

MEDIA RELEASE

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New trace mineral trial results indicate further gains using injectable supplement.

WA cattle producer Ryan Willing has just revealed the latest findings from the *Multimin Performance Ready Challenge*, a 12-month trial currently being run by animal health company Virbac Australia.

As part of the challenge, seven farmers are testing the livestock benefits of Multimin Trace Mineral Injection, supported by expert advice from a team of veterinary mentors. With the results shared on social media and digital channels, the trial is designed to show Australian beef, sheep and dairy producers how they can use the trace mineral injection to improve livestock performance. Trace mineral may also be referred to as trace element or micro mineral.

Together with his wife Elisha, Ryan runs 900 Angus breeders east of Esperance, WA. As he explains, the region's sand plains are nutrient-deficient, which affects the fertility, weight gain and overall health of their self-replacing-herd: "Our sandy soil leaches just about every nutrient available, so trace elements are the key to unlocking maximum production from our crops. Yet even after topping up nutrient levels to our pastures, I've already seen a massive additional benefit from using Multimin."

Ryan's goal is to use Multimin to increase the fertility, conception rate and productivity of his animals. Guided by advice from mentor Dr Enoch Bergman, his herd has been split into two groups, in order to compare improvements in conception rates and timings. Group 1 has been treated with HyB12 + Cydectin Long Acting Injection, and group 2 with Multimin + HyB12 + Cydectin Long Acting Injection. Cows were treated in early June, four weeks prior to joining. They will then be pregnancy-tested five weeks after joining, in order to measure both conception rates and time of conception – both important markers of fertility and herd profitability.

So far, early results indicate strong results for those cows treated with Multimin. Ryan describes how “even though our herd has relied heavily on supplementary feeding this past winter, the Multimin challenge trial cows are looking particularly good. Before I started using Multimin, my yearlings used to look brown and shaggy by the end of winter – but they’re keeping their shiny black coats, which is the first sign of good health. I hope that the next round of results will confirm my feeling that this injection is going to have a really positive impact on both their fertility levels and calving patterns.”

Ryan has had previous positive experiences with Multimin. In 2017, treatment of Multimin four weeks from joining lifted the average conception rate in Ryan’s cows from 85% to 92% with a 9-week joining period. Ryan also saw weight gains in his steers by using a combination of Multimin and Cydectin Long Acting Injection as previous results have shown 1 kg/day average from weaning to spring sale.

Ryan’s mentor Dr Enoch Bergman is a veterinarian at Swans Veterinary Services, with a particular interest in this field of study, having already sampled thousands of local animals in an effort to benchmark trace mineral status for targeted supplementation. He explains the importance of improving calving patterns in a self-replacing herd like Ryan’s. “Firstly, it is critical that calving aligns with optimal seasonal pasture availability, in order to maximize calf weaning weights, breeder’s lifetime fertility and the producer’s ability to capitalize on market opportunities. Our intervention doesn’t stop with choosing the best mating date, we must actively ensure that each breeding animal is given the best chance to fall pregnant each time she cycles. Cows which fall pregnant early in the mating program go on to calve earlier, and are therefore better prepared for their next mating, not only increasing their longevity within the production system, but also the weaned weight of their calves. Adequate micromineral levels are a key prerequisite to the optimisation of both the body condition score and plane of nutrition of each breeder, paramount to achieving the goal of a short fast calving season.

Enoch actively advocates joining heifers for shorter periods and ahead of each producer’s older management groups. “If naturally mating, I advocate joining heifers for three weeks shorter as well as three weeks earlier than their cow mobs. This will

buy the heifer more time after she calves to prepare herself for her second mating season.” Dr Bergman describes, earlier cycling and improved conception rates can be achieved by optimising health and growth through better nutrition. “For most of my clients, integrating a rapid trace mineral top up of zinc, manganese, selenium, cobalt and copper at weaning and again prior to mating will improve reproductive outcomes, as well as contributing to growth, a functioning immune system, and greater disease resilience, all leading to improved future fertility prospects.” And while variable/reduced feed intake, feed antagonists and low trace mineral absorption in the gut can all make oral supplements less effective, Multimin is able to effectively bypass these challenges, being an injectable rather than oral trace mineral.

Dr Bergman also describes how the trace minerals found in Multimin can benefit both mother and unborn calf. “Not only do appropriate levels of microminerals improve conception and the retention of pregnancies, the unborn calf’s micromineral reserves are set up in utero, contributed from its mother’s reserves. Setting the mother up properly helps to set up the next generation.”

Dr Bergman is encouraged by the early results of the *Multimin Performance Ready Challenge*. “It was really exciting to see obvious pigment changes in Ryan’s cattle when comparing the treated with the non-treated animals within the same management group. This really highlights the value of controlled studies. I am looking forward to getting in behind Ryan and Elisha’s cows at preg testing, to see if we can measure some fertility differences as well.”

“It’s fascinating to be able to witness first-hand some of the benefits that Multimin is delivering,” he concludes. “I’m enjoying working with Ryan to further document the value that Multimin can deliver to our nation’s beef producers.”

To find out more about how Multimin can improve your livestock performance, contact your local Virbac representative on 1800 242 100.

Farmers can also follow the trials at www.multiminchallenge.com



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Media Enquiries:

Kate Munsie - C7EVEN COMMUNICATIONS

(02) 6766 4513

kate.munsie@c7even.com.au

Photo captions:

1. Beef producers Ryan and Elisha Willing with mentor Enoch Bergman
2. Multimin treated versus non-treated Angus cows