

IMPACT

University of Idaho
Extension

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Youth Beef Education Day links livestock production, food quality and safety

AT A GLANCE

Young livestock producers need opportunities to learn more about livestock production and the nutritious beef they raise.

The Situation

Young cattle producers have demonstrated little knowledge about the nutritional value of the beef products they raise. In a pre-survey from the 2017 Beef Education Day, 41 percent of the youth attendants had no knowledge that a 3 oz. serving of beef is a good source of iron. Additionally, attendants responded that they did not know a 3 oz. serving of lean beef supplies half the protein people need each day. Due to this lack of knowledge, youth were taught about the nutritious value of beef and animal production standards, which are a part of the beef quality assurance program. A multi-county Beef Education Day was designed to educate future consumers and producers by teaching product quality, nutrition and safe food handling. The goal of the education day was to have young livestock producers understand that they are raising a product that will eventually be sold and consumed as a nutritious beef product.

Our Response

Since 2016, there has been two livestock education days that provide education on livestock production related to raising beef cattle, food quality and safety. These education days have taught everything from the gate to the plate, and everything in between. The organizers goal was to provide the youth opportunities to learn and do tasks, that would be asked of them on their own farm, in a fun environment while



Extension educators, Carmen Willmore and Alaena Wilfong teach scours treatment using pudding with the 4-H youth. Photo C. Kinder.

learning about product quality. The first year of the program focused on livestock management with many hands-on activities. Those activities included how to sample bales of hay for quality analysis, testing tire pressure on stock trailers, and how to administer implants and injections using ears and hide from actual cattle. For the second year, youth were given the opportunity to learn about beef calving procedures, product quality, nutrition and food safety. Youth learned how to wash their hands properly by visually seeing the germs on their hands and were taught how long to wash to eliminate germs. Food safety was also included. This activity taught youth why cooking ground beef to 160°F is important using playdoh to demonstrate contamination. The Beef Education Day incorporated good calving techniques using a fossilized cow pelvis and a life size calf. Students were given the opportunity to “extract DNA” from strawberries, learn about the genetic code, and understand that certain genetic traits can

be passed from the dam and sire to their offspring. The participants learned about the nutritious value of beef and were given a chance to flavor their own hamburgers. The camp was held in Shoshone in 2016 and Gooding in 2017 with lessons taught by 4-H program coordinator Mashelle Barlow, UI Extension educators Alaena Wilfong, Gretchen Manker, Cindy Kinder, Carmen Willmore and Extension Specialist Glenn Shewmaker.

Program Outcomes

In the past two years, the Beef Education Day camps have been attended by 55 youth and adults. In 2017, 50 percent of the campers returned from the year prior. During these camps, education was provided from beef quality assurance trainings and, as a result, 89 percent of those in attendance indicated that they had a greater understanding of the quality assurance program and what it means to be a beef quality assurance (BQA) certified ranch. Additionally, after youth learned about product safety, 89 percent understood the importance of cooking ground beef to 160°F. Youth also indicated they learned how to monitor the temperature of ground beef using meat thermometers. In a post survey of those in attendance, 95 percent of youth indicated that they knew that a 3 oz. serving of beef was a good source of iron, and 83 percent of youth stated that they now know that a 3 oz. serving of beef supplies more than 10 percent of the daily value for 10 essential nutrients. The youth were intrigued by the science aspect of the beef industry. In a post survey of the program, 95 percent of those that attended indicated that they now know that DNA is a set of instructions that specifies the traits of an organism.

The Future

The livestock education camps, offered in the central district and surrounding areas, bring many livestock education opportunities to young livestock producers in a fun and safe environment. Because of the success of the program and the number of youth that return to the camp year after year it will continue to be offered with new topics being presented every year. As the camp grows, more advanced topics will be offered, with opportunities to become youth BQA-certified in the future. It is the goal of the program to continue to link livestock production, end product quality and food safety through these educational opportunities.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

The planning committee would like to thank the Idaho Beef Council and Idaho BQA program for sponsoring these beef education days.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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31-17cwillmore-beef-education.pub
11/17