

Optaflexx® - Drive for Five

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START SOONER, FINISH STRONGER WITH OPTAFLEXX®

For over 13 years, cattle feeders have found a competitive advantage by feeding Optaflexx (ractopamine hydrochloride) for the last four weeks of finishing. Optaflexx provides an average net return of \$25 per head for steers sold on a carcass weight basis.¹ However, new data shows that when they drive for a fifth week of feeding, they can experience even more economic benefits.

START SOONER

Benchmark® data from January 2005 to September 2018 represents the Optaflexx feeding history of 9.7 million steers in over 75,000 pens and 7.8 million heifers in over 50,000 pens. Based on current pricing and marketing conditions, data shows that feeding Optaflexx for five weeks (33 to 36 days) adds incremental value.¹

Track Advantage: Optaflexx

- Average of \$15,000 annually on 15,000 steers fed 300 mg/hd/d
- Average of \$9,450 annually on 15,000 heifers fed 250 mg/hd/d

The same Benchmark data showed that removing two days of Optaflexx can result in a loss of \$0.74/head for steers fed 300 mg/hd/d. For 15,000 steers closed, the \$0.74 per head equates to \$11,000.

PREPARE FOR THE FINISH LINE

So, what needs to be considered when adding an additional week of Optaflexx to your four-week feeding protocol?

“Feedyard managers should be thinking about managing composition of gain,” says Ty Lawrence, Professor of Animal Science, West Texas A&M University. “In general, muscle growth increases at a decreasing rate – fat growth increases at an increasing rate and bone growth is near linear and proportional to live body weight.”

Factors that influence composition of gain include sex, fleshiness, health background, weight, age, frame, muscle, previous diet, etc., and all need to be taken into consideration. While these factors, as well as marketing strategy, should be considered when targeting an optimal endpoint, Dr. Lawrence advises that feeding Optaflexx for 35 days — or five weeks — fits the bulk of the population.

One of the top considerations that is consistent among the multitude of permutations of incoming cattle is the implant strategy to maximize performance and achieve the target endpoint.

According to Lee-Anne Walter, Ph.D., Elanco technical consultant and an expert in cattle growth physiology, a good time to assess how the cattle are doing against their initial projections is around nine to 10 weeks from the target out-date.

“For feedyards that use a re-implant program, this is a good time to determine how they’re progressing against expectations, so they make adjustments as needed.

“To get the most accurate reading when processing cattle during reimplanting, weights should be taken first thing in the morning before first feed,” she advises. “Compare those weights to where they are projected to be based on initial average daily gain estimates, look at body composition and then reevaluate if a new projected out-date is required.”

As the target endpoint draws closer, six to seven weeks out, visually appraise the cattle to confirm they appear to be tracking against updated projections. Lawrence recommends looking for filling of the brisket, pones, flank, and shoulder pocket with fat, which is associated with the disappearance of individual muscle separation when animals walk.

“By confirming optimal dose and duration at this point, rather than when you’re creating your show list around three to four weeks out, you can take action at a time when it’s possible to add incremental value with the fifth week of Optaflexx,” noted Walter.

FINISH STRONGER: GRAB THE CHECKERED FLAG

“Cattle feeders should begin with the end in mind,” says Lawrence. “They should be mindful of the marketing window and how market conditions — Choice/Select spread, basis, etc., — will prevail when cattle are ready for market.”

Elanco is dedicated to working with our customers and their nutritionists to customize a program that will help maximize their net returns and make sure they finish ahead of the competition.

“We have endpoint management resources such as the Optaflexx Optimizer, Optaflexx Market Alert Resource and Benchmark available to help our customers see how feeding Optaflexx for five weeks can deliver a better ROI,” says Walter.

Talk to your Elanco sales representative about driving for five with Optaflexx by starting sooner and finishing stronger to boost your bottom line.

References

The label contains complete use information, including cautions and warnings. Always read, understand and follow the label and use directions.
Caution: Not for animals intended for breeding.

Optaflexx: Complete feed For increased rate of weight gain and improved feed efficiency in cattle fed in confinement for slaughter: Feed 8.2 to 24.6 g/ton of ractopamine hydrochloride (90%DM basis) continuously in a complete feed to provide 70 to 430 mg/hd/d for the last 28 to 42 days on feed.

For increased rate of weight gain, improved feed efficiency and increased carcass leanness in cattle fed in confinement for slaughter: Feed 9.8 to 24.6 g/ton of ractopamine hydrochloride (90% DM basis) continuously in a complete feed to provide 90 to 430 mg/hd/d for the last 28 to 42 days on feed.

Optaflexx: Top dress For increased rate of weight gain and improved feed efficiency in cattle fed in confinement for slaughter: Feed 70 to 400 mg/hd/d of ractopamine hydrochloride (90% DM basis) continuously in a minimum of 1.0 lb/hd/d top dress Type C medicated feed (maximum 800 g/ton ractopamine hydrochloride) during the last 28 to 42 days on feed.

¹Elanco Animal Health. Data on file. (Analysis of Elanco’s Benchmark database from January 2005 to September 2018).
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