Field Peas in Creep Feed for Beef Calves

V. L. Anderson, Ph.D.

In a two year study with 128 cow/calf pairs, wheat midds and field peas were offered in four different combinations as creep feeds. Treatments were reciprocal amounts of dry rolled peas and pelleted wheat midds at 0-100 percent, 33-67 percent, 67-33 percent, and 100-0 percent, respectively. Feed intake increased ($P<.01$) with an increasing level of field peas in the diet. Calves offered 100 percent midds consumed 5.89 pounds of creep feed per day compared to 8.72 for calves offered 100 percent field peas during the 56 day study. Calf gains increased ($P=.06$) from 2.82 pounds per day at 0 percent peas to 3.17 pounds at 67 and 100 percent peas. Gains from 33 percent peas averaged 3.11 pounds per day. Feed efficiency decreased ($P=.02$), however, with increasing pea levels. At 0 percent peas, calves gained .48 pounds for each pound of feed consumed followed by .49, .42, and .38 pounds, respectively for 33, 67 and 100 percent peas. At $2.20/bu for peas and $60/ton for midds, feed costs per pound of gain tended to increase with increasing pea level associated with increased intake and decreased feed efficiency: $.063, .065, .083, and .103 respectively for 0, 33, 67, and 100 percent peas. The added value of gain over feed costs was greater at 67 percent peas at $10.83 per head compared to 0 percent peas. Field peas appear to be a very palatable feed and can be used effectively in creep rations. At higher levels of field peas, feed cost must be considered in relation to return from added calf weight for optimum profit. Peas are biologically useful and economically profitable when used as a major ingredient in creep feeds. •