



DR. KARLA WILKE

COW-CALF AND STOCKER MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST

Limit Feeding Production Cows in Confinement

Since 2009 Dr. Wilke has been researching limit feeding production cows in confinement as a component of a limited perennial forage system and as a drought mitigation tool. Research suggests production cows can be limit fed nutrient dense rations and maintained in confinement when grazing is unavailable. Currently, best management practices, including biological response and economic impact, are being evaluated for the nursing calf raised in confinement. Information on management considerations for confined feeding can be found at <https://extensionpublications.unl.edu/assets/pdf/g2237.pdf>

Field Peas or Sugar Beets for Beef Cattle

When crops intended for human consumption are rejected due to market saturation or because they do not meet human consumption standards, alternative uses for those crops can alleviate market volatility for the crop producer and possibly result in an economical commodity for beef producers. Research with field peas has indicated they can be used in dry-rolled corn and distillers finishing diets without negatively impacting performance and as an energy or protein supplement for grazing cattle. Sugar beets can be used as energy source in limit fed confined cow diets and growing calf diets with similar performance to corn. In finishing diets sugar beet inclusion limited to 15% of the diet dry matter results in similar performance to corn.

Supplement and Marketing Strategies for Yearlings

Growing calves often graze through the summer on cool season grasses in western Nebraska. Traditionally, calves are marketed in the fall when the grass becomes mature. However, the best marketing strategy (mid-summer vs fall) and the best practices for supplementation during that time have not been well characterized either from a biological or economic standpoint. This experiment is currently in its second year at the High Plains Ag Lab near Sidney.

Karla Wilke is the Cow-Calf, Stocker Management Specialist for UNL at the Panhandle Research and Extension Center in Scottsbluff. Her research program includes finding more efficient and economical ways to produce beef cattle while sustaining the range resource. Since 2009 she has been studying limit feeding energy dense by-products mixed with crop residues to maintain beef cows in confinement to provide grazing deferment for range, maintain a core herd from liquidation, or as part of a system to reduce dependency on pasture. Additionally, she evaluates annual forage crops and alternative uses for crops such as field peas or sugar beets as components in beef cattle diets to improve sustainability and efficiency of cattle operations in western Nebraska. Most recently, she has begun evaluating supplementation and marketing strategies for stocker grazing programs. Her extension program involves working with producers to explain and implement practices found to be beneficial through research.

CONTACT

PHONE:
308 – 632 – 1245

EMAIL:
kjenkins2@unl.edu

