Effects of Supplementation with Corn or Dried Distillers Grains on Gains of Heifer Calves Grazing Smooth Bromegrass Pastures

L. W. Lomas

Kansas State University, llomas@ksu.edu

J. L. Moyer

Kansas State University, jmoyer@ksu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://newprairiepress.org/kaesrr

Part of the Agriculture Commons, and the Animal Sciences Commons

Recommended Citation

This report is brought to you for free and open access by New Prairie Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station Research Reports by an authorized administrator of New Prairie Press. Copyright January 2015 Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service. Contents of this publication may be freely reproduced for educational purposes. All other rights reserved. Brand names appearing in this publication are for product identification purposes only. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned. K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
Effects of Supplementation with Corn or Dried Distillers Grains on Gains of Heifer Calves Grazing Smooth Bromegrass Pastures

Abstract
Thirty heifer calves grazing smooth bromegrass pastures were used to compare supplementation with 0.5% of body weight per head daily of corn or dried distillers grains (DDG). Daily gains of heifers supplemented with corn or DDG were similar ($P > 0.05$).

Keywords
corn, distillers grains, grazing, supplementation

Creative Commons License
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License.
Effects of Supplementation with Corn or Dried Distillers Grains on Gains of Heifer Calves Grazing Smooth Bromegrass Pastures

L.W. Lomas and J.L. Moyer

Summary
Thirty heifer calves grazing smooth bromegrass pastures were used to compare supplementation with 0.5% of body weight per head daily of corn or dried distillers grains (DDG). Daily gains of heifers supplemented with corn or DDG were similar ($P > 0.05$).

Introduction
Distillers grains, a byproduct of the ethanol industry, have tremendous potential as an economical and nutritious supplement for grazing cattle. Distillers grains contain a high concentration of protein (25 to 30%), with more than two-thirds escaping degradation in the rumen, which makes it an excellent supplement for younger cattle. Recent advancements in the ethanol manufacturing process have resulted in extraction of a greater amount of fat resulting in distillers grains that may contain less energy than corn. This research was conducted to compare performance of stocker cattle supplemented with corn or DDG at 0.5% body weight per head daily while grazing smooth bromegrass pastures.

Experimental Procedures
Thirty heifer calves (420 lb) were weighed on two consecutive days, stratified by weight, and randomly allotted to six 5-acre smooth bromegrass pastures on April 8, 2014. Three pastures of heifers were randomly assigned to one of two supplementation treatments (three replicates per treatment) and grazed for 142 days. Supplementation treatments were ground corn or DDG at 0.5% body weight per head daily. DDG used in this study contained 25% protein and 6% fat. Pastures were fertilized with 100 lb/a nitrogen and $P_2O_5$ and $K_2O$ as required by soil test on February 21, 2014. Pastures were stocked with 1 heifer/a and grazed continuously until August 28, 2014, when heifers were weighed on two consecutive days and grazing was terminated.

Cattle in each pasture were group-fed corn or DDG in meal form in bunks on a daily basis, and pasture was the experimental unit. No implants or feed additives were used. Weight gain was the primary measurement. Cattle were weighed every 28 days; quantity of supplement fed was adjusted at that time. Cattle were treated for internal and external parasites before being turned out to pasture and later vaccinated for protection.
from pinkeye. Heifers had free access to commercial mineral blocks that contained 12% calcium, 12% phosphorus, and 12% salt.

**Results and Discussion**

Cattle gains and supplement intake are presented in Table 1. Daily gains and average daily supplement intake were 2.00 and 2.8 lb per head daily and 2.10 and 2.9 lb per head daily for heifers supplemented with corn and DDG, respectively. Gains and supplement intake of heifers supplemented with corn were similar ($P > 0.05$) to those of heifers that were supplemented with DDG. This result suggests that protein did not limit performance of heifers grazing these pastures because heifers fed corn received a similar amount of supplemental energy but less supplemental protein than those fed DDG.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Supplement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Corn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of days</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of head</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial weight, lb</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final weight, lb</td>
<td>706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain, lb</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily gain, lb</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain/a, lb</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total supplement consumption, lb/head</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average supplement consumption, lb/head per day</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>