



NEWS LINE

For Release December 16, 2009

Livestock producers facing feed shortages are turning to non-traditional sources

Cold conditions, high costs and lack of feed in many parts of the province are forcing livestock producers to turn to non-traditional feeds, says Barry Yaremcio, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development Beef and Forage Specialist, and a representative of Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC).

“Supplies in southern Alberta are looking quite reasonable. Feed is in very short supply in east-central Alberta from Hanna to Provost - in the Westlock area and parts of the Peace River country due to the summer drought. Feed prices this year can be double, or more, compared to last year. Farmers and ranchers are looking at alternate feeds, be it green feed, straw, using grain screening pellets or by-products of the ethanol industry. They’re doing anything they can to reduce their costs by using feeds that were not traditionally used in years past,” says Yaremcio.

He urges owners to keep close watch on their herds. “If animals are getting thin at this time of the year, it’s going to negatively influence their productive and reproductive abilities. This includes a reduction in the quantity and quality of colostrum produced, this in turn will negatively influence the ability of the calf to resist disease challenges and potentially reduce growth rates. Thin cows have delayed first heat cycles and lower conception rates at first breeding. If animals are thin, they are going to require more feed to keep warm. A cow that is 50 - 100 pounds light at this time of the year may require an additional 1,500 pounds of hay over and above their normal rations, to maintain body condition and stay warm throughout the winter.”

Yaremcio says there are plenty of resources to assist in any situation where animals might be in distress. The Alberta Farm Animal Care toll-free number is 1-800-506-2273 where anyone can anonymously report problems. Also, there is the SPCA and the Alberta Government’s Ag. Info line.

--PLEASE CALL 1-800-468-7021 TOLL-FREE FOR VOICE CLIPS --

AFAC scripts and clips are also available at www.afac.ab.ca

Clip No. 1:

Cold conditions accent the need for livestock to have an adequate supply of feed. Barry Yaremcio, Beef and Forage Specialist with Alberta Agriculture and a representative of Alberta Farm Animal Care, says feed supplies vary across the province:

(17... “limited.”)

Clip No. 2:

Because of much higher feed prices this year Yaremcio says livestock owners have had to adjust:

(20... “past.”)

Clip No. 3:

Any weight loss must be addressed. A cow that is 50 - 100 pounds light at this time of the year may require an additional 1,500 pounds of hay so they can maintain body condition and stay warm, adds Yaremcio:

(16... “cycle.”)

Clip No. 4:

If animals are thin and don’t appear to be doing well, Yaremcio reminds everyone of the AFAC number to call: 1-800-506-2273:

(21... “involved.”)

For further information contact:

Jim Haggins AFAC Manager (403) 932-8050



Be Aware.

Animal Care is Everyone’s Responsibility.