

An on-farm trial found that creep feeding a group of Charolais calves from approximately 10 weeks of age to weaning had significantly higher growth rates compared to a group of calves that had no supplement feed.



Creep feeding boosts weight gain by 20%

Background:

Creep feeding offers farmers a huge opportunity to increase beef production/Ha by reducing pasture consumption and increasing growth rates.

Creep feeding isn't primarily about feed conversion but getting young stock to consume and convert pasture at a much younger age.

Trial results:

Calves that were creep fed with Advantage Feeders averaged a weight of 346kg at weaning while the calves in the control mob averaged only 307kg.

With an average weight of approximately 110kg at the beginning of the trial, the creep fed group averaged a daily weight gain of 1.69kg/day while the control mob averaged 1.41kg/day.

Other benefits:

- The calves from the creep feeding group were much closer to achieving goals of having heavy heifers for breeding at 15 months of age and bulls in forward condition at 24 months of age.
- The creep fed calves were imprinted with the knowledge to feed from feeders at weaning, reducing the occurrence of a weaning check.

Trial outline

Quantity: 30 in the creep feeding group and 30 in the control group

Calving period: 1/8/14 to 30/9/14

Start date: 5/11/14

**Finish/
Weaning date:** 23/3/14

Duration: 140 days

Breed: Charolais

Feeding program:

Creep feeding group: 30 days: 0.5kg/day of pellets
30 days: 0.65kg/day of 50:50 pellets/barley
80 days: 0.8kg/day of barley

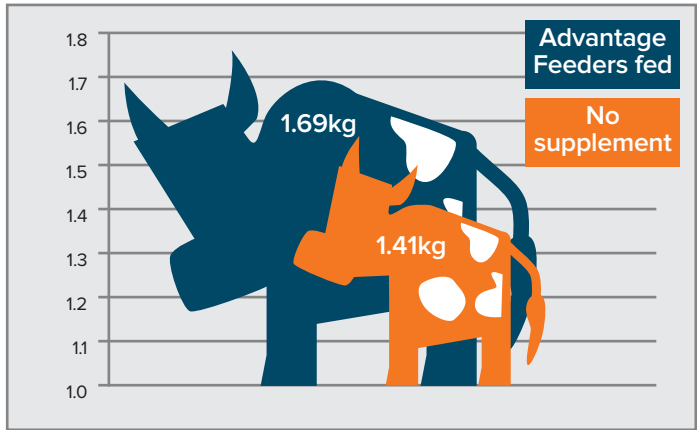
Control group: No supplement



Creep feeding trial



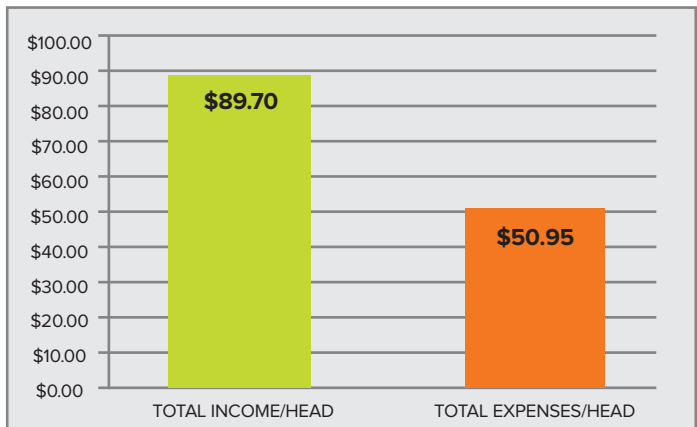
Daily weight gain comparison



Expenditure, income and profit

Trial period (days)	140
Barley used/head (kg)	73.75
Pellets used/head (kg)	24.75
Barley cost/tonne (\$/kg)	\$0.34
Pellets cost/tonne (\$/kg)	\$0.50
Total feed cost/head	\$37.45
Depreciation cost/head*	\$7.50
Feeding cost/head**	\$6.00
TOTAL ADDED EXPENSE/HEAD	\$50.95
Total added liveweight/head (kg)	39.0
Value of liveweight (\$/kg)	\$2.30
TOTAL ADDED INCOME/HEAD	\$89.70
TOTAL ADDED PROFIT/HEAD	\$38.75

Added income versus expenses per head



* This assumes the depreciation rate is 15%, the investment of one feeder is \$3,000, creep feeding accounted for 50% of the use of the feeder each year and 30 calves fed from the feeder.

**This is calculated by multiplying: filling the feeders three times, by one hour each fill, labour is \$60/hour and 30 calves fed from the feeder.

About the trial operators

Jim Wedge and Jackie Chard operate a Charolais and Angus breeding operation with properties at Warwick, QLD and Glen Innes, NSW.

They have a strong focus on producing low risk, thick, polled bulls, bred with an MSA targeted approach.

Opportunity for higher profits

Cereal feeds are currently above their median prices.

If barley and pellets prices were \$250/tonne, \$400/tonne respectively, and 50 calves were used with one feeder, profit increases to \$50.86/head.

Comments from the trial operator

"Soon after the trial commenced, the creep-fed calves looked noticeably different to the control group.

I am very impressed with the engineering of the Advantage Feeders Creep Gates. They make the

creep feeding system very easy to set up and manage.

I was worried about how the cows would treat the Creep Gates. However, I have not seen the cows put pressure on the them."

Jim Wedge