

Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension
2009-2013 Plan of Work Update
140 Iowa Beef Center

Statement of Issues:

The future of the cattle business in Iowa has tremendous potential for profitability and growth. While opportunity for increased profit margins exist with specialized production, good managers can produce beef cheaper in Iowa than any other region in North America because of our inherent advantage of lower feed costs due to co-products, and the potential to recycle nutrients in an integrated crop-livestock production system. Commodity beef production is a narrow profit margin business with inherently high risks. Capital requirements are significant and leverage is often substantial. As a result, capital often becomes a limiting factor when one thinks about bringing the next generation or new producers into the business, either to replace retiring producers or to grow the business. To approach the subject of growing the beef production business, these factors must be considered. Either profit margins must be larger or risks must be reduced to draw in new people and new capital into the Iowa beef industry. Iowa is competitive in the commodity beef production in integrated crop-livestock production systems, but Iowa also has potential in the high-quality specification products for selected branded beef markets.

Performance Goals:

- Reduced feed cost for Iowa beef producers.
- Improved environmental stewardship by beef producers.
- Increased market access and relative price for Iowa beef.
- Improved beef cattle production efficiency.
- Expand intergenerational transfer of beef cattle operations.

Target Audience:

- Beef cattle producers
- Agribusiness professionals that service the beef industry
- Federal and state agencies that work with beef producers

Methods:

The Iowa Beef Center extension program will strive to achieve the performance goals identified for the target audience. The program will be grounded in the timely delivery of research-based information and the enhancement of our clients decision making skills. Our delivery methods will include: applied research and demonstration projects, presentations at hosted and partnered events, information delivery via the farm media

and internet, and one-on-one consultations. The IBC will address the ISU Extension “future talk” priorities that further the success of clientele.

1) Performance goal

a) Objectives

i) Output Indicators

(1) Outcomes

1) Reduced feed cost for Iowa beef producers.

a) 20% of producers who attend an educational event on storing and handling corn coproducts will adopt the use of a strategy to extend shelf-life within 1 year.

i) Conduct 15 educational events on storage and handling strategies to extend shelf-life of corn coproducts.

(1) 10% of producers who attended an educational event on storing and handling corn coproducts have reduced their feed costs by improved coproduct storage within 1 year.

b) 30% of producers who attend an educational event on evaluating inclusion levels of corn coproducts will evaluate their current feeding levels within two months.

i) Conduct 25 educational events on feeding corn coproducts in cattle rations to reduce feed cost.

(1) 15% of producers who attend an educational event on evaluating inclusion levels of corn coproducts will make diet changes to reduce their feed cost by at least 10% compared to their current system.

c) 30% of producers who attend an educational event on reducing beef cow feed costs will evaluate their current production system within 1 year.

i) Conduct 25 educational events on feed costs in beef cow production systems within the next year.

(1) 15% of producers who attend an educational event on reducing beef cow feed costs will adopt changes to reduce their feed costs at least 10% compared to their current system.

d) 25% of producers who attend a feedlot production and marketing educational event will understand the impact pharmaceutical technologies have on feed costs of gain.

i) Conduct 10 meetings on feed cost management for beef feedlots within 1 year.

(1) 10% of producers who attend a feedlot production and marketing educational event will change their current pharmaceutical technology strategy to reduce their feed cost by 5% within 1 year.

2) Improved environmental stewardship by beef producers.

a) 50% of producers who attend an educational event on the value of manure will evaluate the value of their beef manure as fertilizer within 1 year.

i) Conduct 15 educational events on capturing cattle manure fertilizer value within the next year.

- (1) 10% of producers who attend an educational event on the value of manure as fertilizer will capture at least 30% of its potential value within 1 year.
 - b) 10% of producers who attend an educational event on facility design and management to improve water quality protection will begin to thinking about possibly adopting one of the BMPs on their operation within 1 year.
 - i) Conduct 10 educational events on feedlot design and management BMPs to improve cattle performance, nutrient capture, and water quality protection.
 - (1) 5% of the producers attending an educational event on feedlot design and management will adopt at least one recommended BMP within 1 year.
 - c) 20% of producers who attend an educational event on cattle manure management will understand rules and recommendations for land application to capture the value of manure and protect water quality.
 - i) Conduct 10 educational events regarding land application of solid manure.
 - (1) 10% of producers who attend an educational event on land application of solid manure will adopt BMPs to reduce nutrient loss.
- 3) Increased market access and relative price for Iowa beef.**
- a) 10% of producers who attend an educational event on the USDA Process Verified Program will evaluate a PVP for their farm within 1 year.
 - i) Conduct 5 educational events on USDA PVP.
 - (1) 5% of producers who attended educational events on USDA PVP will become certified under an approved PVP within 1 year.
 - b) 10% of producers who attend an educational event regarding production and marketing of branded beef will evaluate the economics of making the necessary changes on their farm.
 - i) Conduct 5 educational events regarding branded beef programs that require specific production and marketing standards.
 - (1) 5% of the producers who attended the educational events on branded beef made a decision based on the economics of their own operation.
- 4) Improved beef cattle production efficiency.**
- a) 25% of producers who attend an educational event on nutritional management to improve production efficiency will evaluate their current production system's efficiency within 1 year.
 - i) Conduct 10 educational events regarding measuring and improving production efficiency of cattle.
 - (1) 15% of producers who attended an educational event on measuring and improving production efficiency adopted the at least 1 of the BMPs presented within 1 year.
 - b) 30% of the producers who attend a bull selection workshop will understand and have access to a sire selection index when making their next bull purchase.
 - i) Conduct 4 bull selection workshops within 1 year.
 - (1) 15% of the producers attending the bull selection workshops will use a sire selection index to make their next bull purchase.

- c) 20% of producers who attend a calf weaning management educational events will understand the relationship between animal health and value of the calf to feedlots.
 - i) Conduct 5 calf weaning management educational events with in 1 year.
 - (1) An additional 10% of producers who attend a calf weaning and management educational event will incorporate third party verification of their vaccination and weaning practices.
- 5) **Expand intergenerational transfer of beef cattle operations.**
- a) 10% of producers who participate in young cattle producers peer groups will develop a multiyear business plan for their cattle operation within 1 year.
 - i) Coordinate 2 young cattle producers peer groups to education them on the business aspects of cattle production.
 - (1) 5% of producers who participate in a young cattle producer peer group will begin to follow their multiyear business plan within 1 year.
 - b) 30% of operations that attend a feedlot expansion workshop will develop a plan for expanding their cattle operation within 1 year.
 - i) Conduct 3 feedlot expansion workshops within one year.
 - (1) 10% of operations at attend a feedlot expansion workshop will expand their feedlot and increase employment on their farm.

Evaluation

In 2008-2009 the specific objectives under two of the Performance Goals that the IBC will evaluate are:

Performance Goal: Reduced feed cost for Iowa beef producers.

Objective: 30% of producers who attend an educational event on reducing beef cow feed costs will evaluate their current production system within 1 year.

Output Indicator: Conduct 25 educational events on feed costs in beef cow production systems within the next year.

Outcomes: 15% of producers who attend an educational event on reducing beef cow feed costs will adopt changes to reduce their feed costs at least 10% compared to their current system.

Performance Goal: Improved environmental stewardship by beef producers.

Objective: 50% of producers who attend an educational event on the value of manure will evaluate the value of their beef manure as fertilizer within 1 year.

Output Indicator: Conduct 15 educational events on capturing cattle manure fertilizer value within the next year.

Outcomes: 10% of producers who attend an educational event on the value of manure as fertilizer will capture at least 30% of its potential value within 1 year.

Methods:

Names and addresses of producers will be collected at educational events that address these two performance goals in 2008 and 2009. The number of events and participants will be recorded. Beginning in January 2009 participants that attended educational events at least six months earlier will be mailed a brief survey asking them how they have changed their production system and/or management practices relating to the performance goal addressed at the event and what they believe the resulting economic advantage has been. The data will be collected through the fall of 2009 and will be summarized. In addition, a selected few producers that are known to have made significant changes will be interviewed in greater detail to evaluate the role that ISU Extension had in their decision to implement change.