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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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How Much Hay is Needed?

With only a month to go, I am sure many farmers will be happy to see 2018 end. It has been a struggle from the beginning to the end. I remember how muddy it was last winter. I actually had to get a 4-wheel drive tractor pulled out, on level ground, in an area where I feed hay. There was a time that I thought both tractors might be stuck, as all 8 wheels on the two tractors were just spinning, but going nowhere. After the mud of feeding came the struggles of getting crops planted with wet conditions. Hay making was delayed throughout the summer despite lush growth with the moisture throughout the growing season. Now we have crops still in the field after Thanksgiving. Some growers report hundreds of acres of soybeans and corn still not harvested. Field conditions continue to be too wet to harvest crops and several have damaged harvest equipment trying to harvest. The forecast does not improve for harvest, hauling manure or feeding hay in the near future.

With those thoughts, the harvest situation is simply wait and hope for improved conditions soon. As far as feeding hay, well that must go on despite the conditions. As I stated before, making hay was a challenge in 2018 and some producers have indicated that they do not think they have enough hay to make it through the winter. The following was in a recent Beef Blog and it addresses estimating and calculating how much feed you may need this winter. Glenn Selk wrote this and it appeared in the November 19 edition of the the Beef Blog. (www.thebeefblog.com)

Estimating forage usage by cows is an important part of the task of calculating winter feed needs. Hay or standing forage intake must be estimated in order to make the calculations. Forage quality will be a determining factor in the amount of forage consumed. Higher quality forages contain larger concentrations of important nutrients so animals consuming these forages should be more likely to meet their nutrient needs from the forages. Also cows can consume a larger quantity of higher quality forages.

Higher quality forages are fermented more rapidly in the rumen leaving a void that the animal can re-fill with additional forage. Consequently, forage intake increases. For example, low quality forages (below about 6% crude protein) will be consumed at about 1.5% of body weight (on a dry matter basis) per day. Higher quality grass hays (above 8% crude protein) may be consumed at about 2.0% of body weight. Excellent forages, such as good alfalfa, silages, or green pasture may be consumed at the rate of 2.5% dry matter of body weight per day. The combination of increased nutrient content AND increased forage intake makes high quality forage very valuable to the animal and the producer. With these intake estimates, now producers can calculate the estimated amounts of hay that need to be available.

Using an example of 1200 pound pregnant spring-calving cows, lets assume that the grass hay quality is good and tested 8% crude protein. Cows will voluntarily consume 2.0% of body weight or 24 pounds per day. The 24 pounds is based on 100% dry matter. Grass hays will often be 7 to 10% moisture. If we assume that the hay is 92% dry matter or 8% moisture, then the cows will consume

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about 26 pounds per day on an “as-fed basis”. Unfortunately we also have to consider hay wastage when feeding big round bales. Hay wastage is difficult to estimate, but generally has been found to be from 6% to 20% (or more). For this example, lets assume 15% hay wastage. This means that approximately 30 pounds of grass hay must be hauled to the pasture for each cow each day that hay is expected to be the primary ingredient in the diet.

After calving and during early lactation, the cow may weigh 100 pounds less, but will be able to consume about 2.6% of her body weight (100% dry matter) in hay. This would translate into 36 pounds of “as-fed” hay per cow per day necessary to be hauled to the pasture. This again assumes 15% hay wastage. Accurate knowledge of average cow size in your herd as well as the average weight of your big round bales becomes necessary to predict hay needs and hay feeding strategies.

Big round hay bales will vary in weight. Diameter and length of the bale, density of the bale, type of hay, and moisture content all will greatly influence weight of the bale. Weighing a pickup or trailer with and without a bale may be the best method to estimate bale weights.

Beef 509 in February

BEEF 509 program is held to raise the awareness level about the beef that is produced and what goes into producing a high-quality and consistent product. The program will take place on two consecutive Saturdays, February 16 and 23, 2019. The part of the program held on February 16 will include a live animal evaluation session and grid pricing discussion. Carcass grading and fabrication are among the activities that will take place February 23. The program will take place at The Ohio State University Animal Sciences building in Columbus. It will be critical to attend both sessions as participants will be assigned to teams that will work together throughout the program.

A maximum of 32 spaces will be available on a first come, first served basis. If interest in BEEF 509 exceeds the 32 spaces provided, names will be held and applicants notified of upcoming sessions. The registration fee for each BEEF 509 participant is $150. The program is the result of a partnership with the Ohio Beef Council, Ohio Cattlemen’s Foundation, The Ohio State University Extension and The Ohio State University Department of Animal Sciences. These entities will be funding all remaining costs associated with the BEEF 509 program.

Pesticide and Fertilizer Re-certification Dates

The first class will be on January 23, 2019. We will begin at 10:30 a.m. with the fertilizer training for one hour, take a half hour for lunch, then do the 3-hour pesticide training. The second opportunity will be on Thursday, February 7, 2019 beginning at 5:00 p.m. with fertilizer and following the same schedule.

The cost of the training will be $10 for those who only need fertilizer re-certification. If you need pesticide re-certification the cost will be $35 with or without the fertilizer. The $35 charge will include your meal. Please pre-register so I can let Frisch’s know how many to be prepared for at least one week prior to the date you wish to attend. They need to know so they can schedule enough people to work on those days. Again, you can pre-register in person or call the Adams Co. Extension Office and Barbie will take the registrations. The office is located in the Courthouse Annex in West Union or call 544-2339. The office hours are 8:30 a.m. until noon and from 12:30 until 4:00 p.m. Please pay when you pre-register.

Dates to Remember

January 16 — Small Farm College will begin. This is an 8-week course offered from 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. on Wednesday nights. This OSU Extension event will be in the round room at North Adams High School. Registration material will soon be available at the OSU Extension offices throughout Ohio including the Adams County Office. Materials are available online today. Go to the OSU Extension Website, http://adams.osu.edu

January 22 — Beef Quality Assurance Certification. Union Stockyards with the meal beginning at 5:30 p.m. The program will begin at 6:30 or once everyone is finished eating, so please do not come at 6:30 to eat. Call Janet at 393-1958 to register.