



# Ohio County Farm & Home News

**Cooperative  
Extension Service**

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## WHAT IS THE COST OF CHEAP MINERAL

The following article is from Dr. Kate VanValin, Assistant Beef Extension Professor at U.K., discussing the need for quality mineral supplementation in beef herds.

The quality and cost of mineral supplements can vary greatly, and it can be overwhelming trying to make sense of all the numbers and information listed on the feed tag. While I am always a proponent of trying to manage feed costs, I caution producers against exchanging an adequate mineral for a poor-quality mineral. While saving a couple of dollars on a bag of mineral can certainly add up, it is important that the mineral being provided is still adequate to meet the needs of the herd to prevent mineral deficiencies which can become costly!

In the fescue belt, cattle are especially susceptible to selenium deficiency. Symptoms of selenium deficiency include white muscle disease in calves and decreased immune function and growth.

Unfortunately, signs of mineral deficiency can be difficult to spot, and often producers may not realize they have an issue until testing is completed as part of a necropsy. Many complications from mineral deficiencies can be avoided all together by feeding an adequate mineral.

In the United States, concentrations of selenium in the feed are regulated by the Federal Drug Administration. This regulation exists to prevent selenium toxicity from occurring due to over supplementation which could have negative impacts on the health of livestock, wildlife, and humans. Since the inclusion rate

of selenium is regulated not to exceed 3 mg per head per day, rarely will you see differences in selenium concentration in free-choice minerals formulated for a similar intake. For example, mineral supplements formulated to be consumed at 3 oz. per head per day will typically contain 35 parts per million of selenium. Since more selenium cannot be added to the mineral supplement, the type of selenium included in the supplement is especially important. Research from the University of Kentucky has shown that feeding a mix of selenium sources can be better than a single selenium source. For this reason, it is recommended that producers choose a mineral that provides 50% of the selenium from sodium selenite and 50% from a selenium yeast.



What is the cost of providing a better form of selenium in the mineral? Recent price comparisons have shown that the difference in price for providing a 50/50 blend of selenium sources increases the cost of the mineral by as little as \$1 per bag, assuming all other inclusions were similar. If we assume that a cow typical consumes 1.4 50 lb. bags of mineral per year, that is a

difference of \$1.40 per cow per year. How does that compare that to cost of losing a single calf due to selenium deficiency?

Fortunately, it is possible to manage mineral costs while still providing a mineral that will meet the nutritional needs of the herd. Take some time to evaluate your mineral tag this year. What source of selenium is included? How much zinc or manganese is included in the mineral? Current recommendations from the UK Beef IRM Basic Cow-Calf Mineral are 3,200 ppm for zinc and 3,750 ppm for manganese. We rarely see deficiencies of

these minerals in the state, so over feeding might be adding to your mineral cost without providing an added benefit. Producers can purchase the UK Beef IRM Mineral from local feed suppliers or use the sheet as a guide for selecting a mineral available locally. It is not uncommon for producers to show me a couple of mineral tags and ask me which they should be feeding. Much to their surprise, I don't always recommend the more expensive mineral. Sometimes the better mineral is cheaper, but this isn't always the case. It is important to evaluate mineral choices and select the mineral that meets the needs of your herd, without providing excess quantities of minerals or other ingredients that may not be beneficial. For help evaluating mineral choices, please reach out to your local Cooperative Extension Service.

## U.K. BEEF WEBINAR SERIES STARTS IN DECEMBER

The UK Beef Webinar Series will start back up in December. These sessions are open to any beef producers, but a one-time registration is required. If you have received notices in the past then you are registered and should get the notification, if not, you can register by sending an email with your name and county to [dbullock@uky.edu](mailto:dbullock@uky.edu) with the topic heading of UK Beef Webinar Registration.

The dates and topics are:

- December 12, 2023 – Shooting the Bull – UK Beef Specialists will provide information on a hot topic in the beef industry and answer any questions posed by the attendees.
- January 9, 2024 – Prebreeding Vaccination Considerations – Dr. George Perry, Texas A&M University
- February 13 – What's the Cost of a Cheap Mineral – Dr. Katie VanValin, University of Kentucky

All webinars start at 7:00 CST. All registered members will receive a Zoom invitation the morning of the presentation with the link and password. For more information contact Darrh Bullock at [dbullock@uky.edu](mailto:dbullock@uky.edu)

## U.K. CORN & SOYBEAN VARIETY YIELD RESULTS

The 2023 University of Kentucky Corn & Soybean Variety Yield results are now available online, which includes results for corn variety results at an Ohio Co.

site, in cooperation with Sanderfur Farms. Booklets with results should be available in December.

**Corn:** <https://varietytesting.ca.uky.edu/corn>

**Soybean:** <https://varietytesting.ca.uky.edu/soybean>

The corn variety site also has corn silage yield results from three locations in Kentucky, which would be useful for livestock producers.

When evaluating variety yield results, it is good to look at the location closest to your farm but, pay



particular attention to the overall summary. By selecting a variety which does well over different locations, soil types, and

environment, you will have a variety which should perform well on your farm, no matter the weather conditions.

## U.K. FALL CROP PROTECTION WEBINAR SERIES



The last session of the "2023 Crop Protection Webinar Series" will be this Thursday, Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>, on the video conferencing app Zoom. The weekly webinars will occur at 9:00 a.m. -10:00 a.m. CT on Thursdays and are hosted through the Southern Integrated Pest Management Center.

Preregistration is required to attend each webinar. The webinar schedule and preregistration links are as follows:

- Nov. 30 – U.K. Fall Crop Protection Webinar: Insects in Field Crops During 2 Years of Drought and Heat; Registration: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_AqvCh08T](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AqvCh08T)

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This program is an excellent opportunity for commercial applicators to get CEU's as program organizers have applied for continuing education credits for pesticide applicators and Certified Crop Advisers.



- Nov. 30 – U.K. Fall Crop Protection Webinar: Insects in Field Crops During 2 Years of Drought and Heat; Over Zoom at 9:00 a.m. till 10:00 a.m.; Registration: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_AqvCh08TQGCAJXvKxqdwFA](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AqvCh08TQGCAJXvKxqdwFA)
- Nov. 29 – Solar Solutions for Poultry Farmers Webinar; 6:00 p.m. CT
- Nov. 29 - Dec.2 – Ky Farm Bureau Convention; Galt House, Louisville
- Dec. 7 – Green River CPH Sale; Kentuckiana Livestock Market; 6:00 p.m.
- Dec. 12 – U.K. Beef Webinar: Shooting the Bull with Beef Specialist; offered over Zoom; 7:00 p.m.; Register by sending an email with your name and county to [dbullock@uky.edu](mailto:dbullock@uky.edu) with the topic heading of UK Beef Webinar Registration.
- Dec. 14 – Managing Cattle in Confinement Conference; Hardin Co. Extension Office; 1:30 p.m. till 7:30 p.m. CT

More information about these programs is available by contacting the Ohio Co. Extension Office at (270)298-7441.