Certified Grassfed by AGW – Information on Supplements

A core requirement for grassfed animals, and a key expectation from consumers of grassfed meat, is that animals are only fed a grass and forage diet and are not fed grain or grain by-products. In addition, animals that are fed 100% grass and forage diets have been shown to have nutritional benefits in their meat and milk - for example higher levels of omega-3s, vitamins and conjugated linoleic acid. The use of supplements may affect that.

Some feedstuffs are clearly suitable (grass, hay etc.) and others are clearly unsuitable (corn, distillers grains) for grassfed animals. There are other feed ingredients or supplements where further analysis is needed before a decision can be made as to whether they are suitable as part of a grassfed diet, and that analysis might include any effect such feedstuffs could have on the nutritional value of the animals' meat and milk.

When assessing whether feedstuffs are suitable for Certified Grassfed animals we therefore look at their nutritional analysis in terms of fiber, protein, fat and carbohydrate content, and compare this with the analysis of forages and grains to see whether they fall into the suitable or unsuitable category. For example, it stands to reason that supplements for grassfed animals should have a similar nutritional analysis to grass and forage and therefore have a fairly high fiber content.

<u>Supplement tubs/blocks</u>

Any tub or block that is 20% protein or higher on its guaranteed analysis tag is considered to be a protein tub and **must not** be used for Certified Grassfed animals. If it is less than 20% protein it must still meet the points below.

<u>Urea</u>

Urea is not a permitted ingredient for Certified Grassfed feeds or supplements.
Anything that contains urea cannot be fed to Certified Grassfed animals.

<u>Molasses Products for Certified Grass-Fed Animals</u>

The Certified Grassfed standards permit the use of mineral and vitamin supplements. These often use molasses as a carrier. Molasses may also be used as a binder or ingredient in pellets or cubes (if these are made from acceptable ingredients), but cannot be used as a feed in its own right. In other words pouring liquid molasses over forage would not be acceptable as a feed for Certified Grassfed animals.

A supplement should be precisely that – an addition to the main feed, not a feed in itself, used to maintain nutrient balance in the diet.

Supplements generally show an expected daily intake. Certified Grassfed animals can be supplemented with supplement tubs or blocks with a targeted daily intake of up to 3 lb. per animal per day for cattle and bison and 5 oz. per day for sheep and goats.

If the expected daily intake is over 3 lb. per animal per day for cattle and bison or 5 oz. per day for sheep and goats it isn't a supplement as defined by AGW and therefore isn't suitable for Certified Grassfed animals.

Other ingredients

A multi-ingredient supplement must have two of the first three ingredients on the product label listed as a mineral or source of a mineral.

Neither of the first two ingredients on the product label can include sources of grain, protein (e.g. soya meal) or processed grain by-products. Labels that simply list "plant protein" or "plant protein products" as one of the first two ingredients are similarly unacceptable as there is no way to know what this plant protein is.

Cows with calves at side (ewes with lambs at side etc.)

Mothers with offspring at side must not be fed products that are prohibited under Certified Grassfed by AGW standards.

Bait feed, feed to handle or gather animals

Certified Grassfed by AGW farmers must ensure that the ingredients of any cubes or pellet feeds (that might, for example, be used as bait feed or when handling or gathering stock) are listed on the acceptable forage/roughage supplements list below.

Acceptable forage/roughage supplements

If the farmer is using any feeds that are not listed below, but which they believe meet the definition of forage/roughage, they must provide information on the analysis of the feed for AGW consideration.

Alfalfa pellets or cubes
Almond hulls or almond hull pellets or cubes
Beet pulp
Corn cobs
Cottonseed hulls or cottonseed hull pellets or cubes
Cotton gin trash
Forage cubes
Grass cubes or pellets
Oat hulls or oat hull pellets or cubes
Peanut hulls or peanut hull pellets or cubes
Rice hulls or rice hull pellets or cubes
Soybean hulls or soybean hull pellets or cubes

Unacceptable forage/roughage supplements

Feeds that have been reviewed and found to be **unacceptable** for use on Certified Grassfed farms include:

- Citrus pulp
- Cottonseed meal
- Fresh fruit* (e.g. apples)

None of these can be fed to Certified Grassfed animals. This list is not exhaustive – it only includes feeds that have been put forward for consideration to the Technical Team. If there is any doubt as to whether a feed or supplement is suitable for Certified Grassfed animals it should be referred to AGW **BEFORE** it is fed to livestock.

* Incidental consumption of fruit from wild trees may be acceptable - please contact AGW for further information.

Sprouted grains

Sprouted grains – e.g. barley sprouts – are only permitted as feed for Certified Grassfed by AGW animals under derogation in times of necessity for welfare (e.g. in drought). The derogation would only allow sprouts to make up a maximum of 25% of daily dry matter intake.

These sprouts are often grown hydroponically, and the entire “mat” of sprouts and their roots is generally offered to livestock. As per the standard on animal grazing sprouted grain in the field, we would expect these sprouts to be around 8 inches long when offered as feed and we also want over 95% germination.

The reason sprouts are restricted under Certified Grassfed is because although the grains have been sprouted, the farmer is still using grain to feed their animals. Part of the principle of Grassfed Certification is that ruminant animals are not fed products that could be used to feed humans such as grain.