

# Everything You Need to Know About Stockpiled Grazing!

A list of resources available to producers for extending the grazing season using stockpiled forages

**Do you operate a mixed beef and grain farm consisting of several hundred head of cattle and several hundred acres of pasture and rotated forage and grain land?** Do you traditionally bring home your cattle in the fall and feed hay, chopped silage or grain near your yard during the winter? Are you looking to extend the grazing season for your cattle as long as possible? If so, you may want to consider stockpiled grazing!

Below is a list of questions that need to be addressed, as well as relevant resources on where you can begin to find information to help develop your extended grazing strategy.



## What is stockpiled grazing?

*It is a form of deferred grazing where the producer stockpiles the forage grown during the spring and summer for when the cows need fall or winter feed, or for early spring grazing. It can be done by using either perennial or annual species.*

Read more at: Alberta Agriculture and Forestry / Information / Crops / Forages & Range / Pasture Systems / **Agronomic Management of Stockpiled Pastures**. [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex12422](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex12422) and [http://www.foragebeef.ca/app33/foragebeef/index\\_body.jsp](http://www.foragebeef.ca/app33/foragebeef/index_body.jsp)

Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (MAFRD) / Crops / Production / Forages / Production and Management / Feeding / **Feeding Quality of Stockpiled Forage**. [https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/production/forages/pubs/feeding\\_quality\\_stockpiled\\_forage.pdf](https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/production/forages/pubs/feeding_quality_stockpiled_forage.pdf)

## Does stockpiled grazing reduce the cost of production for our operation?

*Cost savings can be realized because of the reduced harvesting, hauling, feeding and manure removal costs. However, shelter, bedding, fencing and water requirements still must be considered. The standing hay cost should also be included to see how this practice will affect overall production costs.*

Read more about calculating production costs at: MAFRD / Business and Economics / Financial Management / Production Economics / Beef / **Beef Cow-calf Production Costs** based on 150 head cow herd – 2015. <http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/business-and-economics/financial-management/cost-of-production.html#beef> and at

MAFRD / Business and Economics / Financial Management / Farm Software and Worksheets / Forage and Livestock / **Standing Hay Costs**. <http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/business-and-economics/financial-management/farm-software-and-worksheets.html>

## What are the land and forage requirements?

*One of the most important management decisions in influencing the quantity and quality of the forage that will be available for fall grazing is the “summer resting date”. This is the date in the summer when the animals are removed from the pasture so that it can re-grow for use in the fall and winter. If you want to graze dry beef cows in November and December, you will want a system designed to produce the maximum yield possible as long as the quality is sufficient to maintain the dry cow. It is important that the strategy for stockpiled grazing fits into the overall annual grazing and forage management plan.*

For more information on stockpile management, visit: Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Beef / **Forages and Pastures**. <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/beef/facts/99-009.htm> and <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/field/news/croptalk/2010/ct-0910a7.htm>

Read more about forage selection at: Sask Forage Council / Resources / SFC Resources / **Forage Species Selection CD** [http://www.saskforage.ca/joomla/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=37&Itemid=51](http://www.saskforage.ca/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=37&Itemid=51)

Read more about planned grazing management at: Sask Forage Council / Resources / SFC Resources / **Managing Saskatchewan Rangeland (pages 63-67)**. <http://www.saskforage.ca/publications/ManagingRangeland.pdf>

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry / Information / Crops / Forages & Range / Varieties / Plant and Insect Identification / Crops / **Alberta Forage Manual**. [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex16](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex16)

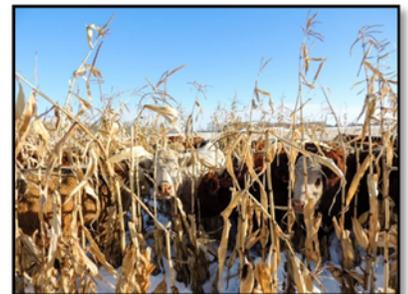
For a comparison of different annuals, see **Annual Forage Species Demonstration** at: [http://www.saskforage.ca/Coy%20Folder/Projects/ADOPT/ADOPT\\_Annual\\_Forage\\_Species\\_Demo\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.saskforage.ca/Coy%20Folder/Projects/ADOPT/ADOPT_Annual_Forage_Species_Demo_Final_Report.pdf)

Learn more about the new grazing management tool called **PastureMap** at: <http://www.summertechologies.com>

## What are the fencing, water, labour and other requirements?

*Grazing annual or perennial grasses and legumes to extend the grazing season can result in significantly less labour compared to feeding cattle in confinement. Strip grazing will require the movement of fencing every 2-3 days dependent on stocking density and forage availability but can effectively reduce forage wastage. Control of access to forage is of particular importance when grazing corn to reduce the risk of grain overload.*

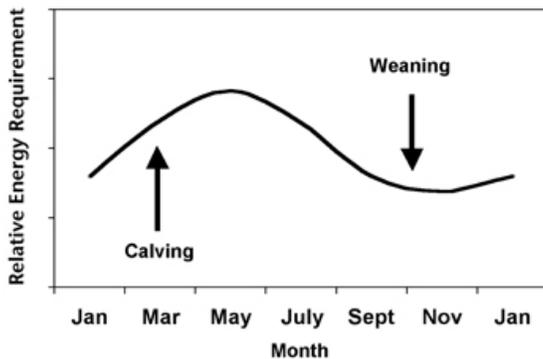
*Another consideration for successful stockpiled grazing is the need for water and wind breaks during the winter months. If water is not pumped by a water system, ice may need to be chopped daily at the water source. Wind breaks may also need to be moved if portable fences are used. Cattle may need to be fed in the yard, or in a more sheltered area, on extreme weather days.*



For more information see: **Stockpiling Perennial Forages** at:

[http://www.saskforage.ca/Coy%20Folder/Projects/Stockpiling/Stockpiling\\_Perennial\\_Forages\\_Final%20Report\\_website.pdf](http://www.saskforage.ca/Coy%20Folder/Projects/Stockpiling/Stockpiling_Perennial_Forages_Final%20Report_website.pdf)

## How will we make sure that we are meeting the nutrient requirements of our animals and keeping our animal healthy?



*This can be done by forage and hay testing, ration balancing and body condition scoring. It is important to match forage availability and nutrient requirements (including water needs) with calving date. Remember that energy requirements increase considerably immediately before and just after calving.*

*Additional supplementation may be required and consulting with a nutritionist or your veterinarian is advised.*

To learn more about nutrient requirements of beef cattle, review the easy-to-use ration balancing software program called **CowBytes**. This program can be viewed and purchased at:

[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex12486](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex12486)

## Are there environmental benefits?

*Stockpile grazing can have environmental benefits as it keeps the cattle out of confinement longer, resulting in lower fuel emissions from harvesting, feeding and manure spreading. The forage residue that is left from stockpile grazing can provide cover over the winter, can reduce run off and improve to the soil profile through decomposition.*

*However, it is also important to note that nutrient runoff from these areas in the spring can be a concern. Caution is advised when deciding on extended grazing sites to avoid areas that drain directly into a body of water.*

Read more at: The Western Producer (Mar. 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014). **Study to improve nutrient management practices.**

<http://www.producer.com/2014/03/study-to-improve-nutrient-management-practices/>

Read more about managing for good stewardship at cattle wintering sites at:

[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex3517?opendocument](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex3517?opendocument)

## Are there any financial assistance programs available for implementing this production practice?

*For Manitoba producers, financial assistance programs may be available through MAFRD. It is important to note that completion of the Environmental Farm Plan and/or the Verified Beef Program is required to apply for certain programs. For more information on current available programming please contact your local MAFRD GO Centre.*

*Cont.*

*Similarly, Saskatchewan producers may be eligible for funding through the Environmental Farm Plan, Farm Stewardship Program and Agri-Environmental Group Plans. The Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program*

*also provides cost-shared funding to help develop secure water sources. See the Government of Saskatchewan website for more information about these programs.*

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For an electronic copy of this fact sheet, please visit the Manitoba Beef Producer website at [www.mbbeef.ca](http://www.mbbeef.ca)