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Citrus Molasses

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The Range Cattle Research and Education Center received numerous calls this past winter concerning the use of citrus molasses in liquid supplements. Several studies have been conducted by University of Florida researchers which made direct comparisons between citrus and cane molasses.

Dr. Herb Chapman fed citrus and cane molasses as energy supplements for yearling steers grazing St. Augustinegrass pasture grown on organic soil. Under these conditions, St. Augustinegrass contains sufficient protein to meet the needs of the growing steers. Steers ate 7.7 pounds per day of citrus molasses and gained 1.1 pounds per day. Steers ate 6.8 pounds of cane molasses and gained 1.1 pounds per day.

Mr. Sloan Baker, at Quincy, and Dr. Gordon Kirk, at Ona, compared citrus molasses to cane molasses in finishing diets fed to yearling steers. At Quincy, steers were fed 40 percent molasses product in a ground ear corn finishing diet, and at Ona, steers were fed 29 percent molasses product in a citrus pulp finishing diet. Both studies showed that citrus molasses and cane molasses were of equal value when included in finishing diets that produced daily gains of 2.3 pounds per day.

A situation with much of the citrus molasses currently being produced is a relatively high moisture (water) content. Standard values for citrus molasses should be 71° brix, 65 percent dry matter (35 percent moisture) and 45 percent total sugars. Standard cane molasses contains 79.5° brix, 70 percent dry matter (30 percent moisture) and 46 percent total sugars.

Citrus molasses is an acceptable ingredient for formulating liquid feed to be fed to Florida cattle. Citrus molasses should be acceptable for making slurry mixes, but citrus molasses containing high levels of moisture may be too thin to hold dry ingredients in

suspension. Cattlemen making molasses slurry mixes with citrus molasses should monitor the possibility of ingredient separation. Mixing thin citrus molasses with heavy millrun cane molasses to make a thicker liquid is a potential solution. Cattlemen purchasing citrus molasses should obtain an analysis sheet which lists brix, total sugars, and total solids. From these values, the dollar value of citrus molasses can be established in relation to other molasses sources.