

Performance and beef quality of growing bulls offered whole crop legume-cereal and alsike clover silages

Pesonen, M., Huuskonen, A. & Honkavaara, M.
Natural Resources Institute Finland
Green Technology

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Maiju Pesonen

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Outline

- Background
- Objectives
- Materials & methods
- Results
- Conclusions

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Background

- 1) Alsike clover is an interesting alternative forage crop
 - Well suited to acidic, organic soils
 - 2) Producing whole crop small grain cereal silages provides an opportunity to **improve the efficiency of forage production for ruminants** under Northern European conditions
 - Cost effective, wide harvest window, high yield, benefits in manure spreading and ley re-establishment ect. ect.
- Especially in organic farming systems using different clovers is a conventional approach and annual legumes are often sown with cereals
 - Nitrogen fixing, soil improvement effect ect.
 - Legumes can **enhance the nutritional quality** of the cereal whole crop silage
 - However, there is paucity of published information:
 - a) on performance,
 - b) carcass characteristics
 - c) meat quality
 - of growing bulls when **grass silage is replaced by whole crop legume-cereal or alsike clover silages**

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Objective

Our objective was to determine the effects of silage plant species:

- whole crop legume-cereal silage vs. grass
- alsike clover silage vs. grass

On growing beef bulls:

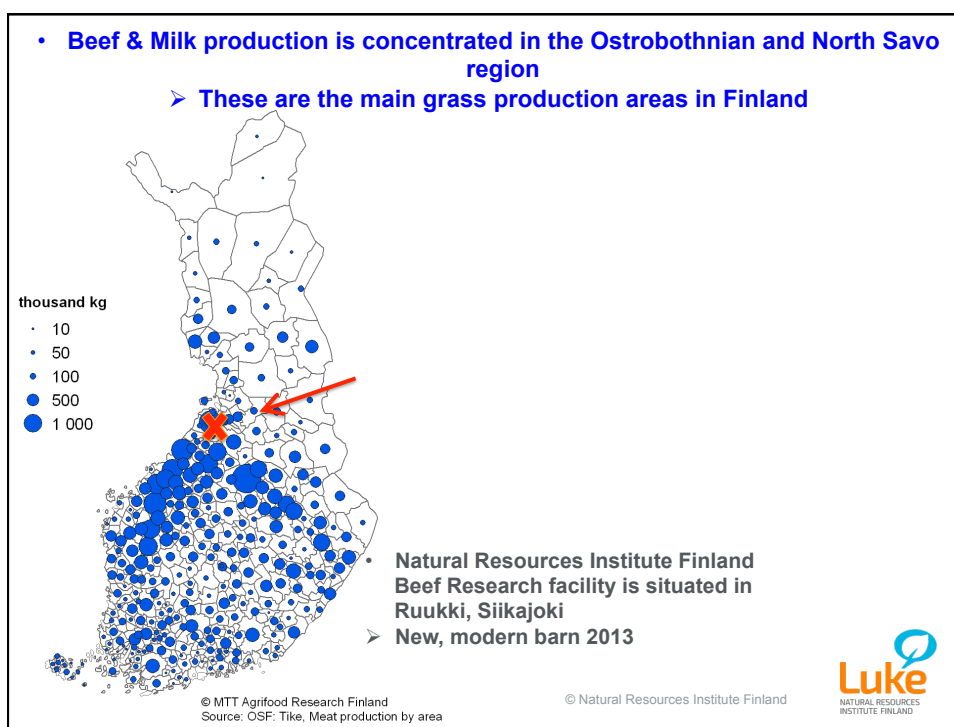
- Aberdeen Angus
- Nordic Red

On the production traits:

- on animal performance
 - ✓ intake, growth, carcass characteristics
- beef quality
 - ✓ pH, marbling, drip loss, shear force, colour, sensory analysis
- beef fatty acid profile

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Materials & methods 1

- **The experiment comprised in total:**
 - ✓ 50 Aberdeen Angus bulls
 - ✓ 50 Nordic Red bulls
 - Four five animal pens / treatment
 - Two pens of each breed / treatment
- The feed intake was measured and recorded with GrowSafe feed intake system
 - Each pen contained two GrowSafe feeder nodes
- During the experiment, the bulls were housed in an uninsulated barn
 - ✓ Peat-straw mixture was used as bedding
 - ✓ Space allowance / bull 10.0 m²

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Materials & methods 2

- The grass silage was the regrowth from a timothy (*Phleum pratense*) sward (TS)
 - Alsike clover (*Trifolium hybridum*) was harvested at flowering state (AS)
 - Two legume-cereal mixtures:
 - ✓ Faba bean (*Vicia faba*) + wheat (FW)
 - ✓ Pea (*Pisum sativum*) + wheat (PW)
- All silages were preserved in bunker silos & treated with formic acid based additive

Feeds					
	TS	AS	FW	PW	Barley
Dry matter (DM), g/kg feed	289	295	277	269	883
Crude protein, g/kg DM	129	164	154	174	107
NDF, g/kg DM	580	450	465	427	210
Metabolisable energy, MJ/kg DM	10,1	9,6	9,7	9,7	13,2
Digestible OM in DM, g/kg DM	629	603	608	608	821
pH	3,96	4,10	3,79	3,98	

- The crude protein content was 19 % higher in FW, 35 % higher in PW and 21 % higher in AS than in TS
- TS had 4 % higher ME content than the whole crop legume-cereal silages
- TS had 5 % higher ME content than the alsike clover silage

Materials & methods 3 – Total Mixed Ration

- The composition of the diets were:
 - All the TMRs had 650 g/kg forage and 350 g/kg cereal in the DM
 - The cereal was rolled barley
 - The TMR was offered for the bulls *ad libitum*

	TMR (65:35)				
	TSB	TASB 50:50	ASB	FWB	PWB
Dry matter (DM), g/kg feed	378	381	385	365	356
Crude protein, g/kg DM	121	133	144	138	151
NDF, g/kg DM	451	408	366	376	351
Metabolisable energy, MJ/kg DM	11,2	11	10,9	10,9	10,9
Digestible OM in DM, g/kg DM	696	688	679	683	683
Protein balance in the rumen, g/kg DM	-2	7	16	11	22

- Due to differences in composition of the experimental silages the FWB, PWB, TASB and ASB rations had 9-25% more crude protein than the TSB
 - Protein over feeding?
 - In all rations the PBV value fulfilled the Finnish recommendation for growing cattle (PBV above -10 g/kg DM for animals over 200 kg LW)

Materials & methods 4

Statistical model included:

- the effects of **diet, breed and their interaction**
- the effect of the **slaughtering batch**
- the effect of pen was used as an error term when differences between treatments were compared because treatments were allocated to animals penned together
- initial live weight as a covariate in the model
- **Differences between the treatments were tested using orthogonal contrasts:**

Feeding experiment 1:

- 1) Breed (Ab vs. Nordic Red)
- 2) Diet (Grass silage diet vs. WCLC-silage diets)
- 3) Whole crop legume-cereal silage diets (Faba bean vs. Pea)

Feeding experiment 2:

- 1) Breed (Ab vs. Nordic Red)
- 2) Linear effect of alsike clover inclusion
- 3) Quadratic effect of alsike clover incl.
- 4) Linear interaction between breed and alsike clover incl.
- 5) Quadratic interaction between breed and alsike clover incl.

Since the interactions between breed and feeding treatments were not statistically significant, the interactions are not presented

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Results 1 – Duration, liveweights & age



- The Nordic Red bulls weighed in average **115 kg less** than the Angus bulls in the beginning of the experiment
- The final live weight was in average **104,6 kgs higher** for the Angus bulls
- The duration on the experiment was in average **49 days shorter** for the Angus
- **PWB diet tended to shorten the duration of the experiment (P=0,02)**
- There were no differences in the slaughter age

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Results 2 – Feed intake

	Angus					Nordic Red				
	TSB	TASB	ASB	FWB	PWB	TSB	TASB	ASB	FWB	PWB
Dry Matter, kg/d	12,20	12,45	12,01	13,40	12,15	10,95	10,87	10,97	12,33	10,44
DMI, g/kg live weight	20,5	21,0	20,4	22,6	20,5	22,6	23,2	23,0	25,2	23,1
Metabolizable energy (ME), MJ/d	136	136	131	143	132	123	119	120	132	113
Crude protein, g/d	1457	1635	1707	1840	1834	1317	1432	1561	1688	1565

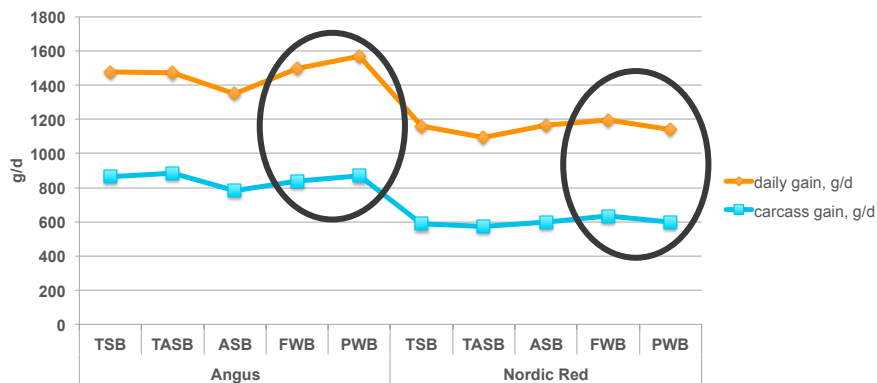
- The total **DMI** of the **Angus bulls** was **12 % higher**
 - **Daily ME and CP intakes were higher for Angus bulls (exp 1. P=0,005; exp 2. P=0,003)**
- **DMI relation to LW was 11 % higher in the Nordic Red bulls (exp 1. P=0,01; exp 2. <0,001)**
- **The FBW diet tended to increase DM and energy intakes (P=0,006)**
- CP intake were higher with whole crop legume silage and alsike clover diets (exp 1. and exp. 2 <0,001)

Results 3 - Feed conversion

	Angus					Nordic Red				
	TSB	TASB	ASB	FWB	PWB	TSB	TASB	ASB	FWB	PWB
Kg DM/kg carcass gain	13,9	14,3	15,6	16,1	14,1	19,4	19,7	19,0	19,8	17,9
MJ ME/kg carcass gain	151	156	174	172	154	211	216	212	212	194
g CP/kg carcass gain	1688	1845	2188	2223	2154	2236	2499	2636	2714	2641

- There were no significant differences in DM or energy conversion rates when replacing timothy silage with alsike clover silage
- **CP conversion reduced linearly with increasing alsike clover inclusion**
- ✓ **The PWB diet tended to increase feed efficiency of the bulls (<0,001)**
- ✓ **The FBW diet tended to reduce the feed efficiency of the bulls (<0,001)**
- ✓ **Angus bulls used 4,36 kg less feed DM and needed 47,6 MJ less feed energy for 1 kg carcass gain than the Nordic Red bulls**
- ✓ Angus bulls were in average 23 % more efficient in converting the feed to carcass gain than the Nordic Red bulls
- **The bulls could not utilize the additional protein obtained through feeding**

Results 4 – Daily gain & Carcass gain



Angus: live weight vs. carcass gain:

➤ 1473,4 vs. 847,4 g/d

Nordic Red: live weight vs. carcass gain:

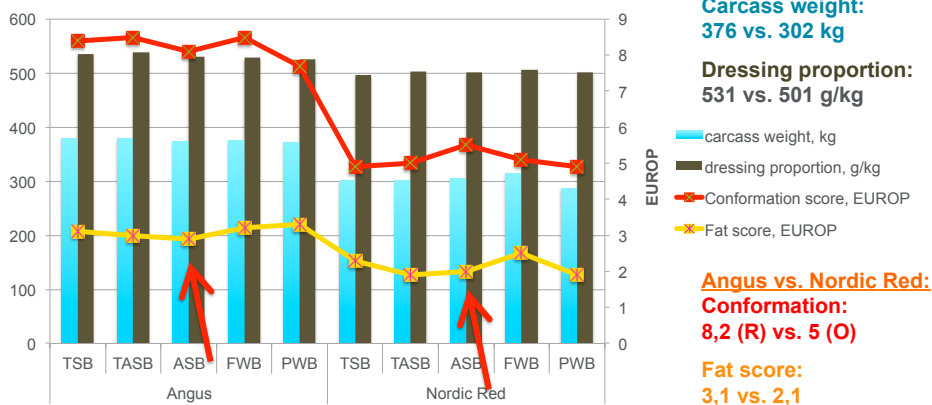
➤ 1151,6 vs. 598,6 g/d

- ✓ Angus bulls grew faster
- ✓ Trend for slightly better growth with WCL silage diets (P=0,16)
- ✓ **No treatment differences**

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Results 5 – carcass traits



Angus vs. Nordic Red:

Carcass weight:
376 vs. 302 kg

Dressing proportion:
531 vs. 501 g/kg

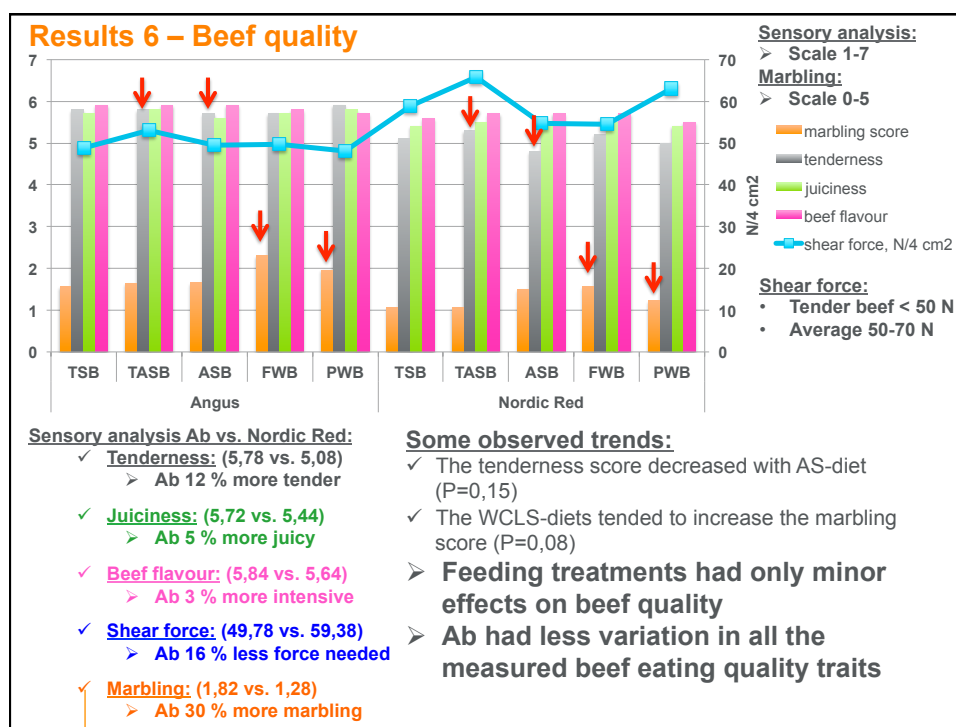
Conformation score, EUROP

Angus vs. Nordic Red:
Conformation:
8,2 (R) vs. 5 (O)

Fat score:
3,1 vs. 2,1

Some observed trends:

- With AS diets the bulls had slightly poorer carcass weight and conformation class (P=0,14)
- The carcass weight of **FWB bulls was 9 % higher than the PWB bulls** (P=0,02)
 - The conformation score of FWB bulls was also higher (P=0,04)
- **Carcass fat score tended to decrease when replacing TS by AS (P=0,07)**
 - **Might be associated with the enzyme polyphenol oxidase > plant selfprotection** (Lee et al. 2007)
 - **Results in lower level of dietary lipolysis in the rumen > prerequisite for biohydrogenation of unsaturated fatty acids** (Lee et al. 2009)



Results 7 - Fatty acid profile

	Angus					Nordic Red				
	TSB	TASB	ASB	FWB	PWB	TSB	TASB	ASB	FWB	PWB
Saturated fatty acids, %	45,92	44,33	44,11	46,00	46,10	42,44	43,29	44,52	43,71	45,33
Monoun saturated fatty acids, %	46,27	47,20	47,72	46,90	46,40	48,99	48,99	47,41	48,36	46,02
Polyun saturated fatty acids, %	6,71	7,52	7,38	6,24	6,57	7,53	8,18	7,89	7,00	7,71
n6/n3 fatty acid ratio	3,01	2,90	2,91	3,20	3,10	4,33	4,31	4,12	4,29	4,49

- The loin samples of the **Angus bulls contained a higher proportion of saturated fatty acids (<0,001)**
- Angus bulls tended to contain lower proportion of mono- and polyunsaturated fatty acids compared to the NR bulls
- **The n-6/n-3 fatty acid ratio of the Nordic Red bulls was 30% higher than the corresponding value of the Angus bulls (<0,001)**
- **AS diet tended to produce beef with lower n-6/n-3 fatty acid ratio**
 ➢ **The effect was even more pronounced in Nordic Red bulls (P=0,23)**

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Conclusions

- At fixed 500 days slaughter age **breed differences were observed:**
 - ✓ in growth
 - ✓ carcass traits
 - ✓ beef quality
- The results indicate that Aberdeen Angus bulls produced beef with a lower n-6/n-3 fatty acid ratio compared to Nordic Red bulls (more healthier)
- **Replacing moderately digestible timothy silage by whole crop legume-cereal silages or alsike clover silage in the diet did not have any remarkable effects:**
 - on animal performance
 - carcass characteristics or
 - beef quality of the growing bulls
- **The possibility of protein over feeding should be taken into consideration in ration planning with high CP legume forages**

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