

Post Rock Extension District Column

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By Sandra L. Wick

K-State Research and Extension-Post Rock District
Crop Production Agent

Do you know what your cost of production is for your cowherd?

It is common sense to know what your expenses and income are to know where you stand with profitability! It doesn't matter if you are a crop or livestock producer, it is critical to have a recordkeeping system that will help you track your enterprises.

Accurately documenting production costs are not necessarily high on the "to do" list of most cattle or crop producers. Let's focus on your beef enterprise. One of the best reasons to know what it costs to produce a calf or what your total feed and non-feed costs are is that it allows you to quickly evaluate emerging opportunities such as grazing a neighbor's cover crop or a field corn residue, according to Dr. Justin Waggoner, KSU Extension Beef Systems specialist. If you don't know your production costs, it is highly encouraged to start the process. Tax time is a great time to take a good look at your business and calculate your production costs.

If you would like to get a better idea of what it costs to produce a calf in Kansas, the Kansas Farm Management Association (KFMA) Enterprise Reports, from membership operations across Kansas, provide that information in a one-page summary that can be accessed on the Ag Manager website (<https://www.agmanager.info/kfma>). Scroll down to KFMA Enterprise Reports and select 2019 or earlier, then hit submit. You can then select your type of beef operation to obtain the summary documents. The Kansas Farm Management data from these operations suggests that in 2019, feed costs were approximately \$504 per cow and the non-feed or operational costs were approximately \$584 per cow. So the average total cost to produce a calf was \$1088 ($\$504 + \584) on these operations in 2019. Waggoner points out that the total feed costs (pasture and purchased feed) of \$504 amounts to \$1.38 per day to feed a cow in Kansas.

If you want tools to help you build that budget for your cowherd, K-State Research and Extension also has livestock budgets for many different kinds of operations such as cow/calf or backgrounding. These FREE downloadable Excel spreadsheets are very user-friendly and can be found at Ag Manager at <https://www.agmanager.info/farm-mgmt-guides/livestock-budgets#2021-livestock-budgets>. New budgets are developed every year to update prices. These spreadsheets allow you to input your own expenses and income values, but also provides you with default values.

The Kansas State University cost-return budgets were developed to serve as a barometer of profitability for various livestock industry enterprises. These budgets are NOT intended to represent any one operation.

Each individual operation should adjust key inputs to reflect their own situation.

For more information on **beef production costs** contact me at any Post Rock Extension District Office in Beloit, Lincoln, Mankato, Osborne or Smith Center.

Post Rock Extension District of K-State Research and Extension serves Jewell, Lincoln, Mitchell, Osborne, and Smith counties. Sandra may be contacted at swick@ksu.edu or by calling Smith Center, 282-6823, Beloit 738-3597, Lincoln 524-4432, Mankato 378-3174, or Osborne 346-2521. Join us on Facebook at "Post Rock Extension" along with our blog site at postrockextension.blogspot.com. Also remember our website is www.postrock.ksu.edu and my twitter account is @PRDcrops.