

# Beef Cattle 101: Educational Cattle Workshops for Beginning and Novice Farmers

Robinson, H.<sup>1</sup>, Westerfield, C.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ag and Natural Resources Agent, University of Georgia (UGA) Extension, Upson/Lamar Counties, Thomaston, GA 30286  
hrobinson@uga.edu <sup>2</sup>District Conservationist, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Barnesville Field Office, Barnesville, GA  
30204 carmen.westerfield@usda.gov



## INTRODUCTION

University of Georgia (UGA) Lamar and Upson County Extension Offices and the local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) have been focusing on properly educating cattle producers in the area over a broad range of topics, geared toward cattle management.

## SITUATION

Over the last five to ten years, middle Georgia has experienced farm turnover. New farmers have moved to the area, and the number of cattle producers has continued to fluctuate. Cooperative extension and NRCS have seen a drastic increase in beginning farmer cattle management questions. There have been approximately 35 new (out of county) famers moved to the area and about 80% of the current farms have experience turnover, generationally. Within those numbers, there has been a substantial increase in females taking on greater farms roles. This has led to the need for an increase in beef cattle management programming, covering everything from beef cattle basics to advancement updates.

## RESPONSE

To meet the production educational needs of new cattle producers in the middle Georgia area, programs were hosted to provide the necessary background information to start or take over a beef cattle cow/calf operation. These programs also gave the new producers a safe place to ask beginner questions.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This educational series would not have been possible without the contributions by our sponsors: Two Rivers Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc., AgSouth Farm Credit, ACA, WF Equipment @ Walters Farms, Country Oaks Farm & Home Supply.

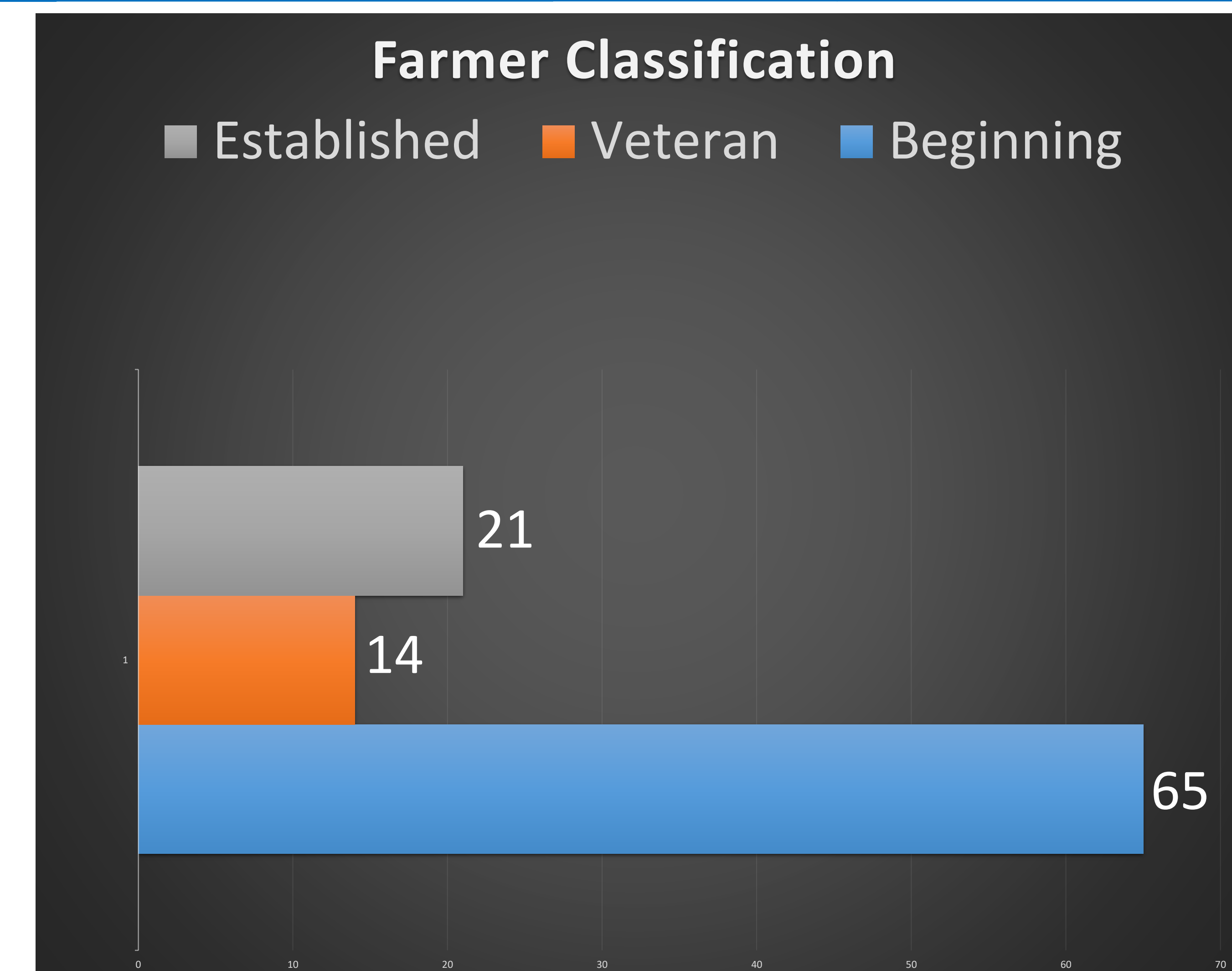
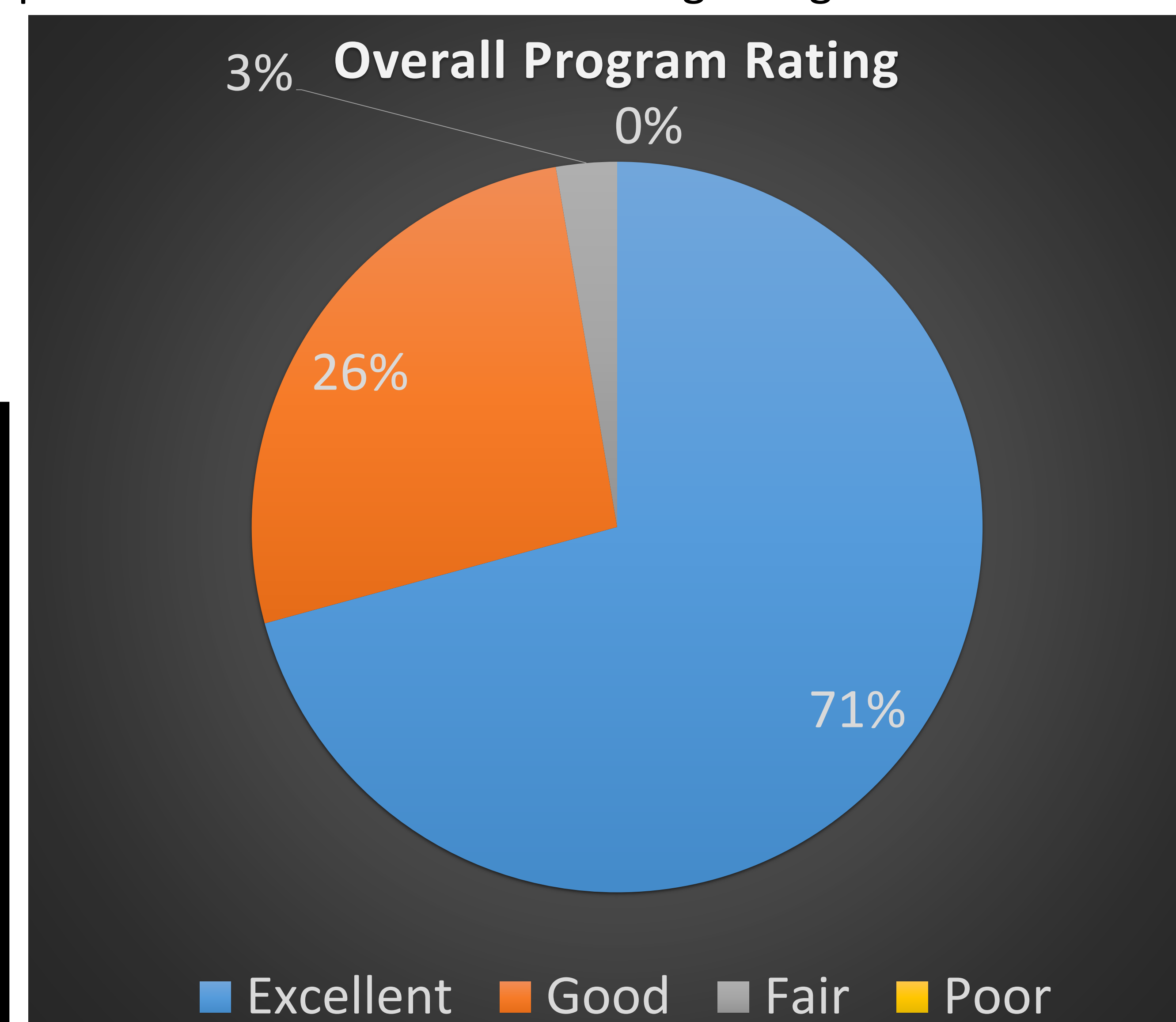
A major thank you to our overall grant sponsor Lamar County Soil & Water Conservation District.

## PROGRAMMATIC METHODS

The program series objectives were to cover the basics of beef cattle production management. This series was a collaboration between Lamar Soil and Water Conservation District, the District Natural Resources Conservation Service, and UGA Upson and Lamar County Extension. The series was a 10-month program that educated local (beginning, veteran, and novice) producers on the ins-and-outs of beef cattle production. The focus started on forages, moved to equipment, and then finished with animal science topics.

- Getting Started (GATE Card, FSA Programs, Record Keeping)
- Grazing Systems for Cattle
- Planning Your Grazing System (Establishment, Renovation, Management)
- Weed Management/Sprayer Calibration
- Forage Review
- Structural Practices/Equipment
- Cattle Nutrition/Selection
- Herd Health
- Beef Quality Assurance (BQA Certifications)
- Meat Science
- Summary and Review

Due to circumstances, portions of the series were held in-person and virtually. Binders and materials were provided to individuals at the beginning of each session.



## RESULTS/IMPACT

The Beef Cattle 101 program series was a success with a total of 219 participants throughout the entire course: 65% beginning farmers, 14% veteran farmers, and 21% established farmers. Participants were not expected to attend all sessions, but majority chose to. Participants ranged from multiple counties including but not limited to: Upson, Lamar, Pike, Monroe, and Crawford. The series grant sponsor made it possible for each attendee (of the first night program) to get up to ten free soil samples each. With those results, we were able to help come up with a game plan for pasture renovation, establishment, and management throughout the first five months of the program.

As a result of the program series, 100% of the participants have continued to utilized FSA, NRCS, and Cooperative Extension in their perspective counties and regularly check-in regarding available educational materials.

