

# Factors Affecting the Weaning Weight of Range Calves

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## INTRODUCTION

Weaning weight of calves is important to the beef cattle producer, since gains from birth to weaning are more economical than those made later. Producers of either slaughter or feeder calves are especially interested in this weight, as their income largely depends upon size and weight available for sale. Heavy weaning weight in replacement animals is equally or more important, because it is related to mature size and future production of the herd.

A number of factors influence the weight of calves at weaning. This study is concerned with certain hereditary factors which are influenced by the breeding program and with environmental factors, such as the season of birth, on weight of calves at weaning. Information on the factors affecting production and the magnitude of their influence is essential to devise a program to make the most efficient use of feed.

Limited data have been published on factors that influence weaning weights of beef calves in Florida. Production records of cattle at the Range Cattle Experiment Station, Ona, have been kept since the founding of the Station in 1941. This study is an analysis of records to determine the influence of breeding of dam, influence of sires and season of calving on weaning weights.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The calf's weaning weight is a useful measure of a cow's yearly production, since this observation is taken at the end of the period over which she exerts maximum influence on the growth of the calf.

In crossbreeding work at the Everglades Station at Belle Glade from 1943 to 1951, Kidder and Chapman (6)<sup>1</sup> found the reciprocal crosses of both Brahman-Angus and Brahman-Devon matings to be superior in weight gains from birth to weaning to any of the three purebred lines. Baker and Black (3), USDA Livestock Experimental Farms, Iberia, Louisiana, found that

<sup>1</sup> Italic figures in parentheses refer to Literature Cited.