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## WHAT KIND OF FEEDER CATTLE?

Subject Considered from Scientific and Practical Viewpoint, Interesting to Ranchmen

Not many Nebraska ranchmen feed out for market the cattle which they raise, but they are interested in the feeding proposition. As they supply the stuff to be fed, they naturally want to know the kind for which there will be the strongest demand and that will bring the best prices from feeder buyers.

An article written by H. J. Gramlich of the Nebraska Experiment Station on the subject, "What Kind of Feeder Cattle?" was published in The Nebraska Farmer of November 25. The article is interesting throughout, but the part showing the trend of the demand for feeders and the kind that will probably be wanted most in the next few years will be of special interest to ranchmen who supply the feeder market.

Because of the importance of the subject, to ranchmen as well as farmers and feeders, and the able manner in which it is handled by Prof. Gramlich, it is reprinted entire, as follows:

### Buying Stock Cattle

Each year the farmer who has a considerable amount of grain and roughness to feed is confronted with the problem of buying stock cattle—unless he is equipped, as few farmers are, to maintain a breeding herd and produce his own calves. Upon the large markets in almost any month of the year he can find cattle of all classes, ages and grades. These cattle are for sale. Generally they are in the hands of a speculator, who is only too glad to move them, providing he can secure a price which will insure him a profit. Consequently the question of what kind of cattle to buy is not so much one of what classes are available as which one of the many classes available will prove most profitable.

In the fall months, when most farmers buy their feeders, steers are available ranging from calves up to three years old and over. These calves as a rule are fresh from the range and carry a considerable amount of milk fat. They can be taken out and fed a rather heavy grain ration during the winter and spring and returned to the market

in the early summer as finished baby beefs. Good, uniform calves of one of the beef breeds generally sell in carload lots at a figure around \$8 a hundredweight, or fully \$1 higher than older steers of the same breeding.

Such calves will make gains of about two pounds a day under feedlot conditions. Under exceptional conditions they may make three pounds a day. This, however, requires the use of large quantities of high-price feeds, and it is doubtful if the added gain thus secured is entirely justifiable. A calf when on maximum feed will consume as much as fifteen pounds of corn, three to four pounds of oil meal and three to five pounds of alfalfa hay a day. Calves eat proportionately less than older steers and make 100 pounds of gain with less feed. In fact, it is safe to say that the older steers become the less economical as their gains.

### Making Baby Beef

It must be remembered that the feeding of baby beefs involves quite largely the use of highly concentrated feeds. This means that calves will not use up very much roughness, providing they are fed in to really highly finished baby beefs and at the same time satisfactorily use up home-grown roughness is to keep a herd of breeding cows and produce calves from them, allowing the cows to winter on roughness.

Calves always should be vaccinated against blackleg. Sometimes a purchaser is able to ascertain whether calves already have been vaccinated. It is not advisable to dehorn calves where they are taken out to be finished as baby beefs. The dehorning sets them back materially, and besides the horns do not bother in the feedlot. Packers do not discriminate against horns when the calves are sold.

A good grade of calves, such as would develop into good baby beefs should weigh approximately 400 pounds apiece when they reach the market. In selecting calves to feed out as baby beefs, it is very important to see that they are low-set, compactly built and of an early-maturing type; otherwise there is a marked tendency for the calves to grow during the first winter and spring, and when they go back to market they will be discriminated against because of a lack of finish. Baby beefs marketed in June, at which time they are about fourteen months old, usually weigh from 800 to 900 pounds apiece. At that season of

the year they are comparatively safe from discrimination, because with the approach of warm weather there is a strong demand for light cuts of beef.

In recent years many feeders have taken to the feeding of calves and the game is not looked upon as so fascinating as it was five or six years ago. Perhaps it is as safe as any, however, owing to the fact that the cost of making the gains is somewhat less than with older cattle, and the initial weight is so small compared to the final weight that the purchase price quite easily can be absorbed.

### Yearlings are Good Feeders

An increasing number of cattle feeders have adopted the policy of feeding yearlings. In the fall months it is possible to purchase yearlings weighing from 600 to 800 pounds of almost any quality desired. If the feeder wishes to put these cattle on the market as beefs the following spring, it is quite essential that they be comparatively even, of good width and develop so evenly, and will lack the attractiveness so much sought by the buyers of handy-weight steers. When calves are selling at \$8 a hundredweight, a good class of yearling steers usually can be purchased at about \$7.

Such steers will do quite well on roughness during the fall and can be put on feed about the first of the new year and finished for a rather late spring market. Steers taken out at a weight of about 700 pounds and handled in this way can be made ready for a June market weighing from 1,100 to 1,200 pounds. It has been a noticeable fact that during recent years steers of such weight, providing they carried sufficient finish, have brought practically the top of the market at almost any season of the year, more particularly from May until fall. Such steers make their gains at a somewhat lower cost than do two year olds, and will consume considerably more roughness and other comparatively cheap feeds than will calves.

If a farmer is purchasing cattle to rough through the winter and run on grass the following summer, steers of the above class usually will be found the most satisfactory. This season, however, the man who purchased light two year olds last fall, roughed them through the winter and pastured them in the summer sold them as grass-fat three year olds to a much better advantage than did men who had the lighter grass-fat two year olds.

### Two Year Olds in Favor

A great majority of feeders prefer to handle two-year-old steers. These steers may be found in an assortment of weights varying from 800 pounds up to 1,050 pounds. Usually this difference in weight is due very largely to the amount of flesh the steers carry. Two year olds have an advantage over yearlings and calves in that they are more mature and are able better to withstand adverse weather conditions; hence they need less shelter. They will also consume a larger proportion of roughness to grain in the feedlot.

The grade of steers that bring \$8 on the market as calves and \$7 as yearlings usually can be purchased at around \$6 to \$6.40 as two year olds. This gives the feeder somewhat more margin on which to operate, although proportionately less of the finished weight will represent gains made in the feedlot; consequently he must look for his profit more in the margin between the cost price and the selling price than in the gains he makes on the animals.

Two-year-old steers put in in the fall weighing in the neighborhood of 900 pounds, carried several months on rough feed and then finished on grain usually go back to market some time between February and June weighing from 1,200 to 1,400 pounds, and in most years find a ready sale. There are times, however, when buyers discriminate against such steers because of excess weight.

### Few Three Year Olds Fed

At the present time three-year-old steers are fed only in small numbers. It is doubtful whether a feeder is justified in taking out three-year-old steers, because generally such steers carry sufficient flesh to cause packers to bid on them in the fall, and then when fed they are likely to come back to the market weighing more than the trade demands. Packers are very adverse to heavy cattle at certain seasons of the year. Furthermore, animals of the age and weight of three year olds usually make gains at a high cost. It requires a large amount of feed to maintain their body weight. Usually three year olds as feeders sell at prices somewhat higher than two year olds, because of competition from the killers. Thin three year olds, of course, are an exception to this.

In summing up the above we may say that the age of cattle to select depends very largely upon the conditions under which they are to be fed. If a feeder is desirous of mak-

ing a short feed and turning his cattle back in a short time, say in sixty, ninety or 100 days, he certainly should take out three year olds or fleshy two year olds. If he expects to rough the cattle along in the stalk-fields and on hay until about the first of the year and then finish them for an April market, two-year-old steers would probably answer his requirements best. If he has in mind a longer feeding period and has good shelter, yearlings or calves would prove highly satisfactory.

### Calves Require Long Feeding

One thing to remember, however, is that calves should not be taken out with the expectation of finishing them as baby beefs short of eight months, and some feeders have come to the conclusion that ten months is even better. Yearlings can be finished in somewhat less time than calves, although the feeder should figure on taking out yearlings that he would need to hold from seven to eight months in order to make the proper finish.

The kinds of feeds a feeder has available must also be taken into consideration in deciding what age of feeder cattle to buy. Where it is a question of disposing of a considerable amount of grain and only a limited quantity of hay, the younger cattle doubtless would answer the purpose best. If, as usually is the case, the object in buying steers is to use up available feed in the stalk fields as well as considerable hay of poor quality, then the best plan would be to buy older steers, rough them several months and finish them on a grain and hay ration.

At the Missouri river markets, cattle generally are divided into three classes: Westerns, southern and natives. Westerns originate in the range country and have been raised under range conditions. They generally are dehorned and are more or less branded. While of good breeding and well built, they are likely to be wild and are entirely unaccustomed to man on foot.

### Classes of Feeders

Southern are of more or less inferior breeding, usually small for their age, narrow bodied, off color and rather plain in quality. They generally come from Texas and other southwest states. Often they are transplanted to northern ranges as two year olds. It is not uncommon to see trainloads of these cattle moving north in June and July, and even later.

Natives usually are seen in bunch-

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## DENVER TO GET CATTLE BUREAU

United States Department of Agriculture Planning to Aid Industry thru Large Centers

Provision is made in an announcement by the Department of Agriculture for the establishment in Denver and other large live stock centers of bureaus to collect and disseminate information and data regarding live stock and meat products, according to information received by J. B. Killian of Denver, assistant secretary of the market committee of the American National Livestock Association.

Development of Denver as a great live stock market may lead to the establishment there of a permanent agency representing the American National Live Stock Association. The prominence of Denver in this industry and its central location resulting in the establishment of the headquarters of the market committee there provide a precedent which the government and the association may recognize.

### \$65,000 for Bureau

Mr. Killian received information on two propositions of vital interest to stockmen. One concerned the appropriation of \$65,000 for the establishment of the market bureau.

The other was a telegram from E. L. Burke of Omaha, vice president of the National Association, giving notice that the national conference on marketing and farm credits, to meet in Chicago Dec. 4 to 8, would give over the third day of the convention entirely to the live stock industry. Prominent speakers from all over the country will discuss problems of vital interest to the stock raiser, the commission men, the stockyards man and the ultimate consumer.

### Resolutions Sent Out

The following resolution was sent out to live stock men all over the country from the office of Mr. Killian:

"Resolved, That it is the sense of the market committee of the American National Live Stock Association that, at the proper time, after the plans of the bureau of markets have been perfected and the collection and dissemination of statistical information has been inaugurated, there should be established, at one of the

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Receipts for Years Ending December 31, 1915-1914

	1915	1914	Increase	PER CENT INCREASE
Cattle	1,218,342	938,817	279,525	29.8
Hogs	2,642,973	2,258,620	384,353	17.0
Sheep	3,268,279	3,113,889	154,390	4.9
Horses & Mules	41,679	30,688	10,991	35.8
Carloads	101,786	83,139	18,647	22.4

## Why The Increase?

Because it is a Clean Market for Clean Live Stock.

It is the most modern Live Stock Market in the world, over \$1,600,000.00 having been expended during the past six years for improvements and betterments, insuring shippers the very best and most efficient facilities for the prompt handling and marketing of stock.

The South Omaha Stock Yards are open for inspection, as well as for the handling of your live stock.

Enormous increase in Live Stock receipts during 1915 over previous years means

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