



Effective Dry Season Livestock Management

2017



GRASS / VELD MANAGEMENT
LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT
SUPPLEMENTING (NUTRITION)

GRASS / VELD MANAGEMENT

- Always manage grazing with drought in mind
- One head of cattle to 10 hectares
- One head of small stock to 1 hectare
- The difficulties of veld management in communal areas
- Over grazing magnified the drought
- Boreholes



Livestock Management

- Wean calves early
- Keep herd to a minimum
- Cull old infertile animals
- Supplement your productive animals
- Do not panic and buy expensive feeds
- How much does it cost you to produce 1 kg of meat?

Supplements

- What is a supplement?
- Feeding the bacteria and protozoa in the rumen that live in symbiosis with the animal enabling the animal to digest and extract the nutrients from the grass.
- Summer supplementing – green grass.
- Winter supplementing – yellow grass.
- Drought supplementing.

- The correct supplementing is the single most important factor in having a healthy productive herd. It is essential that cattle are supplemented with the correct minerals, vitamins and proteins for the environment they are living in. Good genetics will not reach their full potential unless the animals are correctly supplemented. Unproductive, sick animals and poor growth are often a result of mineral and vitamin deficiencies.

- It is important to supplement throughout the year for optimal health of your animals. Healthy animals react better to vaccinations and deworming. During a period of drought and the winter months when the grass is dry this becomes even more important. It is far easier to maintain the good condition of an animal than to try and regain a poor conditioned animal. The average calving rate of a non-supplemented animal in Botswana is 34% by supplementing this will increase to over 80%.

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- When looking at supplements you need to look for a supplement that has been formulated specifically for the environment and conditions of Botswana. Your biggest expense as a cattle farmer is your feeding and supplementing so it is imperative that you get it right. You need to look for a high quality supplement that is concentrated, contains the correct minerals, vitamins and proteins and that has a low intake thus keeping your profitability as high as possible.

- When supplementing it is important to remember that cattle must have access to sufficient roughage, at least 12kg per day, and water. Utilise your grazing and if you are in an area where there is no grazing then use a roughage that is accessible such as lablab, sorghum stalks, maize stalks and wheat straw. We consistently suffer drought conditions in Botswana so you need to look at growing your own roughage such as lab lab or maize stalks to thus combat our lack of rainfall.

- The harsh drought conditions that we experience mean our cattle have to walk long distances to eat the correct amount of grass needed each day. The grass at this time has a very hard casing but does contain nutrition and the animals need to be able to digest and absorb this goodness. The micro organisms that live in the rumen stomach live in symbiosis with the animal and it is these micro organisms that allow them to digest roughage. When we are supplementing we are in part feeding these micro organisms that play an integral part in the digestive system of the cow.

- We know from doing local grass analysis that our grass is selenium deficient. Selenium is a mineral that ensures the cattle have a high immune response. A healthy animal is able to walk the distances required and is productive.

- Arthrosis is another problem that farmers deal with on a regular basis with their livestock. Arthrosis is when the cartilage in the hip and knee joints has not fully formed and makes walking painful for the animal and thus unable to cover long distances. Arthrosis is avoided only by using the correct supplement.

- Prussic Acid poisoning is the most common cause of stock death during Botswana's hot summer months and is often incorrectly diagnosed as pasturella. Prussic Acid poisoning is 100% preventable by supplementing with appropriately formulated supplements. (eg sulphur) Mixing ration of 1.25kg sulphur: 50kg of supplement.

Supplements

- DCP 18
- P6 plus sulphur
- Blocks
 - P6
 - P9
 - Small stock energy block
 - Goat and sheep block
 - Lac & Bamb block
- Production Lick
- Vasbyt



“The best manure of any successful farming enterprise is the daily footprint of the farmer.”

MOA