

## HAY/CATTLE INVENTORY FOR WINTER FEEDING

Warren Gill  
Extension Animal Science-Beef, Sheep, Horse

**1. Assess Forage Needs.** Following is a rule-of-thumb method for determining hay needs:

Estimate hay available. It is best to base your estimation on average weights of several bales. Remember: Just because most people think that large-package bales weigh a thousand pounds doesn't make it so. Many times, so-called thousand pound bales only weigh 700 to 800 pounds. Large-package bales stored outside may have substantial losses during storage and feeding. Adjust your estimate accordingly.

**2. Calculate the number of animal units.** Base the number of animal units on the following system:

- a. Mature cow or bull = 1 unit
- b. Yearling cattle = 1/2 unit
- c. Calves = 1/4 unit

Figure your need to feed for 100-120 days in the winter in Tennessee (use the lower figure if substantial amounts of stockpiled forage are available; use a higher figure if drought or other conditions cause winter feeding to start earlier in the fall).

Figure each animal unit will eat 30 to 40 pounds of hay daily, assuming average to good-quality hay.



ANIMAL	UNITS	Total
#Cows_____	x 1 _____	
#Heifers_____	x 0.5 _____	
#Steers_____	x 0.5 _____	
#Calves_____	x 0.25 _____	
#Bulls _____	x 1.5 _____	

TOTAL UNITS \_\_\_\_\_

x Amount fed per day \_\_\_\_\_

x Number of days \_\_\_\_\_

= Total pounds hay needed \_\_\_\_\_

÷ By average bale wt. \_\_\_\_\_

= Total bales needed \_\_\_\_\_

Total bales counted \_\_\_\_\_

! Total bales needed \_\_\_\_\_

Excess or Deficiency \_\_\_\_\_ (in bales)

Additional information on beef cattle nutrition can be obtained by contacting your local Agricultural Extension Service office or from the Extension-Beef, Sheep & Horse home page:

[www.utextension.utk.edu/ansci](http://www.utextension.utk.edu/ansci)