



Better Cattle Ranches Through Better Cattle Nutrition Educating ranchers for improved cattle feeding

Public Value Statement

Better food nutrition for people starts with better feed nutrition for cattle resulting in producing high quality protein meats for dinner.

The Situation

North Dakota ranchers, farmers, and feedlots provide care and husbandry to the highly productive cattle raised in North Dakota. These cattle need nutritive feeds provided in the correct proportions to maintain growth, longevity and be healthy. Challenging weather creates nutritional variability in North Dakota feeds. Matching feed resources with cattle needs requires nutritional education to make well balanced diets for healthy cattle and people.

Extension Response

Drought and floods affected crops raised for cattle feed. Variable feed quality created a need for addressing cow and calf nutrition. Education for developing well balanced nutritional diets for cattle was provided by many routes of delivery. A classroom setting was provided for participants in the NDSU Feedlot School. County based meetings, online seminars and webinars on nutrition were taught. News releases, blogs, videos and social media were used to provide up to date information on nutritional needs and feed changes. Individual education was provided for site specific feeding issues.

Impacts

Improving knowledge gained by attending classes on nutrition resulted in 44% and 52% increase in understanding of animal requirement, variability in feeds, feed testing, feed processing and ration formulation.

Improved feed ration and better feed conversion led to a reduced cost of gain by lowering cost of gain by 10 cents or a cost saving of \$30 per head. If only 20% of North Dakota's calf crop was influenced by feed saving through better rations, that would be a \$6,000,000 savings per year.

Feedback

'I should have tested my millet hay for nitrates. Losing bred heifers to nitrate poisoning was a terrible financial loss'. – A Dakota Angus Rancher.

'I didn't know using ration balancing software was that easy to understand' – Feedlot School participant from Edgeley, ND

'How much wheat midds can I use to offset my lack of silage production? I don't want to sell cows if I can buy feed' – Jamestown ND rancher

I learned that when adding protein with co-products feeds, I need to correct mineral imbalances. – Walsh county ND cattle feeder

Primary Contact

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