

Beef Farmers Can Reduce Feed Costs

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Beef cattle farmers can reduce their herd's winter feed costs by using stockpiled tall fescue regrowth and corn stalks to graze cattle, according to a recent

Penn State study. Dairy and Animal Science faculty who used three feeding systems last winter found that fescue and corn stalks were between \$57 and \$68 per acre

compared to the cost of feeding cows round-baled hay in drylot. The trial started on November 18, 1992, approximately two weeks after calves were weaned, and continued for 63 days. Each of the three systems tested used 12 cows.

sufficient cornstalk grazing. There was an 18-day period during the trial when cows in Systems 2 and 3 were each fed 18 pounds of rectangular-baled hay per head daily after a 17-inch snowfall.

According to Lowell L. Wilson, professor of animal science, "even subtracting out the rectangular-baled hay that was fed when grazing was not possible because of snow accumulation, the average value of the corn stalks and the stockpiled grass was \$58/acre. The rectangular-baled hay was valued at \$100/ton and was fed on the snow."

According to Beef and Forage Herd Manager Peter J. LeVan, "One of the reasons that the corn stalks and stockpiled tall fescue gave a rather large saving was due to controlled grazing. The cows were provided a seven-day quantity of either corn stalks or grass at one time. This made more efficient use of the available forage. To divide the weekly grazing paddocks, we used a single electrically-charged wire which was quite effective in restraining the cows to paddock areas to be grazed."

Cows gained 0.50, 0.03, and -0.16 pounds per day, respectively, during the 63-day trial from November 18 to January 19. These weight changes were acceptable levels of performance during this phase of production, particularly since cows in all three systems were gaining weight by the end of the trial. Changes in cow weight were not a factor in comparing the treatments since the cows were not sold.

Spring-calving beef cows in the

first and second trimesters of pregnancy require a lower plane of nutrition during late fall and early winter compared to calving, lactation and breeding requirements. It can therefore be economical to match lower-quality feeds that may be available — such as corn crop residues and stockpiled grass — to this period of lower nutritional requirements.

The average calving date of the cows in the spring of 1993 was April 10. There were no differences between cow groups for calf birthweight, calf vigor score, calving ease score, or calving percent. There also were no differences in any health or maternal characteristics, such as retained placentas or calf acceptance by the cow. According to Erskine H. Cash, professor of animal science, "It must be emphasized that after the cows came off this trial on January 19, they were fed round-baled hay in drylot according to or exceeding requirements recommended by the National Research Council. Continuation of weight loss on cornstalk grazing later than accomplished in this trial may have caused a depression of some of the cow or calf characteristics during the following calving and breeding seasons unless supplemental protein and energy were provided to meet the requirements of pregnant cows in the last trimester of pregnancy."

Crystal L. Egan, project assistant, and Richard F. Todd, former departmental research aide, also helped with this project, which was conducted at the Haller Farm near the University Park Campus of The Pennsylvania State University.

Contest Winners

(Continued from Page C8)

Gold Emblem Teams

1. — California, Cadee Ohanian, from Clovis, Seth Nitschke, from Clovis, Lino Mendes, from

Hanford; 2. — Texas, Jason Behrends, Todd Bierschwale and Lydell Meier, all of Fredericksburg; 3. — Kansas, Jered Shipman, Ben Simon and Kari Brown, all of Girard.

Top Ten Individuals

1. Eugene Kidd
2. Chris Webster
3. Scott Barronton
4. Mark Estridge
5. Josh Munsey
6. Wade McCollum
7. John Neipert
8. Jennifer Hargis
9. Adelee Gade
10. Donna Martin

Nursery Landscape

Town	State
Bear Creek	North Carolina
Bear Creek	North Carolina
Fayetteville	Georgia
Bear Creek	North Carolina
Flint	Michigan
Lineville	Alabama
Troy	Missouri
Buckner	Kentucky
Lakefield	Minnesota
Martinsville	Virginia

Matthew Stanley and Scott Barronton, all of Fayetteville; 3. — Minnesota, Kelli Daberkow, Adelee Gade and Leo Schmidt, all of Lakefield.

System 2 used stockpiled tall fescue that was last grazed 90 days before the test began. Fifty pounds of nitrogen per acre had been applied in August at a cost of \$21 per acre. This treatment allowed 0.88 acres per cow. Cattle were moved weekly, grazing about 1.2 acres of fescue each time. Protein content of the standing grass ranged from 8 percent in November to 5.7 percent in January. The approximate dry matter yield of the stockpiled tall fescue was 1.5 tons per acre.

System 3 consisted of grazing corn stalk residue for the first 29 days of the trial and then stockpiled tall fescue for an additional 35 days. The corn field yielded approximately 110 bushels of shelled corn per acre and was a grain-producing variety. There was an allowance of 0.6 acres of corn stalks and 0.4 acres of stockpiled tall fescue per cow. Paddock size, grazed for a seven-day period, was 1.8 acres of corn stalks.

The per-acre value of the corn stalks for the first 29 days was calculated to be \$57 per acre or about \$35 per cow, based on the average daily per head round bale cost of \$1.20 for the cows confined to drylot. This assumes that snow cover would not have prevented

Gold Emblem Teams
1. — North Carolina, Eugene Kidd, Mark Estridge and Chris Webster, all of Bear Creek; 2. — Georgia, Joshua Westerman,

Poultry

Top Ten Individuals

1. Brian Lloyd
2. Erin Johnson
3. Christina Wallace
4. Deann Nelson
5. Melissa Jung
6. Sara Allen
7. Brian Barnes
8. Adam Lane
9. Julie Albert
10. Jesse Weilert

Town	State
Springdale	Arkansas
Pleasanton	Texas
Yoder	Wyoming
Jasper	Georgia
Yanceyville	North Carolina
Pleasanton	Texas
Hays	Kansas

James Newman, all of Pleasanton; 3. — Georgia, Brian Barnes, Corey Watson and Jonathan Burgess, all of Jasper.

Gold Emblem Teams
1. — Arkansas, Brian Lloyd, Erin Johnson and Christina Wallace, all of Springdale; 2. — Texas, Melissa Jung, Julie Albert and

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The World's Forage Analysis Superbowl was started in 1984 to encourage and promote quality forage production. Samples from around the country are judged on forage analysis, visual factors, herd production, and milk produced per ton. Results are announced annually at the World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wis.

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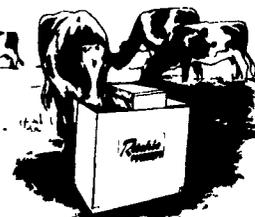
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