

IOWA BEEF CENTER

FEED BUNK MANAGEMENT

Feed Bunk Management Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Manager

Responsible for ensuring that adequate bunk space per animal is available to attain optimum performance of the pen.

- Receiving calves entering the feedlot should have a minimum of 18 inches of bunk space per head if they are all expected to eat at one time; yearlings on full feed should typically have at least 10–12 inches per head.
- Cattle in confinement may be managed with less bunk space per head (6–9 inches) but 2–3 feedings per day is recommended.

Responsible for working with nutritionist to make sure diet formulations are reassessed regularly by _____ and feed mixing tests should be performed by _____ every _____ weeks.

Feed truck driver

Responsible for ensuring that cattle will be fed their respective diets at the desired time(s) _____ as determined by the feedlot manager.

- Feed should be delivered along the entire length of the bunk, or if the pen is not stocked to capacity, feed should be delivered far enough that all cattle can eat at once.

Bunk reader

Responsible for assessing feed bunks and making feed calls approximately one hour prior to daily morning feeding. The bunk reader should have the previous 4–7 days bunk scores and feed delivery on hand while making that day's feed decision.

- Feed delivered will be increased by _____% (DM basis) after _____.
- Feed delivered will be decreased by _____% (DM basis) after _____.
- For a more conservative intake protocol, consider increasing feed delivered after three consecutive slick bunk (0) scores. Incremental increases are suggested to be no more than 6% for any single increase.
- For a more aggressive intake protocol, consider increasing feed delivered after 1 consecutive slick bunk (0) scores. Incremental increases are suggested to be no more than 2% for any single increase.
- Any stale feed should be removed from bunks. In addition, any foreign materials, such as manure, rocks, metal, etc., should be removed from bunks.
- Ingredients should be tested for DM content at a minimum of once a month (ideally, once per week) to ensure proper ration formulation. A quality control program for incoming ingredients should be developed and followed. This should include a testing protocol and/or sourcing feedstuffs from select suppliers with quality control programs in place.

Veterinarian

Responsible for writing treatment guidelines, prescriptions, and withdrawal times for products used in the health program through the Veterinarian Feed Directive (VFD).

Feed mill manager

Responsible for ensuring the feed is properly mixed, complies with the VFD prescribed by the feedlot veterinarian, and meets all legal and intended specifications.

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