

## MAKE PASTURE FERTILIZING PAY

Grass growth is stimulated by nitrogen fertilizer just like other crops. Although nitrogen fertilizer can be expensive, favorable cattle prices greatly increase the potential to profit from the increased grass growth produced from nitrogen.

Our Nebraska research shows that you get about one pound of additional calf or yearling gain for every pound of nitrogen fertilizer applied. With grazingland becoming more scarce and expensive, boosting yield with fertilizer should be especially valuable this year.

However, this fertilization rule-of-thumb assumes that the amount applied is within our general recommendations, which are based on the potential amount of extra grass growth expected. This is affected mostly by moisture. More importantly, it also assumes that your grazing management will efficiently harvest this extra growth.

If your animals graze continuously on one pasture throughout the season, much of the extra growth is wasted. They trample, manure and foul, bed down on, and simply refuse to eat much of the stemmy grass. Less than one-third of the extra grass ends up inside your livestock.

To make fertilizer pay, cross-fence pastures to control when and where your animals graze. Give animals access to no more than one-fourth of your pasture at a time, letting the rest regrow. Graze off about one-half of this growth before moving to another subdivision. Maybe even save one subdivision for hay. If your pastures aren't subdivided, fertilizer dollars might be better spent on cross-fences and watering sites.

Follow these suggestions and more of your pasture growth will be eaten, and more profits will come from fertilizer and pastures.

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