Cattle fatten up on old aspen trees

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Department of Games, Fish and Parks has been doing some experimenting with feeding ground aspen trees to cattle and it looks like the Old West Regional Commission will get to sink its teeth into the results.

Four standing rib roasts from animals fed on a combination of 48 per cent ground aspen plus sodium hydroxide will be offered to commission members at a Dec. 11 luncheon here, the commission said.

At the luncheon, commission members will be asked to see if they can tell which among four of the roasts came from the aspen-fed beef rather than beef fed on traditional alfalfa roughage.

The commission gave the department a $30,000 grant to see if the aspen trees, which currently have no commercial use except for firewood, can be a suitable and economical source of cattle feed.

Aspen trees, which are especially thick in the Black Hills of South Dakota and in parts of Wyoming, are not currently harvested and are subject to excessive rot in maturity, the commission said.
But cattle have shown a longstanding preference for the
park, the commission said.

Dr. L.D. Kampstra of the Animal Sciences Department
of South Dakota State University, who led the researchers,
said aspen-fed beef showed light to moderate marbling,
足够的 to qualify as good grade beef but not choice grade.
The department has been feeding 50 hereford steers on
a variety of aspen concentrates to see how well they would
fatten. Results also indicate aspen-fed cattle gained weight
about twice as fast as the alfalfa-fed group.

After the commission members try out the beef, they
will hear the results from an earlier taste panel which
Kampstra said found the beef “tasty and tender.”

The commission is made up of representatives from
Wyoming, Montana, North and South Dakota, and Nebraska.