

Forage Sampling and Analysis (Signature)

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.

Public Value

Forages are a fundamental component of beef cattle diets. 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.

Outcomes

Short-Term (Knowledge)

- Increase the knowledge of producers regarding forage sampling protocols
- Increase knowledge of forage analysis terminology
- Increase knowledge of how to use forage analysis results to improve animal management.

Indicators

- Producers demonstrate increased knowledge of forage sampling protocols.
- Producers demonstrate increased knowledge of forage analysis terminology
- Producers demonstrate increased knowledge of the importance of forage analysis for animal management decisions

Medium-Term (Behavior)

- Producers routinely sample harvested and purchased forages for analysis
- Producers base animal management and production practices decisions on information from forage analysis

Indicators: 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.)

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.