



Hunter Nutrition

The Program That Performs

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In the past few years, there has been a subtle debate on grass-fed beef and grain-fed beef. Many consumers think that grass-fed beef is healthier than grain fed beef. Recently, this competition has grown with the increase in consumers that desire a healthier lifestyle. Most consumers believe that grass-fed beef is a healthier option and some say a higher quality of life for the cattle that produce it. What most consumers don't always consider however, is that while going through the various production stages, both grass-fed and grain-fed beef begin their lives on a forage diet. This leads to many also misinterpreting the meaning of 'grass-fed beef', the correct term for this type of meat is 'grass-finished beef', since all beef starts the growth phase on forages.

Grass-fed or Grass-finished beef are derived from cattle that have never consumed grains or any other feedstuffs beside forages their entire lives. Typically, after weaning these cattle go directly onto pasture and continue their growth there until harvest. The cattle can survive off of only forages, but don't always receive the highest level of nutrition that is standard due to the quality of forages available and changing seasons effecting pastures and other grasses. With that also comes the need for a reasonable amount of land to institute rotational grazing or intense management practices to ensure high quality of forages. With a grass only diet, it also takes longer for the cattle to reach market weight compared to grain-fed cattle.

The typical time for grass-finished beef from birth to slaughter is about 30-35 months. A study performed at *Texas A&M University* found grass-fed beef to have higher omega-3 fatty acids, but have a greater amount of saturated and trans fats than grain-fed beef (Smith, 2014). In this study,

WHAT'S THE BEEF ABOUT...

GRASS FED VS. GRAIN FED

by Katie Marchino

researchers concluded that grassfinished beef did not provide significantly higher nutritional benefits for consumers over grain-fed beef.

Which takes us to, what is grain-fed beef? Grain-fed beef is what most beef producers raise in the United States. Traditional grain-fed cattle are weaned, go to a stocker, and then onto a feedlot or another pasture until market weight. These cattle are fed a balanced ration of grains and forages. Some consumers think that because they are referred to as 'grain-fed' that they do not receive any forages.

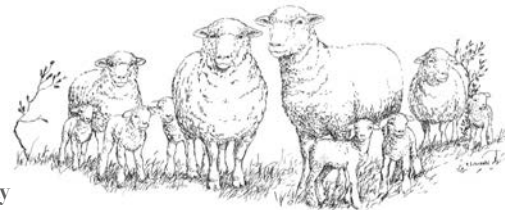
That is incorrect. Forages are very important to the ruminant diet. Providing a mix of grains and forages gives cattle all essential vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, and energy necessary for growth and development of muscle tissues. It typically takes cattle 20-24 months when fed this diet to reach market weight; which is about 10-11 months faster than grass-finished beef. The shorter production phase also impacts environmental factors significantly. Longer production results in the requirements for more land, more water, and more waste produced.

In conclusion, grass-finished and grain-fed beef are both great choices for a healthy diet. The health benefits we have evaluated so far between the two do not provide enough of a nutritional difference to make one better than the other. Red meat overall is an important part of the diet and provides us with a lot of essential vitamins, and minerals. Choosing between the two types of beef should be a personal choice and one that fits your lifestyle and beliefs the best.

Resources: beefmagazine.com

PREPARING FOR LAMBING SUCCESS

by LeAnn Hall, and Jeff Held, Professor Emeritus of Animal Science, South Dakota State University



Now we see the results from a successful breeding season! As with breeding, planning and preparation improve the odds of success at lambing time.

BREEDING/EARLY GESTATION

Stay at "flushing" rate of nutrition for first 4 weeks of breeding, then return to maintenance ration. Record breeding marks from ram to identify approximate lambing dates. Confirm pregnancy by blood test at least 28 days after last marks or rams pulled, or by ultrasound at least 35 days post-breeding.

MID-GESTATION

Feed ewes at maintenance ration through 15 weeks gestation. Over-feeding at this time can increase incidence of pregnancy disease. Shear or crutch ewes, and trim feet. Administer campylobacter vaccine to all ewes, 60-90 days after vaccine for first-time lambers.

LATE-GESTATION

Clean barns, prepare drop pens, lambing jugs, and mixing pens. Removal of compacted manure will decrease heat generation and fly pressure. Respiratory diseases are readily acquired in crowded, poorly ventilated areas with dirty bedding. Keeping the drop area free of accumulated, wet manure and preventing drafty areas

should be an utmost priority. Provide adequate ventilation while avoiding direct airflow from fans on newborns during hot weather. Move ewes into a conveniently located, easily observable area. Recommendations include 16-25 square feet per ewe for the drop area. Inventory and prepare needed supplies, including a warming device for damp, chilly weather. See the link below for a list of recommended supplies and warming suggestions. Gradually increase ewe feed intake to late-gestation requirement (130% of maintenance diet) for the last 4 weeks of gestation. Grain supplementation may be necessary during pasture drought conditions and/or poor forage quality. Administer over-eating (CDT) vaccine.

AT LAMBING

First, DO NO HARM! We can often be tempted to intervene too early; stay patient! Interruptions can slow the progression of labor and birth, so observe unobtrusively. Provide assistance only when necessary. After birth, clear mucus and membranes from around lamb's nose if needed, and induce sneezing with a clean stick of straw. Determine colostrum is present in the dam's udder, and open both teats. If the ewe lacks adequate milk, provide lamb with supplemental colostrum. Use care not to heat colostrum too rapidly,

and never use a microwave. Doing either will destroy the antibodies vital to the lamb for immune protection during first few weeks of life. A good rule of thumb is 1oz colostrum/11lb body weight total in 12 hours, with no more than 5-6oz at any one feeding. For example, a 12lb lamb born at noon should intake 4oz by 1:00pm, 4oz more at 5:00pm, and 4oz more at 9:00pm. Absorption of antibodies decreases rapidly after the first 12 hours, reaching nearly 0% absorption within 24-hours after birth. Supplementation after this time should involve ewe or goat's milk, or high-quality lamb milk replacer. Completely dip naval cord in 7% iodine, weigh and eartag if desired, and move to lambing jug. Take care not to contaminate lambs with another's fluids as the ewe may reject the lambs. After 2-3 days, move ewes and lambs into mixing pens with ample space, minimum of 16-20 square feet per ewe. Monitor ewes and lambs to ensure critical bonding has occurred and lambs are consuming adequate milk.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Space requirements: *Sheep 201: Housing* (sheep101.info)

Colostrum: *Colostrum Feeding of Newborn Lambs – Sheep* (extension.org)

Barrel Lamb warmer: *Lamb Warming Box ideas - Bing images*



LAMB MILK REPLACER

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MAINTAINING ANIMAL CONDITION IN LACTATION

by Jeff Hunter

Lactating animals require twice as much protein and TDN(energy) than maintenance requires. Animals almost always lose condition during lactation. The excessive loss of condition shortens live-spans, depletes body reserves, increases days to bred back, and reduces weaning weights. The key to maintaining condition or limiting the weight loss is to have animals in good condition(but not overly fat) prior to calving/lambing.

Feeding correctly in lactation is important to maintaining animal weight. Some feeding strategies which will help are as follows. (1) Balance rations and feed the right amount. (2) Feed a nutrient dense ration. (3) Avoid low TDN, high fiber, low dry matter forages. (4) Feed adequate protein levels. (5) Utilize Rumen By Pass Fat Sources.

Some rumen by-pass dry fat sources are Kinetic, Megalac, and Energy Booster. These work well as an addition to existing rations to help maintain animal condition.

I really like to feed a rumen by-pass protein and fat source such as roasted soybeans, extruded soybeans, or by-pass soybean meal in lactation. These soy products have a nice benefit in that they provide both rumen by-pass protein and by pass fat in one ingredient.

Management and feeding post weaning is critical to getting animals bred back and also in the necessary condition for the next lactation. When it is time to wean, avoid things like late weaning, limiting water at weaning, and excessively reducing feed quality and quantity. After the few weeks of drying off, go back to providing adequate feed levels needed for production. Remember the animal's production cycle in nearly year long. You cannot wait till flushing or gestation to try to 'get it right'.



ENERGY VALUE OF FEED INGREDIENTS

by Jeff Hunter

When selecting feedstuffs for a ration keep your feeding goals in mind. If a faster rate of gain is desired you should pick ingredients with higher TDN values. Ingredients with a higher TDN have more energy/calories and thus produce a faster rate of gain. For situations where energy needs to be reduced such as when feeding replacement stock or holding show animals, then select ingredients with lower energy and higher fiber levels. Grains and Feed Ingredients vary in their energy value (TDN), see the tables below.

GRAINS	TDN VALUE OF GRAIN	INGREDIENTS	TDN VALUE OF INGREDIENTS
Corn	91%	Soybean Meal	78%
Wheat	90%	Roasted/Extruded Soybeans	107%
Barley	83%	DDG's	80%
Oats	74%	Soy Hulls	71%
Molasses	75%	Alfalfa Meal	55%
Fat	195%	Cottonseed Hulls	40%

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