

## **Master Cattleman Program helps producers hone production, risk assessment skills**

### **Situation:**

With producer input from around the state, the Profitable and Sustainable Agricultural Systems initiative team identified the need of a comprehensive educational program for livestock producers. Individual producers indicated more training was needed on successful management strategy evaluation techniques.

Objectives of the Wyoming Master Cattleman Program are to promote the sustainability of cattle producers through use of a comprehensive production strategy and the use of risk assessment tools. Producers first received training on goal setting, insurance options, risk management strategies, and financial enterprise analysis. Subsequent programs covered marketing and production strategies. The program was accomplished through eight, three-hour workshops at four locations during 2009 including Sheridan, Washakie, Uinta, and Fremont counties. Taught by University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service area educators, state extension specialists, and industry experts, the course provided written and Web publications and one-on-one consultations. Forty-five producers attended the workshops with all graduates completing a risk and enterprise analysis for at least two potential opportunities for their operations. Since the pilot course in 2007, 102 producers have participated. Partial funding for the program came from a \$14,490 grant from the Western Center for Risk Management Education.

### **Impacts:**

Participants completed electronic evaluations at the end of the program. Follow-up discussions with a sample of participants were held one month after the program.

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Using an electronic response system, participants rated the effectiveness of each session from excellent to poor:

<b>Session Topic</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Goal Risk Management		57.2%	35.7%	7.1%	
Enterprise Analysis	13.3%	66.7%	20%		
Cull Cow Management	7.1%	85.7%	7.2%		
Retaining Ownership	20%	73.3%	6.7%		
Scientific Tools for Bulls	16.7%	66.7%	16.6%		
Lasting Legacy	6.3%	50%	31.2%	12.5%	
Niche Marketing	37.5%	62.5%			
Alternative Ranching	30.7%	15.4%	38.5%	15.4%	

When asked if their knowledge increased in the class, 86.6 percent strongly agreed or agreed.

Usefulness of the Enterprise Analysis and Risk Assessment tool:

- 12.5 percent have already used the tools to analyze an operational risk
- 50 percent have not yet used, but definitely plan to
- 31.2 percent plan to use the tool

All participants indicated they would recommend this program to other producers.

Participant shared the following comments:

- "I really liked the sounds of that cull cow strategy until we worked through the partial budget (group work)." - Uinta location participant
- "I thought the financials would come out better on that strategy. It's been a strategy that's worked well for us in the past. I guess I will have to go home and recheck my numbers to see how they are different than the example." - Washakie location participant
- "I am really upset with you for giving us this CD with the (enterprise) analysis tools. Now I am going to be up until 2 or 3 in the morning reworking several scenarios that I had been working on." - Sheridan location participant

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