

Proper Winter Feeding Increases Gains

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Since winter feed costs make up a high percentage of total cow costs, it's important to develop a feeding program that allows the herd to be carried through the winter at least expense while still maintaining health and body condition.

Dr. John Hough, research and performance director for the American Hereford Association, said nutritional requirements of dry, mature pregnant cows are only slightly above maintenance and lower than other periods in the annual production cycle. Because of these low nutrient requirements, this group is able to utilize a lower quality of forage than any other group of cattle.

Feed of only 5.8 percent to 6.4 percent crude protein and 53 percent to 56 percent total digestible nutrients (TDN) is sufficient. This provides an opportunity to cut winter feed costs by using feed such as crop residues, mature grasses, low-quality hay, and other lower-quality feeds.

"Nutrient requirements, as well as management, increase dramatically after calving. Nutrient requirements are directly related to the cow's milk production. If adequate milk production and rebreeding are to be achieved, feed quality and quantity must be increased," Hough said. "You must be sure nursing cows are getting good forage and feed supplements."

Research shows that for maximum lifetime production, heifers should first calve as 2-year-olds. Adequate nutrition and management are essential if heifers are to reach the ideal breeding weight of 600 to 750 pounds.

"Replacement heifers must have greater protein and energy percentages in their feed than mature cows," Hough said. "In addition, newly-weaned heifer calves require closer observation to detect weaning stress or lack of nutrition."

By supplying your herd with adequate nutrition without overfeeding, you can more easily maintain a healthy herd, reducing the risk of sickness, keep feed costs in line, and realize greater profits.

Gelbvieh Breeder Recognized

WESTMINSTER, Colo. — Dunwalke Farm, Far Hills, N.J. was recently recognized by the American Gelbvieh Association (AGA) as the owner of three Gelbvieh cows exhibiting the consistent maternal efficiency typical of "The Mother Breed of Beef."

The AGA has designated these outstanding beef females as dam of merit or dam of distinction.

Maternal productivity plays a major role in profitable beef production, as nearly 60 percent of the cost of producing a pound of beef can be attributed to the cow herd. Research has demonstrated that fertility and calving ease followed by milk, growth and carcass cutability have the biggest influence on profit in a retained ownership (conception to carcass) system.

Cattlemen agree that Gelbvieh have strong maternal attributes with the added benefits of growth and carcass cutability. Given the increased emphasis on the efficient production of lean beef, the Gelbvieh breed is in an excellent position to increase its influence on the beef industry.

The title "Dam of Merit" recognizes cows with at least three calves that meet strict selection criteria including early puberty and conception, regular calving intervals and above-average weaning weights. The "Dam of Distinction" honor recognizes cows that meet the same high standards for superior, long-term productivity with at least eight calves.

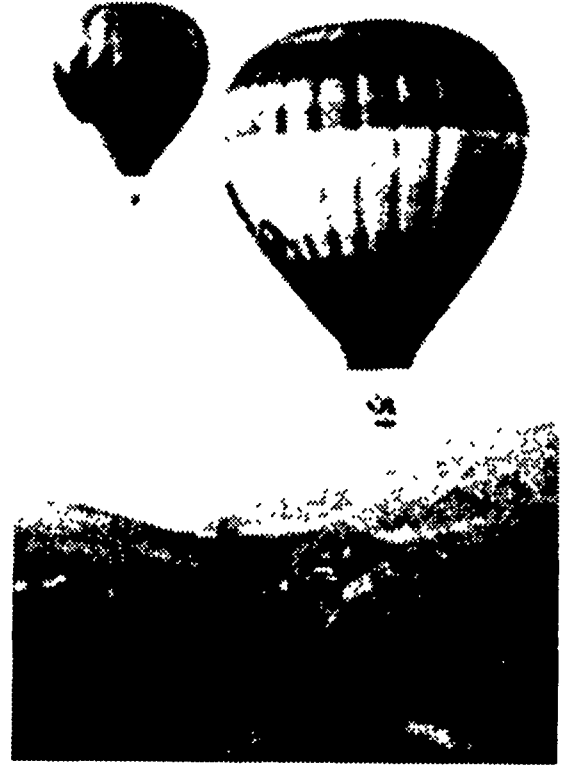
For more information on Gelbvieh cattle and AGA programs, contact the American Gelbvieh Association at 10900 Dover Street, Westminster, CO 80021, (303) 465-BEEF.



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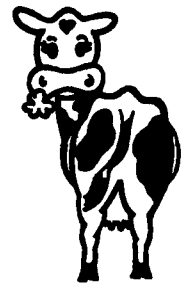
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