Sweet Clover Hay for Beef Cattle

The feeding trial was conducted at the Northwest Experiment Station at Crookston, during the winter of 1915-16, with the object in view of giving sweet clover hay a trial as a winter roughage for winter growing, yearling beef cattle.

Results.

The steers in lot 2 receiving sweet clover hay, corn silage and oat straw made a noticeably larger gain than the steers in lot 1 receiving alfalfa hay, corn silage and oat straw. In considering this fact it must be kept in mind that this is a report of only one trial with a comparatively small number of steers and cannot be considered as conclusive until further experimental work comparing the two feeds has been done. The significant thing about the gains made by these two steers was the fact that the cattle receiving the sweet clover hay did winter successfully, made a creditable gain and compared favorably with the cattle receiving the alfalfa hay.

A study of the figures given for lot 1 shows that the steer in this lot which received sweet clover hay, corn silage and oat straw without the corning silage made an average daily gain of 0.45 pounds, while those in Lot 2 receiving corn silage in addition to the sweet clover hay and oat straw made an average daily gain of 0.16 pounds. It will be noticed further that with corn silage at $3.25 per ton, sweet clover at $8.00 per ton and oat straw at $1.00 per ton the cost per pound gain in Lot 2 was $0.41, thus showing a reduction of a little over $0.03 in the cost per pound gain due to the addition of corn silage.

It could be said of the eighteen steers in Lots 1, 2, and 3 at the close of the trial, that they had all grown successfully, were well put on, and were in good, healthy, thrifty condition suitable to going on pasture and looked ready to start right out going good gains. None of them were fleshly enough to class as butcher steers. It was difficult to detect any difference at all in appearance as compared with the steers in lots 1 and 2 though the steers in lot 3 hardly looked up to the equal in condition of those in lots 1 and 2.

The steers in lot 4 were fed on a ration of approximately fifteen pounds of corn silage per head per day, all the threshed sweet clover straw and all the oat straw they cared to eat. It was the purpose of this ration to determine whether or not the threshed sweet clover straw had any value as feed in the form in which it comes from the threshing machine. Because the steers in this lot became so thin in condition and were doing so poorly that the ration was kept at the winter, some ground oats was fed until the weather began to warm up in the spring. The steers in this lot gained on 27 pounds of ground oats during the entire winter period of 176 days and that by charging sweet clover straw at $1.50 per ton, oat straw at $0.65 per ton, and corn silage at $4.25 per ton and corn silage at $4.25 per...