



Research

Reducing Winter Feed Wastage

"Feed wastage study"

Project No. 0007-030

Research Institution: Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development

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Objectives: To determine the wastage when silage or hay is fed on the ground vs. in a feeder, and when bales are processed or unrolled.

Background: Winter feed costs account for 70-75% of cow-calf operating costs. Wasting less feed will help to reduce this cost. While bale processors and portable bunk feeders have been proposed as ways to reduce feed wastage, their benefits have not been proven.

These researchers are comparing the effects of feeding silage in two ways (fed on the ground vs. fed in portable bunks) to the effects of feeding

high moisture hay in three ways (unrolled onto the ground vs. processed and fed on the ground vs. processed and fed in portable bunks). The amount of feed delivered and wasted (e.g. fine material) will be weighed daily. Hay, silage and processed feed samples and fines will be analyzed for particle size and nutrient content. Input costs and feed savings will be analyzed to calculate the net benefit of the various strategies.

Implications of the Research: Economically sound approaches to reduce winter feed wastage will improve net returns for producers.

