



The MicroFeeder concept for the supplementation of grazing livestock is for farmers who want optimal results at the lowest costs

By

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Typically, the physiologically optimal livestock production systems are the most expensive, but it is vice versa in this case. Offering granulated minerals in a feeder has proven to be far the most cost efficient supplementation way. Studies have shown that the intake of the most important minerals are at least 2.2 times higher when cattle are offered granulated minerals, compared to molassed minerals in buckets – the farmers' spending on mineral supplements were at the same level, so they should feel cheated for all the money they spent on molasses and plastic buckets.

A mineral feeder makes the difference

The MicroFeeder Mineral Rocker is developed in order to supplement grazing livestock in the cheapest way. The feeder prevents any spill of minerals due to its self-raising effect and other design details, and the top provides an efficient protection of the minerals against contamination with manure, urine and rainwater.

The feeder allow use of granulated minerals, which typically costs only half the price per kg compared to molassed minerals, and the minerals do not have to be of the expensive "watertight" version, which, apart from the price, have the disadvantage that the animals cannot taste the minerals through the coating layer, and therefore that they also cannot regulate the intake of the minerals themselves.



Picture 1: The Mineral Rocker is 88 cm high and 78 cm in diameter and it has a weight of app. 39 kilo. The weighted bottom ensures a self raising effect.



Practical trials have verified that supplementation with granulated minerals – apart from the direct economic advantages – gives considerable improvements in daily gain and reproduction traits:

- A trial in the Danish “Vildmosen” concluded that the daily gain was 30% higher for dairy heifers that had granulated minerals from a mineral feeder, compared to a control group without minerals.
- A Swedish trial compares use of granulated minerals with lick stones, and concluded that the daily gain was 13% better and the number of inseminations per pregnancy in the following winter 0.5 smaller for heifers that had been offered granulated minerals.

Free access minerals in granulated form is a new, innovative mineral type

Many farmers associate granulated minerals to something they know from the 80’ies, which clutters up in a hard cake by the slightest moisture, and which the livestock wouldn’t eat unless used as top dressing, or mixed with other feed.

The modern type of granulated minerals that are used for free access feeding in a mineral feeder, are designed, on basis of up-to date science and know-how, so that:

- The intake can be predicted very precise, using the animals’ physiological ability to regulate the intake according their needs, especially of salt.
- Salt becomes therefore an important ingredient in the mineral supplements, and other minerals are balanced in relation to the salt, according to animal type, natural content of minerals in the grass in the region in question, etc.
- Small amounts of feed materials are incorporated to ensure the mineral supplements always are fresh and appetising.
- Only good and “honest” raw materials of mineral sources are used, here under organic and chelated forms.



Picture 2: The feeder is easy to fill and to move from field to field.



The choice of supplementation method is easy for the clever farmer

A farmer would typically demand from his mineral supplement dealer, that the supplements he buys are good value for money, offer optimal productivity as well as health and reproduction, and are easy to work with.

Here the MicroFeeder concept is a good answer from the salesperson to the farmer. Try to look at the following example:

- A farmer has 25 cattle, which are grazing for 8 months and require to be supplemented with 11 grams of magnesium and phosphorus per day (plus some other minerals that are in the supplements in the right proportion to Mg and P). Both granulated minerals and molassed minerals hold typically 110 gram Mg + P per kg. The total need for supplementation is therefore 25 animals x 240 days x 0.011 kg per day / 0.11 kg = 600 kg mineral supplement.
- Molassed minerals in buckets hold typically 20 kg per bucket and costs € 30 per bucket. Granulated minerals are typically sold in 25 kg bags, costing € 18 per bag.
- A feeder costs typically € 175 and has a durability of at least 5 years – the cost per year is therefore € 35.
- Totally the mineral bucket solution costs therefore 30 buckets x € 30 per bucket = € 900.
- The MicroFeeder concept costs € 432 for the supplements and € 35 for the feeder, in total € 467.

The following figure illustrates, that although the MicroFeeder concept requires an initial investment of around € 175 in a feeder, the break-even point in comparison to molassed minerals is already seen in less than 100 days:

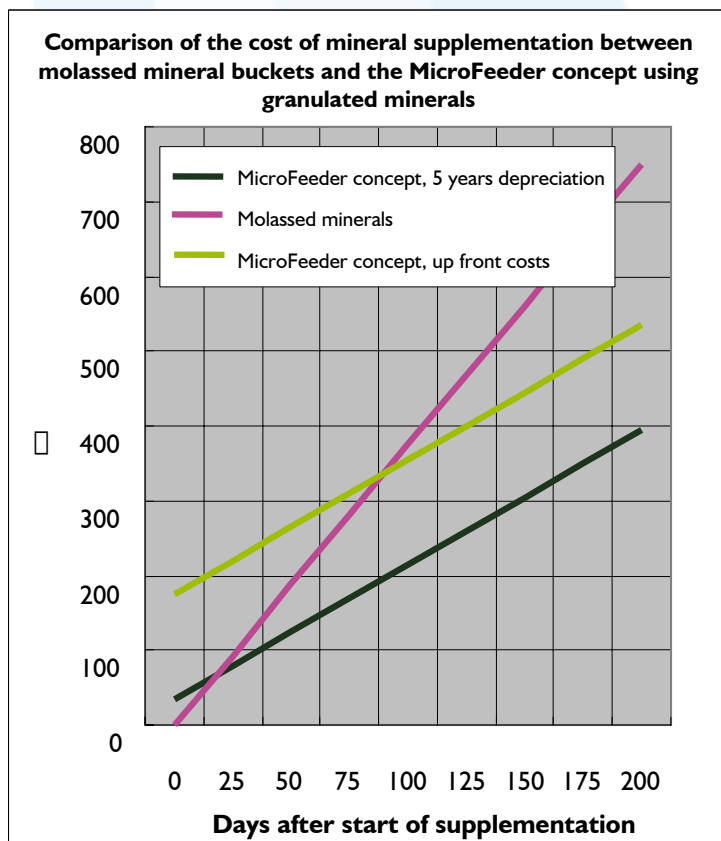


Figure 1: The investment in a mineral feeder is returned in less than 3 months, and in around 25 days if depreciated over 5 years; the positive effects of the MicroFeeder concept on production, reproduction and health starts immediately.



From an immediate point of view the farmer can save $€ 900 - 467 = € 433$ by choosing the MicroFeeder concept. In practice, though, the difference is much larger, because it is very seldom farmers buys enough buckets, and in the example above, the farmers would typically only buy 20-25 buckets for the flock, and not 60 as he should.



Picture 3: Lambs eat more grass and less milk around 25 kgs weight and gets thereby a need for mineral supplementation. The MicroFeeder model for sheep has a special design, with a lower and narrower eating opening, and inside there is a feeding tray so that they easily can reach the minerals from 25 kgs age.



Picture 4: Horses (here Icelandic and Shire horses) eats minerals from the feeder.

All are winners

The MiroFeeder concept makes all winners. The livestock perform optimally because they receive the supplements they require. The farmer saves at least half of the expenses on mineral supplementation and gets a better production economy. The mineral producer/dealer gets satisfied farmer customers.

Both large and small beef, dairy, sheep and horse farms uses the MicroFeeder concept – probably the most typically for the farmer clients that switch to the MicroFeeder concept is that they are innovative, prosperous, young and successful.

Read more at <http://www.microfeeder.com>.