
PERCEPTIONS AND DISTINGUISHED CHARACTERISTICS OF WHOLE COTTONSEED FROM DAIRY PRODUCERS AND NUTRITIONISTS

To gain a deeper understanding of the mindset toward whole cottonseed (WCS) from its customers, research was conducted with large dairy producers and ruminant nutritionists – two key influencers in the complex dairy feed decision-making process.

RESEARCH TARGET AUDIENCE

20 large dairy producers and 20 ruminant nutritionists were interviewed across the U.S.

PURPOSE

Understand the mindset, perceptions and key value propositions for WCS in the minds of dairy producers, veterinarians and nutritionists.

FOUR FACTORS IN DECIDING RATION INGREDIENTS

WCS has a unique triple-nutrient composition of protein, available fat and effective fiber. It is easy to add to a ration, and its unique composition helps provide cows with the vital nutrients they need to perform.

The research revealed that decisions concerning feed ingredients are made almost exclusively by a combination of the farm owner, farm manager and nutritionist with occasional input from a veterinarian. Below are four factors that weigh heavily in the feed ingredient decision-making process.

1. PRICE

Price is seen as the primary consideration factor as farmers weigh costs vs. benefits as part of their decision-making process.

2. NUTRITIONAL VALUE

Ensuring that cows are healthy and getting the proper nutrients from their feed is a major component of selecting ingredients.

3. NUTRITIONAL RECOMMENDATION

Many producers rely heavily, if not exclusively, on their nutritionist's recommendations when it comes to feed.

4. SOFTWARE PROGRAMS

Computer programs such as SESAME™ allow users to provide their own inputs and help make the best decisions for their farm.



KEY FINDINGS AND PERCEPTIONS OF WHOLE COTTONSEED

The producers and nutritionists were also surveyed on their use, perception and concerns of using WCS in their rations. Key findings from that survey include:

- ➔ WCS is largely seen as a unique product which can serve as an “all-in-one” ingredient that delivers energy, fiber and fat while also serving as a forage extender.
- ➔ When compared to other feed ingredient alternatives, it was found that WCS has the distinguishing characteristics of:
 - An **all-in-one source** of protein, fat and fiber.
 - Delivering **highly-effective fiber** that’s hard to find in other feed sources.
 - Being **highly digestible**, due to the slow release of fat from the seed.
- ➔ Nutritionists’ recommendations carry a lot of weight with producers, influencing the feed ingredients going into rations.
- ➔ Price is the single biggest barrier to wider usage of WCS, although some are willing to pay a higher price to receive the benefits that cottonseed provides.
- ➔ Perception of WCS among those in the industry is generally positive given its nutritional benefits and consistency.

Summary and Conclusion:

With a generally positive perception in the industry, WCS is known for its nutritional value and ability to increase milk fat. Although nutritionists and producers could both benefit from learning more about cottonseed’s properties and best practices, alleviating concerns about its use, storage and quality.

Looking to purchase WCS?

Cotton Incorporated suggests producers get in touch with their WCS merchant or feed dealer to check prices, or submit a request for WCS quotes through its [Whole Cottonseed Marketplace](#).

Want to learn more?

For more information, including reports on market conditions, feeding information and a list of suppliers, visit wholecottonseed.com.

