

Midwest Messenger LIVESTOCK

ROUNDUP



Consider leaving some corn standing for the cows when combining

By Aaron Berger
Nebraska Extension Educator

This year's dry conditions have impacted hay and forage production, meaning corn residue grazing will be in high demand after this year's harvest.

Drought conditions have led to yields that in many places are only a third to half of the long-term average and in some places farther west even less. This means for many cow-calf producers, there will be very little fall and winter grazing available. Hay also will be in short supply.

Demand for corn residue grazing will exceed supply in many locations.

While forage prices are high, corn prices are currently near the cost of production. When both forage and other feed options are considered, corn in many cases is the most economical energy source available for feeding the cow herd.

This sets up a scenario where purposefully leaving some corn standing in the field to be gleaned directly by the cows while also grazing residue could be a way to significantly increase the number of grazing days a field could provide.

A rule of thumb is that for every 100 bushels of corn yield that is in a field, there are approximately



UNL photo by Troy Walz

25-30 grazing days available of husks and leaves for 1,300-pound cows. However, if with corn residue, cows are given 11 pounds of corn per day of standing grain through strip grazing, the number of days of feed available could be increased by 1.5 to 2 times.

In this situation, the harvested area of residue needed could be allocated along with a daily delivered strip of standing corn. In addition, a supplement could be provided daily in a pound or more of a feed that contains the ionophore monensin along with vitamins, minerals, and additional protein. Under these conditions, supplementing non-protein nitrogen in the form of urea would be an option to meet rumen degradable protein needs of the cows, as the microbes in the rumen could effectively utilize the nitrogen with the readily available energy from the corn.

Cows coming out of drought-stressed pastures are likely going to be thin and would benefit greatly from this type of feeding scenario to gain weight going into the fall and winter and put on body condition prior to calving. Having corn standing in the field also provides a readily available feed resource that will stick out above the snow should the winter bring much needed precipitation.

Cow owners could calculate how much corn will be needed and buy bushels of standing corn by the acre from

CORN FOR COWS
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Fall alfalfa irrigation

By Ben Beckman
Nebraska Extension

As temperatures cool this fall, don't be too quick to shut irrigation off on alfalfa, especially if the soil profile is dry.

Alfalfa water use drops considerably as temperatures cool. During peak summer growth, plants may use around a third of an inch of water per day, while fall demand may drop closer to a tenth of an inch. While that may seem like a reason to stop irrigating, it's worth a closer look.

Fall irrigation in alfalfa has two benefits, but both depend on having room in the soil profile for additional water. Because alfalfa is a perennial and can continue growing into the fall until a hard freeze, adequate soil moisture can help plants maintain healthy roots and prepare for winter. Fall irrigation can also rebuild soil moisture

depleted during the growing season. Alfalfa has a deep root system, and water stored deeper in the profile can provide a valuable reserve when growth and water demand increase again next summer.

Irrigate based on soil moisture, not the calendar. If the profile is already full, adding more water provides little benefit. If soils are dry, fall can be an efficient time to rebuild those reserves before freeze-up.

Also keep soil texture in mind. Coarser soils may take water quickly but hold less, while finer-textured soils generally hold more water but may take it in more slowly. And don't forget to keep local irrigation restrictions in mind.

For more information, see Nebraska Extension NebGuide G1778, Irrigation Management and Crop Characteristics of

Alfalfa.

UNL
FORAGE
MINUTE

Fall thistle control

By Ben Beckman
Nebraska Extension

Did you spray thistles this past spring or summer? If so, it may be worth revisiting those areas. New plants or regrowth may have shown up, and late September through early November can be

a good time for thistle control in pastures and hayland.

For biennial thistles like musk, plumeless, bull, and Scotch thistle, look for small, flat rosettes close to the ground. Controlling these rosettes now can prevent plants from bolting, flowering, and producing seed next year.

Canada thistle is a little different. This creeping perennial spreads through both

seed and an extensive root system. Fall is one of our best opportunities for control because actively growing plants are moving nutrients back into their roots for winter, helping systemic herbicides reach that underground system.

Several herbicides are labeled for thistle control, including GrazonNext HL, Milestone, Chaparral, DuraCor, and Tordon 22K. Product effectiveness varies by thistle species, so match the product to the weed and site being treated. For current options, rates, and restrictions, check Nebraska Extension's EC130 Weed Management Guide and always follow label directions.

Remember, one fall treatment probably won't eliminate an established problem. Scout again next spring and continue timely control to prevent seed production

FORAGE MINUTE
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Pillen points to challenges, opportunities of technology in agriculture

By R.J. Post
Grand Island Independent

At a show with 80 acres exhibiting the latest and greatest in agricultural technology, Gov. Jim Pillen looked back on his childhood and a tractor that his father bought.

"I was 5 years old. I can remember my father buying a John Deere 630, which was one of the first tractors with power steering," Pillen said Wednesday at Husker Harvest Days. "So, I've been in agriculture my whole life. I think I have a lot of experience."

A classic row-crop tractor built from 1958 to 1960, the Model 630 heralded the final era of John Deere's two-cylinder engine lineup.

"I'm the first governor of Nebraska in 100 years that's made my living in agriculture," said Pillen, who is a veterinarian as well as a livestock producer. "I think I get it."

But his talk during "The Nebraska Farmer Hour" in the Hospitality Tent sounded notes of both praise and caution for the role of technology in modern agriculture.

On the cautious side, he explained the rationale behind LB525, the Agricultural Data Privacy Act, which the Legislature passed into law in April.

"We're all in the technology business," Pillen said. "It's mind-boggling to me when I get in a combine and all the data that's in that combine. I'm sorry, I don't want John Deere to have my data."

No publicly traded company should own a farmer's data, he said.

"As a farmer, that's my data. That's your data. We own the data. We control the data," Pillen said. "That's what this Ag Data Privacy Bill did, and nobody else can get it."

Whoever has the data can have a big impact, he said, and they may make decisions that are not in the interest of family farms.

"Ninety-five percent of Nebraska agriculture is owned by family farmers and ranchers. It's really, really important that it stays that way," Pillen said. "I'm committed to defending the family farmers and ranchers."

On the other hand, he praised Husker Harvest Days for showing "the extraordinary innovation and entrepreneurship that takes place in the greatest industry in the State of Nebraska, agriculture."

"When you think about cattle, when you think about ethanol, the bioeconomy, energy being made from manure from cattle and pigs in the form of renewable natural gas, all of the things taking place, making polypropylene from ethanol, making amino acids from ethanol," Pillen said.



The Independent photo by Emilee Arnold

Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen talks to state FFA officers and an audience about the future of agriculture Sept. 16 during Husker Harvest Days. During his talk, Pillen sounded notes of both praise and caution for the role of technology in modern agriculture.

"It's so exciting. It's incredible."

Nebraska's ethanol industry has gone into what Pillen called "Generation 2."

"Now we are able to take ethanol and make new biodegradable plastics from lactic acid that is made from ethanol. We're able to make amino acid lysine from ethanol," he said. "We have a great opportunity to disrupt the supply chain. Almost all our polypropylene comes from China. We have an opportunity to make polypropylene from Nebraska ethanol."

"Those are all things that are right around the corner from happening," Pillen said.



The Independent photo by Emilee Arnold

Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen greets state FFA officers as they join him in conversation about the future of agriculture.

Asked by state FFA officers about the challenges and opportunities posed by the growth of technology over the next 10 years, the governor said, "Everything's technology. We're in the technology business, raising corn, raising cattle."

"But I think that sometimes we get so enamored in technology, we forget how important communication is. We forget how important it is to have eyeball-to-eyeball communication," Pillen said. "I worry about technology overtaking the most common basic instincts of humanity: relationships, love, caring about each other."

As for opportunities, he pointed to those provided by the ONE RED (Opportunity for Nebraska: Reducing Emissions and Decarbonization) program, which was established in 2024.

The initiative managed by the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy and Environment and funded by a \$307 million grant from the Environmental Protection Agency seeks to lower greenhouse gas emissions and fund clean energy projects.

"It's a really great opportunity," Pillen said. ONE RED can protect the Ogallala Aquifer while improving water quality and access for communities and agriculture.

"We have 70,000 center pivots. We're all guilty. We've probably at times used more water, which means in

some soils we would push the nitrates down," he said. "Now we can pump the nitrates out of the groundwater, put less nitrogen on, still have great crops, save money, fix water quality and make sure that we don't overirrigate."

He called the program "a game changer."

"It really, really will make a big difference with improving yields, improving water quality and decreasing the amount of water we use," Pillen said.

To help the beef industry recover from the devastating wildfires in western Nebraska, Pillen advocated opening Conservation Reserve Program acres for grazing and providing low-interest loans for beef producers under 30 years old.

"We have to bring young people back to the forage land," he said.

"Those are things I believe that government should do because it's about food security," Pillen said. "Family-farm success is equal to food security, and those are things we need to do."

All new members appointed to Nebraska Brand Committee

New state law in Nebraska set up guidelines for a Nebraska Brand Committee with seven representatives instead of five. With that, Gov. Jim Pillen announced new appointments effective Aug. 28.

The group now includes five cattle producers, plus the owner or operator of a feedlot and the owner of a livestock auction market. The secretary of state as well as the director of agriculture serve as ex-officio members.

Terms for the new members are staggered starting out. Following those initial appointments, members will each serve a four-year term. Any appointments to the committee are subject to legislative confirmation.

The purpose of the Brand Committee is

to protect Nebraska brand and livestock owners from the theft of livestock through established brand recording, brand inspection and livestock theft investigation.

Governor's appointments and initial terms:

District 1: Ben Holliday, two-year term

District 2: Jed Connealy, three-year term

District 3: Kraig Freeman, four-year term

District 4: Dr. Kip Lukasiewicz, four-year term

District 5: Jordan Feller, two-year term

Registered Feedlot Owner: Larry "Doug" Sheppard, three-year term

Livestock Auction Owner: Todd Eberle, four-year term

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and reduce the infestation over time.

Late summer annual grasses

By Ben Beckman
Nebraska Extension

Late summer is often when annual grasses like foxtail, sandbur, and barnyardgrass become especially noticeable in pastures. They commonly show up where grass stands are thin, animal traffic is heavy, or overgrazing has left open space.

By this time of year, control options are limited. Annual grasses are difficult to selectively remove from established grass pastures, and many plants are already producing seed. If seed has not matured,

mowing may help reduce seed production.

Long-term control starts with maintaining a healthy, competitive pasture. Proper stocking rates and adequate recovery between grazing periods help desirable grasses fill open space and reduce opportunities for annual grasses to establish.

Where annual grasses remain a problem, identify the species and plan ahead. For many summer annual grasses, herbicide control means using a labeled pre-emergence product next spring, timed before germination. Once plants emerge, selective control in a grass pasture becomes much more difficult.

Annual grasses may be easy to notice now, but late summer is often too late for much direct control. Focus on limiting seed production, improving pasture competition, and planning for earlier control next year.

CORN FOR COWS

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the farmer they rent corn stalks from.

The economics of leaving strips of standing corn

When considering the economics of grazing strips of standing corn with residue, there are several questions that need to be asked.

1. What is the cost of the next alternative feed option of comparable quality delivered to the cow compared to grazing standing corn and residue in the fall or winter?

2. What are the benefits of reduced expenses by harvesting standing strips of the crop with cattle versus combining and hauling the grain? For example, the 2026 Nebraska Agricultural Custom Rates report states harvesting irrigated corn is 32 cents per bushel and hauling is 15 cents per bushel for a total of 47 cents per bushel or \$94 per acre for harvesting costs if the crop yields 200 bushels per acre.

3. What is the value of grazing and recycling nutrients being consumed from grain and stover back on the field as fertilizer (manure and urine) at today's prices? Around 0.70 pounds of nitrogen, 0.31 pounds of phosphate, 0.27 pounds of potassium, and 0.6 pounds of sulphur are in one bushel (56 pounds) of corn grain.

Quick math for an irrigated corn crop grazed in the fall and winter with dry cows.

A 200-bushel corn crop at \$5 per bushel and corn residue grazing at \$35 per acre generates a gross value of \$1,035 per acre.

- Gross Value per Acre of Grain Harvest and Grazing Residue \$1035
- Reduced Harvest Expense of not Combining and Hauling Corn (\$94)
- Estimated Value of Corn Grain Nutrients Retained (30% of N, 80% of P,K,S) (\$110)
- Value per Acre of Standing Corn to Equal the Value of Crop After Credits \$831

- \$831 per Acre per 200 Bushel Corn equals \$4.16 per Bushel or about 7 cents per Pound of Corn

Cow costs per day

- 11 pounds of corn at 7 cents per pound equals 77 cents
- 20 pounds of residue at 2 cents per pound equals 40 cents
- 2 pounds per day of protein/mineral/ionophore equals 50 cents
- Total feed per day per cow equals \$1.67

Spring calving cows with calves having been weaned would be estimated to be gaining around 1.5 pounds per head per day on this feeding plan. The old saying, "The eye of the master fattens the ox" applies to this situation. The amount of area needed will vary depending on cow body condition, residue in the field and weather as grazing progresses.

For comparison, providing cows an average grass hay at \$200 per ton, having a TDN energy value of 55% and crude protein at 8%, along with 3 pounds per head per day of a DDG cube at \$375 per ton, would have similar performance and cost about \$3.75 per head per day.

What are the logistics?

How could this work? Let's assume an irrigated cornfield with a 200-bushel yield. If the farmer harvests all the corn on an acre, there are approximately 50 to 60 days of grazing per acre of husks and leaves for one 1300-pound cow. If in addition to residue, 11 pounds of standing corn is targeted to be allocated per day per cow, 1/1,000 of an acre of 200-bushel corn yield would provide the desired amount of grain. If corn is planted on 30-inch rows, 17 feet, five inches is 1/1000th of an acre.

For 100 cows, being allocated 11 pounds per day of 200-bushel corn, 0.1 acres of standing corn is needed. If the 100 cows are provided with 20 pounds of leaves and husk to go along with the corn, approximately 1 acre of

harvested corn residue should meet this need along with the corn husk and leaf available from the grazed standing corn.

Because of the corn being supplied, cows can be expected to eat a greater percentage of the corn residue in the field, utilizing more of the cobs and corn plant tops and still achieve acceptable performance. This level of residue utilization is greater than what would be targeted if only corn residue without grain was being grazed. Cows should be worked up to 11 pounds of corn over a 7-to-10-day period, increasing the amount of corn the cows are consuming daily to reduce the risk of acidosis.

Strategic planning of where standing corn strips are to be left in the field in relation to the water source and prevailing wind can help make the most of this opportunity. After harvest, when standing corn strips are left, calculate the area needed daily for the allocation of standing corn and use a tractor with a front-end loader or a UTV to lay down alleys. This allows for building temporary fence across standing corn rows, so cows can see the wire and keep standing corn from being knocked down into the temporary electric fence.

In terms of fencing for strip grazing, quality geared reels with polywire or braid, step in posts, and solar chargers are tools that are beneficial to make this practice effective. This scenario is also one that would lend itself well to the use of virtual fence technology. The outside traditional boundary electric fence would still be needed, but cows could be moved internally with virtual fence collars, being given the desired amount of standing corn and harvested corn residue daily.

The thought of purposefully leaving strips of standing corn in the field for cows to graze directly may be a bit of a mental stretch for both the farmer and cow owner. However, with current prices for corn and the market value of limited hay and other forages, it looks to be one of the most cost-effective options available for putting weight on cows, stretching corn residue resources and getting cows fed through this fall and winter.

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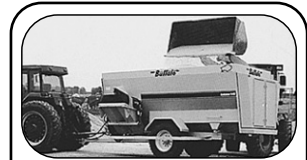
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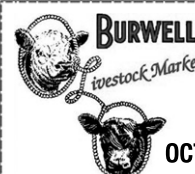
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335 blk (210s-125h) NI Risse & Miller sired 450-600#
..... Aaron & Chris Galloway #2
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50 blk, blk-x (30s-20h) NI A.I. genes 525-625#..... Gail Rippe
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Daly, 400 Blk (AIT) 400-550 Fischer, 100 Blk 400-500
Shorb, 300 Ang (AIT) 450-575 Klebsch, 65 Blk 450-575
White, 250 B,Bwf 450-550 Cape, 50 1st X Bwf, few Hfr strs 500-550
Plus many more clvs including several sets of 2 & 3 wt. clvs.

Our web site is updated daily, for current listings check our web site.
Sales Barn 605-223-2576
Bryan Hanson Dennis Hanson Nick Moreland Willie Cowan
605-280-1283 605-280-1030 605-280-3392 605-223-2576
or 1-800-280-7210 or visit our web site at www.ftpierrelivestock.com.
Sales broadcast on live bid format at www.cattleusa.com.

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH, 2026**
SPECIAL CALF & YEARLING BBQ AUCTION
9:00 A.M. - WEIGHUPS
12:00 NOON - YEARLINGS FOLLOWED BY CALVES

75 Blk/Bwf Hfrs 800-900.....Clark Ranch
36 Blk Strs 800-900.....Dave & Peg Sidak
28 Blk PO Hfrs #950-1000.....Dale Paxton
20 Blk/Bwf Strs/Hfrs 650-850.....Dean & Leann Sidak
14 Blk PO Hfrs 950-1050.....Kyle & Tony Sanderson
10 Blk PO Hfrs 1025-1075.....Brett Sedlacek
9 Blk Strs/Hfrs 750-850.....Dick & Chris Prussa
5 Bwf PO Hfrs 1000-1050.....Jeff Skrdla & Austin Jarecke

Spring Calves
395 Char(243)/Blk(152) Strs 500-675.....Taylor Land & Cattle
210 Char Hfrs 500-650.....Taylor Land & Cattle
110 Blk Strs/Hfrs 450-550.....Ben & Kalen Wenger
75 Blk Strs 500-650.....Mark Friehe
60 Blk/Bwf Strs/Hfrs 450-600.....Wickersham & Hewett
50 Blk/Bwf Strs 475-600.....Brad & Emily Larson
42 Blk Strs/Hfrs 500-600.....Jeremy & Anita Hampton
35 Blk Strs/Hfrs, weaned 550-650.....Sara, Doug, & Mason Crumrine
20 Red Angus Strs/Hfrs 500-600.....Steve & Traci Hytrek
20 Red/Rwf Strs/Hfrs 450-600.....Russell Frederick
10 Blk Strs/Hfrs 525-575.....Steve & Briley Naprstek

UPCOMINGS
Tuesday, October 6th - Regular Auction
Wes Kilmurry, Manager | 402.340.4225
Austin Jarecke, Yard Manager | 402.340.8540
Field Reps
Richard Schrunk 402.340.1222 | Troy Judge 402.340.4901
Nick Waldo 402.340.5552 | Jake Paxton 402.340.3310
Office: 402.925.5141
ALM@AtkinsonLivestock.com | www.AtkinsonLivestock.com
www.CattleUSA.com
We are approved to sell NHTC, Verified Natural Beef, Beef Care, and Age & Source Verified Cattle.

Sale Barns

LEXINGTON LIVESTOCK MARKET, LLC
LEXINGTON, NE

OCTOBER 2ND 2026
SPECIAL CALF/FEEDER AUCTION
BUTCHER COWS @8:00 AM CALVES/FEEDERS@ 11:30 AM

CALVES
140 Angus & Bwf Steers & Heifers 475-575 #2P..... TIM & RYAN MARTIN
115 Angus, Bwf, & Rwf Steers & Heifers 600-650 #2P..... WYATT EGGLESTON
100 Angus & few Red Steers & Heifers 350-550 #2P..... RICK & JAKE LAMMERS
60 Angus & Bwf Steers & Heifers 400-650 #4PW..... DALTON BEST
6 Angus Steers 950-1000 #4PW..... RANDY JOHNSON

SPECIAL CALF/FEEDER AUCTION*OCTOBER 9TH & 16TH

OFFICE 308-324-4663 • www.lexlivestock.com
RICK SHOEMAKER, OWNER 627-7284; Jeff Rogers 325-1272
Jeff Marshall 233-4633, Ryan Rogers 325-1273
Dean Dallman 380-2615, Gary Cook 870-0414
Geoff Cook 870-2791, Brian Eberle 440-4798

**BASSETT LIVESTOCK AUCTION**

Wednesday, September 30th, 2026
Special Feeder Cattle Auction
9am Weigh Ups - 12pm Yearlings
View & bid live on CattleUSA & DVAuction

Yearlings:
250 blk strs 850-905..... Sid Fairbanks Ranch
205 blk few bwf strs 1000-1050..... Shovel Dot
195 hfrs inc 65 bwf & 130 blk - few bwf (spayed) 875-925 ... Frizzell Ranch
185 blk hfrs (PO) 875-975..... Mart & Dee Hollenbeck
175 blk-few bwf strs 950-1050..... Anthony Hays
165 blk strs 1000-1050..... Chase & Melissa Hollenbeck
130 mostly red hfrs (GO) 850-1000..... Steve & Rick Rentschler
120 blk strs 975-1025..... Larry & Steve Nelson
90 blk hfrs inc 65 (GO) & 25 (PO) 900-1000..... Paxson Ranch
60 mostly bwf strs (BQA) 1000..... Kendall & Brandi Sybrant
60 blk strs (HR) 950..... Myles Fairbanks
15 blk-bwf hfrs (PO) 950..... JH Kime
10 blk hfrs (PO) 1000..... Smith Angus Ranch
Several pkgs of 5-40 head of fall calves & yearlings with more listings by sale time.

Bassett Livestock Auction 888-684-0584 or 402-684-2361
www.bassettlivestock.com
Jake Maurer 402-822-0080 • Shane Kaczor 402-336-7011
Joe Leonard, Fieldman 402-376-4988
Payton Shankland, Fieldman 402-822-0226
Andrew Wewel, Fieldman 402-760-2267

Bassett Livestock is approved to sell cattle in the following programs:
Age & Source Verification, China EV, NHTC, Saudi Arabia EV,
Verified Natural Beef, BQA, Beef Care, & 100% Vegetarian Fed.