

“Beef Plus”

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The livestock industry in the United States is in a state of change greater than has been experienced in many years, and perhaps greater than in any time in history. Challenges due to rapidly escalating costs of what has become known as “The Big 3: Feed, Fuel, and Fertilizer” have caused livestock producers to make significant changes in the way they conduct their farming operations.

Many knowledgeable industry professionals have speculated that the next 3 to 5 years will present more challenges than most livestock producers have ever faced before, and that there are likely to be very significant changes in the way business is conducted within our industry. Fortunately, as is almost always the case, these challenges will also represent significant opportunities for those livestock producers who are willing, and prepared, to make the changes needed to survive and prosper in the new agricultural environment.

Since the price of feed, fuel, and fertilizer are closely linked to each other, it is unlikely that we will be seeing a significant decline in the input costs associated with these commodities anytime soon. Continuing along a path of “business as usual” is almost certainly a recipe for failure in the changing dynamics of our industry. Only those livestock producers that are willing, and prepared, to make the needed changes in their operations are likely to survive and prosper in the coming years.

In an effort to help cattle producers prepare for the changes they are facing in the coming years, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System will be presenting a new educational series called “Beef Plus”. The Beef Plus program is designed to be a follow-up to the tremendously successful “Master Cattleman” program that has been presented throughout the state in recent years. Literally thousands of cattle producers have taken advantage of the great wealth of information presented in the Master Cattleman program, but it is important to note that you do not have to be a Master Cattleman graduate to attend the Beef Plus program.

Beef Plus, which was designed from the ground up to provide in-depth, practical, and timely information that can be used by everyone in the cattle industry, consists of a series of three, day-long meetings and will be held in central locations throughout the state. The three sessions will focus primarily upon topics dealing with nutrition, forages, and general management practices. The sessions will be taught by leading Specialists from Auburn University and by Regional Extension Agents from across the state.

The Tennessee Valley region is fortunate to be hosting the first Beef Plus program to ever be offered. The Beef Plus program will be held at the TN Valley Research and Extension Center in Belle Mina. The dates for the meetings are: Friday, September 19th, Friday, October 10th, and Friday, November 7th, with each meeting beginning at 9:00 a.m. and concluding at about 4:00 p.m. The cost to attend this program is \$75 per person (family discounts are available) and will include meals, snacks, and all educational material.

Space for this program is extremely limited. Anyone that is interested in taking advantage of this great educational opportunity should contact Gerry Thompson at (256) 353-8702, Ext 25 or by email at thompgl@auburn.edu as soon as possible.