

Cattle clipping clinic provides hands-on learning

The Situation

Preparing a beef project to exhibit at the fair takes a great deal of work. The preparation can be fun and rewarding if youth and their parents have the knowledge and equipment needed to accomplish the feat. New and returning project participants ask for help from local extension educators annually. Many first time participants aren't sure of the equipment and supplies needed or how to use them. The participants are willing to learn but there are limited clinics available to teach them and many clinics are very costly to attend.

Our Response

To address the numerous requests for beef cattle preparation, a University of Idaho Extension educator planned and developed a Cattle Clipping Clinic. To help youth and their parents learn, a presenter with expertise in cattle clipping, and a team of qualified helpers, presented the clinic and provided hands-on instruction. Topics at the clinic included: current clipping techniques, proper equipment, clipper safety, show day preparation and showmanship.

The clinic provided an opportunity for participants to gain hands-on experience with using the clippers and other equipment to prepare the animal. Many youth brought their own project animal on which they practiced their newly learn skill. Those who didn't bring animals were able to receive instruction from the presenters as they demonstrated clipping and preparation techniques as well as the products and equipment needed.

An area rancher donated the use of his facilities to hold the clinic, a local cattle producer involved in raising and showing beef cattle provided lunch for the attendees, while an area feed dealer gave one bag



Participants look on as clipping techniques are explained.

of cattle feed to each family at the clinic. The clinic was intended to provide the opportunity for beef cattle exhibitors to gain the knowledge and information needed to increase their ability to prepare a beef animal for the fair. Attendees were from 10 counties in two states and included 4-H and FFA members, volunteers, parents, extension educators and beef cattle producers.

Program Outcomes

Clinic attendees completed a retrospective survey using the Likert scale at the conclusion of the training. On a scale from 1 to 5 participants were asked to answer questions based on his/her perception of knowledge level before the clinic and also after participating in the clinic. The participant average after participating is in parenthesis:

- I knew what clippers and blades were needed to clip cattle. Participant average – 3.08 – (4.50)

- I understood clipper safety. Participant average – 3.47 – (4.81)
- I understood how to clip the head and neck of my cattle – 2.65 – (4.50)
- I understood how to clip the top line of my cattle – 2.55 – (4.47)
- I knew what equipment is needed to prepare my animal for the fair – 3.49 – (4.76)
- I knew how to prepare my animal for the show – 3.18 – (4.68)

Participants were asked; “What will you do differently to prepare for the fair because of what you learned at the clinic?” Answers included; “I know the correct clippers and blades to use,” “I will spend more time clipping at home” and “I know how to handle the clippers safer.” They were also asked; “What skill that you learned at the clinic will help you the most?” Answers were, “How to clip correctly and what equipment to use,” “How to keep the clippers safe around the animal” and “Do more showmanship practice at home.”

Participants received an evaluation by mail or email after the fair. They were asked, “What did you do differently to prepare for the fair after attending the Cattle Clipping Clinic?” The majority of the answers were; “I spent more time preparing the animal at home and did more clipping at home.”

They were also asked to rank their skill level from 1 to 5 (1=low, 5=high) in the post fair evaluation. Table 1 shows the results.

	Before the clinic	After the clinic
Animal Preparation	2.5	4.0
Clipping Knowledge	2.2	4.0
Type of Clippers to use	2.67	4.33
Show Day Preparation	2.16	4.0

The increase in knowledge before and after in all areas and the answers to the questions indicate participants gained needed skills by attending.

The Future

Presenters will use the information obtained from both evaluations to determine needs of program participants in future clinics Another clinic is planned for 2013.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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