Mexican Steer Performance in South and East Texas

B.G. Warrington, J.W. Holloway,
F.M. Rouquette Jr. and C.R. Long

Texas A&M Agricultural Research & Extension Center at Uvalde

BOTTOM LINE

There is a strong genotype X environment interaction in both forages and performance of Mexican Steers. The ADG of Mexican steers on winter annuals at Overton was 1.82 lb, and for native range at Uvalde, ADG was 1.10 lb. Feedlot performance was acceptable for Mexican steers from both environments (Overton-3.17 lb/d and Uvalde-3.35 lb/d).

Summary

- If the environment and the types of forage to be utilized can be described then steer performance can be predicted to help producers determine if Mexican steers will fit their program.
- If Mexican steers are to be utilized then the producer will need to have a tight set of rules for the purchase of the steers.
- Currently the Mexican description of steers classified as number 1's, 2's or 3's is inadequate and should be upgraded to accurately describe the type of steers being purchased.

Introduction

Importations of steers from Mexico have reached as high as 3 million head per year, but generally average approximately 1 million head per year. Typically it was felt that these steers would grow out slowly and never perform well compared with available domestic steers. Texas has vastly different forage resources available for growing Mexican steers. Two locations within Texas were chosen to conduct this experiment, Overton (lush, semi-tropical) and Uvalde (dry, semi-arid). These locations would provide large differences in type and availability of forage for growing Mexican steers. The purpose of this experiment was to quantify the performance of Mexican steers in two different environments and to quantify Mexican steer performance in the feedlot depending on previous growing environment.

Experiment

Four hundred and thirty eight (438) head of Mexican steers were gathered at Uvalde in the fall of 1992 and fed hay for 2 weeks. At the end of the two weeks, 120 head of the steers were moved to Overton for grazing on winter annuals: the remaining steers were grazed on native range at Uvalde and supplemented with a 41 % cotton seed cake at the rate of 0.75 lb/head. At Uvalde, as winter oats became available, 100 steers were moved to oat grazing. When the oats were grazed out, these same steers were then moved to graze sorghum alum pasture until being shipped to the feedlot. The steers were weighed, visual condition scored (1-thin, 9-fat) and frame scored (1-short, 9-tall) at the beginning of the experiment and each time they were moved to new pastures during the experiment. All steers were fed at two commercial feedlots near Hereford, Texas.

Results

At Overton the steers were grazed on winter annuals resulting in higher daily gains and fewer grazing days to the feedlot and heavier weights upon entering the feedlot. Steers with greater than 25% Brahman influence had lower ADG and higher costs of gain in the feedlot than steers with less than 25% Brahman influence. The steers at Uvalde were not separated by

percent Brahman influence. Results from Uvalde were that steers had lower daily gains and more grazing days to the feedlot than steers grazed at Overton. The steers at Uvalde that were on improved forages did have higher gains than steers on native range alone but due to the number of days (75) that improved forages could be grazed they were not significantly higher. In the feedlot all the steers had acceptable performance with only slight differences due to previous grazing environments. The steers could not be compared directly due to the use of a commercial feedlot and the fluctuations in the fed cattle market, which resulted in the steers from Uvalde being sold with less days on feed and at a lighter finished weight than the steers from Overton.

Performance of Mexican Steers.

		Overton		Uvalde	
Trait		<25% Brah	>25% Brah	Native	Improved
Pasture Phase					
On weight		439	424	416	418
Off weight		763	739	659	672
Grazing days		179	179	236	236
ADG		1.84	1.80	1.07	1.13
Feedlot Phase					
Days on feed		148	145	125	125
Pay weight (lbs)		1194	1167	1075	1091
ADG		3.17	3.16	3.33	3.37
Feed:Gain		7.9	8.5	7.7	7.4
Cost$/lb gain		.4995	.5367	.4654	.4511
Carcass Traits					
HCW		762	756	671	
USDA YG %					
	No. 1	30.5	44.9	12.5	3.9
	No. 2	42.4	42.9	69.2	63.0
	No. 3	18.6	12.2	18.3	33.1
	No. 4	8.5	0	0	0
USDA QG %					
	Choice	57.6	59.2	29.8	28.3
	Select	40.7	40.8	70.2	71.7
	Standard	1.7	0	0	0