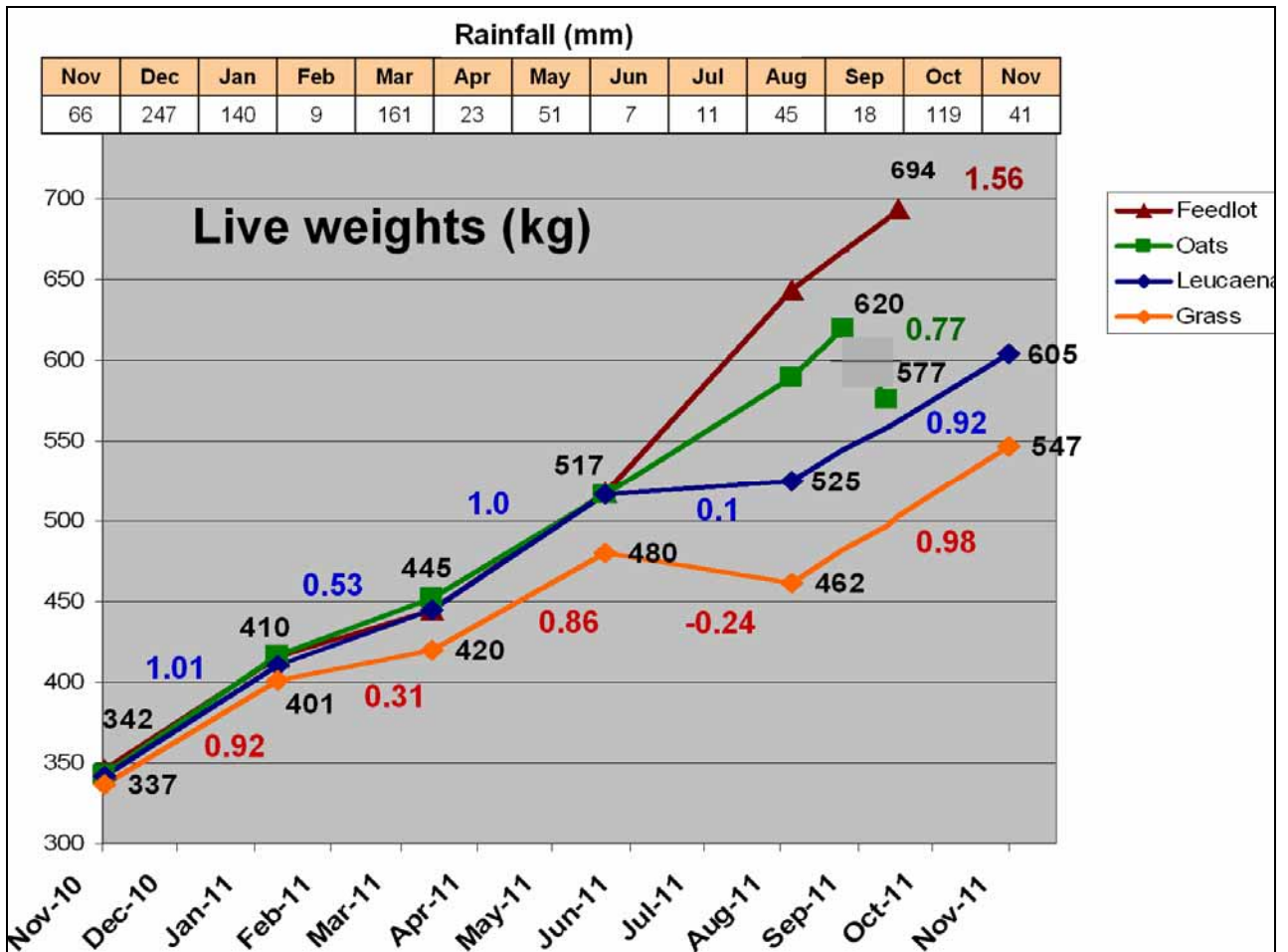


“Bonnie Doon” PDS trial results

The second successful PDS field day was held at “Bonnie Doon”, Bell on December 2, drawing a crowd of 50 producers. This trial, which compares the economic performance of beef cattle finishing systems, is being coordinated by Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) FutureBeef extension officers, Tim Emery and Roger Sneath, with funding from MLA.

The trial now has results on EU steer weight gains for a 12 month period. Of the 87 head in the trial, 18 remained on an improved grass pasture of predominantly Bambatsi and Green Panic for the full 12 months. The remaining 69 steers were run on Leucaena from November to June. On June 3 the 69 head were split into three mobs. A third of the mob stayed on Leucaena, whereas the other two groups went onto oats and into the feedlot.

The below graph outlines the average daily gains achieved in each system and the rainfall that fell over the course of the 12 months.



Some interesting observations were that the steers that remained on Leucaena over winter maintained their weight, whereas those on grass in fact lost 0.24kg/hd/day. Following the rain in August, the steers on grass performed marginally better than those on leucaena, perhaps due to some compensatory gain.

Production figures

Summary	ha	Equip hd/yr	ha/hd	ac/hd	Wt in	Wt out	kg/hd	kg/ha	Days	ADG
Grass	33	19.1	1.67	4.1	337	547	210	130	364	0.58
Leucaena	134	131.7	1.01	2.5	342	605	263	260	364	0.71

- Stocking rate for oats grazing period = 1.0 ac/hd (0.4ha/hd)
- Annualised stocking rate for oats = 3.45 ac/hd (1.4ha/hd)
- Average Daily Gain (ADG) in feedlot = 1.56 kg/head/day (No HGP)
- ADG on oats = 0.77 kg/head/day until 23rd September (0.71 ADG when tail of mob included until 11th Nov 2011)

Cost of gain

Costs included are listed in economics data sheets. These cost of gain values exclude labour and selling costs.

Grass	\$0.68/kg
Leucaena	\$0.61/kg
Oats	\$1.75/kg
Feedlot	\$2.04/kg (feed only; feed conversion is 8.5kg as fed basis)

Economics summary

The finishing systems were compared by investigating the “partial return on livestock capital invested”. This measure focuses on the capital invested in steers and allows the relative economic performance of each phase of the steer finishing systems to be compared. The calculation takes into account the different capital investments necessary to make the steer finishing systems operate and therefore makes adjustment for the differing stocking rates and periods of time. Not all costs are included.

	First period return		Second period return	Full year return
Leucaena	21.35%	Leucaena	7.84%	32.12%
		Oats	7.22%	30.68%
		Feedlot	11.88%	36.01%
Grass	9.41%	Grass	8.45%	19.78%

For a comprehensive copy of the results, please contact Tim Emery, DEEDI,
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