



Cattleman's Guide to Feedlot Lingo

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This circular is intended to familiarize cow-calf producers with the lingo and jargon which may be used by feedlot managers when discussing custom feeding and feedlots.

Portions adapted from: Albin, R.C. and G.B. Thompson. 1996. Cattle Feeding: A Guide to Management. Trafton Printing, Inc. Amarillo, TX.

Acidosis

An acute or chronic disease condition in feedlot cattle. Results from over-consumption or too rapid consumption of grain (starch). Acute cases generally result in death. Chronic cases are common, resulting in erratic intakes and/or reduced feed intake, but are probably hidden by pen intakes which tend to make average consumption look normal. It is one of the most costly problems in the feedlot industry. Sub-acute cases are difficult to diagnose, but symptoms include poor performance and poor conversions.

ADG

Average daily gain. The amount of gain divided by the number of days in the feeding period.

As Is Basis

Feed is sold 'as is,' with no adjustments for moisture content. *See also:* [Dry Matter Basis](#).

Bawling Calves

Calves which are taken directly off the cow and weaned at the feedlot, requiring additional labor and a greater degree of health management by the feedlot.

Breakeven

The sale price (\$/cwt) at which the customer or owner of the cattle does not make or lose money.

Buller(s)

Steers which are ridden by other steers in the pen (as with cows or heifers that are `bulling'). If problems persist, animals are usually removed from the pen to prevent bruising, injury, and reduction in performance of the other cattle.

Buller Pen

Pen in which bullers are kept.

Bunk Call or Bunk Reading

Deciding how much feed should be fed and when it should be fed.

Bunk Management

The philosophy the feedlot manager uses to determine the amount of feed to offer. *See also:* [Slick Bunk Management](#).

Bunk Reader

The person at the feedlot who is responsible for deciding the daily amount of feed the cattle are fed. This person is critical to the successful feeding of high concentrate diets. *See also* [Bunk Call](#), [Feed Call](#), [Missing the Call](#).

Byproducts

Feed ingredients which are produced during the production of human food products (e.g. corn sweetener, flour, cooking oils, sugar) or industrial products (e.g. ethanol, industrial oils). These byproducts are used as ingredients in some growing and finishing diets. *See also:* [Wet Distillers Grains](#), [Wet Corn Gluten Feed](#).

Calf-Feds

Cattle which are placed on feed as calves and finished at less than 16 months of age. Usually on feed for 150 to 200 days. These cattle are usually placed in the feedlot directly following weaning. *See also:* [Yearlings](#).

Carry Cattle

Cattle which are held at the packing plant over a holiday or weekend. These cattle may be penned at the plant for 36 to 84 hours before being slaughtered. These cattle are generally offered feed and water if held for more than 36 hours.

Charging the Bunk

Condition resulting from errors in bunk calls, feed delivery, or inclement weather. Cattle will rush to the bunk when the feed truck comes because they are hungry and overeat, resulting in problems such as acidosis, founder, and other digestive disturbances.

Chronic(s)

Cattle which fail to respond to treatment. *See also:* [Realizer](#) and [Railer](#).

Chute Charges

A fee charged by some feedlots each time cattle are worked through the chute.

Clean Bunk Management

Refers to the bunk management style in which cattle clean up all the feed offered every day. Feed call is increased if cattle have 'slicked the bunk.' *See also:* [Charging the Bunk](#), [Bunk Management](#), and [Slicked Up](#).

Close-Outs

A detailed description of pen performance, feed intake, death loss, and profit or loss. A close-out is generated each time a pen of cattle is sold. Can be calculated on a 'deads-in' or 'deads-out' basis.

Company Cattle

Cattle which are owned and fed by the feedlot. *See also:* [Customer Cattle](#).

Consulting Nutritionist, Feed Company

A nutritionist employed by a feed company who assists the feedlot with professional opinions on rations, supplements, feed additives, and management practices. The feed company provides these services when the feedlot purchases supplements or other feed ingredients from the feed company. *See also:* [Consulting Nutritionist, Private](#).

Consulting Nutritionist, Private

A private nutritionist hired by the feedlot to give professional opinions on rations, supplements, feed additives, and management practices. Usually paid on a retainer plus a per head fee. *See also:* [Consulting Nutritionist, Feed Company.](#)

Consulting Veterinarian

A veterinarian hired by the feedlot to consult on animal health related issues such as vaccines, treatments, etc. Usually paid on a retainer plus a per head fee.

Cost of Gain

Total of all feedlot-related costs (feed, yardage, processing, medicine, death loss) divided by total gain during the feeding period. Can be calculated on a 'deads-in' or 'deads-out' basis.

Custom Feedyard

A feedyard which feeds, manages, and markets cattle for customers. Fees are charged for materials and services.

Customer Cattle

Cattle which are owned by an investor, rancher, or other client of the feedlot and fed and managed for a fee. *See also:* [Company Cattle.](#)

Dark Cutter(s)

Carcasses which have muscle tissue which is dark colored rather than the desirable cherry red. Usually the result of depletions in muscle glycogen stores. Can be influenced by implant strategy, cattle handling techniques, weather, and sex of cattle.

Days on Feed

The number of days the cattle are fed.

Deads In/Deads Out

Lingo which refers to the methods used to calculate closeouts, cost of gains, and breakevens. These can be calculated with 'deads in' or with 'deads out' of the calculations. 'Deads in' refers to leaving the dead cattle in the calculations, while 'deads out' refers to leaving the dead cattle out of the calculations.

Digestive

A death resulting from a digestive disorder.

Dressing Percent

Carcass weight divided by final live weight times 100.

Drunk Cattle

Cattle which are experiencing acidosis due to over consumption or too rapid consumption of high grain diets.

Dry Matter Basis

Feed is sold on a 'dry' basis following adjustments for variations in moisture content. *See also:* [As Is Basis](#).

Dry Rolling

Grain processing method in which grain is rolled without steaming.

Dry Supplement

Supplement which is generally pelleted and fed in a dry form in a mixed ration.

Eared Cattle

Cattle with significant *Bos indicus* (Brahman) breeding.

Feed Alley

The road used by the feed trucks to deliver feed to the pen.

Feed Call

The amount of ration which is fed to a particular pen. *See also:* [Missing the Call](#), [Bunk Call](#).

Feed Conversion

The amount of feed consumed by an animal per unit of body weight gain. Expressed as pounds of feed per pound of gain. *See also:* [Feed Efficiency](#).

Feed Cost of Gain

Total feed costs divided by total pounds of gain. *See also:* [Cost of Gain](#).

Feed Efficiency

The amount of feed consumed by an animal per unit of body weight gain. *See also:* [Feed Conversion](#).

Feed Markup

The amount that the feed charges are marked up by the feedlot. Charges vary with each lot. Feed markup charges are usually inversely related to the yardage charges. Charges for feed markup plus yardage are usually similar. Feed markup can be charged as a percentage of the feed bill or as a flat fee per ton of feed.

Finisher or Final Finisher

The final diet cattle will be on during the feeding period. Usually contains 5-10% roughage, but may be an all-concentrate (no roughage) diet, depending on the feedlot.

Flaker

A mill which steam flakes grain.

Gluten or Gluten Feed

See [Wet Corn Gluten Feed](#).

Grass Cattle

Cattle which were grown on pasture prior to placement in the feedlot. *See also:* [Yearlings](#).

Green Cattle

Cattle which are relatively thin with only small amounts of body condition. *See also:* [Soggy Cattle](#).

Grid(s)

A method of pricing slaughter cattle which offers premiums and discounts for cattle. Cattle which are leaner and have a higher quality grade receive the premiums. Grids generally have other specifications for carcass weight and dark cutters as well.

Grow Yard

An operation which grows or backgrounds cattle for a period of time before entering the feedlot for finishing. May be used to wean calves since the operations generally have a higher ratio of employees to cattle and can give sick calves extra attention.

Heiferettes

Heifers placed on feed following the loss of a calf or open heifers placed on feed following the breeding season.

High Moisture Corn

Corn which is harvested when moisture levels are 22-28%. Generally, this corn is ground or rolled and stored in pit or bunker silos. It can also be stored whole and processed before feeding. *See also:* [Pit Corn](#).

Hospital Pen

Place where sick cattle are treated before being returned to the home pen. *See also:* [Sick Pen](#).

In the Beef

Method of sale which refers to selling the cattle on a carcass weight basis rather than live weight. Usually carcass weight times carcass price with no discounts for Choice or Select. *See also:* [Live](#).

Ionophore

Antibiotic which enhances feed efficiency in cattle by altering ruminal fermentation. (Rumensin®, monensin; Bovatec®, lasalocid; and Cattlyst®, laidlomycin propionate are the approved ionophores used in diets for finishing cattle).

Inventory Gain/Loss

The amount of gain or loss in feed inventory due to storage, milling, and processing feed.

Limit Feeding

Limiting feed intake in order to achieve a desired rate of gain during the growing period. Used in growing and backgrounding situations to have cattle ready for market at a specific point in time. *See also:* [Programmed Feeding](#).

Liquid Supplement

Liquid supplement based on molasses which contains urea or another non-protein nitrogen (NPN) source. Used to provide supplemental protein in a finishing diet. May also contain supplemental phosphorus, salt, ionophores, and other feed additives.

Live

Method of sale in which the cattle are sold to the packer 'live' at the feedlot. The packer is responsible for transporting the animals to the slaughter facility. *See also:* [In the beef](#).

Liver Abscesses

Disease condition of the liver in which rumen microflora infect the liver due to breaks in the rumen wall caused by acidosis. In severe cases, liver function is impaired and performance reduced.

Long Yearlings

Yearlings which have had an extended period of grazing. Usually placed on feed in the fall following a full summer grazing season. Fed for 120 days or less. *See also:* [Short Yearlings](#) or [Yearlings](#).

Melengesterol Acetate (MGA)

A steroidal feed additive that is used to suppress estrus or cyclic activity in feedlot heifers.

Micro Machine

Machine which adds micro ingredients such as ionophores, antibiotics and other ingredients to the diet in a water based slurry.

Mill Man

Employee in charge of the feed mill.

Missing the Call

Making a mistake in reading the bunk. *See also:* [Bunk Call](#), [Feed Call](#).

NPN

Abbreviation for non-protein nitrogen. Urea is a common source of NPN. *See also:* [Liquid Supplement](#).

Overeaters

Cattle which eat too much on a high grain diet.

Pay Weight

Shrunk live weight of an animal at the time of sale. Usually 4%. *See also:* [Pencil Shrink](#).

Pen Deads

Cattle which are found dead in the pen. Cause of death is usually unknown.

Pen Rider

Employee who rides through the pens to look for sick cattle.

Pencil Shrink

An arithmetic deduction of weight from the live weight of an animal to account for fill, usually 3% for cattle off pasture and 4% for off-feed weights of fed cattle. *See also:* [Pay Weight](#).

Pit Corn

High moisture corn which has been ground and stored in a bunker or pit silo. *See also:* [High Moisture Corn](#).

Processing

Vaccinating, treating for internal and external parasites, ear tagging, and other procedures such as implanting, dehorning, and castration which are done soon after cattle arrive at the feedlot.

Programmed Feeding

A feeding routine which is used to achieve a specific rate of gain and limit feed intake. Used in growing and backgrounding situations which want to have cattle ready for market at a specific date. *See also:* [Limit Feeding](#).

Projections

Projecting the days on feed, cost of gain, and breakeven for a particular pen of cattle. This is done when the pen is placed in the lot. Generally this is the responsibility of the manager or assistant manager.

Pulls

Cattle which have been pulled from their home pen for treatment. *See also:* [Pulling Cattle](#).

Pulling Cattle

Removing cattle from the pen for treatment. *See also:* [Pulls](#).

Put-Together Cattle

Cattle which have been assembled by an order buyer from small lots.

Quality Grade

A grade placed on each carcass by the USDA inspector at the packing plant. Quality grade is based on the degree of marbling and degree of maturity. Color, texture, and firmness of lean are also used in the final quality grade determination.

Rail-Out

A carcass which has been placed on a special rail in the packing plant so that the USDA inspector can make a more detailed inspection of the carcass.

Railer(s)

Cattle which fail to respond to treatment. *See also:* [Chronic](#) or [Realizer](#).

Realizer(s)

Cattle which fail to respond to treatment. *See also:* [Chronic](#) or [Railer](#).

Receiving

Getting new cattle into the feedlot.

Reimplanting

Giving cattle their second implant (usually done only with calf-feds or long-fed yearlings).

Respiratory

A death resulting from pneumonia or related respiratory disease.

Short Yearlings

Cattle placed on feed after being weaned. Usually placed on feed during months of March through July. Fed for 120-160 days. *See also:* [Yearlings](#) or [Long Yearlings](#).

Show List

The pens of cattle which the manager is offering for sale to packer buyers during a particular week.

Shrink

See [Pencil Shrink](#) or [Inventory Gain/Loss](#).

Sick Pen

Pen where sick animals and animals recovering from treatment are kept. *See also:* [Hospital Pen](#).

Slicked Up

Refers to the fact the cattle have cleaned up their feed or `slicked the bunk.' Cattle have `slicked the bunk' with saliva. Bunks which are `slick and wet' have just been slicked. Bunks which are `slick and dry' have been slicked for some time. *See also:* [Bunk Management](#) or [Clean Bunk Management](#).

Soggy Cattle

Cattle from a backgrounding or growing operation which are fleshy or overly conditioned. *See also:* [Green Cattle](#).

Steam Flaker

Grain processing method in which grain is subjected to steaming before rolling or flaking.

Step-Ups

The rations used to acclimate cattle to high grain diets. Length of time that cattle are fed these diets varies. Generally the amount of concentrate is increased gradually. The first week in the feedlot the cattle may be fed a 45% roughage diet, the second week a 35% roughage diet, etc. until the cattle are on the final finisher.

Storm Diet

A diet fed during periods of stormy weather to help keep cattle on feed. Usually contains more roughage.

Surfactant

An additive used to aid in grain processing.

Trenbolone Acetate (TBA)

Active ingredient in some implants approved for use in feedlot cattle.

Warmed Up Cattle

Cattle which have been grown in a backgrounding yard prior to being placed on feed.

Wet Corn

See [High Moisture Corn](#) or [Pit Corn](#).

Wet Corn Gluten Feed

A byproduct of the wet corn milling industry which is made by blending corn bran and corn steep liquor. A common ingredient in finishing rations in Iowa, eastern Nebraska, southeast South Dakota, and southern Minnesota. See also: [Byproducts](#).

Wet Distillers Grains

A byproduct of the dry milling (ethanol) industry. Commonly used as an ingredient in feedlots in close proximity to dry milling plants. Can be produced from a variety of grains (corn, milo, barley, wheat). See also: [Byproducts](#).

Yardage

Charges incurred each day that the cattle are in the feedlot. These charges vary depending on the lot. Usually on a cents per head per day basis.

Yearlings

Cattle which are placed on feed at greater than one year of age. Generally fed for 80 to 150 days. See also: [Calf Feds](#), [Short Yearlings](#), or [Long Yearlings](#).

Yield Grade

A numerical grade placed on each carcass by the USDA inspector at the packing plant which estimates differences in the yield of boneless, closely trimmed retail cuts from the round, rib, loin, and chuck. Factors determining yield grade include: fat thickness at the 12th rib, ribeye area, hot carcass weight, and the amount of kidney, pelvic, and heart fat. Lower yield grades (1.0) indicate leaner carcasses, while higher yield grades (5.0) indicate fatter carcasses.

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