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**BEEF FINISHING PERFORMANCE BOOSTED BY SWITCH TO SLOW RELEASE
CONDITIONER**

Replacing sodium bicarbonate buffer in beef finishing rations with a slow release rumen conditioner can increase growth rate by 7% and feed efficiency by 5%, according to the results of a recent University of Milan trial. The change also reduced the incidence of bloat, lameness and aggressive behaviour.

The trial used 126 Charolais bulls grown from around 530kg LW to finishing at 750kg LW. In addition to an *ad lib* mixed ration based on maize silage and brewers' grains, cattle received either 80g/head/day of sodium bicarbonate or 40g/head/day of the slow release rumen conditioner Acid Buf.

Feed intake was unaffected, but an improvement in feed conversion ratio for the cattle receiving Acid Buf (6.98 vs. 7.36) resulted in an increase in average daily gain from 1.57kg/day to 1.65kg/day. No differences were seen in carcass weight, conformation or fat score, or killing out percentage.

"There was also a significant reduction in the incidence of bloat in those cattle fed Acid Buf, plus fewer cases of lameness and less aggressive behaviour," adds Dr Derek McIlmoyle, AB Vista's technical director for GB and Ireland.

"The performance gains are a direct result of improvements in rumen conditions, in addition to none of the negative impacts on outflow rates

associated with sodium bicarbonate that can lower feed efficiency. The change in behaviour matches observations when Acid Buf is used on-farm, and is likely due to the calming effect of the bio-available source of magnesium in Acid Buf."

For more information, contact AB Vista on +44(0)1672 517 650 or info@abvista.com.

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Notes to editor:

AB Vista is an animal nutrition technology company offering pioneering products and technical services to the global animal feed industry. Since its establishment in 2004, AB Vista has grown to be a top-three player in feed enzymes and is also one of the largest suppliers of natural betaine to the global animal nutrition industry. The company invests heavily in research and development and has a growing portfolio of products and services spanning the poultry, swine, ruminant and aquaculture sectors. AB Vista is headquartered in the UK, with regional offices located in the USA, Brazil, Singapore, Spain, India, China, Germany and Finland.

AB Vista is part of AB Agri, the agricultural division of Associated British Foods, one of Europe's largest food & retail companies with a market capitalisation of £26 billion.

For further press information please contact Nic Daley or Mike Keeler on +44 (0)20 8647 4467.

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