

Take stock of your herd's nutrition.



Shauna Hermel, editor
shermel@angus.org

One of the cow's greatest assets is her ability to turn some pretty poor feedstuffs into life-sustaining protein. We can turn her out to forage landscapes ranging from the plush hills and valleys of the grain states, where an acre is more than enough to support her nutrient needs, to the arid Southwest, where she might have to scour 50 acres or more. She can adapt to environments ranging from the marshes of Florida to the slopes of the Rockies. In fact, she can make it appear so easy we can fall into the trap of not thinking about what's out there for her to eat.

Recent rains have improved drought conditions across the country, but pastures are still recovering, and there are areas still facing drought. Where my family ranches in northeast Missouri, pasture conditions are as bad as I've seen. I don't recall the ponds ever being this dry.

This kind of year makes you appreciate that old Kentucky 31. It will rain eventually, and that fescue will come back — hopefully soon enough to stockpile. If not, we'll be relying on that cow's ability to consume a variety of feedstuffs given ample time to adapt.

Back to the basics

Times of shortage bring us back to the basics: What does it take to maintain a cow, keep her content, and support her reproductive capacity? How can we make the most of what we do have? What do we need to supplement to make up for shortages?

Intern Taylor Edwards, a senior in ag communications at Auburn University, tackled a couple stories addressing those questions. One focuses on pasture management (see "Manage Pastures for Peak Performance," page 50). The other focuses on weaning calves at a younger age (see "Managing Early-Weaned Calves," page 28).

Since we'll be headed to Florida this fall for Angus Convention (see page 98), let's turn to a University of Florida source. Matt Hersom, associate professor there, describes nutrient requirements of beef

Table 1: Predicted forage dry-matter intake, as % of body weight, based on forage quality and cow production stage

Forage type	Gestating	Lactating
Low-quality (<52% TDN):		
Un-supplemented	1.8	2.0
Protein supplemented	1.8	2.2
Energy supplemented ¹	1.5	2.0
Medium-quality (52%-59% TDN):		
Un-supplemented	2.0	2.3
Protein supplemented	2.2	2.5
Energy supplemented ¹	2.0	2.3
High-quality (>59% TDN):		
Un-supplemented	2.5	2.7
Protein supplemented	2.5	2.7
Energy supplemented ²	2.5	2.7

SOURCE: Document AN190, University of Florida Animal Sciences Department, UF/IFAS Extension.

¹Above 4 lb. of supplement, each 1 lb. of supplement decreases forage consumption by 0.6 lb.

²Pound-for-pound substitution of supplement for forage.

cows in a resource available online at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/AN190>. It includes tables on water and nutrient needs of cows of different classes and weights. Table 1 addresses keeping cows content with bellies full. Just remember, a cow can starve on a full belly if what she eats doesn't have the nutrients she needs.

In his "Health & Husbandry" column on page 42, columnist Brad White explains how to use body condition score (BCS) to evaluate your nutrition program. Dan Shike highlights some of the latest nutrition research in "The Digestive Tract" (see page 46).

Supplementation strategy

Articles in the *Angus Beef Bulletin EXTRA* supplement those in the magazine like your mineral program supplements your forage base. Nutrition-related themes have dominated recent editions. Subscribe to access stories such as July's "Front Page" article on ammoniating low-quality forages to stretch forage supplies, as well as upcoming articles on alternative feedstuffs like cottonseed.

Signing up for the *Angus Beef Bulletin EXTRA* will add two emails per month to your inbox, with maybe an additional polling request or extremely important announcement a couple times a year.

If you prefer to listen rather than read, *Angus Beef Bulletin Audio* provides an audio version of the *EXTRA*.

Angus At Work, a separate podcast, provides news and information on health, nutrition, genetics, marketing and management via interviews with industry experts and thought leaders. **ABB**

Digital EXTRAs

