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## **Fall...Now Is The Time Improve Cow Condition?**

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As the forage in our pastures becomes more brown than green in appearance it is not uncommon to notice a few thin cows within the herd. As forage quality declines in late Summer/Fall it can be difficult for some cows to maintain body condition, especially young cows (first or second calf) or those with relatively high lactation potential. However, the best time to improve cow body condition on Spring-calving cows is post-weaning during the Fall.

The nutrient requirements of cows are at their lowest for approximately 45 to 60 days immediately following weaning. The energy requirements of a 1400 lb mature cow (20 lbs/d of peak milk production) over the course of a year and the low at weaning. At that time, less feed or forage resources are required to meet the maintenance requirements of the cow than at any other time in the production cycle. Improving cow condition during the Fall may also be regarded as an insurance policy against the unknowns of the upcoming winter months. Cows in good body condition (Body condition score 5 or greater, 1- 9 scale) experience cold stress at lower temperatures than cows that are thin (Body condition Score 4 or less).

There are many different management/ grazing strategies that may be used to improve cow condition during the Fall. Weaning calves greatly reduces maintenance requirements and is an essential first step. The extent to which cows can gain weight and improve body condition depends heavily on the quality and quantity of the available forage resources. If calves are weaned early in the fall, cows grazing native pastures can gain condition with little or small amounts of supplemental feed, provided the supply of forage is not limiting. If necessary, supplements that provide both energy and protein are preferred and in many situations energy may be more limiting than protein. Traditional range cubes, byproduct feedstuffs (distiller's grains, corn gluten feed), concentrates and even alfalfa may be used as supplements. Additionally, grazing opportunities such as corn or milo stalks with some grain present (grain drop) may also be used to put condition on cows during the Fall.

Fall is the time to improve condition on spring calving cows.

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### ***Harvest Safety***

If harvest has not already begun for you, it likely soon will be. It's an awesome and yet potentially dangerous time of year. Consider a few preventative steps to help reduce that danger.

An Extension Educator in Nebraska with experience as a firefighter and EMT wrote an article a few years ago sharing insight from the firefighters in his department about the increase in fire calls during harvest. He noted how often residue buildup around engine/exhaust systems and concealed drive belts/pulleys was the culprit. It's a good reminder to make sure dust/debris is regularly removed from machines and to check electrical systems to reduce sparking potential.

In addition to regular cleaning, consider starting harvest on the downwind side of the field when possible. In case of fire, flames will be pushed towards the harvested portion of the field, reducing potential damage. Carry a cell phone and be aware of service levels so emergency calls can be made. Everyone on the harvest crew should know the field location and be able to accurately relay that information to emergency personnel using local road numbers and letters.

Have fire extinguishers in the combine cab, one accessible from the ground and another in equipment or a service truck nearby. In case of fire, don't hesitate to use it after calling 911.

Road safety is important as well. You'll encounter lots vehicles moving from field to field. Do you have working flashers, lights, and adequate slow moving vehicle signs? It may seem logical for those involved with agriculture to slow down when we see farm equipment, but a slow moving vehicle may be just another obstacle to pass on the highway for someone else.

Having a plan cannot be stressed enough. Lots of moving parts make up a harvest operation. Combine. Tractor and grain cart. Semi. Auger. Grain Bin or Elevator. All have their own moving parts and hazards. Have a plan to make sure all are operated safely and that plans are in place should an accident occur. We don't like to think about it, but we need to.

Take care of yourself. Avoid replacing sleep with an energy drink or a meal with a candy bar. Take regular breaks to stop, stretch, and move around. Taking care of yourself physically can also help you stay more alert and prevent you from making unsafe or time wasting mistakes.

Harvest should be an enjoyable time of the year. Take measures now to make sure it is.

### ***Lawn Overseeding***

If your tall fescue lawn got a little thin this summer, now is a good time to do something about it. Our optimal overseeding window starts in September.

Start by mowing the grass short (1 to 1.5 inches) and removing the clippings. This will make it easier to achieve good seed-soil contact and increase the amount of light that will reach the young seedlings. A power raking might be in order for thatch layers between a quarter and three quarters of an inch. Deeper depths may require greater attention.

With thatch under control, soil can be prepared for seeding. For small areas, use a hand rake to roughen up soil before seeding. Larger areas may benefit from machine tillage/seeding. Verticut and slit seeder machines cut furrows in the soil (seed in two directions for best results). Core removal via aeration provides an excellent environment for seed germination and growth (make three to four passes to ensure enough holes for the seed).

As you seed, apply fertilizer as suggested by a soil test or starter fertilizer at the rate suggested on the bag.

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Cindy Williams  
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No News from Cindy today.

Nancy Nelson  
Meadowlark District  
Family Life

### **Beware of Caller ID Spoofing**

Spoofing is when a caller deliberately falsifies the information transmitted to your caller ID display to disguise their identity. To trick you into answering, spoofers may use local area codes and numbers that look familiar.

Here are some ways to avoid being spoofed:

- Don't answer calls from unknown numbers.
- If you answer and it's not who you expected don't hang on, hang up.
- If a caller asks you to hit a button to stop getting calls, just hang up.
- Never assume an unexpected call is legitimate. Hang up and call back using a number you can verify on a bill, a statement or an official website.
- Be suspicious. Con artists can be very convincing.
- Don't give out personal information such as account numbers, social security numbers, or passwords or answer security questions.
- Use extreme caution if you are being pressured for immediate payment.
- Report spoofing scams to law enforcement, the Federal Communications Commission and Federal Trade Commission.