

Last week we encouraged you to begin thinking of areas in your operation that you believe to be weak, or profit robbing. These are the things that if done differently may result in less work and more profit for you down the road. There are a number of things that can help increase profitability. Although we will not cover all of these, we have grouped some by category, and will discuss a few things that may fall into each group.

An environment is defined as the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant, lives or operates. As a producer, it is your responsibility to ensure that the environment your cattle are in is healthy, and one of good quality. A condition that would qualify as such may include those of a dry, clean place for the cattle to stay- one that would protect the cattle from adverse weather conditions. Although this is certainly important, we encourage you to expand your thinking. Ask yourself “What is the quality of the environment that your cattle are in?” “Am I making the most of it?” “What is the condition of the plants my cattle consume as they graze?” And, “What is the condition of the soil that those plants are produced in?” You see, a cow’s environment should be viewed as everything that can affect her productivity- whether it be adequate shelter, forage quality, or even the quality of the soil that produces that forage. We believe that improving the quality of **her** environment can have a lasting impact on **your** profitability.

One such method to improve a cow’s environment may be to first improve soil quality. A very effective way to do this is by distributing fecal nutrients throughout the pasture. Most producers tend to feed their cattle in the same spot in the pasture because that is most simple. This type of feeding does have benefits, but does not promote fecal distribution throughout the pasture. Rather, the cattle are likely to centralize to that spot, and not stray far from that feeding area. This results in high quality soil in this area, but other areas in the pasture may suffer if the cattle are not covering the whole pasture. To correct this we recommend feeding in every area of the pasture. If your operation is comprised of more than one pasture, it is beneficial to feed throughout every pasture. Because it consists of simply feeding cattle in different places, natural manure distribution is a simple way to improve soil quality without having to make unnecessary purchases on other things to improve quality. If desired, a hot wire fence may be used to help keep the cattle in a specific place to ensure even manure distribution throughout the pasture. Intensive rotational grazing can also result merit desired results, as it forces the cattle to cover the complete pasture. This results in a more thorough grazing of the forages, and a more even manure distribution in the pasture, both of which can increase soil quality.

A producer should also be sure that his cattle have access to a good quality water source of all times. This is especially important when temperatures are high. If you have access to a well, you may be wise to lay water lines to provide water troughs for the cattle. This will help you be less dependent on ponds that may get low in the summer. A good producer looks at the resources he has available, then finds a way to make them work together to benefit his operation. A good manager understands that there will be times he will need to spend more now so that he can increase profitability in the future. It may take a little extra time to feed in different places in the pasture. It may take even more of your time to lay water lines for water troughs. However, we believe these are some things that will certainly be worthwhile in the future. What are some other ways you can help improve the environment that your cattle are in?

Prices for feeder steers medium and large 1 sold through the Oklahoma National Stockyards on Tuesday, March 24, 2015 are as follows: 482lb- \$313.07, 573lb- \$275.36, 660lb- \$243.21, and 770lb- \$214.63. The Price for April 2015 750lb feeder steers on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange was \$217.85.

Thanks,  
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