

The Cattle Call[®]

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR

TODAY'S PROGRESSIVE BEEF PRODUCER

www.crystalix.com

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FEEDING STRATEGIES DURING DRY CONDITIONS

The continuing drought in parts of the country makes it necessary for producers to adjust their feeding strategies. A combination of effective supplementation and forage consumption management can make a significant economic difference. Try these suggestions:

- Supplement effectively. The key to holding the line on costs during drought supplementation is enabling your cattle to extract all the usable energy from the grazing that is still available.
- A protein supplement like CRYSTALYX[®] low-moisture blocks will improve the digestibility of low-quality forage. It will also increase the amount of critical energy cows can extract from the forage. A blend of ruminally degradable protein and bypass protein will maximize rumen microbial fermentation efficiencies for digesting low-quality forages. This blend will also improve the protein status of the cow. Conserving protein tissues is important because they are metabolically active tissues and organs in your reproductive cows. Cows in a stage of negative energy balance will have great difficulty producing healthy calves, milking sufficiently, and rebreeding on time.
- Provide the same levels of trace minerals as you would during a normal season. It is especially important to encourage sufficient phosphorous consumption.
- Supplement vitamin A, which can be deficient in forages harvested during and after drought.
- Position low-moisture blocks in strategic locations. The

blocks will help draw cattle away from traditional loafing areas and into areas that may be underutilized. Research shows CRYSTALYX[®] can be an even more powerful draw than water.

- Control supplement consumption physically, rather than with salt. Salt only increases requirements for clean, fresh water, and that is usually compromised and restricted during periods of drought. Physical consumption control through low-moisture blocks allows you to continue to take advantage of free-choice supplementation without further increasing the cost of labor and fence-walking in anticipation of scheduled deliveries.
- Limit grazing if you're already feeding forages. Pulling animals off drought-stressed range allows grass to rebound when moisture returns.
- Cull conservatively. Pregnancy check early and ship non-producers first. Unless you're scaling back the operation, heavy culling into quality breeding animals should be the last resort. Performance testing pays off when trying to make the right culling decisions.
- Wean early, especially your fall calving cows. This presents a management challenge: Early weaned, lightweight calves will be even more vulnerable to the normal stresses of weaning, drylot acclimation, environmental changes and processing.

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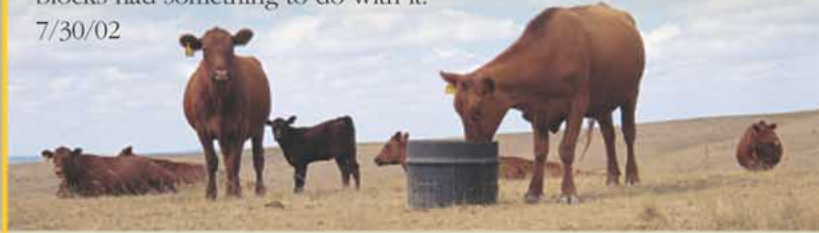
SUPPLEMENT STRATEGIES AT WORK

Bill Riggins' fourth summer of drought has left him long on country and short on grass. He has cut his cowherd in half this summer. His strategy to hold things together at his ranch in southeastern Colorado includes leaving CRYSTALYX® low-moisture blocks out for his cows all summer.

"Some people might think that is cost-prohibitive," Riggins says. "But you can't sell the roof off your house and still expect to live in it. Our only hope for maintaining these cows on what little dry grass and oak brush left is to give them some supplemental nutrition that helps get some good out of it..."

"Between the drought and cattle prices, our deal hasn't been real lucrative the last couple of years. But we have very few open cows at fall pregnancy test. We have very few problems at calving. If we do that again this summer on what little grass we have, I'm going to feel pretty strongly that the blocks had something to do with it."

7/30/02



REDUCE WEANING STRESS - A MANAGEMENT PLAN

The most stressful time of a calf's life is weaning. There is a new approach that promises to help producers ease their calves through this stressful time. This approach focuses on better management of calf behavior.

The Question

Why not transfer as much weaning stress from the calf to the cow, which is better suited to handle it? That is the question South Dakota State University researchers considered.

"It's a simple reversal of traditional roles," Doug Zalesky, SDSU Extension Beef Specialist, says. You confine the cows rather than the calves and turn the calves into nearby pasture.

Observations and Research

Confined cows were fed loose hay and fresh water for four days. Calves were permitted to graze while maintaining fenceline contact with their dams. No figures were compared for weight gain, but observations showed that weaned calves avoided the dust and stress of traditional drylot weaning, and went to pasture easily, comfortably, and adapted to the open environment after five days.

Three years of weaning studies at the University of California at Davis compared weaning seven-month-old calves by one of five methods.

- Fenceline separation from dams - on pasture
- Total separation from dams - on pasture
- Total separation from dams on drylot after being preconditioned to hay
- Total separation from dams to drylot without preconditioning to hay
- Non-weaned controls on pasture

The hard data from this research supports the SDSU observations.

- Calves allowed fenceline contact spent no less time feeding during the weaning process than unweaned controls.
- Calves in totally separated treatments ate less.
- Isolated calves spent more time walking fence, standing up and bawling.

(SEE CHART)

Although the behavioral effects of weaning were relatively short-lived, the less-stressed calves showed higher weight gains in the days following weaning. This difference lasted for at least 10 weeks.



Creep Feed or Supplement?

Experience and research has demonstrated that creep feeding calves for the final three to four weeks before weaning can help reduce the stress at weaning. Further field trials recently conducted by Ridley Block Operations, the makers of CRYSTALYX® Brand Supplements, demonstrate that offering a highly palatable, low-moisture block at weaning appears to offer the same jumpstart to the feed familiarization process. When fortified, highly palatable supplements are placed in weaning pens, even calves that are naïve to supplements experience interest in the blocks. And that, in turn, stimulates acclimation to the feed bunk - and calves that are eating are less stressed.

Summary

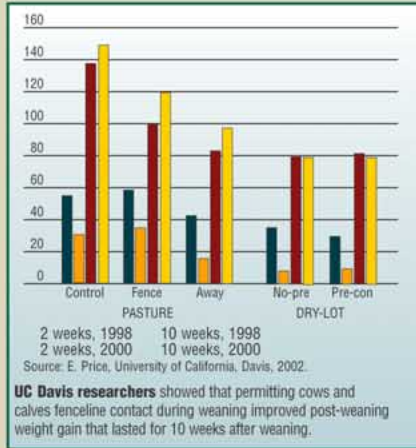
- Permitting calves to stay with their natural behavioral instincts by adjusting weaning management can help reduce stress.
- Providing a highly palatable weaning supplement aids calves in getting acclimated to the bunk.

Producers Tell Us Why They Rely on CRYSTALYX®

Producers have different reasons for putting CRYSTALYX® to work in their cattle operations. Some like the labor-saving convenience. Others use it to manage grazing distribution. Many say it makes their available forages go further. Here's what several cattlemen have to say about CRYSTALYX®.

UC Davis research showed that permitting cows and calves fenceline contact during weaning improved post-weaning weight gain that lasted for 10 weeks after weaning.

Source: E. Price, University of California, Davis, 2002



Supplement Strategies At Work

CPC Livestock has been trying to prove that CRYSTALYX® Brand Brigade® low-moisture blocks are a waste of money. They can't. The Kentucky backgrounding operation has been running its own trials on Brigade® for four years.

"The starter feed we provide these calves has everything in it those animals need," Ivan Pedigo, CPC's feed manager and co-owner says. "So there's no reason that that block should make any difference." Yet it has. CPC found that when calves consume only about a quarter-pound per day, dry-matter intake feed efficiency, and calf gains go up, and feed costs go down. Even after accounting for the cost of supplement, total cost of gain only drops by 1.5 to 4 cents per-pound. Why?

No matter how good your starter feed is, there's always a percentage of calves that don't eat it immediately, according to Ridley Research Coordinator Mark Robbins. Robbins says a fortified, palatable supplement like Brigade® changes that behavior, while providing a nutritional boost when it is needed most.

Results By The Barrel™

CRYSTALYX® Brand Brigade® Stress Fighting Formula provides weaned calves and new arrivals:

- A highly palatable supplement that can alter feeding behavior by encouraging calves to start eating
- An all-natural, 14 percent vegetable protein that won't dilute starter rations
- An organic trace mineral package
- High levels of vitamin E to increase the immune function during stress.

