



# Beef Tech-Line



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## Spring Mineral Supplementation

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Spring is around the corner. Some calves are already on the ground and more will be coming shortly. Many producers have kept their brood cows on solid nutrition programs and feel confident in their 2010 calf crop as well as their ability to get the cows bred back for next year. Unfortunately there may be others who are concerned about their finances and have cut back their supplementation programs. Many areas have experienced the most brutal winter in over a decade. Inadequate supplementation and a brutal winter are a bad combination. It is likely that some cow calf producers will have trouble this spring and will be looking for help. What can be done?

Ideally, cows are adequately supplemented on a year round basis so they maintain good body condition as well as mineral and vitamin status. When this is the case they don't need to play nutritional catch up before and during calving season.

Challenges are faced by cows that have been allowed to lose body condition and perhaps have lacked supplementation in the critical before calving time period. Cows can lose body condition quickly but it takes time to gain it back. Adding calories to the diet or increasing the diet digestibility will help, but it may take several months for the cows to return to optimum condition.

It also takes time to recover trace mineral status. This process can be speeded up with the use of organic trace minerals. Consider the use of organic trace minerals if the herd 1) has not had trace mineral supplementation for a period of time, 2) had poor reproductive efficiency last year, 3) is known to be in an area with high amounts of trace mineral antagonists or 4) puts a high value on reproductive efficiency and calf health. Organic trace minerals can speed recovery of trace mineral deficient cows but don't expect improvement until on the program for 60 days.

Hubbard has the products necessary to either maintain a good year round nutritional program or to jumpstart a failing program. Stockmaster Breeder Minerals are formulated for the period from 60 days before calving until the cows are bred back. Breeder minerals contain organic trace minerals (copper, manganese, zinc and cobalt) and are indicated in the 4 circumstances listed above. Stockmaster Breeder Minerals are available in an 8% and 12% phosphorus version; which are 70A2 Stockmaster 12-8-12 Breeder Mineral and 70A1 Stockmaster 12-12-12 Breeder Mineral. The 8% phosphorus version is adequate for most geographical areas. If you are feeding mature forage that is low in phosphorus you can opt for the 12% product. Stockmaster Cattle Prep Mineral (70A3) shares all the features of the Breeder Mineral products other than that Cattle Prep is formulated with conventional (not organic) trace minerals. Other times of the year cows can be maintained on products such as Stockmaster Sweet Phos 8 (70A5) or Stockmaster Sweet Phos 12 (70A4).

Blocks are another excellent way to provide nutrients to brood cows. Cows that are fed mature forage benefit from both improved digestibility of the forage as well as from the nutrients directly provided by the block. Breed-Up 20 (354K, 356K) and Breed-Up 28 (359K, 361K) are both good choices and both provide organic trace minerals. Breed-Up 28 includes non protein nitrogen to meet the crude protein needs of cows on mature forage. Breed-Up 20 provides 20% crude protein and meets the needs of producers who prefer no nonprotein nitrogen.

Adequate mineral supplementation is important all year, but is especially critical 60 day before calving until the end of the breeding season. Stockmaster Minerals and Breed-Up Crystalyx blocks are two options for providing sound nutrition for beef cows.

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