



Western Beef
Development Centre

A Division of PAMI

SUPPLEMENTING BEEF COWS WITH DDGS

A VAN DE KERCKHOVE, HA LARDNER

OVERVIEW

- Efforts to reduce feed costs have led to increased use of low-quality forages in beef cow diets. However, these forage types require supplementation to meet nutritional requirements, especially in the 2nd and 3rd trimester of gestation
- Protein supplements are ideal for low-quality forages, as the nitrogen supplied by the crude protein optimizes rumen health and function
- Expansion in the ethanol industry has subsequently increased the production of distillers grains, nutritionally dense ethanol co-products particularly high in crude protein

OBJECTIVES

- Compare DDGS to traditional supplement (rolled barley)
- Evaluate animal performance and forage displacement as a result of supplementation
- Estimate the economic feasibility of each supplementation system

RESULTS

- Cows supplemented with 100% DDGS, 50% DDGS and 50% rolled barley, and 100% rolled barley had body weight changes of 26, 19, and -5 lbs, respectively
- Cost per head per day were \$2.63, \$2.66, and \$2.71 for 100% DDGS, 50% DDGS and 50% rolled barley, and 100% rolled barley, respectively
- Industry yardage costs would be substantially less than research yardage costs due to reduced labour for fencing, watering, and feeding ie \$0.45/hd/d vs \$1.20/hd/d

SUMMARY

Grazing crop residues is one method to extend the grazing season and manage winter feed costs. Cows supplemented with DDGS showed greater weight and body condition changes than cows supplemented with the same amount of rolled barley. This is likely due to the greater nutrient (energy and protein) density of DDGS. Replacing rolled barley with DDGS also reduced feeding costs per cow per day. These results indicate the potential to use DDGS as a supplement for beef cows consuming low quality forages.