

# BEEF PRODUCER ATTITUDES, USAGE AND PERCEPTIONS OF COTTONSEED FOR FEED

**A recent study found that cotton byproducts, including whole cottonseed (WCS), are an effective source of fiber, fat and protein in feedlot rations without adverse effects on performance or carcass characteristics.<sup>1</sup>**

To gauge the overall attitudes of feedlot and cow/calf producers including their use of cottonseed, a research survey was conducted to determine how cottonseed was perceived outside of the dairy industry.<sup>2</sup>

## RESEARCH TARGET AUDIENCE

Six nutritionists, seven cow/calf producers and seven feedlot producers were interviewed across the U.S.

## PURPOSE

Understand the mindset and perceptions about cottonseed throughout the beef value chain and identify who influences decisions around feed in feedlot and cow/calf operations.

## FIVE FACTORS IN DECIDING FEED

WCS has a unique triple-nutrient composition of protein, available fat and effective fiber.<sup>3</sup> During the research survey, it was discovered that decisions concerning feed ingredients are made almost exclusively by a combination of the farm owner and a nutritionist. Below are five factors that weigh heavily in the decision-making process.

### 1. PRICE

A low-cost strategy is often practiced when making feed decisions, although most people are hesitant to change their ration mix unless they are being priced out.

### 2. AVAILABILITY OF FEED INGREDIENTS

Those purchasing feed ingredients first assess what they have access to on their own before gauging what is available to purchase at an economically reasonable price.

### 3. NUTRITIONIST RECOMMENDATION

Nutritionists are critical drivers in the decision-making process as they determine the best ration mix for the animals and provide alternatives in situations where a certain feed ingredient is not available.

### 4. SOFTWARE PROGRAMS

Nutritionists utilize software programs that allow them to plug in feed price, nutritional information and other critical data to optimize the ration.

### 5. NUTRITIONAL VALUE

Decisions are made and rations may be adjusted based on what the animal needs in its diet, which could include fat, fiber, protein, etc.



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## KEY FINDINGS AND PERCEPTIONS OF WCS IN BEEF RATIONS

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:

- ➔ Producers that have used whole cottonseed for decades have a highly favorable opinion of it due to its ability to provide fat, fiber and protein in the diet. Even those who do not use it are generally aware of its key benefits.
- ➔ Usage levels of WCS are consistent over time with slight variations being driven by availability, price and weather factors. On average, three to four pounds of WCS are being fed per animal per day.
- ➔ Price, availability and concerns around gossypol are the biggest drawbacks to those who do not use WCS.
- ➔ If WCS was to be incorporated into the diet, it would likely be done on a trial basis after consulting with others who have experience with it e.g., peers, dairy producers, nutritionists, etc.
- ➔ Nutritionists are the single biggest influencer on the feed ration decisions as they work jointly with farm owners.

### Summary:

Overall, producers are generally aware of the benefits of cottonseed in cattle diets. The biggest opportunity to increase demand for cottonseed and the understanding of cottonseed revolves around education. Both nutritionists and farmers could benefit from learning more about cottonseed's properties, helping alleviate any concerns about its use.

## Looking to purchase WCS?

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

## Want to learn more?

For more information, including reports on market conditions, feeding information and a list of suppliers, visit [wholecottonseed.com](http://wholecottonseed.com).

<sup>1</sup>Warner, Andrea L, et al. Effects of utilizing cotton byproducts in a finishing diet on beef cattle performance, carcass traits, fecal characteristics, and plasma metabolites. American Society of Animal Science, 4 Feb. 2020, doi:10.1093/jas/skaa038.

<sup>2</sup>Maroun, E. (2020, October 30). [Research for FLM Harvest on whole cottonseed for beef cattle]. Unpublished raw data.

<sup>3</sup>(Kellog, D. W., J. A. Pennington, Z. B. Johnson, and R. Panivivat. 2001. Survey of management practices used for the highest producing DHI herds in the Unites States. J. Dairy. Sci. 84:E120- E127. doi:10.3168/jds.S0022-0302(01)70206-8)

