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Relevance

The Women Increasing Skills and Education (WISE) program began in Virginia in 2021 from a growing need to educate women on cattle management and equipment safety and operation. In Virginia, the number of women reported as the farm principal operator has increased in recent years, now accounting for 40% of VA farms. VA is home to 2% of the nation's cattle inventory, with cattle ranking 2nd in sales according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Additionally, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that the agricultural sector is the most dangerous in America with 574 fatalities, including 19 fatalities in Virginia's agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting sectors, per year (2018).

Program Objective

To increase the knowledge, skills, and confidence of cattle production and equipment operation for women



Equipment WISE

Accidents and injuries on the farm are primarily due to interactions with livestock or equipment. A Penn State study estimates there are approximately 396 agriculture related emergency visits per year in VA. Each visit has an average cost of \$1,600, totaling \$576,000 in accidents alone.

Program Topics:

- Driving and operating a tractor
- Trailering safety and backing
- Chainsaw safety and use
- Fencing
- ATV/RTV and Sprayer use

Cattle WISE

Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) programs and Low Stress Cattle Handling (LS) can increase profits to the cow and calf operation by \$100,898,000, and prevent calving difficulties losses of \$15,000,000, for the number of cattle in VA per year.

Program topics:

- Low Stress Cattle Handling with Dr. Temple Grandin
- Dystocia assistance and prevention techniques
- Chute-side cattle handling and BQA (vaccination & castration)
- Reproduction techniques
- Beef Quality Assurance training

WISE Program Results and Impact

- 130 participants attended from 24 counties in Virginia
- 91% of evaluation respondents stated that presenters and information provided were "Excellent quality"
- 88% of participants stated their overall confidence in all areas had increased, including tractor operation, maneuvering trailers, ATV safety, sprayer calibrations, small engine troubleshooting, chainsaw operation, LS cattle handling, reproduction: breeding and dystocia, and BQA.

"One of the best trainings I've ever attended. Hands down"
"Hopefully can practice more at the farm now that I know the basics"
"...all the content improved my confidence in operating equipment"

Over 3 years of W.I.S.E programs the potential economic benefit of addressing cattle and equipment education is \$46,935,200. **Every \$100 invested in this program has a potential ROI of \$32,176.10.**

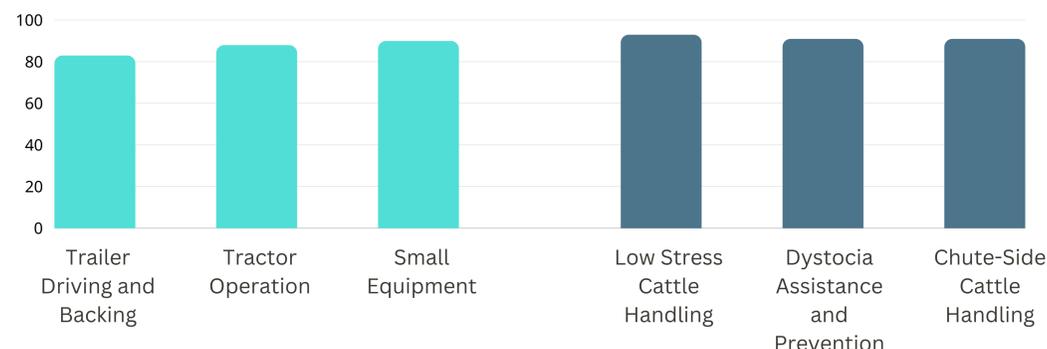


Figure 1. Percentage of participants reporting an increase in confidence in each topic area as a result of attending the Equipment and Cattle WISE program.

Acknowledgements

Cattle and Equipment WISE was made possible by the Virginia State Dairywomen's Association, the Virginia Cattle Industry Board, The Virginia Beef Council, Senterfitt Cattle Company, CFC Farm and Home Center, and Farm Credit.



An Evening with Dr. Temple Grandin

The program included an evening session with Dr. Grandin presenting to 130 participants, including 4-H youth, youth educators, and those affected by autism. Participants learned about Dr. Grandin's experience growing up with autism, and her outlook on how autistic individuals can change the world through their unique perspectives and skillsets.

