

October 23, 2014

AGRIVIEW

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Cattle graze pastures all year long, but the nutrient composition changes with the seasons and fall and winter diets are generally low in protein, minerals and vitamins. This change in forage quality usually warrants the need for supplemental feeding.

The grass that just a few weeks ago was lush and full of nutrients will start to turn coarse and fibrous. Crude protein content of the grass decreases and the forage becomes harder for cattle to digest.

Animals consuming diets low in protein, lose their appetite, develop a rough appearance, become weak and possess a lowered resistance to disease. Calf weights and reproductive efficiency are also adversely affected if the herd is not maintained on an adequate plane of nutrition.

A seemingly easy answer to this problem is to have the cows consume more forage to make up the needed nutrients. But, since the grass is slowly digested, consumption is lowered and the animal receives even less nutrients.

The key to increasing consumption of low quality forage is to add protein to the diet. Protein will assist in increasing the rate of digestion, thereby allowing the cow to graze more. Protein supplements are available in many types and forms such as cubes, cakes and

blocks. Each will vary in nutrients composition and you need to be aware of the protein amount.

Protein is required for growth and milk production, therefore, the requirements for developing heifers and lactating cows are higher than for dry, pregnant cows. Also, an adequate amount of dry matter (energy), minerals and vitamins need to be provided to avoid nutritional deficiencies in your herd.

DON'T SPRAY THE FIREWOOD:

November is ushering the colder, wetter days that precede the onset of winter. Many homeowners with fireplaces have already enjoyed the first fire of the season, thanks to an early cold snap last week. Many of you are probably using wood left over from last year. After bringing the first load of wood to the house, often we discover the wood is infested with bugs. Warming: don't reach for the bug spray!

Never spray the woodpile. The chemical can remain on the surface of the wood and can produce a toxic vapor when burned, which could be irritating to the eyes and sinuses. While not serious, common sense tells us not to burn something that is toxic. Wood that has been treated with preservatives or other chemicals should also not be burned in the fireplace.

Beetles are the most frequently found type of insect emerging from firewood. Fortunately, these beetles are unlikely to attack seasoned or finished woods in your home. They normally infest green wood in newly felled or weakened trees and aren't interested in your bookcase or antique table.

Beetles lay their eggs in trees and often end up in firewood. If you bring infested

wood into the house and let it sit, adult beetles eventually emerge. Finding these insects in the house alarms some folks.

Termites, carpenter ants, cockroaches, spiders and centipedes, also can enter the house on firewood and cause undue concern.

The most serious pest that is often brought into your home with firewood is the brown recluse spider. The brown recluse spider is a nonaggressive spider that may never move from the log while it is being transported from the storage shed to the house. This spider normally bites when it is injured or trapped in clothing. The venom from its bite can be extremely harmful to humans.

These tips should be followed to prevent importing insects, spiders and other unwanted critters into your home with the firewood.

Never spray the woodpile with insecticide. The vapors could be toxic. Never store wood in direct contact with the soil. Instead, stack wood off the ground on a rack or platform of treated wood or stone. Keep the woodpile dry with air circulation under and around it. This discourages cockroaches, millipedes, centipedes and pillbugs from setting up housekeeping. Never store firewood too close to the home. Termites or ants that find a way into the woodpile can use it to gain entry into the house. Never store wood in the house. Bring in only as much wood as you can burn at one time. Dangerous insects and spiders are rare, but it's a good idea to check logs carefully for insects before carrying them inside. Wear long sleeves and gloves when handling firewood.

If you do find termites in your firewood, don't panic. Just don't bring the wood into the house until you are ready to burn it. Termites can't survive the fire.

TRANSPLANTING NATIVE PLANTS:

Many desirable native or wild Texas plants are adaptable for the home landscape. The natives are hardy to local weather conditions, local soils, and perhaps more tolerant of local garden insects and diseases. Most natives are easy to grow, yet the task of successfully transplanting the desired native from the wild is often difficult and must be done with care.

Before digging, decide which native plants will best fit your landscape needs. It would be unwise to select a native dogwood for a sunny location, since dogwood demands shade or overhead protection. The planting area for the new plant should be well prepared prior to transplanting.

In choosing the native plant to transplant, do not attempt to transplant an overly large specimen. Small plants are usually more vigorous. They grow much faster and are easier to handle.

Pruning transplanted plants can be difficult, but usually is essential for viability. Cut back the upper branches and end shoots of limbs to compensate for loss of root area and to encourage new branching and foliage growth come spring. Some of the foliage should be stripped or removed from evergreen plants.

Some of the most desirable and abundant native plants that may be transplanted include: dogwood, redbud, river birch, sassafras, cherry, laurel and native oak elm.

IMPORTANT DATES:

November 8th - Major Show Heifer Validation - TVCC Ranch - 7:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

**November 13th - Cow-Calf Roundtable - Corazon-Pitchford Sale Facility,
Athens - Registration - 5:30 p.m. - Program - 6:00 p.m. - \$15.00
per person - Barbecue Dinner - 1 C. E. U. Contact the
Henderson County Extension Office by Monday, November
10th to pre-register.**

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