

Note: Last year the “Cowboy Articles” were written to help you with your beef project. Remember when Cowboy did this?



Title: I Weighed-in My Steer, Now What?

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On 3/19/08 Cowboy, an Angus/Charolais cross, weighed 725lbs. He was a large frame steer (score 6) and I estimated he should weigh 1375lbs at fair time. In order for Cowboy to make that market weight he had to gain 3.80 lbs per day.

On 4/06/08 Cowboy weighed 780 lbs; he had gained 3.06 lbs per day. That was below his estimated weight gain on my growth chart! I was feeding Cowboy 6 scoops of rolled barley/corn, (twice a day) which was 18 pounds per day. I thought that was more than enough! Why did he not gain more?

I noticed that Cowboy was cleaning up his grain and would come running when it was time to feed him. He was telling me he wanted more. When I weighed a scoop of grain it weighed 2 lbs, not what I originally thought! I had better increase his feed!

I then began giving him 9 scoops of corn (4.5 per feeding) which was challenging him to eat more. He left just a little grain and when the grain was cleaned up I knew it was time to give him more. (Cowboy should have been eating at least 2% of his body weight in grain, per day, which was $780 \times 2\% = 15.6$ lbs per day or 8 scoops.)

I watched what I fed Cowboy; besides feeding him barley/corn and some Vigor Plus, I also fed him alfalfa hay. One day part of the bale was moldy; I did not feed him the parts that were molded. The bugs (bacteria) in a beef animal’s rumen can handle a little bit (less than 5%) of mold but I would not like to eat mold, so I tossed the bad parts away.

There was some hay and “gunk” in the bottom of the water tank, so I cleaned Cowboy’s water tank, which was filled every week depending on the number of animals that shared his tank.

This year’s steer



This year’s steer is an Angus cross, tag number “101”. No name yet. On February 19th he weighed 694 lbs. He is a small frame steer and should weigh 1150 lbs at fair time. Holy Cow is “101” dirty. The corrals have been extra muddy and I am hoping to wash him soon. “101” also has ringworm. Outbreaks of ringworm happen when there are several cloudy days. I think we had 30+ days without sun! I rubbed iodine on the spots and should see hair growing back in a couple of weeks. I’ve heard that toothpaste works too.



How is your project going? Here are some questions you can ask yourself.

- ✚ What does your grain weigh?
- ✚ Are you feeding 2% of body weight in grain a day?
- ✚ What is your target fair weight?
- ✚ What is your animal telling you?