Corn Stover Feeding Systems

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I will discuss the four main topics for corn stover feeding to beef cows

Corn Stover Discussion

- Grazing
- Feed Analysis
- Utilization in Beef Cow Diets
- Supplementation
Grazing Stover

- General rule of thumb for grazing corn stover:
  - 30-35 days /acre/cow (assuming 150 bushel corn)
  - Seasonal and weather conditions may limit forage quality
  - Feed quality declines every day cows are on stover
  - Supplemental feeding may be necessary to maximize utilization
  - Limitations include fence, water, location, soil compaction, climate

Grazing is the first and cheapest choice. Below are some general “rules of thumb” you need to consider when planning to graze corn stover.
Utilizing corn stover need to be targeted at two of the four nutritional requirement phases.

Cow Diets

• Four general phases of nutritional requirements
  
  – Early, Mid, and Late-Gestation, Early-Lactation
  – CS is best utilized in the early-mid gestation phases
  – Feeding will require cows to “learn” to consume corn stover especially the lower stalk portion
  – Make the cows work during early-mid gestation phases
  – Keep track of Body Condition Scores
Simple Cow Diets
(assuming 1300# beef cow)

• Early Gestation
  – 2/3 (20#) corn stover
  – 1/3 (10#) average quality grass/alfalfa hay

• Mid-Gestation
  – 1/3 (10#) corn stover
  – 2/3 (20#) average quality grass/alfalfa hay

• Late Gestation
  – Limited CS based on body condition and lactation needs

Here are some simple beef cow diets you can easily manage for beef cows utilizing corn stover
Feeding Systems

- Grazing – first choice

- Round Bale Feeders
  - Consider excess forage waste (10-15%)
  - Feed refusal may be a problem

- Tub grinding and bunk feeding
  - best alternative for larger herds
Here is a photo of segregating bales with poly reel/wire and recycling refused corn stover from the previous day onto the next hay bale. (It’s like putting frosting on the cake but the cows probably don’t agree! Utilizing this method will allow the left over stalks to be consumed instead of wasted.
# Feed Analysis

## Nutrient content of corn stover/stalklage (% of DM)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrient</th>
<th>Michigan 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NRC, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDN, %</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE(_{r}), Mcal/lb</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE(_{p}), Mcal/lb</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crude protein, %</td>
<td>6.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDF, %</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADF, %</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ash, %</td>
<td>11.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calcium, %</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phosphorus, %</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potassium, %</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plan ahead, take feed inventories and make your cows work by utilizing less expensive feed resources. Your management during drought years will make you a better manager when it comes to winter feeding ever year thereafter.

Supplementation

- Cows will balance needs based on alternating feeding scheduled (hay and corn stover over 2-3 days)
- Supplemental protein may be necessary
- Take feed samples whenever quality is questionable
- Utilize ration balancing software

- Oklahoma State University - Cowculator
  [http://beefextension.com/new%20site%202/cccalc.html](http://beefextension.com/new%20site%202/cccalc.html)
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