

REPRODUCTIVE PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH OF SHORTHORN PUREBRED AND CROSSBRED COWS

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SUMMARY

Data were obtained from 27 pure Shorthorn, 22 Angus × Shorthorn, 31 Charolais × Shorthorn and 27 Hereford × Shorthorn cows, during 10 years. Angus × Shorthorn cows required the least number of services per conception (1.17), had the shortest average gestation lengths (280.6 days), and had a calving percentage of 88.2% and birth weight of calf of 29.8 kg. The respective figures for Charolais × Shorthorn were 1.21 services, 281.6 days, 88.3% (the highest) and 32.9 kg (the heaviest), for Hereford × Shorthorn 1.23 services, 283.6 days, 84.4% and 31.6 kg, and for pure Shorthorn 1.20 services, 282.2 days, 82.7% and 29.6 kg. Average calf weight at birth increased with the advance in age of cow up to 5 years, then showed little change. Seventy-two per cent of the crossbred cows calved for the first time at 2 years old compared with 65% of the Shorthorns. On the other hand, Shorthorn cows had the highest twinning percentage (2.9%) and the lowest single calf mortality at birth (1.4%). The maximum body weights of Angus, Charolais, and Hereford crossbreds and Shorthorn cows were 576.8, 655.8, 625.4 and 553.8 kg respectively at 7-8 years of age.

INTRODUCTION

LITTLE information is available on the comparative reproductive performance and lifetime change in body weight of different crosses of beef cows. Mason (1966) reviewed the few existing reports and concluded that the reproductive performance of crossbreds was superior to that of purebreds. The recent reports of Schilling and England (1968) and Turner, Farthing and Robertson (1968) confirmed that conclusion.

In the present investigation, reproductive performance of pure Shorthorn cows and crossbred Angus × Shorthorn, Charolais × Shorthorn and Hereford × Shorthorn cows was compared. The change in body weight of cows from birth up to 9 years of age and its relation to the birth weight of their calves was also examined.

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