



Bunk Management Economics (Part 3 of the Bunk Management Series)

In the research done by Galyean, et al. at NMSU, fluctuating feed deliveries by +/- 10% every day resulted in 7% poorer gains and feed conversions when compared to steady feed deliveries.

If we model a comparison of typical gain and feed conversion with gain and conversion that is 7% better, we can establish an economic difference between the two.

The following table shows the economic advantage per head of 7% better gains and feed conversions at different weight gains and different corn prices:

	<u>Corn Price per Bushel</u>							
	\$2.50	\$3.00	\$3.50	\$4.00	\$4.50	\$5.00	\$5.50	\$6.00
500# Gain	\$21	\$24	\$26	\$28	\$30	\$32	\$34	\$36
600# Gain	\$25	\$28	\$30	\$33	\$35	\$38	\$40	\$43
700# Gain	\$30	\$32	\$35	\$38	\$41	\$44	\$47	\$50
800# Gain	\$33	\$37	\$40	\$43	\$46	\$50	\$53	\$56

These numbers are based on actual closeout data. Improved feed efficiency reduced feed costs per head. Finish weights were unchanged in this model, so improved gain reduced yardage and interest expense.

The research trial by Bierman & Pritchard at SDSU was done to compare bunk management technique, specifically to see if managing feed deliveries could improve feed efficiency.

In that trial finish weights and daily gains were the same in both treatments, but DM feed conversions were improved by 11% (6.15 vs. 6.90) when bunks were slick 70% of the time compared to when bunks were slick 40% of the time.

In that trial, improved bunk management was worth the following per head at different corn prices:

	<u>Corn Price per Bushel</u>							
	\$2.50	\$3.00	\$3.50	\$4.00	\$4.50	\$5.00	\$5.50	\$6.00
465# Gain	\$21	\$23	\$26	\$29	\$32	\$35	\$38	\$41

While the daily gain and finish weight was unchanged, you can see the value of improving the feed efficiency through tighter bunk management.

The results of these two trials were consistent; the value of improved bunk management was \$20-40 per head on yearlings and \$30-50 per head on calves, depending on corn price. These savings are based on management, and would not be affected by the purchase and sales prices on the cattle.

There is little to no cost in applying better bunk management. All it takes is a little more time, more attention to details, and a lot of practice.

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