



Affected by the flood and need cow feed? Here are some options using donated feeds that may be available.

Donations of hay and feed have been coming in to help those affected by the flood. The University of Nebraska Eastern Nebraska Research and Extension Center (ENREC) near Mead, NE is one of the sites where these feeds are available for pick up. If you are a cattle producer, you may be asking what is available and what do I need?

To start to determine needs, several questions need to be asked:

- 1) What type of animal do I need to feed?
- 2) How long will I need to be feeding these animals?
- 3) What feed supplies do I have at home?

In addition to hay donations, there are some supplements available to pick up. Extension tested some of the hay donated, and it appears to fall into two basic categories: the perennial grass hay has a medium energy content but is low in protein, while the annual forages bales available are higher in energy and protein. Given this information, Nebraska Extension put together some options for feeding cows using feeds that are either available from the donation pool or could be purchased and used to supplement the hay that has been donated.



Early Lactation Cows

Cows in early lactation have the greatest energy and protein requirements. When using medium or high quality grass hay, supplemental protein and energy will be required to meet their needs. If feeding young or thin cows, then extra supplemental energy and protein will be needed. Thus, it is suggested that lactating 2- and 3-yr-old cows (young) and cows in < 4 BCS (thin) be fed separate from mature cows in good condition. Below is a series of possible options for meeting the cows' needs using grass hay and supplemental feeds. Ionophores can improve the amount of energy and protein available from feed and thus can be beneficial, especially for early lactation cows. However, care must be taken not to feed more than the label suggests. If there is a need to purchase feed, then distiller grains are likely the most economical source of protein. If dried distillers grains (DDGS) are unavailable, whole soybeans can be used to meet protein needs in many cases.

	Early Lactation Cows											
	<i>Lbs. per day intake (as-fed)</i>											
	Maintain condition (mature cows)						Young cows or thin cows needing to gain condition					
	O1	O2	O3	O4	O5	O6	O1	O2	O3	O4	O5	O6
Grass Hay (55% TDN; 6% CP)				30	30	28				30	30	26
High Quality Grass Hay (59% TDN; 11% CP)	33	31	32				32	30	32			
14% Pellet		6	3			4		6				7
36% Gain Master Feed (contains ionophore)			2		2			2	2		2	
DDGS (would need to purchase)	2			7	4		5		2	9	7	
Whole Soybeans (would need to purchase)						5						5

*Note: O1 = Option 1; O2= Option 2; O3 = Option 3, etc.

***Hay in the above scenarios are provided free choice. Whole soybeans should not be fed with supplements containing urea.



Non-lactating Cows

Cows that lost their calf have the lowest energy and protein needs. Given the energy content of the grass hay tested, cows provided with free choice hay would gain a little body condition if provided with a little protein. There have been some protein tubs donated which could be used for this purpose. Cows that are still pregnant will need a bit more protein than the protein tubs can provide. Below are a few ideas of options for supplementing non-lactating cows. Again, dried distillers grains (DDGS) are likely the lowest cost source of protein if available.

	<i>Lbs. per day intake (as-fed)</i>				
	Open Dry Cow	Pregnant Dry Cow			
		Option 1	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Grass Hay (55% TDN; 6% CP)	30	28	28	28	28
38% Feed Grower (contains ionophore)			1		1
DDGS (would need to purchase)		2	1		
Whole Soybeans (would need to purchase)				2	1
18% Lick Tub	0.75				

The possible combinations of feeds to meet cow needs are almost endless, given the variety of feeds that producers may have on hand.

For more help developing a feeding plan, contact Travis Mulliniks (308-696-6707) or Mary Drewnoski (402-472-6289).