Day 4 (Saturday) on the tour started out sunny and bright. First stop was with Ward Cattle Co. Creed runs the farm with his father and sons - one full-time son and one part-time. They each have their own cows, totaling about 650 cows and heifers. They AI the heifers first, then cows in May then put them right out with the bulls for 60 days. They start calving in mid-February through mid-April. They try to keep track of expenses by owner. They practice fenceline weaning keeping calves on pasture and feeding a 13% CP supplement. We went for a ride around their farms to see the cows, heifer calves, bulls and steers headed to the sale next weekend. The picture is some of their bred heifers.

Phil Osborne rode the bus with us between stops to talk about the WV Quality Assurance Feeder Cattle Sale that was started in 1986. It will be held this year on Friday, October 3 and they will be selling 2300 steers and 1350 heifers. There are health and preconditioning programs that are mandatory to follow for participation. Silver participation is considered following the protocols with no weaning; Gold includes the protocols and weaning. The key to this program is proper weaning. The calves need to stay on good grass with the mothers moved.

Second stop was Roger and Reta Jean Nestors’ H and N Farm in Belington. Every grazing season they custom graze Creed Ward’s bred heifers on about 114 acres of pasture. Their pastures are split up into 10 9-acre paddocks that are grazed for 4-5 days then rested for about 35 days. Roger has done a lot of nutrient management work on the farm, taking soil test every 2 years. One of the 4-H clubs served us some great refreshments before another great wagon ride to the top of the farm. Pictured left is one of the views from Reta and Roger’s pastures, right is the hard-working 4-H club serving our refreshments!

Doward and Tuala Matlick of Alta Verde Farm, Moatsville, hosted the last stop of our tour. Doward runs about 100 commercial cows and custom hay operation. His primary business is a construction company. That was evident by the custom-designed equipment he fabricated to make his beef operation run more efficiently with one person. His barns are built with mostly recycled building materials he has collected
from demolition projects he’s had. He now has a young man helping him while he is away working construction, and he has one granddaughter out of 11 grandchildren interested in agriculture. This time we rode on a construction trailer behind a pick up!

Pictured left is the view from the hayfield above the Matlicks’ house. Right is the feeder that Doward built the hand-crank cover for.

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