



# The Faucet is Turned Off

Parts of the U.S. looking for relief from Mother Nature.

It's the first of July and the grass outside my window looks like it does in November. What should be green, luscious grass is dry and brittle from lack of rain. The fall crops are trying to grow but without moisture the outlook for harvest is not so good. The pastures, like my lawn, need moisture and the ponds are the lowest my Dad has seen in many years.

Drought usually gets its reputation from its effect on crops. But its effect on livestock can be equally dramatic. Hot, dry weather increases the water needs of livestock while decreasing water supplies. Crops may not yield as planned, causing a feed shortage. Consequently, farmers and ranchers may face special challenges, including decisions about whether to buy feed or sell livestock.

Drought forces producers to make management decisions, some that are not fun to make. Kansas State University (K-State) Extension specialists suggest producers consider some general strategies to help cope with current and future low precipitation issues.

Develop a drought management plan so that if resources decline to certain levels the plan already outlines the course of action. Consider the effects on pastures, harvested forages and water supplies. The plan can reduce stress for family members and facilitate timely action.

Early weaning is an option for producers dealing with drought. It is much more efficient to feed the calf directly than to feed the cow to increase milk production. Calves older than 90 days of age or heavier

## Drought resources

For more information about drought management contact your local Extension agent. Numerous resources are also available online. Visit:

- [www.oznet.ksu.edu/drought](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/drought)
- [www.ag.ndsu.nodak.edu/drought/drought.htm](http://www.ag.ndsu.nodak.edu/drought/drought.htm)
- [www.extension.iastate.edu/Pages/communications/drought/livestock\\_issues.html](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Pages/communications/drought/livestock_issues.html)
- <http://cowcalfcorner.okstate.edu/archive.htm>
- <http://animalrangeextension.montana.edu/Articles/ExpireMSU%20Nut%20Conf%20proc.pdf>
- [www.angusjournal.com/drought](http://www.angusjournal.com/drought)

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than 200 lb. can be weaned with minimal consequences. Protein and energy requirements of the cow are decreased 30% or more depending on stage of lactation at weaning. The water requirement of the cow also drops 60% with weaning. Young cows particularly benefit from early weaning since they are still growing. For more on this drought management tactic, see "Early Weaning" on page 47 of the July 2006 *Hereford World* or online at [www.herefordworld.org](http://www.herefordworld.org).

## Other considerations

Hauling water is more expensive with today's gas prices. Make sure that it is an economically viable option.

Shorten the breeding season, use early pregnancy diagnosis and remove opens and bulls from the pasture.

Develop a culling list starting with dry, ornery, old or other problem cows.

Feeding cows on pasture is hard on the pasture. If this approach is used, carefully consider which pasture to sacrifice. Fencing off a portion of

the pasture for feeding may reduce pasture-wide damage.

According to Greg Lardy, North Dakota State University Extension beef cattle specialist, the basic health needs of the rangeland and cow herd are simple. Rangeland should not be overgrazed or overstocked during drought. Cattle need adequate nutrition now and to sustain them through the winter. To accomplish this you need to reduce stock density or provide supplemental feed. Depending on the severity of the drought, both of these options may be necessary.

## Water requirements

Research shows that water requirements may increase or even double normal animal intake during hot weather. Clean, fresh water is important. If animals do not meet their water needs, they may refuse to eat, experience lowered production, become sick or die.

Water supplies also might become a problem as the drought wears on. Wells and piping may be inadequate if water demand increases dramatically; shallow wells and streams can dry up. You may need to transport water. Contact your local emergency government office or your county Extension office for information on water supply assistance.

Daily water intake for beef cattle at 88 F:

- **Cows** — 16.5 gallons with nursing calves; 14 gallons for bred dry cows and heifers.
- **Bulls** — 18 gallons.
- **Growing cattle** — 9 gallons for 400-lb. animals; 12 for 600 lb.; 14 for 800 lb.
- **Finishing cattle** — 14 gallons for 600-lb. animals; 17 for 800 lb.; 20 for 1,000 lb.; 22.5 for 1,200 lb.

The good news is every drought ends with rain. Hopefully by the time you read this we've had rain here in Blue Rapids as well as other parts of the country where moisture is needed.

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## Hereford highlights

The American Hereford Association (AHA) Board and staff work to provide services that benefit the membership and Hereford customers. Below are a few enhancements recently made to the AHA Web site, [Hereford.org](http://Hereford.org), to expand these services.

### Performance pedigrees

For more than a year, AHA members have been able to access performance pedigrees on the Web by using the enhanced Internet account tools. To provide more information to potential Hereford customers, the AHA has recently made performance pedigrees available as PDF files to all users of AHA search tools.

### Sire selection options

The AHA has added several options to the expected progeny difference (EPD) search form to allow for more thorough searching by categories of sires published in the Sire Summary. Options for carcass sires and National Reference Sire Program sires are available.

### Packing slips and statements online

AHA members who have access to the enhanced Internet account area are now able to view packing slips and monthly statements on the Web, in addition to receiving them in the mail with their paperwork. To access these reports, log in to your AHA Internet account and proceed to the "Download Files" area. Once there, look toward the end of the list of reports to download, where you'll find a link labeled "Click for Accounting Files."

### Spanish search tools

The AHA has posted a Spanish version of its animal and member search tools on the [Hereford.org](http://Hereford.org) site. Spanish-speaking Hereford customers can now search the site for registered animals and their owners' contact information, and also access interactive pedigrees, EPDs, production summaries, sale information, etc., in the Spanish language. The AHA has incorporated several features to let customers know of animals that are for sale, have semen available or have received various awards from the AHA. To view the Spanish site, click on the "En Español" link under the main menu at [Hereford.org](http://Hereford.org). HW

