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Feeding MGA to Grazing Heifers

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Feeding MGA to grazing heifers suppressed estrus but did not improve gain.

Introduction

MGA is widely used to promote growth and feed efficiency in feedlot heifers. But this trial was designed to study the efficacy of MGA on grazing heifers--an area that has received little attention.

Experimental Procedure

The trial was conducted at the Harold Engle Jr. ranch near Madison, Kans. April 28, 1980, 70 head of predominantly crossbred heifers were individually weighed, tagged, and allotted randomly in equal numbers to treatment or control groups. The two groups were pastured separately in 160-acre native grass pastures, and rotated every 20-30 days to eliminate pasture effects.

The heifers fed MGA received 1.4 pounds of a 14% range pellet formulated to supply .5 mg MGA/heifer/day. The control heifers received the same supplement without the MGA. Eighty days after the trial started, the heifers received an additional 3 pounds of a 17% range cube/heifer/day. Because of the extremely dry summer conditions, they were weighed off pasture August 2, 1980, much earlier than planned.

Results

Results are shown in Table .1. In spite of dry grazing conditions, the average daily gain of the heifers was excellent. The 3% gain improvement by heifers fed MGA was not statistically significant.

Table 18.1. Effect of MGA on the performance of grazing heifers.

Treatment	No.	Starting weight, lbs	Final weight, lbs	Pounds gained	A.D.G.
Control	32	500.6	664.5	163.9	2.48
MGA-fed	34	506.9	675.7	168.8	2.56

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