



## Considering Your Feed Resources Now that the Hay is In

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With the hot weather of late, no one wants to think about winter feeding. However, with the first hay crop in, many farmers are doing just that. With pasture resources dwindling as the season moves on, it's time to consider how to manage remaining pasture resources while minimizing the amount of feed you will have to import this winter. These decisions will be based on the weather thus far and its affect on your hay and silage harvest and also on the number of animals you wish to retain and feed through the winter.

Let's say you've had great yields and the bales are numerous and high quality. Excess is an opportunity to obtain an unexpected cash flow, reduce your own winter imports and to put some value back on the land through stockpiling.

You might want to bale and sell some of your hay crop. With shortages and cattle actually moving out of the Northern reaches of the Peace Region, a ready market is nearby for surplus producers and the farmers there will be thankful. It's also fine to save your bales for a rainy day (well, actually, a DRY day). Properly cured and dried hay will retain it's quality or 2 years and longer. If a field is set up for fencing and water, it might be possible to offer custom grazing for neighbors who are running low and need to give their pastures a break. Or you could even give one of your heavily used pastures an early retirement this year. You will thank yourself next spring when the extra recovery time in the fall results in bountiful pasture resources in spring. When grazing regrowth on hay fields heavy in alfalfa, be sure to observe the herd for signs of bloat.

Stockpiling surplus is an excellent way to both reduce your winter feed costs and improve your land through nutrient deposition. Stockpiling can be done in numerous ways and again requires that a field be set up with fencing and water. Bales can be grazed exactly where the baler left them or moved to an area you would like to improve. Cross-fencing will ensure a more even deposition of nutrients across the field. Swath-grazing is even easier way of stockpiling in which a stand is swathed directly after a killing frost (-5 C) and left where it lays. Cows can easily access swath through up to 13 inches of snow. Grazing standing crops such as corn is even easier yet. It all depends on what you have available and whether it can provide adequate nutrition and gain. Salt and minerals should always be supplied in addition to any additional feed resources that will balance the meal in terms of energy and protein.



**A city slicker is driving on a country road near High Prairie, looking at the cows in the field. His car splutters and suddenly stops. Not knowing too much about mechanics, he is looking under the hood trying to figure out what's wrong when a cow comes up to him. This cow looks at the vehicle and says "I think it's your radiator." The man is so astonished he runs away as fast as he can to the nearest farmhouse.**

**When the farmer answers the door, the man says "One of your cows just talked to me! She was giving me advice on my car!". The farmer replies "The one with the two black splotches around her eyes?" "Yes, exactly!" the man replies. "Oh that's Ethel." says the farmer. "But don't pay any attention to her, she doesn't know anything about cars."**

# EVENTS

## Pasture Tours

Join us **August 28-30th** for our second round of pasture tours.

Join us **August 28th** at Elzinga Farm in the M.D. of Greenview for an in depth look at how pastures and a feedlot can be managed in tandem.

Join us **August 29th** at Birch Hills Colony in Birch Hills County

Join us **August 30th** at McLaughlin Farm in the M.D. of Big Lakes for pasture tours and a close-up look at an innovative watering system.

## Field Day

Join us **August 31st** at L'Heureux Farm in the morning and Gaschnitz Farm in the afternoon to examine corn grazing as a season extender and the use of alternative feed crops such as turnip, tillage radish and millet.

Knowledgeable speakers and lunch at all events!

10:30am to 3:30pm

\$25/member, \$40/farm pair  
\$30/non-member, \$45/farm pair

Contact: Karlah  
(780) 523-4033 and register today!

**SAVE THE DATE!!**  
Western Canadian Grazing Conference Nov 27-29, 2012  
Red Deer, AB

Join us on our Facebook Group!

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/pcbfa/>

Now, lets say the converse is true and you're running short. Perhaps your pastures are dry and your hay crop is poor and you're not sure how you're going to meet the winter feed requirements of your herd. You can import bales and treat the shortage as an opportunity to improve soil health through winter bale-grazing. You can look for someone to custom graze for you or reduce your herd size and custom graze for someone else at a reduced stocking rate, providing yourself with reinvestment capital for next year.

Cropping aftermath (chaff), straw, failed crops and the regrowth on harvested fields are all resources that are available to you at an affordable rate. Imported feeds such as barley, oats and screening pellets can be fed to calves as creep feed to induce an early weaning. This leaves your cows in a better body condition going into winter and they will cost less to feed. While it is a temporary solution that may reduce the potential for a second cut, you can turn cattle out onto baled hay fields to graze regrowth provided you remove them in time for the critical regrowth period (4-6 weeks before the first killing frost).

You have a three-fold goal when considering your remaining grazing resources. It is firstly important to protect existing stands for the 2013 season. Overgrazing in the fall to compensate for a deficit is simply not worth the stand damage and delayed establishment in the following spring. Secondly you want to minimize winter feeding costs for the estimated 200 days of winter feeding. Thirdly, you should analyze your resources to see what additional nutrients are needed for a balanced diet that will ensure maintenance or gain.

If you must reduce herd size, take the time to consider your marketing alternatives. What with the drought in the American Midwest, we may well see a flood on the market in the late fall and it would be a shame to catch the tail end of that after the great prices we've seen so far this year. Proper prior planning will help you avoid that situation.

## September 30, 2012 AgriStability Supplementary Forms Deadline Fast Approaching

### CONTACT YOUR LOCAL AGRISTABILITY FIELD ANALYST TO DISCUSS:

- Questions regarding completing your supplementary forms
- E-filing your supplementary forms
- Submitting your 2012 AgriStability Program Fee prior to the December 31, 2012 deadline
- Other questions regarding AgriStability or AgriInvest

September 30, 2012 is the deadline to file your 2011 Supplementary Forms without a penalty. December 31, 2012 is the final deadline (with penalty) to file your supplementary forms for the 2011 program year.

To receive a copy of your supplementary forms, please contact any District Office or toll free at 1-877-899-(AFSC) 2372. Your local AgriStability Field Analyst is:

**Linda Bennett**

**Grande Prairie & Falher**

Ph. 780-538-5234

**Edith Kaut**

**Fairview & Spirit River**

Ph. 780-835-2295

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