

If early snows stalled corn harvest, try grazing

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Some Nebraska corn growers are still waiting to get out in the field and finish harvesting their crop.

However, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln forage specialist says it might be better idea to allow cattle to graze that corn.

“If early fall snows prevented you from harvesting all your corn, instead of waiting for snow to melt and the ground to either freeze or dry out, try grazing,” Bruce Anderson said. “Grazing standing corn is one way to finish harvest early so preparation for next year’s crop can begin. After all, cattle can get into graze much earlier than large harvest equipment.”

Cattle also will be able to take advantage of corn ears that fell to the ground.

When considering grazing corn, cattle producers first may want to feed cattle corn to help the animals adapt to a higher grain diet, Anderson said.

In addition, producers should limit the size of the area animals have access to so they don’t run wild, knocking down, trampling in and wasting the valuable feed.

Limiting the area can involve daily strip grazing, Anderson said.

“Use electric fences that you reposition every day to allocate only one day’s worth of feed at a time,” he said.

To determine how much area to provide on a daily basis, Anderson recommends first estimating corn grain yield.

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“Each bushel of grain you provide should support about three cows for one day, considering that they also can eat much of the corn forage but will have some waste,” he said.

Producers can give cattle an estimated area to start, then give a little more or a little less each day depending on how well cattle used the previous day’s allocation.