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## **OPTIONS FOR FEEDING DISTILLERS GRAINS**

Delivering distillers grains to cattle can be a difficult task. On many cow-calf operations, producers commonly rotate cattle among pastures, which would require moving feed bunks if distillers grains are being fed that way. There are various ways producers can make this task easier.

One of the easiest ways is to feed distillers grains directly on the ground. However, for this to be cost effective, a producer must first know how much waste occurs when cattle are fed on the ground.

UNL Extension has conducted research on the difference in waste when feeding wet and dry distillers grains to cattle either in a bunk or on the ground. Researchers observed the difference in weight gain and performance between cattle fed distillers grains in a bunk and cattle fed the same amount of distillers grains on the ground. Because the energy content of both weight gain and distillers grains are known, they were then able to calculate how much distillers grains fed on the ground was wasted to see that difference in gain.

Research showed waste was between 15 and 18 percent when cattle were fed wet distillers grains on the ground. Waste was between 35 and 40 percent when dry distillers grains were fed on the ground. The difference in waste may be because of the particle size of the distillers grains. If they are wet, the particles stick together better, allowing better access for cattle to pick up more when on the ground. If they are dry, the particles are small and don't have moisture allowing them to stick together, which makes it more difficult for the cattle to pick them up.

This research on the waste from feeding on the ground doesn't mean producers can't or shouldn't feed distillers grains on the ground. It all depends on the alternative option's cost. Though there is that waste with wet or dry distillers grains, producers could still feed for less total money and incur the waste compared to some other alternatives.

Additional information on distillers grains can be found at [beef.unl.edu](http://beef.unl.edu).

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