

ANR FIELD SUCCESS STORY

(POW 2007-2011)

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Position/Title: Livestock Field Specialist

Administrative Area: Northwest

Fiscal Year Accomplished: July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008

POW Title and Number: 140 Iowa Beef Center

Title of Success Story: Growing Iowa's Cattle Industry

Problem Statement: Cattle are the original Iowa value added investment. Expanding and growing the beef industry in Iowa creates jobs, uses the abundant feedstuffs and fosters economic development in Iowa's rural communities.

Programmatic Response: A workshop series for producers & Ag business focused on putting together a plan to start or expand a cattle feeding operation. The workshop included hands on exercises and homework. Participants received materials and tools to help grow their cattle feeding operation.

Impact/Outcome: Eleven participants attended 10 workshop hours discussing 'Does cattle feeding make sense for my operation?' An overview of cattle feeding and beef industry in US and Iowa competitiveness was shared. The potential returns and risks, capital and other resources needed and the effect on their financial situation and resources was reviewed with case study exercises to reinforce the educational information.

A Business Plan development example of structures and models with risk assessment and management strategies to finance the investments were developed to provide them with a competitive advantage. What a professional cattle feeder needs to establish for a custom feeding business to be successful was played out in a roll model workshop. Facilities, environment, and feedlot siting were major questions and discussion during the workshop.

Survey results following the workshop indicated that 4 feedlots are going to remain the same size, 2 feedlots are going to reduce numbers and 5 feedlots are going to increase numbers by a few head to one that will file for a NPDES permit to increase numbers. All feedlot owners attending the workshops felt the long drive and harsh weather was extremely worth their time, cost and effort. A telephone survey 3 months after the workshop has indicated a change in their plans to grow because of the drastic increase in feed costs and little prospects for feed cost improvement in the short term. Only one feedlot is going to grow with the rest remaining the same size or down sizing.

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