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Improving Heifer Development Programs Using Precision Technology and DDGS

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Beef Day 2022

Improving heifer development programs using precision technology and DDGS

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Objective

Determine how precision supplemental feeding on a range setting impacts heifer growth development.

Study Description

Heifers were stratified into two groups based on initial body weight and each group was randomly assigned to one of two treatments: a control group (n=30) and a precision group (n=30). Treatment groups are separated into different pastures to graze dormant native range from November to April. Groups are rotated monthly to reduce individual pasture influence. Heifers in the control group are supplemented as a group and bunk fed 5lb/head/day with dried distiller grain pellets (DDGS). Heifers within the precision group will be supplemented individually using the SmartFeed system (C-Lock Inc. Rapid City, SD) and offered 5lb/head/day DDGS pellets. Individual daily weight and daily rate of gain will be measured within both groups using SmartScale technology. A time series trend analysis will be used to forecast animal BW at time of breeding, ensure individual heifer gain is satisfactory and adjust amount of supplement delivered to ensure animals are achieving target weight gains.

Take Home Points

We expect animals under the precision supplementation protocol will be more uniform at time of breeding, have higher conception rates, and reduce supplemental waste compared to the control group.

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