

Beef basics course offered to producers

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A home study course aimed at providing important information for beef producers has been updated to include the latest research available, according to University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension.

Beef Basics II recently was unveiled, focusing on breeding for profitability, said Steve Pritchard, extension educator in Boone and Nance counties who chairs the program.

The seven-lesson course is designed to help producers with topics on reproduction, herd health and genetic improvement using the most current university research, Pritchard said.

The Beef Basics program started in 1993 as a way to help beef producers, feed consultants and veterinarians wanting to learn more about beef production, he said. Since then, more than 5,800 people from Nebraska and more than 40 other states and a few other countries have used the course to further their education.

“The course was started to fill a need to provide educational information on different segments of the beef industry,” Pritchard said.

Many beef producers and others find it difficult to attend educational seminars, Pritchard said. The Beef Basics course allows them to learn in their own home and work at their own pace. Courses can be taken in any order and the number of lessons in a course range from four to 15. Extension educators grade quizzes associated with each lesson and return them with comments to the students.

“These cold and wintery nights would be an excellent time to brush up on beef cattle management skills,” Pritchard said.

Thirty-seven percent of those responding to a survey taken of producers who took the course in the last four years indicated that the information learned from the courses has resulted in a gain of about \$11 per head. Earnings averaged \$6,843 per operation. Reported savings from the

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survey respondents on 10,570 head of cattle was \$116,650 per year.

Participants surveyed indicated they had made management changes to their operation based on what they had learned from the home study courses. One past participant indicated saving \$12 per head by following the mineral nutrition recommendations in the course, Pritchard said. Another producer reported “using corn co-products with more confidence and efficiency” after completing the course.

In addition to the Beef Basics II course, extension also offers Beef Basics VII, which focuses on using corn co-products in the beef cow herd through the introduction of corn milling byproducts.

Beef Basics II costs \$60 while Beef Basics VII costs \$40. To enroll, go [on-line](#) . Call Pritchard at (402) 395-2158 for more information.