



## **SEAWEED - JUST SMELLY STUFF?**

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“Smelly, vile, putrid. Good for nothing rotting seaweed - a blight on this beautiful coastline.” This is the popular notion of one of the most wholesome and useful resources in the world. The Romans, Scottish and Irish coastal inhabitants have known its true worth for 100’s of years while many Asian people regularly include it in their diet. Iodine has been extracted from it, insulation is made from it, stock have been fed on it, gardens have been based on it and in modern civilisation a myriad of uses are attributed to the alginates extracted from it – icecream, beer, dye fixing in fabrics, welding rods, toothpaste, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, etc. Even during wartime, the British used it to camouflage equipment on the beaches.

Being of plant origin, seaweed is easily assimilated by other plants whether applied directly or to the soil. Its extreme growth rates are attributed to the auxins, cytokinins and gibberellins produced during its growth – this growth enhancement is passed on to the land based plants appropriately treated with seaweed. For all animals, particularly herbivores, the naturally chelated and balanced minerals and trace elements are readily absorbed and utilised to provide a nutrient complex necessary for good health. Animals having free choice will inevitably select seaweed first over most other feeds.

Forget any proprietary blends of vitamins or trace elements. Modern science tends to want to identify and isolate the ‘active constituent’ in remedies or treatments. Because of its complexity seaweed must be considered as a whole. Not only does it contain a complex of minerals and trace elements but also vitamins, alginates and importantly a vast range of amino acids in often minute quantities. To attempt to identify a single component as being the essential ingredient to any situation is fraught with failure. Suffice to say that the interrelationship of each of the components of the seaweed with the receiving organism provides the overall health giving effect.

Throughout the world the composition of seaweeds varies considerably with one of the best and cleanest in the world at Australia’s doorstep in the Tasmanian coastal waters. Given the opportunity, stock will graze this kelp in preference to grass. It is said that they are ‘looking for salt’ but the seaweed has a lot more to offer than just the 3% of sodium chloride (common salt) contained in it. The addition of seaweed tends to aid in the digestion and uptake of feed making for less feed requirements. Stock on a ration including seaweed will sport a shiny coat and hoof and clear eyes indicating abundant health.

It is worth mentioning that seaweeds and fish exist as a result of fertility depletion, through erosion off the landmass, into the seas of the world. By using seaweed directly or as a growing adjunct, the need for other non-replenishable inputs is lessened and using seaweed directly as a stock supplement or as a plant growth additive completes the recycling of this resource.

When next you are looking for a remedy or some form of preventative to disease and pests in plants, animals or people, consider using seaweeds and fish as a natural source of complex minerals, trace elements, vitamins and amino acids. No other single additive is known to contribute so effectively to optimum health and growth.

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