



When bargain supplements are simply no bargain

In the fight to hold down winter supplementation costs, producers are often advised to compare supplements based on cost per pound of protein. That's been pretty good advice.

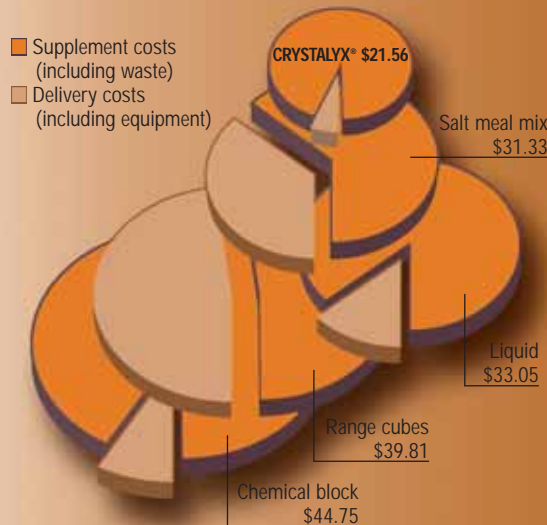
Some detailed budget analysis shows that if you stop there, you could still lose money by overspending on supplement delivery. Focusing strictly on the purchase price of supplements—even on a pound-for-pound of nutrient basis—means you're neglecting as much as nearly half the total cost to supplement, depending on conditions and the supplement form. Those costs can include:

- Labor costs, including realistic values for your own time.
- Truck cost per mile.
- Tractor and other equipment needs.
- Wasted feed lost to wind and weather both in storage and during delivery.
- Overconsumption or underconsumption, caused by irregular delivery, poor intake control, or "boss cow" syndrome.
- Disruption of efficient forage use when animals stop grazing to rush the supplement truck.

HOW THE COSTS BREAK OUT

Analyzing typical costs to supplement a 100-cow herd for three months demonstrates that when you include all the costs of your supplement program—both feed and delivery costs—a cheap per-ton cost does not mean a cheap total per-head supplementation cost.

TOTAL PER-HEAD COST OVER 90 DAYS



Assumes 20 miles roundtrip to provide supplement, \$8 per hour labor, 34.5¢ per mile truck cost.

- Interference with grazing distribution when animals don't stray far from a location of repeated supplement delivery. "You put a hired person behind the wheel, you figure out all the wear and tear and depreciation—those are real

costs," says Kansas State Animal Science Professor Dale Blasi. "But what's harder to figure out is what are the real savings [in cutting down delivery frequency]." For the cow/calf producer who's checking cows daily for calving progress, for instance, those costs are already "sunk."

Still, self-fed supplements that ensure adequate nutrition independent of the cow-checking schedule offer other opportunities for managing time and labor resources:

- At times of the season when it's not critical to see cows daily.
- At times when labor is being eaten up by other demands, such as at calving or seasonal cropping operation activities.
- For operations with low levels of calf loss and calving difficulty, which don't demand constant cow attention.
- For producers who want a dependable, self-fed supplement available if they are unable to make a scheduled daily check.

It's a cost/benefit analysis each operation ultimately has to conduct on its own, Blasi acknowledges. That analysis starts with thorough accounting of all the costs going into calving management, independent of supplement delivery.

RESULTS BY THE BARREL™

Don't believe the numbers? Run an economic analysis of your supplement choice, using your own total supplement costs, with the new Crystal Clear Economyx™ supplement calculator available on-line. Crystal Clear Economyx™ is a free software program, courtesy of the makers of CRYSTALYX® Brand Supplements. It can help you evaluate all of the different costs



associated with a supplementation program, including labor and equipment costs. It's an economic tool that fairly compares different supplementation programs by accounting for input costs that are sometimes over-

looked or have been difficult to quickly calculate in the past, by hand.

Visit www.crystallyx.com to download your free copy of Crystal Clear Economyx™.

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