

Give Your Beef Calves A Strong Start



By Erik Brettingen, B.S.

The stress caused by weaning decreases a calf's immune function and makes them more vulnerable to disease. For many years it has been common practice to give medicated feeds, pellets, or additives around the time of weaning to decrease the incidence

of disease. Treating with these medicated feeds can be expensive, counterproductive to rumen function, and now requires a veterinary prescription due to the Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD). Crystal Creek® formulates products that have natural ingredients proven to support calves during the stress of weaning and do not require the need for a VFD. Crystal Pellets™ and Heifer Pride™ are two products that can help give your beef calves a strong start.

Crystal Pellets™ are an aloe vera based flavoring agent to be fed to calves either in the grain mix or top-dressed onto their feed. Crystal Pellets™ help support the health of the calf by helping increase feed intake and providing ingredients that have been proven to support immune function and nutrient absorption.

Appetite Support: When calves eat more, their immune system simply has more calories to support its function of fighting off harmful pathogens. It is helpful to think of the calves calories as dollars and the calf's needs as a number of bills to pay. There is the heat bill to maintain normal body temperature, a maintenance bill for basic body function, an immune system bill for disease protection and hopefully some left over funds to pay the growth bill. The immune system uses more calories in the body than any other system, but if primary needs for survival like body temperature and maintenance aren't being met, there surely will not be adequate calories left for a strong immune system leaving the calf at an increased risk of illness. Eating more leads to increased caloric intake which results in more calories for a calf to pay its "bills" to be healthy and grow.

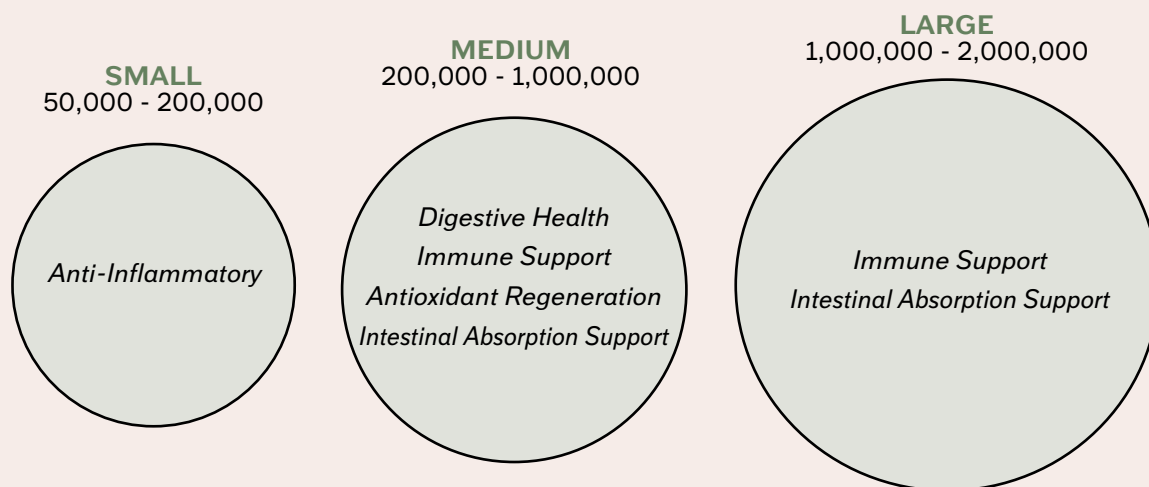
Powerful Ingredients: The naturally derived ingredients in Crystal Pellets™ have been scientifically proven to:

- Decrease inflammation by selective COX-2 inhibition
- Stimulate the immune system along the gastrointestinal tract
- Promote nutrient absorption in the lower gastrointestinal tract

Figure 1

ALOE VERA POLYSACCHARIDE PROFILE

(Molecular Weight in Daltons)





- d. Promote antioxidant regeneration
- e. Stop/reverse gastric ulcer formation in laboratory models

The complex polysaccharide profile that can be found in Crystal Pellets™ is made up of small, medium, and large molecular weights. This molecular weight is very important and helps to determine what body system the ingredient helps to support. See Figure 1.

Heifer Pride™ is a nutritional supplement added to the calves complete feed or creep feed that many producers have found to be useful in helping keep their calves healthy and moving forward. After weaning, it is not uncommon for calves to “go backward” due to stress and its impact on the intestinal tract. Many times a rough hair coat and watery, off-colored manure go along with

this backward slide in animal health. The naturally derived ingredients in Heifer Pride™ have been proven to support the integrity of the intestinal tract of ruminants during times of significant stress such as weaning or regrouping.

It is important that beef calves wean smoothly to maximize their average daily gain, feed efficiency, and overall profit. There are alternatives available to the medicated feeds currently requiring a veterinary prescription. These alternatives work with the calf to support its immune system. Natural supplementation with products that contain beneficial ingredients that have been scientifically proven to be effective can be a useful tool for many farm and ranch owners. Contact a Crystal Creek® representative to learn more about how Crystal Pellets™ and Heifer Pride™ can be a positive addition to your calf weaning program.