



## Colorado State University Extension Golden Plains Area Extension

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### **Cattle and All Those Ears**

The high plains winds caused havoc with this current corn harvest. Corn loss in some fields is being reported between 20 to 60 bushel, and up to 80 per acre in extreme cases. Although not ideal, this does provide grazing opportunities for cattle producers willing to manage fields with extreme amounts of corn available. It is important to remember that management is the key. Cattle are able to acclimate to high corn diets, but engorging on corn will cause lactic acidosis as the rumen microbial population is changed to rapidly. In short it can be fatal or cause cattle lasting negative production effects.

Producers need to manage cattle properly to ensure a positive and productive outcome. An article from the University of Nebraska Extension (<https://beef.unl.edu/down-corn-problem-or-opportunity-cattle-producers>) outlines the steps necessary to prepare cattle to enter fields with high amounts of corn. Basically, cattle can be acclimated to graze such fields by adding corn to their diets and gradually increasing to a predetermined daily consumption over a ten day to two week period. This may be the safest and best option. Another preventive measure may be the use of biologics. One such product called Lactipro *advance*® from MS Biotec claims beef producers could cut roughage-to-grain transition time by up to 50%. Such products change the rumen environment to allow for quicker utilization of high energy grains. Prior to using such products it is recommended to consult with your nutritionist and veterinarian.

If management of the cows is not an option, managing the fields may be. Cross fencing fields, or pivot fencing options (see the previously mentioned Nebraska article) can limit each cow's daily corn consumption. Likewise, increased cows per acre or limiting available acres available is a wise to control intake in a field. If possible, time grazing may work in the right situations. This allows a set time access to fields and utilizes electric fencing to remove and confine cattle to already grazed areas for the remainder of the day. In either case it is the management of the situation or quite possibly a combination of different strategies will allow producers to make the most of this opportunity.

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