

## Fall Months Beef Cow Nutrition

Cows calving in a body condition score six (a cow in a fleshy body condition with no ribs showing) rebred quicker with a higher pregnancy percentage than cows in thinner body condition. The cost effective method to have cows in a body condition score six at calving begins six months before targeted calving date when cows are entering the middle one-third of pregnancy. As an example, if you plant to start calving March 1, then the middle one-third of pregnancy will be the fall months of September, October and November. Cows at this stage of pregnancy have their lowest nutrition needs. Additionally, these fall months generally feature moderate weather conditions. In combination, these two factors, low nutritional needs and low environmental stress, make it an excellent time to put body condition on a beef cow. Improving cow body condition will reduce mid-winter feed costs because a fleshy cow will be more physically prepared to handle harsh winter weather.

The nutritional strategy you will utilize to enhance cow body condition will vary with forage type available and how it's been managed.

With native range on non-fertilized Bermuda, cows will benefit by being supplemented with one to two pounds of a high protein supplement daily during the fall months. Native and non-fertilized Bermuda will be maturing and losing protein content. Cows grazing these forages will enter a protein deficient nutritional state if protein supplementation is not provided. Supplementing protein on native and Bermuda in the fall increases forage intake, improves digestibility and boosts weight gain.

Cows grazing fescue or fertilized stockpiled Bermuda during the fall months will generally not require protein supplementation. We expect fescue and fertilized Bermuda to have protein contents in the teens, adequate to meet a cows protein needs. With adequate intake, cows should gain weight readily on these forage types. Weight gain can be enhanced by feeding one to three pounds of an energy feed daily to enhance weight gain.

For additional information on beef cow nutrition, contact the Tulsa County OSU Extension Center (918) 746-3725.