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Steer Gains on Burned and Nonburned Bluestem Pasture, 1978 to 1982

Ed F. Smith and Clenton Owensby

Summary

From 1978 to 1982, steers on a late spring burned pasture averaged 40 lbs more gain each summer than steers on a non-burned pasture.

Experimental Procedures

For many years we have studied the impact of late-spring burning of native bluestem pasture on vegetation and cattle. The effect on steer gain for the summers of 1978 through 1982 is reported here. The 44 acre pasture, was burned each year in late April. The non-burned pasture is 60 acres. Weights were taken in the morning after the steers were penned without feed or water overnight. Both pastures were stocked at about the same rate.

Results and Discussion

Annual burning increased average steer gains ($P < .05$) by 40 pounds (Table 11.1). The early spring burned pasture has been burned each year since 1951 and the gains have been greater on it nearly every year.

Table 11.1. Steer Gains on Burned and Non-burned Bluestem Pasture. April 27 to Oct. 3, 1978 (154 days), May 7 to Oct. 3, 1979 (149 days), May 1 to Oct. 2, 1980 (154 days), April 30 to Sept. 30, 1982 (152 days), May 10 to Sept. 28, 1982 (141 days)

	Acres per steer	Initial wt. lbs	Gain lbs	Daily gain ^a lbs
Nonburned				
1978	4.0	519	181	1.18
1979	3.2	429	184	1.23
1980	3.3	465	155	1.00
1981	3.3	524	210	1.38
1982	3.5	568	215	1.52
Burned				
1978	4.0	521	221	1.44
1979	3.1	435	229	1.44
1980	3.3	485	215	1.40
1981	3.4	518	240	1.58
1982	3.7	583	242	1.72

^aGains were significantly greater ($P < .05$) each year for the burned pasture.