

# HOW TO...

## PICK THE MINERAL

### Why...

Throughout the year livestock face various events which can lead to loss of condition, illness and lack of performance. To help our animals achieve the best results and stay in great condition we can supplement their feed with vitamins and minerals. With so many on the market it's difficult to know which you need. Below you will find a simple guide to the most commonly supplemented minerals. However this is just a guide and we do recommend that you contact a vet if you are concerned for an animal's welfare.

### Guide

#### Protein

Usually fed when forage quality is low and animals are at risk from protein deficiencies. Most Protein feed blocks will also be high energy (usually with oils and sugars) to help boost ailing animals.

#### Magnesium

Hypoglycaemia or Grass Staggers is a condition which can be suffered by both sheep and cattle. It is caused by a lack of magnesium and/ or Calcium in the diet. Usually around Spring and Autumn when the grass is more lush, magnesium is low. Magnesium cannot be stored in the body so if there is lacking in the grass, animals can become susceptible. By adding a Hi Magnesium block during these times can reduce the risk greatly. Cows suckling calves on winter feeds and dairy cows are most at risks as the input/output ratios change.

#### Phosphorus

Phosphorus is an important mineral for fertility and breeding. It is usually fed during bulling/tupping time. For dairy cattle and lactating animals it is also important for milk production.

#### Copper

Copper deficiency is rare although more common in certain areas and is usually seen more in growing cattle. Signs of copper deficiency in growing cattle are change of coat colour (black hair gets brown highlights), impaired immune function, diarrhoea, decreased growth rate and delayed puberty. Only supplement copper for sheep if there is a known deficiency as too much can cause liver problems due and poor absorption which then leads to deficiency. It is a complicated mineral for sheep and as a general rule, sheep mineral buckets do not contain copper.

### Tips and Rules

- Do NOT feed copper to sheep unless there is a known deficiency
- Always check the label for list of ingredients
- If in doubt consult a veterinarian
- Always provide enough for the number of animals to make sure they are getting what they need
- Know what you are giving and why

### Call Free!

For more help or advice about any of the products mentioned on this sheet, please call our friendly staff FREE on 0800 056 0002 or you can email us at [enquiries@farmandcountrysupplies.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@farmandcountrysupplies.co.uk).

### Tips and Notes

If weight gain or high sugar content is an issue, try using a mineralised salt lick instead of a molassed bucket



Molassed mineral buckets are good for fussy eaters

Use special formulation buckets for particular use, for example a Pre-Tup bucket will be formulated to give all the minerals required during the tupping season.

### You Will Need

To determine how many feed buckets you need for your herd please call with the number of animals for us to advise.

### Other Guides in the Series relevant to this article

Lambing Season, Worm Control in cattle, Bolusing