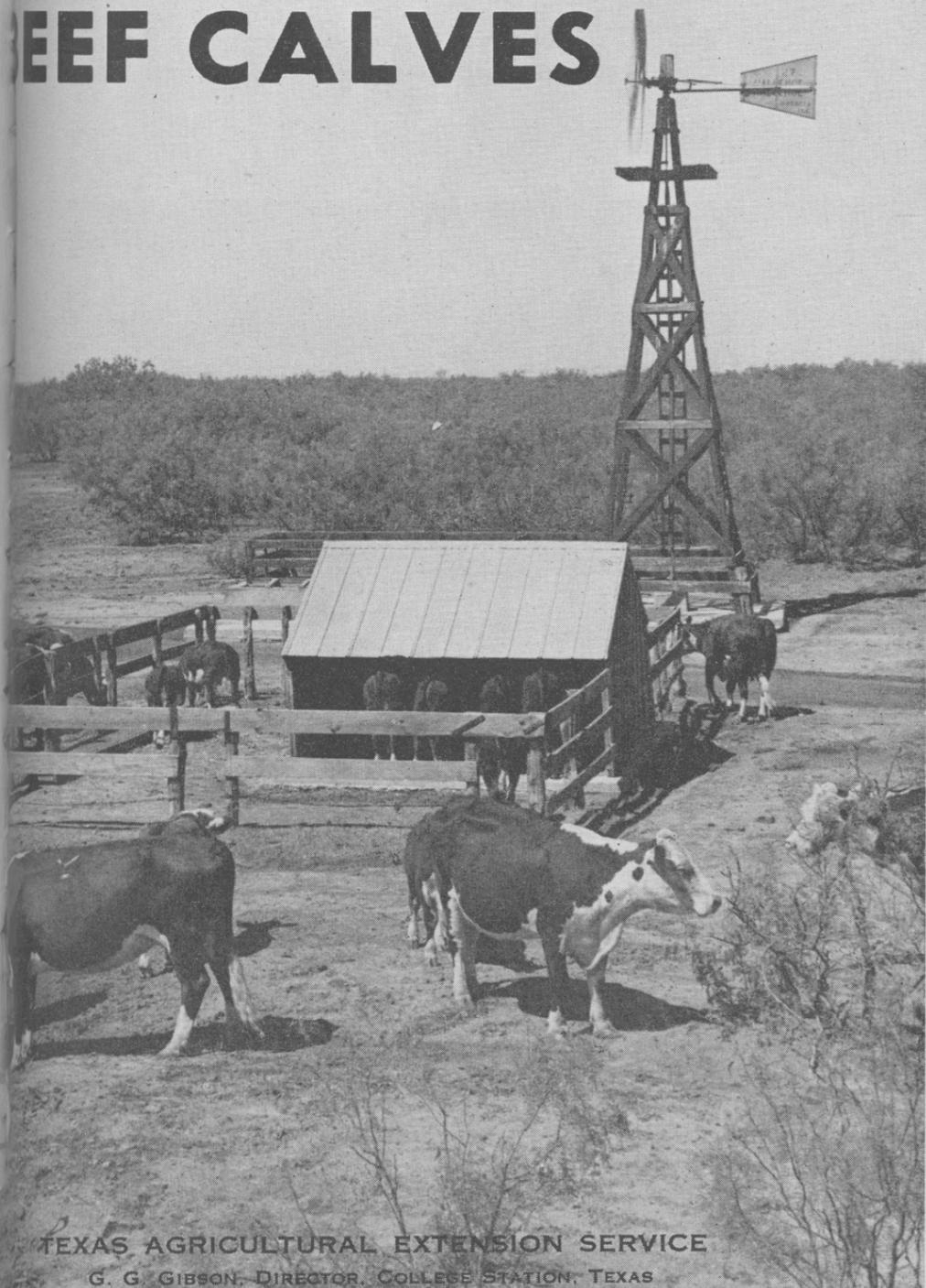


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*Creep Feeding*

# CREEP FEEDING OF CALVES



TEXAS AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE

G. G. GIBSON, DIRECTOR, COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS

## ON THE COVER

The picture on the cover was taken on the E. B. Dickenson Ranch, leased by J. C. Sale, Stanton, Texas.

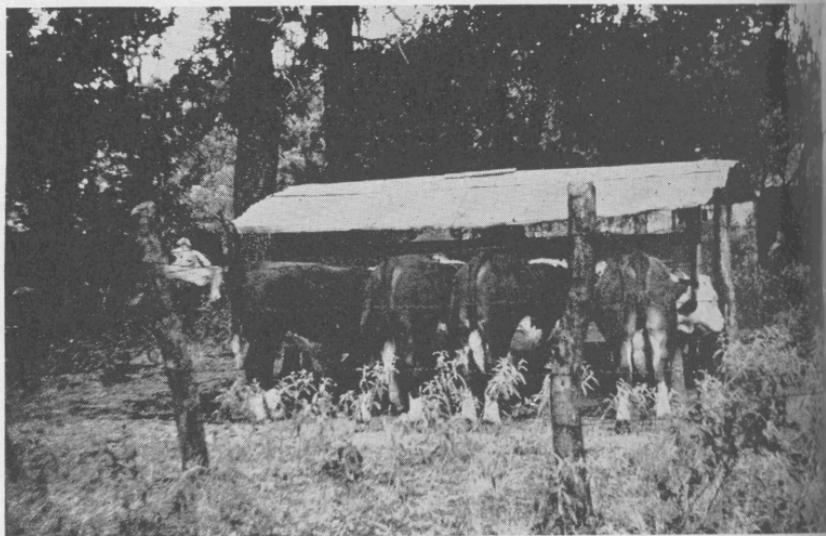


Fig. 1. Inexpensive creep is shown on the Robert Priess Ranch, Mason County.

# Creep Feeding Beef Calves

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*Extension Animal Husbandmen*

in collaboration with  
JOHN H. JONES, *Professor of Animal Husbandry*  
and

JOHN K. RIGGS, *Associate Professor of Animal Husbandry*  
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"Creep feeding" beef calves may increase weight as much as 100 pounds per head from birth to weaning age. Management prac-

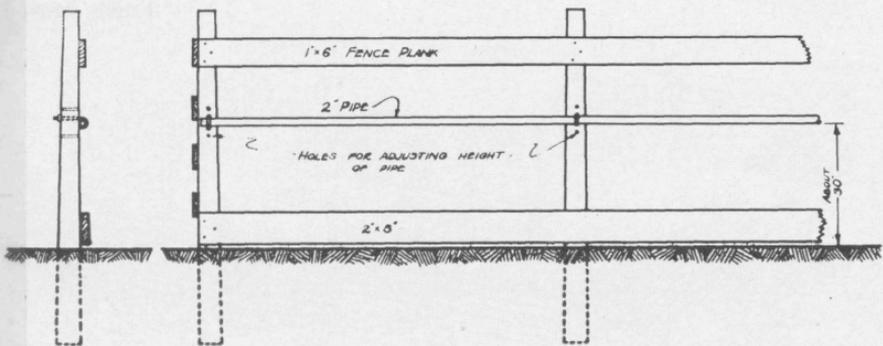
tices during the first 6 to 8 months will pay greater dividends than during any other period.

## THE CREEP

The creep is an enclosure or lot having an opening large enough for calves to enter, but too small for older cattle. Inside this enclosure is some type of feeder. Through this arrangement calves are allowed access to additional

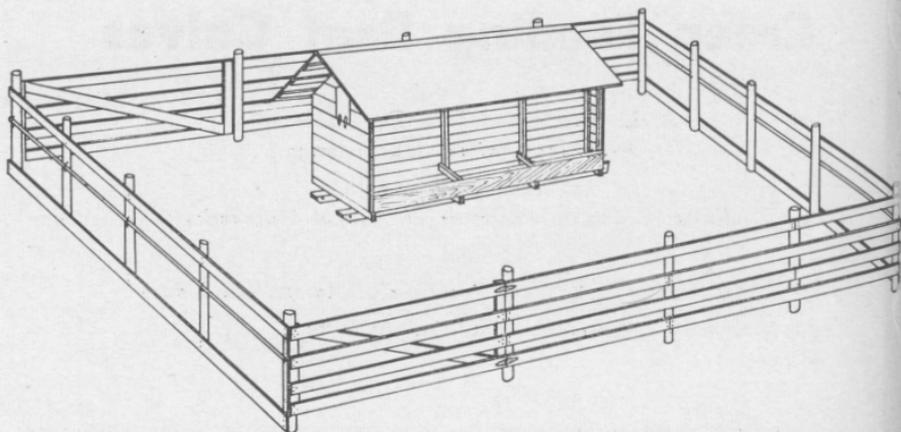
feed. Such an arrangement is referred to as a "creep feeder."

The creep may be constructed with wire, poles, lumber or pipe. It should be strongly built, regardless of the material used. Figure 2 shows a section of creep using both



Blueprint No. 261

Fig. 2. Section of a creep fence.



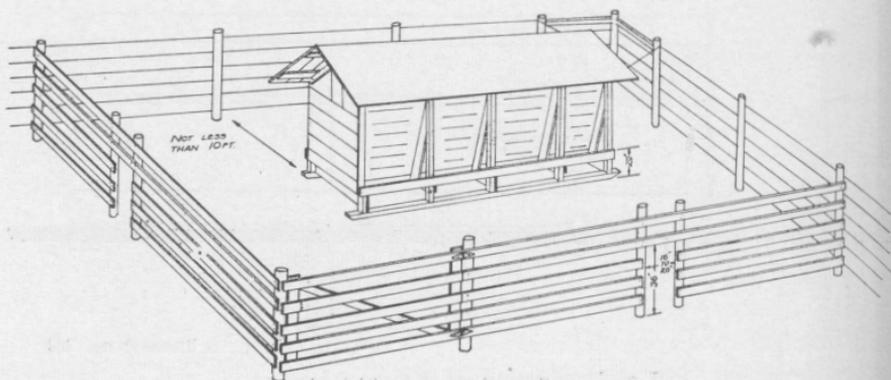
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Fig. 3. A creep and self-feeder.

pipe and lumber. This same pattern could be used in building the entire creep, or just at the ends as shown in Figure 3. Other types of creeps are constructed with gates. Such openings should be about 16 to 20 inches wide, and 30 to 36

inches high. Figure 4 shows such a creep, including a larger gate for entry of feed truck.

The size of the creep will vary according to the number of calves and size of feeder used.

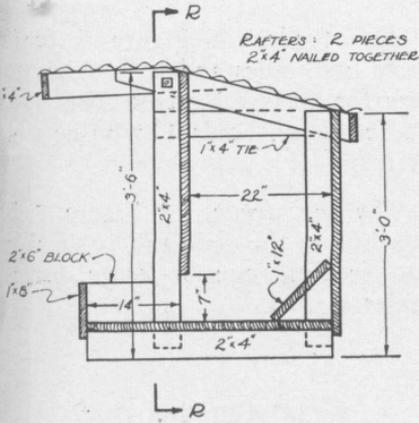


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Fig. 4. A calf opening and a larger entry for the feed truck.

## FEEDERS

Feeders may be of several types. Self feeders, constructed to allow calves to feed from both sides, and others which feed from one side only, may be used. Such feeders are very desirable, as they protect feed from weather. They should be built large enough to hold about 5 days supply of feed, thus reducing labor, yet supplying fresh feed. Open troughs may be used but do not have the advantages of self feeders.



Blueprint No. 171

End view of Range Creep Feeder.

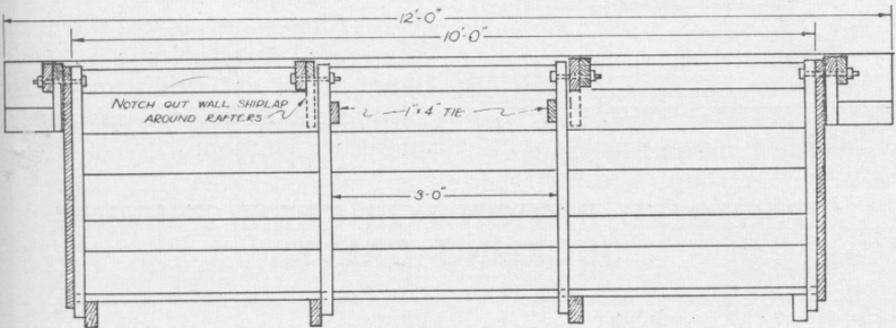
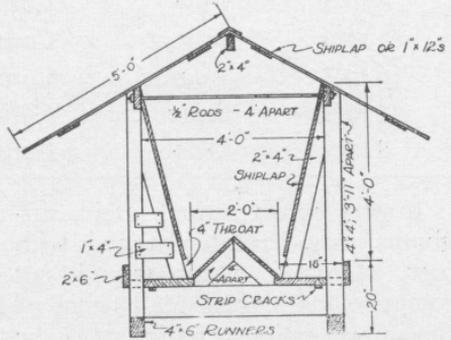


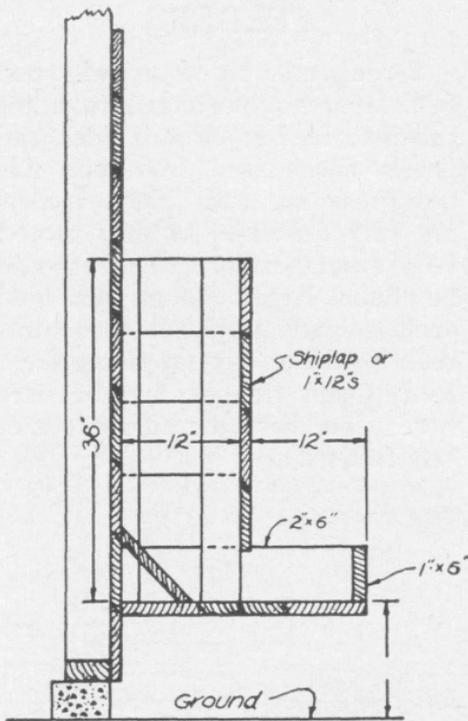
Fig. 5. Longitudinal section of a Range Creep Feeder.

The self feeder in Figure 5 is the type with the feed trough on one side. This will permit placing the feeder against one side of the creep. By doing this, the self feeder can be filled from outside the creep. It may be raised or lowered by placing various sizes of blocks or logs underneath the floor. One this size has a capacity of 30 bushels of grain, or one-half ton of cottonseed cake, and will serve about 30 calves.



Blueprint No. 159

Fig. 6. This plan allows feeding from both sides.



Blueprint No. 172

Fig. 7. Wall Self Feeder.

The feeder in Figure 6 feeds from both sides and is designed to care for about 80 calves. This size, 16 feet long, holds 125 bushels of grain.

The self feeder in Figure 7 is attached to the wall and is suitable for feeding one or more calves under a shed.

## LOCATION OF CREEP FEEDERS

Ideal locations of creep feeders are places near shade, water and salt. Almost any place where the cows are attracted one or more times daily is satisfactory. The picture on the cover is an example of such a location.

## SUGGESTED RATION FOR CREEP FEEDING SUCKLING CALVES

AGE OF CALF (Month)	MONTH	FEED (Pounds)	FEED PER DAY
2 to 3	April	Whole oats 100	1 to 3 lb.
3 to 4	May	Corn 65, oats 35	2 to 3 lb.
4 to 5	June	Corn 70, oats 30	3 to 4 lb.
5 to 6	July	Corn 65, oats 25, c.s.m. 10	4 to 6 lb.
6 to 7	August	Corn 70, oats 20, c.s.m. 10	6 to 7 lb.
7 to 8	September	Corn 80, oats 10, c.s.m. 10	7 to 9 lb.
8 to 9	October	Corn 85, c.s.m. 15	9 to 11 lb.

In the above ration, grain sorghums may be interchanged with corn. Ground wheat should not comprise more than 50 percent of the grain ration. Barley may be substituted pound for pound in these rations but should be ground.

Pea-sized cottonseed cake works to an advantage when threshed oats, corn or grain sorghums are fed, but cottonseed meal is preferred if the feeds are ground. The amount of cottonseed meal, cake or other protein supplement may be reduced

when an abundance of green pasture is available.

The amount of grain necessary for creep feeding calves varies considerably with their age, amount of the mother's milk, palatability of feed and the time they are started on feed. The table on page 6 indicates near maximum amounts required. Ten percent molasses substituted for 10 percent corn increases palatability of the mixture. This causes calves to consume more feed and should increase gain. Ordinarily it should take 500 to 700 pounds of feed per calf. Early cal-

ves started on creep feeders in March or April make more economical gains, learn to eat more readily and consume 500 to 700 pounds of feed by weaning time. Threshed or shelled grains are recommended for young calves, while older calves started in mid-summer should be fed ground sorghum grain or ground ear corn with cottonseed meal. In some cases cottonseed cake is used for creep feeding. Cottonseed meal and hulls are also used. Some feed manufacturers sell special calf pellets for creep feeding. However, they usually are higher in price than home-grown grains.

## STARTING CALVES ON FEED

Getting calves into the creep requires patience and time. A small number of calves may be separated from their dams and placed in the creep. When these have learned to eat, they will act as decoys for the rest of the calves. It is a good idea to confine in the creep an older animal accustomed to eating. This animal also serves as a decoy. It sometimes helps to scatter a little cake or hay near the openings on the pasture side so that the cows

may teach the calves to eat. Then more cake or hay placed beyond reach in the pen will entice the calves into the enclosure. Once inside, they should find feed at all times. Fresh, clean feed in this early period is essential. Another practice allows both cows and calves access to the creep for a few days. Feeds should be limited during this period, and after a week the cows may be excluded from the pens.

## LIMITATIONS OF CREEP FEEDING

Extra equipment and labor is required.

It is sometimes difficult to get calves to eat.

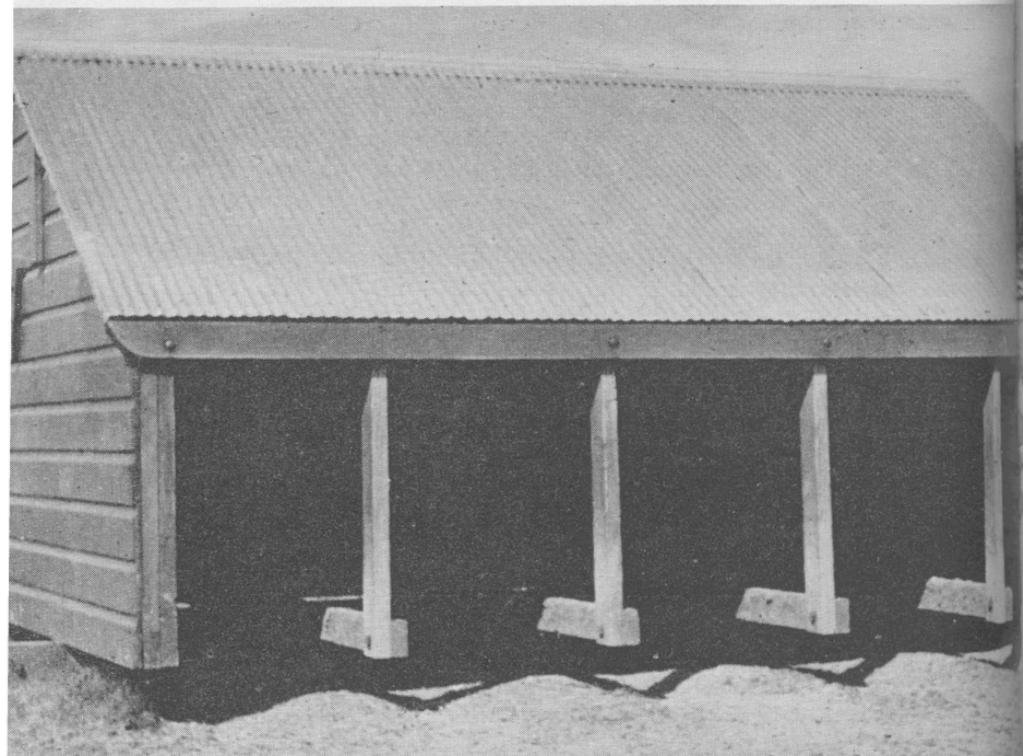
Hogs, sheep or goats cannot run in the same pasture where creep feeders are located.

Creep fed calves sometimes do not sell to advantage as feeders.

5. There may not be enough spread in price to justify creep feeding.

6. Where there is more than one central gathering place, sufficient creep feeder equipment may be too expensive.

7. Pastures larger than two sections may not be adaptable to creep feeding.



Blueprint No. 391

Fig. 8. This creep feeder works satisfactorily for some breeders. Built on skids, it may be moved from one place to another.

## ADVANTAGES OF CREEP FEEDING

The advantages of this method of growing and fattening calves are:

1. It adds weight and finish.
2. The cows are not suckled down so much.
3. Calves grow out more uniformly in size and condition.
4. There is little shrinkage at weaning time.
5. It aids in the development of future breeding stock.
6. Shortens the feeding period after weaning.
7. Serves as a good market for home-grown feeds.
8. Calves creep fed usually sell for a higher price than calves not creep fed.

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