

# ON THE RANCH

## Farm Custom Rates

Part 1:

<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/epublic/live/ec823/build/ec823.pdf>

Part 2:

<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/epublic/live/ec826/build/ec826.pdf?redirected=true>

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## Cow Culling Suggestions

The current drought conditions are causing cow-calf producers to closely evaluate their herds to determine which animals should be culled due to the availability and price of pasture and rangeland and the prospects for a tight hay supply this fall:

1. Only take cow/calf pairs to grass. Non-pregnant cows or cows that lost their calves at calving should be culled. Therefore, only cows that have the potential to wean a calf are turned out to pasture.
2. Cull cows that have been identified as poor mothers, have unsound udders, teats, feet and legs, bad disposition, and other physical problems (cancer eye, etc.). Older cows should be checked carefully to insure they have a sound mouth and are likely to sustain productivity.
3. Identify the productive and nonproductive females in your herd. Use your individual records kept on each cow to identify cows that have consistently weaned calves that rank in the bottom 10-20% of your herd. Go back to the last two years of information collected and if a cow ranks low in both years, they should be candidates for culling.
4. Evaluate the number of heifers that you need to keep for replacements. Although these heifers require less total feed than cows, they need higher quality feed because they still have a nutrient requirement for growth. In addition, if conditions exist during the summer where hay supply is reduced due to the dry conditions, higher quality feed is also needed for replacement heifers this fall and this hay may be expensive.
5. There may be females in the herd that are suckling a calf but the intent for these females is to cull them after the calf is weaned. If the pasture and forage resources are limited, consider early weaning the calf at 60-90 days of age and selling the cow.
6. If there are herd bulls that are not going to be part of the bull battery the following year, consider culling them soon after the end of the breeding season.
7. It is more economical and efficient to feed the calf directly than to feed the calf through feeding the cow during drought situations. Design a ration for the calf that is palatable, dust free, and cannot be sorted. Once the calf is weaned, the cow can be culled or maintained on a lower quality ration, especially when the breeding season has been completed.
8. Selling only a few cull cows in a fiscal year will likely not have any tax implications. If a large number of cows are to be sold, then you may want to contact your Extension Management Specialist or your accountant to determine any tax implications.

Source: <http://www.extension.org/pages/13495/cow-culling-suggestions>

## FEED HIGH QUALITY HAY AFTER CALVING

Good cow nutrition is crucial following calving to get cows rebred. Today let's review some guidelines to make sure we do the job right.

Cows need good feed after calving. Each cow experiences much stress after calving because she is producing milk for her calf and she is preparing her reproductive system to rebreed. As a result, nutrient demands are high. Energy requirements increase about 30 percent and protein needs nearly double after calving. Underfeeding reduces the amount of milk she provides her calf, and it can delay or even prevent rebreeding. And if it gets cold, wet, or icy again, nutrient demands can sky-rocket.

Winter grass, corn stalks, and other crop residues are low quality right now because these feeds are weathered and have been pretty well picked over. So it is critical that the hay or silage you feed will provide the extra nutrients your cows need. Not just any hay or silage will do. Your cow needs 10 to 12 percent crude protein and 60 to 65 percent TDN in her total diet. If she is grazing poor quality feeds, your forage and supplements must make up any deficiencies.



Make sure your forage has adequate nutrients; if you haven't done so, get it tested now for protein and energy content. Also determine the nutrient requirements of your cows. Then feed your cows a ration that will meet their requirements. But don't overfeed, either. That is wasteful and expensive.

In summary, avoid underfeeding after calving; it can delay rebreeding and slow down calf growth. Use good quality forages to provide adequate nutrition. Your cows will milk well, rebreed on time, and produce healthy calves year after year.

Source: Bruce Anderson, UNL Forage Specialist



## My Horse University

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