

Calving Management Schools

The Situation

Agriculture is the largest economic driver in Kansas, and cattle and calves represented 52% of Kansas agriculture cash receipts in 2019. Increased demand for food, coupled with population encroachment onto agricultural land, underscores the importance of increased production efficiency by livestock operations. In addition, increased percent calf crop (calves weaned as a percentage of cows exposed for breeding) is critical to individual producer profitability. Each calf born and reaching weaning in good health represents a step toward improved producer profitability as well as progress feeding the world.

What We Did

Calving Management Schools provided training to cow/calf producers on the sequence of events during calving and when and how to provide assistance if the birth is not progressing normally. Additional topics covered varied by location with a similar goal to increase the number of calves at weaning (e.g., cow nutrition, genetic selection, and vaccine storage and handling). Information on improving calf health and survivability from a herd management perspective was emphasized at the school and in newsletters, radio programs and newspaper articles. Meetings in seven locations across Kansas recorded a total attendance of 476. The presentation at one location was shared on Facebook Live and is posted for viewing on YouTube.

Outcomes

On the day of the meeting, 97% of those present reported an increase in their knowledge, awareness or ability to manage issues regarding calving assistance (38% a lot of change or significant change). Eighty-one percent of attendees said they would change when they provided assistance, and 89% said they would change how they provided assistance at calving. Ninety-two percent of producers expected to increase the percentage of live calves at weaning. Attendees said that an improved understanding of the entire calving process and being able to visualize how to manipulate the calf to correct malpresentations would have the greatest impact on their operations.

Success Story

Producer comments:

Written-

- *“as a producer just starting out this class (all parts) was so valuable. Thank you!”*
- *“For me, good review, learned better technique to rotate calf. Importance of keeping hooves off of uterus causing tearing.”*
- *“Will start watching the clock to gauge when to help instead of guessing.”*
- *“Very good program. I mainly farm but just bought a cattle operation. This program has given me better confidence going into calving season.”*

Contact

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A.J. Tarpoff, extension veterinarian, explaining how to use various tools and re-position a calf in utero. Images of work inside the cow were projected onto a large screen to show how to manipulate the calf in the birth canal.