



CPA Info #211

Workshop Evaluation Summary

**Participant Assessments of the
2013 Value-Added Beef Workshops: “What You
Should Know About Beef Quality and Meat Cuts”**

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PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENTS OF THE 2013 VALUE-ADDED BEEF WORKSHOPS: “WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BEEF QUALITY AND MEAT CUTS”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the Tennessee Value-Added Beef Program, three “What You Should Know About Beef Quality and Meat Cuts” workshops were conducted in Knoxville, Murfreesboro and Jackson in November 2013. There were 100 participants from 26 different counties in the three workshops. There were 69 completed evaluation forms returned by participants for a response rate of 69 percent. The average number of cattle owned by each participant was 53 head with a range of 3 to 350 head.

While 41 percent of the respondents indicated that they sell beef cuts direct to consumers, only 16 percent reported that they have a retail meat permit. When asked to provide an overall rating of the workshop using a 1 to 10 scale, where 10 = excellent, the average rating for all locations was 8.9. A variety of responses were given for the “best part of the workshop” -- “good information/very information” and “quality and knowledge of the speaker” were the most common responses.

When asked to provide comments on ways to improve the workshop, the most common response was “make no changes; good as is.” A few key suggestions included distributing a printed copy of the slides or a summary of key points for participants and to provide more information about regulations and cattle production (feeding, grain-fed, grass-fed) and to provide more detail on cuts of meat and actual cutting/butchering.

When asked to identify the two most important things learned in the workshop, “grade/yield,” “grass-fed vs. grain-fed,” “cuts and cut locations,” “age/harvest timing” and “freezing and storage” were the most often responses. When asked to identify actions that were planned as a result of the workshop, the top responses were “communicate with consumers and processors,” “learn and research more,” “begin to improve tracking of genetics, inputs, slaughter dates and yield” and “sell at younger or appropriate age.”

In order to evaluate increases in knowledge, participants were asked to rate their level of understanding “before the workshop” and “after the workshop” of nine specific concepts that were taught during the session. Significant increases in understanding were reported for all of the concepts. The largest increase in understanding of 80 percent was reported for “understanding of yield grades” while other significant increases in knowledge were reported for “traits affecting tenderness and flavor” and “USDA yield grades.”

When asked if they would recommend the workshop to others, 95 percent of the respondents said “yes” and when asked to make suggestions for topics to be addressed in future workshops, “marketing” “cattle feeding” and more information about “processors” were the most suggested.

BACKGROUND

Three “Value Added Beef: Quality and Cuts” workshops were conducting as part of the Tennessee Value-Added Beef Program in 2013, one each in Knoxville, Murfreesboro, and Jackson on November 4, 5, and 6, 2013. At the conclusion of each workshop, participants were asked to complete an evaluation of the session. Sixty-nine completed evaluation forms were collected from participants, as recorded in Table 1.

Table 1. Participation in Beef Quality and Cuts Workshop

Location	Number of completed evaluation forms	% of total participants
Knoxville	22	32%
Murfreesboro	34	49%
Jackson	13	19%
Total	69	100%

The following sections report participants’ assessment of the workshop. The report is structured as the evaluation form was, with a mix of close-ended and open-ended questions. Results are presented in aggregate (across all sites) and by individual site where appropriate.

PARTICIPANTS’ BEEF OPERATIONS

Participant-provided information about their cattle and value-added beef operations is summarized here. Table 2 and Figure 1 summarize the data from Question 2 regarding the number of cattle owned. Table 3 summarizes the locations of the operations represented at the workshops.

Table 2. Number of cattle per operation represented at the workshops

	All locations combined	Knoxville	Murfreesboro	Jackson
Participants with no cattle	8	4	3	1
Average # of cattle*	53	101	34	36
Median # of cattle	31	75	25	31
Range in # of cattle	3-550	10-550	3-100	10-76

* Mean, mode and range are calculated without the “zero cattle” participants.

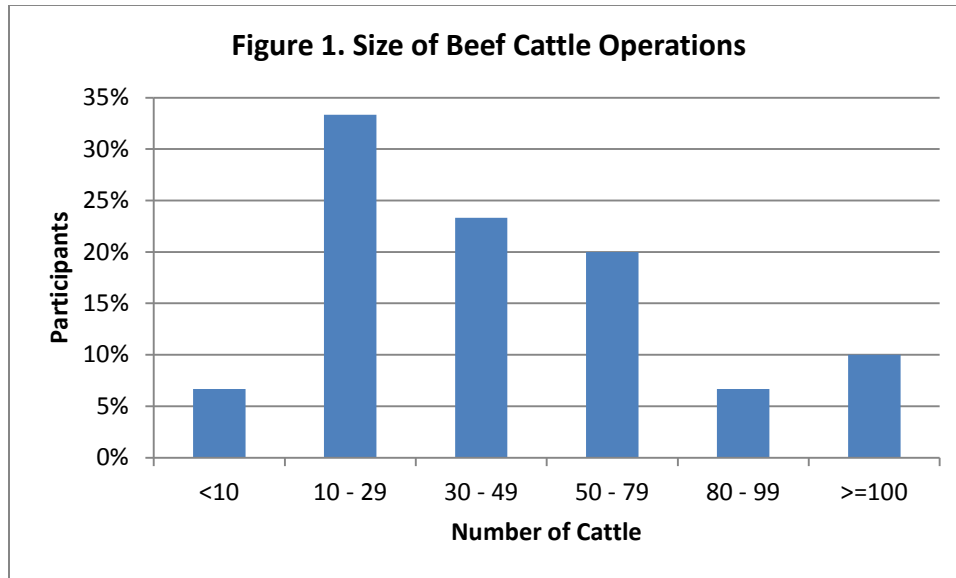
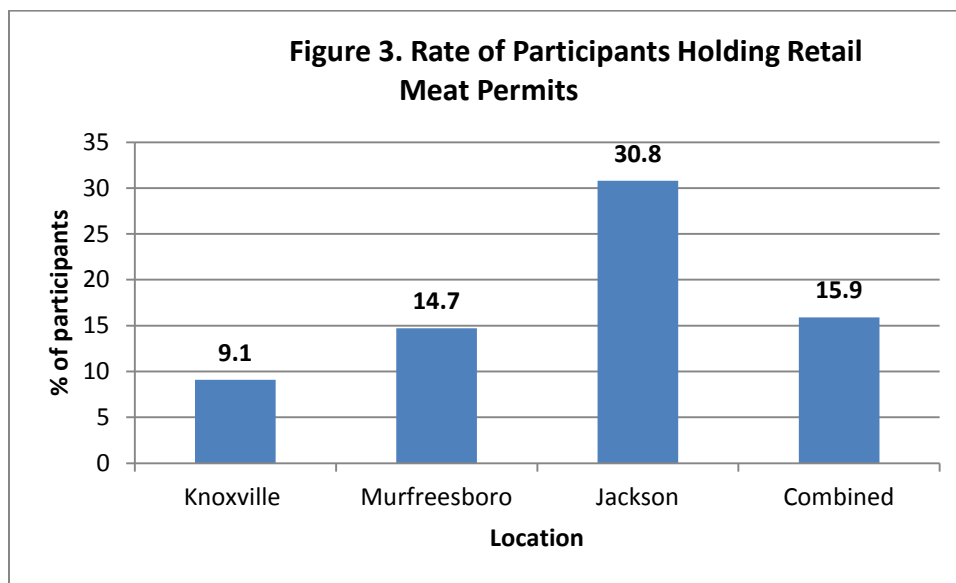
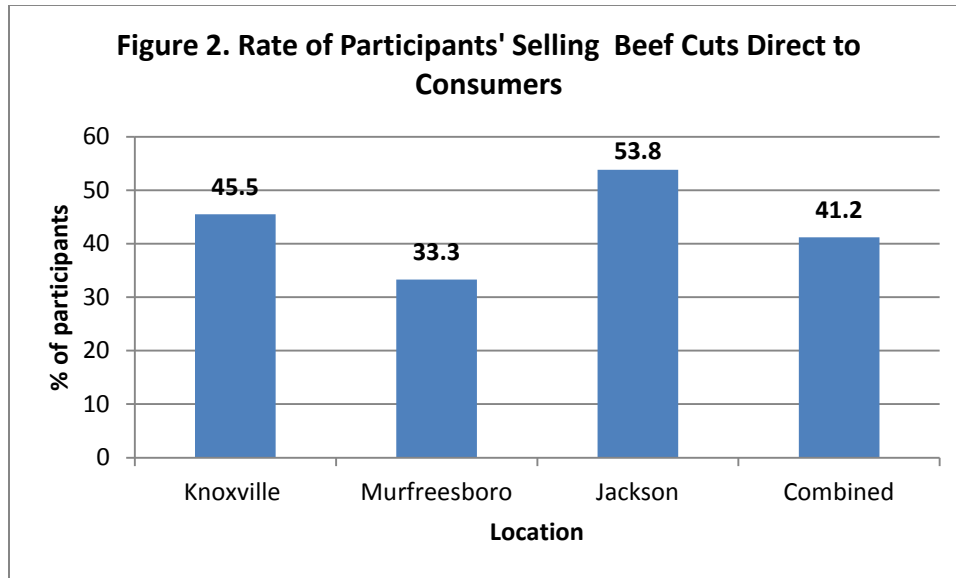


Table 3. Counties in Which Participants' Farms Are Located, by Meeting Location

Knoxville meeting		Murfreesboro meeting		Jackson meeting	
County	#	County	#	County	#
Blount	1	Cannon	2	Benton	1
Claiborne	2	Maury	1	Dickson	1
Grainger	2	Davidson	2	Fayette	5
Jefferson	1	DeKalb	2	Gibson	1
Knox	8	Dickson	2	Hardeman	2
Loudon	3	Hamilton	1	Haywood	1
McMinn	1	Marshall	2	Shelby	2
Union	1	Montgomery	2		
		Putnam	2		
		Rutherford	2		
		Trousdale	1		
		Williamson	14		

Participants addressed their current participation in selling value-added beef. Figure 2 shows that over half of the participants in west Tennessee (the Jackson meeting) already are selling beef cuts directly to consumers, while only a third of participants were direct-selling cuts to consumers in middle Tennessee, represented by the Murfreesboro workshop which had the greatest number of participants. Figure 3 shows that nearly a third of west Tennessee participants hold retail meet permits. Rates are far lower in middle and east Tennessee.



PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATION OF THE WORKSHOP

This section presents the feedback from participants about the overall quality of the workshop, what they found best and most helpful, how the workshop could be improved, and the extent to which the workshop changed their understanding of a set of topic areas addressed in the workshop.

Using a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 was terrible and 10 excellent, participants rates the workshop overall. The mean ratings are shown in Figure 4. Participants in aggregate rated the workshops as good to excellent, with little difference in scores among workshops. The data are further broken down in Table 4 which shows that participants in the Jackson workshop held either very good opinions or, for a small set

of participants, rather poor opinions of the workshop. In Jackson, 8% of participants rated the workshop as “bad,” where “bad” ratings are scores from 1 to 3, neutral ratings are scores from 4 to 7, and good ratings are scores from 8 to 10.

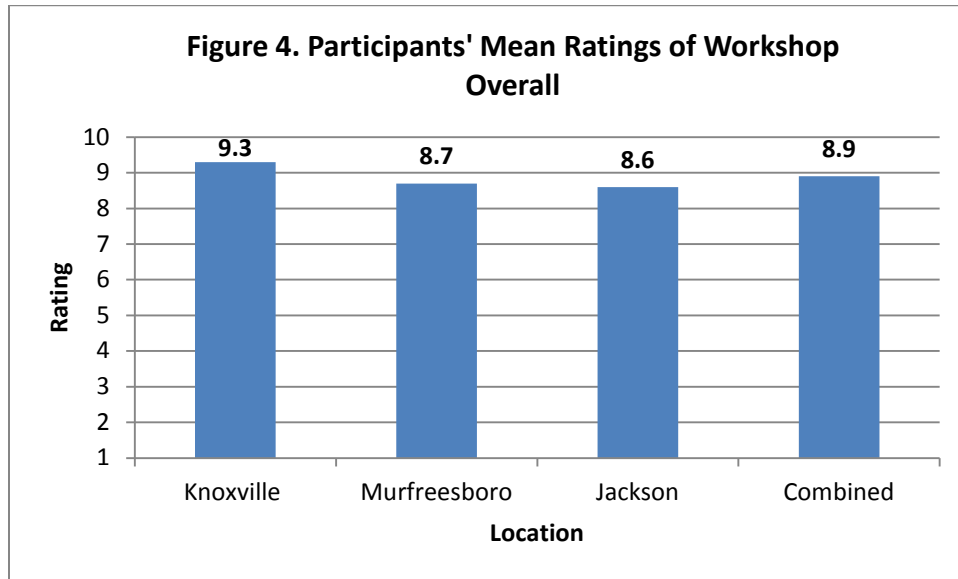


Table 4. Participants' Ratings of Overall Workshop Quality

Location	“Bad”	“Neutral”	“Good”
Knoxville	0.0	9.1	90.9
Murfreesboro	3.1	6.3	90.6
Jackson	8.3	0.0	91.7
Combined	3.0	6.1	90.9

* “Bad” includes ratings of 1 – 3, where 1 is associated with “terrible”; “neutral” includes ratings of 4 – 7; and “good” includes ratings of 8 – 10, where 10 is associated with “excellent.”

Participants identified the “best part of the workshop.” Their responses are summarized here. Numbers that follow each item on the list indicate how frequently the item was identified. Participants commented frequently on the quality and utility of information at the workshop, the quality of the speakers, and many of the specific topics addressed.

- Quality and knowledge of the speaker/instructor/Dr. Loveday (19)
- Good information/ very informative (13)
- Cuts (10)
- Grades/grading specifications (8)
- Yields (7)
- Grain/Grass (6)
- The meal provided at the workshop (3)
- Venue and location (2)
- Information on beef nutrition (1)
- Quality of meats, tenderness of meats (1)
- Group input other side of beef (1)

Participants provided input on how to improve the workshop. Their recommendations are presented here. The numbers following the recommendation indicate the number of participants who made that specific comment/suggestion.

- Make no changes; “good as is” (10)
- Would like to have handouts, copy of slides, or summaries of key points (9)
- Provide more information about... (10)
 - Regulations (2)
 - Cover all cuts and how they are cut into cuts during butchering
 - Cover effects of lighting on meat color change
 - Talk about how to get better tenderness and taste (2)
 - Actual cuts of meats, need help with setting price of beef
 - More retail information
 - More on how to feed for better quality
 - More on grass fed vs. Grain fed
 - More info on actual names of beef cuts and how to get the cuts we want from our processors.
- Presenter Issues (5)
 - Have actual processors in the state present
 - Find a new presenter that knows something about direct marketing to niche markets
 - Remove political opinions and provide unbiased information.
 - Address specific markets, e.g., health consumers
 - Less personal bias
 - Shorten presentation
- Pacing, content (5)
 - I know it is a lot to cover in a short time, but pace was fast and it’s hard to get the ground work for it all
 - Move a little faster
 - Hard to do all this
 - It concerned more "how to do" for us to become direct producers, rather than making contacts for us to partner with
 - Increase class time, broaden subject
- General Concerns (7)
 - Room too cold (2)
 - Sound system
 - Two breaks instead of one
 - Start on time (2)
 - Soft chairs

Participants identified the two most important things they learned at the workshop. Their responses are provided here.

- Grade/Yields (20)
- Grass fed vs. Grain fed (13)
- Cuts and cut locations (9)
- Age/Harvest timing (7)
- Freezing and storage (7)
- Marbling (4)
- Fat content (4)
- Live weight (2)
- Producing and identifying quality meat (8)
- Miscellaneous (13):
 - USDA vs. marketing guidelines
 - Slides to see actual carcass and related cuts
 - Approve marketing
 - Financial impact
 - Communications with processor
 - Personal performance is the key
 - Overall good program
 - Better understanding of farm to customer
 - Basic beef management

Participants were asked to identify the actions they planned to implement as a result of what they learned at the workshop. Very few indicated they would make no change or were uncertain. Participants' responses are presented here.

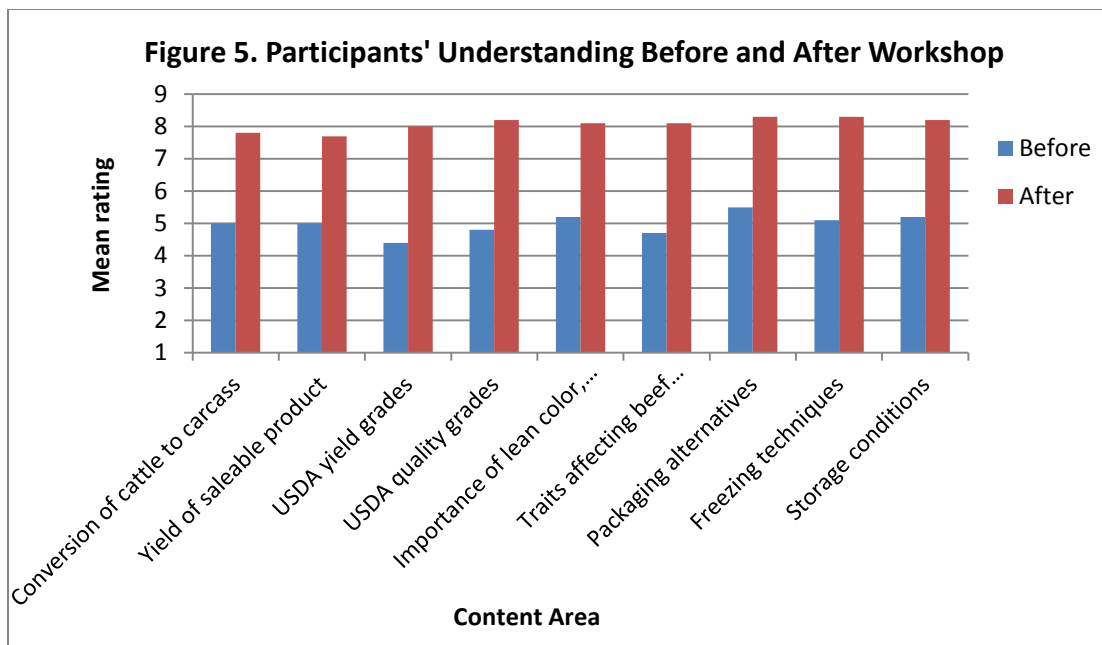
- Communicate with consumers and processors (7)
- Learn/research more (6)
- Begin or improve tracking of genetics, inputs, slaughter dates, and yields (5)
- Sell at younger or appropriate age (4)
- Change or reconsider feeding (3)
- Consider direct sales (2)
- Change website (2)
- Change wrapping on beef (2)
- Get retail meat permit (1)
- Focus on/ Improve Quality (8)
 - Focus on keeping cattle on the learner side, being sure to sell and wean cattle at a good time to keep them in the "A" age category
 - The way to care of cattle
 - My aging in cooler
 - Better observation of cattle fat
 - Concentrate more on quality
 - Get good quality beef
 - Less fat on animals, feeding program
 - Evaluation of cattle for cut quality

PARTICIPANTS' ASSESSMENT OF WORKSHOP IMPACT

For this assessment, participants rated their understanding of specific content areas before the workshop and after the workshop. Figure 5 presents participants' mean ratings before and after the workshop for each content area. Table 5 presents this information by workshop location.

The content area in which participants began with the least understanding was yield grades, with an average score of 4.4. At workshop's end, participants scored their understanding of yield grades as an 8, which is 3.6 points or 80% higher than at the outset. Significant gains occurred across all other content areas as well. Table 5 shows that Knoxville participants scored their pre-workshop understanding highest largely because of high pre-workshop scores for freezing and storage. Their endpoints, across all areas, are similar to participants at other locations.

Table 6 shows the balance among participants who reported increased understanding vs. no change in understanding across all content areas.¹ The two content areas that changed the understanding of the greatest share of participants were "Traits affecting tenderness and flavor" and "USDA yield grades," at 95% and 93.5%, respectively. The content area with the greatest portion of unaffected participants (23%) was "packaging."



¹ The evaluation form allowed participants to report a decrease in understanding, but as expected, participants reported only no change or an increase in understanding.

Table 5. Participants' Understanding Before and After Workshop, by Content Area and Workshop Location

Content Area	Knoxville		Murfreesboro		Jackson	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Conversion of cattle to carcass	5.2	7.7	4.8	7.9	5.0	7.6
Yield of saleable product	5.1	7.4	4.8	7.8	5.9	7.9
USDA yield grades	4.7	7.9	4.5	8.0	3.6	7.9
USDA quality grades	5.3	8.2	4.8	8.3	4.1	7.9
Importance of lean color, texture and marbling	5.7	8.4	4.9	7.9	4.8	8.1
Traits affecting beef tenderness and flavor	5.2	8.1	4.2	8.0	4.9	8.3
Packaging alternatives	6.1	8.3	5.2	8.1	5.0	8.7
Freezing techniques	6.3	8.2	4.3	8.3	4.9	8.7
Storage conditions	6.3	8.3	4.6	8.0	4.9	8.6
Average across all content areas	5.5	8.1	4.7	8.0	4.8	8.2

Table 6. Participants Self-evaluation of Change in Understanding

Content Area	No change	Increase understanding
Conversion of cattle to carcass	9.8	90.2
Yield of saleable product	11.3	88.7
USDA yield grades	6.5	93.5
USDA quality grades	8.1	91.9
Importance of lean color, texture and marbling	9.8	90.2
Traits affecting beef tenderness and flavor	5.0	95.0
Packaging alternatives	23.0	77.0
Freezing techniques	16.4	83.6
Storage conditions	15.0	85.0

PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORKSHOPS

The following list the recommendation of participants regarding topics to address or address further at future workshops.

- Marketing techniques, technologies, and contacts (8)
- Feeding (7)
 - Grass Related (3)
 - Pros and cons of grain feeding (2)
 - Feeding options overall
 - A live on-farm demo of animals and feeding program
- Processor Related (3)
 - Enticing more processing facilities in East TN
 - More on choosing a processor
 - Local processor opportunities
- Requirements (permits and regulations) for public retail (3)
- Pricing for whole caress, half quarter or even as meat going in the freezer (2)
- More on yields and colors, more on the physical live appearance of the cow compared to the carcass
- Tips and advice focused on calf-cow operations and how and what they can do to help make the beef better
- More information on finishing freezer beef
- USDA labeling
- More about the different cut of beef
- Techniques of slaughter
- I like the question and answer

When asked if they would recommend the workshop to others, not all of the participants that completed a questionnaire answered the question – 83% of the returned evaluation forms indicated “yes,” but among those who answered the question, 95% said “yes,” they would recommend the workshop to others.

