



** This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online <https://ksre-learn.com/feeding-steers>

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Cattle Chat: Dietary plan for steers

K-State beef cattle nutritionist Phillip Lancaster offers feeding guidance for home-raised steers

By [Lisa Moser](#), K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Many people maintain a garden in the summer and enjoy eating the bounty of their homegrown produce. Similarly, cattle producers raise freezer beef for themselves and to share with family and friends.

On a recent Kansas State University Beef Cattle Institute [Cattle Chat](#) podcast, a listener asked how to take an 850-pound steer to finish weight on the farm.

“Finished in this context means when the steer is reaching physiologic maturity, so they have adequate fat cover on them and they are also depositing intramuscular fat,” said K-State beef cattle nutritionist Phillip Lancaster.

He defines a finished steer to have about one-half inch of backfat over the rib, and their body condition score will be around eight or nine.

With a starting weight of 850 pounds and a goal end weight of around 1,350 pounds, Lancaster said that steer will need to gain about 500 pounds in about 150 days -- making it about 5-6 months before that steer will be ready for processing.

“With home-raised steers, we have to be a little more cautious than with feedlot animals because they are getting grain and free choice hay separately,” Lancaster said. “We are trying to keep them from experiencing acidosis and other digestive issues.”

He recommended the 850-pound steer be offered 10 pounds of grain-protein mix per day to start with and then increase that amount to 20 pounds per day at half-pound increments every 2 days. After that, he advises increasing the amount of grain-protein mix offered by one-half pound per month for 2 months, then hold the amount of grain-protein mix offered steady until the steer reaches the optimum finish.

“With that feeding strategy, I’m trying to get him to a diet that is 15% roughage and 85% grain and protein mix,” Lancaster said.

To hear more about his topic, listen to [Cattle Chat](#) on your preferred streaming platform.

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story

Beef Cattle Institute Cattle Chat podcast, <https://ksre-learn.com/cattle-chat-feeding-steers>

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Story by:

Lisa Moser
785-532-2010
lmoser@ksu.edu

More information:

Phillip Lancaster
785-532-6323
palanaster@vet.k-state.edu