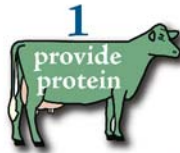


10 reasons to make FORAGE FIRST in the ration.

1. Provide protein

Legume forages can provide up to 75% of the protein needed by lactating dairy cows; corn silage can provide up to 25%.



3. Maximize intake

Forages stimulate cud chewing and rumination, which improve the cow's appetite. Some non-forage sources of fiber actually reduce intake.



5. Minimize acidosis

Acidosis occurs when excessive VFA production in the rumen causes cows to go off feed. Adequate forage and fiber greatly stimulate rumination (cud chewing) which buffers acids in the rumen.



7. Minimize laminitis

Many times when cows develop acidosis, they also develop laminitis. Adequate fiber in the diet greatly reduces both acidosis and laminitis.

9. Good for soil

With their deep roots and permanent ground cover, perennial forages help hold soil in place. They also increase the organic matter in soil, and legumes add nitrogen to the soil.

2. Provide fiber

Forages are often the only source of fiber in a cow's diet.

Fiber is essential to slow the passage of feed, thereby increasing the amount of nutrients that the cow can absorb from the feed.

4. Provide energy

Forages are also an important source of energy -- especially corn silage which can provide up to 50% of the energy needed in a cow's diet. Alfalfa silage can provide up to 40%.

6. Designed for rumen

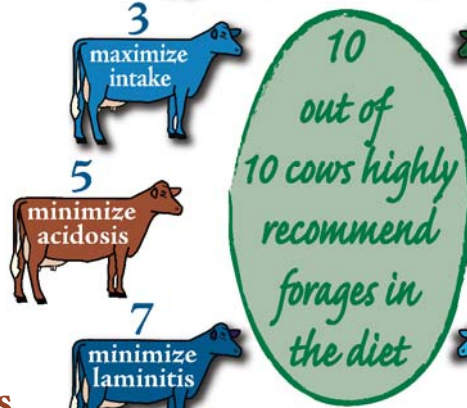
Cows were designed to eat forages. With their rumens working as fermentation vats, cows turn plants and byproducts that we can't eat into foods we can.

8. Reduce feed costs

Forages are an economical source of protein, energy and fiber because these nutrients are more expensive when purchased as concentrates.

10. Sustainable

Perennial forages help protect the environment because they reduce surface water runoff and leaching of nutrients; they require less fertilizer; and they cover the soil year-round.



U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center

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Greener Horizons for Crops,
Cows, and Communities

