



# NEWS LINE

For Release January 19 2009

## High level of management required when winter grazing

This is the time of the year when livestock producers need to take additional care of their animals. Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) Livestock Care Veterinarian, Ray Fenton, says AFAC supports raising cattle on winter pasture and swath grazing but cautions that a high level of management is necessary. "Let the cattle do the work and we can reap the benefits economically, environmentally and improved land productivity, but to ensure proper animal care, there are a number of conditions that must be met.

Conditions include:

- \* Strong, healthy cattle in good body condition that are not nursing calves - old and, or thin animals, calves and infirmed cattle should not be subjected to winter grazing conditions;
- \* A good quantity and quality of feed that can be readily accessed through the deep, encrusted snow. Cattle need up to 50 per cent more energy than normal to maintain their weight. This in turn requires more feed intake, longer digestive time particularly with higher fibre forages and these factors can lead to malnutrition and impaction in winter grazing cattle and horses;
- \* A good quantity and quality of snow as a source of water;
- \* Ready access to good shelter, either natural or constructed that provides a windbreak. Dry bedding is essential;
- \* Cattle should be inspected at least twice a week. Some animals will not be able to adjust to water deprivation or winter grazing. They will fail and must be removed from these conditions. During extreme winter weather, supplemental feed may be required. Providing five pounds of grain per head per day will go a long way to meet increased needs during cold weather.

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

AFAC scripts and clips are also available at [www.afac.ab.ca](http://www.afac.ab.ca)

#### **Clip No. 1:**

Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) supports raising cattle on winter pastures and swath grazing. Ray Fenton, AFAC livestock care Veterinarian, says producers can reap the benefits economically, environmentally and improve land productivity but there are a number of conditions that need to be met. This includes assuring cattle are strong, healthy, and in good body condition:

(9... "conditions.")

#### **Clip No. 2:**

There are a number of other factors to keep in mind, adds Fenton. These include the need to have good quality and quantity of feed that can be readily accessed through the deep encrusted snow:

(23... "essential.")

#### **Clip No. 3:**

Fenton emphasizes a high level of management is necessary when winter grazing animals:

(22... "needs.")

AFAC urges that anyone who may notice animals in distress to call the ALERT LINE: 1-800-506-2273.

#### **For further information contact:**

**Susan Church AFAC Manager**

**(403) 932-8050**



## Be Aware.

Animal Care is Everyone's Responsibility.