

Arsenic and cattle

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.chem/2006-02/msg00198.html>

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 - *Date:* Tue, 14 Feb 2006 20:57:02 -0700
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I had made an unsupported statement about a year and a half ago that cattle required a small amount of arsenic in their diets to survive. I was asked for any sort of literature support and found very little at the time.

<http://www.ead.anl.gov/pub/doc/arsenic.pdf>

"Depending on the amount ingested, arsenic can be beneficial (animal studies suggest that low levels of arsenic in the diet are essential) or adverse (high levels can be toxic)."

<http://horse.purinamills.com/bulletins/poison/lamenessinducing.html>

"The toxic effects of selenium in ruminants varies, depending on the amount and rate of its absorption, the individual animal's susceptibility, the type of selenium present in the plant, and the interaction of selenium with other elements, such as sulfur, arsenic, or copper, in the diet. These minerals, and possibly others, competitively interfere with selenium absorption by ruminants. If this also occurs in horses, adequate amounts of these minerals in their diet may help reduce selenium poisoning for them, although currently this hasn't been demonstrated."

Still no real pointers to peer reviewed literature... but, if you have healthy cattle, you have some arsenic. This is beef, milk, and ground or surface water near where they "eliminate". And arsenic is not limited to cattle...

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