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## Preparing for Winter Feeding

*Dr. Eric Bailey, State Beef Nutrition Specialist:*

First, start by taking inventory of your equipment and labor availability for winter feeding. Do I have the ability to store large quantities of meal or pelleted feeds? Commodity feeds like distillers grains, soyhulls, wheat midds, corn gluten feed have nutritional profiles that make them desirable cow feeds but they are of no use to your cows if your operation lacks equipment to store and feed. Can you feed small pellets or meals with your equipment (troughs to feed into, means of transporting from storage to the cows) and labor. Our goal in this scenario is to supplement the necessary calories (energy) to replace what would normally come from hay, so these feeds must be provided daily for maximum benefit.

If feed storage is a major concern and the goal is stretching your hay supply as long as possible, there are a couple of options to think about. This doesn't simply mean hay waste and the ideal type of hay feeder but not to allow the cows to be picky. Only feed them one day's worth of hay at a time. I typically like to allow for 3.0-3.5 % of a cows weight per day in hay under this system. A tractor implement to unroll round bales of hay prices at around \$1500 online, which is not very many hay rings, especially if one is investing in the sophisticated ones that are purported to reduce hay. Hay rings have a place when feeding daily is not an option but waste will always be greater than "limit feeding".

Finally, if your labor and equipment are stretched thin before winter feeding, perhaps it is time to consider a deep cull of your herd to better match feed availability with your herd. Producers have chased growth-oriented genetics over the past couple of decades and not reconsidered stocking rate. Forage intake is proportional to body weight, meaning a 1,400 lb cow needs much more feed than a 1,000 lb cow. When is the last time you

evaluated stocking rates and cow size? If you have more cows than your pastures can support, you are going to be locked into a cow welfare system where you must provide supplemental feed for part of the year.

Final thought, producers who last the longest in the cow business are not the ones who make the most money in the good years, they are the ones who lose the LEAST money in the bad years.

## Prussic Acid in Frosted Forages

Last November I wrote about this same topic, however, with all the phone calls and emails coming in, I thought it was worth repeating. Prussic acid, or hydrocyanic acid, is produced in several different forages; most talked about is in the sorghum family. This compound is most concentrated in new growth and mostly in the leaves, which is why it is recommended to not graze animals on plants such as johnsongrass, milo, sudangrass, and others until the forage is 18 – 24 inches tall.

Although typically affecting cud-chewing animals, prussic acid inhibits oxygen transfer in the blood. Any severe stress from wilting from events such as drought, excessive chewing (cud), rumen bacteria, and frost can release cyanide from the plant tissue in varying degrees; frost and new growth after a prolonged drought are most notable.

A killing or burning frost is when higher levels accumulate and it is recommended that animals be withheld from grazing until the forage dries down or new growth occurs. Depending on the frost, it is recommended to keep animals removed for one to two weeks.

When it is safe to turn animals back out onto potentially affected forages, be sure they have some gut fill.

Unlike with nitrate concerns, prussic acid can be broken down once the forage is baled dry and properly cured. However, unlike nitrates, there is no quick test, so if there is concern for prussic acid accumulation you'll have to get it tested.

Ensiling is generally a safe way to dissipate high levels of prussic acid but this is only after silage is removed from storage as much of the poison escapes as a gas when being moved for feeding. Since this varies, it is best to wait about a week after a frost to chop for silage, then approximately 3 weeks after the ensiling process.

## Events:

### Farm Tax Workshops

This is a free event at several locations on two different dates, all at 6:15 – 8:30 pm.

Preregistration is required.

- Nov 7<sup>th</sup>: Fulton, Callaway Extension Office. Farmington, Weber Road Facility. Tuscumbia, Miller Extension Office. And more.
- Nov 18: Mexico, Vocational Ag Center. Steelville, Steelville Library. And more.

Call Mary Sobba at 573-581-3231 for more information.

### Hemp Workshop - CBD, Grain, & Fiber: Agronomics, Regulations and More

An old crop becomes new again! This MU Extension Workshop will cover a wide variety of topics related to the emerging hemp industry in Missouri. Topics to be covered: Legislative summary and regulatory update, agronomic practices and pests for CBD, grain and fiber hemp, industry outlook, producer perspectives, crop enterprise budgets and processing and contracts.

Presenters will include MU Extension field specialists and economists, CBD-Hemp growers and processors, the Missouri Dept. of Agriculture and the Missouri Hemp Trade Association. The workshop will begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 4:30 p.m. Cost for the workshop is \$55. Saturday, Nov. 16, 2019, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the MU Extension Center, Warren County 107 W. Walton, Warrenton MO. Call or email Justin Keay at [justin.keay@missouri.edu](mailto:justin.keay@missouri.edu) or 636-970-3000.

### Show-Me-Select 2019 Fall

#### Sale Dates

- November 15- Joplin Regional Stockyards, Inc. @ 7:00 p.m. Carthage, MO  
Coordinator: Eldon Cole, 417-466-3102
- November 22- Kirksville Livestock Auction @ 6:30 p.m. Kirksville, MO

Coordinator: Zac Erwin, 660-665-9866

- November 30 - Kingsville Livestock Auction @ 11:00 a.m. Kingsville, MO  
Coordinator: David Hoffman, 816-380-8460
- December 7- SEMO Livestock Sales, LLC @ 11:00 a.m. Fruitland, MO  
Coordinator: Erin Larimore, 573-243-3581
- December 13 - Farmington Livestock Auction @ 7:00 p.m. Farmington, MO  
Coordinator: Kendra Graham, 573-756-4539
- December 14- F & T Livestock Market @ 12:30 p.m. Palmyra, MO  
Coordinator: Daniel Mallory, 573-985-3911

### Missouri Livestock Symposium

MLS is a large annual event that occurs in Kirksville, MO. This year from December 6<sup>th</sup> (4 pm – 10 pm) & December 7<sup>th</sup> (8 am – 5 pm), this free event will include a dinner (Friday) and a lunch (Saturday), as well as a large trade show and several educational programs. Friday night's keynote speaker is Dr. Temple Grandin. Saturday includes eight different topics every hour regarding beef, sheep, meat goats, stock dogs, forages, horses, farm management and around the farm and home topics. Join us November 30<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup> at William Matthew Middle School, 1515 S. Cottage Grove in Kirksville, MO.

### Strip-grazing Milo Demonstration: a Winter Feed Alternative

A demonstration on strip grazing milo in a cow/calf operation will be on December 12<sup>th</sup> at Lee Farms, Cope Grass Farm, and High Hill in Truxton, MO. 12 – 3 pm (lunch included). Call the Montgomery County Extension office at 573-564-3733 for more information; registration required.

### Mid Missouri Grazing Conference

Join us on Thursday, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 for the annual MMGC at the St. Martins Knights of Columbus in Jefferson, City, MO from 1 pm – 6:30 pm. There will be 6 topics and our Keynote Speaker, Valerie Tate, Agronomy Specialist. Registration is \$30 by January 18 (\$40 at the door) and includes dinner and door prizes. Call 573-897-3797 ex 3 (Megan Rudroff or Cindy DeOrnellis) for more information.

**Happy Holidays, everyone!!!**