

# ON THE RANCH

**Drought Strategies  
for Cow/Calf  
Producers**  
February 6  
11:00 a.m.  
Bloomfield

**Nebraska Poultry  
Industries  
Convention**  
Feb 20-21  
Divots Conference  
Center  
Norfolk, NE

## Winter Livestock Care

Source: Steve Tonn, UNL Livestock Educator

Rain, sleet, snow, ice, freezing temperatures – winter can be a real struggle for four legged animals. Most livestock are well adapted to cold weather, but sick, elderly, or young animals and those under unusual stress are more susceptible.



**Shelter:** Most livestock can handle wind chills about 20°F without much stress. But, to stay healthy, they need a dry place to escape cold rains, wet snow, and wind.

While natural protection and windbreaks may be adequate, three sided sheds opening away from prevailing winds are best. Allow enough room for livestock to lie down safely without being trampled or smothered. The larger the animal the more room they will need. Good, clean, dry bedding insulates livestock from the cold ground, which draws away body heat.

**Food & Water:** Feeding good quality hay or alfalfa to ruminants (cattle, sheep, goats, llamas, alpacas) and horses is effective for body heat production during cold weather. Body heat is generated when these animals are digesting these feedstuffs. During cold weather, animals will need to eat more to maintain their body condition.

One of the most important considerations for winter feeding is adequate water. Water is essential for digestion, which produces heat in fiber breakdown. Do not assume that livestock can meet their water needs by eating snow – to get enough water, eating snow would take most of their feeding time. Ingesting large quantities of snow also reduces the core body temperature.

Water above 40°F is ideal to ensure good consumption. Automatic water units are best; if that is not possible, be sure to provide water several times a day. In freezing temperatures, you will need to break ice or provide fresh water periodically if you don't have a tank heater.

**Mud:** All too often, where there are animals in the winter, there is mud. Feeding in muddy locations increases the amount of feed wastage. Mud makes foot and hoof diseases more likely. Livestock walking on frozen muddy ground are more susceptible to foot and leg injuries. With good management and planning, the negative environmental and animal health aspects of mud can be minimized.

The best winter practice is to make sure that your livestock is in good condition before cold weather hits. Addressing the nutritional, environmental and health needs of livestock in the winter will help to ensure optimal animal welfare and performance.

For more information checkout the following resources:

**Winter Livestock Care** [http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pdf/ec/ec1635\\_toc.pdf](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pdf/ec/ec1635_toc.pdf)

**Winter Livestock Management** <http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/sfn/w08livestock>

**Equine Winter Care** <http://www1.extension.umn.edu/agriculture/horse/care/equine-winter-care/>

# Drought Strategies for Cow/Calf Producers

Wednesday, February 6, 2013

Community Center

Bloomfield NE

11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Free meal provided

## Topics

- Grazing Management for 2013
- Dry Lotting Beef Cows
  - Do's and Don'ts
- Culling Strategies and Tax Consequences

*Program topics presented by  
University of Nebraska—Lincoln  
Extension Educators and industry  
personnel*

This workshop and meal are  
sponsored  
by UNL Extension in  
Knox County and the Knox County  
Cattlemen



Please pre-register for a meal count by phone, fax, or email by **February 1, 2013**.

Call: 402-288-5611

Fax (402)288-5612

Email: [knox-county@unl.edu](mailto:knox-county@unl.edu)

## Drought Webinars for Cow/Calf Producers

The drought of 2012 reduced forage supply and has produced many challenges for cow/calf producers. The following programs focus on management strategies that will help producers work through and develop plans for their cow/calf enterprise. They are available at <http://beef.unl.edu/web/beef/bsc2012-2013-droughtmtgstrategies> now or on the date it airs. Each webinar is presented by UNL Specialists and Veterinarians.

### Winter Feeding Consideration for the Beef Cow Herd Managing Calving

**If the Drought Ends: Grazing and Forage Options** (airs on NET2 at 7:00 pm January 17)  
**Grazing & Forage Options with Continuing Drought** (airs on NET2 at 7:00 pm January 24)

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### Lease or Own Cows & Bulls?

The decision whether to own or lease cows and bulls involves several factors in addition to cost comparison. Cost comparisons for an operator deciding whether to own (by purchasing or raising) or to lease, can usually ignore all costs for the cows except ownership and lease costs, provided that the cows to be leased are of similar size and quality to those to be raised or purchased. Comparing costs of raising cattle to leasing requires estimating the cost to raise a replacement heifer/bull to breeding, calving or other age depending on when she/he would enter the herd. Depending on feed costs and replacement purchase prices, raised replacements may cost more or less than purchased replacements.

**Cost Comparison** - To compare the costs of owning or leasing a cow, complete these 3 steps.

**Step 1.** Estimate ownership costs per year for purchased or raised cows or bulls.

■ **Economic depreciation (D)** is an expense claimed by the owner of a capital asset to compensate for the asset wearing out over some limited useful life. Economic depreciation may differ from depreciation taken for tax purposes, as depreciation allowed by the Internal Revenue Service may differ from values used for management purposes.

■ **Interest on investment (I)** is usually an opportunity cost on funds tied up in cow or bull ownership. Interest on investment in a cow or bull is the interest rate times the average value of the animal.

■ **Death loss (DL)** is another cost of cow ownership. Death loss should be calculated on average value.

■ **Property tax (PT)** may be assessed against cow and bull values in some states. In such cases these taxes should be added to the ownership cost.

■ **Total ownership costs (TO) = D + I + DL + PT.** Higher cow or bull values or interest rates or a shorter depreciation period will increase the cow and bull ownership costs.

**Step 2.** Estimate bull ownership costs per year per cow.

**Step 3.** Compare the cost of owning the cow with the cost of leasing a cow. In situations where the bull is provided as part of the lease, add the bull ownership cost per cow to the ownership cost of the cow for comparison.

**Cash lease.** A cash lease for a cow is the easiest to compare to owning. The conditions of the cash lease are important to the comparison of shared leases. If the cow owner stands death loss and is willing to replace infirm and open cows for reasonable reasons, then the comparison can be made straight forward.

**Share leases** may be a way to obtain the use of capital in the form of cows and/or bulls in situations where cash or credit is limited. These leases also permit the sharing of risk between the lessee and lessor. Just which risks are shared depends on how the lease is written. Comparing ownership to share leasing is more difficult than comparing to cash leasing. While all leases depend on negotiation between both parties, equitable lease arrangements usually share revenues in the same proportion as each party contributes to costs.

For more information, please see the *Beef Cattle Share Lease Agreements*  
<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/epublic/live/ec841/build/ec841.pdf>.