

*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 19<sup>th</sup> 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?