



DN NEWSLETTER

issue 18

The quicker we finish our beef animals the greater the return, so reducing days on feed is critical for profitability. Beef finishing margins are heavily influenced by purchase price, sale price and the cost of feed - all are things we cannot easily influence! It is important therefore that we focus on those elements of production that we can influence including nutrition, health, feed efficiency and environment.

One of the quickest changes we can make to our nutritional programs is to implement Zinpro performance minerals into the growing and finishing rations. Feeding Zinpro's Availa®Zinc and Manganese has been shown to reduce lameness, morbidity and improve feed efficiency along with daily gain. The net result of this is less days on feed, with lower feed and veterinary costs.

In terms of management we should focus on 5 key areas.

1. Gut Health

You are what you eat applies to cattle as much as it applies to humans. The health of the gut is integral to good animal performance and health. The animal's gut is home to 70% of the animal's immune system, so any damage to the gut wall results in a significant immune response which takes priority for nutrients usually reserved for growth. Factors which effect gut health include acidosis, fibre deprivation, mycotoxins and heat stress. Balanced nutrition, consistency of feeding and adequate feed space are some factors to focus on.



2. Controlling Digital Dermatitis

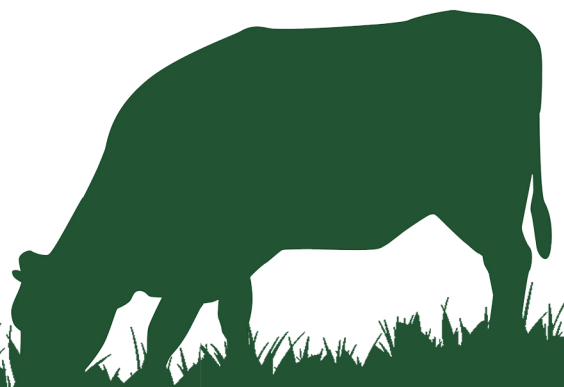
Clinical DD can depress feed intake when it effects the mobility of animals and feeding frequency. It also results in activation of the immune system and partitioning of nutrients away from growth. Effective DD prevention can be achieved by a combination of surveillance when animals are brought on to the unit (topical treatment should be applied to any active lesions) hygiene and regular footbathing where necessary.

Availa®Zinc can help to boost the immune system and improve skin integrity in the heel, both of which will help to reduce the incidence and impact of DD.

3. Stress

Stress can be caused by a number of factors including transporting, re-grouping and handling of animals. Stress also leads to activation of the immune system, impairs liver function that reduces glucose production. The combined effect of these two conditions reduces the amount of glucose available for muscle growth.

Reducing stress is associated with planning the timing of group changes, regrouping and husbandry tasks. Ensure adequate access to food, water and lying space following any stressful situations.



4. Vaccinations

Bovine respiratory disease (BRD) is one of the most important diseases of growing cattle. Lung damage in early life can have a profound effect on growth and survival. Effective vaccination protocols are one of the best preventative interventions. The response to vaccination can be affected by trace mineral status and also by stress. Stressed animals have a poorer response to vaccination and therefore timing is essential. Vaccinations are best carried out before stressful events. Try to avoid combining husbandry routines such as weaning or transporting animals with timing of vaccinations.

5. Environment

Clean air is essential for good health so ensure that housing facilities are well ventilated. Sheds should have a ventilation rate of 40-50 air changes in summer and 5 air changes per hour in winter. In summer keep animals cool by applying effective cooling velocity. Providing long day lighting will also improve growth and feed efficiency. Artificial lighting systems should be designed to provide 16-18 hours of light above 200lux and 6-8 hours of darkness.

These 5 key management factors can improve performance and health reduce days on feed and improve profitability.



Upcoming Online Events

The next Zoom meeting is on Thursday 19th November. Our speaker from Phileo will focus on the variability of forage and getting more from forage.

Registration is essential in order to receive meeting links and passcodes directly to your inbox.

Register for events via the DN website at:

www.dugdalenutrition.com/upcoming-events



Visit the **UPCOMING EVENTS** page to see our full online meeting schedule for 2020-21.

DN Beef Nutrition Guide

The DN Beef Nutrition Guide was created to provide help and support for productive and profitable beef systems.

The Beef Nutrition Guide is available on the TECHNICAL area of the DN website.

