HAY/CATTLE INVENTORY FOR WINTER FEEDING

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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.

Example: Multiply animal units x days x amount of forage per day:

25 cows	x 1	= 25
10 backgrounding steers	x 1/2	= 5
10 replacement heifers	x 1/2	= 5
4 calves	x 1/4	= 1
1 bull	x 1.5	= 1.5
		37.5 animal units

37.5 animal units x 120 days x 30 lbs. of hay/day = 135,000. lbs.

This totals 67.5 tons of hay or 169 bales of hay (assuming bales weigh 800 pounds each).

3. Compare animal numbers and hay. If hay is adequate, rest easy. If it is apparent that feed supplies will be inadequate, begin examining management options and feed alternatives to most efficiently maintain your cattle operation.

Hay / Cattle Inventory Work Sheet

Hay Inventory:

No. Bales	Weight / Bale	Total Weight
Total No.____		Total = _____
		Average = ____

Total Hay _____ / 2000lbs = _____ Tons 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