



Forage Management and Drought - Supplementation Strategy

Drought conditions across several regions of the United States continue to create challenges for livestock producers related to forage supply and quality.

FORAGE QUALITY AND SUPPLEMENTATION

We want to provide enough nutrients to the animal to support optimal growth. However, we want to minimize the amount of nutrients that exceed the animal's requirements. This minimizes waste and reduce cost. For example, we can feed a combination of grass hay, corn, and ProPellet distillers to meet the requirements for a yearling steer. We can also provide similar nutrients by just feeding a better-quality forage like alfalfa hay.

Ingredient	Price (\$/ton)	Diet 1 (lbs/hd/day)	Diet 2 (lbs/hd/day)
Grass Hay	100	14.48	---
Alfalfa Hay	235	---	19.11
Corn	270	2.67	---
ProPellet	350	1.17	---
Mineral	1,000	0.25	0.25
Cost/hd/day	---	\$1.42	\$2.37

Feeding a poorer quality forage along with ProPellet supplementation reduced feed costs by \$0.95/hd/day.

Forage prices and availability differ based on quality and regional differences. Conditions like drought can also increase price increased demand for forages as well as less production. The prices used for the above comparison represent current prices for good quality alfalfa and average to poor quality grass hay in the Midwest. Additionally, supplement availability and prices will also differ for regions. As a result, strategies may differ for producers in different regions under different conditions.

STRATEGIES

- **Test forages** - knowing the quality of the forages will allow for more of a strategic approach to target more specific requirements by the animal
- **Consider selling better-quality forages and feeding poorer quality forages with a supplement** - depending on forage prices, a diet with a poor-quality forage and a quality supplement like ProPellet can often result in a more profitable strategy
- **Drought conditions can reduce forage quality or forage availability** - when purchasing hay, looking for “deals” on poorer-quality hay and then supplementing with ProPellets can often make more sense than over-feeding nutrients with a high-quality forage
- **Work with a nutritionist to evaluate formulation options** - contact your local nutritionists and request best-cost formulation options. You can also reach out to your POET Bioproducts contact to request different formulation options

Producers should always use these strategies when deciding on which forage management program to use. However, when forage prices start to increase, evaluating different options and incorporating different strategies become even more important.

*These results are not a guarantee of nutritional value, as laboratory results are influenced by factors beyond the control of POET Nutrition.