

Eastern Dakota Cattle Feedout Project V: Discovering Value in North Dakota Calves

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The Eastern Dakota Cattle Feedout project was developed to discover the actual value of spring-born beef steer calves, provide comparisons between herds, and benchmark feeding and carcass performance for contributing North Dakota cow herds. Cattle consigned to the feedout project averaged 722.9 pounds upon delivery to the Pipestem Feeders Feedlot, Carrington, ND, on December 5, 2008. After an average 189-day feeding period with 3.03% death loss, cattle averaged 1240.0 pounds (at plant, shrunk weight). Average daily feed intake per head, as fed, was 32.9 pounds while pounds of feed required per pound of gain were 12.9. Diet dry matter was 56 percent. The calves averaged 446 days of age at harvest. Overall pen average daily gain with death loss included was 2.53 lbs. Feed cost was \$0.720 per pound and total cost of gain without interest was \$0.975. The cattle were harvested on May 21, May 29, June 25 and July 9, 2009. Marbling scores averaged 416.5 (low choice). Overall loss before deducting interest expense per head was -\$96.53. Average loss before interest expense for the top five groups of six head of calves with superior growth and carcass traits was -\$8.93 per head while bottom five groups of poorer performing calves (without deaths) averaged -\$123.05 loss per head. The wide range in profitability indicates the diversity of the cattle consigned by North Dakota cattle producers into a feedout project.

Table 1. Cattle Feeding performance - Eastern Dakota Cattle Feedout

	year	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Average
Birth Date							
Top 5 herds	--	--	1-Mar-06	5-Mar-07	28-Feb-08	--	--
Overall Average	--	26-Mar-05	28-Mar-06	15-Mar-07	24-Mar-08	--	--
Bottom 5 herds	--	--	14-Apr-06	3-Apr-07	11-Apr-08	--	--
Harvest weight							
Top 5 herds	--	--	1263.4	1270.9	1351.3	--	1,295.22
Overall Average	1197.1	1277.0	1200.3	1217.0	1244.5	--	1,227.18
Bottom 5 herds	--	--	1113.2	1137.9	1190.3	--	1,147.13
Average Daily Gain							
Top 5 herds	--	--	3.29	3.06	2.87	--	3.07
Overall Average	3.43	3.39	3.10	3.20	2.75	--	3.17
Bottom 5 herds	--	--	3.15	3.32	2.80	--	3.09
Marbling score*							
Top 5 herds	--	--	531.5	417.1	460.9	--	469.82
Overall Average	423.03	456.51	445.1	423.0	416.5	--	432.83
Bottom 5 herds	--	--	369.3	433.0	397.8	--	400.05
Ribeye area							
Top 5 herds	--	--	--	13.9	14.4	--	14.13
Overall Average	13.12	13.06	12.8	13.4	13.8	--	13.23
Bottom 5 herds	--	--	--	12.7	13.5	--	13.10
Profit per head							
Top 5 herds	--	--	\$ 244.55	\$ 61.84	\$ (8.93)	--	\$ 99.15
Overall Average	\$ 80.34	\$ (121.48)	\$ 154.40	\$ (33.68)	\$ (107.52)	--	\$ (5.59)
Bottom 5 herds	--	--	\$ 70.76	\$ (61.65)	\$ (123.05)	--	\$ (37.98)

*300-399= Select, 400-499= Low Choice, 500-599= Average Choice