

Psychology Is Needed By Feeders

LAKEVIEW — Stockmen often have to include some "cow psychology" in their feeding methods if they are to get adequate amounts of necessary phosphorus into their cattle, says Oris Rudd, county extension agent.

The phosphorus is necessary for good animal nutrition, playing an important role in reproduction and efficient growth. Animals deficient in phosphorus usually have poor appetite for feed, are unthrifty and generally make poor gains. Continued phosphorus deficiency results in weak or dead offspring, poor milk production, and inefficient gains in young stock.

Bone meal is probably the most readily available source of phosphorus, although defluorinated phosphate and dicalcium phosphate are available and are suitable for livestock feed.

Because phosphate materials are relatively unpalatable there is often the problem of getting cattle to eat enough to do them good.

Mixing bone meal half and half with salt is an old standby method which has been used. The effectiveness of this method is often influenced by the way the material is fed.

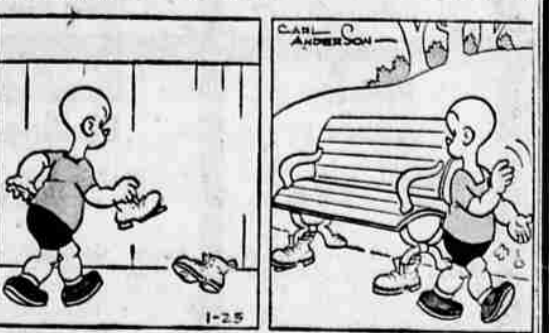
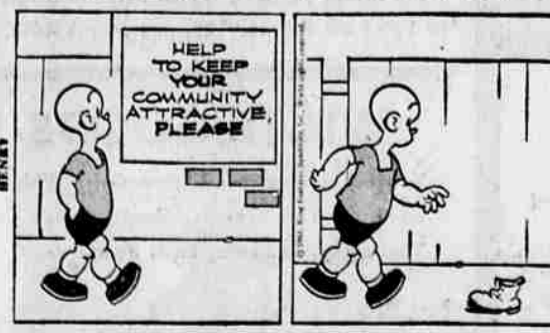
Cattle are like people in that they like to eat and drink in groups. If only a small salt box is available the aggressive ones eat first and wander away, with the young stock and more timid cattle following before they have had a chance to satisfy their needs.

Here's where the psychology comes into play, says Rudd. By providing a salt box large enough for 10 or 15 head to eat from at a time the farmer will give the "followers" in the herd more opportunity to get the salt and bone meal needed. If trouble persists a little cottonseed meal should be mixed in as an appetizer.

This will increase consumption and the extra protein will usually also be helpful. Commercial mineral mixers do this, but use sweet anise or other pungent flavoring.

Evidence indicates that iodized salt is beneficial and that cattle will more nearly satisfy their needs if they have ground salt instead of block salt.

One last point Rudd suggests for getting adequate phosphorus and salt into livestock is to refill the salt box at frequent intervals with a fresh mix, stirring it in with the old supply.



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