

Performance of Range Cattle REC Steer Calves in a Texas Feedlot

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In 2000-01 the Range Cattle REC fed 39 Brahman derivative breed steer calves in a feedlot at Gruver, Texas. Steers were weaned on August 1, 2000 and backgrounded on Floralta hemarthria pasture and dry concentrate weaning feed for 51 days before shipping on September 20th. Steers were placed directly in the feedlot and slaughtered on April 11, 2001.

Steer payweight at weaning was 587 lbs (actual weight less 3% pencil shrink). During the 51-day backgrounding period steers gained 1.35 lbs per day and had a payweight of 656 lbs when shipped (actual weight less 3% pencil shrink).

During backgrounding, steers were fed an average of 6.4 lbs of dry concentrate weaning feed daily with a total cost of \$30.02 per steer. Vaccinations three weeks before weaning and a booster at weaning cost \$5.00 per steer. Pasture was priced at \$10.00 per steer. Total cost of backgrounding was \$45.02 or \$0.65 per lb of gain. Trucking from Ona, Florida to Gruver, Texas cost \$46.15 per steer.

Initial weight in the feedlot was 647 lbs per steer. Over 201 days in the feedlot average daily gain was 2.75 lbs, with a final weight of 1199 lbs per steer (actual weight less 4% pencil shrink).

Hot carcass weight at slaughter was 773 lbs per steer with a 64.47% dress. Carcasses graded 59% choice or better and 38% select. One carcass (2.5%) graded standard. Carcasses had a 2.70 yield grade average with no yield grade 4s or 5s. Ribeye area averaged 12.92 square inches and backfat thickness averaged 0.62 inches. Carcass value averaged \$124.98 per cwt. Total value per carcass was \$965.11 including a \$7.96 per carcass premium.

Steers were valued at \$83.00 per cwt or \$487.21 per head at weaning on August 1, 2000. Adding the cost of backgrounding (\$45.02), shipping (\$46.15), interest on investment (\$31.17) and feedlot cost (\$274.33) the total cost per steer at slaughter was \$883.88. Net return per steer (\$965.11 - \$883.88) was \$81.23.

The good net return received for this group of steers is the exception and not the norm. Steers were sold on an \$80.00 per cwt fat cattle market. More important to the cow/calf producer is the data provided on performance of steers during backgrounding and in the feedlot; and the quality of carcasses produced. Cattlemen can use similar performance and carcass data as a marketing tool and for improving herd genetics.

The University of Florida, IFAS, Animal Science Department has a pasture-to-plate program by which Florida cattlemen can enter as few as five steers and obtain feedlot production and carcass data. Contact Dr. Bob Sand at 352-392-7529 for program details.

Past Peace River Farmer and Rancher articles written by Findlay Pate can be viewed on the internet at <http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~ona/PRFAR.html>

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