

Feeding

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are exposed to falling precipitation and have the wet hair coats are considered to have reached the lower critical temperature at 59°F. In addition, the requirements change twice as much for each degree change in wind-chill factor. In other words, the energy requirement actually increases two percent for each degree below 59°F.

To calculate the magnitude of the cold when the cow is wet would be the difference between 59° minus 4° = 55°. True energy requirements to maintain a wet cow in this weather would be two percent times 55° or 110 percent increase in energy (which would mean that over twice the normal energy intake is needed.)

This amount of energy change is virtually impossible to accomplish with feedstuffs available on ranches. In addition this amount of energy change in the diet of cows accustomed to a high roughage diet must be made very gradually to avoid severe digestive disorders. There-

fore, the more common-sense approach is a smaller increase in energy requirements during wet cold weather and extending the increase into more pleasant weather to help regain energy lost during the storm.

Cows that were consuming 16 pounds of grass hay per day and 5 pounds of 20 percent range cubes could be increased to 20 pounds of grass hay offered per day plus six to seven pounds of range cubes during the severe weather event. This is not a doubling of the energy intake but by extending this amount for a day or two after the storm may help overcome some of the energy loss during the storm and done in a manner that does not cause digestive disorders.

The fact that it is not feasible to feed a wet, very cold cow enough to maintain her current body condition, underscores the need for cows to be in "good" body condition at the start of winter.

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