

CONSENT

Researchers are required to provide a consent form to empower you to make an informed decision about your participation. You should feel free to ask us any questions you may have.

As part of the overarching Wellbeing on Beef Farms research study, you are being asked to participate in an intake interview to tell us about the history of your farm and your grazing system.

The data for this project will be kept confidential. All data associated with you will be coded and a key kept separately, so there will be no direct identifying information within the data, such as your name. The data will be kept for three years after the study closes and only the Human Research Protection Program at MSU and research team will have access. All data will be encrypted and stored in password protected file structures. Information about you will be kept confidential to the maximum extent allowable by law.

The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings but without direct identifying information.

Participation is voluntary. You have the right to say no; you may change your mind at any time and withdraw; you may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

If you have concerns or questions about this study please contact Dr. Jenny Hodbod or the MSU Human Research Protection Program via irb@msu.edu.

Do you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study?

We would like to make audio recordings during the interview – they are for project use only and will be stored in password-protect folders only accessible to the project personnel during the lifetime of the project (2021-2024). Audio recording is not compulsory for participation, and you can request the audio recordings to be halted at any time.

Is it ok if we record the audio?

FARM HISTORY

First, I'd love to learn about the history of your farm.

Who is living here?

How long have you been at farm (multigenerational?)

How long has there been beef cattle?

What do you know about the history of this land?

In the survey you said your farm was [X acres] with [Y acres] used for grazing – is that correct? How has that changed over time?

OPERATION

In the recruitment survey you said you did [insert from survey] enterprises, is that everything?

Can you tell me how that mix of enterprises evolved?

Who works on your ranch? (Family? Non-Family?)

Do you have any sources of income off the farm?

Which is your main source of income?

ANIMALS

You said in **the survey you have [insert livestock types here], and X cattle [insert cattle numbers below].** Could you tell me about the number of each of these other livestock types:

Animal	✓	Avg. Number	Target number	Is this animal out grazing?	Average Finished or Market Weight (lbs)
Market Calves					
Beef stockers (yearlings)					
Beef finishers/ Finished					
Breeding Calves/ Replacement Heifers					
Brood cows					
Bulls					
Sheep					
Goats					
Pigs					
Chickens					
Horses					
Other					

Has the rolling herd average changed over the past 5 years? (expanded/declined)

Are you aiming for a particular age or weight before selling your livestock?

Do you have a set calving **[and lambing where appropriate]** season? If so, when?

Grass type(s):

Length of grass growing and grazing season:

GRAZING MANAGEMENT

In the interview you said [grazing management system] – I'd love to dig into that in a bit more depth. How would you explain your grazing management system?

If they have multiple paddocks [will know from survey]:

How many paddocks, what size?

How are they separated (temporary/permanent fences)?

If temporary, how long does it take to put up a fence?

How often do you move the animals between the paddocks?

What's the average (or goal) for the grazing period (days)

What's the average (or goal) rest period (days) before returning to the paddocks?

How do you decide when to move the animals?

Do you have different herds? Or are all the cattle running together? I.e., how many animals per paddock?

Is stocking rate/density a part of your management?

If yes - what is your target?

Do you have a grazing plan sketched out?

Do you grow hay or crops?

If yes:

Crop	Acreage	Type of fertilizers used	Use (and which part of plant used for what, in case grazing on corn stalks etc).	Crop sold as revenue stream (RS) or used as on-farm feed (FF)?
Hay				
Wheat				
Small grain_____				
Corn _____				
Other _____				
Other _____				

Are you applying Inorganic/organic fertilizers/nitrogen inputs and/or lime on your grazing paddocks/pastures?

Are you applying any elsewhere on the farm?

Are you applying any herbicides or pesticides anywhere?

Do you need to purchase additional feed?

If yes, how much of each feed is typically purchased during the year to maintain your herd?

Alfalfa hay Amount (tons)_____

Grass/Pasture hay Amount (tons)_____

Grain Bale silage Amount (tons)_____

Grass Bale silage Amount (tons)_____

Grain Silage Amount (tons)_____

Grass Silage	Amount (tons)_____
Grain_____	Amount (tons)_____
Grain_____	Amount (tons)_____
Other_____	Amount (tons)_____
Other_____	Amount (tons)_____

MARKETING

How do you market or sell your animals?

Local auction_____

Video/internet auction_____

Direct to background/stocker operation_____

Direct to a feedlot_____

Direct to a packing plant/processor_____

Direct to consumers_____

WELLBEING FRAMING

Did COVID impact the farm significantly?

What's the biggest success and challenge on the farm at the moment?