



NATIONAL
FOODS
STOCKFEEDS

Supplementation, Feeding & Backgrounding Animals Ready For The Feedlot



What is Backgrounding?

- Backgrounding
- A **management** program designed around **vaccination** and **nutrition** to better prepare weaned cattle to enter the feedlot
- Intermediary stage between weaning and feedlotting
 - Linking cow-calf systems to the feedlot sector
- Adding value
 - ↑ Frame
 - ↑ Health Status
 - ↑ Adaption to feedlot management and nutrition

Who Backgrounds?

Three backgrounding players:

- Cow – Calf System
 - \uparrow weight = \uparrow income
 - Prepares animals for sale directly to feedlot
 - Traceability
 - Added value from otherwise unutilized crop residue or veld
- Feedlots
 - Flexibility in calves purchased
 - Price dependent
 - \$ to buy kg vs \$ to feed kg
 - Uniform group of animals entering feedlot
 - Focus on frame
 - Only healthy animals enter feedlot

Who Backgrounds?

- Specialist 'Backgrounders'
 - Buys weaners, backgrounds for 30 – 90 days and sells to feedlot
 - Profitability dependent on:
 - Weaner price
 - 20-40% of weight sold is purchased
 - Feed price
 - Performance and duration
 - Selling price
 - Co-mingling from different sources to supply feedlots with uniform of animals who are already grouped

Why Background?

- Demand for backgrounded calves continue to grow
- Premium prices for heavier animals entering feedlot
 - Flexibility to decide when to market cattle to the feedlots (↑\$)
 - Control availability of cattle to feedlots
 - Uniformity – quality, weight, sex
- Cow – Calf Systems
 - Better selection of replacement heifers
 - Could market pregnant heifers at a later stage
- Relatively low cost/kg gain
- Value added to otherwise unutilized roughage
 - Weight added is instantly saleable
 - Backgrounding = immediate economic edge
 - Opportunity costs (?)

How do Feedlots Benefit?

- Minimize stress in the feedlot – reduce losses during receiving period
- Cattle familiar with bunk feeding and water troughs
 - ↑ feed intake in feedlot
- Better adaption to feedlot diets
 - ↑ ADG
 - ↑ GIT health
- Improved health status and immune function
 - ↓ Mortalities & Morbidities
 - ↓ Reduced treatment costs
 - ↓ Endogenous N losses



How do Feedlots Benefit?

- Carcass Characteristics
 - Heavier carcasses at slaughter due to increased frame size
 - Same carcass weights in shorter feeding period
 - Reduced standing & management costs
 - Carcass composition = between backgrounded and non-backgrounded cattle
- Animals entering feedlot have usually been partially processed
 - Dehorned, castrated etc.
 - ↓ labor + ↓ stress on animals
- Purchasing of large, even groups of cattle
- Greater overall feedlot profitability

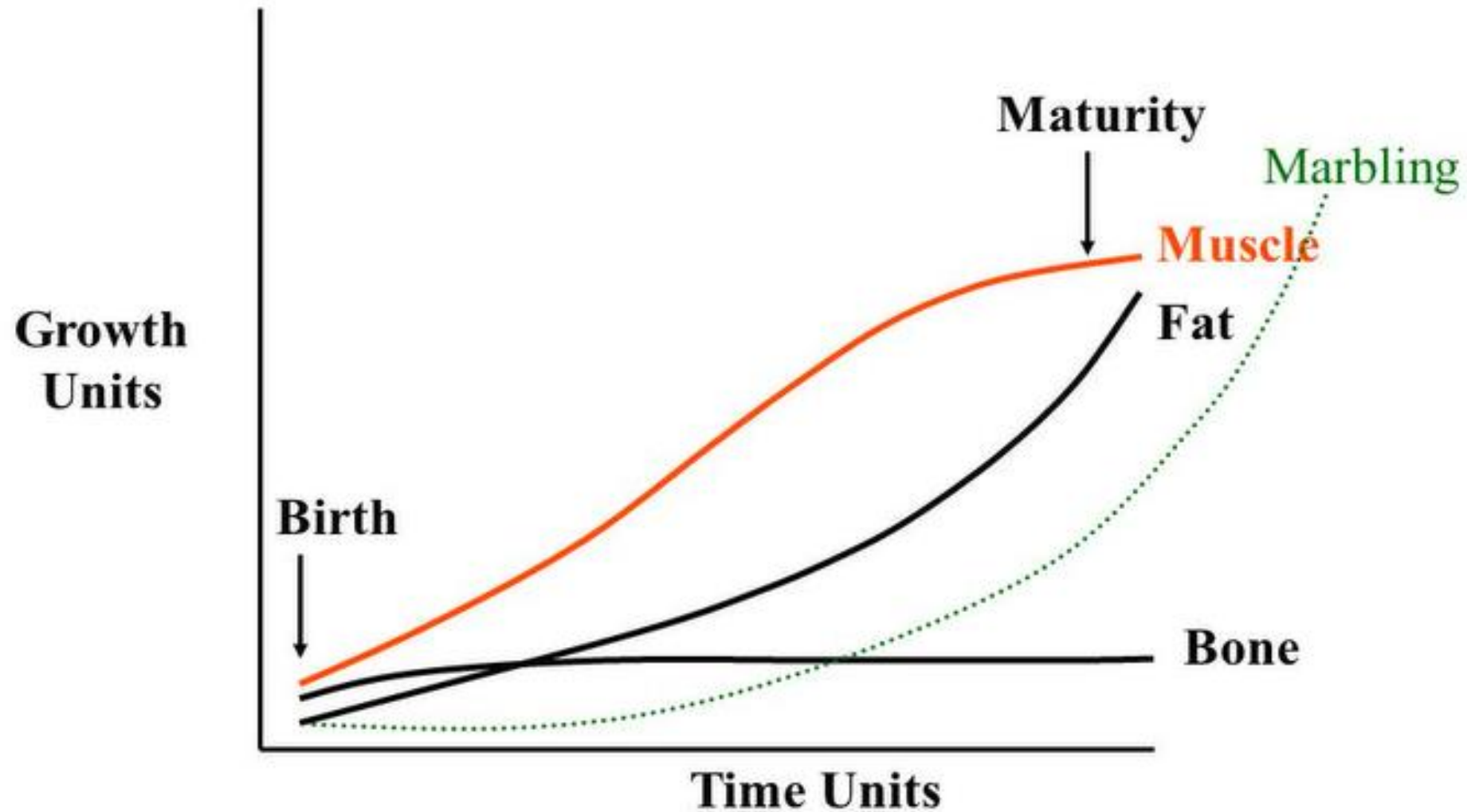
Backgrounding Principles

- Backgrounding can happen either -
 - Extensively vs Intensively
 - Summer vs Winter- and this will influence feeding strategies greatly.
- Aim for controlled growth
 - 800 – 1000g/animal/day
 - Depending on length of backgrounding period
 - 190kg to 240kg in 70 days = 714g/animal/day
 - 200kg to 240kg in 45 days = 888g/animal/day
- Limit energy intake
 - $\pm 1.3x$ maintenance requirements
 - Low energy ration such OR
 - Low intake of higher energy ration

Backgrounding Principles

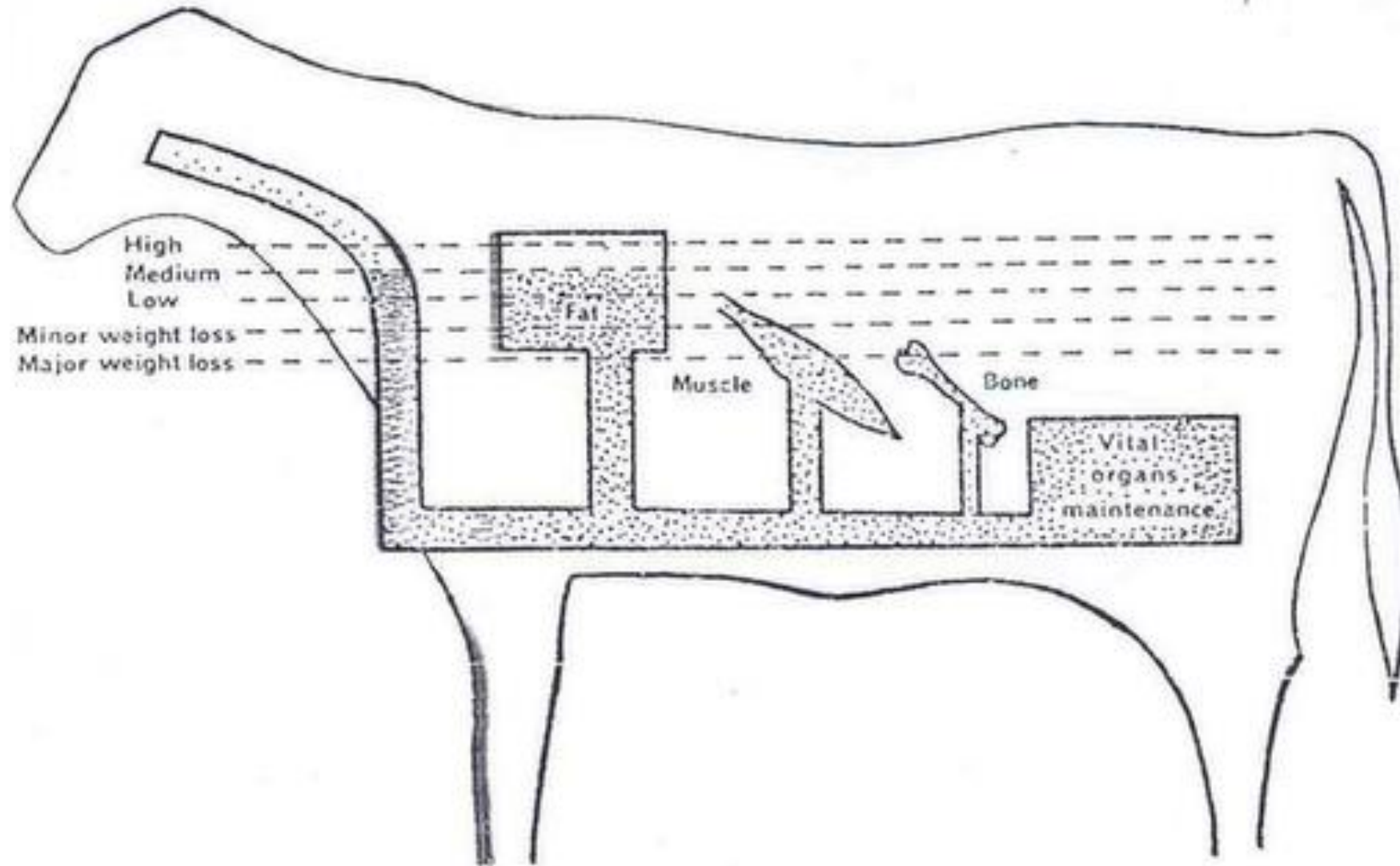
- Maximize frame
 - Focus on bone and muscle deposition
 - Avoid fat deposition – heifers more susceptible
 - Quality protein - **NB**
 - Adding bypass protein \uparrow ADG & \downarrow FCR in young cattle <220kg
- Roughage based - economic gain - cost of gain
- Aim for 80kg – 100kg of frame growth
- Supplementary feeding limited to 20% of calf's intake on grazing
- No “One Size Fits All” approach – contact your NFL technical advisor

Feeding Principles



^a Adapted from Boggs, et al, 1998

Feeding Principles



Feeding Principles

Important considerations -

- Potential of animal?
 - Frame size
 - Condition
 - Breed
 - Sex
 - Age
 - Chronological vs Physiological



Feeding Principles

- Intensive Backgrounding
 - Drylots/Pens – no access to veld, pasture or crop residues
 - Less dependent on seasons
 - Receiving ration NB for adaption (<10% of cattle eat in first 24hrs)
 - Palatable
 - Ad lib roughage 10-14 days
 - Begin with 0.5% BW concentrate and increase by 500g/head every 3 days
 1. TMR (\pm 40 - 70% roughage) to be fed ad lib – consult nutritionist
 2. Ad lib roughage (lucerne/grass hay) + Supplementary Feeding
 - Pen Feeding Meal: 2-5kg/head/day**
 - Veld Fattening Cubes/Meal 2-4kg/head/day**
 - Good quality protein
 - Young cattle limited microbial protein production
- Feed must be always available – digestive health

Feeding Principles

- Extensive Backgrounding
 - Summer
 - Sufficient quantity and quality of natural pasture/veld to support gain
 - ADG 22% ↑ in summer vs winter
 - Feed intake 13% ↑ in summer vs winter
 - Supplementation with minerals – leached from soil – good grazing
 - High Phos 7 Blocks** **80-100g/head/day**
 - High performing animals or animals with reduced quality/quantity grazing
 - Production Lick Energy + Mineral + Trace Mineral + Protein
1000-1500g/head/day

Feeding Principles

- Extensive Backgrounding

- Winter

- Crop Residues

- Offer additional protein – natural protein sources

- Winter Block 45%** **1x 25kg block/30 animals**

- Winter Cubes 45%** **800-1200g/animal/day**

- Veld Grass

- Offer additional protein + energy (>10.2MJ/kg)

- Production Lick

- Energy + Mineral + Trace Mineral + Protein

- 1000-1500g/head/day

- Complete Feed

- ± 1.5-2.5% BW/head/day dependent on grazing

- Pen Feeding Meal**

- Veld Fattening Cubes/Meal**

Practical Feeding Principles

- Ensure easy physical access feed
 - Especially for smaller cattle
 - Bunk space + trough space
- Grouping NB
 - Prevent bullying
 - Simplifies nutritional management
- Initially, feed roughage in troughs to encourage usage
 - Introduce silage slowly
 - Adaption is key
- Bunk management is key

Summary



Thank You!

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