

## SELF FEEDING OATS TO CALVES FROM WEANING TO MARKET

Oats is one of the outstanding feed grains produced in this state. North Dakota ranked second in the nation in the production of oats, and accounted for 15 percent of the total crop grown in the entire United States in 1969.

North Dakota also produces the finest quality calves, too many of which are shipped to other parts of the country for fattening.

This trial is designed to find the best ways to combine our high quality calves and our high quality feed oats to produce the greatest possible return to North Dakota farmers and ranchers.

Research work to date shows that the returns from feed grain can be more than doubled if the grain is marketed as beef ready for slaughter.

In this trial, beginning in November, 1969, two lots of steers were started on a ration of; 4 pounds tame hay, 2 pounds alfalfa hay, 0.2 pound mineral, and oats self fed. The oats in one lot was dry rolled, while in the other lot it was fed whole.

The tame hay was removed from the ration after 35 days because it was not being eaten.

One steer was removed from the lot getting rolled oats because of a leg injury.

Table 1 shows rations and feed costs. Table 2 summarizes data on weights and gains and Table 3 shows carcass data.

**Table 1. Rations and Feed Cost in the Oats Self – Feeding Trial.**

Ration	Whole Oats Fed Lot			Rolled Oats Fed Lot		
	Total lbs. feed per lot	Lbs. per head per day	Total cost per lot	Total lbs. feed per lot	Lbs. per head per day	Total cost per lot
No. head	8			7		
Oats	36,723	14.6	\$627.96	30,571	13.9	\$522.76
Alfalfa hay	5,024	2.0	62.80	4,396	2.0	54.95
Tame hay	1,040	4 lbs./30 days 2 lbs./5 days	9.36 -	910 -	4 lbs./30 days 2 lbs./5 days	8.19 -
Minerals	502.4	0.2	24.12	439.6	0.2	21.10
Rolling @ \$2.00/ ton	-	-	-	30,571	13.9	30.57
Total feed cost	-	-	\$724.24	-	-	\$637.57

**Table 2. Data on Weights and Gains in the Oats Self – Feeding Trial.**

No. of head per lot	8	7
Initial weight – lbs.		
Total per lot	2965	2590
Average per head	370.6	370.0
Final weight – lbs.		
Total per lot	8045	7425
Average per head	1005.6	1060.7
Gain per lot – lbs.	5080	4835
Number on days on feed	314	314
Average daily gain per head – lbs.	2.02	2.20

**Table 3. Carcass Data From the Oats Self – Feeding Trial.**

Average dressed weight		
Per head – lbs.	571.9	636.1
Average dressing percent	56.87	59.97
Average carcass grade (USDA) <sup>1/</sup>	7.38	9.29

### **Summary**

The rolled oats fed lot made faster gains for less cost than the lot fed whole oats. Daily gain for rolled oats was 2.20 pounds per head compared with 2.02 pounds per head for whole oats. Cost per hundredweight of gain for rolled oats was \$13.19 compared to \$14.26 for whole oats. However, until the calves reached a weight of about 600 pounds per head there was no difference in daily gain between the lots. Two steers in the lot getting whole oats became lame from founder and failed to make satisfactory gains. Therefore, the average carcass value shows an advantage of \$34.52 per carcass for the steers fed rolled oats.

Results from this study show that North Dakota calves and North Dakota feed oats can be successfully combined in a profitable self-feeding enterprise.

Plans are to continue and expand this study in future trials.