

Rate of Gain Example

Rate of Gain contributed one third of the total points in this year's competition. This portion of the competition was included to reinforce to youth the importance of this performance measure when considering the economic value of raising a market animal. Measuring an animal's efficiency in converting feed nutrients into increased body mass is an important variable in the cost to finish an animal.

Example:

Imagine two steer calves placed on feed. Both steers are gaining an average of 3.5 pounds per day (1.59kg/day). Over time, we measure that Steer A consumes an average of 21lbs (9.53kg) DM per day, which equates to a 6:1 feed to gain ratio. Steer B consumes 28lb/day (12.70kg/day), a F:G of 8:1, and therefore is less feed efficient than Steer A. Based on a ration cost of \$187/tonne* (or 0.085 cents per pound), Steer A costs \$1.79 to feed per day. Steer B costs \$2.38 per day. If both steers reach their finish weight in 200 days, the less feed efficient animal (Steer B) would cost the producer \$119 more to finish than an animal with better feed efficiency (Steer A). (**Note: this example may not reflect current feed costs.*)

This example illustrates the importance of improving and maximizing feed efficiency in cattle on feed, which can make or break profitability in the feeding sector.