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

Families like to know their roots and understand their heritage. A family's heritage is a result of its past. Businesses are the same way. U. S. Sugar is generally recognized as the clear leader in the liquid feed industry in the southeastern United States. Here is the story of the industry itself and U. S. Sugar's role.

The earliest documented reports of feeding molasses to cattle in North America are from 1890. It was used to eliminate dust and feed waste, as well as a major source of energy. Because it's proximity to production, perhaps Mr. Ralph Kidder, Everglades Experiment Station, Belle Glade, initiated some of the earliest research with cane molasses in 1936. It didn't take U. S. Sugar very long to become involved; in 1940 it planted 80 acres in permanent grasses, put cattle on the pastures and fed molasses as a supplement. A 1941 publication of the Florida State Chamber of Commerce, "Florida's Molasses-Fed Beef Equals the Nations Best," reviewed the excellent eating qualities of molasses fed beef and touted U. S. Sugar Corporation as providing impetus to Florida's growing cattle industry. In 1942, University of Florida's Dr. Gordon Kirk, Range Cattle Experiment Station, Ona, commenced the first research to determine the value of cane molasses as a supplement for brood cows on pasture.

Elsewhere in the country, several years went by with little academic attention to molasses until basic ruminant research was conducted in Missouri in the early 1950's. The North American liquid feed industry's birth is thought to have occurred in the mid-1950's in Idaho and Nebraska, conceived by two brothers-in-law using beet molasses as the base ingredient. Also, Purdue University's Dr. T. Wayne Perry published his

famous "32% liquid supplement formulations" that clearly helped launch the liquid feed industry.

Back in Florida, U. S. Sugar and the University of Florida, working at times separately and together, were making things happen in the growth of both the cattle and liquid feed industries. The University of Florida is the undisputed academic leader in the research of feeding of cane molasses to ruminant animals. Notable names over the years include Baker, Chapman, Davis, Cunha, Hentges, Crockett, Pate, Moore, Kunkle, Brown, Hall, Arthington and others.

U. S. Sugar may have actually started its world famous cattle business, Sugarland Ranch, as a demonstration project to show skeptical cattlemen that cane molasses could be successfully fed to pasture cattle. Every "retired company old-timer" interviewed credited Mr. Sid Crochet as the initiator of both the Cattle Project and the beginning of what's become the Suga-Lik® business. Crochet was responsible for the sale of molasses and most was being sold to industrial distillers. He was convinced that using molasses as a cattle supplement would create more value for both Gulf region cattlemen and the company. The Cattle Project was begun as a molasses feeding demonstration. By 1946, Sugarland Ranch encompassed 5,000 acres and was demonstrating the feeding of heavy cane molasses free choice. Eventually, Sugarland Ranch became one of the largest commercial



A GROUP OF BRAHMAN COWS LICKING MOLASSES FROM A SELF-FEEDING TROUGH ON A RANCH IN SOUTHERN FLORIDA. PHOTO TAKEN FROM A BOOK ENTITLED "BEEF PRODUCTION IN THE SOUTH" (1969).

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TWO OF THE COMPANY'S FORTIFIED MOLASSES DELIVERY TRUCKS. PHOTO TAKEN IN 1971.

ranching operations in the world. By the time the land gave way to the southern migration of the citrus industry, the Cattle Project had emphatically demonstrated, on a practical basis, the value of using blackstrap cane molasses as the basic ingredient in supplements for Gulf region beef cattle. Crochet was right.

As the company's sugar cane production increased, there obviously was more molasses available and the company began to work with cattlemen on their individual feed needs. During these years, various ingredients were incorporated to provide certain nutrients and feed additives. U. S. Sugar's first commercial feed plant opened in 1961 or so. Prior to that, ingredients were added and mixed by hand. Formulations also evolved. In those early years, as today, urea was used for added crude protein and phosphoric acid for a highly bioavailable phosphorus source. Bill Gober and John Black were hired in 1961 and 1962 respectively to help further develop the liquid feed program. U. S. Sugar worked in conjunction with Hoffman-LaRoche to develop a dispersable vitamin. Then, water-soluble trace minerals were incorporated. Phenothiazine was an efficacious feed-through parasiticide that was eventually discontinued nationwide for environmental reasons. Fats and oils were researched and incorporated. The slurry concept was developed from an idea seen on a commercial cattle ranch.

In 1971 the brand name "Suga-Lik" was chosen in a brainstorming session among Gober, Black and Bob Hare. The

name was officially trademarked in 1983. As that generation wound down their careers, they continued to develop and refine the business and a new feed plant was constructed and opened in 1993.

Today the liquid feed industry continues to be a growth industry in North America. U. S. Sugar's current generation is endeavoring to continue the tradition of excellence that preceded. The strong commitment to cattlemen's needs still exists, manifested through the annual support worth tens of thousands of dollars to the University of Florida's animal science research program as well as on-ranch development activities. There is continued investment in the Clewiston feed plant. New construction initiated in 2001, either complete or in progress, will enable the production of innovative new products, as well as double the plant's capacity and fully automate it. The plant is in its second year of Feed Facility Certification, which assures cattlemen and packers that no prohibited animal protein products are used in the facility. In recent years, we've developed strategic supplementation strategies and built a Florida forage database that is unequalled anywhere.

The Suga-Lik® product line is now Fully Fortified.™ This means that your Florida forage supplemented with one of U. S. Sugar's Fully Fortified™ Suga-Lik® supplements provide at least 100% of all the essential nutrients your cows require. There is no need to supplement anything else! No other commodity or commercial supplement product can legitimately make this claim. That is value delivered to you.

In closing this chapter of our family story, we'd like to wish you and your family a blessed Christmas season and a happy and prosperous New Year.

Patrick B. Whidden, PAS

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The strong
commitment to
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still exists

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