

AgriLife Extension Seeks to Make Good Cattle Operations Better Through SPA Program

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SWEETWATER - The Texas AgriLife Extension Service has set the dates for its 2009 Beef Cattle Standardized Performance Analysis workshops.

The dates, times and locations are:

- April 28, 8:30 a.m. Nolan County AgriLife Extension Office, 100 East 3rd Street, Suite 305, Sweetwater.

- May 6, 8:30 a.m. Texas Agrilife Research and Extension Center, US Hwy 70, Vernon.

"The Standardized Performance Analysis or 'SPA' program measures individual operations and compares them to a pool of similar operations," said William Thompson, AgriLife Extension economist at San Angelo. "The idea is to help producers improve their operations with a hard dollars-and-cents approach and by learning from others' experiences."

"Participants will complete an in-depth financial and production analysis of their cow herd, specifically the calves weaned in 2008," he said.

"This analysis will give them an excellent idea of where they currently stand," Thompson said. "Comparing their findings with others helps them establish both short- and-long term goals for their herd."

Thompson said the goal of the intensive, day-long workshop is to help ranchers complete the SPA analysis for their 2008 calf crop. Registered participants will be sent forms to organize data before the workshop. Confidentiality of the producer's data will be maintained, he said.

After the analysis is completed, each participant will receive an individual consultation with a specialist certified in the program, and guidance on developing and using the information to measure cow herd performance and cash flow. They will also get a "herd report card" that compares their herd's performance to others. Software and supporting materials will be provided.

"We've enjoyed relatively good calf prices over the last several years, but history and current economic conditions tell us that may not last forever," Thompson said. "That's why developing a sound ranch plan and overall efficiency overview is so important now."

Event organizers ask participants to register as early as possible, so they can gather and organize the records and data needed to complete the analysis.

Individual registration for first-time participants is \$50 and \$30 for those who have participated previously. The fee includes a noon meal.

For more information and to register contact Thompson at 325-653-4576, w-thompson@tamu.edu or Stan Bevers at 940-552-9941, ext. 231, s-bevers@tamu.edu

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