

Prime Cuts:

When in Drought, Feed Cattle Cake

Famo Flier

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Cake has largely been a western ranch program with limited use in Minnesota and Wisconsin. However, drought conditions can quickly impact forages leading to lower harvest yields. Thus, hay will be expensive, some will be poor quality, and all will be hard to find. Cattle cake may be one answer to this problem.



What is it?

Cattle Cake, also called Cattle Cubes, refers to a large diameter pellet.

Why is it used?

It is a popular winter brood cow supplement on western ranches. One of the primary advantages of cattle cake is that it can be fed with minimal facilities.

Who uses it?

Many cow/calf operations feed cake on the ground. A common practice on large ranches is to train the cattle to come to a fence line a certain time of day. The cattle come to the fence and the rancher pours cake along the fence line allowing the cattle to eat it. The cattle get their supplement, and the rancher can take a head count and make sure all is well with the herd. Other large ranches spread cake on the ground with truck or ATV mounted systems. Cake is a convenient and flexible way to supplement cattle and little or no investment in facilities is necessary to feed it.

When to feed it?

Cake can be fed every other day and still be an effective supplement. Simply double the amount that you would feed if feeding every day.

How much to feed?

Most producers will feed 2 pounds/head/day of a 20% crude protein product but some with poorer forages or shorter forage supply will feed up to 4 pounds/day.

Benefits?

- ✓ Provides the crude protein needed to supplement low protein hay
- ✓ Improves the digestibility of low protein hay by providing the nitrogen needed by the rumen microbes
- ✓ Provides an extra boost of energy without boosting dietary starch
- ✓ Extends hay – every pound of cake consumed is a pound less hay consumed
- ✓ Supplements minerals, trace minerals and vitamins supporting animal health and performance and helping grow a healthy fetus

Lick tubs, liquid feeds and standard supplements can all be used to provide protein, provide energy and to increase forage digestibility. Ranches need to decide what program is best for them. Cake is an effective alternative requiring no long-term investment and can be very useful during drought conditions.



Overall, Cattle Cake is a cost-effective option that is especially popular when pasture and hay are in short supply.

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