EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
STOCKPILED GRAZING!

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

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. Stockpile grazing can be done by using either perennial or annual species.

Manitoba Agriculture / 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)

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)

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.


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.


Annual Forage Species Demonstration at: http://www.saskforage.ca/Coy%20Folder/Projects/ADOPT/ADOPT_Annual_Forage_Species_Demo_Final_Report.pdf

Pasture Map at: http://www.summertechnologies.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 depending 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.

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, reduce run off and improve the soil nutrient 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 about managing for good stewardship at cattle wintering sites at: http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex3517?opendocument

HOW CAN YOU MAKE SURE NUTRIENT REQUIREMENTS ARE MET?

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 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

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!

![Image of a field with cattle]

**Everywhere you need to know about stockpiled grazing!**
ARE THERE ANY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AVAILABLE FOR IMPLEMENTING THIS PRODUCTION PRACTICE?

For Manitoba producers, financial assistance programs may be available through Manitoba Agriculture. 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 Manitoba Agriculture GO Centre.

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