Beef producers in eastern Idaho learn new management practices

**AT A GLANCE**

Beef cattle producers are more successful when they remain up to date on management strategies that optimize profitability.

**The Situation**

Beef cattle production is a large part of south eastern Idaho’s economy. Producers are in a constant state of looking for a more cost-effective way of running their operations. Ranchers in the region are concerned about beef production issues related to rebreeding, forage management and stockmanship. They are seeking educational information for efficient beef production practices to reduce cost and increase profitability.

**Our Response**

The University of Idaho beef team organized and hosted a beef school program in three locations — Rexburg, Montpelier and Malad. The team included Extension educators, beef specialists and industry professionals who presented information related to beef production.

**Program Outcomes**

A total of 60 people participated in the program over the course of three weeks. 49 participants responded and returned the end-of-session evaluation survey. The pre-and-posttest knowledge questions included in the survey were measured by using a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = Very low and 5 = Very high). The Paired Samples T-test showed statistically significant increase in respondents’ overall knowledge score before and after all three spring beef schools. (Results in Table)

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<th>Statistical Results for Beef School 2018</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mean Average</td>
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<td>Week One</td>
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Participants reported they are going to implement practices in their operation because of their participation in the beef schools, specifically: using genetically enhanced EPDs for bull selection, paying closer atten-
tion to forage management, and using alternative sources of protein.

The survey asked the producers to report an estimated future cost saving or increase in their income/livestock head after implementing the strategies in their operation. 18 producers with a total estimated head of 3,380, reported total future savings of $35,100 because of the practices they were going to implement. This accounts for an average estimated increase in the future income of $10.8/head (range $5-$30/head).

The Future

The team is planning future beef schools in various locations throughout the eastern region of Idaho, aiming to keep producers current with the best livestock and land management practices. In the future, there will be more demands on the producers to provide impeccable records, including records for animal health and ranch management practices. The driving force behind this is consumer demand. Consumers want to know the origin of the beef they eat and details about how the animal was raised.

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