

AgriProfit\$

Benchmarks for Alberta Cattlemen

Economics & Competitiveness

Economic, Productive & Financial Performance Of Alberta Cow/Calf Operations

Comparing:

Central Alberta Total,
Central Alberta Low Cost, and
5 Year Central Alberta Low Cost
Management Groupings

*(combining Aspen Parkland & portions of
Boreal Transition Grass Types)*

Production Year - 2008

October, 2011



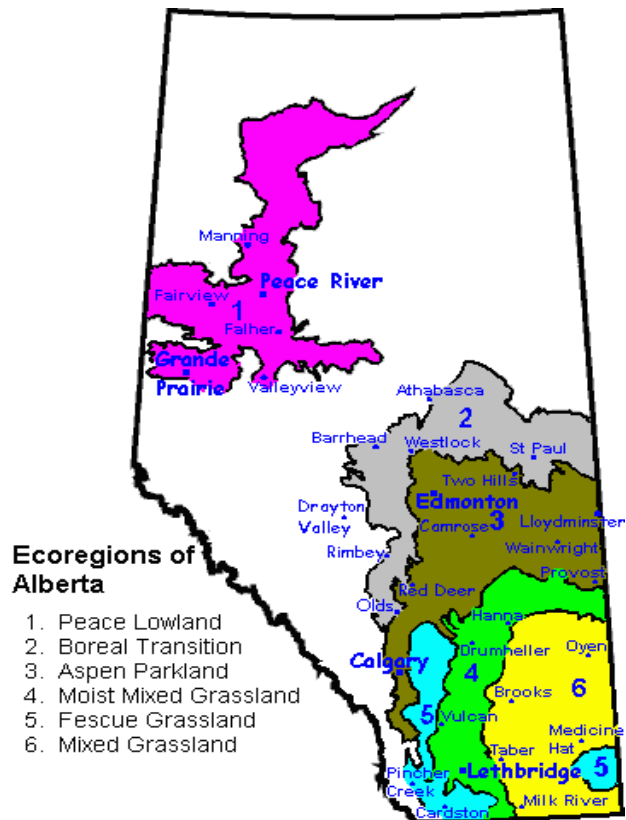
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This *AgriProfit\$ Cost & Returns Report* presents the productive, economic & financial performance of cow/calf producers in the Central Region for the 2008 production year.

Field research was undertaken through Alberta Agriculture's *AgriProfit\$ Business Analysis & Research* program with the cooperation of producers in the region.

The intent of this report is to benchmark three specific management groupings:

- a regional average including all *AgriProfit\$* participants in the Aspen Parkland & portions of the Boreal Transition grass types.
- an average of the "low cost" herds in the region during 2008. This "**Low Cost**" average includes the lower 50% of producers in the pool as ranked by total costs / lb. of calf weaned*.
- a five year average of the "low cost" herds in Central Alberta. This long term average includes producers in the lower half of each year group as ranked by total costs / lb. of calf weaned.



Cost and returns profiles for common forage and grazing crops in the grass type / region are included in this benchmark report in order to put these profit centers into context with the cow herd profiles they support. A list of definitions for common terms employed in this benchmark report is also appended.

The primary value of this report is to enable producers to gauge their productive, economic and financial performance relative to their peers locally and provincially. Benchmark analysis, comparing to one's own detailed cost and returns analysis, is the first critical step in identifying operational strengths and weaknesses in a cow/calf operation.

The map above illustrates the location of each grass type region within Alberta. This package only reports the results of one specific grass type region. If you are interested in obtaining information on specific regions, please contact the Economics Unit at:

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* For this analysis total production cost (TPC) per lb. weaned was the primary criteria for identifying the top management herd groupings. It should be noted, however, that there are several other factors that may contribute to the success of a cow/calf operation.

****Note:** Regional & top management groups had sufficient full farm observations to develop the farm financial benchmarks only these are used to develop the farm level financial performance indicators. Enterprise productive & economic information is developed based upon the whole Alberta sample.

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Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development
October-11

Historical Review of Alberta Cow/Calf Operations Economic, Financial & Productive Performance: 2004 - 2008

Benchmark Comparables: Central Alta vs. '04-'08 C. Alta 5 Year Low TPC Group

Enterprise Type: Weaned-Calf

Enterprise Economic Performance: Major Unit Cost & Returns Groups

	----- \$ / Lb. Weaned -----					C.AB 5Yr Low TPC
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	
Weaned Calf Value	0.953	1.256	1.091	0.946	0.963	1.033
Winter Feed & Bedding Costs	0.464	0.336	0.455	0.451	0.452	0.350
Pasture Costs	0.364	0.462	0.355	0.424	0.401	0.362
Labour Costs	0.120	0.099	0.097	0.088	0.096	0.093
Other Variable Costs	0.196	0.187	0.154	0.151	0.149	0.149
Fixed Costs	0.110	0.101	0.098	0.103	0.096	0.085
Total Production Costs	1.254	1.184	1.159	1.217	1.194	1.039

Farm Financial Performance Indicators:

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	C.AB 5Yr Low TPC
<u>ROAD to Profitability</u>						
Risk (Debt to Asset Ratio)	0.21	0.22	0.13	0.14	0.14	0.15
Operating Expense Ratio	0.62	0.62	0.65	0.66	0.65	0.58
Asset Return	0.03	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.03
Debt Payout to Profitability	5.81	5.71	9.44	10.03	6.54	4.41
	83,726	98,811	34,285	35,576	55,622	80,315
<u>The "3-C's"</u>						
Current Ratio	1.69	1.87	2.88	3.65	3.04	3.34
Calif. Working Cap. Ratio	0.49	0.65	1.12	1.21	0.79	1.22
Capital Turnover Ratio	0.17	0.17	0.11	0.10	0.13	0.14
Farm Size (Acres)	4,210	2,453	2,139	2,405	2,523	2,237

Debt to Assets = Total Liabilities / Total Assets
 Operating Expense Ratio = Operating Expenses / Value of Production
 Return on Assets = Return on Assets / Total Farm Assets
 Debt Payout = Total Liabilities / Net Farm Income
 Profitability = Net Farm Income

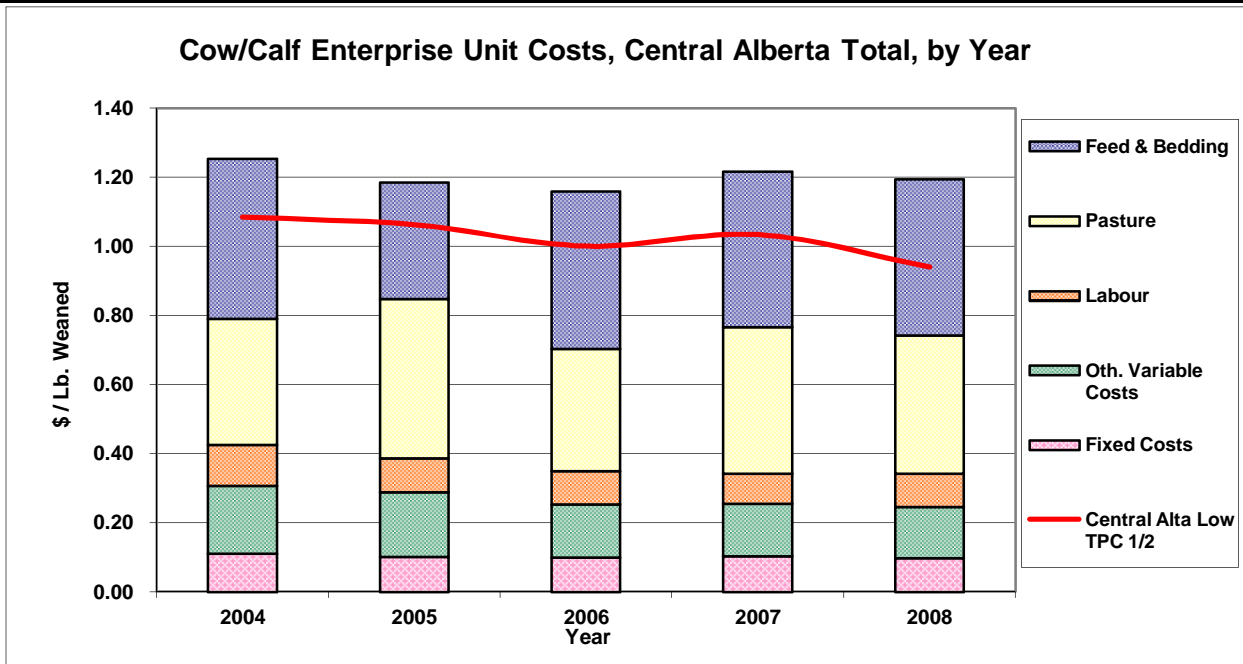
Current Ratio = Current Assets / Current Liabilities
 Calif. Working Cap. Ratio = Working Capital / Total Expenses
 Capital Turnover = Value of Production / Total Farm Assets
 Farm Size = Total Acres in crops, forages & grazing
 (includes all acres owned, rented & leased)

Productive Performance Indicators:

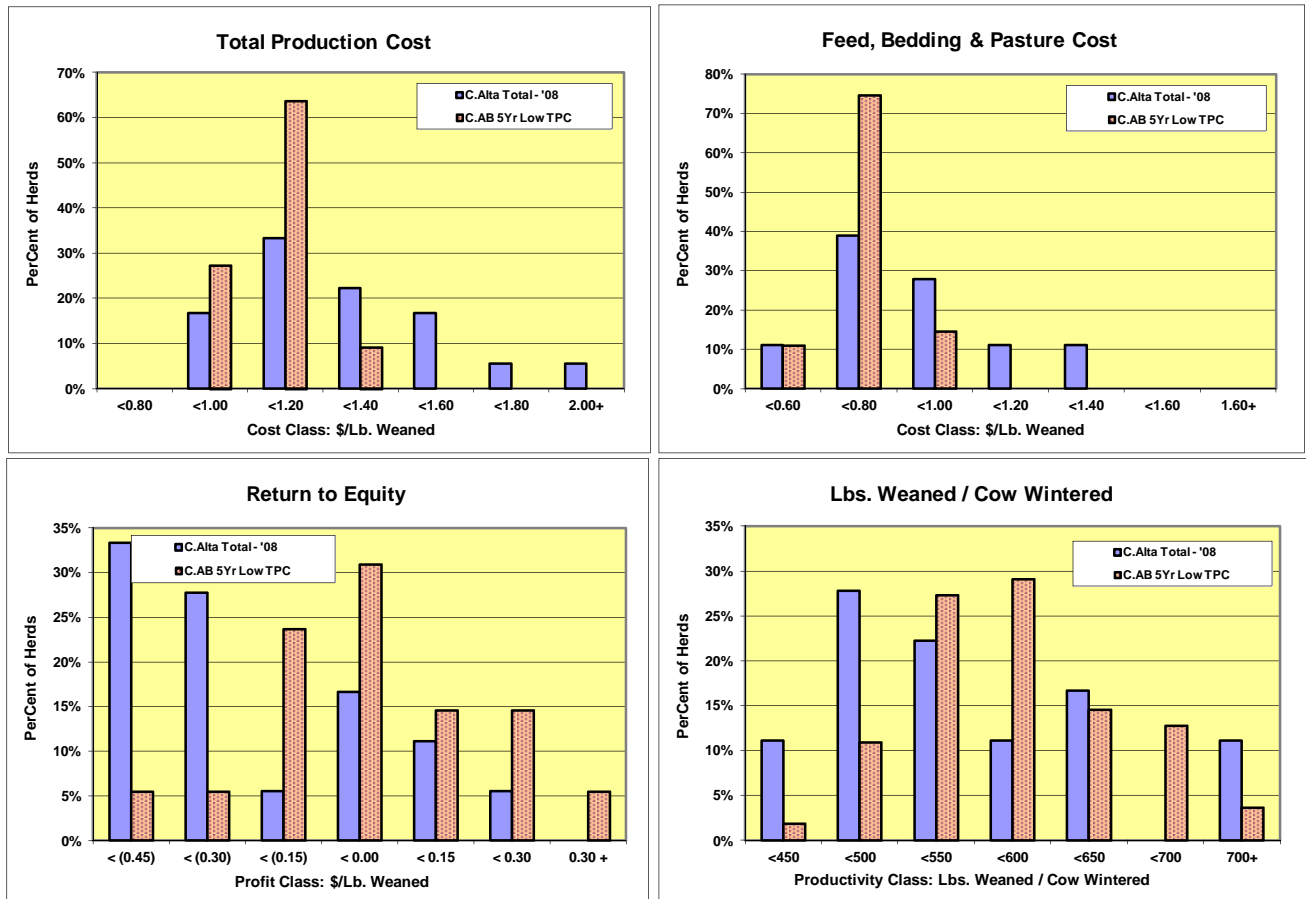
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	C.AB 5Yr Low TPC
Calf Crop (%)	89.6	87.5	87.1	81.7	83.6	87.9
Lbs. Weaned/Cow Wintered	554.1	510.1	547.8	534.4	548.2	573.7
Wean Wt as a % of Cow Wt.	43.9	41.1	42.6	42.6	43.6	45.4
Feeding Season Days	175.7	141.9	181.7	162.8	157.8	163.3
Tonnes Fed per Cow (as fed)	5.2	3.9	5.8	5.5	4.9	4.5
G rowth (weaning weight)	577.8	538.2	562.4	572.8	580.0	591.6
O pen Cows (%)	6.0	7.8	9.7	11.1	12.7	8.6
L ength of Calving Period	133.2	172.5	148.1	115.6	111.2	126.6
D eath Loss of Calves (%)	3.2	3.1	3.6	6.1	2.6	3.1

Historical Review of Alberta Cow/Calf Operations (cont'd)

Benchmark Comparables: Central Alta, by Year
Enterprise Type: Weaned-Calf



Frequency Distributions: Selected Economic & Production Indicators, Central Alberta Total, 2008 vs. 5 Year C. Alta Low Cost Group



2008 Cow/Calf Enterprise Overview

Economic & Physical Performance Comparisons

Benchmark Comparables: Central Alta Total & Low Cost; C. Alta 5 Year Low TPC Groups

Enterprise Type: Weaned-Calf

Economic Performance Indicators:

	\$ / Lb. Weaned		
	Central Alta		C.AB 5Yr
	Total	Low TPC	Low TPC
Production Stock Sales	0.963	0.931	1.033
Value of Production	0.914	0.899	0.980
Winter Feed Costs	0.429	0.266	0.335
Bedding Costs	0.022	0.016	0.016
Pasture Costs	0.401	0.366	0.362
Labour Costs	0.096	0.087	0.093
Other Variable Costs	0.149	0.139	0.149
Depreciation & Capital Lease Payments	0.072	0.051	0.064
Other Fixed Costs	0.024	0.015	0.021
Total Cash Costs	1.042	0.803	0.895
Total Production Costs	1.194	0.941	1.039
Contribution Margin	(0.184)	0.025	0.026
Gross Margin	(0.129)	0.096	0.085
Return to Investment	(0.268)	(0.039)	(0.049)
Return to Equity & Management	(0.281)	(0.042)	(0.059)
Total Investment (\$ / cow wintered)	1,581	1,447	1,546

Physical Performance Indicators:

	Central Alta				Central Alta		
	Total	Low TPC	C.AB 5Yr Low TPC		Total	Low TPC	C.AB 5Yr Low TPC
Conception Rate (%)	86.5	88.9	90.6	Cows Wintered	188.9	159.5	202.9
Calving Rate (%)	98.9	99.3	99.3	Cows per Bull	22.9	24.4	24.0
Weaning Rate (%)	97.7	96.6	97.7	Labour Hours per Cow	4.9	5.1	5.2
Calf Crop (%)	83.6	85.2	87.9	AUM's/Cow Wintered	10.6	9.7	9.8
% Calved - 1st 2 Cycles	83.2	87.5	84.1	Feeding Season Days	157.8	134.3	163.3
Lbs. Weaned/Cow Exposed	485.0	532.1	520.0	Tonnes Fed per Cow			
Lbs. Weaned/Cow Wintered	548.2	590.5	573.7	- as-fed	4.9	3.6	4.5
Wean Wt as a % of Cow Wt.	43.6	47.2	45.4	- dry matter			
Weight per Day of Age (lbs.)	2.40	2.80	2.66				

	Central Alta		C.AB 5Yr
	Total	Low TPC	Low TPC
G rowth (weaning weight)	580.0	624.3	591.6
O pen Cows (%)	12.7	11.0	8.6
L ength of Calving Period	111.2	72.6	126.6
D eath Loss of Calves (%)	2.6	2.3	3.1

2008 Cow/Calf Enterprise Overview

Economic & Financial Performance Comparisons

Benchmark Comparables: Central Alta Total & Low Cost; C. Alta 5 Year Low TPC Groups

Enterprise Type: Weaned-Calf

Economic Performance Indicators:

	<i>\$ / Cow Wintered</i>		
	Central Alta		C.AB 5Yr
	Total	Low TPC	Low TPC
Production Stock Sales	528.17	549.65	592.58
Value of Production	500.85	530.94	561.96
Winter Feed Costs	235.40	156.96	192.05
Bedding Costs	12.31	9.62	8.90
Pasture Costs	220.09	216.04	207.82
Labour Costs	52.64	51.50	53.25
Other Variable Costs	81.56	82.29	85.22
Depreciation & Capital Lease Payments	39.67	30.24	36.60
Other Fixed Costs	13.19	8.87	12.06
Total Cash Costs	571.30	474.25	513.20
Total Production Costs	654.85	555.51	595.89
Contribution Margin	(101.15)	14.54	14.73
Gross Margin	(70.45)	56.69	48.76
Return to Investment	(147.00)	(22.94)	(28.27)
Return to Equity & Management	(154.00)	(24.57)	(33.92)

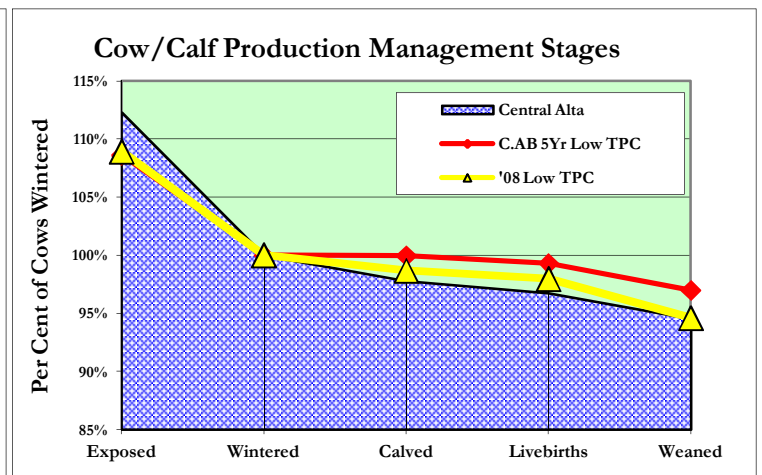
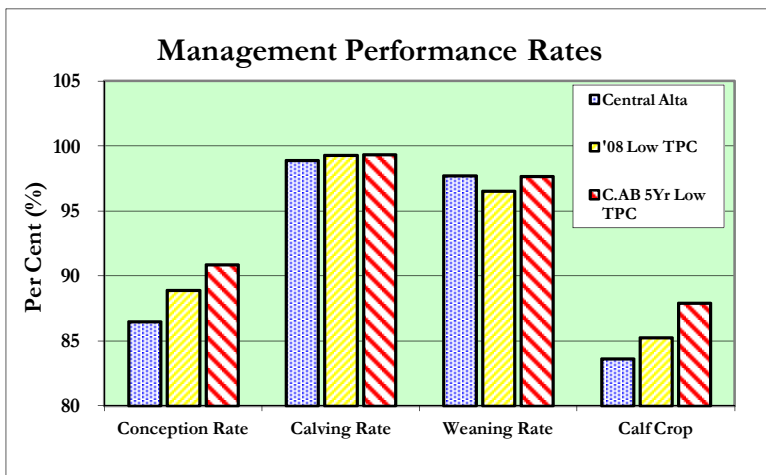
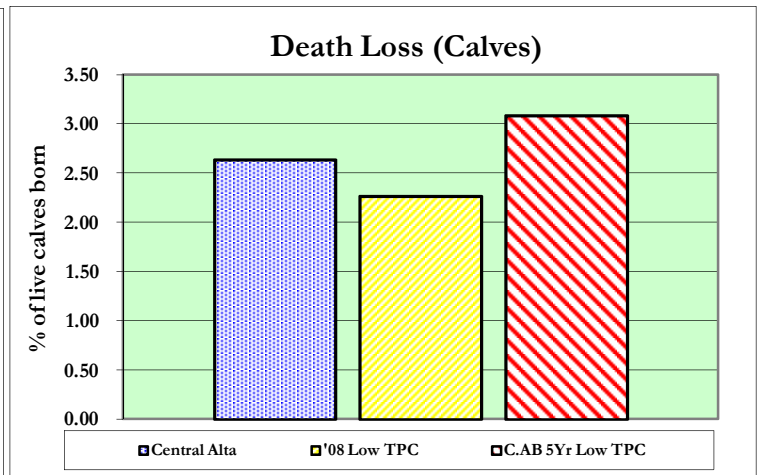
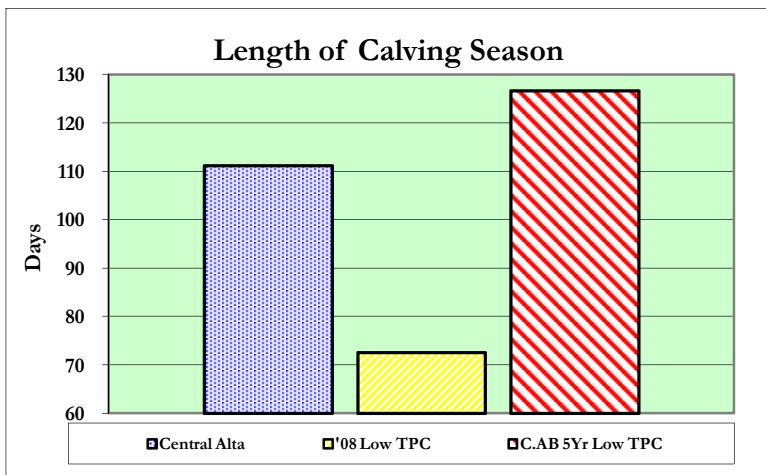
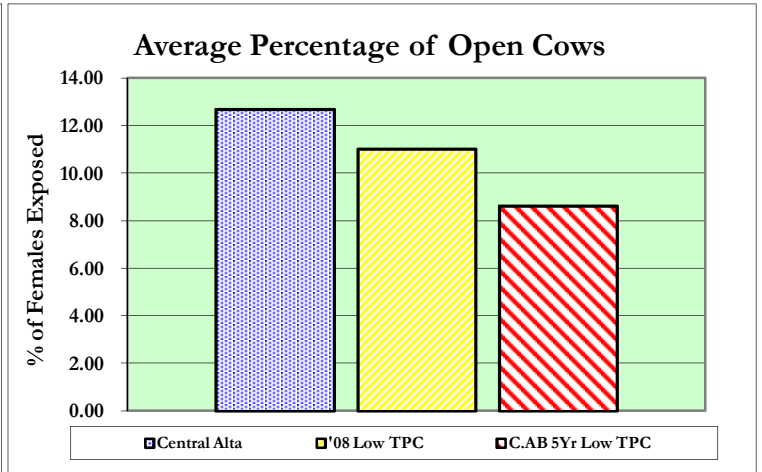
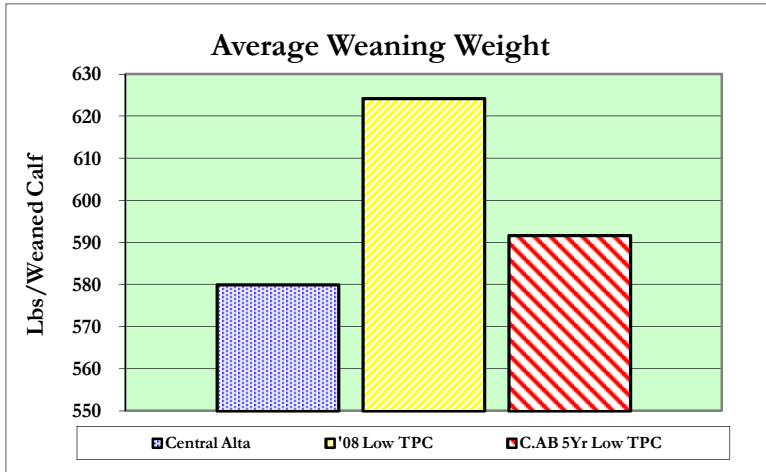
Financial Performance Indicators:

<i>ROAD to Profitability</i>	Central Alta		C.AB 5Yr Low TPC	
	Total	Low TPC		
Risk (Debt to Asset Ratio)	0.14	0.15	0.15	= Total Liabilities / Total Assets
Operating Expense Ratio	0.65	0.61	0.58	= Operating Expenses / Value of Production
Asset Return	0.02	0.01	0.03	= Return on Assets / Total Farm Assets
Debt Payout to Profitability	6.54 55,621.82	6.30 48,510.25	4.41 80,314.73	= Total Liabilities / Net Farm Income = Net Farm Income
<i>The "3-C's"</i>				
Current Ratio	3.04	5.30	3.34	= Current Assets / Current Liabilities
Calif. Working Cap. Ratio	0.79	0.90	1.22	= Working Capital / Total Expenses
Capital Turnover Ratio	0.13	0.11	0.14	= Value of Production / Total Farm Assets
Farm Size (Acres)	2,523	1,697	2,237	= Total Acres in crops, forages & grazing (includes all acres owned, rented & leased)

2008 Cow/Calf Enterprise Overview

Physical Performance Comparisons

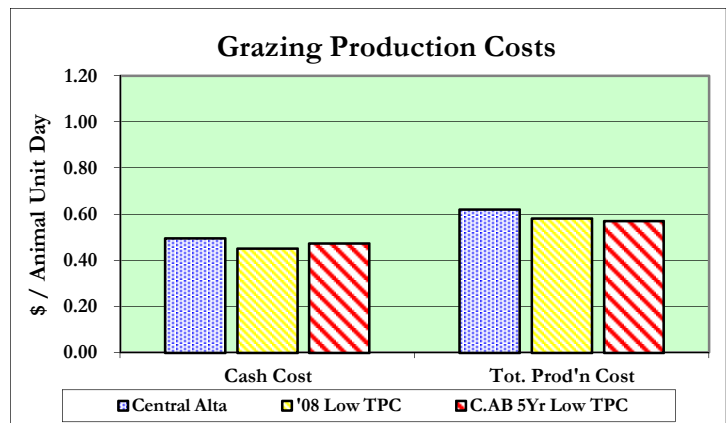
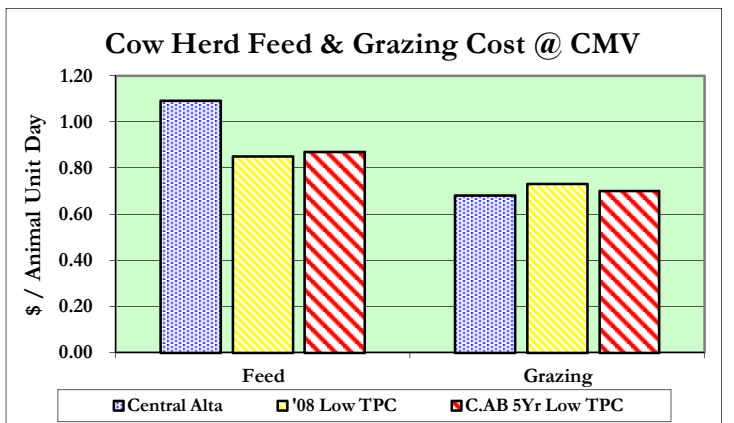
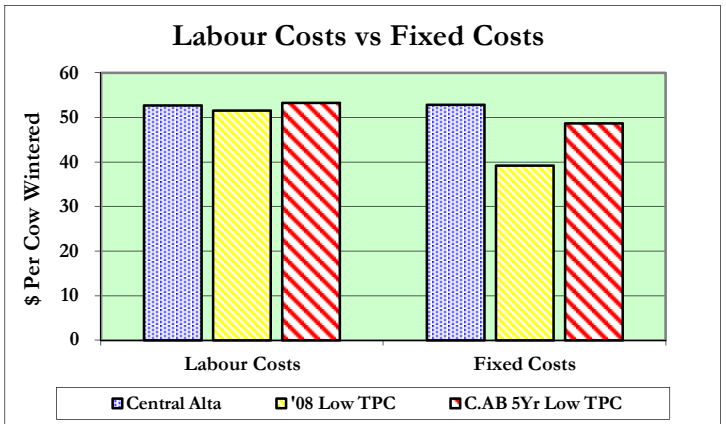
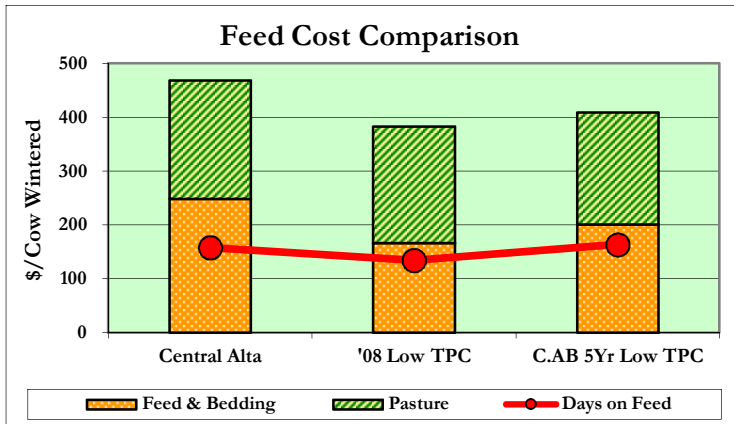
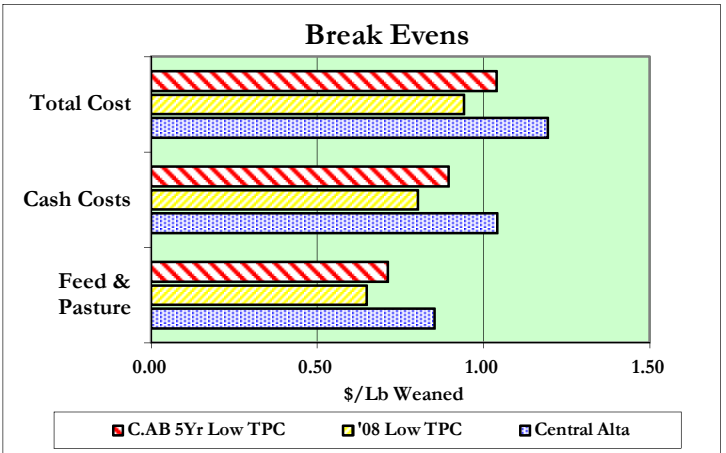
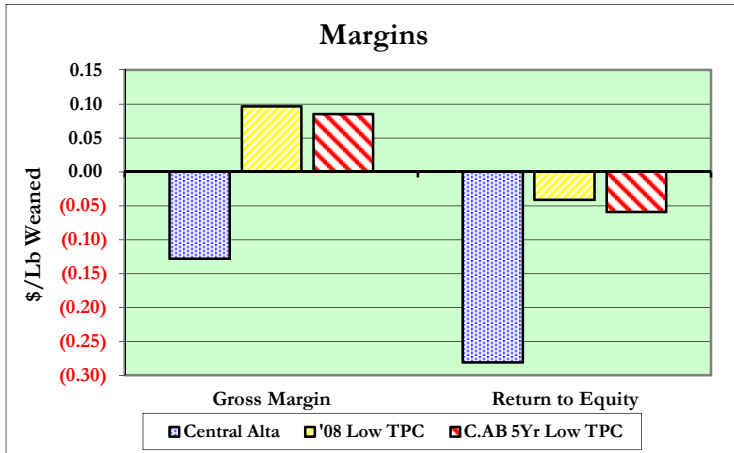
Benchmark Comparables: Central Alta Total & Low Cost; C. Alta 5 Year Low TPC Groups



2008 Cow/Calf Enterprise Overview

Economic Performance Comparisons

Benchmark Comparables: Central Alta Total & Low Cost; C. Alta 5 Year Low TPC Groups



Cow/Calf Enterprise Unit Cost & Returns Detail - 2008**Economic Performance Comparisons**

		Central Alta	C.AB 5Yr
		<u>Total</u>	<u>Low TPC</u>
		----- \$/Lb Weaned -----	
(A)			
1.	Weaned Calves	0.96	1.03
2.	Feeder Calves	0.00	0.00
3.	Slaughter Cattle	0.00	0.00
4.	Purebred Calves	0.00	0.00
5.	Baby Calves	0.00	0.00
6.	Cull Cows/Open Heifers	0.16	0.11
7.	Bulls	0.02	0.01
8.	Bred Cows/Bred Heifers	0.02	0.02
9.	Miscellaneous Receipts	0.00	0.00
10.	Government Programs	0.00	0.00
11.	Inventory Adjustment	0.08	0.15
12.	Less: Cattle Purchases	0.34	0.35
	Value of Production	0.91	0.98
(B)			
1.	Winter Feed	0.43	0.33
2.	Bedding	0.02	0.02
3.	Pasture	0.40	0.36
4.	Veterinary & Medicine	0.04	0.03
5.	Breeding Fees/Bull Rental	0.00	0.00
6.	Trucking & Marketing Charges	0.02	0.02
7.	Fuel	0.02	0.02
8.	Repairs - Machine	0.01	0.02
9.	Repairs - Corrals & Buildings	0.01	0.01
10.	Utilities & Miscellaneous Expenses	0.03	0.03
11.	Custom Work & Specialized Labour	0.02	0.01
12.	Operating Interest Paid	0.00	0.01
13.	Paid Labour & Benefits	0.02	0.01
14.	Unpaid Labour	0.08	0.08
	Variable Costs	1.10	0.95
(C)			
1.	Share/Lease Cattle Payments	0.00	0.00
2.	Taxes, Water Rates, Lic. & Insurance	0.01	0.01
3.	Equipment & Building	0.07	0.06
	a) Depreciation		
	b) Lease Payments	0.00	0.00
4.	Paid Capital Interest	0.01	0.01
	Total Capital Costs	0.10	0.08
(D)	Cash Costs	1.04	0.89
	(B+C-B14-C3)		
(E)	Total Production Costs	1.19	1.04
	(B+C)		
(F)	Gross Margin	(0.13)	0.08
	Return to Unpaid Labour	(0.20)	0.02
	Return to Investment	(0.27)	(0.05)
	Return to Equity	(0.28)	(0.06)

Cow/Calf Enterprise Unit Cost & Returns Detail - 2008**Economic Performance Comparisons**

		Central Alta		C.AB 5Yr
		<u>Total</u>	<u>Low TPC</u>	<u>Low TPC</u>
		----- \$/Cow Wintered -----		
(A)				
1.	Weaned Calves	528.05	549.32	592.35
2.	Feeder Calves	0.00	0.00	0.00
3.	Slaughter Cattle	0.00	0.00	0.00
4.	Purebred Calves	0.00	0.00	0.00
5.	Baby Calves	0.12	0.33	0.23
6.	Cull Cows/Open Heifers	86.97	108.98	64.00
7.	Bulls	13.50	11.73	6.58
8.	Bred Cows/Bred Heifers	12.22	27.38	11.52
9.	Miscellaneous Receipts	0.00	0.00	0.42
10.	Government Programs	1.26	0.18	2.67
11.	Inventory Adjustment	44.34	24.65	85.55
12.	Less: Cattle Purchases	185.61	191.63	201.35
	Value of Production	500.85	530.94	561.96
(B)				
1.	Winter Feed	235.40	156.96	192.05
2.	Bedding	12.31	9.62	8.90
3.	Pasture	220.09	216.04	207.82
4.	Veterinary & Medicine	20.43	22.05	19.47
5.	Breeding Fees/Bull Rental	0.82	1.41	0.88
6.	Trucking & Marketing Charges	10.02	13.22	9.77
7.	Fuel	12.23	11.16	11.89
8.	Repairs - Machine	7.68	8.86	10.02
9.	Repairs - Corrals & Buildings	3.74	4.03	5.60
10.	Utilities & Miscellaneous Expenses	15.19	17.31	16.60
11.	Custom Work & Specialized Labour	9.86	3.79	7.11
12.	Operating Interest Paid	1.58	0.46	3.89
13.	Paid Labour & Benefits	8.75	0.47	6.94
14.	Unpaid Labour	43.88	51.02	46.31
	Variable Costs	602.00	516.41	547.23
(C)				
1.	Share/Lease Cattle Payments	0.93	2.47	0.61
2.	Taxes, Water Rates, Lic. & Insurance	5.26	4.78	5.80
3.	Equipment & Building	39.67	30.24	36.37
	a) Depreciation			
	b) Lease Payments	0.00	0.00	0.23
4.	Paid Capital Interest	7.00	1.63	5.65
	Total Capital Costs	52.85	39.11	48.65
(D)	Cash Costs	(B+C-B14-C3)	571.30	474.25
(E)	Total Production Costs	(B+C)	654.85	555.51
(F)	Gross Margin	(A-D)	(70.45)	56.69
	Return to Unpaid Labour	(A-D+B14)	(110.12)	26.45
	Return to Investment	(A-E+C4)	(147.00)	(28.27)
	Return to Equity	(A-E)	(154.00)	(33.92)
	Total Investment		1,580.96	1,447.22
				1,546.13

**2008 Forage & Pasture Enterprise Cost & Returns Analysis
Central Alta**

----- Forages -----				----- Pastures -----		
	Alfalfa /Grass Hay	Grain Silage	Haylage	Alfalfa /Grass Pasture	Tame /Native Mixed	Swath Grazing
Average field size (acres)	89.5	74.0	55.3	131.2	218.5	58.0
Number of Observations	33	19	20	37	47	8
	-----\$/Tonne-----			-----\$/AUM-----		
(A) 1. Crop Sales	62.74	38.68	40.71	21.31	21.10	27.33
2. Crop Insurance Receipts	0.06	0.95	0.43	0.73	0.40	0.00
3. Miscellaneous Receipts	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4. Government Programs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
5. Straw / Aftermath Grazing	0.70	0.86	3.54	0.00	0.00	0.00
Gross Return	63.51	40.49	44.68	22.04	21.50	27.33
(B) 1. Seed	0.00	2.61	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.69
2. Fertilizer	3.79	7.61	0.94	0.00	0.00	5.11
3. Chemicals	0.00	2.34	0.00	0.56	0.17	0.95
4. Crop Insurance Premiums	0.01	1.65	0.57	0.23	0.10	0.01
5. Trucking & Marketing	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.60	0.00
6. Fuel	7.13	4.84	5.43	1.77	1.32	1.01
7. Irrigation Fuel & Electricity	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
8. Repairs - Machinery	5.80	1.63	2.41	1.24	0.63	0.26
9. Repairs - Buildings	0.68	0.15	0.02	0.28	0.58	0.14
10. Utilities & Misc. Expenses	4.63	1.52	2.86	0.79	0.88	0.35
11. Custom Work & Specialized Labour	1.09	1.74	0.87	0.11	0.00	0.97
12. Operating Interest Paid	0.62	0.20	0.18	0.10	0.08	0.01
13. Paid Labour & Benefits	2.54	1.00	1.37	0.74	0.28	0.22
14. Unpaid Labour	6.83	2.97	4.19	1.98	2.43	0.77
Variable Costs	33.11	28.25	18.83	7.88	7.06	12.48
(C) 1. Cash/Share Rent & Land Lease	13.12	3.04	5.39	11.13	5.27	2.56
2. Taxes, Water Rates, Lic. & Insurance	3.26	0.68	0.76	1.34	1.38	0.83
3. Equip. & Bldg. a) Depreciation	13.28	4.55	8.29	1.28	1.36	0.67
b) Lease Payments	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00
4. Paid Capital Interest	1.45	0.82	0.53	3.89	1.71	0.52
Total Capital Costs	31.11	9.09	14.96	17.63	9.74	4.57
(D) Cash Costs (B+C-B14-C3)	44.11	29.82	21.31	22.26	13.01	15.61
(E) Total Production Costs (B+C)	64.22	37.34	33.79	25.52	16.80	17.05
(F) Gross Margin (A-D)	19.40	10.67	23.37	(0.22)	8.49	11.71
Return to Unpaid Labour (A-E+B14)	6.12	6.12	15.08	(1.50)	7.13	11.04
Return to Investment (A-E+C4)	0.74	3.97	11.41	0.41	6.41	10.79
Return to Equity (A-E)	(0.71)	3.15	10.89	(3.48)	4.70	10.28
Return on Investment (%)	0.2	2.4	3.1	0.1	1.2	3.6
Total Investment (\$/acre)	520.06	917.21	1,332.52	564.68	702.50	1,648.62
Management						
Yield per Acre (tonnes or AUM's)	1.62	5.64	3.65	1.48	1.33	5.54
Expected Market Price (\$/unit)	62.74	38.68	40.71	21.31	21.10	27.33

* Cost and returns profiles include/combine all tenure types ... owned, rented & leased.

Definitions & Explanations to Accompany the Cow/Calf Enterprise Overview

Production Stock Sales – revenues associated with the sale of weaned calves & other **non-breeding stock** related sales.

Value of Production (VOP) – the value of what was produced by the cow/calf enterprise over the course of the production year. Includes cash & non-cash values of:

- cull & breeding stock sales,
- revenues from miscellaneous sources (eg. Program payments, patronage refunds, etc) as allocated to the cow/calf enterprise,
- inventory adjustments relating changes in the number & value of stock included in the enterprise,
- an adjustment for livestock purchases (value is added only from the point of purchase forward)

Winter Feed Costs – the cost of all feeds used by the cow/calf enterprise, purchased or homegrown, based on the market value of these feeds (**not** the cost of raising the feeds).

Pasture Costs – the value of grazing used by the cow/calf enterprise (exclusive of any other retained ownership/backgrounding uses). Pasture is valued into the cow/calf enterprise at market value (**not** cost) & is treated as a “cash” cost.

Labour Costs – a sum of paid & contributed labour, as allocated to the cow/calf enterprise. Paid labour is valued at cost, while unpaid labour is valued at a standard or base cost.

Depreciation & capital Lease Payments – sum of depreciation & mach./equip’t/bldg. lease payments on assets allocated to the cow/calf enterprise.

Other Fixed Costs – total cash overheads, as allocated to the cow/calf enterprise (share/lease cattle payments, property taxes, insurances, licenses & term loan interest).

Total Cash Costs – sum of enterprise cash costs, considering home grown feeds, bedding & pasture as cash costs.

Total Production Costs – sum of all variable& fixed production costs.

Contribution Margin – VOP less Variable Costs

Gross Margin – VOP less Total Cash Costs

Return to Investment – VOP less Total Production Costs Plus Term (Capital) Interest Paid

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Return to Equity & Management – VOP less Total Production Costs.

Investment – sum of assets allocated to the enterprise. Includes: breeding stock, machinery, equipment, buildings/facilities & building site (only)

Breeding Performance Rates

(adjusted for sales & purchases of bred cattle)

Conception rate (%) - # Bred / # Exposed

Calving Rate (%) - # Livebirths / # Bred Females

Weaning Rate (%) - # Weaned / # Exposed

Calved in 1st 2 Cycles (%) - # Calved Cycle 1 & 2
Total Calved

Lbs. Weaned/Cow Exposed - Total Lbs. Weaned
Females Exposed

Lbs. Weaned/Cow Wintered - Total Lbs. Weaned
Bred Females Exposed

Weaned Wt. As % of Cow Wt. - Avg. Lbs. Weaned
Avg. Mature Cow Wt.

Weight per day of Age (lbs.) – Avg. Lbs. Weaned
Wtd Avg Wean Age

Cows Wintered – Open Inventory of Bred Cows & Heifers

Cows / Bulls - # Cows & Heifers Exposed / # Bulls Used

Labour Hours / Cow – Total Labour Hrs / Cows Wintered

AUM’s / Cow Wintered – Total Enterprise AUM’s
Cows Wintered

Feeding Season Days – Days Fed (in yard)

Tonnes fed per Cow –
Tonnes Total Feed (As-Fed)
Cows Wintered
Tonnes Total Feed (Dry Matter)
Cows Wintered

GOLD Indicators

Growth (Wean wt.) - Total Lbs. Weaned
Calves Weaned

Open Cows (%) - # Open Cows & Heifers
Exposed

Length of Calving Period – Days from 1st to last calf

Death Loss of Calves (%) - # Calves Died
Live Births