

## LUPINS IN INTRODUCTORY RATIONS FOR LOT-FED STEERS

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Improved performance in the initial feeding period has an impact on profitability particularly when feeding cattle for the domestic or short-fed export markets.

Forty four Hereford steers were allocated to four equal groups with an average weight of 259 kilograms. Two groups of steers were fed a conventional introductory ration similar to those used in commercial **feedlots** and two groups of steers were fed an introductory ration using lupins. The rations are shown in Table 1. The finisher ration was the same for all groups and all ration components were hammermilled. The roughage component was barley straw.

TABLE 1 Introductory ration programs for lot-fed steers

Days	Lupin program			Conventional program	
	Lupins	Grainmix**	Straw	Grainmix**	Straw
1- 5	80	-	20	20	80
6-12	60	20	20	40	60
13-18	40	40	20	60	40
19-24	20	60	20	70	30
25-90	-	80	20	80	20

\*\* 48% wheat, 48% barley, 3% cottonseed meal, 1% limestone.

The steers were fed for 90 days by which time they had achieved adequate finish and weight specification for the domestic supermarket trade. The results are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2 Performance data for lot-fed steers on the lupin ration program or conventional rations

	Lupins	Conventional	P value
Days on feed	90	90	
Start weight kg	259	259	n.s
28 day weight kg	297	286	
Daily gain to 28 days kg	1.36	0.95	P<0.01
Final weight kg	389	374	
Daily gain to 90 days kg	1.43	1.27	P<0.05

Cattle on introductory diets containing lupins achieved significantly higher growth rates in the introductory period. The weight gain advantage was maintained throughout the remainder of the feeding period. Furthermore no significant differences were observed between groups in fat cover, fat colour, meat colour or meat texture.