Beef Cattle Production and Management Program Update
Texas AgriLife Extension Service
Most Recent Quarter 2009 “Snapshot”

Relevance

Beef Cattle Production continues to be the leading source of agricultural income for the state of Texas. In 2008, income from beef cattle in Texas was nearly $7 billion, roughly 36% of the state’s agricultural receipts. Recently, an increased need for education of beef cattle producers has been highlighted by the ongoing drought over much of the state, and fluctuations in production costs and cattle prices.

Extension Outreach Efforts

During the most recent quarter of 2009, the Texas AgriLife Extension Service held 226 educational programs targeting producers of beef cattle, reaching over 30,000 individuals who attended the sessions. An additional 39,000 individuals were reached through one-on-one contact methods by Extension faculty. The annual Beef Cattle Short Course had another big turnout with 1,470 attending.

Selected Program Highlights

Listed below are some significant program highlights from educational events and activities around Texas during this three month period.

- Specialists from Animal Science and Ecosystem Science and Management conducted Drought Management educational programs in 24 counties in 4 Extension Districts attended by more than 1,000 clientele. A drought management model was developed by Risk Management Specialists and a bulletin was written to use as a guideline for ranchers. Attendees were instructed on how to recognize impending drought, how to prepare a drought management plan (destocking plan, marketing plan, supplementation plan, etc.,) and if they were in a drought, review their options and the needs of cattle until a plan could be implemented. Knowledge change surveyed at most of the educational programs was 90% or higher and over 2/3’s indicated they intended to complete and follow a drought management plan (about 1 in 10 said they already had one).

- Two Beef 706 programs were held teaching best beef quality management practices to cattle producers. This program was held in partnership with the Texas Beef Council, with the goal of teaching cattle producers how to raise cattle in a manner that will produce a high quality and safe beef product for the consumer. Program participants learn to evaluate live cattle and estimate the production parameters that determine value of live cattle and the muscle cuts they produce upon harvest. In addition, participants are instructed in best management practices to ensure the production of a safe, wholesome and nutritious beef product. Through survey responses at the conclusion of the Beef 706 it was determined that there was as much as a threefold increase in knowledge gained regarding best beef quality management practices.
These programmatic success stories represent merely a snapshot of the programs being held across the State. For more information regarding any of these programs, please contact Dr. Pete Gibbs, Associate Director for Agriculture and Natural Resources at (979)862-3932.

- **Drought Loss Estimates** - AgriLife Extension Economists provided estimates that the financial impact of the drought to Texas farmers and ranchers had reached $3.6 billion dollars. Texas AgriLife Extension coordinated its release with the Texas Commissioner of Agriculture’s office. Many media sources used the estimate and generated related news stories using Texas AgriLife Extension Service faculty as resource people. Viewer impressions totaled more than three million in July on stories related to the devastation caused by the drought.

- **Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Llano County** co-sponsored the annual Beef and Range Field Day with the local NRCS. More than 150 landowners and beef producers attended the field day. Extension specialists and industry representatives presented the program and addressed brush and weed management, range monitoring/stocking rates, alternative feeds and supplemental feeding, rainwater harvesting, and new regulations for Trichomoniasis. Seventy-five individuals returned a mail survey on the field day and the results were as follows:
  
  **Knowledge level changes captured from the Llano County program:**
  - 100.3 percent change in understanding of the new regulations implemented by TAHC in regards to Trichomoniasis.
  - 70.69 percent change in understanding how Trichomoniasis negatively impacts beef cattle reproduction and profitability
  - 59.86 percent change in understanding the economic and quality considerations when evaluating alternative feeds in beef cattle.

  **Total economic value of this Extension program as determined by estimates provided by program participants was over $200,000.**

- **The CLO Agricultural Workforce and Community Development Pilot Project** began due to identified critical issues, primarily labor management, at the High Plains Livestock 2027 Conference. The program has 5 basic components: 1- Executive Management, 2- On-site workforce training programs, 3- Longer term vocational workforce, 4- Family and Youth educational program, 5- Economic analysis and support related to community impacts. Partners for the pilot program include Texas Cattle Feeders Association, Texas Association of Dairymen, and Texas Pork Producers Association. In 2009, there have been 9 sessions reaching 86 workers in the pilot counties: Deaf Smith, Dallam, Sherman, Lamb and Hansford.

- **A Junior Fed Beef Career and Leadership Camp** was held at WTAMU. Thirteen high school junior and seniors from the Oklahoma panhandle to Sealy, Texas attended the three day camp. The camp was a joint effort of Texas Cattle Feeders, WTAMU and Texas AgriLife Extension and was sponsored by TCFA and Allied Industry Sponsor Companies. The program included problem solving and leadership activities as well as tours of beef processing facilities, and feedyards and hands on training. Participants were paired with a local feedyard and participated in a day long job shadowing experience following the camp.