

Project 253-4: Wintering and Grazing Yearling Steers

Methods of Wintering Yearling Steers on Bluestem Pasture, 1951-52.

E. F. Smith, R. F. Cox, and S. B. Fansher

This test is to determine if yearling steers can be wintered satisfactorily on dry bluestem pasture. Different methods of feeding protein supplements are being tested.

Experimental Procedure

Thirty head of good quality, about 750-pound, Hereford yearling steers were used in the test which was started December 7, 1951. The steers were purchased in the spring of 1951 and had been grazed on bluestem pasture during the summer and fall. They carried a moderate amount of flesh. They lost some flesh during October and November when they were on grass alone prior to the start of winter tests. The steers were sprayed twice with B.H.C. for lice. All of the pastures in which the steers were wintered had been grazed the previous summer at normal stocking rates, but a plentiful supply of dry grass remained. From 6 to 13 acres of pasture were allowed each steer.

The 30 steers were divided into three lots of 10 steers each and received the following supplements in addition to dry bluestem pasture from December 7, 1951, to April 29, 1952.

Lot 1—2 pounds of cottonseed oil meal pellets daily, salt, and mineral (bonemeal and salt).

Lot 2—4 pounds of cottonseed oil meal pellets every other day (average 2 pounds a day), salt, and mineral (bonemeal and salt).

Lot 3—Cottonseed oil meal and salt self-fed, and mineral (bonemeal and salt). (The salt was mixed with the cottonseed oil meal to limit its consumption and make it possible to self-feed the cottonseed oil meal. This mixture was fed in a self-feeder.) The cottonseed oil meal pellets were fed on the ground.

Observations

1. The most satisfactory method of wintering in this test was feeding cottonseed oil meal pellets every day. Feeding every other day in Lot 2 resulted in slightly less winter and summer gain combined, as compared to feeding each day. Self-feeding a salt and protein mixture produced considerably less yearly gain and is of questionable value as measured here.

2. Steer gains for the winter period were low, although weather conditions were favorable for wintering on dry grass in 1951-52 except during the month of December and the first week in March.

Table 22.—Wintering and Grazing Yearling Steers

Phase I—Wintering—December 7, 1951, to April 29, 1952—144 days.

1. Lot number	1	2	3
2. Number of steers per lot	10	10	10
3. Management	Fed cottonseed pellets daily	Fed cottonseed pellets every other day	Self-fed cottonseed meal and salt mixed
4. Initial weight per steer	745	741	746
5. Final weight per steer	759	733	717
6. Gain or loss per steer	14	-8	-29
7. Daily gain or loss per steer .....	.10	-.06	-.20

8. Daily ration per steer:			
Cottonseed oil meal or pellets	2.01	2.01	2.03
Salt .....	.08	.09	.61
Mineral ¹ .....	.14	.10	.04
Prairie hay ²	1.28	1.24	1.20
	Free	Free	Free
Dry bluestem pasture	choice	choice	choice
9. Feed cost per steer ³	\$19.90	\$19.60	\$19.89

Phase II—Grazing—April 29 to July 21, 1952—85 days.

10. Initial weight per steer	759	733	717
11. Final weight per steer	929	909	893
12. Gain per steer	170	176	176
13. Daily gain per steer	2.00	2.07	2.07

Summary of Phases I and II

14. Initial weight per steer	745	741	746
15. Final weight per steer	929	909	893
16. Gain per steer	184	168	147
17. Daily gain per steer .....	.80	.73	.64
18. Total feed cost per steer	\$49.90	\$49.60	\$49.89
19. Feed cost per 100 lbs. gain	\$27.11	\$29.52	\$33.93
20. Appraised value per cwt.	\$24.00	\$24.00	\$24.00
21. Loss per steer ⁴	\$87.69	\$90.79	\$96.67

1. Mineral was 2 parts steamed bonemeal to 1 part salt.
2. Prairie hay was fed only when snow covered the grass.
3. Feed prices: Cottonseed oil meal or pellets, \$100.00 ton; salt, \$12.00 ton; mineral, \$5.00 cwt.; prairie hay, \$15.00 ton; dry bluestem pasture, \$.75 per head per month; bluestem pasture, \$30.00 per head for summer season.
4. In computing loss per steer, initial cost was estimated at \$35.00 cwt.

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Methods of Wintering Yearling Steers on Dry Bluestem Pasture. Four-Year Summary, 1948-52.

E. F. Smith, R. F. Cox, and A. G. Pickett

The object of this test was to compare different protein supplements and methods of feeding them to yearling steers on dry bluestem pasture during the winter. The steers were good to choice quality Hereford yearlings. They were wintered in pastures that were stocked at a normal rate during the previous summer; however, a plentiful supply of dry dead grass was available for each of the lots during the years in which these tests were conducted. From 6 to 19 acres of grass were allowed per steer for the winter. In each year except 1951-52 the steers were purchased in the fall in moderately thin flesh. In 1951-52 the steers were purchased in the spring of 1951 and grazed on