With No Grass”

Critical Control Point for Profitability – Feed Cost

- Feeding the cow herd is the largest cost area in beef enterprises, approx 45-50% of annual maintenance cost.
- Stored or supplemental feeds constitute the largest, most variable portion.
- Designing nutrition / supplementation program correctly is a must.

Defining the Situation

- What is the overall objective of the nutrition / supplementation program
 - Extend the forage base
 - Meet nutritional deficiencies
 - Alter cow production
- *You have to know where you want to go before you can get there.*

Know what have you to work with

- Cattle
- Forages
- Feeds



Know what the cattle Need

- Different cows have different requirements
 - Age, physiology, breed, etc.
 - Intake Potential
 - Energy
 - drives body condition score
 - Protein
 - How do you feed cattle with different requirements

Which Cow are You *Feeding*



Know What the Cattle Need



What forage are you using

- Cow-calf production in Florida relies on pasture / forage
- Determine Pasture-Forage:
 - Quantity
 - Quality and composition
 - Utilization rate

What Pasture?



Pasture and Forages

- Pasture – if you have it
- Hay – if you can find it or afford it
- Summer Annuals – if you can grow it
- Any other option – if you can find it or feed it



Supplemental Feeds

- Depending on your situation everything or nothing is an option
- Supplements have constraints in use
 - Availability – Storage – Handling – Feeding

<http://www.animal.ufl.edu/extension/beef/documents/Short06/MHersom.pdf>

Supplemental Feeds

- No one feed alternative is perfect
 - Energy: fiber vs starch
 - Protein: DIP vs UIP
 - Mineral: Excess vs deficiency, balance
 - Concentrated source of some characteristic
 - Fat, sulfur, mycotoxins
- Cattle do not have a nutritional requirement for any feedstuff

Supplemental Feeds

- There is no “best” supplement
- Comparing supplements
 - Determine level of intake
 - Determine concentration of nutrients
 - comm. often don't list TDN80 – Crude Fiber = TDN
 - Determine \$/lb of nutrient supplemented
 - Determine \$ of excess nutrient supplemented
 - Factor in all cost/benefits associated with feeding
 - Intangibles
 - Suitability
 - Convenience

Feedstuff Options

Feed	TDN,%
Whole Cottonseed	95
Hominy	91
Corn	88
Dried Distillers Grains	90
Soybean Meal	87
Wheat Middlings	83
Citrus Pulp	82
Corn Gluten Feed	80
Soybean Hulls	80
Cottonseed Meal	75
Molasses	72
Wet Brewers Grains	70
Peanut Skins	65
Peanut Hulls	22
Urea	0

Feedstuff Options

Feed	Crude Protein, %
Urea	281
Cottonseed Meal	49
Soybean Meal	49
Dried Distillers Grains	30
Wet Brewers Grains	24
Corn Gluten Feed	24
Whole Cottonseed	23
Wheat Middlings	18
Peanut Skins	17
Soybean Hulls	12
Hominy	12
Corn	9
Citrus Pulp	9
Peanut Hulls	8
Molasses	5

Feedstuff Options

Feed	Fiber, NDF%
Peanut Hulls	74
Soybean Hulls	67
Corn Gluten Feed	45
Whole Cottonseed	44
Dried Distillers Grains	44
Wet Brewers Grains	42
Wheat Middlings	37
Peanut Skins	28
Cottonseed Meal	26
Hominy	25
Citrus Pulp	24
Corn	9
Soybean Meal	8
Molasses	-
Urea	-

Feedstuff Options

Feed	\$ / Ton*	% TDN	% CP	\$ / cwt	\$ / cwt TDN	\$ / cwt CP
Whole Cottonseed	308	95	23	15.40	14.63	66.96
Hominy	238	91	12	11.90	13.08	99.17
Corn	240	88	9	12.00	13.64	133.33
Dried Distillers Grains	198	88	30	9.90	11.25	33.00
Citrus Pulp	188	82	9	9.40	11.46	104.44
Corn Gluten Feed	178	80	24	8.90	11.13	37.08
Soybean Hulls	204	80	12	10.20	12.75	85.00
Cottonseed Meal	325	75	49	16.25	21.67	33.16
Blackstrap Molasses	107	72	5	5.35	7.43	107.00
90% DM basis	137	72	5	6.88	9.55	137.57
Hay†	111	54	10	5.55	10.28	55.50

* Priced September 26, 2008

† \$60/900 lb roll

Supplementation Management

- Start feeding before the grass runs out
- Supplement only those animals where there is an economic return
- Feed supplement where/how all cattle have access to the supplement
- Monitor cow body condition score
- Consider all alternatives

Other Feed Options

- Ammoniated Low-quality Forages
 - Hays, crop residues, straws
- Cull Vegetables
 - Greater water content, other issues
- Unusual By-products
 - Limited consistency, storage, delivery
- Abandoned Crops
 - Fencing, water, timing, other issues
- Cotton gin trash
- Cottonseed hull
- Rice bran
- Rice hulls
- Bakery product/waste
- Candy waste products

What Management Can We Use

- **Group Feeding**
 - do waste feed on animals that don't need it
- **Limit / Program Feeding**
 - input of management to fully utilize feed resources
- **Culling**
 - remove cattle that will consume the most feed resources, not the ones that will generate this or next year's income
- *Hope and Pray for Rain*

Limit / Program Feeding

- Supply nutrients to meet requirements
 - Have to know nutrient requirements
 - Have to know feedstuffs
 - Have to have facilities
- Commitment
- Management

Limit / Program Feeding

- Pros

- Increase efficiency of feed use
- Control feed intake
- Extend feed resources

- Cons

- Intensity of management
- Equipment
- Facilities

Maintain a minimum of 5% roughage in the diet

Final Remarks

- Grazing forage alone often does not meet energy and/or protein demands of cattle
- Forage-Cattle-Supplement interaction can be complicated
 - Forage quality
 - Forage availability
 - Cattle requirements change
 - Supplement characteristics

Final Remarks

- Right now energy is our most limiting nutrient
- We can allow cows to slide in BCS if we can make it up later
- Evaluate feedstuff on a price / unit of nutrient
- Find roughage where you can get it