

BEEF TIPS



August 1998

Department of Animal Sciences and Industry

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Upcoming Events

August 12

Kansas Hereford Tour

August 13

KLA-KSU Ranch
Management Field Day
Rezac Land & Livestock
Emmett

continued on page 3

MAKING QUALITY SILAGE—FACTS AND IDEAS

Silage is an important cropping system in Kansas. Consider the following information when making silage.

Feeding quality and quantity of silage is determined by:

1. Value of the crop stored.

- Corn is the standard for high quality silage.
- Forage sorghum have about 75% the energy value of corn. Hybrid or variety selection is critical for forage sorghum, and a good rule-of-thumb is to avoid the phenotypic extremes.
- Sudan grass and sudan-sorghum crosses generally have 65-80% the value of corn silage.
- Drought stricken crops can make excellent silage, however, energy content of silage is directly related to grain content.

2. Moisture content and stage of plant maturity.

- Whole-plant corn silage should contain 30 to 36% dry matter (66 to 70% moisture) when the kernel is in the 60 to 80% milk-line stage of maturity.
- Grain sorghum should be harvested at the mid- to late-dough stage of kernel maturity.
- Moisture content of sudan grass and sudan-sorghum crosses can be a major problem, wilting will produce satisfactory results. Regardless of the length of the field-wilting period, these forages must be cut at the correct stage of maturity.

3. Effectiveness of preservation.

- Chop corn or sorghum silage at $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch.
- The value of fine chopping increases as the plant matures.

- Keep the knives sharp. This will increase machine efficiency, improve packing, decrease cell bruising, and increase palatability.
- A firm pack is necessary to reduce oxidative losses.
- The first three rules of bunker silo management are: PACK, PACK, PACK.
- When packing horizontal silos, add thin layers between packing runs.
- Pack horizontal silos continuously while filling, and continue packing after the last load of the day.
- Crown the silo so that rain will drain off and unsupported and unpacked edges will be eliminated.
- Fill the silo as rapidly as possible. Delayed filling increases dry matter losses and reduces silage quality via reduced respiration and oxidative losses.
- Make piles as deep as practical. This will reduce the percentage of silage exposed to air and help get a firmer pack.
- Fill quickly. Quick filling reduces the time exposed to air and reduces respiration and oxidative losses.
- Use a bacterial inoculant on every load. Inoculant should provide at least 100,000 colony-forming units of viable lactic acid producing bacteria per gram of forage.
- Seal tops of horizontal silos with plastic sheets and tires. Covering silage piles reduces dry matter losses to 20% in the top 3 feet (if unsealed losses will be 50%).
- Losses in very good silage will range from 5 to 15%, whereas losses in a very bad silage will run 25 to 50%. Losses are caused by:

effluent, respiration, primary and secondary fermentation, and aerobic activity during storage and feed out.

4. Feeding management.
 - The height, width, and depth dimensions of your silo should be small enough to allow a rapid progression through the silage mass during the feed out phase.
 - Minimize disturbing the silage face or pile.
 - Leave the silage face as even and perpendicular to the floor and side walls as possible.

*By Justin Gleghorn,
Graduate Assistant*

Information gathered from:

Producing and Feeding Sorghum Silage, C-354
K-State Research and Extension.

Silage Management: Update 1998, Bolsen et.al.
Proper management assures high-quality silage
grains, Mahanna.

Making Quality Corn and Sorghum Silage,
Guyer.

Feeding Corn and Sorghum Silages to Beef
Cattle, Guyer.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR SPRING CALVING COW/CALF PRODUCERS TO . . .

In August and September, forages are maturing, weaning time is approaching, and weather dictates several key management decisions.

Breeding Season

- If heifers/cows are still showing signs of heat, look for problems such as:
 - Inadequate bull power.
 - Nutritional stress.
 - Inadequate body condition.
 - Reproductive disorders including: IBR, Vibrio, Lepto, cystic ovaries, uterine infections, etc.
- Cull cows that are not conceiving after three or four services by a fertile bull. Remove bulls after 90 days of service (preferably 60 days with cows, 45 days with heifers).

Cowherd nutrition

- Provide ample amounts of clean, fresh drinking water.
- Consider limited-intake creep feeding if:
 - Drought conditions develop and persist.
 - Range conditions limit milk production.
 - Creep feed/grain prices are relatively low.
 - Value of gain allows for economic benefits.
- Tips for successful limited-intake creep feeding:
 - Limit duration to last 30 to 75 days before weaning.
 - Limit intake to 1 to 3 pounds/head/day.
 - Use an ionophore or other feed additive to maximize efficiency.
 - Protein level should be equal to or greater than 16%.
 - High salt levels may help limit intake, but can be tough on feeders.
- Pre-purchase bulk rate winter supplementation needs prior to seasonal price increases.

Herd Health

- If pinkeye is likely to be a problem, consider the following preventive and therapeutic measures.

Preventive:

- Make sure herd is receiving adequate vitamins and trace minerals in their diet.
- Consider using a medicated trace mineral package.
- Consider vaccination for pinkeye and IBR.
- Control face flies.
- Clip pastures with tall, coarse grasses that may irritate eyes.
- Provide ample shade.

Therapy:

- Administer an intramuscular injection of long-acting oxytetracycline when symptoms are first noticed.
- Shut out irritating sunlight by patching eyes, shade, etc.
- Control flies.
- Consult your veterinarian.
- Consider revaccinating for the respiratory diseases any animals that will be taken to livestock shows.
- Vaccinate suckling calves for IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV, and possibly pasteurilla at least 3 weeks prior to weaning.
- Revaccinate all calves with 7-way blackleg.
- Vaccinate replacement heifers for brucellosis (4 to 10 months of age).
- Monitor and treat footrot.

Forage/Pasture Management

- Enhance grazing distribution with mineral mixture placement away from water sources.
- Observe pasture weed problems to aid in planning control methods needed next spring.
- Monitor grazing conditions and rotate pastures if possible and (or) practical.
- If pastures will run out in late summer, get ready to provide emergency feeds. Start supplemental feeding before pastures are exhausted to extend grazing.
- Use crop residues.

- Harvest and store forages properly. Minimize waste by reducing spoilage.
- Sample harvested forages and have them analyzed for nitrate and nutrient composition.
- Plan winter nutritional program through pasture and forage management.
- For stocker cattle and replacement heifers, supplement maturing grasses with an acceptable degradable intake protein/ionophore (feed additive) type supplement.

Reproductive Management

- Remove bulls to consolidate calving season.
- Pregnancy check and age pregnancies 60 days after the end of the breeding season. Cull cows that are short-bred.

These methods contribute to a more uniform calf crop, make winter nutritional management easier and increases the success rate of next year's breeding season.

General Management

- Avoid unnecessary heat stress—do not handle and (or) truck cattle during the heat of the day.
- Repair, replace and improve facilities needed for fall processing.

- Order supplies, vaccines, tags, and other products needed at weaning time.
- Consider earlier than normal weaning if:
 - Drought conditions develop and persist.
 - Range conditions limit milk production.
 - Cows are losing body condition.
 - Facilities and management is available to handle lightweight calves.
 - First-calf heifers have the most to gain.
- Resist the temptation to feed the cows without weaning; feeding early weaned calves is more efficient.
- Look for unsound cows that need to be culled from the herd.
- Prepare to have your calf crop weighed and analyzed through a state, regional, or breed performance testing program.
- Document cost of production by participating in Standardized Performance Analysis (SPA) programs.
- Plan your marketing program, including private treaty, consignment sales, test stations, production sales, etc.
- Attend KLA/KSU Grazing Management Field Day, August 5th and/or 13th.

“Plan your marketing program, including private treaty, consignment sales, test stations, production sales, etc.”

*By Twig Marston,
Extension Cow/Calf
Management Specialist*

LOADER SAFETY—USE CAUTION MOVING ROUND BALES

The following are some safety precautions to follow when working with loaders and moving round bales.

- Do not overfill the loader. Transport the load as low as possible to lower the center of gravity and avoid overturning.
- Move and turn the tractor at slow speeds.
- Set wheels to the widest setting possible to increase tractor stability.
- Do not transport rider(s) unsafely.
- Look up and avoid overhead electric power lines and other obstacles when moving with an elevated front end loader.
- Stop the loader arms gradually when lowering or raising the front end loader.
- Operate the loader from the operator's seat only.
- Always stay out of the area under a raised front end loader, loader attachment or any machine operated by hydraulic power without securely blocking it in position.
- Always use the most level route possible when transporting bales.
- Always level the loader bucket tines as the load is raised to help prevent the load from rolling backwards.
- Keep all shields and protective guards in place and working properly.

Upcoming Events con't

August 14–15
Kansas Angus Tour

August 15
Polled Hereford Tour

August 15
Kansas Gelbvieh Tour

August 20–21
K-State Risk and Profit Conference

August 22
Kansas Brangus Tour

August 22
Barber County Cattlemen's Tour

August 21–23
Flint Hills Beef Fest

August 27
Wabaunsee Co. Ranch and Range Tour

September 11–20
Kansas State Fair

September 18–21
Kansas Junior Livestock Show

Kansas Feedlot Performance and Feed Cost Summary*

Gerry Kuhl, Extension Feedlot Specialist, Kansas State University

June 1998 Closeout Information**

| Sex/No. | Final Weight | Avg. Days on Feed | Avg. Daily Gain | Feed/Gain (Dry Basis) | % Death Loss | Avg. Cost of Gain/Cwt. | Projected Cost of July-Placed Cattle |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Steers: 28,201 | 1,205 | 154 (127-202) | 3.22 (2.83-3.61) | 6.07 (5.69-6.55) | 1.20 | \$53.97 (50.44-60.58) | \$49.17 (45.00-54.00) |
| Heifers: 19,892 | 1,098 | 160 (130-233) | 2.85 (2.21-3.30) | 6.44 (5.83-7.30) | 1.53 | \$57.98 (52.78-62.48) | \$51.33 (46.00-58.00) |

| Current Feed Inventory Costs: July 15 Avg. Prices | Range | No. Yards |
|---|-------------|-----------|
| Corn | \$ 2.64/bu | 7 |
| Ground Alfalfa Hay | \$81.14/ton | 7 |

*Appreciation is expressed to these Kansas Feed-yards: Brookover Feed Yard, Brookover Ranch Feed Yards, Decatur County Feed Yard, Fairleigh Feed Yards, Kearny County Feeders, Pawnee Valley Feeders, and Supreme Cattle Feeders.

**Closeout figures are the means of individual feedyard monthly averages and include feed, yardage, processing, medication, death loss and usually sold FOB the feedlot with a 4% pencil shrink. Interest charges are not normally included.

BEEF TIPS



K-State, County Extension Councils, Extension Dis-tricts, and U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating.

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