



EXTENSION IMPACT

Economic Viability for Beef Producers

To remain viable, beef producers must use strategies to set their animals apart from the rest. To do so, they need to better understand how purebred and “beef × dairy” crossbred cattle grow. However, there is a gap in research-based information surrounding the growth and performance of beef × dairy crossbred cattle. Cow-calf producers need to understand and adopt strategies to ensure the health of their calves through calf care and preconditioning; finishing beef producers need to understand growth and development to more effectively direct market beef products; and all producers need to understand growth and development to better manage their feed inventory and make alternative feed or culling decisions. Aside from issues that intensified during the pandemic, there was a need for beef producers to better understand how to use budget spreadsheets to manage their business. Producers also need decision-support tools to appropriately price their products for profit.

In response, Extension researchers and educators are conducting several on-farm studies to measure growth and performance of beef × dairy crossbred calves. Preliminary data will be used to help producers make the best feeding strategy decisions. Extension educators used a blended outreach approach (including webinars, factsheets, popular press articles, and budget spreadsheets) to help beef producers ensure economic stability. These outreach activities helped producers address concerns unique to COVID-19 pandemic by learning about feeding strategies that limit beef animal growth and reduce per-pound carcass deductions and increase feed costs from retaining animals for longer periods of time. Additional outreach activities encouraged culling strategies due to feed inventory concerns. For example, over 850 Wisconsin beef producers

attended series and/or reviewed the recorded content to learn more about weaned calf management, nutrition strategies, and health strategies. Of attendees, 67% of respondents indicated they increased their understanding due to attending the webinar. Additionally, respondents predicted management changes made due to attending the webinar would result in increased profits: 66% anticipated profits of \$1–5 per head, while 14% predicted a \$6–10 per head profit, 12% predicted a \$11–20 per head profit, and 8% predicted a \$20+ per head profit.

Extension helps beef producers use budgeting tools and best management practices to improve their bottom line.

Further outreach efforts focused on developing and promoting the use of budget spreadsheets to increase producer understanding of costs of production, pricing products, estimate future costs based on known past performance, and to lower risk. After attending a program demonstrating the use of new budget spreadsheets, over 50% of respondents indicated they intended to use the spreadsheets to calculate costs and make informed decisions. After attending a program focused on helping producers learn about pricing their products to capture a positive financial return, 85% indicated they are likely to adjust their current pricing based.

in 2021



850
participants



1,700+
article views



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