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The cattle feeding industry of Kansas

Abstract

The Kansas cattle feeding industry has grown tremendously since 1956. The 1968 January Cattle on Feed Report shows more than ten times as many cattle in commercial feedlots as in 1956. Farm feedlots have also increased, but since 1966 over 50 percent of our cattle have been fed in lots with at least 1,000 head capacity.

Keywords

Cattlemen's Day, 1968; Report of progress (Kansas State University. Agricultural Experiment Station); 518; Beef; Commercial feedlots; Farm feedlots; Grain

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The Cattle Feeding Industry of Kansas
 Philip Phar, Beef Cattle Nutrition
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The Kansas cattle feeding industry has grown tremendously since 1956. The 1968 January Cattle on Feed Report shows more than ten times as many cattle in commercial feedlots as in 1956. Farm feedlots have also increased, but since 1966 over 50 percent of our cattle have been fed in lots with at least 1,000 head capacity.

Cattle feeding will continue to expand in Kansas because of our abundant feed grain, favorable climate, accessibility to markets, and replacement cattle and, most important, the skill, intelligence and attitude of Kansas feeders.

*Cattle and Calves on Grain Feed, Kansas

<u>Date</u> <u>Jan. 1</u>	<u>Commercial</u> <u>lots</u>	<u>Farm</u> <u>lots</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Commercial</u> <u>lots</u>
1956	30,000	152,000	182,000	16%
1957	38,000	115,000	153,000	25%
1958	44,000	127,000	171,000	26%
1959	49,000	166,000	215,000	23%
1960	58,000	217,000	275,000	21%
1961	88,000	249,000	337,000	26%
1962	99,000	284,000	383,000	26%
1963	150,000	293,000	443,000	34%
1964	183,000	264,000	447,000	41%
1965	200,000	251,000	451,000	44%
1966	260,000	220,000	480,000	54%
1967	311,000	275,000	586,000	53%
1968	338,000	272,000	610,000	55%

* Kansas Crop and Livestock Reporting Service

In 1966, 1,351,000 grain-fed cattle and 2,077,000 grass-fed cattle were marketed from Kansas. Grass-fed cattle and calves included those pastured on bluestem and other tall grasses, short grass ranges and wheat pasture and some that were wintered mainly on rough-ages and limited grain. Total Kansas cattle marketed in 1966 numbered 3,428,000 head.

The success of any feeding operation, commercial or farm feedlot, depends on many factors, but the most important is the ability of the feeder or feedlot to produce cheap, efficient feedlot gains. Improved nutrition and new methods of feed processing have played major roles in improving efficiency.

Commercial size feedlots have certainly been justified in their use of steam-processing equipment for milo and corn. Initial cost of the equipment is high but feed requirements can be reduced five to ten percent, or even more, when the grain is properly steam-processed.

Ensiled, high-moisture corn and milo is also being used by feeders of all sizes to increase efficiency. Upright silos both concrete stave and air-tight, and concrete lined trench silos are being successfully used to store grain at moisture levels of about 30 percent. The improved digestibility of grain ensiled at 30 percent moisture has resulted in increased feed efficiencies of up to 15 percent

More research is needed to refine these two methods of feed processing if we are to continue to improve feedlot efficiency. This research will have to be done in the feedlot and in the laboratory.

Kansas feeders have increased their use of the "futures" market the past year. As more people become acquainted with "futures contracts," more cattle will be "hedged" in feeding operations. Any feeder considering the use of the "hedge" must know the costs involved in feeding cattle. If a feeder does not know his costs and doesn't intend to learn, he can never successfully use the "futures" market. Furthermore he will probably not be a cattle feeder for too many more years.

There is a trend in Kansas for smaller feeders to consider shifting their operations to growing instead of fattening programs. This will allow a feeder to increase his capacity without increasing his feed storage, crop land, equipment, etc., and take advantage of the high efficiency of commercial feedlots during the final phase of fattening. The commercial feedlots have thus created a new market for smaller feedlot operators.

There is a little doubt that cattle feeding will continue to expand in Kansas. It is more important than ever before that the cattle feeding industry, the University and all allied industries work together to maintain and improve Kansas's position as a major cattle feeding state.