

The Value of Consistency for the Rumen

July 28, 2020

Cattle like consistency. They like consistency in the weather, feed sources, time of feed delivery, etc. These factors and more can affect cattle negatively when variation is introduced – throwing them out of their routine and hindering performance.

In cattle production, we not only feed the animal but the rumen as well. The rumen consists of its own ecosystem of microorganisms that provide energy for themselves and the animal. The external factors that affect cattle ultimately affect their rumen micro environment. And inconsistencies can impact digestive health, eating patterns and performance.

When cattle endure a weather event such as extreme heat, their natural instinct is to reduce intake to reduce heat production, this reduction and subsequent increase in intake after the event has passed, put strain on the rumen microbiome. A healthy, stable rumen in cattle produces and maintains a full spectrum of microbes to keep the pH in a healthy range and to utilize energy from the entire diet. The abrupt increase in food for the microbes creates an imbalance in the rumen and can create an acidotic event, followed by a period of cyclical feed intake patterns to compensate for the erratic rumen pH. Similarly, disruptions in feed delivery can cause over-consumption and subsequent cyclical feed intake and potential for a series of acidotic events to follow. Finally, changes in diet compositions can create an inconsistent environment within the rumen until the transition is complete. The rumen microbiome is flexible and can evolve to overcome these disruptions but there are losses in production until that has occurred.

All these variables are inevitable to some degree in production agriculture, but it is important to understand the impact of these inconsistencies and create plans for minimizing them. One of the greatest values of Sweet Bran® and RAMP® is consistency of supply, of the diet, and even consistency of nutrition across all cattle on feed. Sweet Bran and RAMP help to minimize disruptions in the rumen coming from external factors and keep cattle eating all day and into the night for maximum production.



By [Maggie Youngers, Ph.D.](#)

digestive health and performance for production animals in the beef, dairy, aquaculture and pet food markets. Branded Feed is a segment of Cargill Starches, Sweeteners & Texturizers (CSST).

Branded Feed
Freedom from Convention