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By WINFIELD UNITED

FEBRUARY 2026

Chick Days #1—Place orders by March 4th to receive April 8th

How do we manage our spring forage fertility without sacrificing quality?

Nitrogen is one of the most essential nutrients to raise forage protein and increase yield. We have seen a reduction in milk income, but we still need to deliver the nutrients that create high yielding and quality forages.

To fertilize small grains with normal N rates:

35 gal/ac of 30% N @ 11 lb/gal = 385 lb of fertilizer
385 lb fertilizer/ac @ \$350/T inc. = \$67/acre
\$67/acre ÷ 10 T per acre = \$6.7/Ton
Feeding 35lb AF/hd = **\$0.12/hd/day N cost**

See the feed cost differences below to make up for less N and lower feed quality:

To replace lost protein with 48% soybean meal and replace lost energy with corn...
0.75 lb SBM @ \$400/T = **\$0.15/hd/day increase**
1 lb corn @ \$5.50/bushel = **\$0.10/hd/day increase**

Although milk prices have reduced since last year, don't lose sight of the importance of quality & yield and managing the impacts on your costs per cow. With current feed ingredient prices this year, forage quality and quantity should be given the highest priority.



NEW NUMBER TO TEXT ORDERS

Our new line to text feed orders is
717-866-1744.

Please include your name, feed, quantity, bin number, and location with your order.

Chick Days 2026 is Here!

The first Chick Day will be held April 8th.
Orders must be placed by March 4th to have your chicks on April 8th.

The 2nd Chick Day will be held May 13th.

K&K Feeds Dairy and Crops Meeting

Join K&K Feeds at Shady Maple Smorgasbord for a Dairy and Crops Meeting on **Friday, February 27th.** Topics for the day include:

New Bron Calf Feeding Requirements

Dr. Tom Earleywine, Land O Lakes

What we know about Clostridium in Forages

Celso Heinzen Junior, BonSilage

Plant Health with Fungicide

Del Voight, Penn State Agronomist

**RSVP by
February 20th**

Colostrum What's the Difference, and Why does it matter?

The most important meal a calf will consume in its entire life is colostrum. Immunoglobulin G (IgG), an important antibody, cannot pass through the placental barrier during pregnancy. Therefore, calves are essentially born without a functioning immune system. It may take three or four weeks for the newborn calf's active immune system to kick in, so during that time they need some help.

That's where colostrum for calves comes in to provide passive immunity. During a calf's first feeding, IgG in colostrum will provide a calf with passive transfer of immunity, which will help protect the calf from disease and infection during the first three to four weeks of life. To achieve passive transfer, calves will need to consume at least 150 grams of IgG. Data shows that successful passive transfer leads to:

- **5% more calves surviving past the first 60 days.**
- **Improved heifer growth and higher future milk yields.**
- **A higher number of cows making it to the end of their second lactation and beyond.**



While ensuring the newborn calf receives high-quality colostrum is important, the amount of IgG fed is not the only important factor to consider when feeding colostrum. To ensure that a calf is achieving passive transfer of IgG, dairy producers should look to the five Qs of Colostrum management: **Quality, Quantity, Quickness, Quite clean and Quantifying.**

Stress, including heat stress & cold stress, handling and movement stress, will decrease colostrum **quality**. If a cow is using nutrients to fight against stressors, they will have fewer nutrients available to produce high-quality colostrum for calves. Another issue that can affect colostrum **quality** is the length of the dry period. A dry period of 45 to 60 days is recommended. Research indicates that if the dry period is too short, the cows will not have enough time to produce enough IgG into the colostrum. If it is too long, they may start to reabsorb IgG.

Supplementing your cattle nutrition program with performance trace minerals can also improve the quality of colostrum. Dairy producers who feed [Zinpro® Availa® 4](#) can see an average colostrum quality improvement around 24%. We will cover the remaining Q's in next month's newsletter.

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