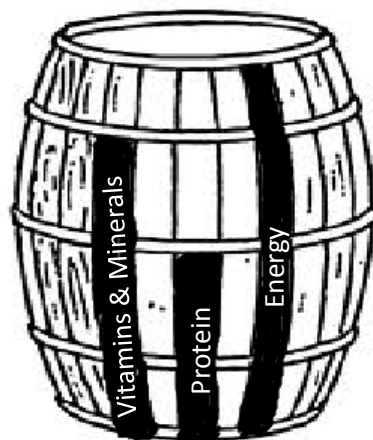


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Raising Heifers is a Barrel of Fun



Beef and dairy heifers represent the future of the farm, and success depends on raising these replacements to their genetic potential.

We like to think of meeting the nutrient requirements of growing heifers is similar to the staves of a barrel. Each stave represents a nutrient that can limit growth and reduce health. If a stave is short then that nutrient can limit growth or increase health problems. For example, if there is enough energy for a weight gain of 1.8 pounds per head per day but only enough protein for a weight gain of 1.5 pounds per head per day, then the heifers will gain the lower amount.

Meeting the nutrient requirements can be challenging since factors such as weather, crowding, disease, mud, animal size and other variables can impact levels of required nutrients. We generally think that it's better-in to build a slight over-formulation into calculating heifer diets. This is particularly true with pasture feeding or free-choice feeding of bales and other feeds. For example, providing a lick tank with Prime 32 % with Bovatec can provide energy, protein, vitamins, minerals, and a growth promotant. Providing this supplement free-choice in a lick tank can enable the heifers to consume more liquid feed if other feeds are not meeting their needs or less if other feeds are mostly meeting their needs. Let's assume we have 600 pound heifers in the winter being fed poor quality hay and some corn silage. These animals might eat two pounds of liquid feed per day while the same heifers on good green pasture might only eat a pound or less of liquid feed. Another example is grain price. If grain is relatively expensive and we under feed it, then heifers might take more feed from the tank. Consequently, if grain prices are relatively inexpensive and we feed more, we would expect the heifers to take less feed from the tank.

This year have a little fun with your neighbors. Supplement your heifers with a Mol-Mix liquid supplement. When the neighbors inquire what you are doing to produce such nice looking heifers, simply reply that your heifers are having a barrel of fun!