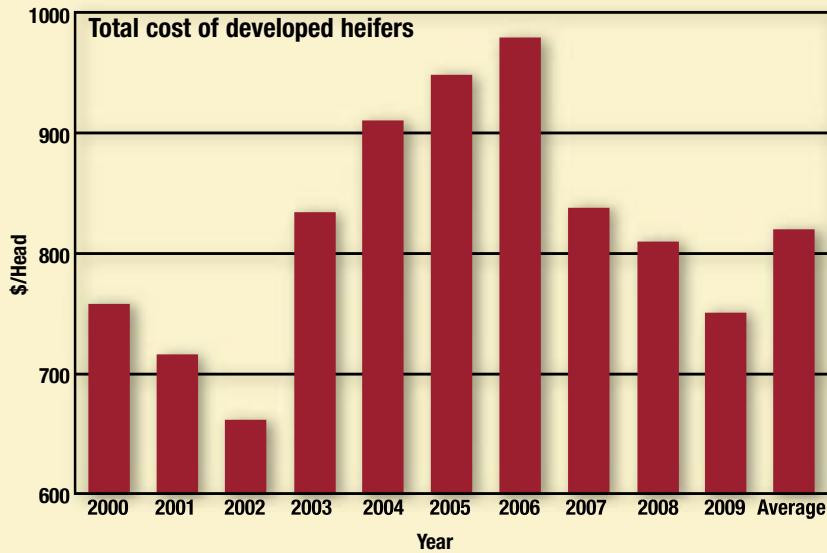


Figure 1. Projected cost of developing replacement heifers on the ranch



Heifer development costs vary with the cattle cycle. Figure 1 presents my calculated typical heifer-development costs. These total annual costs are based on the fall-weaning market value of the weaned heifer calf, plus a specified development cost for taking heifers from weaning to preg-check time. North Dakota research in the 1990s suggests it costs \$250 to \$300 to develop a preg-checked heifer from weaning until preg-check time. Since the value of a heifer calf changes with the cattle cycle, the total economic cost associated with developing replacement heifers also changes with the cattle cycle.