25 Ideas for Keeping Feed Costs in Check

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Keeping Feed Costs in Check
22 Ideas

1. Creep Feeding

A list of situations (Ritchie, 1987) when creep feeding may be advantageous is provided:

- Calf prices are high relative to feed prices
- Fall-born calves
- Drylot cow operations
- Calves from first-calf heifers
- Forage for cows is limited
- Milk production is limited
- Maximum weight or "bloom" is desired
- Male calves
- Large-frame, late-maturing calves
- Calves will be finished by the cow-calf producer on a high-grain diet
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• On the other hand, when creep feeding may be less advantageous when:

  • Feed prices are high relative to calf prices
  • Heavy milking cows
  • Forage is abundant
  • Heifer calves
  • Smaller-framed, earlier maturing breeds
  • Spring calves
  • When calves are to be backgrounded on a high-roughage diet
  • When creep-fed calves are severely discounted
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• Creep Feeding Efficiency
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2. Co-Products
   Corn Gluten Feed
   Distillers Grain
   Soyhulls
   Condensed Distillers Solubles (CDS)
   Bakery Co-Products
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Co-Products Feeds
- Always a good buy?
- Always practical?

Before Purchasing:
- Know value on a nutrient basis
- Know nutrient requirements of animals
- Know storage considerations
- Know feeding Limitations
- Weigh cost savings with other factors
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Co-Products Feeds

Sources

Commercial Feed Companies
NEMO GRAIN (1-888-327-8799)
Roquette (1-800-553-7080)
Cargill (1-800-317-8825)
Endres Processing, LLC (1-785-743-2820)
ADM Quincy (1-800-448-7692)
Cantril Feed (1-319-397-2215)

1 – The information given herein is supplied with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by University of Missouri Extension is implied.
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3. Feed Waste
   Hay Storage
   Hay Waste
   Bunk Management (or no bunks)
   Feeder Design

   - Dry matter hay waste was 3.5%, 6.1%, 11.4% and 14.6% for the cone, ring, trailer and cradle feeders, respectively.
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4. Feed based on need / production cycle

• Lactating cows > Late gestating cows > Early gestating cows
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5. **Selection for Efficient Cows**
   - Common Sense Approach
   - Frame size research
   - Recent genetic research
   - Select daughters of feed efficient bulls
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6. Mineral Supplementation

- Overfeeding (quantity)
- Overfeeding (specific minerals)
- Mineral waste (weather)
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7. Stockpiling
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8. Feed Testing

- Hay
- Grain
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9. Buying in Bulk
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10. Forward Contracting or Seasonal Buying
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11. Ration Balancing and Mixing
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12. Grazing Efficiencies

- Continuous vs. MIG
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13. Hay Storage / Protection
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## Effects of Storage Method on Round bale Hay Loss – University of Tennessee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storage Type</th>
<th>Percent Loss</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On Ground, No Cover</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Tires, No Cover</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Ground, Covered</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Tires, Covered</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Wrap, On Ground</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Barn</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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14. Feeding Ionophores
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15. Use of Growth Promotants
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16. Condition Scoring with Applied Management
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17. Cull Poor Producers

- Opens
- Poor Doers
- Bad udders
- Bad eyes
- Bad attitudes
- Late calvers
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Poor Temperament and Effect on Profit
Mississippi State University Study

1 = Non-Aggressive
5 = Very Aggressive

Net Profits
1 = 121.89
2 = 100.98
3 = 107.184
4 = 83.75
5 = 80.81
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18. Feed based on animal / production needs

- Feeding at 95-97 percent full feed is most efficient based on some research. This assures expensive nutrients are not overfed.
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19. Purchase rather than produce feed
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20. Inter-seed Legumes
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21. Supplemental feeding on pastures – be careful of efficiencies
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22. Night Time Feeding

- Canadian Studies
- Truman State Study
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23. Environmental Factors

- Mud
- Shade
24. Don’t forget value of water quality
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25. Shop Around

- For Best Feed Prices
- For Best Quality
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Do You Have Ideas to Share?