Introduction:

Backyard cattle fattening has gained importance to the livestock industry of the Philippines. It is becoming popular because of the following advantages: (1) It augments the farmer’s income; (2) it requires minimum space for housing; (3) it allows the use of cheap and plentiful farm by-products which ordinarily go to waste; and (4) it helps meet the immediate demand for high protein foods in the diet of the Filipino people.

Fattening cattle in backyard consist of buying young healthy stocks, feeding them properly and selling them at the proper time.

GUIDES IN THE OPERATION OF BACKYARD CATTLE FATTENING:

A. Suitability of the Area or Locality

Cattle production is sensitive to the changes in the quality and quantity of feed supply. They grow normally well when given the right feed. Adequate feeding is attained through grass pasture, grains, and roughages supplemented with protein, minerals, vitamins, carbohydrates and fats. It will be highly profitable if feeds are available in the locality. Feed ingredients such as rice straw, corn stover, copra meal, rice bran and molasses must be abundant. Grass should be enough for the cattle to graze throughout the year.

Good quality feeder stock can be obtained from your neighbors, livestock markets and commercial ranches. Those that are well adapted to your area should be selected.

TIPS IN SELECTING FEEDER STOCK:

1. Have knowledge of the relative prices.
2. Know the weight of the animal
3. Know the quality of the animal
4. Consider the body conformation and physical appearance of the animal.
B. Housing

Proper housing and equipment are important in a successful backyard cattle raising. Cattle should be protected from extreme hot or cold conditions. Shade is necessary. The typical shed under Philippine conditions is constructed of light native materials. The roof is made of nipa or cogon mounted on either bamboo or ipil-ipil posts to protect the animals from extreme weather.

The flooring can be made of concrete or gravel and sand. The average floor area should be about 4 X 7 feet.

B. Selection of Fattening Cattle

To insure a profitable income from fattening cattle, these factors are to be considered:

1. Age- Younger animals require longer feeding period. Feed is utilized for maintenance, growth and fattening. Older animals take shorter time for fattening. Preferred age of cattle for fattening is 2-3 years old.
2. Sex- Steers (castrated males) are preferred than heifers due to their inherent capacity to gain weight, grow faster and easy to manage.
3. Disposition- An active yet mild, quiet and easily handled steer usually grow fast and fattens easily. Restless, nervous and erratic cattle waste too much energy.
4. Constitution- and Vigor- These are determined by the size and quantity of the vital organs. A large feeding capacity, a strong appetite, a large heart girth, well sprung ribs and a wide, depend full-chest show good constitution and vigor.
5. Breed- Improved breeds gain weight faster with less feed than native animals.

The recommended breeds for fattening are:

a. Brahman - The color is silver gray, some with dark shade in front and at the rear. These animal is popular due to its resistance to diseases and heat and is a good beef type cattle.

b. Ongle or Mellore - The color is white, but bulls may be
dark gray on the head, neck and hump. Knees and pastures may be black.

c. Indu-Brazil - The color vary from light to silver gray. Indu-Brazil and Zebu cattle originated from Brazil.

6. Health Condition of the Animal - A healthy animal is alert, with bright eyes, smooth hair coat and moist muzzle.

**FEED REQUIREMENTS:**

In the selection of feed, the ration should be adjusted to the requirements for fattening cattle based on the availability of feed materials in the locality. Cattle can be fattened on all roughage ration or a roughage-concentrate ration. In giving roughage, be sure to give good quality grass-legume mixture in the form of pasture herbage. These should be given in full feeding.

Roughage-concentrate ration is the contribution of forage or farm by-products and concentrates. Some common concentrates used are: rice bran, copra meal, ipil-ipil leaf meal corn by-products, plus meat and bone meal and salt. These concentrates are cheap and available in many localities. Force-feeding or drenching (supak) of this concentrate should be given twice a day.

Common Concentrate Mixtures Used for Fattening Cattle:

**Sample I**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copra Meal</td>
<td>60 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice Bran</td>
<td>39 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt/Powdered Shell</td>
<td>1 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100 %
Sample II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copra Meal</td>
<td>50 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice Bran</td>
<td>25 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dried Chicken Manure</td>
<td>24 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt/Powdered Shell/Ground Limestone</td>
<td>1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 %</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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In areas where ipil-ipil is abundant, cattle is fed with fresh foliage together with the succulent twigs and immature pods of this plant. All the green feed that the animal can consume in a day is placed in the feed bunk so that the animal has access to it all the time. The daily ration of ipil-ipil is supplemented with fifteen to twenty kilograms of common grasses.

**MANAGEMENT PRACTICES;**

1. Newly arrived feeder stock should first be confined and provided with clean and low energy feed.

2. A week after arrival, deworming and spraying of the mount should be carried out.

3. The feeding area should be always kept clean and drained to ensure proper health and good sanitation.

4. Always watch for signs of illness such as reduced feed intake, abnormal discharge or unusual behavior. If illness is suspected, ask the help of a Veterinarian or Livestock Inspector.
5. The animal should be vaccinated against hoof and mouth disease and hemorrhagic septicemia if they have not been vaccinated previously.

6. The animal can be tethered in grassy area and for short periods beexposed to sunlight and kept in the coral in the evening.

7. The animal should be washed at least once a week to increase its feed consumption and for sanitation purposes.

8. Water should be available at all times. Ordinary salt should be made available to the cattle at the rate of 30-50 grams per head daily.

9. Feeding of concentrate should be increased gradually to minimize the occurrence of rumentis, scouring and bloating.

10. Animals in the backyard affected with disease should be removed at once from the pen. They must be isolated and treated effectively.

11. Mineral supplements and growth stimulants are added to the feed as needed.

**MARKETING OF FATTENED CATTLE:**

Six months after the date of purchase, fattened cattle should weigh approximately 275-325 kilograms and, therefore, ready for market. Improper handling of animals before and during transport to livestock markets may cause serious injuries or even death of animals. In transporting animals, see to it that there is adequate bedding and loading facilities. Avoid overloading or overfeeding.

Marketing Tips:

1. Be aware of the current market price of livestock.
2. Sell the animals per head basis based on the prevailing price Per kilo live weight. Before selling, know the weight of your animal.
3. Dispose all marketable animals.
4. Do not market sick animals.