

ROUGHAGES

Any hay can be used to only a limited extent in fattening rations; however, cattle efficiently utilize this limited quantity of hay. Generally speaking, it does not pay to grind hay for cattle unless it is necessary to increase consumption of unpalatable, poor-quality hay (17). Grinding or chopping does not increase the digestibility of hay. Some feeders who finish large numbers of cattle like to grind their hay and mix it with the grain mixture so that the entire ration can be fed with a mechanical feeder. This would hardly be practical for a small operation.

Peanut Hay.—Peanut hay has been used almost exclusively as the hay in steer fattening rations in North Florida. Good peanut hay has about 60 percent as much energy value as ground snapped corn (17). Consequently, if corn is selling for \$40 per ton, for example, top grade peanut hay must sell for not more than \$24 per ton to be comparable in price. In many years the feeding value of peanut hay produced in the Southeast would be much lower than 60 percent of the value of corn.

It is very possible that the available supply of peanut hay will not be large enough to meet the demand in the future. Since new peanut pickers are returning the hay to the land and cattle numbers are increasing, a severe hay shortage might occur. For these reasons, it is likely that cattle feeders will be forced to produce more of their hay, rather than depend almost entirely on purchasing peanut hay as they are now doing.

Grass Hay.—The improved pasture grasses, Coastal Bermuda, Bahia and Pangola, are potential hay crops. Surplus grass usually can be cut from improved pastures at the end of the summer rainy season. These grasses make good quality hay, particularly Coastal Bermuda. Pasture-grass hay is fine-stemmed and quick-curing, which is an advantage in a humid climate.

Experiments at Quincy, Florida, and Tifton, Georgia, indicate that grass hay from improved pasture is superior to peanut hay for wintering cattle (2, 7). Although the proportion of hay in a fattening ration may be too low to make a small difference in quality of hay important, results of these trials show that these grass hays are worth at least as much per ton as peanut hay.

Cottonseed Hulls.—Many steer feeders in Gadsden County feed cottonseed hulls. These hulls have only about 47 percent as much energy value as ground snapped corn and have practically no protein (17). It is doubtful whether it is advisable