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For Immediate Release

WET CONDITIONS AFFECT CORNSTALK QUALITY, GRAZING MANAGEMENT

AMES, Iowa – Rainy weather conditions have affected the quality of cornstalks, so beef producers should allow more acreage per cow for grazing, members of the Iowa Beef Center said today.

Daryl Strohbehn, professor of animal science at Iowa State University, said the 4-6 inches of rain or more that fell in October caused major damage to the quality of Iowa's cornstalks.

The excess rain has leached nutrients from the cornstalks, therefore reducing the amount of feed energy. It also has affected the palatability of the cornstalks, causing cows to reduce their consumption and to be more selective in their grazing. The reduced palatability is caused by harvesting in wet, muddy conditions, which results in soil contamination in major portions of the husk and leaves.

Because of this, Strohbehn said producers should allow at least two to three acres per cow per month for grazing — more than the usual one to two acres needed.

“Producers have to understand their cornstalk grazing this fall simply will not last as long and need to be prepared to supplement the herd earlier than normal,” said Strohbehn, who works with the Iowa Beef Center at Iowa State University.

In fields where there were unusual amounts of harvest loss, this recommendation would not apply.

For more information about managing feed needs for cow herds, visit www.iowabeefcenter.org and refer to the Managing 2007-08 Cow Herd Feed Needs fact sheet. Other fact sheets also are available to assist producers with planning their feed needs for the winter.

The Iowa Beef Center at Iowa State University was formed in 1996 by a legislative mandate. Its goal is to support the growth and vitality of the beef cattle industry in the state. As part of ISU Extension, the Beef Center also serves as a central access point for all ISU programs and research related to the beef industry.

For more information about the Iowa Beef Center, visit www.iowabeefcenter.org.

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