

IMPACT

University of Idaho
Extension

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Winter Beef Schools are a Success for 2008

The Situation

Agriculture is a viable and essential industry to the economy of Idaho. Cattle and calves are the number two agricultural industry in the state (2007) with cash receipts estimated at \$1.07 billion (1). In South Central Idaho, there were 105,500 head of beef cows that had calved as of January 1, 2007 (2). The counties included in this category are Blaine, Camas, Cassia, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka, and Twin Falls. When adding Butte, Custer, and Lemhi Counties, which are also included in the University of Idaho District III Extension System, the number reached 151,800 head (2). This accounts for over 32% of the beef cows that had calved in Idaho.

Based on the impact of the beef industry in Idaho, advisory committees from many of these counties were asked for their input as to what topics and programming would be of value to them. Numerous suggestions were given, but animal health, economics, and grazing/nutrition were of the most interest.



Our Response

After meeting with the county advisory committees, livestock educators and beef specialists met and determined that a series of beef schools would provide the information requested by the beef producers. The schools were held at the end of January during a weekday from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. in Jerome, Mackay, and Malta. This timeframe gave participants enough time to feed cattle in the morning, and return home in the evening to finish chores. These locations served as central points for producers throughout the area.

The topics included in the schools were range rehabilitation after a fire and noxious weed control, utilizing residue forages, cow nutrition and ration formulation, economics of the beef industry, BVD and PI cattle, and reducing the impact of scours. Presenters included Extension educators, specialists, veterinarians, and county weed superintendents. During lunch the Idaho Beef Council discussed how the Beef Checkoff dollars were being utilized. The information provided was intended to meet the needs of cattle producers, but it also gave veterinarians and veterinary technicians the opportunity to meet some of their requirements for continuing education credits. Five credits were approved by the Idaho Board of Veterinary Medicine. One credit was also approved by the Idaho State Department of Agriculture for recertification credits for Idaho pesticide applicator training.

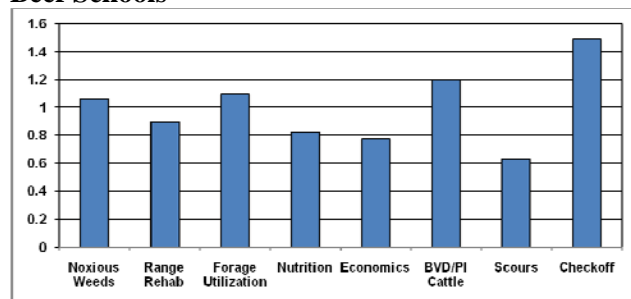
The schools were made possible in part through the generous sponsorships of banks, feed stores, and associations in the communities. This reduced the cost to the producers who attended, and made the

registration fee affordable (\$5 in Mackay and \$10 in Jerome and Malta).

Program Outcomes

Ninety-six people attended the winter beef schools. Mackay had 17 participants, Malta 19, and Jerome 60. Surveys were handed out at the completion of each school (39 were returned), and overall the participants ranked the relevance of the topics to their business as excellent (choices included superior, excellent, good, fair, and poor). Participants were also asked to rate their knowledge of each topic presented, prior to the school and after, on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = no knowledge, 2 = a little, 3 = some, 4 = a good deal, and 5 = a great deal). From the results of the surveys the change in knowledge for each topic was calculated. The overall change in knowledge for all of the topics equaled a 1 point increase from some knowledge to a good deal.

Change in Knowledge of Topics Presented at the Beef Schools



The survey asked the participants how they heard about the beef schools in order to analyze the methods of advertisement and determine the most effective. The options were internet, mailing, newspaper article, radio, or other. They could choose all that applied. The most successful form of advertisement was through the mailings. Twenty-seven people found out through the mailings, 1 person found the information on the internet, 8 read an article in the newspaper, 1 heard about the schools on the radio, and 9 checked other.

Participants were also asked what their occupational backgrounds were to determine who was interested in the program. The largest number of participants were producers, which was expected. Thirty participants were producers, 12 were veterinarians/

veterinary technicians, 3 were from an allied industry, and academia and agency both had 2 people in attendance. Participants were asked to choose all that applied and fit into more than one category.

The survey asked other questions about the most valuable part of the program, what information the participants planned to implement in the future, what they would like more information on, how the schools could be improved, and other suggestions. Many expressed the tremendous value of the animal health sections and were going to implement different concepts from those presentations. Some of the comments about the school were; "It provided information to make a person step back and take a look." and "Thanks for making this very affordable and available." The schools were very successful and the evaluations were positive. As a result, we plan to continue the schools in the future.

Other Contributing Faculty

Chad Cheyney—Butte County Extension
Richard Garrard—Cassia County Extension
Jim England—Caine Veterinary Teaching Center
Benton Glaze—Twin Falls R & E Center
Wilson Gray—Twin Falls R & E Center
Ken Sanders—Twin Falls R & E Center

Sources: (1) Eborn, B., P. Patterson, & G. Taylor. 2007. The Financial Condition of Idaho Agriculture: 2007 Projections [Brochure]. Moscow, ID: University of Idaho Extension. (2) USDA, NASS. 2007. Idaho Agricultural Statistics. Boise, ID: Idaho Field Office.

For More Information

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