

Forage Sampling and Analysis

The Situation

Forages represent a primary source of nutrients for beef cattle. Forages vary widely in their nutrient composition due to various factors including forage species, stage of maturity at harvest and weather conditions during the growing season. Although, beef cattle producers are often aware that forage nutrient composition is highly variable few producers routinely obtain and submit forage samples for nutrient analysis. Many producers are unaware of how to properly sample forages and do not understand the terminology commonly used on forage analytical reports. Forage sampling and analysis is basic management tool/practice that allows beef cattle producers to better manage their forage resources, which may reduce overall feed costs, and improve animal performance.

Short-Term (Knowledge)

Increase the knowledge of producers regarding forage sampling protocols

Increase knowledge of forage sampling devices

Increase knowledge of forage analysis terminology

Indicators

- ~ Producers demonstrate increased knowledge of forage sampling protocols
- ~ Producers demonstrate increased knowledge of forage sampling devices
- ~ Producers demonstrate increased knowledge of forage analysis terminology

Medium-Term (Behavior)

Producers routinely sample harvested and purchased forages for analysis

Indicators

- ~ Percentage of producers that use forage sampling devices (forage probes)
- ~ Percentage of producers that submit forage samples for analysis

Long-Term (Change in Condition)

Improved utilization of forages in beef cattle operations

Indicators

- ~ Improved animal performance (reproduction, gain, etc.)

Public Value

Forages are a fundamental component of beef cattle diets on many operations. Increasing producer knowledge of proper forage sampling protocols and analysis facilitates strategic use of feed resources and improves beef production efficiency which leads to increased economic sustainability of beef cattle producers and rural communities.

Outputs

We will reach clientele via workshops, demonstrations, individual consultation, mass media and industry events. Agents will prepare educational material appropriate for their situation with the help of what they learn by attending Livestock PFT and ASI trainings and other supporting material found on the ASI Agent Resources page under programming.