

Minerals For Beef Cattle – Revisited

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Research and demonstrations conducted by UT Extension have shown that mineral deficiencies exist in forages. Specifically, the data shows that copper, zinc and selenium need to be available in a supplemental mineral. The data also reveals

that there is an excess of sulfur in most of the state that ties up some of the abovementioned minerals. Through written materials, meetings and one-on-one discussions, most producers are aware of these issues. Mineral companies have addressed these deficiencies in the mineral mixes that they sell.

Now another issue has surfaced since co-products have become more available and are being used by many producers. Specifically, corn gluten and distillers grains are being used

widely across the state. Both of these have nutritional issues – a high phosphorus and a low calcium content. Failure to provide additional calcium can result in urinary calculi forming in the urinary tract. In addition, these feeds are high in sulfur. Feeding corn gluten or distillers grains while cattle are consuming forages high in sulfur can create additional problems. The additional sulfur in these feeds causes more of the copper, zinc and selenium to be tied up and cause greater deficiencies.

This discussion is not intended to discourage the use of these feeds if they fit in the beef operation. It is to make you aware that the mineral program needs to be revamped when feeding these products. Contact your local mineral dealer to secure the mineral that best matches up with the feeds you are provide to your animals. Δ

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