

Feedbunk Management

Various management items or control points affect performance of feedlot cattle. Management of the feedbunk certainly has a large impact on gains and efficiencies of cattle. Day-to-day variation in feed intake by individual cattle has been shown to negatively impact performance (Table 1). How well one manages their delivery of feed to animals will affect performance and profitability of the cattle in the feedlot. The following five steps will help insure proper feedbunk management.

Table 1.

**Feed Intake Variation on a High Concentration Diet
(830 to 1100 lb Cattle)**

	Constant	10% Daily	10% Weekly
ADG, lb	3.23	3.02	3.18
Intake, lb/day	17.2	17.2	17.2
Feed/Gain	5.33	5.70	5.42

Score Description of the Feed in the Bunk

- 0 No feed remaining in bunk
- ½ Scattered feed present. Most of the bottom of the bunk is exposed
- 1 A thin, uniform layer of feed across the bottom of the bunk that is typically about 1 kernel deep.
- 2 25-50% of the previous days feed remaining
- 3 Crown of the feed is thoroughly disturbed. Over 50% of the pervious days feed is remaining
- 4 Feed is virtually untouched. Crown of previous days feed is still noticeable.

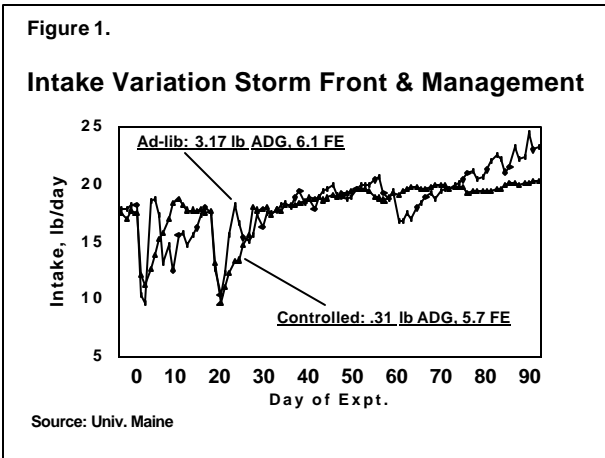
A score of "1/2" is desired. Three consecutive days of a "0" score would indicate feed should be increased. Two consecutive days of a "1" score or one day of a "2 to 4" score would indicate feed should be decreased.

Step 2: Record what is fed

Record what is fed each day. Daily consumption is what is important, not when, during the day, the feed is consumed. This record is vitally necessary to properly manage the bunk.

Step 3: Changing amounts to deliver

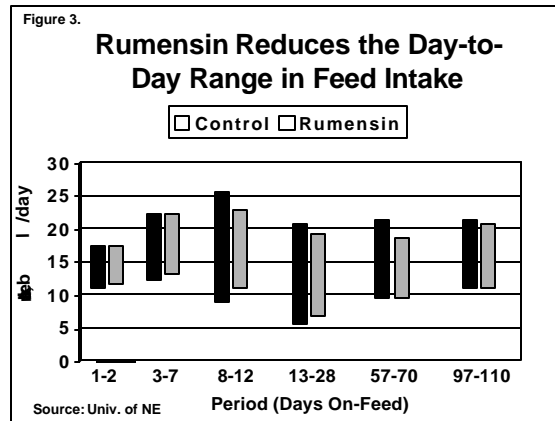
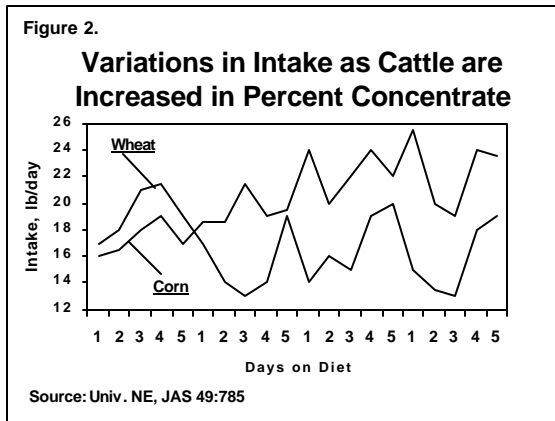
When feed should be increased, increase no more than .5 pounds of dry matter (DM) per head every three days (.33 lb of DM is safer and preferred). With two consecutive days of a "1" score, reduce feed offered by .5 lb of DM per head every two days until a score of "1/2" is achieved. Scores of "2 to 4" require feed to be reduced by an estimate of the feed remaining. For example, if during a winter storm, 17 lb per head was offered and 6 lb per head remains, only 11 lb per head should be delivered the next day. Following large reductions (i.e. following storms) in feed consumed, feed offered can be increased by 1.0 lb of DM per head daily until a score of "1/2" is achieved. See the "controlled" treatment in Figure 1 for an example.



Step 4: Formulate the diet correctly (for diets with roughage)

Briefly, several guidelines exist for correct diet formulation:

- 1) Maintain a minimum of 8% effective NDF (a 10% minimum is safer),
- 2) Feed a diet that cannot be sorted (i.e. adequate moisture, correct particle size of forage),
- 3) Process the grain coarsely,
- 4) Limit the use of rapidly fermented concentrates (i.e. high moisture corn, wheat; Figure 2),
- 5) Use three or more pounds of distillers grains or corn gluten feed DM to meet the crude protein requirements,
- 6) Feed Rumensin® or V-Max® to reduce daily intake fluctuation (Figure 3),
- 7) Feed Tylan for at least the last 90 days on-feed.



Starting New Cattle On-Feed

Start cattle with a 50 to 70% concentrate diet. Typically, a diet with 5 to 8 lb per day of corn gluten feed, distillers grains, or soyhulls DM, limited corn (under 3 lb per day), and good quality forage will successfully start cattle with minimal acidosis problems. Corn silage can be fed at 2 to 4 lb of DM per day in receiving diets, contrary to older philosophies. Step-up rations should limit increases in corn that is consumed daily to 6 lb or less. High concentrations of protein, minerals, and vitamins are needed to compensate for the low intakes. Yeast serves to maintain good microbial populations in the rumen.

Akey's Premium Beef Receiver Base Crumble serves to meet the mineral and vitamin needs plus provide by-pass amino acids and Diamond V® "XP" Yeast in a convenient manner. The key to good receiving and step-up rations is the use of low starch, high energy feeds that do not cause acidosis (Figure 4).

