

Weekly Article

Let the Winter Games Begin

12-1-2020

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. December has been welcomed by a fresh layer of snow, with much of the county receiving 2-3 inches of snowfall. For many cow/calf producers this is the beginning of winter-feeding season or what is often referred to as mud season. Winter feeding is the largest annual cost in a cow/calf operation, accounting for almost 75% of the annual cost on the farm. So, one might say that if you can reduce the farms winter feed cost, then more money will be made as a result. This is true but easier said than done! A 1500-pound mature cow will consume approximately 38 pounds of feed per day, this could be hay, grain, silage, or fresh forage out of the pasture. A three-year study conducted by Ohio State University researchers Dr. Steven Loerch and Dr. Dave Barker showed that in an average 112-day winter feeding program utilizing stockpiled/ winter grazing practices was \$.63 cents per head a day. For a typical winter-feeding operation consisting of hay the price rose to \$1.61 per head a day, this was based on hay prices \$80/ton and \$150/ ton for supplement. This shows that extending the grazing season and dramatically reduce winter feed cost. There are some other considerations to consider such as animal performance and nutrition. Here are some things to consider no matter what type of winter-feeding system you use.

- Forage Quality – no matter if it is hay or growing grass, it is good to take samples and know what your feeding,
- It is not all about Crude protein- make sure to pay attention to Total Digestible Nutrients (TDN) and Net energy. TDN Levels of 65+ is what to strive for.
- Do not forget about minerals and vitamins - If a producer is extending the grazing season on cover crops, corn stalks, and or cool season forages, make sure to supplement with vitamins and minerals.
- Separate animals by age and stage of growth- No matter what type of feeding system you choose separating Heifers and first calf cows from older cows is important. Remember Heifers are still growing and need extra supplement to support body growth and bone development.
- Maintain body condition- It is a good rule of thumb that older cows should maintain a body condition score of 5 and 5.5 to 6 for heifers. Research shows when postpartum body condition is 5 rebreeding can take place 50 or less days. If the body condition score is less than 5 rebreeding can take place 80 or more days after calving.

Some other details to go over is

- USDA will be providing direct assistance to farmers impacted by Corona virus for the second time this year. Producers can contact the FSA office to sign up for their second round of payments for 2020. Sign up deadline is December 11th, 2020 you should call before coming to the office. The phone number to call is (937) 544 2033.
- Our new 2020 Plat Books are for sale. Call the office to make an appointment to buy one at (937) 544-2339.
- For producers who do their on-farm taxes, College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, OSU Extension is putting on a Farmer and Farmland Owner Tax School Webinar to help with tax preparation questions December 3rd 6:30- 8:30 pm. There is a \$35 fee to attend. To register go to <https://go.osu.edu/farmertax2020>
- December 4 2020 Buckeye Shepherds Symposium Webinar 2:00pm to 5:00 pm go to <https://go.osu.edu/ohiosheep>
- 2021 GAP recertification training will be available to producers online or through the mail. The Online training course will begin January 11th and run to June 30th, 2021. For more details or question please call the office at (937) 544 2339.

From the Field

In scouting field conditions for Adams County, the following is things I have noticed.

1. Corn Harvest is wrapping up
2. Some tobacco producers have began taking down and stripping.
3. Water table levels are starting to rise with the last few rain events.
4. Manure continues to be spread.
5. Corn stalks are being baled for forage, remember to replace loss nutrients!