How much SweetPro will my cattle eat?

There are many factors which influence intake, but they can be managed with the "right tub for the forage" to average one pound per day on a moderate frame cow (1,100 lbs +/-).

Factors Influencing Intake

- Forage Quality
- Animal Size & Gestation
- Adaptation Period (two-to-three weeks)
- Nutritional Plain of the Animal
- Weather

SweetPro®
PREMIUM SUPPLEMENTS

A common question for new users is: "*How much will my cattle eat the first day?*." Two scenarios are typical.

1. In most cases, intake is higher during the adaptation period (1.25 to 1.75 lbs. per day) but starts to level off after a week-to-ten days if cattle are on a reasonably sound Plain-of-Nutrition. If so, intake will settle into a range of 0.75 to 1.25 lbs/hd/day for an average intake of one-pound-per-day.

2. If livestock are replenishing body stores of key minerals, adaptation may take four-to-five weeks.

In either case, the cost of higher intake during adaptation is offset by significant improvement in feed efficiency. For cows on a maintenance diet, forage intake can drop by up to 10% to 25% depending on quality and cool or warm season forages. For cows regaining body condition or for growing cattle, the improved feed efficiency is reflected in greater gain on the same amount of feed intake.

Forage Quality Influences

If a tub which is designed to limit intake in harsh conditions, such as FiberMate 20 or Magnum, is used on lush grass or good quality forage *(RFV* above 115)* cattle may ignore the tub altogether for several days and only later nibble less than one quarter pound per day.
If forage quality is poor *(RFV below 85)* intake of the tubs will average higher than one pound per day and the producer should use the next, more restrictive intake tub. For example, if intake of FiberMate 18 averages over 1.5 lbs/hd/day, change to FiberMate 20, or in extreme cases, use Magnum. Conversely, if intake is under 0.5 lbs/hd/day, one should drop back from FiberMate 18 to SweetPro 16.

Animal Size: Larger framed animals will eat proportionally more than moderate framed animals. Cows typically increase intake .25 lb in mid-to-late gestation, but often eat less just before calving. It's best to start cows one-to-two month before calving. Starting too close to calving can complicate the adaptation period and result in erratic intake.

Weather: Weather can be a factor for intake. In advance of a storm, for example, consumption sometimes increases.

Plain of Nutrition: As noted above, animals depleted of certain minerals or other nutrients, will tend to have higher intake until their overall plain of nutrition improves. Conversely, if hay includes good alfalfa or grain is added to the diet, consumption of the tub declines.

Adaptation Period: As noted above, the adaptation period can range from ten days to five weeks, depending upon various factors, the most important of which is forage quality.

** RFV = Relative Feed Value. Table of Relative Feed Value for Forage is attached.*

SweetPro Lick Blocks (tubs) for "Every Stage of Growth" and "Condition of Forage"

	250 lbs to 450	400 to 650	650 to 1,000	1,000 to 1,400	1,000 to 1,450 +	
Starter	X					Also for receiving stressed stockers
Cattle Kandi		X				Stockers and cows on lush pasture
SweetPro 16			X			Most versatile tub, great for heifers
FiberMate 18				X		When forage quality is fair to good
FiberMate 20					X	When forage quality is poor
Magnum					X	When forage quality is very poor or quantity is limited

Nursing calves will consume tubs along with the cow but at rates proportionate with their weight. (i.e. 1,100 lb cow consuming 1.1 lbs., her 400 lb calf will consume 0.4 +/- to total 1.5 lbs. for the pair).

Pasture Ranger	X	X	For grazing alfalfa & wheat Pastures
Dry Cow / Calver-Breeder	X	X	High Vit.E, low NaCl salt, anionic emphasis fights milk fevers & udder edema

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Relative Feed Value (RFV) of Forages

Prime over 151
Premium 125 to 150
Good 103 to 124
Fair 87 to 102
Poor 75 to 86
Reject 74 and below

Forage quality is impacted greatly by stage of maturity. As forage crops mature the nutritive value declines. With increasing maturity, the acid detergent fiber (ADF) and neutral detergent fiber (NDF) increases and crude protein (CP) decreases. Relative feed value (RFV) is an index that reflects the fiber fractions, which dictate potential digestible dry matter feed intake. The higher the RFV, the higher quality feed value is obtained from the forage. RFV ranks forages relative to the digestible dry matter intake of full bloom alfalfa (RFV of 100, ADF of 41, and NDF of 53). RFV declines (number gets smaller) with maturity.

.... Illinois Agronomy Handbook

(Nov 2018)