

NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL MEAT SCIENCE TRAINING/CONTINUED EDUCATION FOR EXTENSION EDUCATORS AND YOUTH AGRICULTURAL ADVISORS TO DETERMINE THE APPETITE FOR INNOVATIVE AND NONTRADITIONAL TRAINING PRACTICES

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I. OBJECTIVES

The objective was to determine whether a need exists for extending traditional meat science content to extension educators and youth agricultural advisors, enhancing their understanding of the relationship between the livestock and meat industries in the state of Ohio.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A needs assessment and preference survey was sent to extension educators and youth agricultural advisors across the state. The survey included 19 questions and gave respondents the opportunity to provide additional comments if desired. Categories included questions regarding the need, importance, and role of meat science, the availability of meat science training, the facilitation of training, resource availability, and respondent's willingness to attend training if available. The survey included a Likert scale with choices ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

III. RESULTS

A total of 112 surveys were completed and collated for assessment with 40 respondents providing additional comments. When asked questions regarding the importance/awareness of meat science across students, exhibitors, and producers, 97.13% of respondents "agreed" or "strongly agreed." When asked questions prompted to measure their need and desire for training, 76.61% "agreed" or "strongly agreed" to a need. When asked whether willing to attend a local 2-d workshop, 68.32% of respondents indicated that "yes" they would attend, whereas 27.72% indicated that they would "maybe" attend. Finally, respondent location information was collected to better understand training needs by region. Comments included such themes as overall support and need for additional training, willingness to host or facilitate training, need for exhibitors to understand relationship between raising animals and end product, and concerns about resource availability. One respondent commented, "Our advisory committee mentioned in our last meeting how butchering and knowledge of meat science was becoming a lost art in our area. They would fully support a program like this."

IV. CONCLUSION

Meat science is a unique area of focus that not all understand, yet it makes up a large portion of the U.S. economy. The results of the survey suggest that extension educators and youth agricultural advisors have a need for, and understand the importance of, additional

education in the area of meat science. The population surveyed expressed a strong will to attend additional training programs if provided. This supports a data-driven decision to move forward with the development of a training program focused in the field of meat science by means of a nontraditional practice in academia.

Keywords: education, extension, meat science, Ohio, training