

## Internet Sites for Cattle Feeding

K.F. Hoppe

Cattle feeding in North Dakota has great potential due to low cost feedstuffs and excellent husbandry from cow calf producers. Limitations to additional cattle feeding include capital for financing cattle and feeding costs. Improving budgeting skills with the addition of a uniform budget for breakevens and closeouts should aid profitability and encourage more finance capital.

The CalfWeb web site was developed to provide interactive budgeting to internet users. Through better pre-feeding and post-feeding performance evaluation, cattle feeders can use breakeven and closeout records to improve feeding skills. Benchmarking production and costs of feeding is a powerful tool for management improvement.

The CalfWeb site is comprised of a home page with links to two main pages and links to other sites of interest. The main pages are the Breakeven Calculator and the Closeout Analyzer. These pages are composed of a series of fill-in-the-blank questions dealing with financial and production estimates or actual values. After completing the question page, the user must click on the submit icon and immediately receives the calculated response, including cost of gain, total profit and return on investment. Clicking on the back key and keying changes can easily accomplish reiterations.

The CalfWeb site contains links to several other pages and sites including information pages at the NDSU Extension site, a listing of NDSU Extension Beef Specialists, market information and the CHAPS 2000 site. CalfWeb also contains a member's only section. This password-protected section allows the storage and retrieval of breakevens and closeouts. In addition, this saved information can be used to create a one-month rolling average benchmark for certain performance and economic criteria.

Better-informed decisions are crucial to maintaining profitability in buying or retaining ownership of calves for feeding. The CalfWeb site is one part of the complex business of feeding cattle.

The screenshot shows the CalfWEB website. At the top, the title "CalfWEB" is displayed in a large, stylized font. Below the title, there are three navigation links: "Breakeven Calculator", "Closeout Analyzer", and "Market Links". A "Welcome" message follows, stating: "Welcome to the North Dakota State University Extension Service's cattle feeding Internet site (CalfWEB). This site is designed to assist cattle feeders in evaluating the potential and actual profitability in feeding cattle." Below this, a paragraph explains the site's purpose: "To calculate the potential profitability of feeding cattle, the **Breakeven Calculator** is used before calves are placed on feed. The **Closeout Analyzer** is then used to calculate profitability after the cattle are sold." A section titled "You have the option to become a member at no cost..." describes the benefits of membership, such as saving information and benchmarking results. Another section states: "This Internet site also contains links to other sites for regional and national market prices, futures market prices, informational sites, and a listing of NDSU Extension Specialists involved in beef production." At the bottom, contact information is provided: "For more information or concerns, please contact Karl Hoppe, NDSU Extension Area Specialist/ Livestock at 701-652-2951 or [khoppe@ndsuext.nodak.edu](mailto:khoppe@ndsuext.nodak.edu)". A footer bar contains links: "Home | NDSU Home Page | Markets | CHAPS Homepage | Contact" and the NDSU Extension Service logo.