

## Cow Winter Feeding Cost Assessment

Goal: Control winter feeding costs to increase profit potential from the cow herd.

	Score	High cost (1-2)	Average cost (3-4)	Low cost (5-6)
<b>Feed Inventory</b>				
Do you take an inventory of your winter feed supplies?		No, not until late winter	Yes, in the late fall or shortly before feeding begins	Yes, monitor feed supply throughout the growing season
When do you inventory the cow herd's feed needs?		When I start to feed hay	I start planning cow needs at weaning time	During the summer I inventory cows and estimate what my winter feed needs will be
When do you cull cows?		When they don't raise a calf	Open, old or problem cows are culled at weaning time	Cull cows are identified throughout the year, anything below average in production, bad eyes, teats, or feet are culled in late summer
	Score	High cost (1-2)	Average cost (3-4)	Low cost (5-6)
<b>Winter Grazing</b>				
What winter grazing options are available?		None	Owned stalk fields, hay stubble	Owned and leased stalk fields, stockpiled hay fields, winter annuals
What do you do to get the most of your winter grazing options?		Nothing	Limit cows to one field or area at a time	Strip graze and supplement to extend grazing time if cost-effective
	Score	High cost (1-2)	Average cost (3-4)	Low cost (5-6)
<b>Winter feed program</b>				
When do you finalize your winter feeding program?		We always feed the same way	In the fall, we adjust feeding programs based on forage supply	Throughout the year, I determine the costs and availability of forages versus concentrates to select least cost feeding programs
How do you determine how much to feed?		We feed it as much as they will eat	We estimate how much they should eat and feed about that amount	We use ration balancing programs to determine if their nutritional needs are met

How do you allocate forages?		Feed whatever we can get to at the time	Feed poorest quality first, save best quality for last	Feed poorest quality first, save best quality for growing animals/heifers, sell top quality hay and replace with low quality forage or stalks
How do you prevent feed waste?		Feed large bales with no feeders	Use hay rings or feeders	Tub grind, feed TMR in bunks or tires
Do you do nutrient analysis on your forages?		No	Sometimes	Yes
How do you decide what supplements to use in cow diets?		Only use traditional supplements such as lick tubs	Only use home raised grains based on availability and cost	Determine needs, supplemental feed costs, and then compare different feeding options
How do you store your hay?		In the fencerow of the hay field, under the grove, wherever it works	Net wrapped, in rows 4' apart,	Under roof, covered and on a raised base (rock, pallets, tires)
How do you store your silage?		In an uncovered pile or bunker		Well-packed, covered bunker or bags
How do you store your supplements?		In a pile	Covered pile (reduce weather impacts); timed delivery and usage	Stored in silage bags; timed delivery and usage; mixed with hay, cornstalks to extend storage period
	<b>Score</b>	<b>High cost (1-2)</b>	<b>Average cost (3-4)</b>	<b>Low cost (5-6)</b>
<b>Cow Groups</b>				
How do you separate cow groups?		All fed together	Separate cows and first calf heifers	Separate based on age, stage of production, and body condition
<b>Equipment</b>				
What equipment do you have for feeding cows?		Tractor, loader	Tractor loader, hay rings, mineral feeders,	Tractor loader, feeder/mixer wagon, hay rings, mineral feeders, bunks or tires so all cows have adequate bunk space
<b>Your Total Score</b>		<b>&lt;32 Reevaluate your feeding plans</b>	<b>33-70 Good job but some room for improvement</b>	<b>70-96 Excellent job, now fine tune the little things!</b>

## Example

Farm: Cyclone Ridge Cattle

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<p>What is the objective? Reduce the cost of wintering my cow herd.</p>		
<p>How will performance be measured? Amount of feed provided to the cow herd. Costs of the daily ration and total annual costs to feed the cows.</p>		
What are the essential steps?	Who is responsible?	What is the deadline?
Inventory the cow herd, replacement heifers and calves	John	November 1
Inventory feed supplies	John	September 15
Harvest north farm first and get cows on stalks	Jim	October 15
Fence hay field for stockpile grazing	Kids	October 15
Move cows to Dad's farm for grazing stalks	John	Early November
Move cows home for grazing stalks	John	Late November
Move cows to stockpiled hay fields	John	Mid December
Calculate winter rations	John	September
Contract co-product supplies if needed	John	September
Prepare winter feeding area - get bunks out and repaired, check feeder wagon,	Jim	August
Fix pen fences	Kids	August
Get feed notebook in feeder tractor to record amounts fed	John	December

