

# SEEKING TO IMPROVE GRAZING DISTRIBUTION WITHIN PASTURES?

*Consider using supplements to draw cattle to underutilized areas*

**Whether you're the cow/calf producer planning to sell weaned calves** or the stocker operator trying to put weight on cattle, you need to use your grass resources as efficiently as possible.

"When you're facing high land prices, strategies that optimize the use of existing pastureland are essential," says Kent Tjardes, Ph.D. and cattle consultant with Purina Animal Nutrition. "You need to manage your pastures so that pounds produced per acre can overcome the cost per acre."

One way to help boost grazing efficiency within pastures is to achieve better grazing distribution.

"It's common to see pastures with overgrazed areas near water troughs or where forage is fed, while that same pasture may have an underutilized area with forage that should be grazed," says Tjardes. "Cattle typically only go so far from feed and water sources, but they can be baited into other underused areas of pasture."

While fencing and water sources can be used to control where cattle graze, they require considerable investment. A viable alternative is baiting cattle with supplements.

"Cattle seek out protein and mineral products

because they crave them. Therefore, protein and mineral supplements can help distribute grazing if used effectively," says Tjardes.

Even in pastures where hay, cubes and other protein sources are regularly being fed, supplement tubs can help enhance grazing distribution.

"We want cattle to go out into the pasture and not just hang around the feed area waiting for the delivery vehicle," says Tjardes. "Offering mineral and protein sources away from the delivery area can help draw cattle into other parts of the pasture."

If cattle have never had liquid supplements or block-type tubs, start by placing them in an area where the group can get adjusted to using them. Tjardes suggests initially placing supplements close to the water and loafing areas, then gradually moving them farther away from those areas so cattle will seek out the supplement source and move to underutilized pasture areas. After shifting supplements away from water and loafing areas, visually monitor intake and cattle patterns over the next few weeks.

"If you know the weight of the tubs you put out, the number of cattle and the number of days they had access to the tubs, you can easily calculate how much

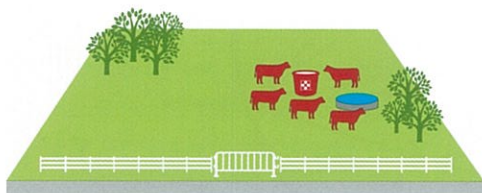
they are eating per day," Tjardes says.

If cattle intake is at a higher level than desired, Tjardes recommends moving the supplements farther out. If consumption is too low, move supplements closer to the water and loafing area until cattle intake is at the correct level. Then, gradually move the supplements to undergrazed areas of the pasture.

Producers can also visually monitor distribution by examining the grass around the area of the supplements. If the grass looks like it has been frequently walked on and there is manure nearby, then the cows are moving as desired. Once cattle are grazing underutilized areas, you can slowly draw them into other locations by using supplements as bait.

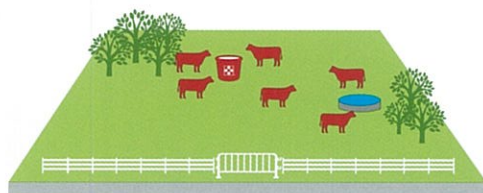
"No producer in today's environment wants to see big areas of pasture go unused," says Tjardes. "That represents dollars per acre that aren't translating to profit. Monitoring pasture resources and adding protein and mineral supplements to bait cattle into underutilized pasture areas can be a powerful tool to boost pounds and profits."

**For more information on supplements to improve grazing distribution, visit [www.purinamills.com/cattle](http://www.purinamills.com/cattle).** ■



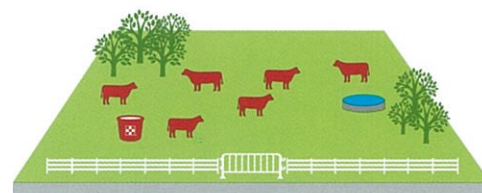
## STEP 1:

Place supplements close to the water and loafing areas.



## STEP 2:

Gradually move supplements farther away from the water/loafing area.



## STEP 3:

Continue moving supplements farther into underutilized areas of pasture.