

Management and feeding tips

Growing calves consume 5 to 15 gallons of water a day. A good guideline is to allow 1 foot of water/tank space per 20 head. To minimize muddy conditions, extend a concrete apron 6 feet beyond the tank.

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A feeder cattle receiving program typically consists of long-stem hay the first 12 to 24 hours, followed by an introduction of the total mixed ration. Proper additives are used to control coccidiosis and BRD.

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Excessively muddy lot conditions can reduce feed efficiency up to 30%. Slope pens away from the bunk and provide a 15- to 20-foot concrete apron by the bunk.

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Feed bunk systems pay off. Hay fed on the ground is likely to be used as bedding and can result in up to 45% wastage.

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Cow size determines nutrition requirements. As a rule, for each 100-pound increase in weight, the net energy for maintenance requirement increases by 0.57 Mcal, and the crude protein requirement by 0.1%.

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When starting calves in the lot, provide good-quality grass hay for 5 to 7 days. Introduce your starter ration or complete pelleted feed on top of the grass hay. After they become accustomed to it - within 7 to 10 days - make ration adjustments as needed.

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Body condition scores (BCS) are used to suggest the relative condition of the beef cow, with 1 representing very thin and 9 representing extreme fatness. A cow with a BCS of 5 is in average condition - a target many beef producers strive for.