



ON FEED

A newsletter of Dakotaland Feeds

November 19, 2018

Preparing for the Next Calf Crop

Weaning is still finishing up around the area with the delayed harvest. You can't hardly be upset about the rain, but Mother Nature could sure have better timing. Even as we finish up weaning in some areas and we hope to let the cows take care of themselves on stalks for a while, the next calf crop is already progressing through gestation.

As the calves in utero continue to grow and develop, how we treat the cows now will influence some of our outcomes on the calves. During mid-gestation, many of the organ systems in the calf have already been formed and are going through growth. Reproductive organs are formed during mid-gestation and nutrition now and during late gestation can influence the reproduction of your herd for years to come. Now is also a good time to assess body condition on the cows. Using a 1-9 scale, we want the cows to be in a body condition score (BCS) 5 or 6 now and maintain that condition as we get closer to calving.

The energy for the cows should be around 52% TDN in mid-gestation and in late gestation should move up to 57% TDN. Protein in mid-gestation needs to be a minimum of 7.5% and in late gestation should be closer to 9%. Keeping the cows in good body condition pays off in higher quality colostrum for the calves and better breed-back on the cows. Thin cows have a much more difficult time supporting reproduction and as a result, they end up open more frequently than cows in better shape. Protein is necessary to build muscle in the calves and also for the cow to produce high quality colostrum so supplying extra protein for cows on stalks is a long-term investment.

Minerals and vitamins are also critical during the development of the calf during gestation. Zinc is necessary for any growth in the body at any point either prior to or after birth. Copper is required for enzyme systems that prevent cell damage and preserve normal growth. Vitamin A is a fat soluble vitamin that is important for normal growth and development and also plays a role in reproduction. Vitamin D helps with calcium absorption for bone growth and development. Vitamin E helps protect cells as an anti-oxidant.

Missing any of the components that are required for normal growth and development can show up later in the life of the calf as challenges with disease, growth, or reproduction. Preventing some of this from following your calves starts long before they ever hit the ground.

We understand the economic challenges facing producers today. Sometimes decisions are made for the short-term without consideration for the long-term impacts and the lasting challenges that could result. Having a balanced ration to fill any nutritional gaps can help you save money and headaches in the long-term. Being consistent in your management helps you prepare the calves to be successful in your operation.

We recommend feeding Rumensin to your cowherd whenever possible. In many scenarios, feeding in the winter includes some type of mixed ration. The Cow Balancer R800 products fit this very well. It allows you to supply all

In a Nutshell:

- * **How we feed cows now influences fetal growth**
- * **52% TDN and 7.5% protein is minimum for mid-gestation**
- * **Vitamins and minerals are critical for fetal development**
- * **Feed Rumensin to your cows whenever possible**
- * **Fat is a good energy source but too much isn't beneficial**
- * **Don't hurt the factory!**
- * **Let us get a cow feeding program set up for you**

PREPARING FOR THE NEXT CALF CROP

of the trace mineral and vitamin needs of the cow along with Rumensin in a ½ lb/hd/d pellet. When feeding distillers grains to your cows, that supplies the phosphorus and protein needs of the cow and so there is not additional phosphorus in your supplement. The Rumensin decreases the voluntary feed intake of the cows while maintaining body condition, which is a win-win for your operation. If we can decrease voluntary intake by 8-10% on your cow herd, that can help save us feed and money and basically pay for your mineral program.

Another question we commonly get is about feeding fat to the cows. Fat is an energy source for the cow and is helpful in enhancing body condition- to a point. Above about 6% in the diet, digestibility of forage starts to decline and intake will start to decline as well. So while fat can be good, more is definitely not better. Also, it has been asked if different kinds of fats help with breeding and the answer to that is no. When cattle consume fats in their feed, the fats are not absorbed into the bloodstream in the same form that they were in the ration. The rumen microbes modify the fats before they are absorbed. So, if cows need extra condition, fat is a good supplement and may help improve breed back because of helping hold better body condition and energy balance after calving. If the cows are in good shape, you are not likely to see any benefit from added fat.

In the current climate, everything is being re-evaluated. I heard someone say, "Just make sure you are cutting the fat and not into the muscle." Your cowherd is the muscle. It is the factory. You need to take care of the factory so you don't hurt yourself down the road. Making sure you take care of the cows now and into the winter will make calving season go a little better. Prior preparation prevents poor performance!

Roxanne Knock, PhD

We work with locations in a lot of rural communities and at this time of year especially, it is important that we support our local communities with our business. I saw this a while ago and it has stuck with me.

- 3** Think of the 3 local businesses you'd miss the most if they were gone. Your business is what keeps those businesses around.
- 50** If just half of the employed US population spent \$50 each month in independently owned businesses, their purchases would generate more than \$42.6 billion in revenue.
- 68** For every \$100 spent in independently owned stores, \$68 returns to the community through taxes, payroll, and other expenditures. If you spend at a national chain, \$43 stays here. Spend it online and nothing comes home.
- 1** The number of people it takes to start the trend... you.

Source: the350project.net

Do business with the people that support you! Spend your money with the people who support your family, your school, and your community. When you support those businesses, they will still be around to fix the tire on the truck during harvest, process the bull with the broken leg, and bring feed for the calves when you are out.

Things to be thinking about:

- ** Remember to HEAT TAPE lines on liquid systems-** this keeps the line fluid. C&R Supply has videos on how to maintain the John Blue pumps at <http://www.crsupply.com/index.php/products/liquid-feed/>
- * Administer booster vaccinations and implant your calves
- * Pregnancy check cows and cull opens or problem cows
- * Use a 5-day pulse of Aureomycin® at 1g/100 lbs of bodyweight in your calves to prevent respiratory disease
- * Get **30-13 tubs and salt** for grazing corn stalks
- * Inventory your projected feed resources and project your winter feed needs so you can plan accordingly