

# Feeding Green Cattails

Use of cattail as a feedstuff has generally been limited to emergency feeding of standing cattail in winter after most nutrients and energy have returned to the soil.

Harvest and feeding of green cattail, especially as that made possible by controlled environments like the North Ottawa Impoundment in North Central Minnesota change the economics.

With the ability to quickly reduce the water table, the cattail becomes much easier to harvest while retaining its energy and nutrient composition. This is advantageous in increasing nutrient removal from the watershed as well as dramatically improving the material's value as a feedstuff.

Green cattails, like crop residues, are candidates for ammoniating to improve its feed value. Furthermore the use of crop residue, especially corn stover, has been found to readily complement distillers grains, a co-product from corn-ethanol refining, in feed rations. This presents a unique opportunity given the availability of distillers grains across the Upper Midwest.

Given the structure of Upper Midwest beef cattle production, it is expected that cattail would be cut, field-dried, and baled, then stored and fed in winter, as cattle would be grazing in summer. Alternatively, it could be chopped and spread in late summer.



	Green Cattail	Corn Stover	Wheat Straw
Dry Matter	91	90	90
Crude Protein	6.4	4.8	3.6
Undegradable Intake Protein	-	30	30
Total Digestible Nutrients	45	45	43
Net Energy for Maintenance	0.45	0.44	0.4
Net Energy for Gain	0.11	0.19	0.02
Acid Detergent Fiber	50	46	52
Calcium	-	0.49	0.19

Source: NDSU Extension Animal Science

## The Feed Value of Green Cattail

Green cattail has a feed profile similar to corn stover. Consequently, using the current market price for stover should serve as a reasonable proxy for the feed value of corn stover. In spring 2018, the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service reported market prices of \$25 for large round corn stover bales, or about \$42 per ton.

## References

Alternative Feeds for Ruminants. Lardy, G., Anderson, V., and C. Dahlen. 2015. NDSU Extension AS1182.

National Hay, Feed, & Seed Weekly Summary. USDA Livestock, Poultry, & Grain Market News. March 2, 2018.

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## In Conjunction with

The Red River Basin Commission

## With support from

The Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund