

EFFECT OF LASALOCID IN LIMIT-FED CREEP

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Story in Brief

Thirty one spring-born nursing calves were allotted to control (limit-fed cottonseed meal creep) or lasalocid (same as control except for addition of 120 mg/lb lasalocid). Creep feed was offered in mineral feeders from July 17 to October 9. Creep was hand fed every other day with a target feeding rate of 1 lb/head/day. Control creep was adjusted to equal the intake of lasalocid creep. Control calves averaged .88 lb/head/day intake compared to .78 lb/head/day for lasalocid calves. Total gains were similar (126 vs. 127 lbs) for control and lasalocid calves. Feeding lasalocid did not improve gains of calves in this study.

(Key Words: Limit-Fed Creep, Beef Cattle, Lasalocid.)

Introduction

Limit-fed creep feeds have been shown to efficiently increase gains of nursing calves. Because ionophores such as lasalocid have been shown to improve gains of grazing stocker cattle, there has been interest in evaluating ionophores when added to the creep feeds given to nursing calves. If ionophores added to creep feeds would improve calf performance, the economics of creep feeding could be significantly improved. Other potential benefits of feeding ionophores such as reduction of coccidiosis might also be realized. The objective of this study was to compare gains of nursing calves given limit-fed, high protein creep feed with or without lasalocid.

Materials and Methods

Thirty-one spring-born Simmental crossbred calves nursing Hereford x Angus cows were used to study the effects of lasalocid (trade name Bovatec) on rate of gain of nursing calves. Forage consisted of bermudagrass that was 8-10 inches tall at the start of the study. Lasalocid was added to cottonseed meal at the rate of 120 mg/lb. Calves were allotted by sex, birthdate and age of dam on July 17 to two treatment groups. Creep treatments were control (cottonseed meal) or lasalocid (same as control with addition of lasalocid). Cottonseed meal was fed as creep feed by hand feeding every other day in covered mineral feeders with a target feeding rate of 1 lb/head/day. Control creep was adjusted to equal the intake of lasalocid creep. A small creep feeding area was constructed with portable panels and a creep gate allowing access only to calves. Dried molasses was added at a rate of 5% of the cottonseed meal to increase consumption of creep after initial intakes

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were lower than desired. The trial lasted from July 17 to October 9 when all calves were weaned at about 7 months of age. Calves were weighed after overnight withdrawal from feed and water. Cows and calves were rotated between pastures every 28 days.

Results and Discussion

Forage quantity was abundant during the entire study. Creep intakes of both groups were lower than desired during the first 28 days of the trial (.65 vs .52 lb/head/day for control and lasalocid, respectively). After the first 28 days, dried molasses was added at the rate of 5% of the cottonseed meal in both treatments. Creep intakes improved dramatically with the addition of dried molasses. One of the major problems with limit-fed creep feeds has been consistent intake of the feed. Experience in this study and in a similar study at Stillwater suggests that the addition of molasses may greatly reduce intake problems. The addition of lasalocid at the rate of 120 mg/lb seemed to slightly reduce palatability of the cottonseed meal until dried molasses was added.

Calf gain during the study was not improved with the addition of lasalocid to the creep (Table 1). The slightly lower intake of Lasalocid creep may partly explain the lack of a gain response to the ionophore. However the level of lasalocid intake during each period should have been adequate for the weight of calf being fed. Because of the variability of responses seen with stocker cattle fed ionophores, results of this single trial should not be interpreted to rule out feeding of ionophores in creep feeds. Further studies need to be conducted.

Table 1. Gain of calves fed limit-fed creep with or without lasalocid.

	Control	Lasalocid
Number of calves	15	16
Initial weight, July 17, lb	305	305
Gain, 84 days, lb	126	127
Daily gain, lb	1.5	1.5
Creep intake, lb/day:		
1st 28 days	.65	.52
2nd 28 days	.99	.80
3rd 28 days	1.00	1.00
Total period	.88	.78