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Feeding Monensin to Yearling Cattle on Summer Grass

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Summary

The feed additive, Monensin, was self-fed in a feed block to yearling cattle on summer pasture. Consumption of the block (0.29 lb. daily) supplied 116 mg. of Monensin daily, which failed to improve the cattle's performance.

Introduction

During the 1976 summer, Monensin was included in a feed block and offered free choice to yearling steers grazing summer bluestem pasture. The gain was 0.28 lb. more per steer daily compared to other steers receiving a feed block without Monensin.

This experiment repeated the 1976 trial.

Experimental Procedure

We randomly allotted 35 Hereford, Angus, and crossbred steers into two groups with one Hereford heifer in each group. Half the animals in both groups were implanted with Ralgro; half, with 30 mg. Stilbestrol, and each group grazed a 60-acre native bluestem pasture from April 27 to September 30, 1977. They had available in covered boxes commercial feed blocks¹ composed primarily of cane molasses; soybean meal, 20%; salt, 16-20%; and other feed ingredients. One group had Monensin added to the feed block at 400 mg. per pound. All animals were gathered the first of each month, penned overnight without feed or water, weighed the next morning, and rotated between pastures each month.

Results and Discussion

Gain was the same for both groups; average feed block intake was the same, 0.29 lb. per head daily, or 116 mg. of Monensin per head daily. We cannot explain the difference in performance during the 1976 trial (when gain was increased with Monensin) and this trial. Late summer gains in 1977 were better than usual due to late summer rains.

¹Feed blocks supplied by A. E. Staley Mfg. Co., Decatur, IL, whose support is greatly appreciated.