



Feedlot Technical Bulletin

Starting Cattle Strong: Key To A Great Finish

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The first 21 days in the feedlot is undoubtedly the most critical time of feeding cattle. Getting calves off to a good start means better overall dry matter intake (DMI), more efficient gain, reduced mortality, and lower veterinary/medication costs through reduced morbidity, and particularly fewer re-treats. A common misconception of starting cattle is that a good start means maximal DMI. While good feed intake is important during this time, if intake is too high it can lead to cyclic intake patterns at later times when energy density increases during the finishing phase. Intake of the right calories and nutrients should be the primary consideration, nutrients that boost the immune system and fight the effects of stress while also promoting long term performance efficiency through good bunk management practices.

Sufficient protein and energy intake is paramount to get cattle started. Not only are these nutrients primary drivers of growth and development but are also essential for normal cellular functions enabling the animal to respond effectively to the many stressors that are presented during this time. Of particular importance, the immune system is dependent upon protein and energy to respond effectively to disease challenge and achievement of immunity from vaccinations.

A QLF Starter supplement will help to get calves off to a good start. QLF Starters provide sugar, a readily degradable carbohydrate that will help jump start rumen bugs to achieve optimal rumen fermentation and utilization of nitrogen (protein) within the rumen. The sugar content of the products can also be effective in enticing cattle to locate and consume unfamiliar feeds, helping to achieve our primary goal of starting cattle, feed intake. Additionally, most QLF Starters contain a yeast extract product that provides essential metabolites for rumen bugs to achieve a faster start and a healthier rumen environment while also promoting immune function.

Most QLF Starters contain organic zinc, copper, manganese, and cobalt from Availa®4 along with elevated levels of Vitamin E. QLF Starters are fortified with selenium and other essential macro and micro minerals and vitamins. Adequate vitamin and mineral nutrition is essential to support the immune system of stressed calves. These nutrients are often depleted during weaning and transit in response to stress and must be replenished to achieve optimal health of calves. Replenishing these nutrients is critical to help calves respond to treatment and vaccination protocols, minimizing the number of re-treats.

With further questions regarding QLF's starter programs, please contact your local QLF District Sales Manager.



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