

Beef Cattle Series: 101 & 201 Educational Cattle Workshops

for Beginning, Veteran, and Established Cattle Farmers

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INTRODUCTION

University of Georgia (UGA) Lamar and Upson County Extension Offices, the Lamar County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) have been focusing on properly educating cattle producers in the area over a broad range of topics, geared toward cattle management and conservation.

SITUATION

Over the last five to ten years, middle Georgia has experienced farm turnover. New farmers have moved to the area, and the number of cattle producers has continued to fluctuate. UGA Extension and NRCS have seen a drastic increase in cattle management questions. There have been approximately 40 new (out of county) famers moved to the area and about 80% of the current farms have experience turnover, generationally. Within those numbers, there has been a substantial increase in females taking on greater farms roles. This has led to the need for an increase in beef cattle management programming, covering everything from beef cattle basics to advancement updates.

RESPONSE

To meet the production educational needs of new and existing cattle producers in the middle Georgia area, programs were hosted to provide the necessary background information to start or take over a beef cattle cow/calf operation. These programs encouraged a safe place for new farmers to ask beginner questions and learn by doing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This educational series would not have been possible without the contributions by our main sponsors: Two Rivers Resource Conservation & Development Council, Walters Farms, and Keck Farm.

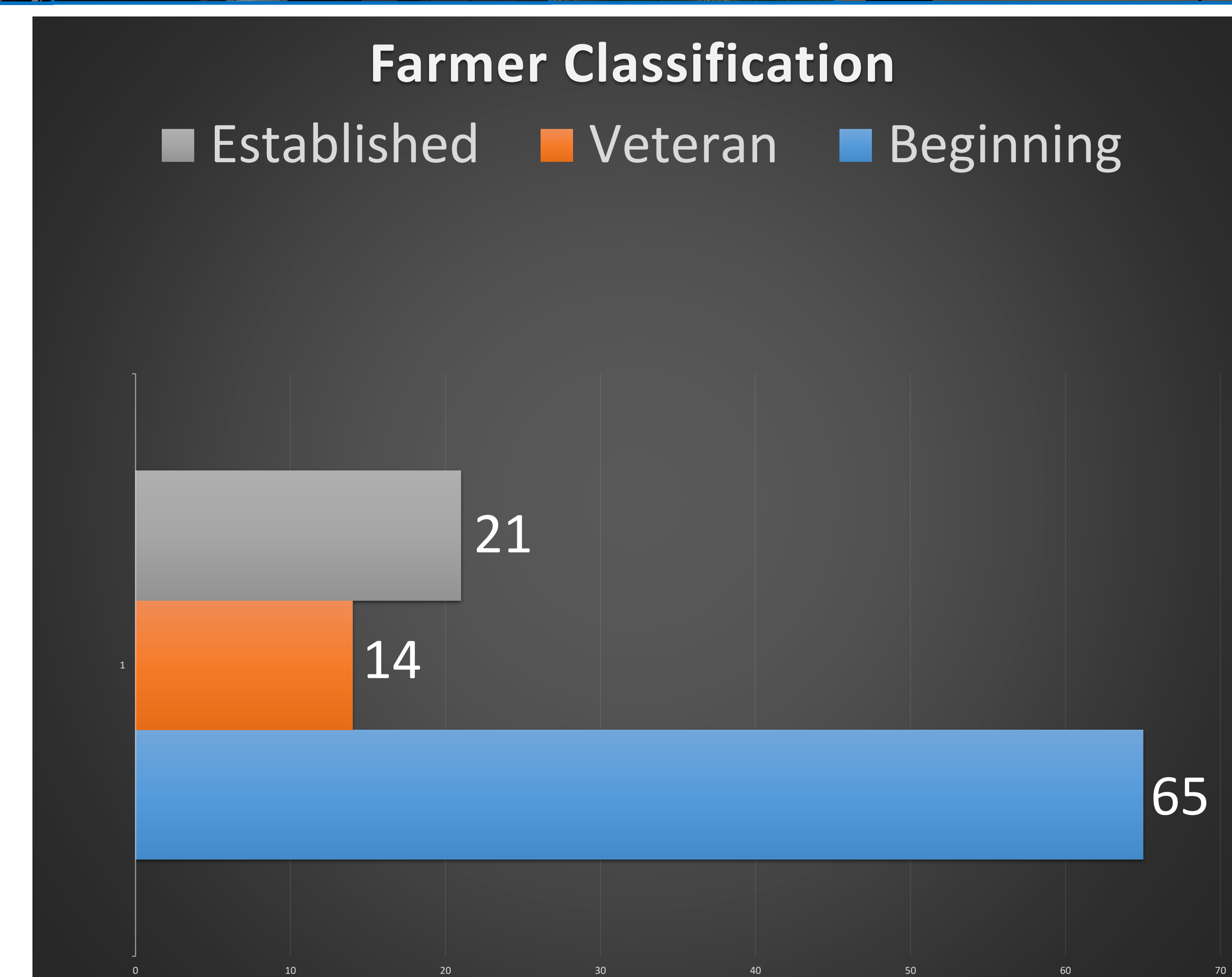
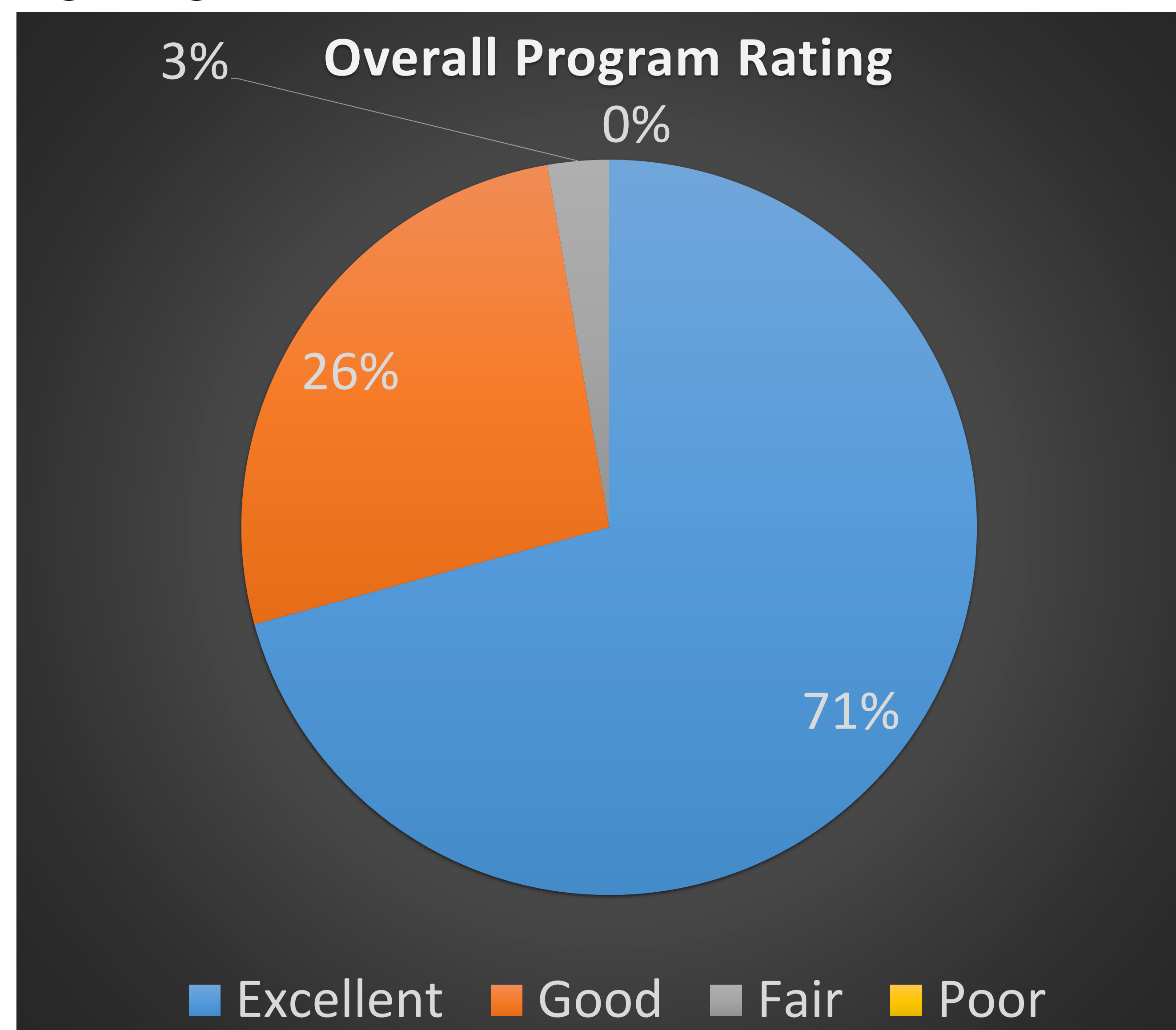
A major thank you to our overall grant sponsor Lamar County Soil & Water Conservation District.

PROGRAMMATIC METHODS

The program series' original objectives were to cover the basics of beef cattle production management but then grew to covering more advanced topics in our 201 class. This series was a collaboration between Lamar Soil and Water Conservation District, the District Natural Resources Conservation Service, and UGA Upson and Lamar County Extension. The two series were five-session programs that educated local (beginning, veteran, novice, and established) producers on the ins-and-outs of beef cattle production. A wide range of topics were covered within these two sessions (101 & 201)

- Getting Started (GATE Card, FSA Programs, Record Keeping)
- Economics/Market Outlook
- Grazing Systems for Cattle
- Conservation Practices
- Testing: Soil, Forage, Litter, Etc.
- Planning Your Grazing System (Establishment, Renovation, Management)
- Weed Management/Sprayer Calibration
- Structural Practices/Equipment
- Cattle Nutrition/Selection
- Herd Health
- Reproduction/EPDs

Binders and materials were provided to individuals at the beginning of each session.



RESULTS/IMPACT

Since origination, our Beef Cattle Educational Workshop series has been a success with over 300 participants throughout all courses: 65% beginning farmers, 14% veteran farmers, and 21% established farmers. Participants were not expected to attend all sessions, but majority chose to. Participants ranged from multiple counties including but not limited to: Upson, Lamar, Pike, Monroe, Crawford, Spalding, Coweta, Toombs, and Chatham. The series grant sponsor made it possible for each attendee (first night of BC101) to get free soil samples. With those results, we were able to help come up with a game plan for pasture renovation, establishment, and management throughout program.

As a result of the program series, 100% of the participants have continued to utilized FSA, NRCS, and Cooperative Extension in their perspective counties and many schedule regular check-ins regarding available educational materials, testing, and arrange site visits with their local offices.

