Beef News
March, 2006

Alleghany Cattlemen's Meeting
Thursday, March 16th

The Alleghany Cattle Association meetings have been growing in numbers with each meeting. There were 26 people at the February meeting. Thanks to everyone for attending and to the volunteers that have been working on the “organizational parts” of the “soon to be” Alleghany Cattle Association.

You’re invited to attend our next meeting which will be held on:

Thursday, March 16, 2006
7:00 p.m.
Blue Ridge Electric Conference Room

If you are interested in cattle health, nutrition, marketing, reproduction, increasing profit and lowering cost ~ this is the group for you! A side benefit is getting to know your cattle producing neighbor. Don’t think you have enough cattle—the average herd size in North Carolina is about 24. People attending have herds with a lot less than 24 and a lot more than 24.

This is an important meeting for the Alleghany cattle producers. The group will be deciding on a name for the Association, dues, meeting dates and other activities. We will also discuss a date (field day) that will help get renewal credits with pesticide license and work as training for the Beef Quality Assurance Program.

North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and local governments cooperating.
Mineral Feeding

At the last meeting there was a lot of discussion about mineral feeding. Following is a brief discussion of feeding minerals to cattle.

- Everything works better with a healthy animal — growth, reproduction, calving, vaccine, etc.
- Healthy animals need adequate feed and nutrition and the basis of good health is a good mineral program — “the foundation of good nutrition.”
- Pound for pound mineral supplements are the most expensive thing you feed, and they may very well have the most impact on herd performance as well.

Please let me know if you would like more information about this.

Mineral Intake Critical for Animal Health

A lot of mineral blocks are still fed. These are typically the hard, red 50 lb. blocks that cows simply cannot lick enough of to meet their mineral needs. You will also still find a few people that will put out salt (white or yellow) as a mineral block. These will not adequately provide for a herd’s needs.

In nearly all cases, however, use of a good quality, palatable, loose mineral product is an effective, cost-efficient means of delivering adequate vitamin and mineral supplementation to the cow.

Intake is often targeted at two to four ounces per head daily. Achieving this target intake by all animals does not occur. Several animals within a herd will consume very little to no mineral at all. However, on the average, mineral consumption usually meets the desired intake levels. It is this averaging effect, over time, which allows free-choice mineral supplements to be the most practical choice for most cattle producers.

When you first change from a block to a free choice mineral, the cattle will probably eat more than four ounces per day. After a couple of weeks they will have met their needs and consumption will level off.

Wilkes Area Stocker Sale ~~ April 6

The Wilkes Area Stocker Sale is scheduled Thursday, April 6 at 7:00 p.m. at Kilby’s Livestock Market in North Wilkesboro. Cattle must be consigned by March 23. Cattle will be received the day of the sale. The following standards must be met for cattle to be eligible for the sale.

1. Weigh a minimum of 300 lbs.
2. Steers, bulls and heifers of predominately beef breeding. Bulls accepted up to 695 lbs.
3. Horned type cattle must be dehorned and healed with less than one inch regrowth.
4. Must grade USDA L1, M1, S1, or LM2.

The cattle will be graded and sorted in pens by weight, grade, sex and breed. This results in uniform pens of feeder cattle which historically have sold for premiums over weekly auctions. Pay weights are on a weigh-in basis.

Consignment forms are available at the Alleghany Extension Center, 372-5597.
Following are some things you can use when selecting a mineral supplement:

1. **Color is not an issue.** Many producers feel it is necessary to use a red mineral. Normally, red colored minerals include iron oxide to achieve this red color. This provides no nutritional value since the iron in iron oxide is very poorly available to the animal. Other commercial products use coloring agents as well. This may be effective as a sales and marketing tool, but the benefit typically ends there.

2. **Stay away from high salt levels.** If high salt is required to get an animal to consume a mineral supplement there are probably other problems present. High salt levels, in many cases, are used to reduce product cost.

3. **Stay away from high Calcium levels** (18 percent or more) especially when this is combined with low phosphorus levels Ca to P should be 1:1 to 1.3:1.

4. **Look carefully at the supplement tag.** Ask about ingredients that you do not recognize. In many cases any number of “bells and whistles” may be added to provide as tag dressing to make the product appear more valuable than it really is. Generally, free-choice minerals for beef cows do not require B-vitamins (thiamine, riboflavin, etc.). Beef cows grazing forages normally produce all the B-vitamins they need by the bacterial action in the rumen.

5. **Trace mineral sources should be from sulfates.** Oxides, with the exception of Magnesium oxide are generally poorly absorbed.

If I can be of service to you, please feel free to give me a call, 372-5597.

Sincerely,

George W. Stancil
County Extension Director

GWS/krm