

FEED FOR THOUGHT

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

FULLY FORTIFIED NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

Chet Fields, Ph.D. PAS

From the beef cow's perspective, there is no perfect forage. In order to economically perform to their genetic potential, cattle must be supplemented with essential nutrients that are not present in adequate quantities in forage. Conversely, excessively high levels of supplemental nutrients are detrimental to performance and should not be supplemented. Nutrient requirements of cattle vary with genetics, the stage of the reproductive cycle, environmental conditions, health and level of production expected. Likewise, forage availability and nutrient content is also a moving target, dependent upon specie, maturity, soil characteristics, ambient temperature, soil moisture, fertilizer practices and photoperiod. Prudent nutrition programs identify the most critical period in the reproductive cycle, characterize the forage nutrient availability during that time frame and provide "fully fortified" nutritional supplements. Please recall that:

- 1) During the *last three months of gestation* the fetus attains about two thirds of its birth weight.
- 2) At calving, the immune system of both cow and calf are severely challenged.
- 3) During the *first three months of lactation* nutrient demands of the cow for milk production and conception present a major nutritional challenge.

The above six-month period is the "*critical season*" in terms of profitability.

Bahia nutrient profiles for the "critical season" are used to formulate and update our Suga-Lik® "fully fortified" supplements. Nutrient requirements are calculated from the National Research Council's (NRC) equations assuming a target calf weaning weight of 500 lbs. and an average cow weight of 1000 lbs.

Appropriate "fully fortified" Suga-Lik® supplements meet 100% of the cow's protein and energy requirements when fed to cows grazing Bahia during the "critical season."



Analytical data for Florida forages indicates that throughout the year, calcium and sulfur levels in Bahia are adequate to excessive, therefore no added calcium or sulfur is necessary. All other essential minerals—including magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, copper, iron, cobalt,

manganese, zinc, iodine and selenium—are formulated to provide at least 100% of the cow's requirement.

The latest cattle research data on reproductive efficiency and immune response with supplemental vitamins A, D, and E resulted in the NRC updating its recommendation to SUPPLEMENT A GRAZING 1000 lb. cow with 50,000 IU vitamin A, 13,600 IU vitamin D and 227 IU vitamin E. Suga-Lik® "fully fortified" supplements have been updated so they now provide those levels of vitamins A, D, and E. The added cost of this increase in vitamin A, D, and E levels is less than 30 cents/cow for the "critical season."

You can be assured that (with the exception of salt) when the appropriate "fully fortified" Suga-Lik® supplements are fed at recommended rates and in conjunction with Bahia or forages of similar nutrient composition, at least 100% of the NRC recommendations during the last trimester of gestation through breeding are met. This "critical season" includes the period of peak (about 20 lbs.) milk production.

Suga-Lik® supplements are "fully fortified." When you feed a Suga-Lik® "fully fortified" supplement you need to make sure you provide your cattle with adequate forage, water, plain white salt and good management. *No other supplemental source of nutrients other than plain white salt is necessary or desirable.*

Another Reason

Terry Weaver and Pat Whidden, PAS

Reasons that Florida beef cattle need supplements:
a) Forage, by itself, is not a complete feed. b) Beginning in late summer and lasting through early spring, forage quantity and quality declines and cows' energy and protein requirements probably won't be met by forage. c) Maintain or improve body condition score (BCS); BCS is the most important factor influencing reproductive performance and profitability. Most Florida cattlemen recognize that there is plenty of research, conducted in Florida and elsewhere, that clearly demonstrates the need to supply supplemental energy, protein and other essential nutrients for pasture cattle.

Reasons that Florida cattlemen have chosen molasses-based liquid supplements for their cattle: Convenient. Takes less labor. Cost effective. Little or no shrink and feed wastage. Provides the opportunity for uniform consumption by all the cattle (no "boss cow syndrome"). Animal friendly (contains no toxic compounds). Proven to work as directed.

Now there's another reason to use molasses-based liquid supplements: Research conducted at Kansas State University suggests that molasses-based liquid supplements may perform better, in some situations, than grain-based supplements. The research, which was published in the October 1999 *Journal of Animal Science*, compared supplementing energy from starch and the sugars glucose, fructose and sucrose (found in significant quantities in molasses) along with adequate degradable intake protein, to cattle consuming low-quality tallgrass prairie hay, which is similar in quality to stockpiled bahia grass. The uses of either starch (i.e., grains) or sugars (i.e., molasses) improved forage intake over no supplement. However, while both carbohydrate sources increased digestibility, all three sugar sources increased the forage digestibility more. The scientists suggested this might have happened because starch-digesting ruminal bacteria are highly competitive with fiber-digesting bacteria. The amount of sugars fed in the experiments was about the equivalent of seven pounds of molasses per day. (For more details, contact us; we'll send you a copy of the research.)

Therefore, some old myths can be discredited. **1.** There is a requirement for degradable intake protein (i.e., NPN/urea). **2.** Forage intake is not necessarily reduced when supplements are fed. **3.** Forage digestibility can be improved, not reduced, by supplements. **4.** Molasses-based supplements may outperform grain-based supplements on pasture. **5.** Cattle consuming in excess of five or six pounds of liquid supplement per day may be beneficial rather than harmful.

Suga-Lik® Grass Mate HD/16 (fed at 4–6 lbs./day) or Suga-Lik® Pasture Supplement 20 (fed at 3–5 lbs./day) may just be the best supplements you can choose for your cattle. Here's another reason.



CERTIFICATION = PEACE OF MIND

U. S. Sugar's Suga-Lik® feed plant was recently awarded certification by the Facility Certification Institute (FCI) that it does not use prohibited mammalian protein products. The inspection process includes visual inspection of the premises, investigation of internal quality procedures as well as practices utilized with ingredient suppliers and transportation sources to assure that no prohibited material can inadvertently enter the plant. FCI was created by the American Feed Industry Association to supply third party certifications to satisfy the needs of the food industry for assurances of a safe food supply. Presently, there is no BSE in the American beef supply and these measures are intended to help keep it out. Look for the FCI seal on our labels. As our customer, you can use it as verification to your cattle buyers that when you feed our program you are complying with the FDA rule on prohibited mammalian protein products.

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Mayo Fertilizer & Farm Supply
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