

Livestock Farmers Face Long Winter

by *Laura Skillman*

Tight feed supplies mean cattle producers will have to be careful managers this winter to keep their animals in good condition to ensure healthy calves and rebreeding in the spring.

"I have some real concern for our cattle producers in that late winter is probably going to be an ugly time for us," says Roy Burris, beef cattle specialist with the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture. "It's probably going to cost us 50% more to winter cattle this year than it normally does."

If producers do not meet the nutritional needs of their cows, it will not only affect the 2008 calf crop but also the 2009 crop, because many of the cows in poor condition will not rebreed. Cattle with body condition scores (BCS) of 5 (on a 9-point scale) have rebreeding rates in the 90 percentile, while those with scores of 3 to 4 are only in the 51-76 percentile.

"This could have a far-reaching effect if producers don't take proper care of their cattle," Burris says. "A lot of them will take good care of their herds, but some of them won't."



NIAS PHOTO CONTEST PHOTO BY JACOB COON

► It may cost some producers 50% more to winter cattle this year, says Roy Burris, University of Kentucky.

Burris is cautioning producers about the high price and low quality of some hay being offered on the market, including hay from ground enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and baled cornstalks. These will provide little nutritional value for cattle and will result in cattle losing weight, having weak calves and reducing their chances of rebreeding.


"I'm scared to death some producers are going to depend on this poor-quality hay, and it's going to mean problems in the calving season," he says.

There's nothing wrong with buying hay, if it is good hay, Burris says, but buying poor hay at high prices only adds to producers' expenses without improving their feed supply. Cattle won't compensate for poor-quality hay by eating more of it; they will eat less. In order to keep cattle in good condition on poor hay it will mean supplementing with other feed ingredients and supplementing a lot.

"Cattle don't have a hay requirement; they have a nutrient requirement," he says. So, the key thing for farmers is to test the hay to know its quality and then feed a balanced ration.

Not all hay is of poor quality. Cattle will consume good-quality hay and won't need as much supplementation, but the state's hay crop was reduced substantially because of a spring freeze followed by drought. So producers need to decide what supplements they will need, and in what amounts, in order to stretch their hay supply through the winter. Some farmers also may have to reduce their herd size.

Instead of buying poor-quality hay, producers would be better off evaluating their cattle, selling some of their poorer-performing animals and stretching what hay they have, Burris says. This will allow them to keep their remaining cattle in better condition and increase a cow's chances of delivering a healthy calf and rebreeding this spring.

"With proper management, we can get through this winter," Burris says. 

Editor's Note: Author *Laura Skillman* is the news and information section leader of the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture.

Roseda Farm

I know, it's not politically correct to "kill" cattle anymore, but cattleman to cattleman, that's what we do. We kill cattle every week for our "Farm to Fork" branded beef program and every week we receive detailed carcass data from the packer. In addition, we have weaning and feedlot data on those same cattle. So it's not by accident that these three Roseda herd sires excel in \$Beef in the Spring 2008 Sire Summary.

They offer a unique combination of marbling and growth. All three are over 100 for Yearling EPD and of the 279 bulls in the main sire summary with Yearling EPDs over 100, they are the top three for Marbling EPD.

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Rito 469 of Rita 9514 112 ranks 10th for \$Beef in the Main Sire Summary. His second calf crop weaned this fall was our best sire group in terms of weaning weight and phenotype. His first daughters are calving this spring and are the best bred heifers on the farm. His combination of \$B +61.58 and \$W +26.22 is among the best of the industry. He is an ideal outcross on our 036 linebred females.

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RARE

HARVEST

RARE

Summitcrest Roseda Designed 13998476



No. 15 \$Beef*
Semen \$20

#B/R New Design 036
#B/R New Design 323
#B/R Ruby of Tiffany 155

#Gardens Prime Time
Summitcrest Barbaramere J018
Summitcrest Barbaramere G042

#VDAR New Trend 315
B/R Blackcap Empress 76
VDAR Pine Drive 251
Tiffany BR
#RR Traveler 5204
#Green Garden Susie 1246 S1
Tehama Conviction 177
Summitcrest Barbaramere B060

	BW	WW	YW	MILK	CW	Marb	RE	Fat
EPD	+3.0	+53	+108	+22	+18	+.53	+.30	-.041
Acc	.79	.79	.74	.56	.50	.53	.47	.45

\$W	\$F	\$G	\$B
+22.25	+47.59	+29.25	+60.76

Owned with:



Summitcrest Farms
P.O. Box 638
Summitville, OH 43962
(330) 223-1931

*Main Sire Summary

Rito 469 of Rita 9514 1I2 14631694



No. 10 \$Beef*
Semen \$30

Rito 616 of 4B20 6807
+Rito 112 of 2536 Rito 616
GAR Precision 2536

+Rito 3M4 of 5H11 GT Maximum
+Rita 9514 of 7R12 Rito 3M4
+Rita 7R12 of 5H26 Rito 9M9

#DHD Traveler 6807
+Rita 4B20 of 0FB1 Bando
#GAR Precision 1680
+GAR Ext 2104
#GT Maximum
Rita 5H11 of 1B14 Rito 9J9
#+Rito 9M9 of 2036 Scotch Cap
+Rita 5H26 of 3X27 Rito 9J9

	BW	WW	YW	MILK	CW	Marb	RE	Fat
EPD	+4.4	+63	+112	+24	+6	+.57	+1.4	-.028
Acc	.71	.70	.61	.24	.30	.34	.28	.26

\$W	\$F	\$G	\$B
+26.22	+47.72	+33.19	+61.58

Owned with:



Wehrmann Angus
Richard McClung Jr.
13789 North Valley Pike
New Market, VA 22844
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Paul Prosser
4855 Carea Rd.
White Hall, MD 21161
(410) 692-9474

*Main Sire Summary

Prairiedge Marbull Design931 13383630



Top 2% \$Beef*
Semen \$20

#Finks 5522-6148
Finks Marbull 68
+Finks Pride 445 04 71

#B/R New Design 036
Eldorene of Prairiedge 12
#Eldorene of Prairiedge 9

#Emulation N Bar 5522
Finks Proud Formera 614
#GDAR Traveler 71
Finks 04 of 85 5522
#VDAR New Trend 315
B/R Blackcap Empress 76
#GDAR Executive 727
Eldorene of Prairiedge 6

	BW	WW	YW	MILK	CW	Marb	RE	Fat
EPD	+4.0	+55	+103	+25	+16	+.60	+.08	+.006
Acc	.82	.83	.77	.64	.54	.58	.52	.50

\$W	\$F	\$G	\$B
+26.86	+41.39	+23.70	+53.17

Owned with:



Prairiedge Angus
Neal Smith Family
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Walnut, IA 51577
(712) 784-2244

F. Leon Weichman
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