c. Intensive Feeding:

This is the kind of feeding where daily a minimum of 1000 g live weight gain is targeted. It is today the most common fattening method used around the world. Young animals are started the fattening program at as early as 4-5 months old and they receive high energy content rations until they are 13-18 months old. It is the most appropriate method for commercial livestock operations.

The most important factor in the choice of fattening method is feed, followed by the animal's race, gender and market conditions.

Seasonal Based:
weight gain is rich in fat, it needs more energy for each unit of live weight gain. As you can see, as the animal gets older, it needs more energy and thus the amount of feed it should consume to achieve 1 kg of live weight gain also increases. This means that in order to achieve 1 kg of live weight gain, the amount of feed consumption should be increased, in other words 1 kg of live weight costs more. (Table 1).

**Table 2. The Influence of Age on Weight Gain for Beef Cattle in Normal Conditions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (Days)</th>
<th>Total Fattening Weight Gain (kg)</th>
<th>Daily Fattening Weight Gain (g)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calf</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 1</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 2</td>
<td>943</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 3</td>
<td>1283</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is an inverse relationship between live weight gain and the animal’s age. In young animals 6-9 kg of concentrated feed yields to 1 kg of live weight whereas in older animals 12-13 kg of concentrated feed yields to 1 kg of live weight. While domestic breeds reach their adult live weight at the age of 2.5, culture breeds can reach slaughter weight at the age of 1.5.

In this respect, you should be very careful about fattening animals over the age of 1 – 1.5, and should start the fattening only if you conclude that it will be profitable. Animals over 3-4 years old should not be fattening cattle because the animal achieves the majority of its adult weight at a certain age. Also young animals have a faster growth rate compared to older animals, and have a higher daily live weight gain. This feature allows young animals to reach the desired live weight at a cheaper cost. The common breeds in our country Holstein Friesian and Brown Swiss calves and the hybrids of these breeds should undergo fattening before they change their milk teeth (between the ages of 1-1.5 or 8-18 months) and the domestic breed calves should undergo fattening at the age of 2 (15-25 months).

c. **Gender**: Bulls gain weight faster and have more live weight than cows. At the end of the fattening period, bulls reach a higher live weight than cows. This is why bulls are recommended for feeder cattle. The reason for this is the effect that gender hormones have over fattening performance and meat quality. The "testosterone hormone" produced in the testicles and other "androgenic hormones" have an increasing effect on muscle mass, which helps the animals to bear more meat. They utilize the feed more efficiently and gain more weight. Also the meats of male animals are darker and less fatty. Females tend to get more fatty compared to males. Sterile heifers should be feeder cattle. Twins where one is a female and the other is a male have a high risk of sterility in the female, so the female should be feeder cattle.
d. **Condition**: "Condition" means the animal's development and fattening state. Among animals of the same condition, those with a larger build gain faster weight than ones with smaller bodies. The height and width of the skeletal structure should also be considered for feeder cattle. In general, animals with longer and wider torsos, with smaller heads and shorter necks, and with a long and flat back are more suitable as feeder cattle. Conversely, animals with long legs and narrow torsos, sharp backs, short and thin bellies, thick skin, long neck and big heads are no good as feeder cattle.

e. **Health**: The health condition of the animals should be inspected before fattening. Animals that are not lively, sluggish, have thin ears, and yellow sclera are ill and are not suitable for fattening. Fattening animals should be treated for internal and external parasites and vaccinated for the required diseases.

Animals which had a good care and feeding during their calf period, have a strong skeletal structure, but became skinny afterwards due to some reason other than sickness (hunger, neglect, stress etc.) would make successful feeder cattle. When these animals are provided with the necessary care before fattening, they perform better than their peers and close the live weight gap between them quite rapidly. Also, as these animals are skinny and weigh less, they are bought cheaper. They use a small portion of the feed they consume for survival and utilize the rest for live weight gain.

f. **Live weight at the end of fattening**: It is not recommended to prolong nor cut short the fattening period. Cutting the fattening period short would decrease both profitability and productivity. On the other hand, if you continue fattening after the optimum live weight is achieved, this might be more harmful than cutting it short. Because, as the weight increases, the daily gained amount goes down, so that 1 kg of live weight increase becomes more expensive and the majority of the weight gain is in the form of fatty tissue. For culture breed cattle, the optimum weight at the end of fattening would be 500-550 kg, and for hybrids it would be 400-450 kg.

g. **Origin**: Means using the calves obtained from bulls that have a high breeding capacity for fattening. Animals obtained from a known source provide you with detailed information as to the care, feeding conditions, diseases and other possible issues. If the mother and the father of the fattening calf are known, the live weight gain to be obtained by the calf can be determined and therefore a high fattening performance can be achieved.

h. **Feeding**: Even if the animals have a good genetic structure, if they are not fed as they are supposed to, the fattening performance will not be as desired. Feed cost accounts to 70-80% of the total cost of breeding facilities. In order to achieve the expected fattening performance, the daily feed given to animals should meet their nutritional needs. In order to manage that, you need to know the nutritional needs of the animal as well as the nutrient content of the feed, plus the animal’s daily feed consumption capacity. A feeder
cattle's daily feed consumption capacity depends on the water content of the given feed. This is the reason why consumption capacity is defined in terms of dry substance content. For instance, the dry substance content of green range grass is 20% whereas it is 87% in dried range grass. A feeder cattle's daily dry substance consumption is approximately 2 - 2.5 % of its live weight. For example, a feeder cattle weighing 200 kg would consume 5 kg of dry substance a day whereas a 500 kg animal would consume approximately 12.5 kg of dry substance.

The feeder cattle use the feed for two major purposes. To preserve its current live weight and to continue its vital activities (breathing, blood circulation, biochemical activities of the body, etc.) they require certain nutrients, which is also called the survival requirements. In addition to its survival requirements, since a daily live weight increase is targeted, the animals should be given nutrients to achieve that target, which is called the productivity share. In this respect, in breeding cattle, you need to know the survival and productivity share requirements of the animals, and prepare your rations accordingly.

Here are the points to be considered in the feeding of breeder cattle:

- The first thing to consider in the rations is the energy requirements of feeder cattle. Generally, rations with higher energy levels yield better results. The energy requirements of feeder cattle increase as they gain weight. Protein level is important for young animals.

- Premixes can be prepared in the light of the animals' mineral and vitamin needs.

It would be useful to have a rock salt or a licking rock in front of the animals at all times.

- In order to avoid digestive system disorders, feeder cattle should be given as much roughage as possible.

- Fattening animals should have clean water in front of them at all times. If you give them water 2-3 times a day, this would increase labor requirement as well as prevent the animals from drinking enough water. Daily water intake of the animals is based on the barn temperature and the weight of the animal. You should try to provide an average of 40-50 liters of water per animal per day.

- If possible, granular feed should be crushed before being fed to the animals.

**PREPARING THE ANIMAL FOR FATTENING**

An animal that roams at a semi-open isolated space automatically adjusts to the environmental climate in two weeks. Animals should be given plenty of dry grass on the day they arrive and approximately 0.5 kg of concentrated fattening feed (the same concentrated feed that the animal will eat during fattening). Daily fattening feed allowance should be increase 250 grams (1 hand full) every 2-3 days so that in 15 days it is
increased up to 2-2.5 kg. In the meantime the dry grass amount is decreased gradually, instead the animal gets used to the roughage it will consume during fattening (hay, cotton cake, malt pulp, corn silage, etc.) This way, at the end of the preparation period (2 weeks) the animal gets used to fattening feed.

**SOURCES**


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**EUROPEAN UNION MINISTRY OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC**  
**NEW TERM OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE**  
**(2015-2016)**

Civil Society Dialogue Program was designed as a platform to bring together NGO’s from Turkey and the European Union member states around a common subject and help societies to get to know each other, exchange information and establish permanent dialogues.

The Program is financed jointly by the Republic of Turkey and the European Union under the European Union's Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA).

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The contract authority of the Program is the Central Finance and Contracts Department.

In this fourth stage of the Civil Society Dialogue, a total of 80 partnership projects are supported under nine policy fields. These are: environment; energy; consumer and health protection; justice; freedom and security; the right to establish a business and the freedom to provide a service; coordination of the regional policy with structural instruments; business and industry policy; agriculture & fishery, and their relevant training chapters.

Our project is supported under the Agriculture and Fishery chapter.