

The nutritional needs of the spring-calving beef cow is at its low point for the year in the fall, the time when the cows are either grazing native range pastures, corn stalks, or sorghum stalks, according to Joe Minyard, extension beef specialist at South Dakota State University.

The cows are pregnant, hopefully, the calves will soon be weaned, and the cow won't have a nutritional workload other than the need to maintain herself, at least until winter weather begins to press on her, Minyard said.

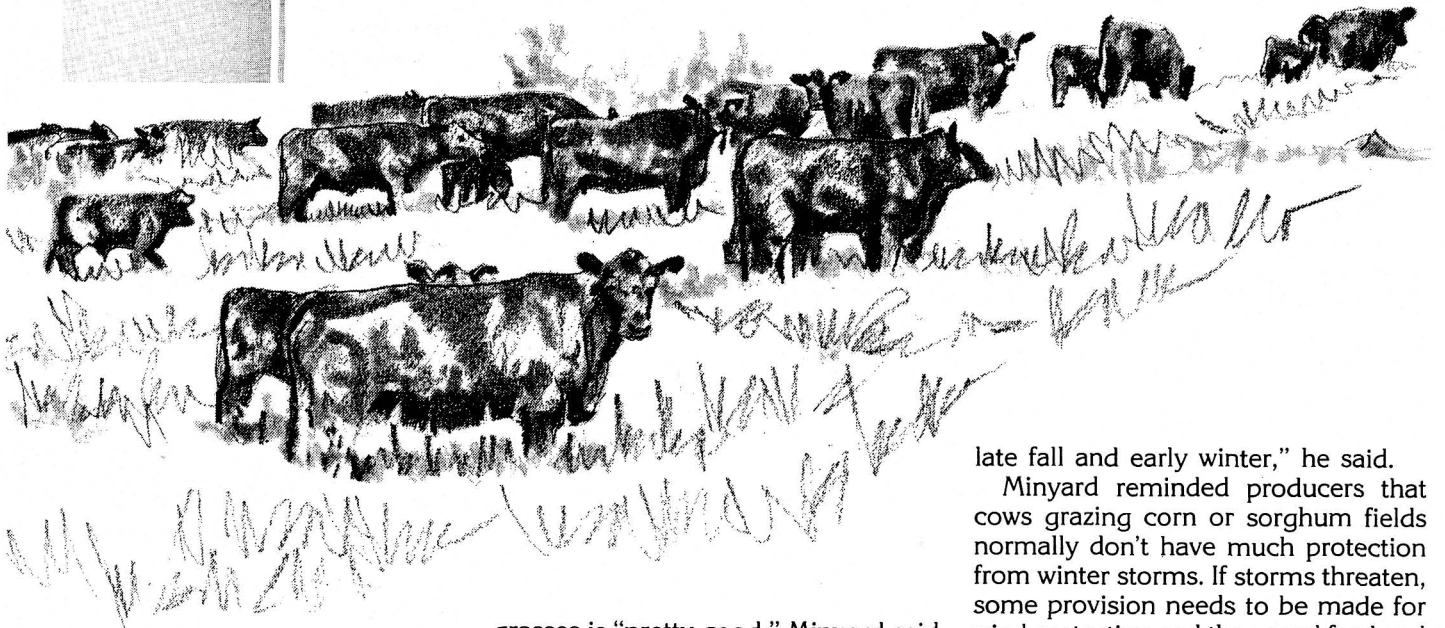
The typical fall grazing—native range and pasture—will be relatively dry, but the nutritional value of cured

the best part of the plants first.

"After the first 30 days of stalk grazing, then look for the need of some nutritional supplementation. The nutrient most likely to become deficient is protein. So, with protein supplementation for the cow herd we're going to get along pretty good as long as the good stalk residue grazing continues," Minyard said.

"As we get into late fall and early winter and snow cover doesn't prevent stalk grazing, then the next nutritional concern might be deficiency of energy. Cows may need to be supplemented for protein and energy as well as salt and minerals, including phosphorus, in

## Fall Grazing Pointers



grasses is "pretty good," Minyard said. In this situation the nutritional concerns would be for water, salt and minerals, especially phosphorus.

If the grass dried up earlier than usual and the cows haven't had green grass for a while, farmers and ranchers might want to consider Vitamin A supplementation. But if they have had good green grass through summer and into early fall, this shouldn't be a concern until the early part of winter, he said.

After harvest when the beef cows are turned in to graze corn and sorghum stalks, there isn't much concern for supplements for the first 30 days, other than those mentioned—water, salt and minerals, especially phosphorus.

That's because during the first 30 days the cows pick and choose, eating

late fall and early winter," he said.

Minyard reminded producers that cows grazing corn or sorghum fields normally don't have much protection from winter storms. If storms threaten, some provision needs to be made for wind protection and they need feed and water.

He advises moving them to some

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shelter—a tree belt behind the buildings, for example. "Be sure they're close to a good feed supply, because in a storm, cornstalk or sorghum stalk grazing is not going to be sufficient."

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