



Western Beef
Development Centre

A Division of PAMI

UTILIZING CROP RESIDUES IN BEEF COW DIETS

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OVERVIEW

- Winter feeding beef cows is a major contributor to the overall cost of production for cow-calf producers
- Cow-calf producers have become interested in including crop residues in beef cow diets because of their potential to reduce winter feed costs
- To explore the idea of enhancing crop-livestock integration and enterprise diversity, a three-year study has started in the fall of 2009 to compare performance and economics of beef cows grazing crop residues compared to cows fed a roughage-based ration in drylot pens

OBJECTIVES

- To determine the effect of field grazing crop residue on beef cow performance (condition and body weight)
- To determine the effect of field grazing crop residue on cow reproductive performance
- To determine if oat/pea chaff or oat/pea chaff/straw can provide the majority of mature pregnant beef cows' nutrient requirements with minimal supplementation
- Characterization of the nutritive value of oat/pea chaff or oat/pea chaff/straw
- Evaluate each cow wintering system economically for total costs and the potential effect on net returns per cow
- To determine the effect of grazing crop residue over consecutive winters on cow condition and performance and the following year's crop

SUMMARY

- A significantly unused resource for many grain and cattle operations is the use of small grain and pulse crop chaff for extending the grazing season and provide adequate nutrition
- In Saskatchewan, thousands of acres of crop residues (small grain cereals, pulse, oilseeds) are available each year for livestock grazing and represent a tremendous resource for Saskatchewan's cattle industry