

Grazing standing corn eliminates the costs of harvesting, transporting, drying, and storing grain. Expenses for cutting stalks for hay or chopping silage also are avoided.

Plus, letting cattle do the harvest eliminates yardage expenses, manure hauling, and feed processing and handling.

After a brief learning period, cattle will preferentially graze corn ears if any have developed.

Drought-damaged corn may not have many ears, but if much grain has developed, the cattle first need to adapt to a higher grain diet before grazing corn begins. Otherwise, acidosis or other digestive disorders could develop.

Cross-fencing and strip-grazing is needed to minimize trampling waste. Give cattle access to no more than a two-day supply of fresh corn at a time; a one-day supply is even better, especially for younger, growing cattle.

Dry cows might do fine if moved just twice each week.

Electric fence is used most commonly for cross fences, but animals must be trained to respect these fences before entering the corn field. Driving over a strip of corn with a tractor, pickup, or four-wheeler before placing the fence in the strip makes it easier to set up the fence and visually alerts the cattle that the fence is nearby. Constructing multiple strips ahead of time provides a catch area if the original fence fails to keep animals in the desired smaller area.