



WASHINGTON STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION



## MEAT TEAM

### Increasing knowledge of farm-to-table food standards

#### BY THE NUMBERS

- Fifteen faculty from 5 universities have collaborated with more than 100 industry professionals to present more than 30 classes and workshops held across the state in 6 different locations, and at Oregon State University and Superior Farms in Dixon, CA.
- More than 650 program participants statewide since 2006.

## 2016

### ISSUE

Everyone raising livestock for food production is looking for information to help them better understand the food production chain from farm to table. Training on meat quality, value-based pricing, regulations, food safety, and quality standards is necessary to maintain livestock profitability and competitiveness, as well as a reliable and secure food system. An understanding of the latest research and new technologies is helpful to address critical and emerging issues on regulations, food safety, and quality standards.

### RESPONSE

Since 2006, the Washington State University Meat Animal Evaluation, Analysis and Technology (MEAT) team has presented beef, pork, lamb, and poultry educational programs to more than 650 participants. Fifteen interdisciplinary faculty from Washington State University, University of Idaho, Kansas State University, Oregon State University, and University of Wyoming representing animal and food sciences, economics, and veterinary medicine, collaborate with industry professionals to provide three different levels of courses on beef, lamb, and pork, and one for poultry. These courses are designed to increase the knowledge and skills of individuals involved in the meat animal industry to promote safe, high-quality production and expand marketing opportunities for animal products. Extensive hands-on and experiential training gives participants the skills they need to successfully raise meat-market animals, increasing the profitability and wholesomeness of the products they harvest and produce. These programs address food production from “farm to table” and encompass topics such as breed selection, life-cycle nutrition, management on pasture, record keeping and budgets, live animal evaluations, harvest, carcass grading, food safety, direct-marketing regulations, and marketing targets and challenges. Panel discussions, tours of industry facilities, and live evaluation of livestock contribute to the practical knowledge of participants.



## QUOTES

*"I now do a much better job of rotating my grazing lots. I have altered my economic business plan based on recommendations from this program and have begun the process to become organically certified in Washington."*

*"I 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."*

## FUNDING

Funding included grants or donations from the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center, the USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Washington Cattle Feeders Association, Washington Cattlemen's Association, Washington State Beef Commission, Washington State Sheep Producers, American Sheep Industry's Let's Grow grant program, Superior Farms in Dixon, CA, and a number of individual sheep producers, cattle producers, and feedlots.

## IMPACTS

In 2013, 100% of participants in the Beef-, Lamb-, and Pork-100, 200 and 300 courses and the Poultry 100 course increased their knowledge of:

- Breed selection and genetics;
- Feeds and nutrition;
- Record keeping and budgets;
- Marketing of beef, lamb, pork, and poultry;
- Home slaughtering rules and regulations; and
- Value-added strategies and how to implement healthcare and management programs.

As determined by survey, 100% of the Lamb- and Poultry-100 respondents (including participants who considered themselves experts) rated the programs as highly or moderately valuable and gained knowledge regarding small-ruminant and poultry production practices. Ninety percent of the Pork-300 participants indicated that the program contributed significantly to their knowledge of the industry. One hundred percent of participating agriculture education instructors indicated they would incorporate this information into their animal science curricula for classroom teaching. A survey of Beef 200 participants indicated 100% of them increased their level of knowledge of live animal and carcass evaluation; record keeping and measuring profitability; feeding beef cattle to meet their nutritional needs; and how to better market beef and beef products. After the Beef-300 course, 86% of attendees said they had increased their ability to market their products. Eighty-eight percent increased their ability to evaluate live animals, 87% increased their carcass evaluation skills, and 100% increased their understanding of food safety and quality assurance issues.