

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

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The Eastern Dakota Cattle Feedout project (year 7) continues 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 745.7 pounds upon delivery to the Pipestem Feeders Feedlot, Carrington, ND, on December 6, 2010. After an average 164-day feeding period with 2.04 percent death loss, cattle averaged 1184.6 pounds (at plant, shrunk weight). Average daily feed intake per head, as fed, was 35.4 pounds while pounds of feed required per pound of gain were 14.0. Diet dry matter was 64 percent. The calves averaged 427 days of age at harvest. Overall pen average daily gain with death loss included was 2.52 pounds. Feed cost was \$0.851 per pound of gain and total cost of gain without interest was \$1.144. The cattle were harvested on May 5 and June 7, 2011. Marbling scores averaged 456.3 (low choice). Overall profit (loss) before deducting interest expense per head was \$(97.90). Average profit before interest expense for the top group of six head of calves with superior growth and carcass traits was \$50.85 per head. The bottom group of poorer performing calves without deads included averaged \$123.10 loss per head, and with deads included averaged \$223.30 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

		2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11**	Average
Birth Date									
	Top 5 herds	--	--	1-Mar-06	5-Mar-07	28-Feb-08	20-Mar-09		--
	Overall Average	--	26-Mar-05	28-Mar-06	15-Mar-07	24-Mar-08	22-Mar-09	21-Mar-10	--
	Bottom 5 herds	--	--	14-Apr-06	3-Apr-07	11-Apr-08	24-Mar-09		--
Harvest weight									
	Top 5 herds	--	--	1263.4	1270.9	1351.3	1334.9		1,305.14
	Overall Average	1197.1	1277.0	1200.3	1217.0	1244.5	1295.5	1203.9	1,233.62
	Bottom 5 herds	--	--	1113.2	1137.9	1190.3	1285.9		1,181.82
Average Daily Gain									
	Top 5 herds	--	--	3.29	3.06	2.87	3.20		3.11
	Overall Average	3.43	3.39	3.10	3.20	2.75	3.27	2.69	3.12
	Bottom 5 herds	--	--	3.15	3.32	2.80	3.38		3.16
Marbling score*									
	Top 5 herds	--	--	531.5	417.1	460.9	470.4		469.82
	Overall Average	423.03	456.51	445.1	423.0	416.5	454.5	456.3	439.28
	Bottom 5 herds	--	--	369.3	433.0	397.8	443.6		400.05
Ribeye area									
	Top 5 herds	--	--	--	13.9	14.4	14.0		14.13
	Overall Average	13.12	13.06	12.8	13.4	13.8	13.9	13.0	13.30
	Bottom 5 herds	--	--	--	12.7	13.5	13.8		13.10
Profit per head									
	Top 5 herds	--	--	\$ 244.55	\$ 61.84	\$ (8.93)	\$ 208.67		\$ 126.53
	Overall Average	\$ 80.34	\$ (121.48)	\$ 154.40	\$ (33.68)	\$ (107.52)	\$ 164.03	\$ (113.52)	\$ 3.22
	Bottom 5 herds	--	--	\$ 70.76	\$ (61.65)	\$ (123.05)	\$ 142.67		\$ 7.18

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

** only 5 herds consigned total