

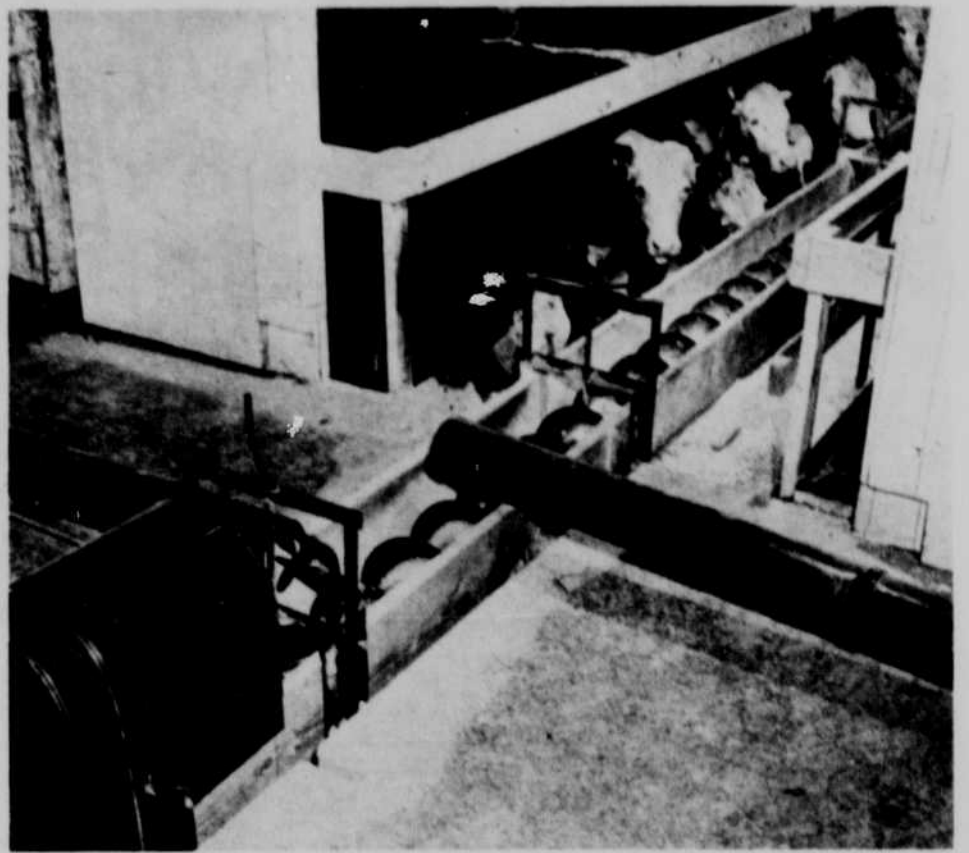
CATTLE FEEDING

\$10,000 is invested. If you can save an hour a day, you can afford to invest \$2,500 in labor-saving equipment. Considering that the typical farm may have a total capital investment of \$100,000, this suggests that an increase in investment of 10% may cut labor and choring time by as much as 50%!

"Before deciding just how much you can afford to invest in your feeding operation this year, take a look at your entire farm operation," says Roy Van Arsdall, a USDA economist located at the University of Illinois. "Decide where your invested money will pay off the best," he says. If you have plenty of feed, a mechanized feedlot may permit you to handle more cattle and realize a better profit than if the extra feed was sold on the market.

Some things are a must in every feedlot. Concrete around your feed bunks and waterers will help cattle gain faster—often $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ pound more per day on less feed. Also a good set of scales is an important asset to a feeding operation. You'll have a better idea of how well your cattle are gaining and you can often better decide whether to feed a little longer or sell immediately, depending on the anticipated cattle price movement. Put these items on a priority list if you don't already have them.

Augers seem to work best in this Ohio cattle feeding setup. The feed is all stored right next to the feeding area. Augers pull feed from each side of the barn to a large central auger which then distributes it to the cattle. Through proper adjustment you can use this method to meter and mix protein supplement with the grain portion of the ration. Studies by Illinois economists indicate augers, conveyors and other mechanical bunk feeders are most practical when you're feeding 50 to 250 head of cattle, and are figuring labor at \$1 an hour.



This Iowa farmer has decided he can't afford to handle sacked feed any more, because it's hard work and takes too much time. He buys feed in bulk, stores in a centralized location, moves it directly into bunks by either conveyor or a self unloading wagon.

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