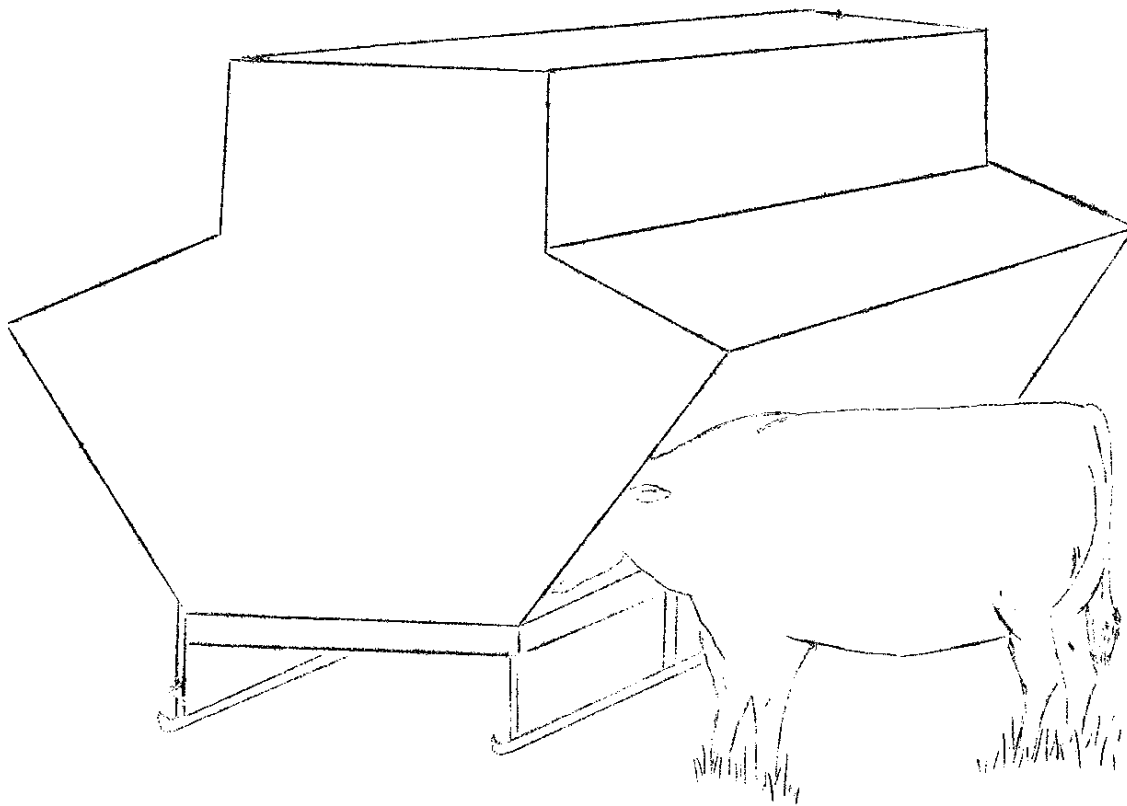


KEEPING UP WITH RESEARCH 10
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CREEP FEEDING FALL CALVES ON FESCUE PASTURE



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Creep Feeding Fall Calves on Fescue Pasture

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In previous research¹ with fall-dropped calves on fescue, we noted that fescue quality and calf gains were related. Calf rate of gain would slow in mid-winter, then with the on set of lush grass, gains would increase sharply, only to slow when fescue became semi-dormant in the summer. To help maintain gains throughout the pre-weaning period, we thought creep feeding could offer a practical method of maintaining gains and increasing weaning weights.

In July, 1973, we allotted 16 head of pregnant Hereford cows by weight to two groups and put them into two 15-acre fescue pastures. Cows and pastures were handled in a similar manner. The K-31 fescue pasture was fertilized with 120 pounds of actual nitrogen, 55 pounds of P_2O_5 , and 50 pounds of K_2O in September and another 80 pounds actual nitrogen in February. Cow weights were taken every 28 days. After all cows calved, a creep feeder was placed in one pasture. Creep feed offered was a 14% protein, 70% TDN ration consisting of 55% rolled milo, 10% soybean oil meal, 30% oats, and 5% molasses. The ration was changed to a rolled milo and soybean meal mixture (14% crude protein) midway through the study, to reduce ration costs.

Creep fed calves ate approximately 3.8 pounds of creep feed per day of age during the entire feeding period, or 1013 pounds per head. Calves ate no appreciable amount of feed until they were two months old. Intake peaked at 9 pounds per head per day one month before calves were weaned. Eight and one-half pounds of grain was needed to produce 1 pound of additional beef by the creep fed calves. During 1974 when unfavorable price relations between grain and beef production existed, creep feeding was not a profitable practice.

These same calves are now being used in a growing-finishing study. We are trying to evaluate a complete program; i.e., grain from birth to slaughter and what influence creep feeding has on animal performance in a drylot finishing situation.

1. Chyba, L., and H. B. Perry, 1972. Beef Production of Fescue Pasture. Report of Progress 195. Southeast Kansas Branch Experiment Station, Mound Valley, Kansas, 67354.

Table 1. Creep feeding fall calves.

	Creep	Noncreep
No. of calves	8	8
Avg. birth date	Oct. 26	Nov. 14
Birth wt., lbs.	64.1	65.0
Weaning wt., lbs.	511.25	393.13
Wt. gain, lbs.	447.15	328.13
Avg. daily gain, lbs.	1.69	1.33
Total lbs. creep feed per calf	1013.00	-----
Total lbs. creep feed per lb. gain	8.50	-----

Information in this report is for farmers, producers, colleagues, industry cooperators, and other interested persons. It is not a recommendation or endorsement as it is not yet backed by enough research.

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