



# ON FEED

A newsletter of Dakotaland Feeds

January 25, 2017

## Winter isn't any fun

I think that a lot of us are in the same boat that we have had about enough winter already. But as bad as we think we have it, the cattle have it worse and we need to think about taking care of them.

**Bedding.** We have this discussion often. Bedding the cattle has tremendous benefits for cattle comfort and gain. After the Christmas rain many of us had, if you put bedding out after that, you could tell how exhausted the cattle were because they immediately laid down when they had a dry place to do so. It costs a lot of energy to stand and shiver in the cold rain. When you see the big spot in the ground where the cattle have been laying, they have transferred a lot of their body heat to the ground. When you can insulate them from the cold ground, it helps them conserve more of their own body heat and when that happens, gains increase. NDSU did some research a little over 10 years ago looking at the impact of bedding on cattle performance and the results tell the impact of bedding. We hear that producers don't want to bed because it causes too much tag, but the NDSU data shows the opposite results that the cattle were cleaner when bedded.

Right now, **taking good care of the cows can be tough.** Cows energy requirements increase by about 1% for every degree less than about 20F when they have a heavy winter hair coat. So the days when it is -20, with a windchill of -40F, it is pretty hard to maintain a cow. We can either increase the energy density of her diet, provide more feed, or both. Feeding

the better hay with a little supplement is about the best option you have on the worst days. We have been asked numerous times this winter what the best supplementation strategy is and generally, if you have good quality hay and adequate protein, your best option is to add no more than about 4-5 lbs of corn. More corn than that starts to shift the rumen toward digesting starch and is counterproductive. Feeding distillers doesn't have that same effect because it is very low in starch, but is energy dense. You are more limited by sulfur content of the distillers than anything else, which means you can feed quite a bit of distillers to cows if they are in need of some more body condition.

### In a Nutshell

- \* Get bedding out for calves that you are feeding
- \* Take care to meet the cow's nutrient needs in cold weather
- \* Get a solid mineral program in place including Availa-4
- \* Use Diamond V Yeast Culture to improve colostrum quality
- \* Use Rumensin to improve feed efficiency and reduce coccidia
- \* Get a colostrum replacer on hand for calving season

	No Bedding	Modest Bedding	Generous Bedding
Amount of bedding, lbs	0	385	674
Initial weight, lbs	725	726	727
Final weight, lbs	1121	1182	1172
Dry matter intake, lbs	21.99	21.96	22.16
ADG, lbs	2.83	3.69	3.53
Feed to Gain	7.63	5.81	6.21
Tag score (1-none, 5-high)	3.75	2.64	1.58
Cost per head for bedding	0	\$5.77	\$10.15
Return over no bedding (based on \$1.15/lb fats)	0	\$70.15	\$58.65
Return on investment	0	12.1	5.77

Adapted from Anderson, Aberle, and Swenson, 2004. NDSU.

## WINTER ISN'T ANY FUN

Now is also a good time to make sure you **have a solid mineral program in place**. The Availa-4 in your breeder products this time of year have a tremendous benefit that pays off for more than one year. The research Zinpro has done shows that feeding Availa-4 to cows prior to calving results in heavier calves at weaning, healthier calves during backgrounding, and more carcass weight. Again, these results are not from feeding Availa-4 directly, but feeding it to the cow before the calf ever hits the ground. Fetal programming or generational nutrition or whatever you want to call it; how we feed the cow is big deal. It turns our calves into top-notch cattle, or the chronics you never want to see again.

**Diamond V Yeast Culture** is added to a lot of your minerals or Cow Supplement and Cow Balancer products this time of year to help build better colostrum. When Diamond V Yeast Culture is added to the cow's ration prior to calving, it significantly reduces the number of calves that have failure of passive transfer. When calves have a failure of passive transfer, it increases the likelihood of those calves getting sick. Diamond V Yeast Culture is also included in Stress Tubs if you are looking for a tub with Diamond V.

We have also been encouraging the **use of Rumensin on the cow herd** for a number of years to improve feed efficiency and try to reduce the shedding of coccidia into the environment where the calf is born. It does not give the calf any immunity to coccidiosis, but if we can lessen the chance that the calf picks it up in the environment, we can hopefully give ourselves a better chance to avoid coccidiosis this calving season. We also have some cake or cube products available with Rumensin, so you can still use this product even if you aren't feeding with a mixer wagon.

**Colostrum is starting to develop** in a lot of your cows right now. It is critical to the calf that they get colostrum as soon as possible because their ability to absorb the immunoglobulins needed for immune function decreases rapidly after birth. Having a colostrum replacer on hand for an emergency is a good idea- not a supplement, an actual colostrum replacer so the calves get everything they need to get off to a good start. The best products are made from bovine colostrum and labeled like a vaccine, not a feed.

How we treat the cow before the calf is born can determine whether your calving season is tolerable or trainwreck. The way Mother Nature has been acting, calving season is going to be tougher this year than it has been the last couple years. Be better prepared by taking care of the cow now.

*Roxanne Knock, PhD*

*The Cabela's Mineral Promotion is going on now. Book by March 31<sup>st</sup>!*

### **Things to be thinking about:**

- \* Get prepared for calving- get chains, OB sleeves, and calf puller in place and *colostrum replacement* on hand
- \* Think about ramping up your mineral program for cows prior to calving, ask about **Ultimate Breeder 8**
- \* Get Stress Tubs or the Ultimate Breeder mineral for the first and second calf heifers before calving
- \* Feed Rumensin to the cows to improve feed efficiency and to limit environmental coccidiosis prior to calving
- \* Set up a herd health plan for vaccinations, de-worming program, and treatment protocols with your veterinarian
- \* Inventory your projected feed resources and project your winter feed needs so you can plan accordingly
- \* Talk with your veterinarian about newborn calf products
- \* Get bedding out for calves to give them an escape from the mud. It impacts your gain and efficiency!