

# Weekly Article

11-1-2021

## Getting Prepared for Winter Feeding Season

Hello, my Name is Richard Purdin with OSU Extension, Ag and Natural Resource Educator and Community Development Educator for Adams County. I hope to better inform local producers and the public of the latest news in the world of agriculture. The first week of November is here and fall like weather has finally settled in. To date there has not been a killing frost or freeze in the area but looking at the extended forecast that will soon change. The last week of October presented challenging weather for grain harvest due to heavy amounts of rain but November is ushering in cooler and drier weather that will hopefully help producers get the rest of their crops harvested. Colder weather might also help with all the insect and weed growth that seems to have been prolonged by the normal than average temperatures in October. The chill in the air is a good reminder that winter feeding season is on the way. Now is a good time to evaluate and prepare for feeding livestock during the winter or what I like to call mud season!

Winter weather in southern Ohio can be quite the challenge for livestock producers. With the prediction of warmer and wetter than average winter coming now is a good time to make sure your facilities and pastures are ready to endure the punishment of winter. I want to touch on some steps that can be taken now to make life easier for not only you (the producer) but the livestock too.

- **Feeding location is important-** Feeding areas should be in well drained areas with medium to minimal slope and easily accessed to feed and tend to livestock. A good example of a feeding area would be a knoll with medium slope, located next to a tree line or large hill to the north and plenty of sun access from the south.
- **Access to clean water-** Livestock should have access to clean healthy water close to the feeding area. It is recommended to have water within 200 ft of a feeding area but ideal is within the whole feeding area. Remember creeks and open ponds should not be considered water sources. Feeding areas should be located 100 ft away from wells, streams or natural waterways, and 1000' away from public water wells.
- **Consider installing heavy use area protection pad-** This is a practice that has become popular with many livestock producers the last 10-15 years and for good reason. These are gravel, paved, or concrete pads that are installed on the land to feed livestock. They are specially designed and sized to place livestock on full time for 4-6 months. One thing to remember since these pads are built impervious is that you should be prepared to hand manure after the winter-

feeding season is complete. USDA NRCS can help cost share with installing Heavy Use Area Protection Pads.

- **Locate away from neighbors-** Remember that by being considered a farmer today you make up less than 1% of the counties population and if you raise livestock, you make up even less than that amount. Many non-farming neighbors might not understand why you feed outside and manure buildup and mud that we as farm just get used to, is not seen in the same way. Locating feeding areas away from public and residential areas.
- **Remember good animal husbandry-** I often hear people say that farming is a business. This is true but it is also a passion and a great responsibility. One that I do not take lightly. Livestock should only have one bad day in their life until that day happens, they should be treated as humanely as possible. Consider wind breaks, shelters, and keeping mud and manure build up as low as possible. 4-8 inches of mud can reduce gain by 14% up to 24% can reduce weight gain by 25%.

Some other details to go over.

- November 20<sup>th</sup> – NAP Deadline for 2022, NAP provides financial assistance to non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of crop, or prevention of planting due to weather extremes. Call the local FSA office for details at (937)544-2033
- Annual OCA Replacement Female Sale- November 26, 2021, 6:00pm at the Muskingum Livestock Auction Co.

From the field

- Soybean harvest is about 40% complete.
- Corn harvest about 30% complete. Poor standability increasing concern due to weather conditions
- Vomitoxin issues might become a concern as corn stands in the field longer.
- Cover crops are still being planted.
- Manure application being made.
- Some producers have started feeding some supplemental hay.
- High demand for calves weighing 500-600lb calves preconditioned and ready to go on feed.