



## Do I Still Need A Supplement If I Feed Alfalfa To My Cattle?

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Good quality alfalfa hay is an excellent source of protein and calcium. However, like other commodity supplements, alfalfa does not provide balanced levels of all necessary nutrients needed by beef cattle. Alfalfa is likely to be deficient in phosphorus, trace minerals and certain vitamins. Each of these nutrients is important for growth, immunity, and reproductive efficiency in a beef herd. A well fortified mineral/vitamin supplement will compliment alfalfa without over feeding protein.

Mineral levels in forages generally reflect the soils on which they were grown. Alfalfa is no exception. Much alfalfa is lacking in phosphorus, copper and zinc as these minerals are often deficient in soils. Nutrient levels in alfalfa also depend upon growing and storage conditions. Vitamins A and E are often adequate in fresh alfalfa, but harvesting conditions and length of storage can negatively affect vitamin activity. As a rule, higher quality alfalfa forages are usually utilized by high producing lactating dairy herds, while the lower quality alfalfa is available for beef herds.

Producers may not immediately observe the impact of poor mineral and vitamin nutrition. However, over time, they may see increased incidence and severity of disease, even after vaccination; increased length of breeding and calving seasons; and reduced growth performance in calves. Eventually, overall profitability of the herd will suffer, draining money from the producer's bottom line, without their knowledge as to the reasons why.

This can all be avoided for less than 10 cents a day by feeding the appropriate CopperHead<sup>®</sup> mineral supplement, like 6% CopperHead<sup>®</sup> or CopperHead<sup>®</sup> Hi Mag. All products in the CopperHead<sup>®</sup> line contain organic trace minerals for more efficient mineral utilization within the body. Additionally all CopperHead<sup>®</sup> products contain RainBloc<sup>®</sup> for improved resistance to moisture. A variety of feed additives are also available in the CopperHead<sup>®</sup> line. Check with your local Sweetlix<sup>®</sup> dealer or go to [www.sweetlix.com](http://www.sweetlix.com) to view available options.

Alfalfa can be a great source of supplemental protein for a cow herd, but it should be remembered that alfalfa is not nutritionally complete in itself. In order for your cow herd to perform at maximum efficiency it is necessary to supplement cattle with the nutrients lacking in alfalfa. The CopperHead<sup>®</sup> line of mineral/vitamin supplements delivers balanced levels of essential minerals and vitamins, including copper, zinc, phosphorus and vitamin A that compliment supplemental feeding of alfalfa well.