



Great Plains Livestock Consulting, Inc.

500 S. 4th St.

P.O. Box 377

Eagle, NE 68347

The Great Plains News Feed

Staff

Ki Fanning, Ph.D., PAS

Ruminant Nutritionist

Cell: (402) 890-5505

Ki.Fanning@GPLC-Inc.com

Jeremy Martin, Ph.D.

Ruminant Nutritionist

Cell: (402) 890-5507

Jeremy.Martin@GPLC-Inc.com

Dan Larson, Ph.D.

Ruminant Nutritionist

Cell: (402) 560-4052

Dan.Larson@GPLC-Inc.com

Zeb Prawl, M.S.

Ruminant Nutritionist

Cell: (620) 243-3846

Zeb.Prawl@GPLC-Inc.com

Luke Miller, M.S.

Ruminant Nutritionist

Cell: (660) 299-0798

Luke.Miller@GPLC-Inc.com

Brent Nelms

Feedlot Tracking

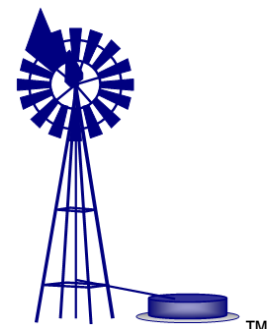
Brent.Nelms@GPLC-Inc.com

Bill Chapman, M.S., PAS

Dairy Nutritionist

Cell: (402) 416-3277

bill@cmpdairy.com



**Great Plains Livestock
Consulting, Inc.**

"Turning Science into Money"

Phone: (402) 781-9378

Fax: (402) 781-9379

www.GPLC-Inc.com

**January/February
2012**

The Latest Across the Plains

Body Condition Scores for Cows and Heifers

Be sure your cows and heifers go into calving at the right body condition. Our nutritionists suggest between 5-5.5 for cows depending on your environment and 5.5-6 for heifers also depending on your environment. Pictured below on the left is a 5 BCS and on the right is a 6 BCS. Feel free to contact any of our nutritionists with any questions you may have!

5 BCS



6 BCS



ATTENTION SEEDSTOCK PRODUCERS if you would like your sale date printed in the GPLC newsletter Calendar of Events, please contact Tiffany Wright at Tiffany.Wright@GPLC-Inc.com or (402) 781-9378 so it can be included.

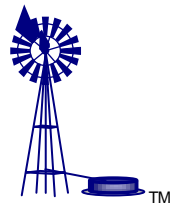
Calendar of Events



- **Jan 7-22** 106th National Western Stock Show, Denver, CO.
- **Jan 10-12** Topeka Farm Show, Kansas Expocentre, Topeka, KS.
- **Jan 11-12** Northern Illinois Farm Show, Dekalb, IL.
- **Jan 17-18** Colorado Cattlemen's Association Mid-Winter Conference, Denver, CO.
- **Jan 23-27** International Poultry Expo, Atlanta, GA.
- **Jan 25-26** 2012 Iowa Pork Congress, Des Moines, IA.
- **Feb 1-2** 105th Annual Minnesota Grain & Feed Association Convention & Trade Show, Mankato, MN.
- **Feb 1-4** Cattle Industry Convention & NCBA Trade Show, Nashville, TN.
- **Feb 8-9** Missouri Pork Expo, Columbia, MO.
- **Feb 12-19** 34th Annual Iowa Beef Expo, Des Moines, IA.
- **Feb 14-16** World Ag Expo, Tulare, CA.
- **Feb 19-21** Annual Meat Conference, Orlando, FL.
- **Feb 20-26** Nebraska Cattlemen's Classic, Kearney, NE.



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Timely Reminders



General

- ✓ Contact us about feeding light weight corn. It still has good feed value or can be put up as high moisture corn, depending on moisture content, and priced better; talk with neighbors to see if they have any.
- ✓ Analyze Winter Feed Supplies.

Beef

- ✓ Switch cowherd to Calving & Breeding Mineral 60 days prior to calving.
- ✓ Remember protein and energy requirements increase during the last third of gestation.
- ✓ Twine or net wrap have no nutritional value.
- ✓ Bulls and pregnant cows need 6-8 gal. water/day and lactating cows need 11-14 gal. water/day (liquid form works best).
- ✓ Knock frozen points off pen surface.
- ✓ Keep cattle bedded during harsh conditions.

Equine

- ✓ Keep an eye on hay/forage quality.

Unused Feed

- ✓ "Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason why so few engage in it."-Henry Ford

Kazakhstan



By Dr. Dan Larson, Ruminant Nutritionist

I recently returned from a trip to the central Asian country Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan is a former member of the Soviet Republic located south of Russia and north of Afghanistan. It is a large country, with topography very similar to the northern Great Plains, with rolling grasslands and sharp bluffs. The population is predominately of Asian heritage and a large proportion of the country is Muslim. Kazakhstan is among the 10 largest countries in the world and is a major oil producer. As such, it has sufficient cash flow for domestic infrastructure improvements. One of these is the development of a beef industry.

The beef industry in Kazakhstan is currently what you may have found in the United States in the early part of the 20th century. The average operation ranges from the larger 200 head cow herds, of which there are few, to the small 3-5 head herds used primarily for home consumption and milk production, which predominate. Most of the cows are a mixture of 1960 style US Hereford and native Red Steppe cattle from Mongolia, which borders Kazakhstan. I spent my time in the northeastern portion of the country near the Russian border, which has a climate much like northern Saskatchewan. The climate is dry and warm during the summer and dry and cold during the winter. The cows graze much of the summer and are either dry-lotted during the winter and fed hay or graze stockpiled pasture on the frigid, wind-swept steppe.

The feedlot industry in Kazakhstan is basically non-existent. The

cowman feeds his own cattle, mainly bullocks, no steers. They are fed a high roughage finishing diet with the addition of some barley or wheat. This system, however, fits their resources. They have very limited availability of grain for livestock consumption, but have excessive grazing ground. The sustainable nature of grass-finished beef actually holds true in Kazakhstan! The beef is processed locally and is typically sold as hanging sides in open-air markets. There is a developing meat packing industry, but developing is the key word.

We were contacted by a company called KazAgro Marketing, which is a cross of our USDA, extension service and Ag Marketing Service, to speak at various locations around the country about the US beef industry. The goal of this organization is to develop a cow/calf and feedlot industry that can export 60,000 tons of the beef by 2015. This is a lofty goal, which I do not think they can accomplish. Their primary trading partners are going to be Russia and China, and they will likely only export lower quality cuts of beef, unlike the US. To accomplish this goal, they have undertaken a couple of projects. First, they have begun importing bred heifers from the US. Working with a company called Global Beef in the US, KazAgro Marketing and their affiliated producers have imported Angus and Hereford bred heifers to a demonstration ranch in eastern Kazakhstan. There, they are experimenting with western production practices and developing strategies that will work in Kazakhstan. Secondly, they are inviting producers and consultants from around the world in areas with similar environments to explain production practices and train their producers.

Kazakhstan is a country perfectly suited to raising beef cows and sheep. However, it will require many years of training to bring their average producer up to the level necessary to reach their import goals. The largest obstacle is to overcome communism. Many producers were raised under that system and progress will require changing an entire mindset. Many of these producers still expect to be told what to do and how to do it. If they can create a self-sufficient producer with the knowledge and tools to raise an efficient product, they may reach their goals. However, this will require many years and much funding to reach these goals. In closing, it was an interesting experience and it shed new light on beef production and how fortunate we are to have all the technology and tools available to us.

Going, Going, Gone Green?



By Dr. Ki Fanning, Ruminant Nutritionist

It seems that we, the American farmer and rancher, have fallen from heroically feeding 155 people per farmer to diabolical Dr. Frankenstein's, using genetically modified organisms (GMO), implants/growth hormones, and even grain byproducts for financial gain. The fact of the matter is, many of these products and management practices are beneficial to the environment and do not reduce the safety of the meat or milk we produce. However, I think we do a poor job of informing the urban population that the products we use to improve production and efficiency also help improve the environment. At the very least, many of these products reduce agriculture's environmental impact. Consequently, we create a larger impact by banning these products in "natural programs", which produces food for the sector of the population most concerned about



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the environment.

A great example of this hypocrisy is the products Rumensin® and Bovatec®. These products are ionophores and are prohibited in most natural and all organic programs because they are classified as antibiotics. These products are used to reduce methane and acetate production in the rumen while increasing propionate production, a more efficiently utilized source of energy. This makes the animal more efficient in production, thus it takes less feed (corn) to produce a pound of milk or meat. Additionally, **Rumensin® and Bovatec® reduce greenhouse gas production, of which environmentalists believe ruminants are a major source.** As a side note, according to the EPA, the largest producers of methane gas are wetland microbes, followed closely by termites.

Spreading manure as fertilizer puts back more than N, P, and K; which are typically the only minerals contained in commercial fertilizers. Manure puts back the rest of the macro minerals (Mg, S, Na, and Cl) as well as all of the trace minerals (Zn, Fe, Mn, Cu, I, Co, and Se). Like animals, plants are healthier and more productive when they have a balance of minerals available.

Implants are probably the most common technology rallied against by the health conscience consumer. I am sure some of you have seen these tables, but I believe it is imperative that all cattle producers have a copy of these numbers. The public needs to understand that implanting cattle does not trade more money (14:1 return) for a less than safe product or a product that harms human reproduction and physical appearances.

cortisol levels. It is always in an animal caretaker's best interest not to mistreat an animal but rather to keep them as comfortable and stress free as possible in order to maintain peak productivity.

I recently heard two misconceptions about beef production, one of which was new to me. That was, "all the corn grown is sweet corn, suitable for human consumption, not field corn". This leads to the second misconception, which is "cattle use/eat valuable resources that could be used for human food". The facts are, cattle turn otherwise non-productive ground, unsuitable for farming, into productive land that is capable of producing food (i.e. beef, lamb, goat, dairy, etc.). In these modern times, corn is only introduced late into the feeding period of cattle and we feed half the bushels compared to 20 years ago. This is mainly due to the knowledge we have gained on how to best source, store, and feed a multitude of other feedstuffs in the place of corn.

I have come across one organization that is trying to set the record straight and help educate the American consumer. It can be found at www.wherefoodcomesfrom.com. Take a moment to look at their web site. Doing so will make you aware of their program bringing consumers from the cities to the farm for tours and interaction with the employees and owners. Many consumers believe all farms are corporate mega farms not family operations. Being on a family operation sets the consumer's mind at ease, reassuring them we would not put anything in the food chain we do not plan to eat ourselves.

I commonly hear people state they need to reduce their red meat consumption to be more heart-healthy. I had even noted it on some of the menus in restaurants I used to frequent. The fact is, beef is high in stearic acid (C 18:0). This is a saturated fat, and has a length of 18 carbons with 0 unsaturated carbon bonds. Due to the carbon length of this fatty acid, **beef does not increase blood cholesterol.** The saturated fats that increase plasma LDL-cholesterol levels are C 12:0 (Lauric Acid), C 14:0 (Myristic Acid), and C 16:0 (Palmitic Acid). These fats (oils) are commonly found in coconut oil, palm oil, cocoa butter, cottonseed oil, and nutmeg butter.

All that said, I know we cannot change everyone's mind with facts and I am not opposed to a niche market like "natural beef" if the economics justify it. Additionally, the quest to make beef an even healthier product is admirable. Several producers we work with are shifting the fatty acid profile of the meat to an even healthier profile (increase the CLA and Omega 3s) by doing one or a combination of the following: grass fattening, high-fiber finishing, flax feeding, and feeding elevated levels of Vitamin E and Selenium.

In summary, we need to be our own advocates because no one else will. There are plenty of animal rights activists that will, at the very least, bend the truth to stop the consumption of animal products. Educate your children so they will pass this knowledge on to their friends at school. Do not depend on the school to get it right, even in rural areas. Ask the waiter or waitress questions about the product they are selling and help educate them. Maybe they will spread the word or become a better promoter of the product. When confronted by an activist, don't get mad, rather take a deep breath and remember these facts. Strive in what you do every day to make your livestock and environment the healthiest it can be and simply tell that story.

Food	Estrogenic Activity (ng/500g)*
Soy Flour (oil removed)	755,000,000
Tofu	113,500,000
Pinto Beans	900,000
Bread, White	300,000
Peanuts	100,000
Eggs	555
Butter	310
Milk	32
Beef from Implanted Steer	7
Beef from Non-Implanted Steer	5

Hoffman and Eversol (1986), Hartman et al. (1998), Shore and Shemesh (2003), USDA-ARS (2002)
 *ng of estrogen (estrogen, estradiol for animal products or isoflavones for plant product) per 500 grams of food

Type	Estrogen (ng/day)
Woman, Pregnant	19,600,000
Woman, Adult Non-Pregnant	513,000
Man, Adult	136,000
Child, Pre-Pubertal	41,000
Birth Control Pill	35,000
Beef from Implanted Animals	1.6

Hoffman and Eversol (1986)

Cows prefer country or classical music. They also prefer sand for bedding. Steers in a lot free of mud gain 38% faster than steers hock deep in mud. I present these facts to show that research is conducted on cattle comfort because a comfortable animal is more productive animal. We also know that yelling at cattle and noisy working facilities reduces the efficacy of vaccines due to elevated

Have a happy and prosperous 2012!