2008

Progress Report: Projecting Weights within Lot Scales

Daryl R. Strohbehn

Iowa State University

Garland Dahlke

Iowa State University

W. Darrell Busby

Iowa State University

Shawn Shouse

Iowa State University

Dallas L. Maxwell

Iowa State University

Recommended Citation

Available at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/ans_air/vol654/iss1/32

This Beef is brought to you for free and open access by the Animal Science Research Reports at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Animal Industry Report by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
Progress Report:
Projecting Weights within Lot Scales

A. S. Leaflet R2283

Daryl Strohbehn, extension beef specialist; Garland Dahlke, extension program specialist; Darrell Busby, extension livestock specialist; Shawn Shouse, extension agricultural engineer; Dallas Maxwell, agricultural specialist

Summary
A total of 660 head of calves, yearlings and finished cattle at two locations were involved in evaluating the relationship between front end weight and whole body weights. A stepwise linear regression model utilizing front end weight, animal sex and cattle type (calf, yearling, finished) predicted whole body weight with an r² of .959. If an electronic identification system can be developed to work in concert with a digital scale system for recording front end weights at a water fountain, it may be possible to monitor weight and gain, therefore, allowing for sorting market ready cattle.

Introduction
Beef marketing systems today incorporate premiums and discounts associated with quality grade, yield grade and carcass weight. Knowing where cattle are at in their growth curve is imperative to optimizing marketing decisions. Weighing feedlot cattle on a routine basis is not practical due to labor cost, shrink issues, and potential injury and bruising. However, if low cost electronic methodology could be incorporated into the existing lot facilities tracking growth may be possible.

Material and Methods
This project has three phases. First, development of total body weight estimates based off of cattle front end weights; second, development of low cost methods of detecting cattle identification and weights within the existing feedlot structure; third, testing the validity and accuracy of the system. For this system to be effective and applicable it has to be simple, dependable and economical.

Starting in the summer and fall of 2006 existing research and extension feedout cattle at three locations were routinely weighed. While doing this a small digital platform scale was placed in the existing working facility to capture front end weights just prior to regular whole body weights. At two locations on five different dates a total of 660 cattle were processed through the system.

Stepwise linear regression within PC SAS version 9.1 was utilized to analyze the data. Sources of variation in predicting whole body weight were front end weights, sex, location, type of cattle (calf, yearling, finished) and date. Significance value used for entry into the prediction model is 0.05.

Results
Front end weight has proven thus far to be a good predictor of total body weight. As table 1 indicates front end weight, sex (1=steer, 2=heifer) and cattle type (1=calf, 2=yearling, 3=finished) were significant indicators of total body weight in feedlot cattle. The full model had an R² of .959, however, front end weight accounted for 99 percent of that value. Figure 1 shows a plot of the data collected thus far.

Table 1. Linear regression model for predicting total body weight in feedlot cattle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Parameter Estimate</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Significance Level</th>
<th>Model R Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>152.4581</td>
<td>15.4681</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front end weight</td>
<td>1.1018</td>
<td>.0467</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
<td>.9461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>-59.3011</td>
<td>8.2077</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
<td>.9557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle Type</td>
<td>142.0625</td>
<td>10.1189</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
<td>.9590</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Implications
This project and data analysis will assist feedlot operators in determining when cattle have reached their optimum end point harvest weight in an economical manner.

Acknowledgements
The authors wish to thank the Rod Berryman, ISU Beef Ruminant Nutrition Farm, Ames; Perry Beedle Feedlot, Oakland; Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity Cooperative; and the Iowa Beef Center for mini-grant funding.
Figure 1. Plot of Front End vs. Total Feedlot Body Weight