

## Limiting Feed Intake

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The management regime in some cattle operations require that some additional feed be given to animals. The problems is finding a way to limit the intake so animals consume the desired amount.

Many producers limit the intake of protein or grain by using a filler. This would be a high fiber feed such as hay or cottonseed hulls. The concept is for the animals to get full before they consume too much of the high density feed.

Some produces prefer to use something that causes animals to eat only a small amount of feed. Some people prefer to use salt to limit feed intake.

If salt is being considered as an intake limiter, two problems that can occur must be addressed. First is that salt will destroy metal feeders and feed mixers. Another problem is that animals can be poisoned by consuming too much salt if enough water is not consumed to flush it out of the animals body.

If salt is to be used, how much should be mixed into the feed? Although the consumption varies, a good starting place is to mix one tenth of a pound of salt for each one hundred pounds of body weight with the amount of feed that it is desired that the animal consume.

An example is the best way fully understand the mixing procedure. Assume that it is desired to feed a 500 pound calf two pounds of feed per day. In the case the there should be 0.5 pounds of salt used ( $.1 \text{ times } 5 = .5$ ). Mix this amount of salt with the two pounds of feed. Animals should consume approximately two and one half ( $2 \frac{1}{2}$ ) pounds of the mix per head per day. Remember this is just a starting place. Monitor consumption and adjust as needed.

Commercial feed companies have feed limiters in their feeds that are less corrosive and do not require mixing.

Intake limiters can be used to limit feed intake, but they do have limitations. If you are thinking about using a feed intake limiter, call your local Extension agent to discuss how it will work in your operation.