

1990

Feeding Holstein Bulls and Steers for Beef Production

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Recommended Citation

Chyba, Leslie J. and Boren, Fred W. (1990) "Feeding Holstein Bulls and Steers for Beef Production," *Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station Research Reports*: Vol. 0: Iss. 12. <https://doi.org/10.4148/2378-5977.7280>

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Keywords

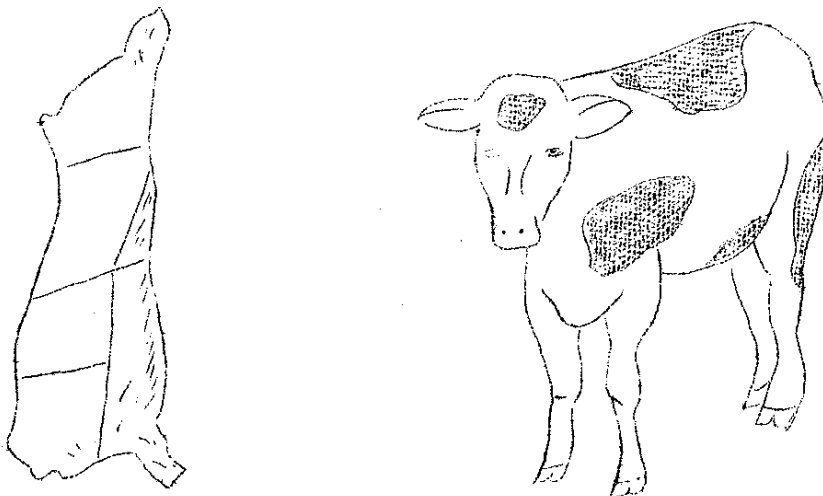
Keeping up with research; 100 (Feb. 1990); Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station contribution; no. 90-275-S; Holstein; Steers; Bull calves; Feeding; Beef production

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KEEPING UP WITH RESEARCH 12
Contribution No. 42
November 1974

FEEDING HOLSTEIN BULLS AND STEERS FOR BEEF PRODUCTION



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Feeding Holstein Bulls and Steers for Beef Production

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Research has shown that bulls gain faster, are more efficient, and produce leaner carcasses than steers, thus creating considerable interest in fattening young bull calves. Advantages are capitalizing on natural growth-promoting hormones of intact animals, and eliminating stress from castration. Grading standards for "bullock beef" (under 24 months old) should insure markets for such animals.

This trial included 12 Holsteins, six yearling steers and six bull calves. They were slaughtered at approximately the same weight. The younger bull calves had to be fed longer because they weighed less at starting than the steers did. Both lots were fed twice daily a ration of 80% rolled milo, 15% brome hay, and 5% soybean meal based supplement. All were weighed every 28 days.

Results indicate that bulls gained faster and were more efficient feed converters than steers (Table 1). Carcass data clearly show bulls produced leaner carcasses having less kidney knob and back fat cover, larger loin eyes, and much lower marbling scores.

Table 1. Performance of young bulls and steers compared.

	Holsteins	
	Bulls	Steers
No. of animals	6	6
Avg. initial wt., lbs.	388.2	628.5
Avg. final wt., lbs.	963.8	991.5
Avg. wt. gain, lbs.	575.6	363.0
Avg. daily gain, lbs.	2.57	2.05
Days on feed	244	177
<u>Avg. daily ration, lbs.</u>		
Grain	16.15	18.25
Hay	2.58	3.28
Supplement	1.00	1.00
Total daily dry matter intake, lbs.	19.73	22.53
<u>Carcass data</u>		
Hot wt., lbs.	542.3	580.0
Dressing %	56.4	57.9
Marbling ^a	8.0	14.2
Conformation ^b	17.8	17.2
Kidney knob, %	2.0	2.5
Loin eye, sq. in.	11.27	8.8
Back fat thickness, in.	.06	.11
USDA grade ^c	17.2	18.3
Yield grade ^d	1.3	2.6

- a. 8 = traces, 14.2 = small.
b. 16 = low good, 17 = good, 18 = high good.
c. 17 = middle good.
d. Yield grade 1 to 5, with 1 most desirable.

Information in this report is for farmers, producers, colleagues, industry cooperators, and other interested persons. It is not a recommendation or endorsement as it is not yet backed by enough research.

Contribution no. 42, Southeast Kansas Branch Experiment Station, Mound Valley, Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station, Kansas State University.

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