



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Colorado State University Extension Golden Plains Area Extension

Contact: Travis Taylor
Title: Area Extension Agent (Livestock)
Phone: (970) 332-4151
E-mail: travis.taylor@colostate.edu

For Immediate Release
(Wray, CO)

October 28, 2020

Down Corn, Opportunity for Cattle Producers

Corn loss due to recent high winds has given cattle producers a beneficial grazing opportunity in the Golden Plains Extension counties. Corn loss in some fields is being reported and, this does provide grazing opportunities for cattle producers willing to manage the corn available in fields. 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. It can be fatal or cause lasting negative production effects.

Producers need to manage cattle properly to ensure a positive and productive outcome. A University of Nebraska article, “Down Corn: Problem or Opportunity for Cattle Producers,” (<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 ten days to two weeks. 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 percent. These products can change the rumen environment to allow for quicker utilization of high energy grains. Prior to using these 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 wise to control intake in a field. If possible, time grazing may work in the right situations. This allows a set time access to field 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 that will allow producers to make the most of this opportunity.

###

Colorado State University Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.

Colorado State University Extension is your local university community connection for research-based information about natural resource management; living well through raising kids, eating right and spending smart; gardening and commercial horticulture; the latest agricultural production technologies and community development. Extension 4-H and youth development programs reach more than 90,000 young people annually, over half in urban communities.