

Fall Beef Nutrition Meetings

The nutrition of the southeastern beef cow herd can make or break the operation. The old adage is that you can not starve a profit out of a beef cow. Improper nutrition can affect calf weaning weights, rebreeding weights and number of calves born alive.

Feed costs represent 60 to 70% of yearly cow-calf expenses. Feeding the cow herd too much or incorrectly can easily put feed costs over budget. One potential way to keep feed costs under control is to reduce the dependence on stored or purchased feed. Keeping an adequate, quality source of growing forage available for the cow herd year round not only reduces dependence on stored feed, but can also keep the feed budget in line.

Nutritional requirements for the cow herd are dependent on the stage of production. A lactating cow or a growing, weaned calf has higher nutritional requirements for energy and protein than a dry, pregnant cow. This is one reason a defined calving season is recommended. It allows you to manage feed resources, which in times of drought and high fuel and fertilizer prices becomes more critical. In a cow herd with all stages of production, some cows will consume more nutrients than they need, while others fall short leading to a very inefficient and costly operation.

How do you know what the nutritional requirements are for your herd? How many days of grazing do you really have left in the pasture? Is winter grazing or feeding commodity feeds right for your operation?

If you would like to know more about beef cow-calf nutrition, a Fall series of nutritional meetings will be held at the Lauderdale County Extension Office, 802 Veterans Drive, Florence. These meetings are designed to provide participants with practical, applied nutritional tools. They will be taught by beef nutrition and forage experts from around the United States. Meetings will be held on the last Tuesday night of each month from July through November. The first meeting is Tuesday, July 31 from 6:45 to 9:00 p.m.

For a complete program, contact your local Alabama Cooperative Extension Office at 766-6223. Program cost is \$50 for the entire series or \$15/night.

The Fall series of beef nutrition meetings is coordinated by the Gulf Coast Beef Education Alliance, which is Cooperative Extension professionals from Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi. See you July 31 at 6:45 pm to learn cow nutritional needs and forage availability.

Randall Armstrong
County Extension Coordinator
Lauderdale County Extension System
766-6223