

# FREEZER BEEF PROTOCOL

**MANY THINK FINISHING CATTLE** is a short-term process as the steer or heifer nears harvest weight. The process begins well before that and there are some useful tips and management practices that will help the process be more efficient, more effective and yield better results.

**PHASE 1 BREEDING AND GESTATION.** Genetics and prenatal care are important. A decision to use cattle with proper genetics is the first step to producing a steak that you will be proud to eat or sell to a customer. Multiple studies on fetal programming have shown that brood cow nutrition, especially during mid gestation, is critical to the ability to marble later in the calf's life. While the cow is pregnant, make sure she is receiving adequate energy. Help the brood cow's immune system by feeding quality vitamins and minerals and adequate levels of protein will help ensure that the brood cow is producing high quality colostrum and that is essential to help the calf meet the immunological challenges early on in life. Feed Brood Cow Supplement at .5-1% of body weight per day.

**PHASE 2 BIRTH TO WEANING.** (Birth to 6-7 months) Creep feeding until weaning will add pounds and help ensure that the calf is in good condition which in turn makes marbling easier later in life. Feeding CPC Grower 13R or AFC Beef 14R in a free choice feeder will also cut down stress at weaning as the calf transitions from a milk-based diet to one centered on forages and grains.

*\* Calves will typically eat 400-600 pounds of creep feed.*

**PHASE 3 GROWING.** (Weaning to 10-12 months) Low stress weaning adds to growth and decreases health issues. Creep fed calves transition to feed in the weaning pen far more easily. They will lose less weight during this phase and are less likely to develop health issues. Often many vaccines are administered during this period and can add to the overall health of the calves. Feeds with moderate levels of energy are fed at this point alongside forages. CPC Grower 13R, AFC Beef 14R, or Stocker 13 w/Bov. should be fed until the animal reaches approximately 750 pounds. These feeds are fed at a rate of 1-2% of the animal's body weight per day.

*\*Calves will typically need 1200-1500 pounds of feed for this phase.*

**PHASE 4 FINISHING.** (Yearling to 16-18 months) Feeding to continue frame and muscle growth. The final stage of finishing should be at least 120 to 150 days of heavy feeding, and this will be influenced by your target finished weight, the frame size of your calf and often the harvest date you can get scheduled. These calves should be transitioned to a higher energy feed and fed 2-3 percent of body weight. CPC Developer 14R or Formax Brood Cow Supplement should be fed during this phase to provide the



protein and energy required. Protein levels during this phase need to be 12-14% until you are satisfied with skeletal and muscle development. Protein levels can be reduced to prevent fast growing calves from getting too big while allowing them to fatten and marble. replacing ten to thirty percent of the feeds mentioned above with Cracked corn will do that especially for the last 60 to 90 days.

*\* Cattle will typically consume 3500-4500 pounds of feed during this stage.*

**DO NOT FORGET THE HAY.** Hay and other forages are critical throughout the life of the calf. High quality hay, especially during the finishing phase, is critical for the animal's stomach to function properly and to utilize the feed efficiently. Low quality hay or a lack of hay will decrease weight gain, increase the risk of multiple digestive disorders and in some cases can be fatal.

*\*Call your local veterinarian for health protocol.*

*\*All natural versions of feeds listed above are available.*

*\*Rumensin® and Bovatec® have no slaughter withdrawal period for finished cattle, only for veal calves.*



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