



Beef Tech-Line



Optaflexx

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Optaflexx (ractopamine hydrochloride) is the trade name for a medicated feed additive approved for use in feedlot animals fed in confinement for slaughter. Optaflexx is approved for both steers and heifers and is to be fed during the last 28 to 42 days of the finishing period. It is approved to be fed in combination with Rumensin, Tylan and MGA. It is not approved for animals intended for breeding. There is no withdrawal period. Optaflexx is marketed by Elanco Animal Health.

When fed to steers or heifers during the last 28 to 42 days of the finishing period, Optaflexx:

- Improves average daily gain
- Improves feed efficiency
- Does not affect feed intake
- Increases hot carcass weight
- Does not affect carcass marbling score
- Improves carcass leanness

Depending on the medication combination the approved feeding rate for Optaflexx varies from 70 to 430 milligrams/head/day or 90 to 430 milligrams/head/day. Most producers feed approximately 200 milligrams/head/day although some feed as high as 300. The economics of the various dosage levels varies with the price of fed cattle.

Table 1 (beef steers) and Table 2 (beef heifers) represent pooled data on animals fed for either 28 or 42 days.

*Table 1.
Growth Performance of Beef Steers Fed Optaflexx for Either 28 or 42 Days (5 Trial Summary)*

	Optaflexx, mg/hd/day		
	0	200	300
Initial Weight, lb	1169.4	1167.9	1167.2
Final Weight, lb	1268.8	1284.6*	1290.6*
ADG, lb	2.8	3.35*	3.52*
ADG Improvement %		19.6	25.7
Total Weight Gain	99.4	116.7	123.4
Optaflexx Response, lb		17.3	24
DM Intake, lb	21.73	21.73	21.82
Feed Efficiency	8.1	6.81*	6.44*

*P<0.001 compared to controls

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Table 2.
Growth Performance of Beef Heifers Fed Optaflexx for Either 28 or 42 Days (5 Trial Summary)

	Optaflexx, mg/hd/day		
	0	200	300
Initial Weight, lb	1066.7	1065.3	1067.6
Final Weight, lb	1164.7	1179.3*	1185.1*
ADG, lb	2.74	3.22*	3.3*
ADG Improvement%		17.5	20.4
Total Weight Gain	98	114	117.5
Optaflexx Response, lb		16	19.5
DM Intake, lb	20.67	21	20.68
Feed Efficiency	7.77	6.68*	6.44*

*P<0.01 compared to controls

Producers feeding Optaflexx at 200 mg/head/day for 28 days can expect approximately 15 lb heavier live weight and 12 lb heavier carcass weight in beef steers (32 study summary) and approximately 14 lb heavier live weight and 11 lb heavier carcass weight in beef heifers (9 study summary). Holstein studies show approximately a 17.6 lb increase in live weight and a 10.3 lb increase in carcass weight.

Optaflexx is approved for a minimum of a 28 day feeding period and a maximum of a 42 day feeding period. The response to Optaflexx may diminish over time. Optimal efficacy of the product has been demonstrated when the product is fed between 28 and 35 days.

Optaflexx can be added to a finishing supplement in much the same way that other feed additives are utilized. Alternatively, Optaflexx can be added to the diet via a crumble. The Hubbard OptiCare product #8420 Opt800 Crumbles is formulated to provide 200 mg of Optaflexx in a 0.5 lb feeding rate. Check with your plant for availability and price.

Many producers choose to utilize Optaflexx for 28 days. Prior to starting Optaflexx, producers need to accurately predict when they are going to market the pen of cattle. Cattle can be marketed anytime within the 28 to 42 day window but most producers choose the shorter end of that window. If sorting is going to take place it needs to happen before the Optaflexx program is started.

Optaflexx results in increased live weight and increased hot carcass weight. High fed cattle markets favor the use of Optaflexx. Simple calculations can be used to compare the cost of the Optaflexx program to the expected return in the type of cattle being considered.

Please contact your Hubbard representative if you need further information about Optaflexx.

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