

## Investment In Vigortone Mineral Pays For Itself At Ulrich Ranches

**A**pril 2006 has been the driest month on record for Cuero, Texas. This town in DeWitt County has received a mere 6.4 inches of rainfall so far this year. Chris Ulrich runs a cow/calf operation near Cuero, and despite the drought, his cattle are in better condition this year than they were a couple of years ago when rain was plentiful. Ulrich switched to Vigortone mineral a year ago, and it has made a tremendous difference in the health and size of his cattle.

***“Two years ago we had an exceptional rainfall of 62½ inches, and my calves weaned off at 501. With all of that rain, you would have thought that they would have weaned heavier, but at the time we were using a different mineral than Vigortone,”*** explained Ulrich. ***“Last year we had a rainfall of 12 inches. We started feeding them as much of the Vigortone mineral as they could eat. Our calves weaned off last year at 556 with the same genetics as the year before.”***

Ulrich runs Braford and Beefmaster cattle on a 20,000-acre operation mostly comprised of Coastal Bermuda grass. ***“We picked Vigortone Gulf Coast mineral to feed. We were going to send our grass off to be tested, but with these extremely dry conditions we didn’t want to waste any grass,”*** said Ulrich. ***“About all we have right now is dirt.”***

Before switching to Vigortone, Ulrich could not get his calves to eat mineral. ***“The other mineral I was using had a sticky feel and smelled like they had put fat in it to make the cattle eat it,”*** commented Ulrich. ***“When you put Vigortone out in the feeders, it’s all mineral and vitamins where the others almost look like mixed feed with corn and milo in them.”***

Although his cattle are undernourished because of the drought, when Ulrich puts out Vigortone mineral, the 120-pound calves eat the mineral right along with the cows. ***“Sometimes the calves spend more time***



Chris Ulrich and his wife Leslie observe some of their cattle eating from a Vigortone Dura-Bull mineral feeder.

***at the mineral than the cows do. When you can get a 120-pound calf to eat mineral, his structure and bones develop. You can see from the calf’s frame and butt how filled out he is, and his coat looks great, too,”*** said Ulrich. ***“Starting on mineral early helps optimize your genetics.”***

Ulrich said since the cows supply the milk and the nutrients for the calves, they also need minerals to give them a boost, but it is more important for the calves to eat mineral so they can gain weight. ***“If a calf starts on mineral at 120 pounds and continues until he is 500 pounds, you know he is going to do a lot better. The goal is get the calf on the ground growing, because the calves are what you sell as an end product,”*** said Ulrich.

Last year, out of 220 cows, Ulrich weaned 200 calves and didn’t have to pull a single calf to be doctored. ***“There was nothing to it,”*** said Ulrich. ***“We pulled calves off of cows one day and then kept them back for 60 days. It was so easy.”***

So far this year, 75% of Ulrich’s cows have calved in 50-60 days. ***“We probably have close to 150***

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***calves on the ground already. Instead of being so spread out, our calving interval has shortened by about 20 days,***” said Ulrich.

Before switching to Vigortone minerals, Ulrich had cows that prolapsed, suffered from milk fever, and even had a few cows he had to clean. ***“We haven’t had one single cow prolapsed... no milk fever, no complications, no retained placentas, no nothing. You couldn’t ask for an easier calving season. We haven’t pulled one calf,”*** said Ulrich. ***“I no longer have to use creep feeds; they just feed on the mineral and natural forages. We haven’t had to do anything except watch them grow.”***

Ulrich said that his calves are gaining an extra 50 to 55 pounds each. On 200 calves, that totals over 10,000

pounds. ***“When I sell calves for \$1.50 a pound and I have an extra 10,000 pounds to sell, that is an extra \$15,000 in my pocket and that is pretty nice,”*** commented Ulrich. ***“The mineral also paid for itself because I didn’t lose any calves when I weaned.***

***“Using Vigortone mineral actually brought me more than an extra \$15,000 because I didn’t have to pay to doctor anything. I also gained money by having better cow reproduction,”*** said Ulrich. ***“Vigortone products put money in my pocket; there are no two ways about it.”***

Vigortone Area Sales Manager Louis Ahart services this account. We salute Chris Ulrich on his successful ranching operation.