

# Fattening Cattle in North Florida

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For a number of years shade tobacco growers have fed steers in dry lot to furnish manure for tobacco. Feed lots in the shade tobacco area have been producing most of the fed cattle in Florida. The fattening rations used have been composed mostly of locally grown corn, cottonseed meal and cottonseed hulls from oil mills in the Southeast, and peanut hay from nearby peanut-raising sections. A considerable number of Western feeder cattle have been purchased in the past, but at present feeder cattle are obtained in the Southeast. Most of the steers have been fed for around 120 days in dry lot during the fall and winter months.

The practice of grazing steers on highly improved pasture, followed by a short finishing period in dry lot, has become very attractive, because steers make economical gains on fertilized pasture in North Florida. By making maximum use of improved pasture, the quantity of corn required to finish a steer is decreased. Since the size of the local corn crop usually limits the number of steers which are fed, grazing steers before finishing them in dry lot permits a larger number of steers to be fattened on the available supply of feed.

Both the acreage of improved pasture and the number of better-type beef cattle in the Southeast are rapidly increasing. Research has made higher yields of feed crops possible by development of new crop varieties and adequate fertilization practices. With this increase in the quantity and quality of both feed and cattle, it seems desirable that a larger number of cattle should be fattened in this area. It is doubtful that the Southeast can ever compete with the Corn Belt in long-term feeding operations. Nevertheless, by judicious use of improved pasture and the available supply of grain, more cattle can be carried to a desirable market finish.

## AVAILABLE FEEDS

### FATTENING FEEDS

**Corn.**—The most important grain crop in North Florida is corn. Consequently it is the basis of dry lot fattening rations. In this area it is usually fed to cattle as ground snapped corn. This is a good form of corn for feeding cattle to a moderate degree of finish, since the shuck and cob are utilized.