

## **Reducing the Risk of In-field Feeding Systems: Wintering Site Assessment Tool**

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The practice of feeding cattle in the field during winter months, known as extensive winter-feeding, has been steadily increasing throughout the prairies, mostly due to reduced yardage, and feeding and manure handling costs. Before winter, farmers should consider their wintering site location and runoff. The greatest environmental risk from wintering sites is the potential of water contamination from runoff carrying nutrients, pathogens, and sediments.

Careful site selection and good site management are essential to ensure the full benefits of extensive winter-feeding while addressing potential environmental concerns. For example, choosing an optimal wintering site and applying the right feeding strategy helps reduce overall production costs by minimizing feeding and manure transportation costs while preventing excessive nutrient accumulation and runoff.

The Wintering Site Assessment and Design Tool (WSADT) can help livestock producers select and manage a wintering site, while addressing potential environmental risks. The WSADT can assist producers in identifying the environmental risks associated with their in-field wintering sites and provides beneficial management practices to address the risk. This tool evaluates five main wintering site factors: site characteristics, feeding strategies, bedding and shelter management, water source management, and post-wintering site management.

### **For more Information**

Wintering Site Assessment and Design Tool: A guide to selecting and managing a wintering site in western Canada. Agdex 420/580-3.

This publication is available through Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development's publication office by calling 1-800-292-5697.

Also available online at:  
[www.agriculture.alberta.ca/manure](http://www.agriculture.alberta.ca/manure)