

impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

Cattle industry support helps educate Idaho County 4-H beef project members

AT A GLANCE

Idaho County 4-H Beef Project members were in need of learning about beef carcass evaluation, beef carcass pricing and breeding beef projects.

The Situation

The main goal of the Idaho County 4-H Beef Project is to develop life skills in 4-H members. In addition, the beef project teaches 4-H members about selecting a market steer or replacement heifer, feeding and nutrition of beef cattle, veterinary care of beef cattle, fitting and showing of a beef animal along with producing high quality beef for the consuming public. Project members have learned valuable life lessons and also, how to select and raise market steers, but there was a lack of participation in the breeding beef project and 4-H members lacked knowledge of the end product they were producing. They needed to learn how beef carcasses are graded and how they are priced.

Our Response

In 2018, Jim Church, University of Idaho Extension educator, contacted the Idaho/Lewis County Cattle Association (ILCCA) to get their support for encouraging 4-H members to participate in breeding beef projects. Also, the ILCCA was asked to support and encourage 4-H'ers to purchase locally raised market steers and to support a beef carcass evaluation program to identify high quality beef. The ILCCA agreed to support the 4-H beef program with an annual sponsorship of \$750. The monetary support would be divided with the beef



4-H Beef Carcass Show Winners with Idaho/Lewis County Cattle Association President Tim Kinzer and educator, Jim Church.

breeding project area getting \$175 and the carcass evaluation program getting \$575.

Program Outcomes

In order to improve program participation in the breeding beef project area, which in turn would educate members on cattle production, \$175 of the monetary support from the ILCCA was used to give the champion breeding beef female a cash award of \$100 and the reserve champion breeding beef female a cash award of \$75. A carcass evaluation show was established a week after the Idaho County Fair to teach 4-H'ers about how carcasses are graded. At the carcass show, the steer carcasses from the fair were graded and the actual value of the carcass was determined from USDA carcass price data. The carcasses were

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then placed based on their value. The top five carcasses were awarded cash prizes from the ILCCA. Below is an explanation of how the \$575 cash awards were divided:

1st place beef carcass = \$173 cash award (30%)

2nd place beef carcass = \$144 cash award (25%)

3rd place beef carcass = \$115 cash award (20%)

4th place beef carcass = \$86 cash award (15%)

5th place beef carcass = \$57 cash award (10%)

The percentage of beef carcasses from the Idaho County Fair 4-H members that graded Low Choice or higher has improved due to this program. With a low of 40% of the carcasses grading Low Choice or better to a high of 68%.

In addition to recognizing the top five carcasses the ILCCA partnered with the University of Idaho Extension, Idaho County to award the Steer of The Year Award to the top steer from Idaho County and Lewis County. To win this award the steer must:

- Be born in either Idaho or Lewis County.
- Must gain a minimum of 3 pounds per day on test.
- Must be shown in quality and fitting and showing

and exhibitor must receive a blue ribbon in each class.

- Exhibitor must receive a blue ribbon on the project record book.
- Final ranking is based on the placing by the judge at the fair and in combination with the carcass evaluation ranking.

These two programs developed in partnership with the University of Idaho Extension, Idaho County and ILCCA has increased enrollment in the market beef project area in both the Idaho and Lewis County fairs. In addition, there has been an increase in the carcass quality at the Idaho County Fair carcass evaluation program and the number of breeding beef projects has held steady.

The Future

After four years of this program, it is obvious that it has been a success. Therefore, this partnership with the cattle industry in Idaho and Lewis counties to promote locally raised beef projects and educate 4-H'ers on beef quality will be continued in the years to come.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

James A. Church, Extension Educator • University of Idaho Extension, Idaho County • 208-983-2667 • jchurch@uidaho.edu

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