

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Grand Challenges

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Grand Challenge: Global Food Systems

Title: K-State Research and Extension Teaches Body Condition Scoring and Forage Sampling at the 2025 Topeka Farm Show

Why is this issue important?

Successful reproduction is a crucial component of a cow-calf operation and is tied to adequate nutrition.

Body condition scoring and forage sampling are two practical tools that provide a producer with needed information in order to meet the nutritional needs of the herd with the forages that they either have available or that they may decide to purchase. Body condition scoring provides a producer with a baseline of where the beef herd is at nutritionally and helps a producer understand where additional nutrition may be needed. Forage sampling, on the other hand, provides a producer with knowledge of the nutritional value of their feedstuff. In combination, forage sampling and body condition scoring allow a producer to match an animal's energetic needs of reproduction with the nutrition available from their feedstuffs.

How did Extension address this issue?

During the 2025 Topeka Farm Show, Ag and Natural Resources Extension Agent Abigail Gettinger worked with the K-State Cow-Calf Specialist, Dr. Jason Warner, and surrounding extension agents to provide five educational sessions across two days on how to perform body condition scoring as well as how to properly collect hay samples to be sent in for nutritional analysis. Additionally, producers were provided the opportunity to take supporting publications, a poster giving examples of body condition scores, and a laminated half-sheet to have on hand in the field that included a table of criteria for body condition scores, a diagram of where to anatomically evaluate an animal, and pictorial examples of body condition scores.

What was the impact?

Across the five educational sessions, the team of extension agents and Dr. Warner were able to reach 52 individuals with educational information and provide practical items for producers to take home in order to be able to apply the education on the farm.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
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