

**Iowa Beef Industry Council
Iowa State Checkoff Research Program
Final Report**

Title: Iowa beef cattle producer survey for benchmarking and indications of industry change.

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Budget:

<i>Awarded:</i>	\$ 39,247
<i>Spent:</i>	\$39,227.12
<i>Remaining Funds:</i>	\$19.88

PROJECT SUMMARY

The objective of this project was to characterize the current status of the beef industry in Iowa by identifying growth opportunities and challenges in Iowa beef production and gain an understating of how beef producers make decisions and what information they need to remain competitive and sustainable. To achieve this, two, four-page survey questionnaires and recruitment materials were prepared by the Iowa Beef Center (IBC) and the Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology-Survey Research Services (CSSM). Surveys were sent to 2000 beef producers, with 1000 surveys being sent to cow-calf producers and the other 1000 sent to feedlot operators in the state of Iowa. Survey respondents had the option to fill out a paper or online survey.

Survey questionnaires were developed by the Iowa Beef Center faculty and field specialists and were mailed in December 2025 using mailing lists obtained by CSSM. By mid-February, responses for cow-calf surveys were 202 completed surveys with a 20.2% response rate but responses for feedlots surveys were 69 out of 1000. A second distribution of feedlot surveys with a different mailing list was conducted. The second distribution resulted in an additional 94 surveys, resulting in a 16.3% response rate for feedlot operations. The Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology-Survey Research Services received completed surveys and complied all responses into percentage frequencies and selected cross-tabulations as needed.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection Procedures. Data collection began in December 2025. The Iowa Beef Center personnel, in conjunction with CSSM, developed a cow-calf questionnaire of approximately 80 items and a feedlot questionnaire of approximately 112 items, both covering opportunities and challenges specific to Iowa beef production as well as general operation characteristics. The current survey questions were modeled after the Iowa Beef Center's 2014 survey to measure changes in the industry over the past decade. An advanced invitation letter was drafted by CSSM explaining the purpose and process of the study, requesting participation, assured confidentiality, and provided CSSM contact information for questions. This was accompanied by a reminder postcard, and email reminders to encourage producer responses. Survey packets contained the invitation letter and a copy of the survey, as well as a \$2 bill as an incentive to complete the survey.

Cow-calf Operator Survey. An advance invitation letter was sent to 1,000 cow-calf producers on December 9, 2025. Survey packets were sent December 17, 2025, to 905 non-responders. An email reminder was sent on December 17, 2025, to 555 non-responders with valid email addresses. On January 2, 2026, a postcard reminder was sent to 689 non-responders, and a second copy of the survey was mailed on January 8, 2026, to 641 non-responders. Mail returned as undeliverable by the U.S. Postal Service was documented and CSSM staff monitored and recorded the receipt of completed surveys.

Cow-calf Response Rates. Table 1 presents the response outcomes from the 2026 data collection from cow-calf surveys. One respondent indicated that their operation was both cow-calf and feedlot. Due to the low response rate for the feedlot survey, this response was reassigned to the feedlot sample for analysis. As a result, the cow-calf sample consisted of 999 operators. Of these,

343 cases (24.3%) were deemed ineligible due to no longer operating a beef farm, not being a cow-calf operator, retirement, or death, leaving an eligible sample of 756. Sixty-nine surveys or reminder postcards were returned as not deliverable by the USPS (69 from the total 1,000). Refusals were received by 2 individuals. There were 483 operators from whom no response was received. These non-responders comprised 48.3% of the sample.

A total of 202 completed surveys were received between December 9, 2025, and April 2, 2026. The final response rate was 26.7%, calculated as 202 completed surveys from the 756 eligible cases.

Table 1. Number of sampled cases and response rate from 2026 Cow-calf surveys.

Sample	999	
<i>Not Eligible</i>	<i>243</i>	<i>24.3%</i>
Eligible Sample	756	
Refused	2	0.2%
No Response	483	48.3%
Survey Responses Complete	202	26.7%

Feedlot Operator Survey. The same process as described for cow-calf surveys was completed for feedlot operators. Invitation letters were sent to 1,000 people on December 9, 2025. Survey packets were sent on December 17, 2025, to 917 non-responders, email reminders were sent on December 17, 2025, to 560 non-responders with valid email addresses, and a postcard reminder was sent January 2, 2026, to 713 non-responders. A second copy of the survey was mailed on January 8, 2026, to 663 non-responders. Undeliverable mail was documented by CSSM staff.

Response rates for the initial feedlot survey were lower than expected. As a result, a second round of surveys and data collection was conducted. The second-round sample consisted of 297 operators selected from the original cow-calf sample whose response indicated both cow-calf and feedlot operations. Because these operators' sample records indicated both cow-calf and feedlot, they were considered eligible for participation in the feedlot survey. These cases were assigned new case IDs for the second round of data collection, while the original case IDs were retained for cross-referencing purposes only. A supplemental sample of 194 operators was also purchased from the U.S. Farm Data and assigned case IDs. After the sample data were reviewed, cleaned, and duplicates removed, the final second-round sample consisted of 491 feedlot operators.

The second round of survey packets were sent on April 9, 2026, to the 491 feedlot operators. A postcard reminder was sent on April 17, 2026, to 422 non-responders. A second copy of the survey mailed on April 28, 2026, to 288 non-responders. Any mail that was returned as undeliverable by the USPS was documented.

Feedlot Operator Response Rates. Table 2 presents the outcomes from both rounds of data collection. The first round of surveys was distributed to 1,001 feedlot operators, including one respondent reassigned during data collection from the cow-calf sample. Of these, 344 cases (34.4%) were classified as ineligible due to no longer operating a beef farm, not being a feedlot operator, retirement, or death, resulting in 657 eligible samples.

The second round of surveys consisted of 491 feedlot operators. Of these, 191 cases (38.9%) were classified as ineligible due to no longer operating a feedlot operation, never operating a feedlot, retirement, or death. This resulted in 300 eligible samples.

A total of 70 completed surveys and 1 partial survey were received during the first round of data collection, and 89 completed surveys and 3 partial surveys were received during the second round, resulting in 159 completed surveys and 4 partial surveys. The overall response rate was 17.0%, calculated as 163 completed and partial surveys out of the 957 eligible cases.

Table 2. Number of sampled cases and response rate from 2026 Feedlot surveys.

Sample	1492	
<i>Not Eligible</i>	<i>535</i>	<i>35.9%</i>
Eligible Sample	957	
Returned Mail	97	6.5%
No Response	696	46.6%
Survey Responses Complete and Partial*	163	17.0%

*Includes 4 partial surveys

RESULTS

Total response rates for both surveys divided by 9 districts are presented in figure 1.

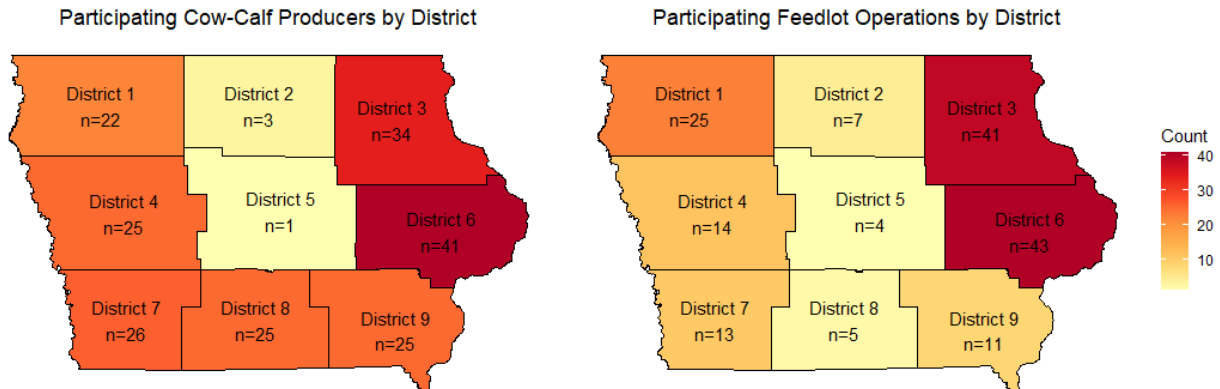


Figure 1. Distribution of participating operators (cow-calf and feedlot) by district.

DISCUSSION

Calf-calf Surveys

Response rates per district. In 2014, the highest reporting for cow-calf surveys occurred in Districts 8, 4, and 7, with greater than 11% of responses per district for a total of 243 respondents. For the current survey, the highest reporting occurred in District 6, followed by Districts 3 and 7, with responses of greater than 12.5% each for a total of 202 respondents.

Cow-calf key findings: Over 80% of respondents described their operations as commercial only, with 12% as commercial and seedstock, and 2.5% described as seedstock, consistent with what was reported in 2014. Black Angus was the most prominent breed represented in respondents' herds (81.68%), followed by Simmental (28.22%); however, 38.61% of respondents reported their herds as crossbred, an increase from 22.3% reported in 2014. The average cow herd reported was 80 head, with a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 850. The average number of replacement heifers was 14 head, with some producers reporting they keep no replacement heifers and others reporting up to 130, while the average number of bulls was 6 head, ranging from 0 to as many as 250. Most producers (62.7%) reported calving in March and April, with the next highest share of calves born in May and June (29.7% of respondents), a distribution similar to what was reported in the 2014 survey. Weather/environment was the most common reason given for deciding when to calve (63.86%), followed by labor availability (28.71%) and tradition (27.23%). In 2014, weather and labor were also reported as the most common reasons for selecting a calving season, at 64.0% and 42.2%, respectively, with tradition at 27.23%; compared to 2014, labor was not reported as high a percentage as a reason for selecting a calving season as in the current survey.

Most respondents reported retaining heifers after weaning and either backgrounding or retaining ownership of steers. For bulls, only 52 respondents indicated that bulls were either kept as replacements or sold as replacements, suggesting that 74% of respondents are not keeping their own bulls for breeding. In 2014, most respondents marketed their calves at a special sale at a local auction (51%); the current survey showed a nearly equal distribution of responses across marketing at a special sale at a local auction, a regular sale at a local auction, and direct marketing. In both surveys, video auction/website listings were not a common marketing method, and the majority of respondents reported using the spot cash market (i.e., live auction price) for pricing their cattle. Regarding production practices, respondents reported castration most often on feeder calves (86.14%), followed by vaccinating twice (45.54%). When asked which technologies they use, implants were reported as the most used (31.19%), followed by artificial insemination (21.78%) and EPDs (21.29%), while other technologies were each reported at less than 10% for current use. Cost (55.45%) was reported as the largest obstacle to implementing new technologies.

When deciding whether to sell calves, 39.33% of respondents reported that they always sell once calves reach a certain age or weight regardless of price, 59.33% reported that they sometimes sell when market price is high and hold back when prices are low, and 58.9% respondents answer "never" to keep feeding calves as long as feed is available and sell only when feed runs short. Only 6% of respondents reported that over 75% of their income comes from their cattle operation, while 70.55% reported that less than 50% of their income comes from the operation. Regarding feedstuffs, 78.11% reported that over 75% of their feed and forage is grown on their own farm. Most (49.26%) respondents reported maintaining their cow herd on less than 100 acres, whereas respondents in 2014 reported using more acres to maintain their cow herd, with 50% reporting 100 to 1,000 acres. Respondents reported using continuous grazing (53.96%) and rotating cows between 4 or fewer pastures during the grazing season (40.59%); in the 2014 survey, a higher percentage of respondents reported using rotational grazing (59.4%). Most respondents in the current survey reported that pasture was either owned (78.4%) or rented from a private entity/owner (56.3%). When asked about their major competitor for additional pasture, the most common responses were other livestock producers (26.04%) and conversion to row crop (19.53%), with CRP at 11.83%. This question had the greatest number of "other" responses,

with most respondents listing a combination of reasons for land competition; these responses will be combined and condensed for publication but have been left in their entirety for this final IBIC report.

Regarding plans for ownership transfer, 50.82% of respondents stated that the next generation would take over the operation, while 26.78% reported that they do not plan to exit the cattle business. In terms of demographics, 96.53% of respondents were male, and 84.16% of respondents were over 56 years old, results that were very similar to the 2014 survey report.

Feedlot Surveys

Response rates per district. In 2014, the highest reporting occurred in Districts 1, and 4 with greater than 15% of responses per district for a total of 200 respondents. For the current survey, the highest reporting occurred in Districts 6 and 3, followed by Districts 1, with responses of greater than 15.3% each for a total of 163 respondents.

Feedlot key findings: Respondents reported finishing cattle most commonly in open feedlots with full or partial shelter (82.5%), followed by open feedlots without cover (71.4%). Operations with cattle finished in confinement bedded barns and in slatted floor/deep pit buildings were reported at 64.3% and 52.6%, respectively, while only 48.5% reported finishing cattle in a hoop building. The total percentage reported was 110%, indicating that operators may be utilizing multiple facilities when finishing cattle. Compared to the 2014 survey, there was an increase in the share of respondents reporting the use of monoslope and confinement facilities. For the most part, respondents in the current survey had no plans for remodeling in the next 10 years. Close to half of respondents market fewer than 200 head per year (56.44%), 15.53% market between 200 and 499 head annually, and the remaining respondents market over 500 head annually; this is in contrast to the 2014 survey, in which over 50% of respondents reported marketing over 500 head annually, this change may be attributed to differences in the sampled operators. Ownership of finished cattle varied among operators: 93.8% of respondents reported finishing cattle they own, 70.4% reported feeding cattle owned by another party at their operation, and 63.2% reported owning cattle that were custom fed elsewhere, while 52.76% of respondents reported feeding home-raised calves.

Of the cattle placed on feed, an average of 80.4% was reported as calves and 74.0% as yearlings. Additionally, 64.4% reported feeding steers while 46.8% fed heifers. Respondents reported that most of the cattle they feed are beef (95.0%), followed by dairy (61.1%) and beef x dairy crossbred calves (37.4%). Respondents reported that 65.03% of the feeder cattle they fed came from Iowa, followed by the northern plains (MT, WY, CO, ND, SD) at 15.95% and Missouri at 15.34%. In 2014, Iowa was also reported as the area from which most feeder cattle were sourced, with Missouri and the northern plains also noted as significant sources; however, the 2014 survey reported more operators sourcing cattle from the southeast than the current survey. Respondents in the current survey were asked why they sourced cattle from certain regions and could provide multiple answers, with availability/timing, consistency of cattle quality, and price as the most reported reasons. The most important traits for feeder cattle reported by respondents were cattle being weaned and adjusted to water tanks and feed bunks, along with vaccination history, while the least important trait was being naturally or organically raised.

The spot cash market (i.e., live auction price) was the most reported pricing method at 79.75%, followed by Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) at 22.09% of responses. The use of LRP is a notable change from the 2014 survey, in which no respondents reported using it. Live, negotiated price (including auctions) was the most reported pricing method by mean percentage of cattle marketed (81.3%). Most operators reported storing dry or delivered feed in commodity sheds or bulk bins, while for high-moisture feed, operators most often reported using bunkers for storage (39.26%). Respondents reported that feed was delivered via bunk-fed components daily (41.10%) or as a total mixed ration daily (47.24%). Among those who bunk feed, feed was delivered once or twice a day, with no respondents reporting feeding more frequently than twice daily. The average market weight reported for finished cattle was concentrated between 1,500 and 1,599 pounds (40.13%) and 1,400 and 1,499 pounds (30.26%). When asked about technology use, operators reported weighed feed mixing/delivery (74.07%) and implants (72.73%) as the most commonly used technologies, while individual animal remote sensing (87.72%), electronic identification (87.18%), and beta agonists (80.36%) were the technologies most commonly reported as “not in use”. When asked about obstacles to implementing new technologies, cost was the most reported answer (62.58%).

Corn (grain), soybeans, corn (silage), hay, and alfalfa were all reported as being grown on farm, and 70.06% of respondents reported that over 75% of their feed is grown on the operation. For current manure management, 94.63% of operators reported on-farm application, with 64.41% reporting that manure is applied according to crop nutrient need and 20.91% reporting they compost manure; 16.67% of respondents reported they were developing a plan for expanding manure storage capacity, while most respondents had no plans to implement selling manure (80.37%), composting (70.91%), or decreasing storage capacity (100.0%). When asked what contributed to an increase in marketed animals over the last 10 years, 56.44% reported no increase in marketed cattle numbers, and only 17.18% attributed an increase to feeding profitability. Conversely, when asked what contributed to a decrease in marketed cattle over the last 10 years, 54.60% reported no decrease and 19.63% attributed a decrease to operator age or health. When asked which factors were most important for maintaining or reducing cost of production, operators reported that management for animal health and nutrition/bunk were the most important, at 88.81% and 83.80%, respectively, while closeout and benchmarking services and data management and tracking programs were reported as the least important, at 22.63% and 20.74%, respectively.

Respondents were asked about anticipated changes to their feedlots: 92.31% reported having no plans to sell the feedlot but continue farming, and 83.94% reported having no plans to retire. Labor for these operations was not commonly provided by non-family, paid employees, with 84.25% of respondents reporting that less than 25% of their labor is provided by non-family employees. Only 9% of respondents reported that over 80% of their income comes from their feedlot operation, while 72.73% reported that less than 60% of their income comes from the feedlot operation. In terms of demographics, 96.13% of respondents were male, and 79.49% of respondents were over 56 years old, results were very similar to what was reported in the 2014 survey.

Additional notes:

Two summarized reports of these survey findings, highlighting changes from the [2014 cow-calf survey](#) and changes from the [2014 feedlot operator survey](#) are in development as producer friendly resources to be distributed and discussed in upcoming Iowa Beef Center events. Another technical report is being developed to submit for publication in the Journal of Extension or a similar publication.

Survey Results:

Survey results are presented for each question by reporting number and percentage. Cow-calf survey results are presented first followed by feedlot. Please note that for some tables the “other” category indicates the respondents who answered “other.” Some respondents included text responses that corresponded with the “other” response, but not all respondents included text responses. As a result, not all “other” response numbers will equal the number of text responses.

Cow-calf Survey Results

Q2. Which of the following best describes your cow-calf operation?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Commercial Only</i>	164	82.82%
<i>Purebred Only</i>	6	3.03%
<i>Both commercial and purebred</i>	24	12.12%
<i>Club Calf</i>	1	0.51%
<i>Other*</i>	3	1.52%
<i>Total</i>	198	100%

*Other: No answer provided (1), donor Holstein females embryos (1)

Q3. What breed(s) of beef cows are in your herd?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Black Angus</i>	165	81.68%
<i>Red Angus</i>	48	23.76%
<i>Hereford</i>	43	21.29%
<i>Shorthorn</i>	13	6.43%
<i>Simmental</i>	57	28.22%
<i>Charolais</i>	26	12.87%
<i>Composite</i>	15	7.43%
<i>Crossbred</i>	78	38.61%
<i>Other*</i>	13	6.44%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	202	

*Other: Angus x Holstein (1), Black Angus x Black Gelbvieh (1), Dutch belt (1), Gelbvieh (2), Highlander (1), Limousin (2), Maine-Anjou (4), Wagyu (1)

Q4. What is your average cow herd inventory for cows, replacement heifers, and bulls for the last 3 years? (2022-2025)

	Mean (head)	Median (head)	Minimum	Maximum	Number Reporting
<i>Cows</i>	79.8	55.0	4	850	193
<i>Replacement heifers</i>	13.6	10.0	0	130	133
<i>Bulls</i>	5.7	3.0	0	250	179

Q5. What are the approximate percentages of your calves born in each of the following time periods?

	Mean Percent	Median Percent	Number Reporting
<i>January – February</i>	24.3%	15.0%	53
<i>March – April</i>	62.7%	70.0%	172
<i>May – June</i>	29.7%	20.0%	144
<i>July – August</i>	22.5%	10.0%	50
<i>September – October</i>	25.6%	20.0%	63
<i>November – December</i>	6.4%	5.0%	27

Q6. What is the reason(s) your operation calves when it does?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Labor availability</i>	58	28.71%
<i>Feed availability</i>	15	7.43%
<i>Market timing</i>	44	21.78%
<i>Weather/Environment</i>	129	63.86%
<i>Tradition</i>	55	27.23%
<i>Other*</i>	14	6.93%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	202	

*Other: Always a place for bulls (1), bull (1), bulls not separated (1), dry lot don't pull bulls (1), bred heifers to calve before field work (1), just purchased and AI to calve at that date (1), one bull died, one was too old and had to use our heifer bull to finish (1), poor management (1), run one bull with herd (tried 2 bulls twice fatal injury both times) (1), selling club calves (1), something to do (1), AI in April before cows go to pasture (1), Would like to calve in a smaller window but various breeding issues have spread it out. (1)

Q7.1. In general, what do you typically do with your calves after weaning – Heifers?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Sell at weaning</i>	44	21.78%
<i>Background/stocker, then sell</i>	75	37.13%
<i>Retain as replacements</i>	92	45.54%
<i>Retain through finishing</i>	78	38.61%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	202	

Q7.2. In general, what do you typically do with your calves after weaning – Steers?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Sell at weaning</i>	43	21.29%
<i>Background/stocker, then sell</i>	80	39.60%
<i>Retain through finishing</i>	83	41.09%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	202	

Q7.3. In general, what do you typically do with your calves after weaning – Bulls?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Sell as replacements</i>	24	11.88%
<i>Retain as replacements</i>	28	13.86%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	202	

Q8. Of the cattle you sell annually, which method do you primarily use?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Direct marketing</i>	58	28.71%
<i>Local auction barn – regular sale</i>	75	37.13%
<i>Local auction barn – special sale</i>	62	30.69%
<i>Video auction / website listings</i>	2	0.99%
<i>Other*</i>	5	2.48%

*Other: Fat cattle buyer (1), sold as cows as pairs in 2024, and have bought back 4 bred heifers, so answered questions based on past. (1), NFO (2), CAFO sized feedlot and sell directly to packers (1)

Q9. Which of the following marketing methods do you also use when selling calves, yearlings, or finished cattle?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Direct marketing (e.g., private treaty)</i>	65	32.18%
<i>Local auction barn – regular sale</i>	95	47.03%
<i>Local auction barn – special sale</i>	84	41.58%
<i>Video auction / website listings</i>	5	2.48%
<i>Other*</i>	6	2.97%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	202	

*Other: Butcher for direct marketing (1), Fat cattle buyer (1), NFO (1), Producer livestock (1), Sell straight to butcher (1), We also sell about 30 head to retail customers (1)

Q10. Of the calves, yearlings, and finished cattle you sell annually, what percentage of each pricing method do you typically use?

	Mean Percent	Median Percent	Number Reporting
<i>Spot cash market (i.e. live auction price)</i>	93.6%	100.0%	166
<i>Forward contracting or marketing agreement</i>	52.3%	50.0%	20
<i>Futures markets</i>	23.7%	20.0%	11
<i>Options market</i>	23.7%	8.0%	12
<i>Livestock Risk Protection (LRP)</i>	37.3%	27.5%	18
<i>Livestock Gross Margin (LGM)</i>	20.1%	0.0%	7
<i>Other*</i>	68.4%	99.0%	7

*Other: Carcass weight - grid (1), Direct to consumer (1), Grade and yield (2), Grid direct to packer (1), Local auction market (1), Private (1)

Q11. Please select the production practices you use on your feeder calves prior to sale:

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Castrate</i>	174	86.14%
<i>Dehorn</i>	81	40.10%
<i>Implant</i>	92	45.54%
<i>Vaccinate once</i>	69	34.16%
<i>Vaccinate twice</i>	111	54.95%
<i>Wean at least 30 days</i>	34	16.83%
<i>Wean at least 45 days</i>	88	43.56%
<i>Other*</i>	13	6.44%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	202	

*Other: Wean at 5-6 months (1), background at home lots for 45-90 days prior to move to custom feedlot (1), don't wean (1), does not sell feeder calves (2), NA (1), sell calves off cows (1), vaccinate 3 rounds wean at 60 days (1), vaccinate 3 times (2), wean at 90 days at least (1)

Q12. Which of the following technologies do you currently use?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Electronic herd record keeping</i>	14	6.93%
<i>Expected Progeny Differences (EPD)</i>	43	21.29%
<i>Genomics</i>	11	5.45%
<i>Feed formulating software (i.e. BRANDS)</i>	14	6.93%
<i>Artificial insemination</i>	44	21.78%
<i>Embryo transfers (ET)/In vitro fertilization (IVF)</i>	14	6.93%
<i>Implants</i>	63	31.19%
<i>Virtual Fencing</i>	6	2.97%
<i>Activity Monitoring</i>	9	4.46%
<i>GPS tracking/Remote monitoring</i>	0	0.00%
<i>Automated feeding systems</i>	5	2.48%
<i>Other*</i>	12	5.94%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	202	

*Other: Buckets (1), fill self-feeders (1), hand (1), hand record keeping (1), N/A (1), no technologies (2), rotational grazing (1)

Q13. What are the obstacles you face when implementing new technologies?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Cost</i>	112	55.45%
<i>Labor</i>	64	31.68%
<i>Lack of knowledge/education</i>	67	33.17%
<i>Weather/Environment</i>	22	10.89%
<i>Tradition</i>	41	20.30%
<i>Other*</i>	8	3.96%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	202	

*Other: If it's not broke, I don't fix it. Yes I look at technology but studies do not convince me to change (1), just too small of herd to justify (1), lack of buy in from all the partners of the operation (1), age (1), no (1), technology with limited ROI (1), time (1)

Q14. Please indicate how often you do the following when deciding whether to sell or keep feeding calves.

	Never	Sometimes	Always	Number Reporting
<i>Sell once calves reach a certain age or weight, regardless of price</i>	20.79%	39.89%	39.33%	178
<i>Compare feed costs with expected sale prices before deciding</i>	44.30%	40.94%	14.77%	149
<i>Sell when market prices are high; hold back when prices are low</i>	30.67%	59.33%	10.00%	150
<i>Keep feeding if enough feed is available; sell if feed runs short</i>	58.90%	32.88%	8.22%	146

Q15. Regardless of your experience with feeding weaned calves, what is your opinion on the following? The problem with feeding weaned calves on my farm is that....

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Number Reporting
<i>I want to receive revenue earlier rather than waiting until calves are finished</i>	16.57%	21.30%	36.09%	19.53%	6.51%	169
<i>I do not have the facilities or equipment</i>	18.75%	25.00%	21.59%	24.43%	10.23%	176
<i>I do not have enough feed supply</i>	27.22%	29.59%	21.89%	15.38%	5.92%	169
<i>Borrowing money to finance the feeding is too costly</i>	18.56%	19.76%	32.93%	19.16%	9.58%	167
<i>Prices of cattle change too much, so too risky</i>	13.17%	20.36%	37.72%	20.96%	7.78%	167
<i>I do not have enough labor or expertise</i>	17.65%	32.94%	27.65%	15.88%	5.88%	170
<i>I do not receive additional profit compared to selling at weaning</i>	10.71%	27.38%	47.62%	10.71%	3.57%	168
<i>It is too difficult to establish a relationship with a buyer</i>	15.38%	27.22%	40.83%	11.83%	4.73%	169
<i>I do not have an interest in feeding weaned calves</i>	27.65%	22.94%	30.59%	12.35%	6.47%	170

Q16. Approximately, what is the percentage of your income that comes from your cattle operation?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>0 – 25%</i>	67	34.01%
<i>26 – 50%</i>	72	36.55%
<i>51 – 75%</i>	46	23.35%
<i>76 – 100%</i>	12	6.09%

Q17. Which of the technologies below are you currently using or considering using in your cattle operation? (Very Unimportant = 1, Unimportant = 2, Neutral = 3, Important = 4, Very Important = 5)

	1	2	3	4	5	Number Reporting
<i>Pasture and feed management</i>	3.68%	1.58%	8.95%	53.68%	32.11%	190
<i>Productivity of pasture acres</i>	3.68%	2.11%	12.11%	49.47%	32.63%	190
<i>Health management</i>	3.83%	1.64%	12.02%	49.18%	33.33%	183
<i>Genetic selection</i>	1.66%	2.76%	25.97%	46.41%	23.20%	181
<i>Grazing/harvesting corn stalks for feed</i>	3.80%	5.43%	25.00%	45.11%	20.65%	184
<i>Access to animal health consultants</i>	4.44%	7.22%	36.11%	38.33%	13.89%	180
<i>Financial record-keeping programs</i>	4.42%	10.50%	46.96%	28.73%	9.39%	181
<i>Access to animal nutrition consultants</i>	5.52%	7.73%	43.09%	36.46%	7.18%	181
<i>Local supply of feedstuffs</i>	4.40%	6.59%	34.62%	45.05%	9.34%	182
<i>Equipment to feed co-products</i>	6.04%	7.69%	39.01%	38.46%	8.79%	182
<i>Availability of labor</i>	4.37%	9.29%	41.53%	30.05%	14.75%	183
<i>Data management and tracking programs</i>	8.94%	19.55%	52.51%	15.08%	3.91%	179
<i>Access to financial consultants</i>	8.89%	17.78%	53.89%	14.44%	5.00%	180
<i>Artificial insemination</i>	13.19%	25.27%	39.01%	16.48%	6.04%	182
<i>Benchmarking services</i>	12.36%	21.35%	58.99%	6.74%	0.56%	178
<i>Estrous synchronization</i>	13.26%	20.44%	47.51%	14.36%	4.42%	181
<i>Feeding my own hay and silage</i>	4.23%	1.06%	11.64%	49.74%	33.33%	189

Q18. What portion of your cow-calf operation's feed and forage is produced by your own farm?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Less than 25%</i>	12	5.97%
<i>25–49%</i>	10	4.98%
<i>50–74%</i>	22	10.95%
<i>75% or more</i>	157	78.11%

Q19. How many acres of pasture were used for your breeding cow herd in 2025?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Zero</i>	2	1.00%
<i>1–99</i>	97	48.26%
<i>100–199</i>	54	26.87%
<i>200–499</i>	35	17.41%
<i>500–999</i>	9	4.48%
<i>1,000 or more</i>	4	1.99%

Q20. Over a typical year, how many months do you use the following feed sources for your herd?

	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.	Number Reporting
<i>Graze perennial grass pasture</i>	5.9	6.0	1	12	191
<i>Graze crop residue</i>	2.4	2.0	0	7	148
<i>Graze cover crops</i>	1.4	1.0	0	6	66
<i>Graze summer annuals</i>	2.9	3.0	0	9	67
<i>Use stored feeds</i>	4.8	5.0	0	12	182

Q21. What pasture grazing method(s) do you use?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Managed/rotational grazing (more than 4 paddocks or pasture rotations)</i>	39	19.31%
<i>Rotate cows between 4 or less pastures during grazing season</i>	82	40.59%
<i>Continuous grazing</i>	109	53.96%
<i>Other*</i>	2	0.99%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	202	

Other: Dry lot (1)

Q22. In 2025, of the pasture acre(s) used in your operation, what percentage was....

	Mean	Median	Number Reporting
<i>Rented from private entity/owner</i>	56.3%	50.0%	106
<i>Rented from public entity</i>	10.0%	0.0%	7
<i>Owned</i>	78.4%	100.0%	176

Q23. What is your major competitor for buying or renting additional pasture or hay acres?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Other livestock producers</i>	44	26.04%
<i>Conversion to row crop</i>	33	19.53%
<i>Recreational development</i>	5	2.96%
<i>Public acquisition</i>	2	1.18%
<i>Energy development (e.g. wind)</i>	0	0.00%
<i>Residential or commercial development</i>	5	2.96%
<i>Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)</i>	20	11.83%
<i>Other*</i>	60	35.50%

*Other: Age (1), Conversion to row crop and 8=Distance from home (1), Conversion to row crop and CRP (4), Conversion to row crop and Public acquisition (1), Conversion to row crop, Public acquisition and CRP (1), Conversion to row crop, Public acquisition, Residential or commercial development and CRP (1), Deer Farms (1), Deer hunters and CRP (1), Deer hunters and home acreage sprawl (1), Don't have any (1), Don't need anymore (1), Don't need or want (1), Fence (1), I have no competition I don't believe in renting (1), Land available at reasonable dollars (1), Limited acres in area. (1), Money (1), Not buying or renting (1), Not looking for other pasture, we have what we need for the number of cows we have (1), Other livestock producers Conversion to row crop (10), Other livestock producers and 8=Government programs (1), Other livestock producers and CRP (6), Other livestock producers and Recreational development (1), Other livestock producers, CRP and 8=DNR they left nothing for the cow/calf guy!" (1), Other livestock producers, CRP and 8=NRCS (1), Other livestock producers, Conversion to row crop and Recreational development (2), Other livestock producers, Conversion to row crop, Recreational development and CRP (9), Other livestock producers, Conversion to row crop, Recreational development, residential or commercial development and 8=Deer Hunters (1), Other livestock producers, Recreational development, Public acquisition and Residential or commercial development (1), Own all we need (1), Public acquisition and CRP (1)

Q24. Do you expect to make any of the following changes to your cattle operation in the future?

	In less than 5 years	In 5–10 years	In 10+ years	No plans for this	Number Reporting
<i>Expand my cow herd</i>	30.11%	6.82%	1.70%	61.36%	176
<i>Reduce or semi-retire from cow herd</i>	18.33%	18.89%	13.33%	49.44%	180
<i>Sell cow herd but continue farming</i>	10.53%	9.36%	7.02%	73.10%	171
<i>Retire and sell entire farming operation</i>	4.02%	6.90%	6.90%	82.18%	174
<i>Transfer ownership of cattle operation</i>	9.55%	18.54%	21.35%	50.56%	178

Q25. If you plan to transfer ownership or exit the cattle operation, which of the following best describes your current plan?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>I do not plan on transferring ownership or exiting my cattle operation.</i>	49	26.78%
<i>Next generation will take over my cattle operation.</i>	93	50.82%
<i>Another established producer will take over.</i>	9	4.92%
<i>A beginning producer will take over.</i>	10	5.46%
<i>Cattle will be sold and land will be used for crops.</i>	12	6.56%
<i>Cattle will be sold and land will be used for non-agricultural purposes.</i>	4	2.19%
<i>Other*</i>	6	3.28%

*Other: Another established producer will take over, Cattle will be sold and land will be used for crops (1), I do not plan on transferring ownership or exiting my cattle operation and the Next generation will take over my cattle operation. (1), Next generation will take over my cattle operation, A beginning producer will take over and wrote in " grandson?" (1), Next generation will take over my cattle operation, Another established producer will take over, A beginning producer will take over (1), Next generation will take over my cattle operation, Another established producer will take over. (1), Next generation will take over my cattle operation, Cattle will be sold and land will be used for crops (1)

Q26. What is your gender?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Male</i>	195	96.53%
<i>Female</i>	7	3.47%
<i>Prefer not to answer</i>	0	0.00%

Q27. What is your age?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>18 to 25</i>	1	0.50%
<i>26 to 35</i>	5	2.48%
<i>36 to 45</i>	7	3.47%
<i>46 to 55</i>	19	9.41%
<i>56 to 65</i>	62	30.69%
<i>66 or older</i>	108	53.47%

Q28. Which of the following topics would you be interested in receiving more research, information, or educational resources about, specifically related to your cattle operation?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Financial Management</i>	26	12.87%
<i>Replacement Development</i>	35	17.33%
<i>Reproduction</i>	27	13.37%
<i>Transition Planning</i>	35	17.33%
<i>Genetics</i>	34	16.83%
<i>Consumer Preference & Demand</i>	11	5.45%
<i>Price Risk Management</i>	33	16.34%
<i>Nutrition & Feed Management</i>	56	27.72%
<i>Environmental Issues</i>	14	6.93%
<i>Marketing Management</i>	34	16.83%
<i>Cattle Health</i>	63	31.19%
<i>Pasture Management</i>	82	40.59%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	202	

Q29. Any additional comments about the survey or anything else you'd like to add?

16 respondents provided additional comments, including:

- Availability of land is hurting cattle producers
- For the last 40 years have always fed out my calves. Been weighing fats before sale and do not believe my cattle shrink 10%. So will sell calves.
- Good job on survey
- Great survey continue this process yearly and continue to educate the next generation
- I really enjoy any and all reference material from ISU for my row crop operation, but I do feel there is a lack of reference material and information not provided to beef operations, especially when compared to neighboring states. This information and studies would be highly beneficial to producers in our state, leading to big impacts on management to our specific climate and stocking rates of Iowa.
- It's hard to justify owning a small cattle herd if you want to make your own hay (decent equipment is costly) and have good infrastructure (land, buildings, fence all costly). It's frustrating for me.
- Scare about Johnne disease and scares the heck out of us that we can spend that much time and money in developing replacements only to have them die two years after they really entered their productive pays with no plan to really save them other than shoot them
- Thank you
- Thank you for the questions, I feel this is a worthy study. And thanks for the two dollars.
- The DNR and public land has taken most of the pasture in this area. I could manage twice as many cows but don't have pasture
- The question on months of different sources of feed is not useful. I tend to feed my cows at least some stored feed every month. However, if grazing is available they get less. Apart from a month on corn stalks, cover crops, and headlands, stored feeds are the most economical choice given opportunity costs.
- We also buy an additional 300 hd of cattle to feed out plus our own.
- We are frustrated with the VFD requirement if we have an outbreak of pink eye, or anaplasmosis we need to treat it right away. We trust the advice of our local veterinary and don't like the runaround of getting a VFD. We do not need more expenses
- Your online access code didn't work

Feedlot Survey Results

Q2. In 2025, what percentage of your finished cattle were fed in each of the following facility types?

	Mean Percent	Median Percent	Number Reporting
<i>Open feedlot with full or partial shelter</i>	82.5%	100.0%	104
<i>Open feedlot without coverage</i>	71.4%	100.0%	44
<i>Confinement bedded: monoslope barn or pole barn</i>	64.3%	57.5%	36
<i>Confinement bedded: hoop building</i>	48.5%	25.0%	11
<i>Slatted floor/deep pit building</i>	52.6%	50.0%	14
<i>Other*</i>	110.0%	110.0%	1

Q3. Please indicate if you plan to expand or remodel over the next 10 years?

	Expand	Remodel	No Plans	Number Reporting
<i>Open feedlot with full or partial shelter</i>	8.39%	14.69%	76.92%	143
<i>Open feedlot without coverage</i>	1.80%	5.41%	92.79%	111
<i>Confinement bedded monoslope barn or pole barn</i>	11.50%	3.54%	84.96%	113
<i>Confinement bedded hoop building</i>	2.94%	0.98%	96.08%	102
<i>Slatted floor/deep pit building</i>	10.78%	0.98%	88.24%	102
<i>Other*</i>	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2

Q4. On average, how many head of finished cattle does your operation market in a year?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Less than 50</i>	50	31.06%
<i>50-199</i>	42	26.09%
<i>200-499</i>	25	15.53%
<i>500-999</i>	13	8.07%
<i>1,000-1,999</i>	18	11.18%
<i>2,000-4,999</i>	6	3.73%
<i>5,000-9,999</i>	3	1.86%
<i>10,000 or more</i>	4	2.48%

Q5. What percentage of finished cattle for your operation are....

	Mean	Median	Number Reporting
<i>Owned by you and finished on site</i>	93.8%	100.0%	143
<i>Owned by you but custom fed elsewhere</i>	63.2%	75.0%	12
<i>Owned by another and custom fed at your operation</i>	70.4%	95.0%	12

Q6. From which of the following sources do you typically buy feeder cattle?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Custom feed, so do not buy or own</i>	9	5.52%
<i>Purchase direct from seller</i>	44	26.99%
<i>Purchase at in-state auction barns</i>	56	34.36%
<i>Purchase through order buyers</i>	40	24.54%
<i>Purchase at out-of-state auction barns</i>	33	20.25%
<i>Home-raise from own cow herd</i>	86	52.76%
<i>Purchase through video/internet auctions</i>	18	11.04%
<i>Other*</i>	2	1.23%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	163	

*Other: Back ground cattle (1)

Q7.1. Of the cattle you typically place on feed, what percentage is – Age

	Mean	Median	Number Reporting
<i>Calves</i>	80.4%	100.0%	127
<i>Yearlings</i>	74.0%	80.0%	65

Q7.2. Of the cattle you typically place on feed, what percentage is – Sex

	Mean	Median	Number Reporting
<i>Steers</i>	64.4%	50.0%	149
<i>Heifers</i>	46.8%	50.0%	116

Q7.3. Of the cattle you typically place on feed, what percentage is – Type/Breed

	Mean	Median	Number Reporting
<i>Beef</i>	95.0%	100.0%	141
<i>Dairy</i>	61.1%	50.0%	19
<i>Beef x Dairy</i>	37.4%	30.0%	20

Q8. From which of the following states/regions do you typically buy your feeder cattle?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Iowa</i>	106	65.03%
<i>Minnesota, Wisconsin</i>	22	13.50%
<i>Missouri</i>	25	15.34%
<i>Nebraska</i>	20	12.27%
<i>Illinois, Indiana</i>	6	3.68%
<i>Oklahoma</i>	5	3.07%
<i>Kansas</i>	12	7.36%
<i>Texas</i>	0	0.00%
<i>Southeast (KY, TN, VA, NC, GA, AR, MS, AL, LA)</i>	22	13.50%
<i>Northern Plains (MT, WY, CO, ND, SD)</i>	26	15.95%
<i>Other*</i>	18	11.04%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	163	

*Other: Home raised (11), don't buy (5), Pennsylvania (1), N/A (1)

Q9. Why do you buy feeder cattle from the states/regions that you do?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Price</i>	49	30.06%
<i>Relationship with seller</i>	47	28.83%
<i>Transportation costs</i>	39	23.93%
<i>Health risk of cattle</i>	45	27.61%
<i>Availability / timing</i>	61	37.42%
<i>Consistent cattle quality</i>	52	31.90%
<i>Other*</i>	20	12.27%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	163	

*Other: Location (1), do not buy/custom feed (7), for years I bought cattle in Dunlap Iowa because of the service and now I sell my calves there. (1), Home raised (5), N/A (1), relationships with order buyers (3), purchase from dairy producer (1), We don't buy them, we custom feed (1)

Q10. How important are the following traits for the feeder cattle that you buy? (Very Unimportant = 1, Unimportant = 2, Neutral = 3, Important = 4, Very Important = 5)

	1	2	3	4	5	Number Reporting
<i>Weaned, adjusted to water tank & feed bunk</i>	7.20%	4.80%	12.00%	22.40%	53.60%	125
<i>Vaccination history</i>	6.40%	4.00%	12.00%	27.20%	50.40%	125
<i>Third-party health verified</i>	5.88%	11.76%	28.57%	26.05%	27.73%	119
<i>Castrated / Dehorned</i>	5.60%	6.40%	8.80%	29.60%	49.60%	125
<i>Implanted</i>	14.17%	20.83%	42.50%	7.50%	15.00%	120
<i>Breed background information</i>	7.50%	12.50%	31.67%	26.67%	21.67%	120
<i>Reputation of seller</i>	7.44%	4.96%	17.36%	38.84%	31.40%	121
<i>Weight, Frame, Condition</i>	6.30%	3.15%	5.51%	40.16%	44.88%	127
<i>Number & uniformity of head in a lot</i>	6.50%	8.13%	27.64%	34.15%	23.58%	123
<i>Gender of animal</i>	5.69%	10.57%	31.71%	26.02%	26.02%	123
<i>Age and source verified</i>	6.61%	16.53%	34.71%	25.62%	16.53%	121
<i>Naturally or Organically raised</i>	23.14%	35.54%	22.31%	7.44%	11.57%	121

Q11. If you feed cattle outside of Iowa, what are your reasons?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>I only feed cattle in Iowa</i>	98	60.12%
<i>Lower cost of gain</i>	2	1.23%
<i>Feedlot management</i>	3	1.84%
<i>Favorable weather</i>	6	3.68%
<i>Feeder cattle price</i>	3	1.84%
<i>To diversify risk</i>	4	2.45%
<i>Fed cattle price</i>	1	0.61%
<i>Lower transportation costs</i>	3	1.84%
<i>Other*</i>	4	2.45%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	163	

*Other: Own additional property in Missouri (1), facilities (1), home raised (1)

Q12. Which of the following pricing methods do you use for the cattle you buy and sell annually?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Spot cash market (ex. live auction price)</i>	130	79.75%
<i>Livestock Risk Protection (LRP)</i>	36	22.09%
<i>Forward contracting or marketing agreement</i>	20	12.27%
<i>Livestock Gross Margin (LGM)</i>	1	0.61%
<i>Futures market</i>	28	17.18%
<i>Options market</i>	24	14.72%
<i>Other*</i>	3	1.84%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	163	

Other: Don't buy (1), Locker (1), We only custom feed (1)

Q13. What percentage of your finished cattle do you typically market using the following pricing methods?

	Mean Percent	Median Percent	Number Reporting
<i>Dressed, negotiated price</i>	68.9%	75.0%	41
<i>Dressed, formula price</i>	68.0%	92.5%	10
<i>Dressed, forward contract</i>	55.0%	50.0%	8
<i>Grid (dressed, grade and yield)</i>	69.3%	97.5%	28
<i>Live, negotiated price (includes auctions)</i>	81.3%	100.0%	93
<i>Live, formula price</i>	50.0%	50.0%	8
<i>Live, forward contract</i>	49.3%	50.0%	7
<i>Other*</i>	25.0%	25.0%	1

*Other: Sale barn (1), no marketing (1)

Q14. What percentage of your finished cattle are marketed under the following programs or classifications?

	Mean Percent	Median Percent	Number Reporting
<i>Conventionally fed</i>	99.0%	100.0%	125
<i>Never fed beta-agonists</i>	88.6%	100.0%	7
<i>Age and source verified</i>	100.0%	100.0%	5
<i>Organically raised</i>	100.0%	100.0%	1
<i>Non-hormone treated (NHTC)</i>	81.9%	100.0%	13
<i>Antibiotic free</i>	90.0%	100.0%	5
<i>Non-hormone treated & antibiotic free</i>	65.6%	100.0%	9
<i>Other*</i>	100.0%	100.0%	2

*Other: Home Raised (1), no Implants, antibiotic Free (1), only custom feed (1)

Q15.1. How do you store Dry or Delivered Feeds at your feedlot?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Commodity Shed</i>	77	47.24%
<i>Bulk Bin</i>	85	52.15%
<i>Other*</i>	17	10.43%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	163	

Other: Bags as needed (1), Barn (1), Elevator purchase (1), Grain bin (1), Grinder mixer wagon (1), Harvest (1), In a building (1), In machine shed (1), Open storage (1), Pile on concrete (1), Raise own feed (1), Silos (2), Wagon (1)

Q15.2. How do you store High-Moisture Feed at your feedlot?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Bunker</i>	64	39.26%
<i>Bagged</i>	32	19.63%
<i>Pile</i>	27	16.56%
<i>Upright Silo</i>	29	17.79%
<i>Other*</i>	8	4.91%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	163	

Other: Do not use (3), dry corn (1), ear corn on wagons (1), none (2), self feeder (1)

Q16. How is feed delivered at your feedlot?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Bunk-fed Components Daily</i>	67	41.10%
<i>Total Mixed Ration Daily</i>	77	47.24%
<i>Automated Delivery</i>	4	2.45%
<i>Self-Feeder</i>	20	12.27%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	163	

Q17. When bunk feeding cattle, how frequently do you deliver feed?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Once Daily</i>	73	47.40%
<i>Twice daily</i>	75	48.70%
<i>More than twice daily</i>	0	0.00%
<i>I do not bunk feed my cattle</i>	6	3.90%

Q18. Currently, what is the average market weight that you target for your finished cattle?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Less than 1300</i>	9	5.92%
<i>1300-1399</i>	15	9.87%
<i>1400-1499</i>	46	30.26%
<i>1500-1599</i>	61	40.13%
<i>1600-1699</i>	14	9.21%
<i>1700-1799</i>	7	4.61%
<i>1800-1899</i>	0	0.00%
<i>1900 or more</i>	0	0.00%

Q19. Which of the technologies below are you currently using or considering using in your feedlot?

	Using	Considering	Don't use	Number Reporting
<i>Feedlot Records/Closeouts</i>	48.85%	13.74%	37.40%	131
<i>Weighed Feed Mixing/Delivery</i>	74.07%	5.19%	20.74%	135
<i>Individual Animal Remote Sensing</i>	2.63%	9.65%	87.72%	114
<i>Performance Monitoring</i>	31.71%	15.45%	52.85%	123
<i>Animal Scales</i>	29.17%	11.67%	59.17%	120
<i>Beta agonist</i>	9.82%	9.82%	80.36%	112
<i>Manure Analysis</i>	32.79%	9.02%	58.20%	122
<i>Cameras</i>	19.83%	11.57%	68.60%	121
<i>Feed Additives</i>	66.67%	7.14%	26.19%	126
<i>Feed Analysis</i>	56.80%	7.20%	36.00%	125
<i>Electronic ID</i>	5.98%	6.84%	87.18%	117
<i>Implants</i>	72.73%	4.55%	22.73%	132

Q20. What are the obstacles for implementing new technologies?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Cost</i>	102	62.58%
<i>Labor</i>	44	26.99%
<i>Lack of knowledge/education</i>	51	31.29%
<i>Weather/Environment</i>	9	5.52%
<i>Tradition</i>	30	18.40%
<i>Other*</i>	12	7.36%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	163	

*Other: Age (4), I don't want to (1), keep it safe (1), number of head hard to justify (1), ROI (2), time (1)

Q21. If you sell directly to the packer, what factors determine where you market your finished cattle?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Do not sell directly to packer(s)</i>	46	28.22%
<i>Transportation distance to plant</i>	25	15.34%
<i>Sale price</i>	73	44.79%
<i>Relationship with Buyer</i>	37	22.70%
<i>Other*</i>	8	4.91%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	163	

*Other: Basis (1), Currently have a marketing agreement (1), Delivery date (1), I don't finish - sell as feeders only (1), I sold to American Beef in Oakland Iowa until they filed bankruptcy (1), Sell through a marketer (1), Shrink (1)

Q22. What share of your feed is grown by your operation?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>0%</i>	7	4.46%
<i>1%-25%</i>	7	4.46%
<i>26%-49%</i>	7	4.46%
<i>50%-74%</i>	26	16.56%
<i>75% or more</i>	110	70.06%

Q23. What crops are typically grown on your farm?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Corn (grain)</i>	144	88.34%
<i>Soybeans</i>	116	71.17%
<i>Corn (silage)</i>	89	54.60%
<i>Hay</i>	113	69.33%
<i>Alfalfa</i>	97	59.51%
<i>Other*</i>	19	11.66%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	163	

*Other: Baleage (1), Earlage (1), Forage, sorghum, rye (1), Oat hay (1), Oats (3), Oats and Sorghum (1), Oats for calf creep (1), Rye (4), Rye oats (1), Rye silage (1), Selling farm (1), Small grains (1), Sorghum (1)

Q24. What are your current and future manure management plans?

	Currently Implementing	Developing Plan	No plan to Implement	Number Reporting
<i>Sell</i>	14.95%	4.67%	80.37%	107
<i>Compost</i>	20.91%	8.18%	70.91%	110
<i>Application on farm</i>	94.63%	1.34%	4.03%	149
<i>Expand storage capacity</i>	12.04%	16.67%	71.30%	108
<i>Decrease storage capacity</i>	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	104
<i>Nutrients applied according to crop need</i>	64.41%	11.86%	23.73%	118

Q25. If your marketed cattle numbers increased in the last 10 years, what contributed to the increase?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>No increase</i>	92	56.44%
<i>Facility expansion</i>	24	14.72%
<i>Manure value for crops</i>	10	6.13%
<i>More custom feeding</i>	6	3.68%
<i>New marketing options</i>	7	4.29%
<i>Feeding profitability</i>	28	17.18%
<i>Family joined operation</i>	23	14.11%
<i>Co-product feed access</i>	8	4.91%
<i>Other*</i>	5	3.07%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	163	

*Other: Beef on dairy (1), Get ready for boys to take over (1), Weak heifer feeder market (1)

Q26. If your marketed cattle numbers decreased in the last 10 years, what contributed to the decrease?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Did not decrease</i>	89	54.60%
<i>Age or health</i>	32	19.63%
<i>Poor facilities</i>	6	3.68%
<i>Low profitability</i>	15	9.20%
<i>Regulations</i>	2	1.23%
<i>Financing issues</i>	4	2.45%
<i>Fewer feeder cattle available</i>	4	2.45%
<i>Shifted focus to other farm work</i>	3	1.84%
<i>Labor shortages</i>	9	5.52%
<i>Other*</i>	5	3.07%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	163	

*Other: Death in family so downsized (1), , High cost and risk while only being able to show same profit we could show 30 years ago (1), Price of feeders (1), Risk with high prices (1), Wife (1)

Q27. How important are the following factors for maintaining or improving financial position of your operation?

	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Number Reporting
<i>Financial management</i>	4.90%	12.59%	82.52%	143
<i>Marketing</i>	2.78%	14.58%	82.64%	144
<i>Production efficiency</i>	4.26%	12.77%	82.98%	141
<i>Intensive herd management</i>	12.23%	37.41%	50.36%	139

Q28. How important are the following factors for maintaining or reducing cost of production on your operation?

	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Number Reporting
<i>Supply of corn and corn co-products</i>	7.59%	15.86%	76.55%	145
<i>Ability to grow my own corn</i>	4.20%	16.08%	79.72%	143
<i>Grain processing</i>	14.71%	44.85%	40.44%	136
<i>Implants for growth promotion</i>	14.60%	25.55%	59.85%	137
<i>Feed additives for growth promotion</i>	9.29%	27.14%	63.57%	140
<i>Data management and tracking programs</i>	20.74%	45.19%	34.07%	135
<i>Closeout and benchmarking services</i>	22.63%	39.42%	37.96%	137
<i>Health management</i>	3.50%	7.69%	88.81%	143
<i>Nutrition and bunk management</i>	2.82%	13.38%	83.80%	142
<i>Financial record-keeping</i>	4.23%	26.06%	69.72%	142

Q29. Do you expect to make any of the following changes to your feedlot operation in the future?

	Less than 5 years	5–10 years	10+ years	No plans for this	Number Reporting
<i>Expand your feedlot</i>	12.32%	17.39%	2.17%	68.12%	138
<i>Reduce or semi-retire from feedlot</i>	23.74%	17.99%	15.83%	42.45%	139
<i>Sell the feedlot but continue farming</i>	3.08%	4.62%	0.00%	92.31%	130
<i>Retire and sell entire farming operation</i>	4.38%	4.38%	7.30%	83.94%	137
<i>Transfer ownership of your feedlot</i>	12.95%	11.51%	16.55%	58.99%	139

Q30. If you plan to transfer ownership or fully exit the feedlot operation, which of the following best describes your current plan?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>I do not plan on transferring ownership or exiting my feedlot operation.</i>	37	27.61%
<i>The next generation will take over my feedlot operation.</i>	67	50.00%
<i>Another established producer will take over the feedlot operation.</i>	7	5.22%
<i>A beginning producer will take over the feedlot operation.</i>	7	5.22%
<i>Cattle will be sold and land will be used for crops or commodities.</i>	15	11.19%
<i>Cattle will be sold and land will be used for non-agricultural purposes.</i>	1	0.75%

Q31. What portion of your cattle feeding operation's labor is supplied by non-family, paid employees?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Less than 25%</i>	123	84.25%
<i>25%-49%</i>	10	6.85%
<i>50%-74%</i>	6	4.11%
<i>75% or more</i>	7	4.79%

Q32. What is your gender?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Male</i>	149	96.13%
<i>Female</i>	5	3.23%
<i>Prefer not to answer</i>	1	0.65%

Q33. What is your age?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>18-25</i>	2	1.28%
<i>26-35</i>	4	2.56%
<i>36-45</i>	3	1.92%
<i>46-55</i>	23	14.74%
<i>56-65</i>	40	25.64%
<i>66 or more</i>	84	53.85%

Q34. How many years of experience in feeding cattle do you have?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Less than 5 yrs</i>	0	0.00%
<i>5-15 yrs</i>	10	6.49%
<i>16-25 yrs</i>	9	5.84%
<i>26 or more years</i>	135	87.66%

Q35. Approximately, what portion of your household income is from your feedlot operation?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Less than 20%</i>	39	25.32%
<i>20%-39%</i>	35	22.73%
<i>40%-59%</i>	38	24.68%
<i>60%-79%</i>	28	18.18%
<i>80% or more</i>	14	9.09%

Q36. What is your preference for continued learning for your feedlot operation?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>I do not plan to seek learning opportunities</i>	49	30.06%
<i>I prefer hands-on learning opportunities at ISU</i>	16	9.82%
<i>I prefer hands-on learning opportunities in my region</i>	80	49.08%
<i>I prefer web-based learning opportunities</i>	32	19.63%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	163	

Q37. Which of the following topics related to your feedlot operation would you be interested in receiving more research, information, or educational resources about?

	Number Reporting	Percent Reporting
<i>Financial Management</i>	47	28.83%
<i>Purchasing Feeder Cattle</i>	32	19.63%
<i>Cattle Comfort & Performance</i>	42	25.77%
<i>Transition Planning</i>	40	24.54%
<i>Facilities Planning</i>	42	25.77%
<i>Consumer Preference & Demand</i>	14	8.59%
<i>Price Risk Management</i>	50	30.67%
<i>Nutrition & Feed Management</i>	50	30.67%
<i>Environmental Issues</i>	19	11.66%
<i>Marketing Management</i>	40	24.54%
<i>Cattle Health</i>	59	36.20%
<i>Manure Management</i>	29	17.79%
<i>Other*</i>	4	2.45%
<i>Total respondents reporting</i>	163	

*Other: Anaerobic digestion (1), None (1), Not interested (1), Purchasing Feeder Cattle Cheaply (1)

Q38. Any additional comments about the survey or anything else you'd like to add?

14 respondents provided additional comments, including:

- Cattle feeding has always been risky business. There is too much protection for traders and not enough for producers.
- I am retired
- I feel the time to transition away from the green tag program and more effort to promote the GOLD tag program as a cow calf producer and a cattle feeder Higher value calves are not rewarded at the sale barn for the green tag in my opinion. I would work with sale barns and vet to phase out the green tag program and move toward a gold tag program. to hopefully capture a better feeder calf value and better health. Survey bigger feedlots and ask them what they want. I am told they want feeders either bawling calves or weaned 90 days. Research tells us 2 rounds of shots are the best and actually Kansas State says 3 rounds may actually hurt calves response to BRD.
- I sell all mine at 700-800 lbs as feeders
- I'm learning from my grandson and great grandson they make me look pretty dumb and I love it! We have 4 generations working the farm today and there was 3 generations before me. I started in 1961 feeding Holsteins
- More than two buck worth of time
- Q2: 2% Finished and 98% backgrounded Q13: Only finished a few for locker, 99% are backgrounded Comments: You need to add a backgrounding option! Not everyone finishes cattle.
- Sold my calves for the first time as feeders in 40 plus years of raising cattle????
- Some of my responses may seem odd to you. I rent a yard to a neighbor who finishes dairy breed calves that are born on from their herd. They provide daily labor and all feed inputs. I clean the pen and haul the manure. I also bed with their stalk bales.
- Thank You
- Thanks for the \$2
- Very good survey
- We currently anaerobically digest our cattle manure and love the products that come out of our digesters (digestate). We land apply these to our crop ground and use almost no synthetic forms of fertilizer on 2,500+ acres of crop ground.