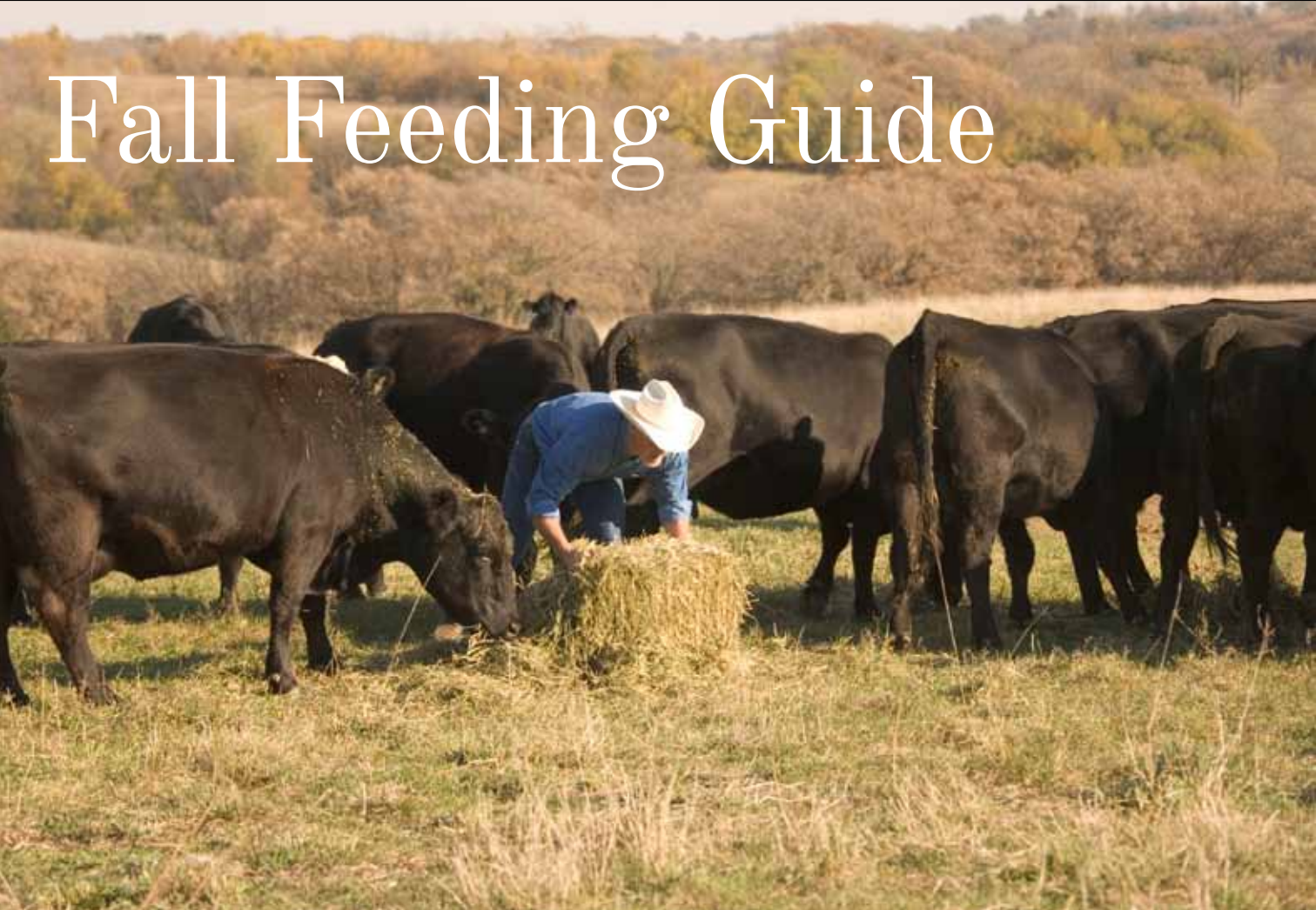


Fall Feeding Guide



Dealing with drought

You can't control the weather, but you can take steps to safeguard your herd.

Drought can affect the health of both animals and land. Dr. Charles Stoltenow is a veterinarian at North Dakota State University. He recommends using supplemental feed.

“We want to make that range or grassland last as long as possible,” he says. “And that means we don't let livestock continually graze.” Stoltenow suggests letting cattle graze for a while, then removing them from the pasture and providing supplemental feed.

During a drought, forages alone don't provide adequate energy, protein, and trace minerals. Cattle can develop what's called dust or pasture pneumonia.

It's absolutely critical that you supply enough water for cattle to drink, even if you have to haul water to the pasture.

Stoltenow advises against letting animals drink out of dug outs or streams that are starting to dry up. “All the salts and minerals become more and more concentrated as the water dries up,” he says. This can lead to nitrate or cyanobacteria poisoning.

Foot rot can also occur when cattle wallow in the mud. Their feet soften up, the mud dries, and they develop cracks in their hooves. Fence off muddy areas and keep cattle out until normal water levels return.



15 tips for keeping cows healthy during a drought

- 1 Monitor body condition and supplement feed as needed to score at least moderate condition.**
- 2 Avoid overgrazing, and employ rotational grazing to save pastures.**
- 3 Creep-feed calves to create near-normal weaning weights.**
- 4 Early-wean calves to take the pressure off cows and pastures.**
- 5 Manage poisonous plants in pastures and hay fields.**
- 6 Pregnancy-check and market cull cows early to save feed costs.**
- 7 Inventory hay and other feed to make sure you're set for winter.**
- 8 Analyze feeds for nutrient profiles to help determine supplemental feed needs.**
- 9 Use alternative feeds to supplement and stretch forages.**
- 10 Limit hay access if possible to stretch forage supplies.**
- 11 Limit-feed a high-concentrate diet to make forages last.**
- 12 Graze crop residues and stockpiled forages to reduce harvested feed needs.**
- 13 Use drought-stressed corn, green chop, or silage for grazing.**
- 14 Make sure cattle have access to a clean, cool water supply.**
- 15 Moisten the soil around ground rods of electric fences to keep cattle in their place.**

Do you have enough hay?

Provided by Purina

With many producers having to feed hay early this year because of the drought, there are some real concerns about the hay supply this winter. Even though you may have stored what you think will be enough hay to carry your herd through, conditions like a particularly harsh winter could cause you to fall short before spring.

If you think your hay supplies will be inadequate and you need to obtain more, you can contact your university Extension service or other sources for finding more hay, or finding suitable strategies for stretching your hay supply. State agricultural departments in major cattle-producing areas also provide listings of where additional hay might be available for purchase.

Storing hay

Hay is such a hot commodity, so you don't want to lose any due to poor storage methods. Follow these tips to keep your hay in good shape:

- Soil contact with hay is the biggest source of spoilage in hay stored outside.

Place bales on crushed rock, a concrete pad, or wood pallets, if possible. If you can't avoid storing hay bales on the ground, pick a well-drained area, preferably with sandy soil.

- Storing bales near the top of a sloping area reduces the amount of water flowing around them. Bale rows should run up and down a sloping area to avoid trapping surface water.

- Store hay in a sunny location with a southern exposure. Never store under trees or other shady areas where drying can be slow.

- Bale rows should run north-to-south rather than east-to-west.

Visit your local Purina Retailer to learn more about Purina cattle feeding programs that help you best utilize your forages.

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Estimating cattle rate-of-gain



If your cattle aren't gaining weight, they're losing value. Calculate their daily rate-of-gain to be sure they're eating properly, and your production goals are being met. Learn how to make a good estimate without a scale.

Whether you're raising a small herd of cattle to sell or to use as beef for your own table, it's important the animals grow at an economical rate.

Extension beef specialist Dan Loy at Iowa State University says if growing cattle aren't gaining weight, they're not adding value. Feed is 60% to 70% of the cost of production, so the faster cattle grow, the more likely the producer will see a profit when they go to market. The expected daily rate-of-gain depends on what you're feeding and what your goals are.

Weight = value

"If they're primarily on forage, 1 to 2 pounds a day for grazing and stocker cattle would be typical," says Loy. "If

you're feeding corn silage or kind of a moderate energy growing ration, 2 pounds a day would be typical. Cattle that are fed on concentrates such as a finishing or feedlot ration, most of those are going to be gaining over 3 pounds a day."

No-scale weighing

It's important to monitor changes in diet. Forage quality can vary during the year, and if it's in poor condition, the animals might not gain any weight. This can be compounded with environmental factors such as heat or cold stress. You should also expect some variation from animal to animal, as body type and feed consumption will differ.

The easiest way to track weight is,

of course, to use a scale. Many small cattle producers don't have that ability, but Loy says there are other options to calculate the rate of gain. One is to use the energy value of the feed.

"Basically, we know from the net energy system how many calories it requires to put on a pound of gain," says Loy. "You can use the net energy of the feedstuffs, weigh what is being fed, and then calculate the rate-of-gain. The good news is that there are computer programs available with calculators that can help producers do this."

By knowing the starting weight of a calf and the desired end weight, you can calculate the gain needed each day to get it ready for market.

Alternative feeds for fall

There are several options to consider when planning an alternative feed program, according to R. Baird LeValley, Colorado State University Extension livestock and range agent. The goal is to rebreed cows while maintaining calving intervals, maintain pounds of calf produced per cow, and minimize feed cost per pound of calf sold.

Grain is not always practical to feed, but it can take the pressure off your hay supply. Substitute 1 pound of grain or other concentrate feed for 2 pounds of alfalfa hay or 3 pounds of grass hay.

Remember, some roughage is needed to maintain rumen function. As a rule of thumb, cows should receive at least 0.5% of their body weight as roughage (90% dry matter basis). A 1,200-pound cow should receive at least 6 pounds of roughage per day.

Cows should be slowly adapted to high-grain feeding. You might begin with 2 to 3 pounds of whole shelled corn per head, per day, and free-choice roughage. Then, increase the grain by 1 pound per day, and reduce the hay by 2 pounds each day until the final ration is attained. Make sure plenty of bunk space is provided so all cows can eat at the same time, and feed twice daily. Once the cows are switched over to the limit-fed, grain-based ration, observe their body condition, and adjust the grain as needed to maintain adequate condition.

Other options

Alternative feedstuffs used to decrease the dependency on hay include harvested cornstalks, millet hay, wheat straw, sorghum-sudan, cottonseed hulls, soybean hulls, wheat middlings, and corn gluten feed.



Before feeding, conduct a nutritional analysis and test for nitrates in annual forages including sorghums. Also, test for prussic acid levels in sorghums, sudans, and sorghum-sudan varieties.

Cottonseed hulls are low in protein (3.5%), but equal in energy to late-cut grass hay. They should be fed with 2 to 3 pounds of 30% to 40% all-natural protein supplement and mineral.

Soybean hulls range from 10% to 16% crude protein. Soyhulls can be fed without additional forage, however, the digestible energy is increased when fed with hay in a 2-to-1 ratio.

Wheat middlings are a good source of protein (18%) and energy. It is best to mix at least 5 pounds of forage with the wheat middlings.

Corn gluten feed is a by-product of the corn wet milling industry and is available in wet or dry form. It is high in protein (25%) and should be fed at a rate of 0.5% of body weight with a forage source.

A calcium-phosphorus mineral mixture and salt should be available to cows at all times, especially when utilizing any alternative feeds. Vitamin A may also need to be supplemented.



Save money on hay by feeding to reduce waste

In most areas of the country, feeding cattle with large round bales is the most economical way to go.

If you put out a one-day supply for the herd in a feeding ring or rack, you'll only have around 5% wastage. If you put out a four-day supply with no rack around it, the cattle will waste about a third of the hay. If you like to roll hay out so it's loose on the ground, make sure that you only roll out what they can eat in one day.

Small square bales are easier to store and handle, but because of the demand for them by horse owners and others, they're also more expensive.



Top 4 weaning tips for fall

Provided by Purina

When it's time to wean calves, it's up to you to manage their diet and surroundings to ensure they grow as they should. Follow these tips to help the success of your weaning program:

1 Reduce the stress of your calves. Be sure to perform dehorning and castration before weaning begins, and keep them hydrated throughout.

2 Pay close attention to the nutrition the calves receive in their diets. When forage is limited, wean calves early to maintain their high rate of growth, and provide them with high-quality feed.

3 Check for and control parasites to protect the calves' immune systems.

4 Vaccinate your calves. Work with a veterinarian to develop vaccine protocols for your operation.

Visit your local Purina Retailer to learn more about Purina cattle feeding programs for weaning calves.

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Cow-calf chore checklist

October:

- Evaluate cows' body condition score (BCS) at weaning.
- Develop winter nutrition program to have cows at BCS of 6 at calving to enhance rebreeding performance.
- Start supplemental feed for bulls on dry grass, according to age and condition.

November:

- If fall calving, make sure lactating cows have a BCS of at least 5.5.
- Treat cattle for lice if needed.
- If spring calving, check weaned calves regularly to make sure they're gaining.
- If culling of spring calves isn't complete, finish it now.
- Attend livestock and forage production meetings offered through Extension.