

Economics of wet distillers grains use in feedlot diets. K. Vander Pol*, G. Erickson, and T. Klopfenstein, *University of Nebraska*.

A summary of current and past research trials utilizing different levels of wet distillers grains plus solubles (WDGS) in finishing diets indicate an increased energy value of WDGS compared to the corn replaced. Further, these data demonstrate that at higher levels of WDGS dietary inclusion, the energy advantage is less than that of lower inclusions ($y = -0.96x + 167$, where x = inclusion rate, % of DM), however, it still appears favorable. With WDGS typically priced at 90-95% of current corn price at the ethanol plant, the cost/unit of energy is much lower than that of corn; however, there are other factors that may affect the quantity utilized in feedlot diets. Factors that may inflate the price of WDGS compared to corn purchased within close proximity of a feedlot may be; demand for corn in close proximity to an ethanol plant may increase corn price, distance from plant to feedlot, shrink, and an overall increased cost in delivering feed to the bunk. Return from feeding WDGS (\$/hd) is positive, and follows a quadratic pattern as level of WDGS in diet increased, with higher levels (30-40% DM) being more profitable than lower levels (10-20% DM). However, as distance from the ethanol plant increased up to 170 km, return (\$/hd) was reduced significantly for all levels, and favored a lower level of inclusion (20-30% DM). Considering cost of feeding (mixing and delivering feed to bunk), incorporating WDGS in the diet increased feeding cost (for 100 d on feed) from \$0.53/steer when WDGS was fed at 10% of DM, to \$4.03/steer when fed at 50% of DM. Our data suggest that because of the higher energy value of WDGS compared to that of corn, it is economical to utilize WDGS at levels as high as 40% of DM. Further, the economic limitations of a higher inclusion rate of WDGS may be distance from plant, corn price at plant, and feed delivery costs. Overall, it is evident that producers need to examine more than just the price of WDGS, to make decisions on a dietary inclusion rate.

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