

Excellence in Livestock Production

Fridays on the Farm Herd Improvement Series

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Educational Objectives

The key objective of the Fridays on the Farm Herd Improvement series was to improve the understanding of sire selection, replacement heifer selection, and cull cow selection for cattle producers. By having a better understanding of selection criteria, such as EPDs, performance, and confirmation, producers would be able to improve their herd genetics, resulting in higher quality calves, which could prove more profitable for their operations.

Program Activities and Teaching Methods

This series consisted of six YouTube videos (Sire Selection Basics, Understanding EPDs, Visual Selection and BSEs, Culling Cattle, Replacement Heifers, and Herd Production Goals) which combined PowerPoint presentations with filmed field examples incorporated within the presentations. Working under COVID-19 precautions, in person events were not able to be conducted, so partnering with the Hot Spring County Extension Council Agriculture Subcommittee, Fridays on the Farm was developed. Fridays on the Farm is a weekly video series that provides a virtual field and education program covering a variety of topics for livestock producers. Herd improvement was the top of the list from the committee to focus on. The weekly videos are distributed through a weekly virtual newsletter and social media.

Results and Impact Statements

The video series has had over 125 views and 13 likes. Many local producers have commented how much they have enjoyed the video series. Three producers have reported being more confident in using EPDs to evaluate herd sires for their breeding programs. They are all very excited to see their next calf crop. Another producer reported a better understanding of what not to tolerate in his herds and be more willing to cull early, rather than continuing to give chances to under performing cows and heifers. 100% of those who completed the evaluation survey reported the series was a valuable learning experience and plan on implementing strategies which were discussed.

Evaluation Method

Along with each video, a link is shared with producers to complete a short digital evaluation survey. This survey covers the topic at hand, producer's implementation plans, suggestions for future topics, and the option to be added to the office mailing lists. Several producers have also responded with personal testimonials regarding the video series. I have worked with these producers on record keeping, so at the end of the next season, we will evaluate the impact of the implementation of these strategies. Since the survey also asks for recommendations for future

topics, it allowed me a chance to see what our county producers wanted for future weekly videos. After this series, our next series was preconditioning calves, per requests.