



WASHINGTON STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION



WSU BEEF 300 PROGRAM: INTENSIVE TRAINING FOR BEEF PRODUCERS

BY THE NUMBERS

- January 2015 Washington State Beef Cow Inventory was estimated at 198,000 head. Cattle on Feed Inventory was estimated at 210,000 head (more than 400,000 cattle will be fed out in Washington feedlots during 2015).
- Since 2007, the WSU MEAT Team has held 5 Beef 300 programs attended by more than 200 participants from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Oklahoma, and Canada.
- The WSU MEAT Team received additional funding in 2012 as part of a 3-year \$675,000 USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Grant awarded to the WSU Small Farms Team.

2015

ISSUE

Meat animal production is a significant part of the Washington State economy. According to 2013 data, cattle and calves ranked fifth among all Washington commodities with a value of \$706 million (National Ag Statistics Service). From niche producers to large-scale commercial operators and packing plants, livestock producers, managers, and employees are seeking information to gain a better understanding of the food production chain from farm to table. For Washington producers to maintain livestock profitability and competitiveness within the U.S. and worldwide, training needs to be provided on meat quality, value-based pricing, and the use of new technologies and the latest research to address critical and emerging issues, regulations, food safety, and quality standards.

RESPONSE

Beef 300 Program participants receive 30-hours of hands-on instruction addressing the production, processing, distribution, and merchandizing practices that affect the quality, consistency, palatability, and wholesomeness of beef. Topics addressed during the training include:

Day One Live Animal Evaluation Principles; Ultrasound Evaluation and discussion; Grid Pricing presentation; Teams evaluate 8 animals and estimate Value and Price; Harvest demonstration at the WSU Meats Lab; Marketing Opportunities and Challenges; and Ruminant Digestive Tract discussion.

Day Two Carcass grading; Fabrication of Carcasses into retail cuts; Value-added Product Development; and Sensory Evaluation and Wine and Meat Pairings.

Day Three Farm to Table Food Safety; Home Slaughter Regulations; Tools to Measure Quality and Palatability; Genetic Selection for Quality and Value; and Review of Live, Carcass, and Retail Value of Beef.



QUOTES

“We feel this type of hands-on education is crucial for our producers and will give the participants a much better understanding of the beef that they raise and market. This will ultimately benefit the consumer.”

“Your program last year was outstanding and was by far the best program I have ever attended as far as information we could use in our business. Thank you again and I hope you are getting the needed support for the great work you are doing.”

“I have a Master’s Degree and have attended many continuing education courses during my career. I found this program to be one of the most pragmatic and interesting courses that I have ever attended. No fluff, just good pertinent information.”

IMPACTS

An evaluation of the 2014 Beef 300 program indicated that 100% of the participants increased their level of knowledge of:

- Marketing Beef Products;
- Live Animal Evaluation and the use of Ultrasound;
- Carcass Evaluation and Meat Quality Indicators;
- Food Safety Principles;
- Understanding Beef Production from “Farm to Table”; and
- Estimating Value and Adding Value to Beef Carcasses.

In addition, 92% of the participants indicated that the WSU Beef 300 Program contributed significantly to their knowledge of the cattle industry. 92% indicated that they will apply what they learned from this course to capture higher prices (or premiums) for the beef products that they market. Of the participants, 43% estimated that the Beef 300 program will positively impact the economic status of their beef operation by at least \$1,000 annually, while an additional 29% said the positive impact will be between \$500 and \$1,000 annually. Finally, 100% of the 2014 Beef 300 participants said that their perception of WSU Extension improved as a result of taking this course.

MEAT Team members (lower left photo) include WSU faculty Dr. Jan Busboom; Mark Heitstuman; Dr. Susan Kerr; Dr. Shannon Neibergs; Dr. Mark Nelson; Janet Schmidt, and Sarah Smith. Partners include: WA Beef Commission, WA Cattle Feeders Association, WA Cattlemen’s Association, UI, KSU, and WWCC.

