

Field Peas in Diets for Growing and Finishing Steer Calves

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Field peas were evaluated in a 2-year growing and finishing study with feedlot steers. Preconditioned steers (n=80) were fed growing diets containing barley and canola meal or field peas. Corn silage, chopped hay, and supplements were included in the rations during the 50-day trial. Steers fed peas consumed more feed as a percent of body weight ($P < .10$) and had numerically greater gains than steers fed barley. The barley-canola meal diet was intermediate.

Finishing diets based on barley or peas were fed from the end of the growing study until steers reached market weight. Intake tended to be greater (4.7%) for the pea diet compared to barley with corresponding higher (5.5%) gains observed. Carcass traits were similar except marbling scores and the percent choice were greater ($P < .10$) for steers fed peas. Peas are very palatable when used as the only grain source in growing and finishing steer diets. Feed costs are a critical factor in using peas in feedlot diets. Producers should make decisions on feeding peas based on local feed prices and projected cost of gain. •