

## **PICKY EATERS AND WHAT TO DO WHEN THEY DON'T WANT TO EAT – A CASE STUDY**

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### **Abstract**

A female reticulated giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis reticulata*) at Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge® has exhibited recurring episodes of limited feed consumption and weight loss over a number of years. The giraffe typically continues to consume some alfalfa and browse but will consume only small amounts or no pelleted herbivore diet during these periods which can last from a few days to over a week. Multiple other feeds have been tested over the years with limited success. The team has tried to correlate occurrences with reproductive cycle with inconclusive results. Weight and body condition score are lower than desired and are negatively impacted by these periods of low feed consumption.

The giraffe is housed in a small giraffe group, typically of 3 to 4 individuals, in a mixed species exhibit. Animals are typically on savannah 20 to 22 hours daily with access to a shared giraffe supply of alfalfa, browse and herbivore pellets. Individual pellet consumption is tracked when housed in the barn.

### **Points to discuss:**

- Have others experienced similar challenges?
- Are there feeds that others would recommend if regular feed consumption is poor?
- Any ideas for potential causes of periods of poor consumption?
- Any suggestions on options to help improve body weight and/or body condition?