

# FEED FOR THOUGHT

News For Cattlemen From Suga-Lik® A Product Of U.S. Sugar Corp.

## U.S. Sugar Earns Safe Feed/Safe Food Certification

The American Feed Industry Association (AFIA) launched its landmark Safe Feed/Safe Food Leadership program in September 2004. The historic program was created to demonstrate and ensure continuous improvement in the delivery of a safe and wholesome feed supply for the growth and care of animals. It is a pledge to food safety and enhancing consumer confidence. U.S. Sugar's Suga-Lik® Feed Department is one of the first companies in the country, to date, that has achieved certification.



In 2001, the plant was one of the first feed facilities to achieve FCI certification to assure compliance

with FDA mammalian protein rule and continues to earn yearly certification.

In 2004, AFIA honored the Suga-Lik® Plant with its Food Safety Innovation Award.

## Nutritional Management of the Modern Cow Herd

*Terry Weaver*



Bull and heifer selection and improved herd health management by most ranchers should be leading to increased production of their cow herd. Some ranchers may not be reaping the rewards of the time and money invested in these areas. Calves with the genetic potential to grow bigger need dams with increased milking ability. This selection comes at a price. In order to get brood cows, replacement heifers, and their calves to achieve their genetic potential and maintain body condition needed for rebreeding will require more nutrition than one might be accustomed to providing. To put it simply, these higher producing cows require more nutrition to wean a heavier calf, maintain body condition, rebreed and maintain immune response. A rancher's forage program is the major portion of the total nutrition plan; yet the supplementation program is also vitally important. The old supplementation program that simply consisted of following a certain date to begin and end probably won't work very well anymore.

Body condition score (BCS) at calving time is very important to the success of calving and breeding. If that mama cow is in poor condition at calving it will be nearly impossible to get her in proper condition within the 90 day period she needs to be rebred. Poor body condition also adversely effects calf weaning weight since the cows' milk production reflects her nutritional state at calving. Paying attention to her condition at calving is important but "is a day late and a dollar short." There is not much that can economically be done at that point to prevent further BCS loss. The argument can be made that one must pay attention to the cows' condition at weaning. Her condition at weaning is the "window into her reproductive world." Research demonstrates that for a BCS of 3 and lower at weaning, it's likely to only get a 75% pregnancy rate the next breeding. Increase that BCS to a 4 and pregnancy rate improves to 85%; and with a BCS of a 5 it likely improves to 94%.

A review of U.S. Sugar's Bahia grass database (consisting of 1,068 samples) confirms some of the field observations I've made. If a herd begins calving in November and weans calves in the summer, Bahia's nutritional quality usually isn't adequate for body weight maintenance, growing a late gestation fetus and putting sufficient body condition on

before calving time. After weaning the cow may appear to gain weight and even look “fat,” but when she calves she looks as if she immediately lost 2 body condition scores. She has gained calf fetus weight (conceptus) in the dry period (late gestation) and lost BCS. The BCS loss was “masked” by pregnancy. Conception rates invariably suffer the following breeding season. The accompanying chart below illustrates the difference in TDN requirements and costs for cows of different weights and milking ability. Give us a call and we’ll “crunch the numbers” for your cows.

Supplementation in the winter is important. Just as important is a nutritional plan and program that includes evaluating and providing the proper nutrition year around. If the animal is losing excessive condition during the lactation period, address it. Preventing BCS loss is much more economical than trying to recover that weight later. If the cow is thin at weaning, address it.

Evaluate her health status, her nutritional status (your forage quality) and provide her the supplemental nutrition needed to recover that weight before calving. Nutrition is a year round endeavor. It doesn’t start with first frost!

U.S. Sugar has the information and the expertise to help you evaluate the nutritional needs of your beef animals. We have the appropriate “Fully Fortified®” nutritional supplement to meet your needs throughout the year. There is a complete menu of Suga-Lik Fully Fortified® products with feeding rates ranging from one pound per head per day up to six pounds. Remember, the Suga-Lik Fully Fortified® nutritional supplements require no other supplemental nutrients, which means no need for free choice salt, mineral or anything else but your forage. We invite the opportunity to help you make the proper nutritional decisions that lead to your success in the cattle business.

### Supplemental TDN Cost for Cows of Different Body Weights

<sup>1</sup> Approx. Cost of Supplemental TDN/Lb = **\$0.0765**

TDN Required for Maintenance (lbs)			
Average Milk Production/Day (lbs)			
TDN Required for Milk Production (lbs)			
Total TDN Required/Day During Lactation (lbs)			
Total TDN Required During 210 day Lactation (lbs)			
<sup>2</sup> Supplemental TDN Required/Day During Lactation (lbs)			
Cost of Supplemental TDN/Day			
Total Supplemental TDN Required During 210 Day Lactation			
Total Cost per Lactation of Supplemental TDN			

WEIGHT OF COW		DIFFERENCE
1000	1050	50 lbs
10.90	11.45	0.55 lbs
12	14	2 lbs
2.53	3.01	0.48 lbs
13.43	14.46	1.03 lbs
2820.3	3036.6	216.3 lbs
1.83	2.28	0.45 lbs
\$ 0.14	\$ 0.17	\$ 0.03
384.3	478.8	94.5 lbs
\$29.40	\$36.63	\$7.23

Lbs TDN Available/Day from Bahia During Dry Period for Weight Gain	0.70	0.73
Days to Recover 1 BCS	104	100

<sup>1</sup> Cost of TDN per lb is based upon an average of cost/lb TDN for whole cottonseed, Blackstrap molasses, corn, hominy feed, citrus pulp pellets, corn gluten feed and soy hulls delivered to Okeechobee, FL on 6/20/05.

<sup>2</sup> Supplemental TDN required is based upon the difference between TDN supplied by Bahia and the TDN requirement of the cow for maintenance and lactation.

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