

WHY SUPPLEMENT ELEPHANTS WITH VITAMIN E?

Elephants in captivity often have much lower levels of serum vitamin E as compared to their wild counterparts. For example, African bush elephants translocated from Swaziland to the US had serum vitamin E that dropped from 0.41 µg/ml in the wild to 0.13 µg/ml after 4 years in captivity (Schlegel et al., 2008). Similarly low levels of circulating vitamin E have been found in other captive elephant populations (e.g., Dierenfeld and Dolensek, 1988, Wallace et al., 1992). In order to maintain blood vitamin E at levels similar to that found in wild elephants, it is recommended that animals be fed at least 130 IU vitamin E/kg diet. (Dierenfeld and Dolensek, 1988). Additionally, it is important that the source of dietary vitamin E be readily available to the animals, with synthetic vitamin E sources generally being less available than natural vitamin E sources (Papas et al., 1991).

Mazuri® Elephant Diet (5666) is designed to provide the necessary vitamin E for captive elephants and contains a very high level of vitamin E (>850 IU/kg supplement). Additionally, Mazuri® offers Emcelle-tocopherol (Cat #10111), a readily available, micellized vitamin E source that can be mixed into water or top-dressed on feed, and has been shown to increase plasma vitamin E in elephants (Wallace et al., 1992; Kenny, 2001). For more information, contact Mazuri® Customer Service at 1-800-227-8941.

References

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