



A NEWSLETTER OF DAKOTALAND FEEDS

Starting Calves and Grazing Stalks

It's that time of year when calves are bawling and cows are relieved to be rid of their calves. With calf prices as high as they are and weak grain prices, it's a good time to focus on the cattle.

With dry conditions and the wind blowing non-stop, dust pneumonia is a very real concern. As we consider this risk, it becomes important to consider your vaccination program and your potential use of in-feed antibiotics to control respiratory diseases.

You can get your VFD ready before you wean calves and get the product on hand so you can use the Aureomycin as soon as you see signs of sickness.

Getting the calves on feed and eating can sometimes be challenging. When starting calves on feed, we can start calves eating around 1.5% of bodyweight on a dry matter basis. Then we can start increasing the amount of feed we put in the bunk. Making these increases every other day will allow us to build intake without overshooting them and having them drop off intake. The bunks may be empty for a time as we work them up on feed. As we near intakes of 3% of bodyweight on a dry matter basis, we need to make smaller increases in feed deliveries and make sure they are cleaning up bunks. Discipline in bunk management can be difficult but is very important to getting calves off to a good start.

SDSU recently published a couple of papers where they either used Stress Care starter pellets or Stress Tubs in receiving calves and compared them to a conventional program. Both the force-fed starter pellets and the Stress Tubs resulted in calves having higher liver mineral concentrations by 14d on feed than the control calves. The calves that received the Stress Care starter in their daily ration had increased intakes, increased daily gains and slightly improved feed efficiency over the first 49 days. Because the number of cattle per pen was relatively small (making it easier to spot sick calves) and the calves were not comingled, health and treatment data was not analyzed.

The bottom line of the work SDSU did is that Stress Care products work. They are a valuable tool that you have available. The SDSU study only fed the starter product for the first 28 days and then put calves on a common ration and followed them until day 49. Even with stopping the Stress Care on day 28, the performance of calves receiving the Stress Care in the bunk outperformed the control group after that as well.

We have options of every kind to get your calves off to a good start whether it is pelleted products, liquid, tubs or meal feeds. And there is proof that it works. An upfront investment in your calves will pay dividends this year regardless of whether you are selling after backgrounding or finishing the calves yourself. Calves are worth too much to use an unproven program.

Cows will soon be going to graze crop residue and as they head out to clean up the fields, remember to supply some protein to help them get more out of the forage they are consuming. A little protein helps improve digestibility and will help cows maintain or increase body condition. If your cows need to add a little body condition, you may want to consider using an Accuration tub or block instead of a protein tub. The AR tubs are made for higher intakes to help improve condition. The 30-13 and 38-20 tubs are great protein supplements for cows on stalks but are made for lower intakes of 0.5-1.0 lbs/d.

With weak corn prices, your non-livestock neighbors could benefit from having your cows cleaning up their fields. If you pay \$0.50/hd/d to graze stalks and an acre typically will last a cow about 30 days, that is likely adding \$15/ac to their crop. If they averaged 160 bu/ac, that is like getting an extra \$0.09/bu for their corn. I don't think most of them would turn that down.

In a Nutshell:

- Consider practices to protect against BRD
- Be disciplined when starting calves on feed
- Stress Care® can help improve intakes and ADG
- Stress Care® products are valuable tools
- Consider using Accuration® tubs for cows to add BCS
- Protein supplement is necessary for grazing stalks
- Grazing stalks can increase soil organic matter

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The University of Nebraska Lincoln has 16 years of data on grazing crop residue that shows that soybean yields are improved when crop residue is grazed in a corn-soybean rotation. Corn yields were not different. Crop ground that was grazed ended up having higher organic matter than non-grazed ground which might run counter to what some farmers and agronomists would think. Livestock are an asset to the system, not a detriment.

Fall is a busy time. Cattle are worth a lot so talk to your Dakotaland Feeds consultant about ways that you can get the most out of your herd. We are here to help.

Roxanne Knock, PhD

What do you need to be thinking about this time of year?

- **Order your Stress Care for weaning.** Planning ahead will help ensure you have it when you need it!
- Talk to your vet about getting a VFD if you want to use Aureomycin at weaning time.
- Remember to HEAT TAPE lines on liquid systems. This keeps the line fluid.
- Get **30-13 tubs** for grazing corn stalk residue.
- Implant calves during backgrounding to get the best gain and efficiency.
- Get your forages tested for quality and have your Feed Consultant set up starting/growing rations.
- 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.
- Pregnancy check cows and decide on a strategy to sell or feed them. Implant them if you decide to fatten them.

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