

See the video:

[http://www.kxnet.com/getArticle.asp?l\\_s=dailyemail&ArticleId=281113](http://www.kxnet.com/getArticle.asp?l_s=dailyemail&ArticleId=281113)

## Swath grazing

Sep 30 2008 11:36PM  
KXMBTV Bismarck

With hay costs at an all time high-due to short supply, one new experiment could uncover the answer many of our producers are looking for.

Reporter Sarah Gustin explains why some of these cows aren't eating a bale of hay.

Imagine morning chores no tractor required.

Eric Scholljegerdes / Animal Scientist: "We move our fence everyday so obviously it is going to be very labor intensive."

Every morning at about 7:30 Eric Scholljegerdes moves this single strand of electric fence 15 to 20 feet and that's lunch for the day.

Three groups of cattle are helping discover the benefits swath grazing has to offer.

The control group eats a standard grass and hay diet, the second group is grazing on Altai Wildrye and the third group-gets the good stuff.

This group of cattle is currently swath grazing on oats, then they will move onto swathed sorghum and once this Corn is harvested-corn residue.

Eric Scholljegerdes / Animal Scientist: "One advantage to this system is that corn is part of our rotation, so we are able to harvest the grain and if the cattle need supplemental energy we can feed that grain back to them or we can market that at the elevator. So that is going to generate some income and the cattle can still graze the corn residue and they do quite well."

And cutting down on your hay bill isn't the only benefit.

Eric Scholljegerdes / Animal Scientist: "For one you are keeping the cattle out of the corral so you don't have the issue of feeding them stored hay and hauling manure and you are also providing nitrogen to the land with the cattle defecating, spreading out the organic matter and the nitrogen, hoof action can also improve soil quality as well."

Cow benefits aren't the only ones being analyzed.

Soil scientists and Agriculture economists are also looking at what this experiment has to offer.

Eric Scholljegerdes / Animal Scientist: "One of the things we are doing with the crops is we are underseeding with legumes with the hope that we are adding nitrogen to the soil. So as we rotate through with a three crop rotation with oats, brown-mdrim sorgum sudnae and corn, when the corn ends up on one of the fields that has been underseeded with those legumes there is going to be some nitrogen added and we are going to be able to reduce some of the nitrogen fertilization costs with that. "

South of Mandan, Reporting for KX news I am Sarah Gustin.

Scholljegerdes says at the station they move the fence everyday, but producers could move it once or twice a week