Supplementing Cattle: Is It Really Worth It? Feeding Heifers in a North Dakota Winter

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Many cattle producers spend money on supplements that do not have an impact on the weight gain of their cattle. This research will help producers decide what they need to feed their cattle to help them gain weight most economically. Twenty heifers were randomly selected into four groups with five heifers in each group. Groups with independent variables were in pens with windbreak and shelter. The first feed period was 50 days. The first group was fed hay and a Crystalyx Brigade supplement barrel. The second group was fed hay and a Crystalyx BFG-30% supplement barrel. The third group was fed hay and six pounds of corn per day. The control group was out in a pasture with hay and a Crystalyx Brigade supplement barrel. The heifers were weighed after the 50 days. The heifers in the control group lost an average of 10 pounds per head. The first group lost an average of 2 pounds per head. The second group neither gained nor lost weight. The third group gained an average of 43 pounds per head. Corn also had the lowest cost per pound of gain at $1.08. All heifers were then put back out into the pasture with hay and a Crystalyx Brigade supplement barrel. After the next 60 days, all groups of heifers gained relatively the same amount of weight. It can be concluded that it is not economical for producers to buy supplements.

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