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Effect of Ralgro¹ on the Performance of Cull Beef Cows

L. R. Corah, F. Brazle², and J. D. Dawes

Summary

We assigned 110 cull beef cows of mixed breeding to a control group and a group implanted with 36 mg Ralgro. Ralgro implants improved gains 12.8 lbs (11.2%) over a 59-day grazing period.

Introduction

Numerous research trials have shown that Ralgro improves weight gain and feed efficiency of suckling calves, growing calves, and feedlot cattle by from 4 to 15%. A Montana study shows 10.3% and 17.1% faster gain in two trials with cull cows on native range grass.

We ran this study to see how cull cows responded to Ralgro.

Experimental Procedure

The trial, conducted at the Jim Becker³ ranch near Howard, Ks., involved 110 open cows of mixed breeding. They were allotted randomly April 10, 1979; 55 to the implant group (36 mg), and 55 to the control group. Condition was estimated by the height-weight ratio system. Cows were grazed on fescue for 59 days, and final weights were taken June 15, 1979. The cows were weighed directly off pasture at both the start and end. All cows were dewormed before the trial began.

Results and Discussion

The starting weight, final weight, and weight gains are shown in table 11.1. All cows were very thin when the trial started.

Implanted cows gained 12.8 pounds (11.2%) more weight during the 59-day experimental period, which is fairly consistent with the work from Montana.

Initial weight and weight-to-height ratio (condition) did not influence average daily gain. The correlation between weight gain and weight-

¹Ralgro (Zeranol) is a product of International Minerals and Chemical Corporation.

²Frank Brazle is SE Extension Livestock Specialist, and J. D. Dawes is Elk County Agent.

³Appreciation is expressed to Elk County rancher Jim Becker for use of the cattle and cooperation in conducting the trial.

to-height ratio was virtually zero, and the correlation between weight gain and initial weight was nonsignificant (.11). All cattle starting the trial in a very thin condition may explain why weight-to-height ratio (condition) had no effect on average daily gain. Likewise, their thin condition may explain why starting weight had no influence on weight gained during the grazing period.

Table 11.1. Effect of Ralgro on the weight gains of open, mature, cull COWS.

Treatment	No.	Starting weight, lbs	Final weight, lbs	Lbs gained	ADG lbs/day
Control	55	767.5	881.5	114.0	1.93
Implanted	55	740.7	867.5	126.8	2.15