

Feeding a Dry Cow:

After weaning up until 2 months before calving is the most economical time to maintain a cow.

Common options to feed dry cows:

Corn Residue Grazing

Grazing corn stalk residue is often done for less than \$1.00 per hd per day. The grazed forage remaining in the field is selectively grazed by cows. They will pick out any corn remaining in the field, but this is normally minimal due to the efficiency of today's harvesters. The husk and leaf that is grazed next is as digestible as bromegrass hay but is lower in protein. Therefore, it is most ideal to begin supplementing protein at the start of grazing corn stalk residue especially with a product containing ruminantsin to help better stretch your resources vs waiting. However, the equation below is a helpful guide for determining when supplementation is required.

Corn Stalk Grazing Density: To estimate the grazing days per acre available for a 1200 lb non-lactating cow... take the corn bushel yield of the field and divide by 3.5. Then take this number times the # of acres in the field. Then that number divided by the number of cows going on the field. The resulting number is roughly how many days the herd can spend in that field before supplementation/alternative grazing/additional feedstuffs is required. See protein supplementation options/recommendations below!

(Example: 180-bushel yield ÷ 3.5 = 51 grazing days per acre. 51 days x 80-acre field = 4080 total grazing days. 4080 days ÷ 100 head of cows = 40 days spent in that field before supplementation/alternate feed is required.)

Grazing Alternatives – Other alternatives for grazing in the fall and early winter are cover crops as well as soybean residue. There are a wide array of cover crop options available. In addition, grazing soybean residue is another cheap option, but often requires more protein and land area requirements relative to cornstalk grazing.

Total Mixed Ration (TMR) – diets with moderate levels of distillers grains and corn silage in combination with corn stalks or wheat straw can be formulated to meet her requirements often for less than \$1.50 per hd per day.

Protein Supplementation:

When pastures start to dry up in late summer, or there is a lack of growth due to drought as we're seeing in many places this year, it is very important to consider utilizing a protein supplement. Protein supplementation is also often required when grazing corn stalk residue. Cows need roughly 3 lbs of protein per day. We need to ensure that cows are meeting their daily protein requirements for many reasons ranging from fetal programming to maintaining body condition going into winter.

A couple supplement options are:

- **45-4 Stalk Supplement** – This is all-inclusive option & is fed at 1.75 lb per hd per day for a dry cow and 2.5 lb per hd per day for a lactating cow. This will contain all of her protein, vitamin, and mineral requirements. **Cost = \$14.08 per 50 lb bag = \$0.49-0.70/hd/day**
- **Cow Range Supplement** – This all-inclusive, high-salt mix can be given to cows and calves and meet all of their protein, mineral, and vitamin needs. It also contains Ruminantsin. This can be more expensive but meets all requirements with limited labor input. Cows will consume 2 to 3 lbs of this supplement per day. **Cost = \$19.73 per 50 lb bag = \$0.79-\$1.17/hd/day**
- **Distillers Grains** – Hand feeding 2.5 lbs per day or 5 lbs every other day or 8 lbs every third day of DDGS in addition to a free-choice range mineral is often the most economical way to supply mineral and protein requirements. **Cost (varies on source/bulk) average = \$220/ton = \$0.28/hd/day**
- **Protein tubs** – tubs are a convenient way to deliver protein and mineral to cows. However, they are by far the most expensive option. In many cases we can cut protein and mineral costs in half by using one of the other options discussed above. **Cost = approx. \$140 per 250 lb 40% tub \$0.56/hd/day *see note on next page about tubs!***

It's important to keep in mind that protein supplementation is important when forage resources are scarce. However, at times it is very important to also supplement energy and forage in addition to protein. If pasture is short enough this will force cows to work to the soil. This is detrimental to future pasture growth and the oral health of the cow.

Supplemental hay may need to be provided in addition to the protein supplementation.

What you need to know about protein tubs!

It is not new news that protein tubs are expensive. But did you know that they do NOT provide your cattle with enough protein? So, along with being incredibly expensive they are not really helping your cattle.

Let us show you an example! As stated above cattle need roughly 3 lbs of protein per day.

Protein tubs have a 1#/hd/day feeding rate. It is difficult for cattle to lick a tub enough to get that 1#/day. For the purpose of this example, we will be positive and say that she is getting that full pound per day. When utilizing a high protein content (40%) tub that equals 0.40 lbs of protein per day at a cost of \$0.56/head/day. This amount of 0.40 lbs will only provide 1/13th of their daily protein requirement.

**note: many tubs are actually more expensive than this AND have a lower protein content!*

When compared to a loose distillers-based supplement such as our 45-4 Stalk Grazer you will find that this product allows you to spend less money and give your cattle more protein at the same time. 45-4 Stalk Grazer is a 45% protein content product and it is fed to dry cows at a rate of 1.75 lbs/head/day (you can feed larger amounts to then give it every 2nd or 3rd day vs every day for more convenient use but for this example we will use daily administration). This equals 0.79 lbs of protein per day at a cost of \$0.49/head/day. This meets over 25% of their daily protein requirement! So, for \$0.07 LESS per head per day you can DOUBLE their protein intake.

**note: even if they were to eat the 45-4 Stalk Grazer at HALF the recommended amount per day you are still getting the same amount of protein per day as a tub and spending a LOT less money supplementing your cows!*

45-4 Stalk Grazer is a simple all-inclusive product. To feed it you can either dump the required amount into a bunk or simply pour it in a line on the ground. Because this product is distillers-based cattle will eat it right out of the dirt/grass just like they do their cubes! We are also going to have available a similar version of this product (Cow Range Supplement mentioned on previous page) that can simply be poured into the mineral feeders!



OUTTAGRASS CATTLE COMPANY by Jan Swan Wood c 2017



RUMENSIN FOR COWS!

Monensin aka "Rumensin", it not only is a coccidia preventative - it has also consistently proven to be a great way to **increase feed efficiency and decrease feed intake** in cows and calves!

During a time of drought when feed is in short supply and is of high cost stretching your efficiencies and decreasing intake is more important than ever.

Nitrate Toxicity: Drought stress can cause nitrate accumulation in forage plants. This is something to keep in mind when feeding your cattle as they will be at increased risk for nitrate toxicity. To combat this risk, it is highly advised to have your forages tested prior to feeding. Forage testing will also allow you to better formulate your rations to help you most efficiently utilize your already limited feed supply. We can come on farm and collect samples for testing or we can get them sent off for you if you bring the samples to the office!