



IMPROVING FEED OPTIONS FOR CATTLE

Balancing feed costs with cattle health, growth and meat quality is one of the largest challenges facing beef farmers today.

SOLUTIONS

Prof. Katie Wood and her team of researchers conducted a feedlot project using two different rations:

1. Corn-based ration
2. By-product based pellet ration

Researchers found no difference in growth or efficiency of cattle between the rations.

The **by-product based pellet** uses ingredients such as off-grade corn, wheat shorts, distiller's grain and tallow. All ingredients are readily available at most commercial feed mills.

Tallow is a combination of rendered fat from animal sources and plant oils, used to provide the same energy content as corn.

This pellet gives feedlot producers a more economical feed alternative during times of commodity fluctuation, while still being enjoyable for the animal and providing all nutritional requirements.

Cattle require a precisely balanced diet consisting of protein and energy to maintain a high quality of life. Economical feed alternatives that can provide the same nutritional components as traditional feeds, but cost less, are beneficial for the farmer and the health and welfare of cattle.

Problem

With fluctuating feed prices, it can be difficult for producers to afford corn-based diets in feedlots. However, it is important to ensure cows receive a sufficient source of energy from their feed to ensure health, as well as proper growth and muscle gain.

Background

At 9 to 11 months of age, beef calves are sent to a feedlot facility to be fed a ration that promotes efficient growth and weight gain. A feedlot provides the calves room to move around in open-air pens and free access to food and water. Cattle are kept at a feedlot facility until they reach the optimal weight to be sold to a processing plant for beef.

Funding for this resource was provided by the W.S. (Stan) Young Memorial Grant through the OAC Alumni Foundation.