



Beef Briefs
by
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CONTROL OF FOOTROT FOR CATTLE ON PASTURE

A recent research report from Kansas State University by Dr. Frank Brazle has indicated there was a distinct advantage for feeding additional levels of zinc to cattle on pasture to control footrot. In this study, the incidence of footrot for grazing steers was reduced by 55 percent.

Earlier work at Illinois State University with dairy cattle showed that including zinc methionine reduced hoof problems. The Kansas study was designed to test the effects of additional zinc methionine in the diet of grazing steers.

The steers were rotationally grazed for 93 days with free choice mineral mixes available at all times. The control group was given a conventional mineral mix containing dried molasses, trace minerals, lasalocid, salt, vitamin A, phosphate and limestone. The treatment group received a similar mix with the addition of 100 pounds of zinc methionine per ton. The trace mineral mix contained a small amount of zinc.

Keep in mind that trace minerals are just that — they do not usually contain enough minerals like zinc, selenium, or magnesium to meet the animal's daily requirement.

The treatment group averaged .08 pounds per day higher average daily gain with a reduction in footrot cases from 5.38 percent to 2.45 percent. The steers consumed an average of 5.4 grams of zinc methionine.

One of the reasons we often see an inconsistency in the incidence of footrot is because of the quantity and availability of zinc in pasture forages. Many times I have visited with beef producers who experience significant problems with footrot, while their neighbors have very little. The forage species, the soil type, pasture fertility, and general condition of the cattle can all contribute to this inconsistency.

A 700-pound steer has a daily zinc requirement of 286 milligrams. As Dr. Brazle pointed out, under their conditions the untreated steers were probably consuming less zinc than was needed, or the availability of the zinc was low, or both. The additional zinc in the mineral mix was enough to at least partially offset this deficiency.

The payoff was reducing footrot treatment in half and the additional 7 1/2 pounds of sale weight for each of the treated steers.

Feed Quality Alert

I hope you have heard by now that the feed value of the grain and silage made this fall has been very low in many cases.

Reports from the Penn State forage van have shown silage that would normally be 8 percent crude protein may be as low as 4 percent, and corn grain that is usually about 10 percent may be as low as 6-7

percent. Fiber values have also varied widely.

The delay in harvest has resulted in much of this feed being stored at moisture levels that are abnormally high. Rental of oxygen-limiting silos, grinding of wet corn and

storage in plastic bags, grain drying, and impatient storage of wet grain in conventional storage sites are some of the things that are happening.

Most will work, some will result in feed spoilage. One factor for feeding this material is to remember that it is wetter than normal, and it will take more pounds of the material to get similar performance through cattle.

The concept of dry matter is one many of the university students wrestle with. Corn that is normally stored at 10 percent moisture, but is now stored at 20 percent moisture, has 400 pounds of water in it per ton.

A daily ration of 20 pounds of the wetter corn will result in feeding about 1.4 pounds of crude pro-

tein and about 14 pounds of TDN. The same weight of the drier corn will contain 1.6 pounds of crude protein and 16 pounds of TDN.

This difference in feed value could cut gains by about 25 percent if an adjustment is not made in feeding. The same result would occur if adjustments in feeding for moisture content were made, but the corn being fed was lower in protein and energy value than the "usual" content.

The upshot of this is to have a lab analysis of all grain and silage this year. Contact your local extension office for a PenPages listing of the labs that perform this service, or contact your feed salesman to assist you in getting this analysis.

Corn left standing in the field

may also have a mycotoxin problem. Some reports have come in that there is some aflatoxin in some of the corn. If you think this may be the case with your feed, have a test done.

This feed can be fed to feedlot animals as long as it is mixed with some good grain. Do not feed moldy feed to any breeding animals, even if they are not bred.

Sprouted grain can be fed to beef cattle in most cases with no harmful effects. However, the conditions for mold growth are high in sprouted grain, so it would be a good idea to confine feeding it to feedlot animals. The energy value will be about 3-5 percent lower in sprouted grain.

Sounds like we're going to have a fun winter, don't you think?

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