

Improving Production Efficiency and Profitability of Beef Production on the Northern Great Plains

More Grazing, Less Feeding, & Value-Added Beef

One Challenge:

Cutting Winter Feeding Costs

Our long cold winters present a large challenge to the efficiency and profitability of calf production. Grazing standing perennial grass as much as possible may reduce cow costs without reducing productivity especially if calving in the spring.

- Standing Altai wildrye averaged 9.7 & 8.0% CP during the winters of 05/06 & 06/07.

- Standing Altai wildrye averaged 57.5 & 52.1% In Vitro Digestible Dry Matter during the winters of 05/06 & 06/07.

Another Challenge:

Reducing Cost of Growing Yearlings

Reducing the cost of gain for growing yearlings can increase the efficiency and profitability of growing and fattening cattle here.

-Yearling steers gained 2.64 lbs/day between September 22nd and November 4th while grazing standing then windrowed Proso millet.

-Yearling heifers gained 2.58 lbs/day between November 9th and December 8th while grazing windrowed sorghum-sudangrass.



A Third Challenge:

Making Our Beef More Valuable

Altering the chemical composition of beef in respect to fatty acids and other constituents to make it more profitable to sell to health conscious consumers.

- Supplementing yearling steers with 2 lbs/day of treated flaxseed while they grazed Proso millet & grass pasture then while they were pen fed moderate amounts of rolled barley & grass hay for 33 days before slaughter resulted in beef with higher levels of monounsaturated and total unsaturated fatty acids. This also led to twice as many steers grading High Select or better.

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