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News Release
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Make Hay When the Sun Shines . . .
Make Beef When the Grass Grows!

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. . .” The opening lines of the Charles Dickens classic, *A Tale of Two Cities*, is an excellent description of the summer grazing season.

On the one hand, spring and early summer generally offer conditions long on grass and short on stress, although the past two years this could be questioned. Cows are peaking in milk production and calves are gaining at the most efficient and economical period of their lives. Life is good for the cow/calf producer.

Then, around mid-summer, like sand through an hour glass, these “ideal” grazing conditions fade away and you’re faced with heat stress, diminished forage quality, reduced grazing time, and parasites literally sucking away profits. What is misleading is that pastures still may appear green, and palatable forage abundant; but in reality overall forage quality, digestibility, and nutritive value drop drastically after plant maturity.

Right when calf requirements begin to sharply increase, cows are simply not able to consume and digest enough of the low quality forages to perform to their genetic potential. You lose the opportunity to maximize pounds of beef produced per acre or per exposed cow at the exact time of year when cost of production is lowest.

Supplementing the cow’s forage diet with protein and energy offers a multitude of benefits to not just help offset problems and stall-outs associated with summer grazing, but to positively impact production. Evaluating the forage quality base can assist in determining what and how much supplement is needed for the cow’s production.

Following are listed problems, challenges, and opportunities associated with mid to late summer cattle production.

Problem: Heat Stress
Challenge: Decreased grazing time decreases digestible matter intake (DMI); increased body temperatures lower breed-back rate; panting/sweating expends energy.
Opportunity: Proper supplemental feed to meet nutritional needs will increase DMI. Cows are then able to more easily meet requirements and should have increased milk production far into lactation.

Problem: Reduced forage quality and availability.
Challenge: Decreased digestibility; nutrient intake drops when calves need it most; poor conversion and low calf average daily gain; lower conception rates.
Opportunity: Supplemental feeding, especially high protein, increases fiber digestion; more nutrients absorbed from lower quality forages; improved cycling/conception and

maintains cow condition. Calves gain to full genetic potential.

Problem: External parasites: horn flies

Challenge: Horn flies can reduce weaning weight by 10 -25 pounds. They bite up to 40 times a day, forcing animals to waste energy on replacing blood loss.

Opportunity: Many commercial products such as “fly control” minerals, pour-ons, and spays can reduce the negatives of this problem.

Don't forget to provide free-choice a quality 12-12 mineral.

What results should you expect in the summer from a sound cattle nutritional program?

- Better breed-back
- Shortened calving intervals and a more uniform calf crop
- Higher conception rates (especially on first-calf heifers)
- Heavier weaning weights
- Fewer health problems
- More pounds of marketable beef