

## **The Importance of Feed Efficiency**

Are you ready for higher feed prices? Balanced rations and good management can affect feed efficiency and cost of production, however studies show that approximately 40% of the differences in feed efficiency are accounted for by genetics. Reduced feed usage means higher profits from your next calf crop. What does this mean in dollars and cents? A bull requiring two pounds less feed per pound of gain than another bull will transmit approximately 40% of that advantage or 0.8 pound less feed times one half (remember the bull contributes one half of the genetic material) per pound of gain to his offspring compared to the other bull. With ration costs approaching \$200.00 per ton and each animal gaining 800 pounds from weaning to harvest, the result is a savings in feed cost of \$32 per animal. If that bull sires 100 calves over his lifetime he will put \$3200 more in your bank account compared to the other bull. Can you afford NOT to use a bull with documented feed efficiency? Remember the benefits will continue to compound down the road as you save replacement females. You can inherit the difference in your herd.

## **Management of the Yearling Bull**

With proper care and management, your yearling bull can give you many years of good breeding performance. Adjusting to a new farm and new ration is a very critical time. While the bulls have been fed a 22% roughage ration on test, most producers adapt them to a higher roughage diet on their farm. It's important to remember that yearling bulls are still growing and will very likely lose some condition during the breeding season. A good guideline to follow is to feed about one pound of grain per hundred pounds of body weight with free-choice, high quality forage and free-choice of a quality salt and mineral mix. The bull should also be allowed a good pen size for adequate exercise.

At breeding time, it is generally recommended that a yearling bull be turned in with not more than 20 cows in a fairly small pasture. Exceeding this number of cows and forcing the bull to cover a large pasture with rough terrain may well lower the conception rate. And certainly the yearling bull should be grouped only with bulls his own weight and age to reduce injury problems from fighting. If at all possible, continue feeding some grain to the yearling bull through the breeding season to reduce his weight loss during this time. Yearling bulls should also continue to grow through the next winter. During that time he should be fed 1/2 - 1 pound of grain per 100 pounds of body weight, plus free-choice quality roughage, salt and mineral. A good parasite control program is also important.

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