

Column Name- The Heartland Minute

By: Lindsay Shorter

K-State Research and Extension Greenwood County

Agriculture Extension Agent

“Cow Conditioning Before Winter”

Are your cows ready for winter?

Fall is a great time to take an inventory and look at the condition of your cattle before the winter months and before cows' advance to the later stages of gestation. Fall is a great time to take a look and really evaluate the body condition score (<https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3230.pdf> or pick up the publication at the extension office) on your cows before heading into the winter months. Now is a great time if you do have some thinner cows to possibly consider strategically supplementing those to meet the cow's protein and energy requirements. This may mean sorting them off to make sure they are putting on those extra needed pounds.

There are lots of options this time of year to help supplement thinner cows. Whether you are grazing dormant native grass, crop residue, or cover crops. One of the important things to remember if you are needing to add pounds to thinner cows, is to make sure you're meeting that cow's nutrition requirements. Many times, producers know that cow's protein requirements are important, but we need to remember the cow's energy requirements are equally important.

If baled forages are going to be a portion of your cow's diets, now is a great time to test those bales. A forage probe is a great tool to help take those samples. The Greenwood County Extension office has a hay probe that can be borrowed. The Extension Office also has access to a ration building software that is great for producers to utilize to make sure their cow's diets will meet their nutritional requirements. If you're needing assistance creating your ration (or you would just like to check it) going into winter time, call the extension office today for an appointment.

For more information regarding Agriculture and Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, or K-State Research and Extension call the office at 620-583-7455, email me, Lindsay Shorter, at lindsayshorter@ksu.edu, or stop by the office which is located inside the courthouse. Be sure to follow K-State Research and Extension- Greenwood County on Facebook for the most up-to-date information on Extension education programs and the Greenwood County 4-H program.