

## Trace mineral requirements for dairy cows

*A practical guide for dairy nutritionists*

Bill Weiss

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### Required Trace minerals for dairy cows

- ✓ Required in milligram or microgram amounts per day
- ✓ Diet concentrations expressed in mg/kg (or ppm)
- ✓ No known 'stand-alone' function
- ✓ Only known functions are as essential components of:
  - **Enzymes/proteins:** Cu, Fe, Mn, Se, Zn
  - **Hormones:** I (0.5 mg/kg)
  - **Vitamins:** Co (0.2 to 0.5 mg/kg supplemental)
  - **Non-enzyme polypeptide:** Cr (0.5 mg/kg supplemental)

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### Diet formulation for TM (also Mg)



```

graph TD
    A[Meet basic requirements] --> B[Adjust for risks]
    B --> C[Adjust for antagonism]
    C --> D[Consider extra-requirement responses]
    D --> E[Consider source effects]
  
```

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### NASEM Requirement System

$$\text{Diet Req} = \frac{\text{Maint} + \text{Milk} + \text{Growth} + \text{Fetal}}{\text{Absorption Coefficient}}$$

mg/d

For trace nutrients may not be best approach



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**Invited review: Limitations to current mineral requirement systems for cattle and potential improvements**

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### Concerns with NASEM TM Factorial System

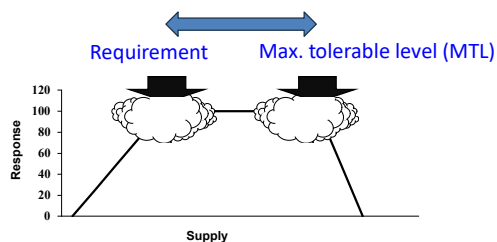
1. **Ignores potential concentration effects**
  - Absorption
  - Potential effects on rumen and intestinal microbiome
2. **Very limited AC data**
3. **Some requirements may be circular**
  - Milk concentration can increase with increased TM
  - Maintenance may increase with increased TM

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### Diet formulation for TM

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## Reducing risk of deficiency increase risk of 'toxicity' and vice versa



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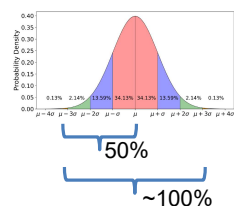
## Sources of 'risk'

1. Variability of diet composition
2. Variability of requirements within a pen
3. Accuracy of requirement equations
4. Accuracy of absorption coefficients
5. Toxicity risk
6. Cost

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## 1 'Standard' safety factor

- Requirements meet needs of 50% of population
- Assuming normal distributions; Mean plus 2 SD = 98% of population
- Assuming basal heat production = variation in mineral reqt: Mean X 1.2 = 98% of population



For many minerals: ~1.2 X NASEM requirement will meet requirements of ~100% of animals in a pen

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## Should forage TM be discounted to mitigate risk?

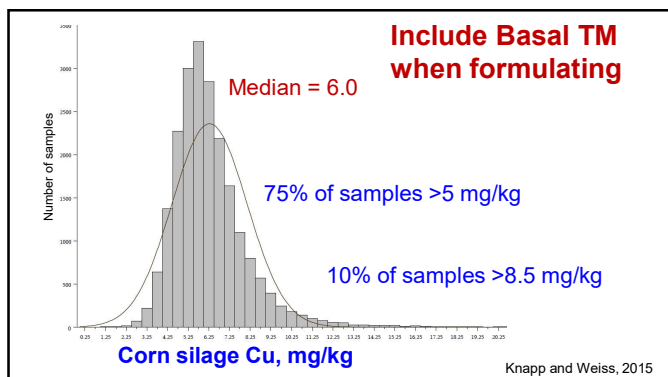
Forages have extremely high SD for TM

### High variation is not a reason to enter 0 for feed minerals

- Much of the variation is sampling
- Use data from multiple samples
- Book values for TM often better than sample value

Entering 0 is usually more wrong than using the mean

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## "But TM in feeds are not available"

WRONG !

### TM availability: Equal to or lower than supplements

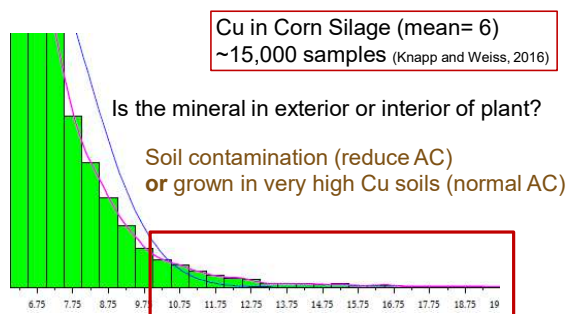
- In humans and lab animals, usually equal or better
- In ruminant feeds, dependent on soil contamination

Metals in soil are mostly oxides



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## May need to adjust TM for soil contamination



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## High TM in Basal Feeds

### With high ash/and Fe

- likely soil contamination
- availability probably low
- use population mean, not sample value

### Without high ash

- could be interior metals
- availability may be similar to inorganic supplements
- use good local mean



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## 2 Accuracy of equations/variables

### 1. Requirements

- Cu: probably ok
- Mn: probably poor
- Zn: good
- Se: no equation but estimate is good

### 2. Absorption

- ?????

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## Most AC are based on relative availability

1. Feed a reference mineral (e.g.,  $\text{CuSO}_4$ ) and test mineral (same amount of supplemental mineral)
2. Measure **response (?)** and report ratio  
Liver Cu when fed source X  
Liver Cu when fed Cu sulfate
3. Multiply reference AC by ratio to get test AC

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## Relative availability

1. Need a response variable
2. Diet specific
3. Need accurate value for reference minerals



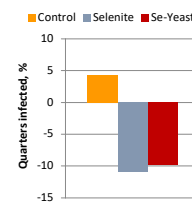
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## What response value should you use?

### Se-Yeast vs selenite

|                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| Absorption:     | ~1.5X |
| Whole blood Se: | 1.3X  |
| WB GSHpx:       | 1.2X  |
| Calf blood Se:  | 1.4X  |
| (Se fed to dam) |       |
| Milk/colostrum  | 1.8X  |

### Se-Y = selenite

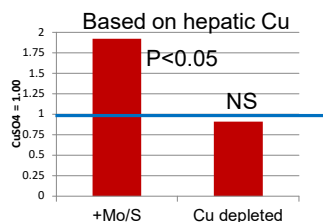


Malbe et al., 1995

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### Relative availability has limitations

Hydroxy Cu chloride vs. Cu sulfate



Spears et al., 2004

Everything is relative!

If CuSul AC = 0.05 is  
HyCu = ~0.10 ?

or  
is CuSulf = 0.025 and  
HyCu = 0.05 ?

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### How do you use relative availability data?

If data show product X is twice as good as sulfate, *should I feed half as much ?*

1. **Cu:** Maybe but usually not
2. **Se:** Don't adjust
3. **Mn:** Probably doesn't matter
4. **Zn:** Don't adjust

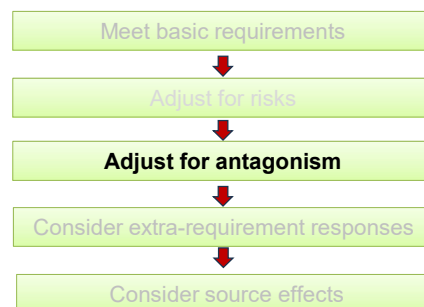
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### 3 Toxicity risk and severity

- Cu: High
- Mn: Very low
- Se: Moderate to high (only a specific form)
- Zn: Low to moderate

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### Diet formulation for TM and vitamins



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### Many metals share an intestinal mechanisms

Excessively high concentrations of can antagonize others

- Fe and Mn
- Cu and Zn
- Fe and Cu
- Etc.

Keep dietary concentrations of TM reasonable!

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### Sulfur (sulfate) antagonizes Cu, Mn, Zn, and Se

1. Mostly (all?) occurs within rumen
2. Mode of action not completely understood but probably via sulfide production (insoluble, binds metals)
3. Diet S (including water) > 0.25% may antagonize
4. Cu is most sensitive to increasing diet S

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## Remember Water

Assumed typical intakes for dry and lactating cows

Water with 300 mg/L **Sulfate-S**

= +0.1% dietary S

Water with 750 mg/L Sulfate-S

= +0.3% dietary S

$$\text{Sulfate-S} = \text{Sulfate} \times 0.33$$

Take water samples occasionally



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## Weiss adjustments for high S: Supplemental minerals from sulfates

- Suggested additional adjustments to **Cu, Mn, Zn** for high S (Includes the 1.2 X adjustment for variability)

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| ≤0.2% S: | 1.2X |
| 0.3% S:  | 1.4X |
| 0.4% S:  | 1.5X |
| 0.5% S:  | 1.6X |

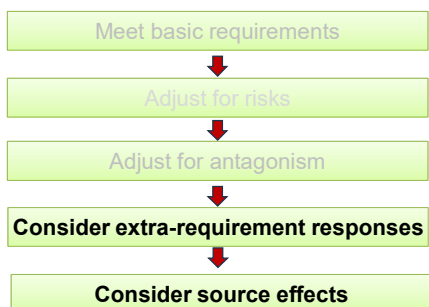
Include the S in water

If also > ~3 ppm Mo: Add 0.2 to above values for **Cu**

Almost all diets: Cu: 13 to 20 mg/kg total diet

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## Diet formulation for TM and vitamins



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Do minerals have to be absorbed to affect cow?

### Mineral requirements:

- Maintains body stores
- Supports productive functions
  - growth
  - lactation
  - reproduction
- Support immunity and health
- GI function/ nutrient digestion

### Absorbed ?

✓  
✓  
Yes/and no  
Yes/and no

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## Source of TM affect ruminal/intestinal microbiome



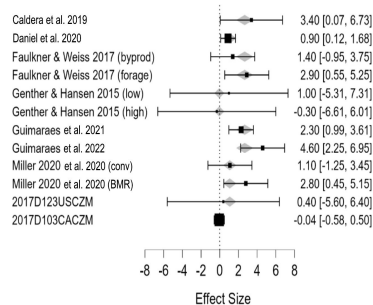
### Compared with sulfates

- Organic Zn reduced the pathogen associated with digital dermatitis in feces (Faulkner et al., 2017)
- Hydroxy Zn reduced the pathogen in feces (Wenner et al., 2022)

Probably a concentration effect not a mg/d effect

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## Hydroxy vs sulfate: NDF Digestibility



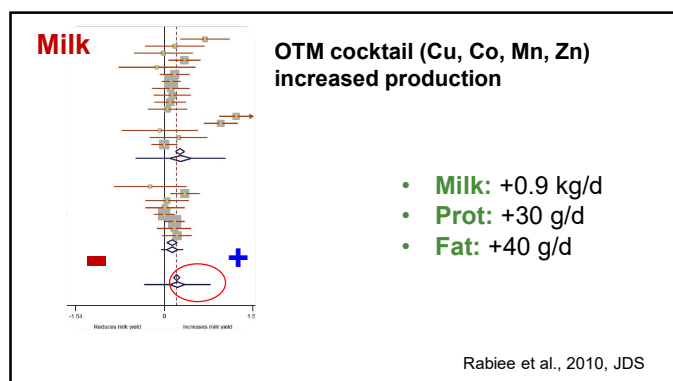
### Meta-analysis

Ibraheem et al., 2023

+1.5% units  
(P < 0.02)

NEL in about 1 lb of milk

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**Recommendations**

**Use high quality alternatives to sulfates**

- Increased diet energy
- Potentially enhanced immune function/health

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**Recommendations:**

**Selenium (0.3 mg/kg)**

**Only question is source:**

- Lactating: Majority from selenite usually is fine
- Lactating with high S diets: Mix of selenite:yeast
- Dry and prefresh: Majority yeast

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**Use standard safety factor (1.2X) for Zinc**

- Modest toxicity risk
- Low uncertainty

**Total Diet!**

- **NASEM**
  - Lactating: ~ 60 mg/kg
  - Dry: ~30 mg/kg (dry)
- **Formulation goals**
  - Lactating: 75 to 80 mg/kg
  - Dry: ~ 45 mg/kg

Adjust for elevated S

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**Use standard safety factor (1.2X) for copper**

- High toxicity risk
- Moderate uncertainty
- High antagonism risk

**Total Diet!**

- **NASEM**
  - Lactating: ~ 10 mg/kg
  - Dry: ~15 mg/kg
- **Formulation goals**
  - Lactating: 12 mg/kg
  - Dry: ~ 18 mg/kg

Adjust for elevated S and Mo

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**Manganese needs greater SF**

Low toxicity risk  
High uncertainty

**Suggest: ~2X NASEM**

**Total Diet!**

- **NASEM:**
  - Lactating: ~30 mg/kg
  - Dry: ~40 mg/kg
- **Formulation goals**
  - Lactating: ~ 60 mg/kg
  - Dry: ~80 mg/kg

Adjust for elevated S

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### Recommended TOTAL dietary concentrations (mg/kg) assuming typical intakes

| Mineral | NASEM | Recommended |
|---------|-------|-------------|
| Cu      | 10    | 12 to 14*   |
| Mn      | 30    | 60 to 80*   |
| Se      | 0.3   | 0.3         |
| Zn      | 60    | 70 to 80**  |

\* Increase when diet has >0.25% S

\*\* Include some HQ organic

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### Summary

- ✓ Current estimates are usually close to correct
  - Feed **modest** excess to ensure adequacy
  - Base safety factor on variability, antagonism, accuracy, and toxicity risk
- ✓ Sulfate TM are usually good sources of mineral *but* reduce digestibility and energy
- TM source effects are more than just increased absorption (which may not even be that different)

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