

Converting Marginal Irrigated Cropland To Cool Season Perennial Forage Production: Will It Pay?

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Table 4. Estimated annual cow carrying cost and return to management when using irrigated pasture in central Nebraska

	Price	Unit	Pasture rental	Irrigated Pasture @ 0.8 ac/pair	Irrigated Pasture @ 1 ac/pair
Feed costs				\$/cow	
Pasture ¹			\$434.00	\$377.34	\$471.65
Corn residue grazing	\$0.50	/d	\$77.50	\$77.50	\$77.50
Prairie hay (large round bales)	\$90.00	/ton		\$40.50	\$40.50
Mineral	\$0.31	/lb	\$27.90	\$27.90	\$27.90
Total Feed Costs			\$539.40	\$523.24	\$617.55
Other costs				\$/cow	
Veterinary & medicine	\$20.00	/cow	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$20.00
Marketing (culls)	\$2.00	2.17 cwt	\$4.34	\$4.34	\$4.34
Cash cost on bldgs & equip	\$4.00	/cow	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$4.00
Misc. cash costs	\$10.00	/cow	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$10.00
Labor	\$10.00	/hr	\$60.00	\$70.00	\$70.00
Ownership costs on bldgs & equip	\$6.65	/cow	\$6.65	\$6.65	\$6.65
Interest on animals	\$2,906	7.5%	\$217.95	\$217.95	\$217.95
Bull purchase (30 cows/bull)	\$4,000	4 years	\$33.33	\$33.33	\$33.33
Cost of replacement heifers	\$2,000	20%	\$400.00	\$400.00	\$400.00
Total costs			1,295.67	1,289.51	1,383.82
Cull Credits				\$/cow	
Cull cows @ 16% per yr	\$90.00	1200 lbs	\$156.60	\$156.60	\$156.60
Cull heifer @ 20% per yr	\$205.00	750 lbs	\$56.89	\$56.89	\$56.89
Cull bull, 4 yr replacement rate	\$130.00	1800 lbs	\$19.21	\$19.21	\$19.21
Total Cull Credits			\$232.70	\$232.70	\$232.70
NET COST PER COW			\$1,062.97	\$1,056.81	\$1,151.12
Production cost of calves (550 lb calf)				Breakeven, \$/cwt	
85% calves weaned per cow exposed			\$227.38	\$226.06	\$246.23
90% calves weaned per cow exposed			\$214.74	\$213.50	\$232.55
Returns to management (\$288/cwt for 550 lb calf)				\$/calf	
85% calves weaned per cow exposed			\$333.44	\$340.68	\$229.73
90% calves weaned per cow exposed			\$402.91	\$409.76	\$304.97

¹Pasture rental budgeted at \$62/pair/month for 7 months; Irrigated pasture budgeted at \$63/pair/month when stocked at 0.8 ac/pair for 6 months and \$79/pair/month when stocked at 1 ac/pair for 6 months