



# The Miracle Feed

By Carson Horn, Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board

**B**efore we begin, let’s just get this out of the way up front. We’re completely aware of the irony of this whole proposition. The last time someone with a cow was approached with an offer of magic beans, it didn’t go so well. In fact, it was a giant flop, to say the least. But, this is no fairytale. Soybeans really are magical when it comes to livestock nutrition. Think about it. What other commodity packs so much high-quality protein, amino acids and energy into one little bean? The answer is—none.

While soybeans are a common ingredient found in producers’ feed rations for poultry, swine and fish, beef producers haven’t been as quick to adopt them, opting for alternative feedstuffs instead. However, growing stocks in recent years have led to greater availability and access to soybeans. Shrewd beef producers who understand the value soybeans can add – not only to their cattle’s nutrition, but to their own bottom lines as well – have taken note of this development in the market.

Jim Hollenback of Jay, Oklahoma, is one of those business-savvy cattlemen. Hollenback, a livestock nutritionist by trade, also owns and operates Hollenback Cattle Company, which specializes in starting lightweight, high-risk stocker cattle and growing them into heavyweight feeders.

“A low-stress environment and the right nutrition is key to getting your calves off to the right start. They’ve got so many stressors that affect them. If we can remove the nutritional stress, that’s one step in the right direction,” Hollenback said. “I think soybeans have a lot to offer if used in the right diet for the right class of cattle.”

In order to eliminate that nutritional stress in cattle, Hollenback advises mixing a feed ration that accounts for your

animals’ daily requirements of protein, vitamins, minerals, energy and fiber. Fortunately for Hollenback, soybeans help him check multiple boxes off that list. Soybeans make up the complete nutritional package for beef producers with a nutrient profile that is protein-packed, high in energy and loaded with beneficial amino acids. Starting cattle on the right diet early, Hollenback advises, is the best thing a producer can do to ensure the long-term health and productivity of their livestock.

“Protein is critical in developing cattle,” Hollenback remarked. “That’s why we use a ton of soybean byproduct.”

For Joe Thrash, a member of the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board (ASPB) and producer from Houston, Arkansas, soybeans have always been a favored ingredient in the feed ration he mixes for his cattle. While soymeal is his preferred choice of protein, he is also sensitive to the economics of feeding soy.

“You can’t get any better than soybeans when it comes to protein,” Thrash asserts. “You just have to put pencil to paper and figure out a plan to get a return on your investment. Every operation is different, so you have to determine what works best for you. However, I’m usually willing to spend a few extra dollars if soybeans are available.”

For this reason, Hollenback points out that producers who have not fed soymeal before are in luck. According to him, producers are currently in a prime situation to experiment with feeding soybeans, as commodity prices have relaxed recently.

“Probably one of my favorite ingredients to use in a calf-starting ration is soy hull pellets,” Hollenback said. “But, soybean meal has been competitively priced this summer compared to some of the dried distillers grains (DDGS), so we’ve

been using a lot of soybean meal in our starter rations.”

Regardless of which form you buy them—whole, meal or pellet—domestically produced soybeans remain a trusted and high-quality feed source. Arkansas Cattlemen’s Association Executive Vice President Cody Burkham says beef producers in the state are well-positioned to partner with their soy-growing neighbors to create collaborative relationships that are mutually beneficial.

“Nutrition is certainly one of your biggest factors if you want to produce quality beef,” Burkham said. “You can have the best-quality genetics there are, but if you don’t feed them right, you’re not going to get what you want. We certainly encourage our cattle producers to get out there and take a look at feeding soy on their operations.”

Burkham adds that as interest in food production continues to grow, consumers will appreciate knowing that when they buy beef locally, they’re not only supporting their state beef producers, they’re supporting the Arkansas soybean industry as well. You can support the Arkansas soybean industry by visiting TheMiracleBean.com or by following the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board on social media. Tune in to all of ASPB’s social channels this November during Arkansas Soybean Month, to learn more about Arkansas’s top row crop.

Before you do though, we want to set the record straight on something. The Grimm boys got it all wrong. It wasn’t the giant who had the best one-liner in that story. The way we heard it, Jack’s cow saw the beans and moored, “Feed me soy, yum!” We’re not sure where they got that “Fee-fi-fo-fum” stuff from.

*Photos courtesy of the United Soybean Board.*

## WHY #FEEDSOY?

- Soybean meal provides a complete nutritional package for livestock producers, combining high-quality protein, amino acids, and energy values not found in the same ratios in other feedstuffs
- The US Soy industry is working to genetically enhance soybean varieties to better serve livestock producers and the nutritional needs of their livestock, and improve the overall performance of livestock
- US beef producers currently feed 1.3 million tons of soybean meal a year (approx. 55 million bu.)

### QUALITY IS KEY

Livestock generally performs better on US soybeans compared to foreign sourced beans

# 80%

of a soybean is made up of meal

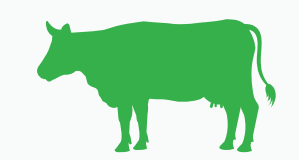
# 97%

of US soymeal goes to animal feed

# 3%

of US meal goes to consumer products

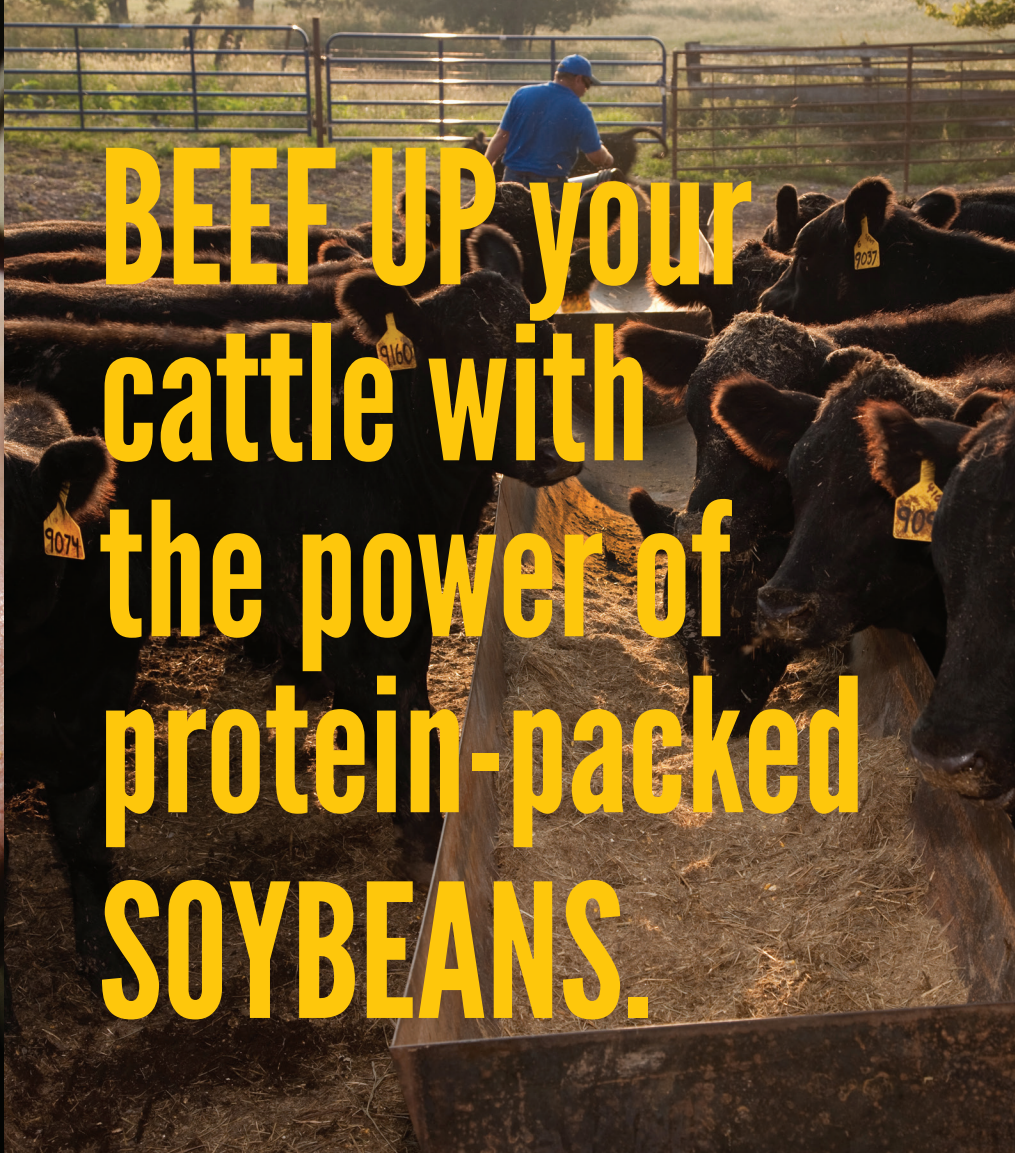
### SOYMEAL FOR BEEF CATTLE NUTRITION



Mature cattle can handle a diet of **6%** whole soybeans, while still maturing cattle should be fed a lighter **4%** or less

- Cattle producers can feed in a variety of ways including as whole soybeans, in pellet form, or as meal
- Soybeans are a natural source of fiber that helps offset cattle’s hay consumption
- Soybean straw after harvest can also be used to stretch stored forage supplies by blending with hay
- US Soybeans are a high-quality, wholesome and domestic protein source
- Locally produced soybeans are a safe and reliable feed source as the risk of foreign animal disease has grown in recent years





# BEEF UP your cattle with the power of protein-packed SOYBEANS.

With its high-quality protein profile, soybean meal is an efficient option for meeting the nutritional needs of livestock. Each year, **US cattle producers feed more than 1.3 million tons of soybean meal.** That's equivalent to almost 55 million bushels. Feeding soybean meal not only helps cattlemen produce high-quality lean beef, it adds to their bottom line.

Learn more about the benefits livestock producers can expect when they supplement their herd's nutrition with soybeans at **TheMiracleBean.com.**



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