

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

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The sixth year of the Eastern Dakota Cattle Feedout project continued 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 691.6 pounds upon delivery to the Pipestem Feeders Feedlot, Carrington, ND on December 9, 2009. After an average 177-day feeding period with 0.9 percent death loss, cattle averaged 1294.1 pounds (at plant, shrunk weight). Average daily feed intake per head, as fed, was 35.5 pounds while pounds of feed required per pound of gain were 10.6. Diet dry matter was 64 percent. The calves averaged 444 days of age at harvest. Overall pen average daily gain with death loss included was 3.34 pounds. Feed cost was \$0.509 per pound of gain and total cost of gain without interest was \$0.717. The cattle were harvested on May 26, and June 12, 2010. Marbling scores averaged 462.4 (low choice). Overall profit before deducting interest expense per head was \$158.64. Average profit before interest expense for the top five groups of six head of calves with superior growth and carcass traits was \$208.67 per head while the bottom five groups of poorer performing calves (without deads) averaged \$152.88 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 | 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 | -- |
| 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 | 1,238.57 |
| 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 | 3.19 |
| 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 | 436.44 |
| 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 | 13.34 |
| 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 | \$ 22.68 |
| Bottom 5 herds | -- | -- | \$ 70.76 | \$ (61.65) | \$ (123.05) | \$ 142.67 | \$ 7.18 |

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