Master Cattleman: A Comprehensive-Interdisciplinary Approach for Delivering Forage-Livestock Information to Producers

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Introduction
Kentucky is one of fifty states in the USA. It has over 1.16 million head of beef cows and over 38,000 producers. Most of its beef producers have off-farm jobs and many of the full-time producers have other farming enterprises such as corn, soybeans, wheat or tobacco. To more efficiently address the needs of this important group, the Master Cattleman Program was implemented in 2000.

Methods
The Master Cattleman program involves University Specialists in Agronomy, Animal Science, Engineering, Veterinary Science and Agricultural Economics. In addition, county agents, industry personnel and other commodity organizations serve in leadership roles. The program involves ten four-hour evening sessions and at least one eight hour field event. A comprehensive notebook with PowerPoint handouts, The Beef Book, Southern Forages book, Forage Crop Pocket Guide, along with additional forage-livestock publications are provided. Participants pay a small fee to cover meals and refreshments.

Results
Since the program began, over 3000 farmers from 118 counties have attended. Evaluations show that producers prefer this more in-depth–interdisciplinary approach and have utilized information gained to improve their overall forage-livestock operation. Survey results show a $27 million dollar impact to the Kentucky economy due to changed practices during the last two years. Two additional programs, Advanced Master Cattleman and Master Grazer, have been introduced following the success of this program. Each graduate receives a farm gate sign.

Conclusion
Master Cattleman has served as an important educational program for Kentucky beef-forage producers. Practical, in-depth programming has been well received by producers throughout the state. The interdisciplinary approach has proven successful with both the Advanced Master Cattleman and Master Grazer now being offered as a result of producer requests.

Forage Session
- Keys to Forage Profitability
- Forage Options and Nutritional Needs
- Soils, Soil Testing and Fertility Establishment
- Legumes and Legume Management
- Forage Quality
- Pest and Plant Disorders
- Grazing Management
- Minimize Stored Feed Requirements
- Reducing Storage and Feeding Losses

Participating Counties
- at least one program during 2000-2009

Forage Session Keys
- Management Skills
- Nutrition
- Facilities and Animal Behavior
- Genetics
- Reproduction
- Forages
- Environmental Stewardship and Industry Issues
- Herd Health
- End Product
- Marketing and Profitability