

impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

Ladies Raising Livestock program targets women in the livestock industry

AT A GLANCE

Women are very involved in livestock production. Ladies Raising Livestock was developed for the women working on livestock operations.

The Situation

Lemhi County Cattlemen's Winter School is an educational program focusing on the various facets of beef production and has been offered every January and February for the past 30 years. The program is co-hosted by Lemhi County Cattle and Horse Growers and the target audience has been male beef producers in the county. While women are more than welcome to attend, many of them are home calving cows or taking care of the family, while the men attend workshops. Attendance by women involved in agriculture was less than 5% over the years.

Our Response

While attending the National Association of County Agricultural Agents professional development meetings in September 2019, Shannon attended a workshop where the agriculture agents had hosted an "all ladies" calving school. They had utilized a female veterinarian as the key speaker. They felt it was very successful and the ladies enjoyed visiting with other ladies in the industry and felt very comfortable asking questions and participating. Shannon adapted this idea to UI Extension in Lemhi County and hosted the first Ladies Raising Livestock (LRL) in December of 2019.



Mother-in-law and daughter-in-law make freezer meal casserole for calving season. Photo credit: Shannon Williams.

Recognizing that many of the women involved in livestock operations were also mothers of young children, they offered the program on a Friday afternoon and included childcare and lunch as part of the program. Ladies from age eight and older were invited to attend. Topics included calving and lambing with a local veterinarian; livestock record keeping and injection site management by Shannon Williams, UI Extension educator; and freezer meals for calving season was taught by Katie McFarland, UI Extension educator.

Northwest Farm Credit sponsored the program so the ladies were able to make a freezer meal to take home. They were also able to take the Idaho Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) quiz and receive their BQA certification.

Plans were made to host another LRL in 2020, but due to COVID-19, an in-person workshop was not an option. There was discussion about doing it virtually, but after reviewing evaluations from the 2019 workshop, it was evident that the ladies valued the interaction between each other.

The second LRL was offered on Dec. 3, 2021. Dr. Sara Chaplin presented on scours — prevention, causes and treatment. Melinda Ellison, sheep Extension specialist, and Shannon Williams teamed up to discuss developing replacement females and Sarah Baker, UI Extension educator, presented on *Beef up your Holidays Without Breaking the Bank* — a beef cutting demonstration and taste testing. The original plan was to do the entire program in person but there were ladies who inquired about attending virtually. The decision was made to have this program be a hybrid, including both in-person and virtual audience at the same time. Advertising was updated and shared with other virtual audience groups.

Program Outcomes

At the 2019 LRL, 21 women attended, ranging in age from 16 to over 80 years old. All of the women received their BQA certification. According to a study conducted by Colorado State University, utilizing BQA certification when marketing their calves could add up to \$16.60 per head on weaned 600-pound calves. When asked why they attended, one lady said “My husband wanted me to learn more about what he does for a living.” Many commented they wanted to become BQA certified and increase their knowledge of calving and cow knowledge. When asked to list what they learned, comments included how to make freezer meals; keep calf’s nose below ears for tubing; and calving tips. One participant wrote “I learned about cow and calf anatomy and how it is involved in the calving process, the stages of calving and ways to stimulate calves that aren’t quite as perky.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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At the 2021 LRL, nine attended in person and 19 attended virtually including two women attending virtually from Canada. A pre-post evaluation of knowledge gained was completed.

Table 1 shows the increase of the “mean” score for each area. Participants scored their knowledge from one to four, with one indicating they knew nothing to four indicating they felt they could now discuss the topic with others.

Knowledge Area	Pre Score	Post Score	Difference
Importance of a nutritional analysis in balancing a ration	2.9	3.2	+.3
Importance of protein and energy during late gestation and early lactation	2.6	3.2	+.6
Importance of rumen fill and its effect on intake	2.7	3.2	+.5
Importance of sorting animals by age, gestational stages and body condition	3.0	3.44	+.44
Preventative measures that can be done to prevent scours	2.7	3.2	+.5
Importance of oral electrolyte choices for beef calves	2.4	3.33	+.93
Diagnosing type of calf scours	1.9	2.8	+.9
The various ways to treat scours	2.5	3.11	+.61
Knowledge of how many quality grades there are	2.88	3.29	+.41
Knowledge of the “BAM” cutting program	1.5	2.75	+1.25