



ON FEED

A newsletter of Dakotaland Feeds

June 17, 2016

Intake Issues

This is the time of year when we finally have the pairs to grass and other jobs get front and center attention. However, the one thing we almost always hear this time of year is an issue with mineral intake.

Mineral intake can be variable,

especially this time of year, for a number of different reasons. First off, it likely is going to depend on your pasture and water conditions. Sometimes, cows won't stop eating mineral until its gone. Sometimes, this may be due to the fact that they are searching for dry matter. With the high percentage of moisture in early season grass, cattle can have a difficult time simply consuming enough to meet their dry matter nutrient requirements. Other times, cattle almost shut off completely on mineral intake because forage quality is good.

Salt is the major driver of intake. Contrary to some theories out there, cattle actually don't have any idea that they are deficient in minerals other than salt. Salt is included in most mineral mixes so you don't have to mess with 2 bags every time you stop at a feeder. However, there are some areas that have such high salinity in the water and the forage that cows won't eat the mineral if there is salt in it. That is not often the case, but when it is, a low salt mineral can be used to help encourage intake.

If you think their mineral intake is too high, **do the math** to come up with a figure. If 40 cows are going through a bag a week, that is just under 3 oz/hd/d. If they are going through a bag a day, then we have a problem. We need to add salt to slow them down. If you are going to add salt to slow them down, make sure you mix it or blend it in with the mineral. Simply providing additional salt in another feeder or a different compartment of the same feeder is not going to stop them from overconsuming the mineral. And we want to slow them down, not completely stop them from eating mineral. If you mix your mineral 1:1 with salt, then the cows need to consume about 6 oz/d to get the full trace mineral supplementation from the original mineral mix.

As cows are reaching peak lactation, their nutrient requirements go up. So while we expect her requirement for sodium to be about 0.10%, as her intake increases through lactation, the total amount of salt she needs will also increase. She could require at least 1.0 oz of salt every day. At 4oz of intake, a 25% salt mineral mix provides 1oz. Realize the requirement could be higher for bigger and heavier milking cows. Many of the loose minerals are designed for 3oz of consumption, and so providing additional salt early season is likely necessary, especially since many of those minerals are 12-18% salt.

Providing either loose salt or salt blocks are equally effective at providing the additional salt a cow needs. I have been asked about trace mineral salt, and it is important that you realize what you are (and AREN'T) getting with trace salt or trace blocks. These products are still 98% salt or more, so there is not any appreciable quantity of mineral in these products. There is no phosphorus or calcium in trace salt, nor is there an adequate amount of

In a Nutshell

- *Mineral intake can vary because of pasture or water conditions
- *Salt is the major driver of mineral intake
- *Do the math to calculate what intake actually is
- *Nutrient requirements increase at peak lactation, including salt
- *Trace mineralized salt is not mineral
- *Purina does research on mineral tubs and weatherized minerals
- *Consistent consumption is critical for Altosid and medicated minerals to be effective

INTAKE ISSUES

any other mineral or vitamin the cow needs. The same goes for cobalt and sulfur blocks. The dyes make them look different, but in reality, it is still just salt. Plain white salt will do the job just the same.

Purina has done research on mineral palatability and tried to refine the formulation so that cows eat what they are supposed to and yet not overconsume. The Purina Wind and Rain tubs and weatherized Wind and Rain Storm Formula minerals are the most highly researched minerals in the industry. If you struggle with intakes on the cows, trying the mineral tubs may be a good option. The tubs are generally a higher cost/hd/d product, but if it helps keep them from overconsuming, then it is well worth it. And at 225 lbs/tub, you are able to put out more product at a time. The targeted intake on the mineral tubs is 4-8 oz/hd/d and we typically see results pretty close to target.

If you are using Altosid for fly control through the mineral or the tubs, having **consistent consumption is important**. The Altosid works by treating the manure and preventing fly larvae from becoming adult flies. In this case, if you are using a loose mineral, we need to work really hard to keep it in front of the cattle. This is why tubs often work better for fly control, because they are less likely to run out. We also need to watch intake to make sure we are getting enough into the cattle for the fly control to be effective. And, the more cattle that consume the product, the better because we get more manure treated that way. There is a residual effect to using Altosid in your pastures. The first year you use it, there will likely be a large initial fly hatch from the previous year. In the subsequent years, the initial fly hatch should be much less and your fly control should be better. You are not likely to get 100% fly control because of certain cattle not consuming the mineral and because Altosid does not control face flies or house flies. However, the horn flies are the most bothersome flies and we should get a good handle on that if we hit our consumption targets.

Just like the fly control needs to be consumed regularly for the best response, if you are using a medicated mineral, intake is also very important. If cows aren't consuming the mineral (and medication) in the appropriate or targeted amount, then the response is not going to be up to expectations. Again, do the math and figure out if you are hitting the appropriate intakes.

Mineral is an important part of the overall nutrition for your cowherd. The easiest way to get it to the cows right now is through free-choice feeding, but we need to be aware of what we are doing and adjust intakes if necessary and maybe try a different form of delivery if we struggle with it year after year. Talk to your local Dakotaland Feeds Livestock Consultants if you have questions on your mineral program.

Roxanne Knock, PhD

Things to be thinking about:

- *Get your creep feeders in shape to put out in pastures
- *Get creep feed out for spring-born calves**
- * Keep mineral in place for the cows on pasture
- *Feed **Altosid** to control horn fly populations
- *Implant cattle going to grass and calves going to pasture
- *Get prepared for heat stress for cattle in the lots- shades, sprinklers, extra water tanks, etc.
- *Pen maintenance as conditions allow
- * Order wasps for feedlot fly control or ask about **Clarify** for feed-through fly control in the feedlot
- * Make sure the bulls have mineral too! Stress Tub or Ultimate Breeder mineral provide the Availa-4 mineral
- * Have a breeding soundness exam and semen test done on your bulls to help ensure high pregnancy rates