

## Planting Creep Pastures

Creep grazing is a pasturing method that provides pasture only for calves that is better quality or more abundant than the rest of the pasture being grazed by cows. Creep grazing can increase weaning weights by 50 pounds using no high-priced supplements. Since calves that weigh 300 pounds or more rely on pasture for over two-thirds of their nutrition, the better the pasture, the faster these calves will gain.

Creep pastures must contain high quality, highly palatable pasture plants. Annual forages like oats, italian ryegrass, turnips, and pearl millet work well. A legume that makes excellent creep pasture is berseem clover. Berseem has high protein, is very palatable, yields well, grows fast, and does not cause bloat. Calves should do very well grazing a mixture of several of these annual forages.

Plant creep pasture where cattle tend to congregate, such as near water. Calves wander more freely from their mothers in these locations. Special access to the creep pasture can be provided by building gates with openings big enough for calves but too small for cows. Inserting creep feeder gates through the fence also works. Another technique I like to use requires no special gates. Simply raise the height of an electric fence between the creep pasture and the permanent pasture so calves can easily walk underneath the fence to the creep pasture while their mothers stay on the other side.

Whatever your choice, plant creep pasture that will provide high quality forage when your calves need it the most. Their weaning weight, and your profits, will both increase.

Dr. Bruce Anderson, Extension Forage Specialist  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
314 Keim Hall—East Campus  
Lincoln NE 68583-0915  
402-4742-2577  
[banderson1@unl.edu](mailto:banderson1@unl.edu)

