

Dave Nichols – Nichols Farms

Bridgewater, Iowa

April 2017

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GAIN

Endo**Fighter**

AminoGain®, AMPT™ Minerals with Endo-Fighter®



At Nichols Farms we've been collecting weaning weights on our cow herd since 1956 and have used them for selection for growth, maternal milk and \$ weaning EPDs. But, they have had about as much value in making management decisions regarding culling cows, pasture stocking rates, herd health, parasite control and mineral use.

Our first whole herd (bulls, steers and heifers) weaning weights (adjusted to 205 days of age) averaged 426 lb. The pairs were grazing four acres of unfertilized bluegrass pasture, and the calves were on a home mixed creep ration of crimped oats, cracked corn and 32% soybean meal based protein pellet on a 1050–1100 lb purebred Angus cow. The next year, due to brutal culling of our cow herd, the average weaning weight was raised to 470 lb.

We made steady progress in increasing weaning weights because of pasture management, better nutrition and genetic inputs. By the 1990s our very top-end heifer calves weighted 600 lb and the bull calves weighted 700 lb.

We rented 720 acres of Adams County pasture several years ago, which had been abused with no fertilizer and no weed or brush control besides being severely overgrazed. The only forages that managed to survive were fescue, weeds and brush. We fertilized it with liquid nitrogen and Grazon[®], which eliminated the weeds/brush after three years. Nothing was left but fescue and lots of it.

Our other pastures were brome/orchardgrass with a smattering of fescue that must have come from our neighbors CRP. On the Adams County pasture we discovered the "curse" of fescue fungus. The calves weaned off their mothers 40 lb lighter than their contemporaries in Adair County. And even worse, our open cow numbers doubled from 5% to 10%. Both the cows' mineral and the calves' creep feed contained CTC, which was the conventional wisdom for fescue pastures.

One other "downside" was we had to split our Angus calves into two separate contemporary groups because it was obvious they couldn't be compared, because this would have made our weaning and yearling weight ratios and EPDs inaccurate.

Then came Endo-Fighter[®]. We were among a handful of producers for which ADM Endo-Fighter was available. The results were astounding. The calves' weaning weights averaged the same as our other cows on brome/orchardgrass pastures and reflected their dam's lifetime average. And, the pregnancy rate was close to the Adair County average for cows on non-fescue grass pasture.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. This year (2017) all of the Nichols bull calves averaged 707 lb. We had 46 head weigh over 800 lb and four head that weighted over 900 lb. It wasn't all Endo-Fighter — all of our calves were creep fed a specific ration designed by ADM that contained AminoGain[®]. AminoGain was the supplement for our bulls, replacement and sale heifers. In our herd, it has proven to increase gain and feed efficiency and the gain was in muscle, not price discounting fat. Our cattle production records are open to everyone, especially to the many tours we host each year.

We've used ADM products in our operations since 2000. We use them because they contribute to many factors, but most importantly . . . how they affect our bottom line. Plus ADM provides us excellent service and sound advice on how to use their products.

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Nichols Farms
Superior Beef Genetics



Ross Havens – Nichols Farms

Bridgewater, Iowa

March 2017

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Nichols Farms weaning weights continue to increase. Although we graze fescue pastures, the Endo-Fighter® Mineral and AminoGain® in the creep feed has given the calves a boost in performance (increase of 65 lb in 2016) despite negative attributes of fescue. The combination of good health and nutrition program has benefited our hardy, healthy calves so our pull rate post-weaning is minimal.

In the bull barn, our bulls on a 90-day test after weaning have been converting at 4.55 lb of feed per lb of gain on a wet, 21% roughage ration. The combination of genetics, nutrition, health and environment have helped us to surpass the US national average feed conversion which is 6.1 lb of feed per lb of gain.

Feeding AminoGain to the bulls in the bull barn has given us excellent results. Our IMF% has increased by 1% and increased our REA one-inch in our bulls when ultra sounded at a year of age.



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