



# EXTENSION IMPACT

## Sustainability & Profitability of Beef Production

**F**acility management plays a key role in the profitability of beef enterprises. Damaged buildings lead to animals facing adverse winter and summer conditions, slowing down their rate of growth and ultimately leading to higher producer costs due to increased inputs such as feed. The cost of repairing or replacing damaged buildings can be high, and potentially threatening to farm businesses. During the 2018-2019 winter, several Wisconsin farm buildings collapsed due to heavy snow loads, many of which housed livestock. There were reports of damaged farm buildings from more than twenty-two counties in the state. Damage estimates from Buffalo County, where the highest amount of damage occurred, were over 10 million dollars.

*Through Extension's Livestock program, beef producers better understand issues related to market strategies and maintaining building structures, allowing them to become or remain economically sustainable while raising a wholesome and nutritious product.*

In response, University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension Livestock educators conducted a series of in-person workshops in 8 locations that incorporated the emergent issues of facility management with the more traditional topics related to economic sustainability. Understanding building

maintenance allows producers to house their animals away from adverse weather conditions and in safe environments, leading to increased animal growth, decreased animal injury due to buildings falling on cattle, and increased producer profits.

In the workshop sessions, 249 agriculture professionals (representing 56,000 head of beef) learned about best management practices to meet current markets, and how to ensure adverse winter weather does not damage livestock housing facilities. Workshop participants represented a wide range of agriculture industry representatives including farmers with cattle feeding operations, cow calf producers interested in learning about the other segments of the industry, allied industry representatives including livestock nutritionists, veterinarians, agricultural lenders, and representatives from livestock markets.

Our evaluations strongly indicate Extension's workshops that focus on pertinent and emerging beef industry issues have a significant impact on farm operations. Evaluations indicate 70% of our 2020 workshop participants intended to make changes on their operations based on what they learned through Extension. More than half of 2020 participants had participated in similar workshops in the past; of those returning participants, 80% confirmed they implemented management changes due to previous Extension workshops. This group of participants also indicated these changes increased farm revenue by approximately up to \$25 per head of beef.



The Livestock program is part of Extension's Agriculture Institute. Learn more by visiting [livestock.extension.wisc.edu](http://livestock.extension.wisc.edu).

in 2020



**\$1.1 million**  
estimated increase of farm revenue due to Extension training



**56,000**  
head of beef impacted by Extension workshops on facility management



**70%**  
of farmers intend to make changes to operations based on training



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