WHOLE OATS vs. GROUND OATS
WITH EITHER LONG OR CHOPPED HAY

This trial was designed to compare whole oats and ground oats when fed to beef calves from about 360 to 500 pounds. Also, included was a comparison between long or chopped hay with each type of oats fed.

In November, 1970 Hereford steer calves weighing about 360 pounds were allotted at random to four lots. Two lots were self-fed whole oats, while two lots were self-fed oats ground through a 3/16 inch hammer mill screen. Hay was fed free choice either as long hay or chopped hay, so that each oat treatment (ground or whole) had both hay types. All lots also received alfalfa hay (2 lbs. / hd. / day) and minerals (0.2 lb. / hd. / day). The calves were fed a total of 72 days. One steer was removed from the ground oats-chopped hay lot because of a bloat condition.

Table 9 shows the trial data, and Table 10 shows the actual feed consumption for this trial.

Table 9. Results of Feeding Whole or Ground Oats with Either Long or Chopped Hay

	Ground Oats			Whole Oats	
Data on:	**Long Hay**	**Chopped Hay**		**Long Hay**	**Chopped Hay**
Number of head per lot	8	7		8	8
Avg. initial weight / head	359.4	362.9		360.0	360.6
Final weight / head	491.9	514.3		505.0	520.0
Gain per head	132.5	151.4		145.0	159.4
Days fed	72	72		72	72
Avg. daily gain / head	1.84	2.10		2.01	2.21
Pounds feed / hundred pound gain	594.6	604.7		663.2	635.1
Cost / hundred pound gain	$9.76	$9.82		$10.64	$10.02

Table 10. Actual Feed Consumption of Calves Fed Either Whole or Ground Oats with Either Long or Chopped Hay

	Ground Oats			Whole Oats	
	Long Hay	**Chopped Hay**		**Long Hay**	**Chopped Hay**
Ration per head per day:					
Whole oats (lbs.)	----	----		9.95	9.81
Ground oats (lbs.)	7.53	8.34		----	----
Chopped hay (lbs.)	----	2.36		----	2.26
Long hay (lbs.)	1.42	----		1.42	----
Alfalfa (lbs.)	1.80	1.83		1.80	1.80
Minerals (lb.)	0.19	0.19		0.19	0.19
Total feed (lbs.)	10.94	12.72		13.36	14.06
Cost per lot	$12.94	$14.87		$15.43	$15.97

Summary

The data for 1970-71 shows that calves fed whole oats outgained those fed ground oats (2.11 lbs. vs. 1.97 lbs.) but that they were not as efficient (649.2 lbs. vs. 599.6 lbs. feed per hundred pounds gain). Cost per hundred pounds gain would favor ground oats over whole oats ($9.79 vs. $10.33).

Calves fed chopped hay ate about 0.8 pound more hay per head per day than those fed long hay. The lots receiving chopped hay had feed costs $1.24 per head higher than did the lots receiving long hay.

Although the data is limited, indications are that grinding oats for calves does not improve rate of gain but may improve efficiency. Also, chopped hay improves rate of gain but also increases cost of feeding.