

IMPACT

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Southwest Idaho Youth Beef Field Days

The Situation

Beef cattle production is a strong component of our agriculture industry, ranking second among agriculture sectors in the state. To help keep this trade viable for years to come, youth need to be exposed to the many facets of beef cattle production. Youth who participate in beef projects experience small segments of the industry. University of Idaho Extension offers additional opportunities to experience aspects of the beef cattle industry. University of Idaho District II Beef Field Days are geared to go beyond the idea of feeding a steer for the duration of their 4-H project, but also to expand the 4-Her's knowledge of other areas of beef production including animal health, quality assurance, and training.

Our Response

For the past 4 years, livestock Extension educators and specialists in southwestern Idaho and industry representatives have coordinated and taught a Youth Beef Field Day in Marsing. Topics have included applied nutrition, Beef Quality Assurance, and market standards.

To meet the need of improved health and feed management, the 2009 Youth Beef Field Day was planned around the topic of Beef Cattle Management. The field day consisted of five hands-on stations pertaining to the overall theme of the event. The topics included general health recommendations for cattle and tour of a vet truck, understanding what happens during a necropsy, developing and calculating feed rations, weighing feeds, and tips to ease the stress of halter breaking steers.

Program Outcomes

Eighty-five youth and 35 adults attended the field day, representing seven southwestern counties in

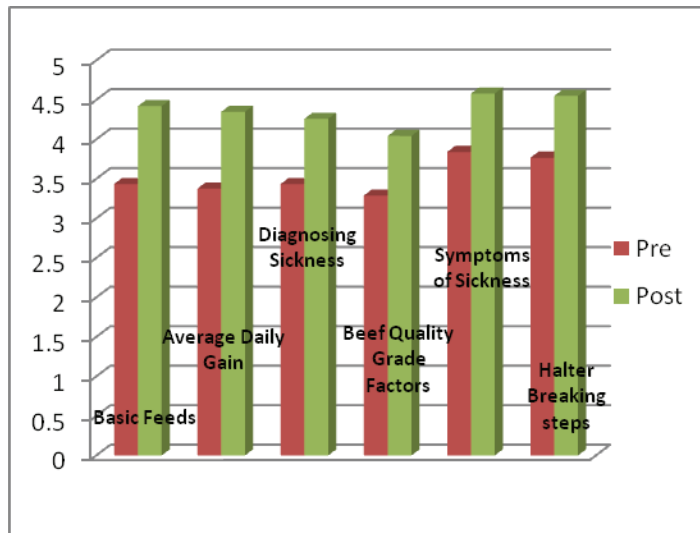


4-H youth perform a necropsy on a calf at the 2009 District II Beef Field Day in Marsing.

Idaho and Malheur County, Oregon. An evaluation was given to each participant at the conclusion of the field day, which asked them to rate their knowledge and understanding of each topic presented on a scale of one to five (1=don't agree at all, 2=disagree, 3=don't know, 4=agree, 5=very much agree). From the results listed in the graph (next page), participants gained knowledge in each area from the beginning to the end of the field day.

The evaluation asked the participants to list one idea they plan to put into practice after attending the field day. Based on responses, the bulk of participants planned to use the halter breaking tips on their steers, weighing their feed rations, and continually calculating average daily gain for their steers as a result of knowledge gained at the field day. When participants were asked what topic they liked best, the majority of youth responded that the necropsy station was their favorite. This was closely followed by the vet truck

Table 1: Pre- and Post-Test Evaluation Results



tour station where they were able to take a steer’s temperature and listen to the heart beat using a stethoscope.

Overall, the youth and adult participants had positive comments about the Beef Field Day. One 4-Her said, “Each year the field day has gotten closer to reality for 4-Hers and working with their steer.” Other comments included:

“This was a wonderful and helpful educational experience.”

“Thank you! We always learn so much!”

“Great job! Be back next year.”

Future workshop suggestions indicated that participants are interested in learning about EPD’s (expected progeny differences), calf selection, job opportunities, and minimizing stress in cattle.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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