Protein Feed Pricing

Feed prices, following the sharp rise in grain and oil seed prices, are at an all time high. Due to the use of corn for ethanol production, and a shortage of grains and oilseeds around the world, it appears fuel prices will remain high for at least the next few years. High feed prices will challenge the economics of production for all livestock producers. The purpose of this article is to illustrate the potential winter feed needs of cattle producers to winter beef cows in the area, show potential costs, and to provide alternatives to producers when purchasing winter feeds.

To winter an 1100 pound beef cow on native grass in eastern Oklahoma requires about 450 pounds of 38% crude protein cubes or about 171 pounds of crude protein to meet her protein deficiency from October to April 15. The chart below shows a variety of protein sources, current bulk price, pounds required to meet a cows winter needs and the estimated cost to winter a cow with the protein source.

Feed	$/Ton	#'s Required	$Cost to Winter/Cow
38% Cube	344	450	77.4
48% Soybean Meal	370	356	65.9
38% Linseed Meal	290	450	65.3
41% Cottonseed Meal	303	417	64.6
21% Corn Gluten Pellet	190	814	77.3
20% Cube	254	855	108.6
17% Alfalfa Hay	150	1006	75.5
16% Wheat Midd Pellet	155	1069	82.9

Granted, it is several months before winter feeding begins, but, planning winter feed needs now and watching the protein market may allow you to find a winter feed bargain.

Gear up to buy bulk feed when possible. Sacking adds 20 to 30 dollars a ton to feed costs.

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