Options for Cattle Producers at Weaning
2016 - A year to feed calves.

The Situation
Weaned calf prices have decreased 40% from previous years and producers are seeking options for creating more income. Feeding calves past weaning delays marketing, increases calf weights, and adds value to home raised feeds and facilities.

Extension Response
Expertise for feeding or backgrounding cattle is available at County Extension Offices and Research Extension Centers. Since the 2016 market price year was uniquely depressed, a series of meetings was developed to create awareness and provide options to selling calves at weaning. The central region of North Dakota was targeted with eight counties creating learning opportunities for producers.

While the local meeting was the focal event, the educational program also included webinars, news releases, individual local producer/agent involvement, and internet resources for backgrounding cattle.

Impacts
Producers that attended the meetings identified a 39% increase in knowledge. The producers also expected a $72.12 per head additional return due to feeding beyond weaning. Of the participating producers, 57.8% indicated they would be feeding their calves for more days as compared to previous years.

Feedback
Producer responses:
I learned ‘to have better balanced rations’, to ‘push gain with cheap feed’, ‘backgrounding does show some profit potential this year’, and ‘keeping calves for a few more months and feed my excess grain and hay is a benefit and profitable’.

Public Value Statement
Providing education on feeding and marketing cattle led to increased revenue for producers and state businesses during a time of depressed cattle markets.

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Resource Links
NDSU CattleDocs
www.ag.ndsu.edu/cattledocs
NDSU CREC Center Points
www.ag.ndsu.edu/CarringtonREC/center-points/backgrounding-cattle-average-daily-gain-goals