



ANIMAL HEALTH NOTES

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Alternate Feed and Fiber Sources: Potential Health Problems for Cattle

Baled:

Corn plants, with ears

-some aflatoxin exposure, level unknown
-some nitrate risk..check stems for nitrate levels if questionable
-potential for toxic plants...sicklepod, coffee senna and jimson weed

Soybean forage, with or without beans

-after harvest...abomasal impaction (4th stomach) caused by stems especially if sole diet or fed with molasses-urea only
-if baled with excessive moisture...mold damaged

Milo stubble

-baled with excessive moisture...mold damaged, nitrate risk if drought struck
-sodium chlorate applied prior to harvest breaks down quickly and has not caused problem with stubble hay

Forages can be baled and wrapped as baleage at 40 to 50% dry matter content. When water content is high there may be limited fermentation with pH values up to 6.0-6.5. This can be a good environment for molds and clostridial bacteria to grow and potentially produce toxins. Clostridial growth produces a putrid, ammonia odor. Clostridial toxins have been associated with severe indigestion and diarrhea in cows. Reports related to botulism associated with feeding baleage have been reported. Listeria bacteria may grow when pH is above 5.5. This organism is associated with bovine abortion and a brain disease in cattle.

Grazing:

Corn fields, after harvest

-slight nitrate risk..check nitrate levels in edible stems if in question
-chance that drought stressed bermuda grass around edges of fields will induce “bermuda grass tremors” in cattle

Corn fields, no grain harvested because of drought, etc..

-limit graze by electric fencing and turning in 60-80 cows per acre and move each day or so or limit time in field each day
-without limitations on intake some cows will select ears and over-eat corn grain causing rumen acidosis, an often fatal indigestion; laminitis (founder) may develop in some cows
-unknown amount of aflatoxin intake

Milo, corn, and soybean forage..no fertilizer since spring

-minimal nitrate risk
-weed toxicity such as sicklepod or coffee senna (Senna sp.)
-milo and Johnson grass regrowth has not been a cyanide problem in this region but you must consider

removing animals for four days after frost
.....if large amounts of soybeans are available some cows will over eat and develop indigestion and hoof problems

Feeding:

Grain dust pellets.....serious potential for cattle to over-eat and cause rumen acidosis, an often fatal indigestion.....introduce say 2 -4 pounds per day per cow, limit feed, until adjusted.

Molasses.....moderate to large intake may induce polioencephalomalacia which responds to vitamin-B1 injections

Sugar cane leaves....can be fed, chopped into small pieces

Rice bran.....balancing calcium-phosphorus intake important for horses, growing animals.

Cotton Seed....limit mature bulls to maximum of 2 pounds day. Don't feed to immature bulls. Potential source of aflatoxin residue for dairy cows.

Cotton seed hulls...added to grain as fiber source. Occasional bloat if grain and hulls sole diet.

Rice Hulls.....nutritionist says only 15% TDN, high silica content, has been associated with bloody stools in young cattle. Not a recommended feedstuff.

Gin Trash ...ok for cattle as a partial substitute for forage

Sources of urea....adequate digestible carbohydrate intake essential
.....feed only one source of urea to be safe and stay withinguidelines for amount to be fed

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