

### Expanding Artificial Insemination in Far South West Virginia

Lee County Livestock Association realized a gap existed in providing education to their producers in artificial insemination. Availability to regional seminars and cost of attendance had been a limiting factor in local cattlemen and women adopting this technology. A Grant was awarded by the Virginia Cattle Industry Board (VCIB) in 2021 to plan and execute an artificial insemination course for far southwest producers.

A two-day course was held on August 5 and 6, 2022. A total of twenty-one participants attended the Bovine Artificial Insemination Course. The majority lived in Lee County with four attendees from Wise County and one from Tennessee.

Dr. Jay Miles, Dr. Mercadanta, Sarah Morton, ABS and Amy Byington, Lee County ANR Extension agent, lead the program. Classroom instruction was held at Lincoln Memorial University. Topics covered during the two days included:

- Understanding EPD's
- Anatomy & Physiology
- Semen handling
- Estrus detection and breeding timing
- AI techniques
- Estrus synchronization protocols
- AI Sire selection

ABS was contracted to provide instructors and equipment. Participants also received valuable hands-on instruction held at Hickory Corner Dairy. They were able to visualize and practice on reproductive tracts as well as palpate live cattle.

Participants completed an evaluation at the conclusion of the course. 90% shared they would use skills and knowledge from the course on their farm. 85.6% of participants rated the overall course as excellent. Producers shared that they enjoyed the hands-on portion of the course.



*"The AI program was packed with tons of useful information. I feel that the classroom study, combined with the hands-on learning at the farm, were very beneficial to the students. We are now implementing more AI and ET work in our herd to help improve and diversify our genetics. Through AI and ET we can use some of the top sires*

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*in the breed at a fraction of the cost of purchasing such an animal. The AI program helped us gain a better understanding of the process and to recognize how an AI and ET program could improve our herd."*

Chris Jones, 3 Sisters Farm  
Registered Black Hereford and Commercial Cattle Farm  
Jonesville, VA

*"Taking the AI course has changed my whole herd. I have introduced better EPD's into my program, and it's a game changer. I'm getting ready to sell my first set of AI calves."*

Randy Cox, Cox Angus Farm  
Jonesville, VA

Lee County Livestock Association hopes this and future courses will increase the usage of AI and encourage more producers to participate in value added marketing programs. Due to the success of this program, a second AI seminar is already scheduled for August of 2023.

