



Farm Notes₁₃

2015 State of the Beef Industry in Bradford County

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SOLUTIONS

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Situation:

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, eight-one percent of the 13 million dollars of agricultural products sold in Bradford County is livestock, poultry and their products. From 2002 to 2012, the number of farms in the county increased 24% from 378 to 470. The average market value of agricultural products sold per farm is \$27,961 while an average farm production expense per farm is \$26,585. Reported average net cash farm income per farm in Bradford County equals \$2,205.



More than 50% of the farms in Bradford County report having cattle. Although many of these farms are small cow/calf operations (their intent is to produce calves for the market), these totals contribute to the State total in which Florida ranks 12th nationally. Data from the USDA 2012 Census of Agriculture reports that 8,745 head of beef cows are maintained in Bradford County. This

number is down from the previous census by nearly 10% from 9,687 in 2007. During this five year period, beef herds throughout the United States were reduced; however, consistent with the trend in the beef industry during this time resulting in simultaneous sell-offs.

Due to the reduction in the size of the United States beef industry over the past several years, prices have risen to record-levels. Much of this increase is due to supply and demand issues and the impression is that cattlemen are in a position to receive profits never before seen; unfortunately, this is not the case. As beef prices increased, so did production costs resulting in similar profits to years before. On a positive note, improved genetics, cropping systems, nutrition and production management systems have enabled the beef industry to provide similar amounts of beef today with fewer numbers of cattle compared to 30 years ago. Additionally, unlike feeders and stockers operators, cow/calf producers are in a position to at least remain profitable.

Summary:

Beef production in Bradford County is down compared to the previous Census, prices have increased but profits have remained about the same as they have been. With the small reported net cash farm income per farm reported for Bradford County, beef managers must utilize improved technology and management strategies to prevent missing revenue that is necessary to remain sustainable for future generations.

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