



CORN COBS???????

When visiting with the more “seasoned” farmer / feeders, it’s seems like they all say the best feed they ever had was ground ear corn. Those days seem to have passed us in our area for the most part. Still a select few, which pick ear corn or chop earlage. As we have trended to remove corn from our back grounding rations, why not add cobs into the non corn rations? Can we get corn cobs? Are they feasible in the blended feed? How do they benefit the growing calf? Does the customer want them? These are just a few of the questions that we encounter when looking at adding a value to the blended feeds.

So, we set out to answer our questions. First and foremost, what are the benefits to the growing calf? #1 an excellent source of effective fiber or scratch for the rumen. #2 better effective fiber and scratch result in more utilization of proteins and minerals which result a healthier rumen. #3 Cobs tend to make the ration safer for weaning the calf; they have a slow rumen degradation which helps prevent acidosis, especially with the fluctuating weather we are seeing this year. #4 Cobs are very palatable in starting and transition diets. #5 Yes, we can get cobs in the blended feed at a feasible value. Therefore, we now have ground corn cobs to offer in our blended feed rations.

We deal with two scenarios typically when weaning calves. One, wean the calf in the dry lot with a self feeder and a big bale of hay and let them go to town eating. If this is your plan I strongly recommend adding cobs into the blended feed at a level that provides more roughage in the diet to help obtain more consistent feed intakes. Number two, bring the calf in and hand feed them with a controlled intake of blended feed and a big bale of hay. This situation provides us with the ability to control consumption; therefore the use of cobs at a higher level is not as critical. I would still recommend cobs due to the fact that we could have a few calves that will have variable intakes allowing another calf to over eat. Initial reports are indicating that a small percentage of corn cobs in the blended feeds are helping to alleviate digestive upset issues.

Words of caution I would give you at weaning time. When taking calves off of the creep feeder and weaning them, know what the consumption is on the creep feeder. Adjust the weaning ration accordingly, give the calf time to adjust, this is a highly stressful time for them. Fill the calf up with good quality grass hay, especially if going to a self feeder. When hand feeding, possibly put the blended feed on top of loose hay in the bunk for the first few days. This will make them eat hay along with the feed, helping prevent gorging.

Whatever your situation maybe, we at New Balance can design a blended feed ration to fit your needs. We are always looking for ways to provide the best blended feed available to you as a producer. Please feel free to call us with any questions!

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