

## **What Do You Mean The Highest Price Feed May Be The Cheapest?**

This was a question that came up at a recent cattle producers get together. I can buy 20 percent cubes at \$185 per ton and that high priced stuff will cost me \$250 per ton. That s \$65 per ton less for the 20% cubes.

The high priced protein supplement contained 48 percent crude protein. My reply was, You will get more crude protein per ton of feed and it may actually be cheaper with the high priced supplement.

In purchasing any supplement, producers should determine the cost per pound of nutrient delivered to the farm. For example, the 48 percent protein supplement would contain 960 lb. of crude protein per ton. With a cost of \$250 per ton, a pound of crude protein would cost 26 cents per pound.

The 20 percent cube would contain 400 lb. of crude protein per ton and the actual cost per pound of crude protein would be 46 cents per pound.

If a producer needed to provide an extra 1.0 crude protein supplement to a hay ration of the beef cows, it would take about 2.0 pounds of the 48 percent supplement to meet the needs. This amounts to 26 cents per day to provide the needed supplement. To meet the needed protein with the 20 percent supplement, 5 pounds of this feed would be needed and would cost 46 cents per day.

The total cost for a protein supplement for a 100-day feeding period would be about \$26.00 with the high-priced supplement (48%) and \$46.00 with the low-priced supplement, a savings of \$20 per cow.

With an average Tennessee beef cow herd of 23 cows, this amounts to a total savings of \$460.00 per herd. The cow herd could be wintered on less cost with the higher priced protein cube.

After going through the illustration, the producer left the discussion talking about what he could save, Heck, I can save a lot more than that. I got nearly a hundred cows. Well, then feeding the high priced protein supplement would be quite a savings.

James B. Need  
Professor of Animal Science  
University of Tennessee  
2505 River Drive, Room 204  
Knoxville, TN 37996-4575  
Telephone: 865-974-7294  
Fax: 865-974-0429  
E-mail: [jneel@utk.edu](mailto:jneel@utk.edu)