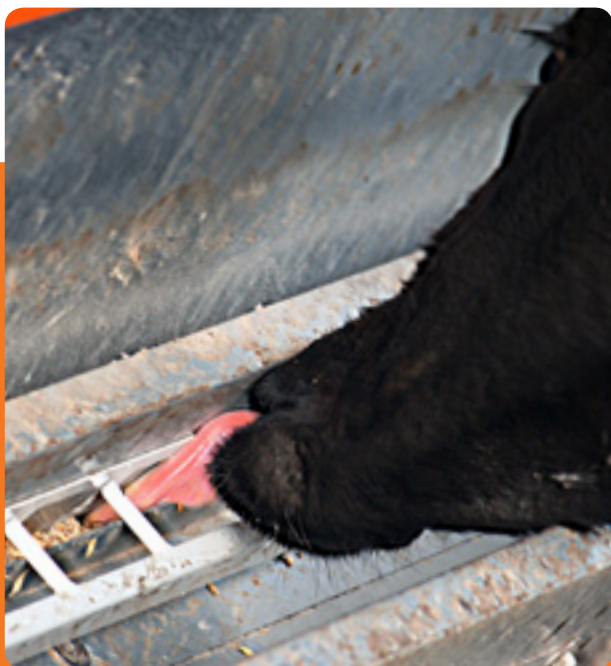


An on-farm trial found that mob of weaner cattle supplemented with sorghum through Advantage Feeders grew at a considerably higher rate than another mob that only had access to pasture.



Trial outline

Quantity:	50 weaners in the creep feeding group and 50 in the control group. Both groups made up of an equal amount of steers and heifers.
Start date:	1/12/14
Finish date:	10/3/14
Duration:	100 days
Stock density:	1 weaner / 6 acres
Feeding program:	
<i>Supplement group:</i>	0.8kg/day of sorghum
<i>Control group:</i>	no supplement

Sorghum supplement lifts liveweight

Background:

Balancing the diet of weaner cattle grazing dry pasture with a high energy feed, like sorghum, increases weight gain. However, the added animal value needs to be higher than the feed input cost.

Advantage Feeders provide a simple system to provide the animal's rumen with a regular supplement while controlling the quantity of feed consumed.

Results:

Weaners that were supplement fed with Advantage Feeders had an average starting and finishing weight of 259.0kg and 354.5kg, gaining 95.5kg.

Sorghum consumption amounted to 80kg/weaner.

The control group had an average starting and finishing weight of 261.0kg and 334kg, gaining only 73kg.

With a growth rate of 0.73kg/day in the control group, it would take an extra 31 days to equal the weight gain of the supplement group.

This reduced growing time is crucial for heifers being bred at 15 months. It is also important to produce saleable animals before pasture quality deteriorates leading into winter.

Weaner supplement trial

Opportunity for higher profits

The trial was only conducted for 100 days. There is potential to start supplementing yearlings earlier, immediately after weaning in August/September.

While the supplement group achieved a high feed conversion of 3.13:1 (sorghum consumption:weight gain), they only consumed 0.8kg/day of sorghum. If the feed rate was doubled it is likely the growth rates would have increased with a similar feed conversion.

Expenditure, income and profit

Trial period (days)	100
Sorghum used/head (kg)	80
Sorghum cost/tonne (\$/kg)	\$260.00
Total feed cost/head	\$20.80
Depreciation cost*	\$5.70
Feeding cost**	\$2.40
TOTAL ADDED EXPENSE/HEAD	\$28.90
Average added liveweight gain/day (kg)	0.225
Total added liveweight/head (kg)	22.5
Value of liveweight (\$/kg)	\$2.20
TOTAL ADDED INCOME/HEAD	\$49.50
TOTAL ADDED PROFIT/HEAD	\$20.60

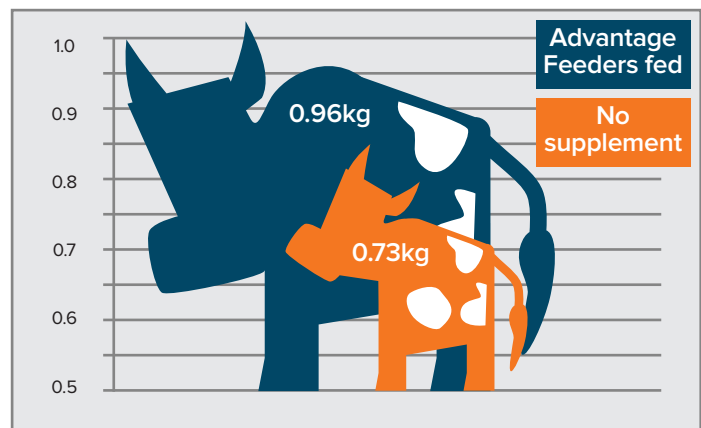
* This assumes the depreciation rate is 15%, the investment of one feeder is \$3,800, supplement feeding accounted for 50% of the use of the feeder each year and 50 weaners fed from the feeder.

**This is calculated by multiplying: filling the feeders twice, by one hour each fill, labour is \$60/hour and 50 weaners fed from the feeder.

Profit increased by **\$20.60** per head and weight gain by **31%**



Daily weight gain comparison



Total added income versus total added expense

