

INSIDE WLJ

RED BLUFF — You know what the new year means! It is time once again for the Red Bluff Bull and Gelding Sale. See the full list of consignors inside! Page 14

BULL WORTH — What's a bull worth in 2026? Page 11

A LOOK BACK IN HISTORY

"The bread line will form at the right! Not a very happy thought as we start out on a New Year. Not a brave thought for a nation which has just won the greatest and bloodiest war in history. Secretary of Agriculture Anderson has called upon American farmers to produce more sugar beets, more grain, more pork, but to reduce beef cattle and poultry population in 1946. As far as beef cattlemen are concerned, there is much difference of opinion as to whether there are too many cattle in the country and as to the wisdom of further drastic declines in cattle production," wrote Nelson Crow in his January 1946 "Observations by the Editor."

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Updated Dietary Guidelines spotlight protein

— Fewer highly processed foods

With protein firmly at the center of the plate, the federal government is urging a shift toward whole foods, fewer highly processed products and sharply reduced added sugars to curb diet-related chronic disease.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Robert Kennedy Jr. and USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins released the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans on Jan. 7, outlining updated nutrition recommendations that guide federal food programs and policy as part of the administration's broader Make America Healthy Again agenda.

"These Guidelines return us to the basics," Kennedy said. "American households must prioritize whole, nutrient-dense foods—protein, dairy, vegetables, fruits, healthy fats, and whole grains—and dramatically reduce highly processed foods. This is how we Make America Healthy Again."

The release comes as federal agencies point to worsening health indicators. Nearly 90% of U.S. health

care spending goes toward treating chronic disease. More than 70% of adults are overweight or obese, and close to one in three adolescents has prediabetes.

Rollins emphasized the connection between nutrition policy and domestic agriculture.

"Farmers and ranchers are at the forefront of the solution, and that means more protein, dairy, vegetables, fruits, healthy fats, and whole grains on American dinner tables," Rollins said.

Shift towards protein

A central change in the 2025-2030 guidelines is the emphasis on protein. Previous editions of the Dietary Guidelines recommended a dietary allowance of 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight—roughly 54 grams per day for a 150-pound adult. The new guidance increases that recommendation to a range of 1.2 to 1.6 grams per kilogram of body weight per day, depending on individual needs.

The guidelines encourage protein consumption at every meal and recognize a wide range of sources. Animal-based options listed in-

clude eggs, poultry, seafood and red meat, while plant-based sources include beans, peas, lentils, legumes, nuts, seeds and soy. The guidance also advises choosing protein foods with little or no added sugars, refined carbohydrates or chemical additives.

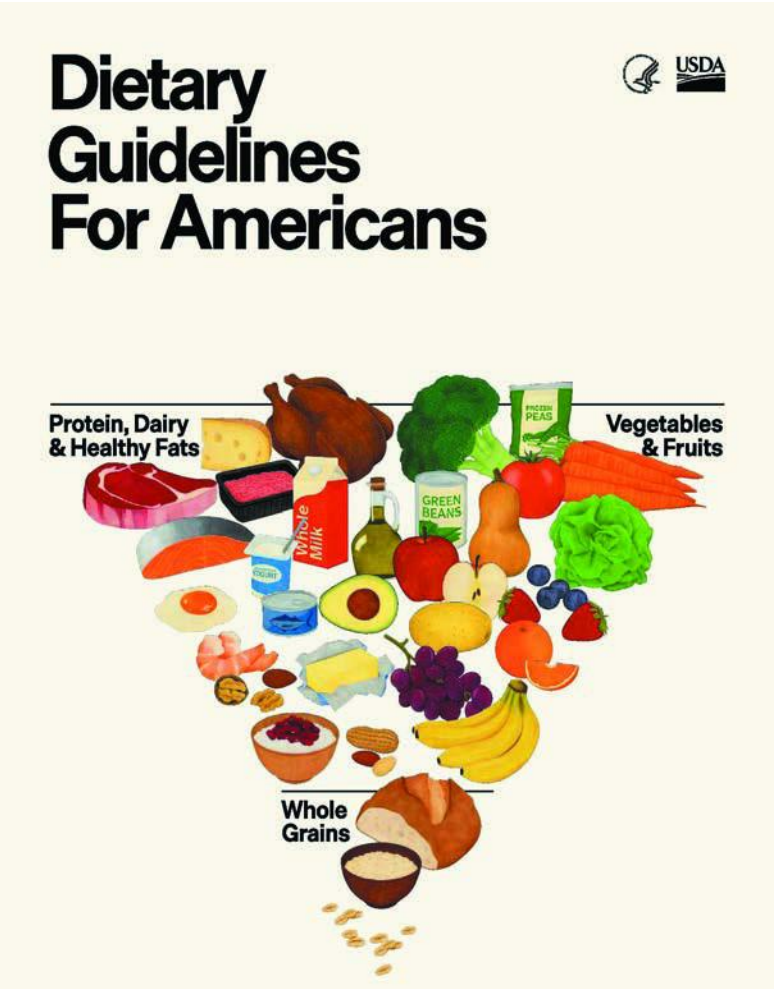
Dairy is treated as a core protein and nutrient source as well. The guidelines support full-fat dairy products with no added sugars and recommend about three servings per day as part of a 2,000-calorie

dietary pattern, adjusted for individual calorie needs.

Whole foods over processed

The guidelines call for eating fruits and vegetables throughout the day as a foundation of a healthy diet, emphasizing variety, color and minimal processing. The guidance encourages whole fruits and

See GUIDELINES on page 7



The new Dietary Guidelines emphasize the consumption of proteins and whole foods.

Cattle company sues supplier for \$11M

An Idaho-based cattle company is suing a livestock supplier for nearly \$11 million for alleged Packers and Stockyards Act violations, breach of contract and fraud.

Roman Cattle Company of Idaho Falls, ID, filed suit against Producers Livestock Marketing Association of North Salt Lake, UT, in mid-December, claiming it has suffered damages of at least \$10.8 million due to Producers' actions that include overcharging and failing to provide quality cattle.

"Producers used its vague invoicing practices to hide the source of the cattle, additional fees, and a higher commission than the parties had agreed," Roman Cattle Co. alleged in court documents.

The company sent more than 100 shipments of cattle, or about 29,100 head, to a processing plant in Idaho between January and September 2025 under contract terms with Producers Livestock, paying the livestock supplier about \$72 million.

Complaint details

Roman Cattle Co. is a cattle dealer that buys cattle and delivers them to a processing facility in Idaho for slaughter, then sells the beef to distributors and retailers. Producers Livestock, while Utah-based, conducts business in Idaho.

In January 2025, Roman Cattle Co. and Producers Livestock came to an agreement for the cattle dealer to receive "high-quality cattle"

See LAWSUIT on page 9

USDA reorganization draws heavy criticism

— More than 20,000 staff have left

The USDA's proposal to reorganize its national structure into five regional offices has collided with one of the agency's most significant workforce con-

tractions in recent history, prompting an overwhelmingly negative public response.

On July 24, 2025, USDA unveiled a sweeping reorganization plan intended to "refocus core operations" around four pillars: work-

force alignment, proximity to customers, reduction of bureaucracy and consolidation of redundant functions. The proposal triggered a public comment period through Sept. 30, 2025, during which the agency received nearly

47,000 emails from employees, lawmakers, Tribes, state and local governments, unions, nonprofit organizations, researchers and private citizens.

Meanwhile, internal data analyzed by the USDA Office of Inspector General

(OIG) show the agency lost more than 20,000 employees during the first half of 2025—nearly one in five of its workforce—through retirement, resignation, termination, external transfers and the Deferred Resignation Program.

Comments mostly negative

Public comments submitted to USDA during the two-month review period reflect that skepticism in strikingly

See USDA on page 21

Cattle futures climb higher into new year

The first full trading week of the year saw green on the board, but lighter cash trade volumes.

Live cattle futures traded higher from New Year's Eve through Thursday, Jan. 8. The February contract gained about \$5 to close at \$235.27, and the April contract gained about \$4 to close at \$236.22.

"Given the fact that day to day there is little change in open interest and volume remains modest, one might deduce that much of the daily activity is made up of day-trading algos," wrote Cassie Fish, market analyst, in The Beef on Thursday.

Cash trade through Thursday totaled about 10,000 head. Live steers sold from \$228-232, and dressed steers sold from \$363-365.

"With packer margins historically red, the packer is in no mood to chase fed cattle prices higher this week, despite bullish cattle feeders," Fish said Wednesday.

Cash trade for the week ending Jan. 4 totaled 43,987 head. Live steers sold for \$231.71, and dressed steers sold for \$360.62.

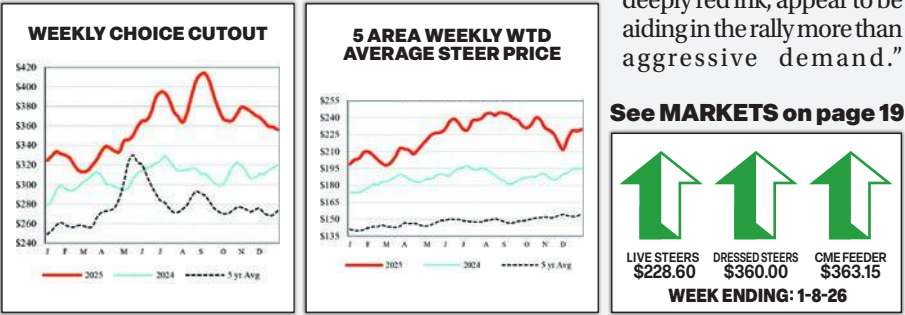
Slaughter through Thursday totaled about 465,000 head, compared to 325,000 head a week earlier (holiday-shortened

week). Total slaughter for a week earlier is projected at 474,000 head. Actual slaughter for the week ending Dec. 27 was 425,745 head. The average steer dressed weight was 982 lbs.

Boxed beef prices were higher over the week. The Choice cutout gained about \$8 to close at \$356.79, and the Select cutout gained about \$9 to close at \$352.06.

"This is seasonally expected and prices ought to be on firm footing for at least two more weeks," Fish said. "Small slaughter schedules, as packers fight deeply red ink, appear to be aiding in the rally more than aggressive demand."

See MARKETS on page 19



PERIODICAL : Time Sensitive Priority Handling

COMMENTS

Protein on top!

“We are ending the war on saturated fats ... Today, our government declares war on added sugar.”

On Jan. 7, Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. announced the new U.S. Dietary Guidelines, which put more emphasis on protein and drove down the idea of ultra processed foods. He claimed, “As Secretary of Health and Human Services, my message is clear: eat real food!”

Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins touted the new guidelines for prioritizing whole nutrient-dense foods. She went on to say, “That means more protein, more dairy, more healthy fats, more whole grains, more fruits and vegetables, whether they are fresh, frozen, canned or dry. We are finally putting real food back at the center of the American diet.”

Kennedy went on to say that this revised food pyramid is “the most significant reset of federal nutrition policy in history.” The Dietary Guidelines influence school lunches, medical advice and nutrition standards. It’s a small step in the right direction. He continued to emphasize the need for more meat in diets, saying, “proteins and healthy fats are essential, and were wrongly discouraged in the prior dietary guidelines.”

Every five years, the Department of Health and Human Services and the USDA publish new guidelines. In the 2020 guidelines, there were more than 160 pages. These new guidelines are wildly condensed down to just 10 pages, but then supplemented with references and sourced research.

In the opening text, the guidelines state, “We are realigning our food system to support American farmers, ranchers, and companies who grow and produce real food—and the Trump administration is working to ensure all families can afford it.” They also claim that nearly 90% of health care spending goes to treating people who have chronic diseases, with most of these as a result of poor diets with a sedentary lifestyle over time. The report continues, “The consequences have been devastating. More than 70% of American adults are overweight or obese. Nearly one in three American adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 has prediabetes. Diet-driven chronic disease now disqualifies large numbers of young Americans from military service, undermining national readiness and cutting off a historic pathway to opportunity and upward mobility. For decades, federal incentives have promoted low-quality, highly processed foods and pharmaceutical intervention instead of prevention. This crisis is the result of poor policy choices; inadequate nutrition research; and a lack of coordination across federal, state, local, and private partners. This changes today.”

Kennedy and Rollins took the traditional “pyramid” look and completely flipped it upside down. Literally. The graphic shown in the new report is an upside-down pyramid with proteins, fruits and vegetables on top, ending at the bottom point with whole grains.

Kennedy went on to say how former policy had turned a blind eye to the disastrous consequences or promoting and subsidizing highly processed foods and refined carbohydrates. He said, “New guidelines recognize that whole nutrient-dense food is the most effective path to better health and lower health care costs.”

According to a USA Today article, more than half of the calories consumed at home come from ultra-processed foods (UPFs), citing the National Center for Health Statistics. These UPFs have been associated with more than 30 health conditions from diabetes, heart disease, mental health disorders and obesity. In the report, it states, “avoid highly processed packaged, prepared, ready-to-eat, or other foods that are salty or sweet ... that have added sugars and sodium. Instead, prioritize nutrient-dense foods and home-prepared meals.”

The American Medical Association (AMA) applauded the new guidelines. In a statement, AMA President Bobby Mukkamala said, “The American Medical Association (AMA) applauds the Administration’s new Dietary Guidelines for spotlighting the highly processed foods, sugar-sweetened beverages, and excess sodium that fuel heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and other chronic illnesses. The Guidelines affirm that food is medicine and offer clear direction patients and physicians can use to improve health.”

The American Heart Association said it commends the emphasis on eating more vegetables, fruits and whole grains while limiting consumption of added sugars, refined grains, highly processed foods, saturated fats and sugary drinks.

This is all great news for farmers, ranchers and food growers. However, the school lunch programs are currently not equipped to scratch-make meals for children. This will be an area of impact that needs to be monitored. According to the School Nutrition Association (SNA), more than 93% of schools cited the need for more staff, culinary training, equipment and infrastructure to reduce reliance on UPFs. Meals served in school are required to meet federal nutrition standards. In response to the new guidelines, the SNA emphasized the need for increased funding for school meal programs.

While the current administration has had a back-and-forth relationship with ranchers this past fall, this is continued support from USDA and Health and Human Services Departments. These guidelines will have a lasting impact and retrain the idea of what the health guidelines should look like. The challenge now is implementation and following through on these promises. — **LOGAN IPSEN**



IPSEN

GUEST OPINION

Decades ago, “calories” was the buzzword among people concerned about food and health. Later, carbs, saturated fats, sugar and sodium took turns playing buzzword. Past buzzwords tend to hang around. They’re all prominent in the government’s Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025.

But the 2025-2030 version scheduled for release early this year is likely to feature a new buzzword: ultra-processed. Though debates linger about which foods fall into the ultra-processed category, the new guidelines will likely warn against excessive consumption of them.

The distance from field to fork is sufficiently long that many farmers will be tempted to ignore changes in the guidelines. After all, it’s not what they grow that’s responsible for the nation’s problems with obesity, diabetes and heart disease. It’s what the food industry does with what they grow.

Still, far-sighted farmers will want to stay abreast of changes in society’s concerns about the healthiness of foods. These changes can, over time, lead to changes in diet that affect what industry asks farmers to grow.

Why are ultra-processed foods deemed harmful? Processing isn’t inherently bad. Ground beef is processed—it’s ground—but unless a preservative is added, it’s still just beef. Processing has benefits, like extra nutrients, longer shelf life and convenience. It can even enhance safety. Think pasteurization. Ultra-processed implies too much processing, but why is that a problem? One attempt at a concise answer says it’s the added ingredients—preservatives, colorings and other chemicals. But unless you believe any dose level of any synthetic chemical is automatically bad, this response begs the question of why they’re bad.

Another attempt at a concise answer is that ultra-processing makes foods “calorie dense” and “hyper-palatable,” or easy to overeat. Four ounces of a frozen pizza will contain many more calories than 4 oz. of broccoli. You’re more likely to eat too much pizza than too much broccoli. Not all ultra-processed foods are calorie-dense, however. Diet sodas aren’t, but they’re considered ultra-processed.

You can understand why regular sodas are deemed ultra-processed. They typically pack nine or 10 teaspoons of sugar into a 12-oz. can. You can also understand why they’re held to be bad. They offer zero nutrition; low nutritional value is another characteristic of many ultra-processed foods. Why are diet sodas ultra-processed? They likewise lack nutrients. The reason they’re considered bad is their intensely sweet artificial sweeteners can trick the brain into cravings for sugary sweets.

Unlike sodas, lab-produced meat substitutes like the Impossible Burger and the Beyond Burger are highly nutritious, but many experts consider them ultra-processed. That’s mainly because they’re industrially produced and include synthetic chemicals. The Impossible Burger’s meat-like sizzle is created using a genetically engineered yeast. For its part, Impossible Foods said its products are “unapologetically processed” but not ultra-processed. The company defines ultra-processed foods as those having high levels of fat, salt and sugar and low levels of micronutrients, fiber and protein. Impossible said its products don’t meet that definition because they have lots of the good things and few of the bad.

PROCESSING THE MEANING OF ULTRA-PROCESSED

Concerns about processing are already being reflected in diets. Take bacon, for example. For a few decades there, America was experiencing a bacon boom. Even as demand for beef and other red meats declined or flattened, bacon moved “beyond breakfast” and into what seemed like every fast-food sandwich in the country.

In the last few years, though, some Americans have been scaling back on bacon. Experts classify it as processed, not ultra-processed. But fears have arisen about the sodium and nitrates in processed meats. Bacon is still ubiquitous, but it’s no longer booming.

The 2023-2025 guidelines could recommend some interesting dietary changes. Milk is a likely candidate. To reduce calories and saturated fats, the guidelines have long recommended fat-free or low-fat milk and dairy products. Whole milk, though, is less processed, and could well get the new guidelines’ blessing.

High-fructose corn syrup isn’t likely to be classified as ultra-processed, but some experts say its presence in a food is a signal that the food is ultra-processed. Corn growers will be watching to see if the new guidelines agree.

By most definitions, some of Americans’ favorite foods are ultra-processed. Look no further than French fries and potato chips. They’re industrially made using ingredients not found in home cooking. They’re calorie dense. They’re “hyper-palatable” in the extreme. Americans aren’t going to give up French fries and potato chips, you say. Yes, but they may indulge in them less often if they keep hearing ultra-processed foods are bad for their health.

Some buzzwords have that power. This one is worth watching. — **Urban Lehner, DTN editor emeritus**

HOOVES & HORNS BY A.W. ERWIN



“She must’ve had t’go *really* bad,... I jus’ feel sorry fer whoever was in that outhouse at 4 a.m.”

OBITUARY



Donald Paul Cox; 1956-2025

Donald Paul “Don” Cox was born on Nov. 11, 1956, in Cheyenne, WY, to Buck and Betty Cox. He was

raised in Chugwater, WY, a Wyoming rancher at heart. Don graduated from Chugwater High School in 1976 and, shortly thereafter, married his high school sweetheart, Rhonda Jane McConnell, on June 12, 1976.

Together, Don and Rhonda raised two sons, Curt and Cody, instilling in them lifelong values that would guide them in both their personal and professional lives.

For several years, Don worked on a number of large ranching operations, gaining experience that would shape his future endeavors. He later began his career with the Chugwater Telephone Company where he worked for more than two decades, eventually gaining a percentage of ownership prior to its sale. He was dependable and down-to-earth, the kind of man who did not say much but could always be counted on to show up and get the work done.

Don and Rhonda later fulfilled a lifelong dream when they were able to purchase their own ranch land and establish the Lazy GT Ranch, alongside Don’s custom artificial insemination business, Lazy GT Genetics. Through this endeavor, Don AI-bred an incalculable number of cattle across Wyoming, earning the respect of fellow ranchers and livestock producers across the state, turning many customers into friends.

He did not seek attention or praise, but those who knew him understood his character by the way he lived, quietly and honestly. He believed in showing up, lending a hand when needed, and keeping his word.

Don had a deep love for his cattle and his dogs and was known for his warm, welcoming nature. He never met a stranger and, and outside of sorting cattle with his family, rarely

spoke a cross word. Throughout his life, he maintained a strong curiosity and interest in learning, adopting new technologies and enjoying books by his favorite authors. One of Don’s favorite ways to spend his time was in the bleachers watching his grandchildren at sporting events and livestock shows.

Don was a proud member of the American Angus Association, the Red Angus Association of America, the Wyoming Angus Association and the Masonic Lodge No. 23 of Chugwater.

He is survived by his sons, Curtis “Curt” Cox (Diane) of Casper and Cody Cox (Becca) of Torrington; along with grandsons, Carter and Cooper Cox; and granddaughters, Bristol and Rozlyn Cox.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Cleo Leon “Buck” Cox and Mary “Betty” Cox, and his beloved wife, Rhonda Cox.

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Letters to the editor: Letters for publication must be no longer than 675 words and must include the writer’s name, location and phone number. Phone numbers will not be published. Letters may be shortened for space requirements. Obituaries must be no longer than 700 words. Send a letter to the editor or obituary by emailing editorial@wlj.net or mailing to Western Livestock Journal, Attn: Editorial Dept., 6021 S Syracuse Way, Ste #103, Greenwood Village, CO 80111.

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ANNA MILLER FORTOZO Managing Editor 720-372-2353 • anna@wlj.net	TRISTAN MARTIN Advertising Coordinator & Graphic Design 720-372-1763 tristan@wlj.net	KEVIN MURNIN Worden, MT 406-853-4638 kevin@wlj.net	TOM WHITE Classifieds Manager 720-370-7977 • tom@wlj.net
CHARLES WALLACE Contributing Editor 805-814-2017 • charles@wlj.net			PUBLISHER EMERITUS
			PETE CROW Publisher Emeritus • pete@wlj.net

WESTERN LIVESTOCK JOURNAL (ISSN 0094-6710, USPS 678660) is published weekly (52 issues annually, plus special features) by Western Livestock Journal LLC, 6021 S Syracuse Way, Ste #103, Greenwood Village, CO 80111. Website: www.wlj.net. Email: advertising@wlj.net or editorial@wlj.net. U.S. subscription rate: 1 year • \$55. Periodicals postage paid at Denver, CO, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Western Livestock Journal, P.O. Box 370930, Denver, CO 80237-0930.

THE
VIEWPOINT
with Tanner Dye

This exclusive column found only in WLJ features unique perspectives from some of the nation's top producers, marketers, animal health experts, economists and more.

At just 29 years old, Tanner Dye has built a multifaceted role for himself in the cattle business, most recently taking ownership of the storied 101 Livestock Market in California

"This has been a dream of mine since I've been a little kid," Tanner told WLJ. "I always told my parents that I was going to own a sale barn one day, and I never thought it would actually come true."

His path to market ownership began with building a career of his own in ranching. As a fourth-generation rancher in Templeton, CA, he established Tanner Dye Livestock from the ground up, steadily growing a cow-calf operation into an enterprise that stretches across 15-20 ranches.

"I started with just a few head and built it, year by year," Tanner said. "I made some mistakes and figured them out and kept working my way at it."

Once established in the cow-calf sector, Tanner's curiosity pulled him further down the supply chain. He began feeding out and trading cattle, again starting from scratch and relying on

trial and error to shape the operation.

Tanner soon caught the attention of 101 Livestock Market in Aromas, CA, a livestock marketing outfit located in a Central Coast town of fewer than 3,000 people. Tanner began working for the auction market on a contract basis while continuing to manage his cow-calf ranches and yearling feeding operation.

When a representative position opened up, he took the job. To support the growing workload, Tanner purchased a few trucks and trailers, handling the freight for the sale barn while still managing his own expanding enterprises.

About three years ago, the livestock market came up for lease, catching Tanner's eye. Lacking the necessary funds to move forward on his own, he explored bringing in a partner, but the deal ultimately fell apart.

In mid-2025, Jim Warren, owner of 101 Livestock, approached Tanner with the prospect of managing the auction barn.

"I told him, 'I have way too many irons in the fire, and I don't know if I could manage the place,'" Tanner said, adding that he didn't really want to work for somebody else while juggling his other responsibilities. "Jokingly, I asked, 'Why don't you sell it to me?'" Tanner recalled. "And Jim said, 'Oh, I'd never do that.'"

A week later, Jim called and offered Tanner owner-



Tanner Dye

Courtesy photo

ship of the market.

"I said that I'd love to make it work, and the rest is history," Tanner said. "We came to an agreement that was lucrative for both of us."

Jim has owned and operated the yard since 1975, building the livestock market to what it is today, selling cattle and small animals.

"I think the coolest part is that it's never changed ownership," Tanner said. "This is the first time it's ever changed hands."

As the ownership reins pass from the Warren family to Tanner, he plans to bring fresh energy to the yard while deepening established relationships and creating new ones with customers.

Tanner also plans to continue selling small animals at the market, which is one of the only sale barns that sells sheep and goats.

"I've been handling sheep and goats my whole life, so I know them just as well as the

cattle," he said. "I think that's a lucrative business for us."

**Becoming the
rancher's choice**

Under Tanner's ownership, 101 Livestock Market will take on a new name: Rancher's Choice Stockyard.

"I was driving down the road thinking of names, and I just thought to myself, 'You know, it's the rancher's choice if we stay open or not,'" Tanner recalled. "If we are good enough, then we are going to be the choice."

101 Livestock Market will host its last sale on Jan. 19. Tanner assumes ownership of the auction yard on Feb. 1, with the first sale under the rebranded Rancher's Choice Stockyard to be held on Feb. 2.

Although Tanner has made the process look seamless, breaking in as a young cattleman—and now as a livestock market owner—comes with its own set of

challenges.

"I have that drive that I want to be the youngest guy," Tanner said. "I want to be the first to do it and make it work on my own."

But while conversations about supporting the next generation are common across the industry, turning words into action can be more difficult.

"You hear it everywhere—that we need to do more for young people and get them involved," he said. "But when it comes time to actually stand behind a young guy, it doesn't always happen. Going to a bank and asking for the kind of financing it takes to grow is a reality check."

These experiences have reinforced his belief that credibility is built through action, following through with customers and employees alike.

"My word is my word, and I think that's how I've always done my business," he said.

The reality of being part of the younger generation trying to get their foot in the door is one also acknowledged by the previous owners.

"It has been difficult to find the right person to take over because other jobs pay more, and they just don't make young people that have the desire or the ability to stay in the cattle business, or agriculture in general," reads a statement on the 101 Livestock Market website.

"We're excited to find Tanner with the desire to run this facility and continue to im-

prove this market in the future," it continued. "He has some great ideas for the future, and we're excited to watch it grow."

While planning to innovate and expand the auction market, Tanner also intends to retain many of the offerings that 101 Livestock has provided over the years. This includes the vaccination programs, which will likely be expanded, and non-hormone treated cattle programs. In addition, the market will continue to work with small producers.

"This sale barn is pretty unique because if you've only got two or three cows, we'll send a truck to get them," Tanner said. "Most sale barns don't have that option."

Most of the staff will also be retained through the change of ownership. "The staff is remarkable," Tanner said. "They're really driven, and everybody is on the same page."

And while the current staff members will be making the transition, Tanner also plans to add some fresh faces to the business.

"I'd like to get some new young blood from people who grew up in the north, to add a wider perspective," he said.

To those on the outside, success can look effortless, but Tanner's career has been shaped by late nights, countless miles on the road and years of grind. — **Anna Miller Fortozo WLJ managing editor**

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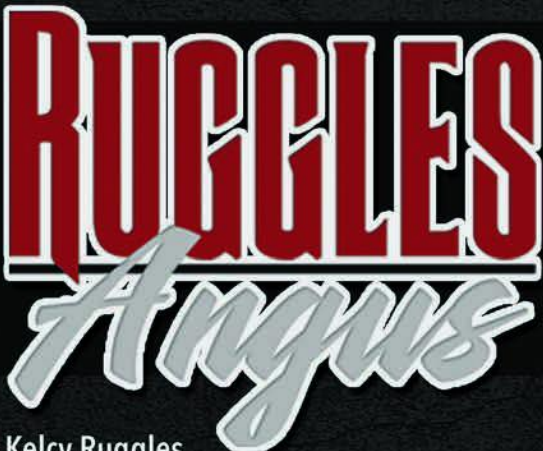


CED	BW	WW	YW	HP	\$M	\$W	\$B	\$C
6	2.7	101	179	13.6	61	96	133	234

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CED	BW	WW	YW	HP	\$M	\$W	\$B	\$C
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Grizzly deaths in Yellowstone reached record level in 2025

In Yellowstone National Park and areas just outside the park, at least 72 grizzly bears died in 2025, mostly at the hands of humans.

That's according to preliminary data released by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and a group of researchers that focus on the species across the rocky mountain region.

The database lists 72 grizzly mortalities in 2025, after Matthew Gould, the Inter-agency Grizzly Bear Study Team's leader, confirmed one more death before the holidays and updated it, tying the highest recorded annual

mortality among grizzlies.

In 2024, published USGS data also shows around 72 known or probable grizzly deaths, though the numbers are routinely updated as wildlife managers continue to investigate some incidents.

The last two years are a roughly 35% increase from the 10-year average of 54 deaths, and a jump from 2022 and 2023 which each saw 47 recorded deaths, according to the data

Grizzly bears are classified as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), though members of Congress have pushed to del-

ist them in recent years.

One grizzly scientist said people should remember the high number of deaths also comes with a high number of total grizzly bears. But some conservationists said the count means grizzly bears need federal protection now more than ever despite the push to delist the species.

Gould said that the mortality data doesn't tell a complete story, and other data indicate a conservation success story.

"What should be noted is that looking at just the frequency of mortalities—although it can be informa-

tive—can be misleading at times," Gould told the Daily Montanan. "As we've seen record mortalities occur, we've also seen record population abundance, and the population is still growing."

According to Gould, the latest population estimate from 2024 was 1,050 bears in the ecosystem, an increase of around 3% from the previous year, and a vast increase from early population targets of around 500 bears during the early recovery days.

"We've been reporting for a number of years that we have a large, healthy grizzly bear population that has de-

mographically recovered and that is a conservation success," Gould said. "I don't think many folks 40 years ago, when the population was perhaps as low as 250 individuals, thought we'd ever be over 1,000 bears."

A vast majority of grizzly bears deaths in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, or GYE, are related to humans—whether directly or indirectly. In 2025, 50 of the 72 listed deaths were human caused.

Nine grizzlies were struck by vehicles and two grizzlies were shot and killed by humans, one from a case of mistaken identity and one from self defense.

Wildlife agency officials killed 21 bears due to livestock predation—mostly cattle, but one instance of pig and one of alpacas as the target—and another 18 bears were killed due to other human conflicts—such as getting into garbage cans, aggressive behavior and property damage, or becoming habituated to humans and food.

Gould said the record-high grizzly population, along with Yellowstone drawing record crowds in recent years, creates a high probability of those two entities meeting.

"You're kind of burning the candle at both ends," he said. "You have a growing population and distribution of grizzly bears and an increasing human footprint in the ecosystem, and when those two elements meet, you have conflict."

Gould said that because the species continues to grow—even though the bears' occupied range contracted slightly this year—it's likely the region is reaching a carrying capacity for grizzlies.

"We predicted this in a 2016 paper, that we'd see slowing population growth, and a fluctuation around a mean rate," Gould said. "As well as a slowing of expansion, it falls in line with the population filling up the ecosystem."

Some conservation organizations that are advocating for continuing federal protections, including Human World for Animals, argue the high mortality numbers around Yellowstone should be viewed with greater concern.

"When record numbers of grizzly bears die, it can be incredibly difficult for that population to bounce back," Wendy Keefover, senior strategist for carnivore protection with Humane World for Animals, said in a statement. "Delisting would result in trophy hunting, exacerbating Yellowstone grizzly bears' struggle to survive. Given the dangers grizzly bears are facing, now is not the time to take away their federal protections—they need them now more than ever."

at the time that the dashboard is part of an effort to increase transparency, educate Montanans on why grizzlies are killed or die when they are currently federally protected, and to prove that the state is ready to manage grizzly bears on its own.

According to the dashboard, there were 32 human-related grizzly mortalities in 2025, up from 29 in 2024. Some of those deaths overlap with the data from the GYE.

Similar to the GYE data, the majority of deaths are human-related.

Nine recorded deaths were due to vehicle collisions, including one from a train collision, seven were considered self-defense, and 10 were management removals due to livestock depredation, other human conflicts or a diseased or injured animal.

The number of self-defense grizzly deaths has raised concerns among some wildlife biologists and habitat managers in the state.

In an opinion piece published recently in the Flathead Beacon, a group of 31 professionals led by former U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator Chris Sevheen wrote that with nearly a quarter of grizzly deaths coming in "defense-of-life," the state should be more forthcoming with the circumstances of those incidents.

"Reports on each defense-of-life grizzly death need not be as detailed or time-consuming as reports on human fatalities, but even a basic accounting of the circumstances could help agencies understand why the incident happened, reduce future grizzly deaths and improve public safety," the group wrote.

Montana politicians have pushed for delisting the grizzly bear and turning management of the species over to state control for years.

The state previously petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to delist the species in the GYE and the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem, centered around Glacier National Park and the Bob Marshall Wilderness, but the agency rejected the petition. A similar petition from Wyoming was also rejected in the final weeks of the Biden administration.

But Montana's all-Republican federal delegation has pushed legislation to delist the species through an act of Congress instead.

Reps. Ryan Zinke (R-MT-01) and Troy Downing (R-MT-02) introduced a bill with Wyoming Rep. Harriet Hageman (R-At large) in January seeking to remove the GYE population of grizzlies in particular from the ESA, restoring a ruling issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during the first Trump administration in 2017.

That rule was ultimately vacated by a federal circuit court, and the agency reversed its stance under the Biden administration.

In July, the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources narrowly voted in favor of the legislation, which has yet to go before the full chamber. — Micah Drew, Daily Montanan



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Cattle producers wary as flesh-eating parasite comes closer to US

Last fall, the New World screwworm—the flesh-burrowing larva of a blowfly (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*)—was detected in cattle in Mexico just 70 miles from the U.S. border. In November, another case was confirmed in Nuevo León, a state of Mexico adjacent to Texas. Most recently, in late December, a case was detected in the state of Tamaulipas, approximately 197 miles from the U.S.-Mexico border.

While the screwworm is not currently present in the U.S., Mexico and Central American countries have been reeling due to the resurgent parasite. There have been more than 144,000 cases in animals and over 1,100 in humans during this outbreak dating to 2023—and the cases continue to track northward.

Members of the California agriculture community are just as worried as their counterparts in Texas, where an outbreak could cost livestock producers \$732 million per year and cause up to \$1.8 billion in losses for the Texas economy, according to USDA estimates.

Among California’s top gross-value commodities in 2024, dairy products/milk are No. 1 (\$8.61 billion) and cattle and calves are No. 4 (\$4.98 billion)—both categories that could be most affected by the screwworm.

“Controlling for and preventing impact from the New World screwworm are the majority of the questions I’m receiving now,” said Brooke Latack, University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) livestock advisor for Imperial, Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Imperial County, adjacent to Mexico, houses about 329,000 head of cattle.

“There is definitely concern about the screwworm down here for producers, industry members and the veterinarians that serve the area,” Latack said.

For dairy, the risk is especially severe, as even small disruptions can lead to major financial losses, said Daniela Bruno, UCCE dairy advisor for Fresno, Madera and Kings counties.

“Unlike beef cattle, which can be held back from market during a quarantine, dairy cows produce milk every day that must be processed immediately—if a farm is quarantined or a plant shuts down, milk spoils quickly and has to be dumped,” Bruno explained.

She said that producers should look into diversifying processing options, reviewing their insurance coverage and bolstering biosecurity against threats like screwworm and avian flu, which has reemerged in California dairies.

It’s not just the economic impact that is particularly unnerving about New World screwworm. While mortality rates vary based on the species and other factors, it can be up to 100% in newborn calves.

“It can affect and kill any warm-blooded animal—any bird, any mammal, including humans,” said Gaby Maier, Cooperative Extension specialist for beef cattle herd health and production at the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine. “But we are particularly concerned about our

cattle here.”

Maier pointed to recent data from the outbreak in Panama, which indicated that 83% of screwworm cases were in bovines, with all other animals trailing far behind (human cases are relatively rare).

The progression of an infestation is especially alarming. After finding an opening on the host (which can be wounds as small as a tick bite, or body openings like the eyes or nose), the fly lays several hundred eggs in the animal’s body. The larvae then use their strong mouth hooks to burrow or “screw” head-first into the flesh.

As the larvae feed on the tissue, the wound enlarges and invites infestation by other fly species, accelerating cell death and eventually leading to secondary bacterial infection, sepsis and death within seven to 14 days.

“I have talked to people who have seen these infestations in person, and they remember it from when they were young,” Maier said. “They say it was horrible—the smell of decomposing flesh in a live animal.”

There have been documented cases—such as in deer in the wild—where the larvae obliterate the entire brain of the animal.

“They just keep digging; they just keep eating away at the tissue,” Maier said. “It’s really out of a horror movie.”

Although it was endemic to California and the southern U.S., the New World screwworm was eradicated in the U.S. in the 1960s through the release of sterile male flies that produce no viable offspring.

A USDA facility in Panama—COPEG (Panama-United States Commission for the Eradication and Prevention of Screwworm)—produces about 110 million sterilized screwworm flies every week, of which about 50% are males. Sterile flies are strategically released to contain spread of New World screwworm, and for the past 60 years the screwworm was largely contained to Central and South America.

Theories abound as to why it has breached the eradication zone—from illegal cattle trading across borders to fewer inspections during COVID-19 to deforestation of the Darién Gap, a treacherous natural barrier between Colombia and Panama.

But the screwworm again has the full attention of the USDA and state and local agencies. In response, the U.S. southern land border has been closed to the movement of cattle and horses. Surveillance efforts have ramped up. Confirmed cases are met with highly effective sterile fly releases. New drugs for the prevention and treatment have been conditionally authorized.

And a new website was recently launched to provide updates for producers and the broader public: [screwworm.gov](#).

For people in the beef and dairy industries (as well as producers with small ruminants like sheep and goats), keeping informed is the most important thing to do, according to Maier and Latack.

“Monitor the situation and stay up-to-date—if the screwworm is detected, it will be

widely publicized so just watch out for those announcements,” said Maier, who recommended checking the USDA website and the California Department of Food and Agriculture screwworm page.

She also cautioned producers to avoid unnecessary use of dewormers or other medications—before a confirmed detection in California or neighboring states—to slow the parasite from developing resistance to those products.

During a screwworm webinar on Nov. 19, 2025, Maier; Rosie Busch, UCCE specialist in small ruminant herd health and production at UC Davis;

Amy Murillo, a veterinary entomologist at UC Riverside; and veterinarian/rancher Tom Talbot presented. Murillo and Alec Gerry, a UCCE specialist at UC Riverside, are leading a project to monitor the state for signs of the fly’s return.

More than 100 people attended the webinar, organized by UCCE livestock and natural resources advisor Morgan Doran in partnership with the California Cattlemen’s Association and California Wool Growers Association.

Maier urged producers to keep a close eye on their herd for distressed animals—cattle, for example, that exhibit

droopy ears or are lagging behind or not eating. The rotting flesh odor is another telltale sign of a possible screwworm infestation.

“They say you smell it before you see it,” Maier said.

Potential entry sites for the parasite also open during the production cycle—the results of dehorning, castration or ear tagging, for example—and should be scrutinized closely. The newborn umbilicus (navel) is a favorite target of the screwworm, Maier said, and producers might consider moving their calving season outside the time of highest fly burden in their area as the

screwworm does not thrive in extreme cold or heat.

If New World screwworm infestation is suspected, Maier and Latack said the producer should immediately contact their veterinarian for treatment options and notify the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

“This is definitely something we want to keep out at all cost,” Maier emphasized. “It’s an animal welfare problem, it’s an animal movement problem, and it will probably be a trade problem—overall, there is nothing good about it.” — **UC Agriculture and Natural Resources**

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CED	BW	WW	YW	MLK	MRB	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C
2	3.6	104	179	17	1.02	1.41	87	217	368

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4	1.1	84	144	31	1.73	1.30	92	245	410

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BNWZ NOBILITY 1202 X POSS RITA 079

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11	0.3	85	156	36	1.68	1.15	80	242	394

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Tolerance for MT wolves increasing, study shows

People’s tolerance for wolves goes up when they see one. It also goes up when they don’t.

That apparent contradiction explains why attitudes toward wolves have grown consistently friendlier over the past decade, according to a new study in the journal Conservation Science and Practice.

The study, released Dec. 12, 2025, was co-authored by husband-wife duo Alexander and Elizabeth Metcalf of the University of Montana (UM) School of Forestry; Justin Gude and Michael Lewis of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; and

John Baldridge of UM’s Bureau of Business and Economic Research. It compared a 2023 wolf-tolerance survey to results from the same questions asked in 2012 and 2017, reaching a total of 7,607 Montanans over that decade.

“The surveys show overwhelming positive trends and declining negative trends,” Alexander Metcalf told Mountain Journal. Those saying they were “tolerant” or “very tolerant” of wolves made up 41% of respondents in 2012. That share rose to 50% in 2017. When the researchers ran the same survey in 2023, 74% held

that attitude.

In the same period, tolerance for wolf hunting moved in the opposite direction. In 2012, 71% of Montanans were tolerant or very tolerant of wolf hunting. That fell to 61% in 2017, and 58% in 2023. Wolf trapping slipped from 40% tolerant or very tolerant in 2012 to 36% in 2023.

The research crew went looking for what drove wolf tolerance upward. They found several somewhat unexpected factors. For example, Montana’s overall population has grown considerably over the decade. Most of those new-

comers have landed in the state’s urban centers, and identify as politically conservative by a 2-to-1 margin, Metcalf said. The researchers hypothesized that could lead to less love for wolves, since conservative politicians have led most of the campaigns to remove Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections.

“But we don’t see an urban/rural divide that you might expect,” he said. “And [newcomer] migration isn’t having much effect on tolerance. It’s that widespread.”

Instead, the way people encounter wild wolves makes

most of the difference. And most of those encounters take place on a visit to somewhere like Yellowstone National Park, where seeing a wolf ranks among the top-sought experiences among tourists.

Paradoxically, the next important factor is not seeing a wolf—anywhere.

“The lack of anything happening serves to bolster your tolerance,” Metcalf said. “No news means good attitude, and bad experiences are extremely rare. Most people’s wolf experiences are positive. That seems to be what’s really driving this increase in tolerance over time.”

Although gray wolves had been naturally repopulating northern Montana since the 1980s, the release of transplanted Canadian gray wolves in Yellowstone National Park in 1995 brought the animal to nationwide attention. The study noted that “wolves have expanded their range and population size while being the subject of myriad lawsuits, stories, conspiracy theories, political maneuvers and persecution.” Attitudes were widely mixed, with few people having any direct wolf experience on which to base an opinion.

Instead, many relied on “Big Bad Wolf” tropes based on Little Red Riding Hood or Three Little Pigs, according to literature scholar S.K. Robisch. In his 2009 book, *Wolves and the Wolf Myth in American Literature*, Robisch compared his visits with wolf-watchers in Yellowstone’s Lamar Valley with the extensive bookshelves of folklore, fantasy, romance and warrior tales built around wolf characters.

“I was concerned with the study of mythic and scientific approaches in literature that have put imaginary wolves into the minds of the most seasoned, clinical thinkers,” Robisch wrote. “Many of these images are possessed of a power equal to the scapegoat, the minotaur, or the phoenix, and some are as ancient. They prompt the most and least responsible actions human beings take toward predatory animals, preservation efforts and the politics of habitat.”

That thinking continues to play out in today’s wolf management debates, Metcalf says. Observed from the judge’s bench or legislative lectern, wolves are a hot controversy in need of immediate control. They met their federal recovery goals of 300 animals and 15 breeding pairs in 2002, prompting lawsuits demanding and resisting their removal from ESA protection.

In 2011, Montana Democratic Senator Jon Tester at-

tached a rider to a must-pass budget bill delisting gray wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains and blocking further judicial review. Montana, Idaho and Wyoming promptly opened wolf hunting seasons, followed by trapping and snaring provisions.

December was a busy month in wolf policy news. Colorado Republican Representative Lauren Robert’s “Pet and Livestock Protection Act,” co-sponsored by Montana Republican U.S. Rep. Troy Downing, Idaho Republican U.S. Rep. Russ Fulcher, and Wyoming Republican U.S. Rep. Harriet Hageman, won House approval on Dec. 18, 2025. If passed by the Senate, it would remove gray wolves from ESA protection throughout the Lower 48 states, overturning a 2022 federal court order that kept wolves protected.

“As written, the ESA makes the gray wolf out to be a liability to avoid, not a resource to be protected,” Downing said in a Dec. 18, 2025, statement. “It is critical that we trust the science and look towards a more precise conservation approach when dealing with unique populations.”

More locally, a Wyoming man accused of torturing a captive wolf in a bar has contested his felony criminal charges. Cody Roberts claims the state’s animal cruelty laws didn’t apply to predators such as wolves. His lawyer on Dec. 19, 2025, submitted a seven-page brief quoting the law that “nothing in this article may be construed to prohibit ... the hunting, capture, killing or destruction of any predatory animal, pest, or other wildlife in any manner not otherwise prohibited by law.” Roberts was initially fined \$250 in 2024 for possession of warm-blooded wildlife before being indicted by a grand jury for the felony cruelty to animals charge, as reported by *WyoFile*.

For Metcalf, this points up a paradox in human-wolf relations: The people who don’t like wolves play a disproportionate rule in their management.

“Almost every other hunter loves their prey,” Metcalf said, noting how mountain lion hunters advocate for increased cat populations as do organizations like the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Mule Deer Foundation. “But wolf hunters hate wolves. And they’re a really small percentage of overall pop—about 1.2%. But they show exceedingly negative attitudes and outsized control and effect on wolves.” — **Robert Chaney, Mountain Journal**

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CE	BW	WW	YW	MCE	MILK	MWW
11	-0.5	90	149	8	27	72
DOC	CW	YG	MARB	REA	API	TI
19	51	-0.24	0.95	0.69	180	106



GW THREE PEAT 331K x GW MISS MOVIN ON 008F
RED HOMO POLLED 5/8 SM 5/16 AN 1/16 AR

CE	BW	WW	YW	MCE	MILK	MWW
15	-1.4	89	148	8	21	66
DOC	CW	YG	MARB	REA	API	TI
17	63	-0.37	0.52	1.15	157	96



GW CANNON BALL 518L x GW MISS DEADWOOD 310J
HOMO BLACK HOMO POLLED 5/8 SM 1/4 AN 1/8 AR

CE	BW	WW	YW	MCE	MILK	MWW
15	-1.8	81	136	8	23	63
DOC	CW	YG	MARB	REA	API	TI
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YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

(In an effort to serve the next generation of livestock producers, WLJ's Youth Opportunities calendar lists internship and scholarship information for agricultural- and livestock-focused students, listed by application deadline. If you have an internship or scholarship to announce, please email it to editorial@wlj.net.)

March 1—The Harvey L. & Maud C. Sorensen Foundation is proud to honor the legacy of Duncan C. McCormack III—an avid rancher, outdoorsman and educator—through an annual scholarship for

students pursuing degrees in livestock management. To view the application, visit tinyurl.com/44ye4u7d.

March 1—The NILE Foundation is now accepting applications for scholarships for the 2026–2027 academic year. Scholarships will be awarded and announced in April. Details: thenile.org.

March 15—The Montana Stockgrowers Foundation is encouraging students to apply for scholarships through its Heritage Scholarship Program. Applications: mtbeeffoundation.org.

Industry groups applaud new guidelines

GUIDELINES (from page 1)

vegetables in their original form, while noting that frozen, dried or canned options with little or no added sugar or sodium are also acceptable.

For a 2,000-calorie diet, the guidelines recommend about three servings of vegetables and two servings of fruits per day, with limited use of juice and a preference for whole foods to support nutrient intake and overall health.

Recommendations on fats also shift away from earlier low-fat messaging. The guidelines call for most dietary fat to come from whole-food sources, including meats, eggs, seafood, full-fat dairy, nuts, seeds, olives and avocados. When cooking, oils rich in essential fatty acids, such as olive oil, butter and beef tallow, are recommended. While saturated fat intake is still advised to remain below 10% of total daily calories, the guidelines note that reducing highly processed foods helps meet that target.

The document also takes a firmer stance on highly processed foods than previous editions. It advises Americans to avoid packaged or ready-to-eat foods that are high in added sugars, refined carbohydrates and sodium, as well as sugar-sweetened beverages such as soda, fruit drinks and energy drinks. The

guidance states that no amount of added sugar or non-nutritive sweeteners is recommended in a healthy diet.

Reactions

Agriculture groups and medical organizations offered varied reactions to the guidelines, particularly around protein, dairy and the treatment of fats and processed foods.

The Meat Institute said the guidelines appropriately prioritize protein and recognize meat and poultry as key sources.

"We are pleased the Dietary Guidelines recommend Americans prioritize protein and that families can get that protein from nutrient-dense meat and poultry," said Julie Anna Potts, Meat Institute president and CEO. She said the simplified format reinforces meat's role as a source of high-quality protein, essential vitamins and bioavailable minerals.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) also welcomed the guidelines.

"As a mom, I understand the importance of eating nutritious wholesome protein and as a rancher, I see the hard work that goes into providing the best possible food for our communities," said Kim Brackett, NCBA vice president.

Brackett said the updated guidance helps families bet-

"We are pleased the Dietary Guidelines recommend Americans prioritize protein and that families can get that protein from nutrient-dense meat and poultry."

— Julie Anna Potts

ter understand beef's nutritional value, noting it provides protein along with

nine essential nutrients, including iron and B vitamins. She added that clini-

cal studies show beef can fit into a balanced, heart-healthy diet and thanked Kennedy and Rollins for emphasizing beef's role.

Dairy groups also responded favorably. National Milk Producers Federation President and CEO Gregg Doud said the continued recommendation of three daily servings and recognition of benefits at all fat levels reaffirm dairy's role in meeting nutrient needs.

The American Medical Association (AMA) praised the focus on limiting highly processed foods, sugar-

sweetened beverages and excess sodium. AMA President Bobby Mukkamala said the guidance provides practical direction physicians can use with patients.

In contrast, the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine criticized the inclusion of meat and dairy, arguing the guidelines should more directly link saturated fat to animal products, while acknowledging the document's emphasis on fruits, vegetables and limits on alcohol. — **Charles Wallace, WLJ** contributing editor

Fort Worth Stock Show announces cattle sales

Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo (FWSSR) will once again host a lineup of elite cattle sales during its 2026 run, offering ranchers, breeders and buyers access to some of the nation's top genetics. Total cattle sales during the Stock Show are projected to exceed \$12 million, reinforcing FWSSR's role as a premier marketplace for the beef cattle industry.

Among the most anticipated events is the Southwestern Exposition Invitational Commercial Heifer Show and Sale, scheduled for Feb. 7, which continues to attract a standing-room-only crowd of bidders. Featuring females with outstanding genetics across multiple breeds, the sale combines competition, education and commerce in a high-energy environment. Consignors compete for \$14,000 in premium money, banners, rosettes and bragging rights prior to the sale, while \$20,000 in

scholarships will be awarded to students by sale management and consignors.

"It's always our goal to ensure these sales represent the very best each breed has to offer," said FWSSR Livestock Show Director Stefan Marchman. "With continued improvements to our facilities and a strong commitment to the cattle industry, we are confident buyers and consignors alike will find their experience at the Fort Worth Stock Show both productive and enjoyable."

• Jan. 17: The Eddie Wood Cowtown Classic Longhorn Sale.

• Jan. 23: Best of the West Angus Bull Sale.

• Jan. 24: Stars of Texas Angus Female Sale.

• Jan. 30: Cowtown Cattle Drive Charolais Sale.

• Jan. 31: 56th Annual Powerhouse Hereford Sale.

• Feb. 7: 39th Annual Southwestern Exposition Invitational Commercial Heifer Sale. — **FWSSR**



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COMING EVENTS

(Send calendar of events information to editorial@wlj.net.)

Jan. 21-22 – The Montana Stockgrowers Association is proud to announce the Agriculture

Labor Summit at the Northern Hotel in Billings. This event was created to address the ongoing labor shortage. Details: mtbeef.org/event/laborsummit.

Tribes stake their claim on the Colorado River

Tribes across the West have worked with states to protect the Colorado River and conserve enough water to raise elevations in the river’s two largest reservoirs, Lakes Powell and Mead, a move that has helped states during critical droughts.

Now Tribes want to make it clear that any future agreements on how to manage the river’s water must include their input and an acknowledgment that they intend to develop their water rights.

“It’s high time that Tribes begin to really begin to flex

their sovereignty,” said Mike Natchees, a member of the Ute Indian Tribe Business Committee.

The Ute Indian Tribe holds significant senior water rights, including 500,000 acre-feet in the Green River basin in Utah, but faces challenges with unused water flowing downstream due to lack of infrastructure and funding.

“It just continues to flow downstream. We are uncompensated for it. It is undeveloped. And again, that is unacceptable for the Ute Indian

Tribe,” Natchees said.

That sentiment was shared among representatives for dozens of Tribes who spoke at the Colorado River Water Users Association conference at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas in December.

Western states that rely on the Colorado River have one month to agree on how to manage the troubled river. The seven Colorado River Basin states—Arizona, California, Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming—have until Feb. 14 to reach a new water sharing

agreement before current operating rules expire at the end of 2026 —or the federal government will step in with their own plan.

But the Ute Indian Tribe, whose reservation is located in northeastern Utah, emphasized that any new agreement will have a significant impact on Tribes across the Colorado River basin.

One of the biggest disagreements between the Upper and Lower Basin states is over which faction should have to cut back on their water use during dry years. His-

torically, Lower Basin states have used nearly all their 7.5 million acre-feet Colorado River allocation under current Colorado River guidelines, compared to the 4.5 million acre-feet used by the Upper Basin states.

Natchees said the impact of water cuts to Tribes in the Upper Basin have not been discussed enough during negotiations, adding that he hopes Tribes will one day have a seat on the Upper Colorado River Commission, an interstate water administrative agency that represents Wyoming, Colorado, Utah and New Mexico.

“The bottom line is that the Lower Basin is just simply over allocated. They’re overusing and they’re doing it with no regard to anyone in the Upper Basin, which feeds their system, and that needs to change,” Natchees said.

Tribes have continued to be a part of the solution when it comes to conservation on the river, said President of the Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe Jonathan E. Koteen.

In 2025, the Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe signed an agreement to conserve 13,000 acre-feet of water to bolster elevations in Lake Mead, and contributed additional water savings through its ongoing seasonal fallowing agreement with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

Those water savings helped California reach its goal of conserving 1.6 million acre-feet in Lake Mead a year ahead of schedule.

“Tribal inclusion must be formal, meaningful and permanent. Tribes are not new participants. We are original stewards of the river, and our voices must be part of shaping the future family,” Koteen said.

Conservation efforts by Tribes have also been innovative, said Koteen. The Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe secured funding to line the Reservation Main Canal, reducing seepage and improving efficiency for water deliveries to large portions of the Yuma Project Reservation Division.

Another example of an innovative solution was when the Jicarilla Apache Nation entered a landmark 10-year water-sharing agreement with New Mexico and The Nature Conservancy in 2023 to lease up to 20,000 acre-feet of its Colorado River water

annually, supporting endangered fish habitat and water security for the state by strategically releasing water into the San Juan River.

“It’s increasing water security for the state of New Mexico, allowing the state to meet its obligations under whatever framework that we end up coming up with in post 2026, so it’s a great project,” said Jenny Dumas, the water attorney for the Jicarilla Apache Nation.

But Dumas emphasized that not every Tribe can replicate such an agreement, and every Tribe has their own unique needs that must be considered when settling on a new water sharing agreement.

Councilmember for Ute Mountain Ute Tribe Conrad Jacket said the Tribe’s Bow and Arrow Farm is a major economic driver. While Tribes in California, like the Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe, are able to reduce crops for payment, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe cannot.

“This year, we did have to cut back,” Jacket said. “And that’s not good on our part. That is not good on all this whole region’s part.”

Instead, the Tribe would benefit more from flexible tools that allow the Tribe’s water to be set aside in good water years, while contributing to additional release in dry years.

Tribes said they were committed to helping states reach a seven-state consensus on how to share the river’s water, in order to stabilize the river and secure their rights.

During the conference, the Colorado River Indian Tribes, the Gila River Indian Community and the Central Arizona Water Conservation District, which manages the Central Arizona Project, signed a major proclamation to work together to protect the Colorado River.

The Colorado River Indian Tribes is Arizona’s largest and most senior Colorado River water rights holder.

“All of us who live in Arizona, native and non-native alike, are connected by water, for without water, there is no life. And it is that common thread that binds us, which has us here today, pledging to work together for the greater good of all who live in Arizona,” said Colorado River Indian Tribes Chairwoman Amelia Flores. — **Jeniffer Solis, Nevada Current**

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CSU to host Calving and Calf Care Clinic

Colorado State University (CSU) Extension will be hosting a Calving and Calf Care Clinic on Feb. 7 at the Kit Carson County Fairgrounds in Burlington, CO.

CSU Extension Veterinarian Dr. Kathy Whitman will be leading this producer education program, which will cover several topics including dystocia management, neonatal calf health, utilizing epidurals, handling colostrum and stressed calves.

Participants will be engaged in hands-on activities during this event using calving simulators.

The program will start at 9:00 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. Registration can be completed online at tinyurl.com/4uzwh88s.

For more information, please contact Extension Specialist Scott Stinnett at the Kit Carson County Extension Office at 719-346-5571. — **CSU Extension**

Cattle allegedly supplied from sale barns

LAWSUIT (from page 1)

purchased by Producers Livestock directly from cattle ranchers or dairy farmers, according to court documents. Doing so directly would avoid the additional costs associated with purchasing cattle at sale barns.

The terms of the contract included the following:

- Roman Cattle Co. would pay for all cattle, plus a commission of \$1.50/cwt.
- All cattle would be purchased directly from ranchers or farmers, and no cattle would be purchased from sale barns, including Producers Livestock-owned sale barns.
- Producers Livestock would ship all cattle using the cattle dealer's preferred vendor, Cow Tran 2.0. Freight prices would be paid by Roman Cattle Co. directly to Cow Tran 2.0.

In March, Roman Cattle Co. and Producers Livestock met once again, agreeing that the cattle supplier's commission would decrease from \$1.50/cwt to \$1/cwt.

Producers Livestock would

acquire cattle and ship them to Roman Cattle Co. and then invoice the cattle dealer for the total amount due. However, invoices did not show the source of the cattle, the price Producers Livestock paid to the seller of the cattle, specific commission amounts, or any added fees, including third-party commissions.

Roman Cattle Co. alleged Producers Livestock hid the source of cattle, fees and a higher commission by not including the information on invoices.

"Roman had trusted Producers would fully comply with the terms of the Contract," court documents read. "However, during the course of the relationship and by Producers' own admission, Producers charged commissions above the agreed \$1.50/cwt or \$1.00/cwt price."

Around June, Producers Livestock agreed to additional terms regarding cattle quality. The supplier would deliver cattle grading at Choice or higher and provide a discount for cattle that graded less than Choice. For beef graded as Se-

lect, a discount of 45 cents per pound would apply, and for beef that did not grade, a \$1.05/lb. discount would apply.

"Given that the grading of the beef from slaughtered animals could occur after Roman was obligated to pay Producers for the loads of cattle, the parties agreed Producers would provide the discount as a credit on the next invoice for the next load of cattle ordered by Roman," the complaint read.

However, Producers Livestock failed to provide credits on loads that graded below Choice, Roman Cattle Co. alleged.

Around September, Roman Cattle Co. discovered through an email communication with Producers Livestock that the cattle supplier had increased commission from \$1/cwt to \$1.50/cwt without agreement. The cattle dealer then request-

ed all invoices since June, but Producers Livestock did not deliver all requested records. Roman Cattle Co. since requested all supporting documentation for all purchases since January.

In mid-October, Roman Cattle Co. withheld all sums the cattle supplier claimed were owed for the months of September, October and November, totaling \$11,060,792.82. The cattle dealer said it would withhold all payments until all the supporting records justifying the charges were provided.

Upon review of records that were provided, Roman Cattle Co. found several issues that violated contract terms. It was discovered that Producers Livestock had charged a higher commission since January, overcharging the cattle dealer at least \$240,000 in commis-

sion fees. In addition, of the cattle supplied, about 49% were supplied from sources other than ranchers, including sale barns. Roman Cattle Co. estimated those damages at \$4,000,000, or more.

Court documents also claim that Producers Livestock charged Roman Cattle Co. third-party fees without the dealer's approval, overcharging by at least \$74,000.

The dealer also discovered that the supplier had supplied beef grading below Choice about 50% of the time, causing Roman Cattle Co. to incur damages of at least \$650,000. Producers Livestock also did not ship cattle using Cow Tran 2.0, resulting in additional freight charges that totaled at least \$360,000.

"Producers' deceptive conduct left Roman without necessary cattle supplies and with-

out sufficient and reasonable notice of the same, meaning Roman was unable to fulfill orders with Roman's customers," the complaint read. "As a result, Roman lost sales and damaged customer relationships."

With no cattle to fulfill customer orders, the dealer had to stop work at its plant but still pay employees, resulting in incurred damages for lost labor of at least \$650,000, the company said.

"In engaging in these unjust and unfair practices, Producers has compromised the integrity of the marketing process and caused anticompetitive harm, as its actions disrupted transparency, trust, efficiency, and product quality across the cattle supply chain," Roman Cattle Co. said. — **Anna Miller Fortozo, WLJ managing editor**

USDA to release crop reports

On Jan. 12, USDA will set the stage for 2026. First, by looking back to late 2025 and providing stocks estimates as of Dec. 1, 2025. At the same time, the Crop Production and World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimate (WASDE) reports will give supply and demand forecasts for the year ahead.

Most-active corn futures have trended steadily higher through the final four months of 2025. But the March board has recently lost some steam when attempting to extend the rally beyond \$4.50, with bullish arguments of record-strong demand offset by bearish concerns of a daunting record amount of supply. The January USDA reports will shed some more light on the underlying fundamentals driving the corn market.

Among the reports USDA will release is its quarterly Grain Stocks report with on-farm and off-farm inventories as of Dec. 1, 2025. This report will, of course, be given context by the beginning corn supply published in the Crop Production and WASDE reports, released at the same time.

Analysts are expecting, on average, roughly 200 million bushels (mb) less corn production than was estimated in the November reports, driven by expectations for a lower national average yield estimate of 183.9 bushels per acre (bpa), down from 186 bpa in November. This would, of course, still be both a record yield as well as record production for the U.S.

As for Dec. 1 corn stocks, the average guess for Monday, according to the Dow Jones pre-report survey, is for 13.040 billion bushels (bb) of corn on hand after the first quarter of the 2025-26 marketing year—the largest on record.

Assuming the estimate for the beginning corn supply is

correct at 18.076 bb (not accounting for imports), the above Dec. 1 stocks total would imply first-quarter corn demand as roughly 5.036 bb, also a record if true.

Looking deeper into corn demand, exports remain the prime candidate for added bushels, with commitments as of the most recent USDA update up 30% to end 2025, and shipments through the first quarter of 2025-26 a record by a wide margin. Corn usage for ethanol has also garnered some recent concern for an area that may be reduced.

On the bottom line, despite a record-large Dec. 1 inventory, it is expected to see USDA's estimate for 2025-26 ending corn stocks reduced. The analysts surveyed by Dow Jones would concur with a prediction of 1.982 bb, down from 2.029 bb in December.

For the world corn market, most market attention will go to South America, where analysts expect to see recent crop-friendly weather reflected in higher production forecasts. Currently, Argentina would be the most likely to receive an upward adjustment, given that the vast majority of Brazil's corn production comes via the safrinha crop, which won't be planted until February and March.

That being said, analysts are expecting, on average, 280 million metric tons (mmt) of world corn ending stocks, up 800,000 mt from December if true and offsetting the reduction in U.S. stocks outlined above. An increase of 2 mmt or so to Argentina's 2026 crop forecast (53 mmt in December) seems like a realistic way in which higher world stocks could still be the case, given that the most recent Buenos Aires Grain Exchange crop report pegged conditions at a staggering 82% good to excellent. — **Rhett Montgomery, DTN lead analyst**



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Developing an AI model to study heart failure in cattle

Chase Markel, a University of Wyoming (UW) Ph.D. student from Wheatland, WY, is harnessing artificial intelligence (AI) to transform how animal scientists study risk factors for congestive heart failure in cattle.

His AI model, the first of its kind, has been trained to predict the risk of congestive heart failure based on images of a cow's heart. Markel, who grew up in the cattle industry, hopes that this new tool can ultimately help alleviate financial losses associated with the condition.

Markel completed both his undergraduate and master's degrees in the UW Department of Animal Science. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in the same department under the guidance of faculty advisers Hannah Cunningham-Hollinger and Cody Gifford.

As a master's student, Markel studied pulmonary

hypertension, also known as high-altitude disease or brisket disease, in cattle. He didn't anticipate that this animal science research would eventually lead to a fellowship in the UW School of Computing and the development of a "computer vision" model with the potential to revolutionize his field.

"I'm not a computer scientist, I'm not an AI guy," Markel said. "I'm someone who is studying heart failure [in cattle] and just happened to have the right conversation and made the connection in order to build something that I think can be useful. It all started with just trying to better understand pulmonary hypertension and heart failure."

His master's research indicated that subclinical cases of pulmonary hypertension, in which an animal is affected by high-altitude disease but survives, may have larger economic im-

pacts than direct profit losses incurred when an animal dies before harvest.

Pulmonary hypertension has been linked to congestive heart failure, the focus of Markel's doctoral research. The size and shape of a cow's right ventricle are key risk indicators for both conditions. As pressure builds in the right ventricle, the heart becomes thick and misshapen, increasing the severity of pulmonary hypertension and risk of congestive heart failure.

Markel knew that detecting these abnormalities, especially in subclinical cases of congestive heart failure, could potentially provide valuable data for plants and producers.

"Anything we can do to improve traceability and individual animal identification back as far as we can go in the production cycle to try to prevent these things is a net benefit for the industry," he commented.

As a School of Computing fellow, Markel developed an image classification model calibrated with thousands of heart images taken in commercial processing plants in Nebraska and Colorado. He used a 1-5 scoring system developed by Tim Holt, a close collaborator and professor at Colorado State University, to train the model to correctly categorize images by score.

To date, Markel's dataset includes nearly 7,000 images, each of them scored by hand, then used to train the model. The new tool has already achieved a startling degree of accuracy. Given an image it's never encountered before, the AI model assigns the correct score 92% of the time.

Although he continues to refine the model, Markel has provided proof of concept for a novel approach to identifying economically relevant risk factors in individual animals. In fact, he's

currently developing a similar model to evaluate liver images for the presence and severity of liver abscesses, another common affliction in feedlot cattle.

"As researchers, we need to start incorporating these tools into our research and ... build that technology so producers and people out in the industry can actually utilize those tools and help improve their bottom line," he said.

While Markel's current models are best suited for application in processing plants, he hopes that future iterations will benefit Wyoming producers more directly.

"Chase Markel's research exemplifies our college's

commitment to conducting Wyoming-relevant research, which integrates emerging technologies, producer experiences and UW faculty expertise to address some of Wyoming agriculture's most vexing challenges," comments Kelly Crane, Farm Credit Services of America dean in the College of Agriculture, Life Sciences and Natural Resources.

Markel submitted a provisional patent application to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office through UW in 2025. He hopes to obtain full patent protection in 2026.

For questions about Markel's research, contact him at cmarkell@uwyo.edu. — **UW Extension**

Developing tools to turn grain crops into biosensors

A collaborative team of researchers from the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center, the University of Florida, Gainesville and University of Iowa have developed groundbreaking tools that allow grasses—including major grain crops like corn—to act as living biosensors capable of detecting minute amounts of chemicals in the field.

Principal investigators Dmitri Nusinow, Ph.D., and Malia Gehan, Ph.D., led the effort to engineer grasses that produce a visible purple pigment, anthocyanin, in response to specific chemical cues. When paired with advanced imaging and analytical systems, these plants can report extremely low levels of chemical exposure, pollution or other adverse conditions that may impact crop and human health.

Their findings, Remote Sensing of Endogenous Pigmentation by Inducible Synthetic Circuits in Grasses, were recently published in the Plant Biotechnology Journal.

- Identification of two transcription factors that can be co-expressed from a single transcript to trigger anthocyanin production.
- Demonstration of both constitutive and ligand-inducible pigment production in protoplasts and whole plants.
- Development of hyperspectral imaging and discriminative analysis techniques that non-destructively detect pigmentation changes from a near-remote distance.

Together, these advancements demonstrate a robust system for precise, remote sensing of chemical exposure in grasses—paving the way for crop plants that can actively communicate environmental conditions.

"Grain crops are at the heart of global food security," said Nusinow. "Having plants act as sentinels in the field could increase food security and improve the sustainability of agriculture."

This research represents an important step toward plant-based monitoring systems capable of detecting contamination, chemical drift, or other environmental factors that influence crop performance. As detection tools become more sophisticated, the ability for plants to "report" in support of open science, both the molecular tools to build these sensors for grasses, and the methods for sensitive detection of changes in pigmentation have been deposited into public repositories enabling other scientists to build on this work and accelerate innovation in plant synthetic biology.

"We wanted to build a system that other researchers could easily use. Making our constructs and imaging approaches publicly available will accelerate innovation across the community," said Gehan.

This work was supported by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, HR001118C01327. — **Danforth Plant Science Center**

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A look at the US's ag ties to Venezuela

Venezuela, whose leader the Trump administration removed in early January, is known mostly for its oil industry, but a period of change may offer opportunities for increased U.S. exports of both food and technology.

Venezuela's agricultural sector has long ties to the U.S., including Nelson Rockefeller's role in modernizing the grocery industry there. Despite the recent conflicts between the U.S. and Venezuelan governments, Venezuela has continued to import food from the U.S. The oil industry has dominated the Venezuelan economy since the 1950s, but Venezuelan agriculture has not kept up with the modernization in other countries.

When Hugo Chavez, a socialist, became president of Venezuela in 1998, he imposed price controls on basic foods and used oil income to increase food imports; but when that income went down, he had to reduce imports, leading to food insecurity.

In 2001, the Venezuelan gov-

ernment transferred ownership of land from large, private landholders to poor Venezuelans and compensated the previous owners. The idea was to increase domestic food production, but the new landowners faced many problems and production went down.

Nicolas Maduro, who succeeded Chavez in 2013 and was deposed recently by the U.S., significantly decreased the importation of goods, leading to "extreme food scarcity," the Agriculture, Nutrition and Health (ANH) Academy said in an analysis.

But the Venezuelan economy has since been somewhat liberalized, and the U.S. Agriculture Department's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) has ranked Venezuela as the 34th most important export market for the U.S., with a total export value of \$753.21 million in 2024 and a three-year average of \$716.91 million in purchases. Venezuela has a population of roughly 30 million people.

In comparison, neighboring Colombia has a population of

53 million, but U.S. agricultural exports there were nearly \$4.4 billion last year and are projected to be 21% higher for 2025, according to USDA export data.

The U.S. is the second largest supplier of agricultural and food products to Venezuela by volume, with a 29% market share, FAS said. Soybean meal, corn, rice and wheat are the top exports, although dairy products and cat and dog food have grown the most in the last 10 years.

FAS reports

In a September 2025 report, Mark Rosmann, a FAS analyst based in Bogota, wrote, "Since 2019, the economic environment in Venezuela has improved and the removal of price controls in 2019, along with reduced market distortions, has allowed meat prices to adjust according to market conditions."

"For 2025, total per capita

meat consumption is estimated at 45 kg, marking a 153% increase from 2018," he said. "Chicken has become one of the most affordable sources of animal protein in Venezuela, second only to eggs, and remains well below pork and beef prices, thanks to its price competitiveness."

Rosmann added, "The U.S. is currently the leading supplier of beef and dairy cattle genetics to Venezuela, exporting live cattle, sires, semen and embryos. Direct exports of U.S. live breeding cattle to Venezuela resumed in 2024 after a seven-year pause, with 30 Brahman bulls and heifers valued at \$300,000. In 2025, an additional 23 American Red Brahman and American Red Brangus cattle, valued at \$180,000, were exported to Venezuela."

In a separate report, Rosmann wrote, "Venezuela's Seed Law, enacted in December 2015, prohibits the importation of genetically engi-

neered seeds, including corn. However, the country allows the importation of biotechnology-derived feed grains, including yellow corn.

"Leading rice suppliers were Brazil (110,000 MT, 47% share) and the U.S. (56,000 MT, 24%)."

In marketing year 2024-25, the primary suppliers of wheat and wheat products were Canada (528,000 metric tons, 45% market share), the U.S. (349,000 metric tons, 30%), Turkey (149,000 metric tons, 13%), and Russia (130,000 metric tons, 11%).

Analysis by FAO

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development have also published reports on the condition of Venezuelan agriculture.

In December, FAO estimated 7.9 million of Venezuela's more than 28 million people need humanitarian aid. Ana-

lysts have also said as many as 8 million people have fled the country in recent years, mostly to Columbia, Brazil and Peru, but also to the U.S.

Farmonaut, a satellite-based agricultural reporting system, has published a report on opportunities for exports of agricultural technology to Venezuela in 2025.

In December, Rachel Nelson of FAS wrote, "Despite Venezuelan authorities' efforts to portray modern agricultural biotechnology as dangerous, private industry groups openly support it for its potential to increase productivity and reduce the use of agricultural chemicals, and advocate for a regulatory framework that allows its legal use. They also note the contradiction of prohibiting domestic biotech use while permitting imports of biotechnology-derived products and crops." —**Jerry Hagstrom**, DTN political correspondent and **Chris Clayton**, DTN ag policy editor

What is a good bull worth in 2026?

With the onset of the Cattle-men's Congress in Oklahoma City, OK, the spring 2026 bull-buying season has officially started. Bull buying season will continue into the spring months in Oklahoma and across the nation, with progressive seedstock operations offering yearling bulls. Accordingly, it's time to revisit the age-old question: what is a good bull worth?

As a student at Oklahoma State University (OSU) in the mid-1980s, I was taught, "A good bull is worth the value of five calves he sires." It is a good answer and a good rule of thumb to follow, the problem is it doesn't exactly narrow down the range. As always, we need to define "a good bull," check current market reports, answer some questions about how we intend to market future calf crops, and do some "cowboy math" to arrive at a more precise answer.

What is considered a "good bull"?

For this discussion, qualifications to meet "good bull" status are:

- A bull that sells with a registration paper which includes pedigree information and a complete set of genetic values (including EPDs and bio-economic indices) to be considered in the selection process.
- A bull that has passed a breeding soundness exam and sells with a breeding soundness warranty (terms will vary).
- A bull that will add value to calves sired because he fits your breeding objectives, production system and marketing plans.

When are we marketing our calves? What is their value?

Using the end-of-year market prices from Dr. Derrell Peel:

- 500-pound weaned steer calves were worth about \$4.80 a pound for a value of approximately \$2,400 per head. Therefore, if the future marketing plan is to sell weaned steers,

\$2,400 x 5 = \$12,000 is the answer.

- 800-lb. yearling steers were worth about \$3.50/lb. for a value of \$2,800 per head. Therefore, if the future marketing plan is to sell yearling steers, \$2,800 x 5 = \$14,000 is the answer.

- 1,500-lb. finished beef steers were worth \$2.29/lb. live for a value of \$3,435 each. Therefore, if the future marketing plan is to retain ownership through finishing and sell fed cattle on a live weight basis, \$3,435 x 5 = \$17,175 is the answer.

So, in the current market, a good bull is worth somewhere between \$12,000-17,175 to a commercial cow-calf operation. Where exactly in that range depends on your marketing plan and the market conditions at that time. Not an exact number because there are many variables in play. One key point illustrated here is that the longer you own the offspring before marketing, the greater the value of the bull to your operation. Retained ownership gives you more time and opportunity to capture the value of your investment in genetics. It is noteworthy that we haven't considered the value added to replacement females a bull will sire. Bulls used to sire the next generation of cows have an even greater long-term economic impact on the profit potential of your operation and should be valued accordingly.

Cow-calf operations are encouraged to consider their breeding goals, production system and marketing plan. Doing so should dictate where to apply selection pressure. Genetic values pay when you purchase bulls capable of improving genetic potential for the specific traits that will translate to added value at your intended marketing endpoint. — **Mark Z. Johnson**, OSU Extension beef cattle breeding specialist

The 18th Annual 'Red Truck' Sale

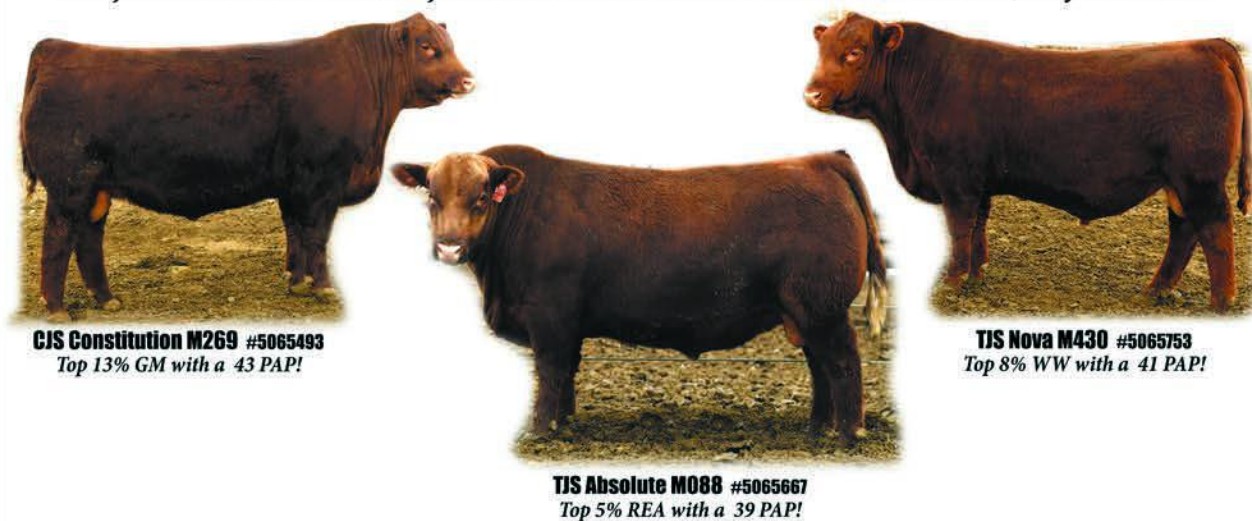
Friday, February 6th, 2026 Buffalo, WY 1:00 p.m. MST

at the Buffalo Livestock Marketing

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Females for Sale Privately Every Fall

The Producer Partnership has completed processing more than 100 uncontained pigs captured in Phillips County, MT, converting a public and agricultural concern into food assistance for Montana communities. The animals were processed at the organization's USDA-inspected facility, resulting in 12,160 pounds of donated pork delivered to the Montana Food Bank Network. Founder and President Matt Pierson said the effort reflects neighbors working together to provide safe, high-quality local protein to families facing food insecurity across the state.

Using ionophores to increase efficiency of heifer development

Ionophores are feed additives that improve ruminal efficiency by shifting fermentation toward greater propionate production and reducing energy lost as methane in the rumen. The ionophores monensin (marketed as Rumensin by Elanco Animal Health and as the generic Monovet by Huvepharma) and lasalocid (marketed as Bovatec by Zoetis) are approved for growing cattle on pasture or in confinement and are commonly used in heifer development programs.

Multiple studies show that both monensin and lasalocid increase weight gain of growing heifers; however, lasalocid has not been widely studied for reproductive performance. In contrast, there is a large body of research evaluating the pioneer monensin product, Rumensin, on heifer efficiency and reproductive development. A recent analysis pooled these studies to quantify growth and reproductive responses of beef replacement heifers fed monensin during development.

Feeding monensin to developing heifers increased average daily gain by 5% and reduced feed intake by 4.3%, resulting in a 14% improvement in feed efficiency. Beyond growth and efficiency, monensin reduced age at puberty by approximately 9 days and increased the proportion of heifers cycling prior to breeding by 16%.

Earlier puberty and increased cycling activity before the breeding season improve the likelihood of early conception. Cows that calve early in the calving season tend to have higher reproductive rates and greater longevity in the herd, making these responses highly valuable for improving lifetime productivity of replacement heifers.

A study from the early 1980s reported that lasalocid increased gain of replacement heifers by 0.2 pounds/day and reduced age at puberty; however, additional research evaluating reproductive responses to lasalocid is limited.

Importantly, feeding monensin did not increase mature size or weight at puberty and did not negatively affect pregnancy rate. Improvements in feed efficiency, earlier puberty and enhanced cyclicity make monensin a valuable tool for heifer development.

As the U.S. beef herd moves into expansion, the role of ionophores in improving efficiency, lowering development costs, and strengthening reproductive performance of developing heifers is increasingly important. — **Paul Beck, Oklahoma State University Extension beef cattle nutrition specialist**

New CA laws affecting farms took effect Jan. 1

Several new state laws beginning will impact agriculture in California. Farmers and ranchers will see changes pertaining to employee wages, management of abandoned farmland, organic waste disposal, agritourism and immigration enforcement.

As with other sectors, the cost of agricultural labor will rise as California's minimum wage increases in 2026 from \$16.50 to \$16.90 an hour.

Under a 2016 state law, minimum wage increased by set amounts from 2017 through 2023, when it reached \$15 an hour. Since then and going forward, the law requires minimum wage be adjusted annually according to the consumer price index, which is used to measure inflation.

A new state law will impact the way counties in California deal with abandoned farmland. Assembly Bill 732, authored by Assemblymember Alexandra Macedo (R-Tulare), was created to help county agricultural commissioners compel landowners to clean up neglected orchards and vineyards.

During the past few years, lower prices for winegrapes and tree nuts left some farmers unable to afford the cost of managing permanent crops or of removing them, resulting in a surge in abandoned acreage and increased pest pressures in neighboring farms.

"If you're right next door, it's pretty difficult," Michael Naito, who grows winegrapes, almonds and pistachios in Fresno and Madera counties, told Ag Alert in 2025. "You've got to spend more because you get a lot of pest pressure."

Current state law allows agricultural commissioners to place liens on abandoned properties that have been declared a nuisance and that property owners have failed to address after a warning. But the abatement process can take years, and it weighs on county budgets, as counties must pay to remove crops or control pests before trying to recoup the money by placing a lien on the property.

"The current abatement procedures place a cost-prohibitive burden on the counties," Fresno County Agricultural Commissioner Melissa Cregan said during a state Assembly hearing. "Local governments simply do not have the funds to front these costs."

The new state law will allow agricultural commissioners to fine landowners \$500 per acre if they fail to make a good faith effort to address a pest-related public nuisance within 30 days and \$1,000 per acre if they do not take action within 45 days.

"This process is something that we, unfortunately, need," Macedo said. "We're not trying to come in and be a bully. We're coming in and trying to work with ag to solve a problem."

A pair of new laws were signed to give California farmers and ranchers more options for disposal of organic waste.

Assembly Bill 411, authored by Assemblymember Diane Papan (D-San Mateo) will allow small-scale, on-farm livestock composting under specific guidelines. Cattle ranchers in more than 40 other states already allow livestock composting. California ranchers will join them in being able to dispose of a limited number of livestock carcasses on their own property instead of having the carcasses hauled to a rendering plant.

A different new law, Senate Bill 279, authored by state Sen. Jerry McNerney (D-Stockton), will increase the amount of agricultural material farmers can send to composting facilities. The law was created to provide alternative disposal options for discarded orchards and vineyards in the San Joaquin Valley, where agricultural burning is no longer permitted.

In recent years, as many farmers struggled to break even amid lower crop prices and rising costs, some turned to agritourism as an alternative income source. A new state law, Assembly Bill 518, authored by Assemblymember Christopher Ward (D-San Diego), was created to provide more opportunities for agritourism operators.

The new law will establish a framework to reduce the regulatory barriers for landowners to host overnight campers on working lands.

"This new law creates opportunities for agricultural producers to diversify revenue, build a new customer base and help more people experience California's beautiful working landscapes," California Farm Bureau, which supported the bill, said in a statement on the organization's website.

While immigration enforcement dominated headlines about agricultural news during much of the past year, few changes will take effect in the new year because immigration law is primarily determined by the federal government.

However, like California's response during President Donald Trump's first term in office, the state legislature enacted some policy changes in response to the Trump administration's crackdown on immigration.

Under Senate Bill 627, authored by state Sen. Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco), beginning Jan. 1 federal law enforcement agents will—except in specific circumstances—be prohibited from wearing masks that obscure their faces and identities.

If agents choose to still cover their faces, they lose their right to assert "qualified immunity," which protects law

enforcement officers from individual liability for their actions, meaning they could be sued for violations such as assault, battery or false imprisonment.

The law was created in response to the new and widespread use of face coverings by federal agents during immigration raids.

Enforcement actions were largely focused in urban areas such as Los Angeles and major cities in other states, though some farming regions such as the Oxnard Plain in Ventura County and the Bakersfield area in Kern County were affected by sprawling raids that lasted up to a few days.

It remains unclear to what extent the new state law will affect immigration enforcement in California. The Trump administration has sued to block enforcement of the law, and administration officials have said agents will not abide by it.

Under federal law, immigration enforcement agents are entitled to enter private worksites only after obtaining a warrant signed by a judge. In California, a 2017 state law prohibits employers from allowing immigration authorities to access nonpublic work areas without a judicial warrant. — **Caleb Hampton, Ag Alert editor, California Farm Bureau Federation**

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Cardey Cattle — Don & Diana Cardey
Chico Sate Beef Unit — Travis Heffner
Coldstream Farms — Galen Smith
Cole Cattle Co. — Robyn Cole
Cooper Cattle Co. — Terry Cooper
Correia Livestock & Stockdogs — Michael Correia
Davis Cattle Co & Larry Imbach — Larry Imbach
Duchi Family Angus LLC — Fred Duchi
Elenbaas Angus — Ben & Lindsey Elenbaas
Elwood Ranch — Kenny & Megan Elwood
England Ranch — Jim England
Garthwaite, Todd & Randi
Gilliland Livestock Inc. — Ron Gilliland
Gudel Cattle Co. — Kris & Casey Gudel
HAVE Angus — Jim Vietheer
High Desert Cattle Co. — MT & Cori Anderson
Hinton Ranch
Simmentals — John & Shauna Hinton
JSL Angus — Mark & Cathy Ferguson
King Farms Land & Cattle Co. — Cameron King
Kolker Ranch Angus — Jason & Janessa Kolker
Kool Breeze Red Angus — Kathie Banwarth

KV Cattle Co. — Kelsey Vietheer
Lax Cattle Company — Robert Lax
Nannini Hay & Livestock — Gary Nannini
Oak Ridge Angus — Cheryl LaFranchi
Owings Cattle — Mike Owings
Peerless Ranches — Austin & Jessica Goodwin
Sammis Ranch — Joe Sammis
Shandar Angus Ranch — Morgan Andrews
Simmie Ranch — Katherine Simmie
Spencer Cattle Co. — Jerry Spencer
Split Creek Angus — Jeremy Strand
Sunbright Angus — Gary Ford
Sunny Okanogan Angus Ranch — Todd Vejraska
T&S Livestock — Richard Titus
Twinpine Angus — Mark & Ida Higgins
Westwind Angus Ranch — David Holden
White Ranch Angus LLC. — Randy & Thomas White
Wooden Shoe Farms — Steve & Alicia Billman
Wulff Bros. Livestock — Carl Wulff

BALANCER

Cardey Cattle — Don & Diana Cardey
Potter's Emmett Valley Ranch — Kevin Potter

CHAROLAIS

Bianchi Ranches — Robert, Chris & Erica Bianchi

Broken Box Ranch — Jerry Maltby
Cardey Cattle — Don & Diana Cardey
Pomi Ranch — Derrick Pomi
Rafter DN — Dave & Nancy Condron
Rocking Hill Ranch — Phillip Hill
Romans Charolais — Jeff Romans
University of Idaho Beef Center — Elisha Johnson

GELBVIEH

Potter's Emmett Valley Ranch — Kevin Potter
HEREFORD
Cache Cattle Co. — Rodney Curtis
Cedar Grove Horned Herefords — Michael Pratt
England Ranch — Jim England
High Desert Cattle Co. — MT & Cori Anderson

Morrell Ranches — Barry & Carrie Morrell
Murphy Herefords — William Murphy
Pomi Ranch — Logan Pomi
Sonoma Mountain Herefords — Jim & Marsha Michelson
Y Cross Herefords & Angus — Greg & Maureen Thomas

MAINE

Brocco Show Cattle — Ron Brocco

POLLED HEREFORDS

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AD Cattle/Emily Jones — Art Dombrowski
Cache Cattle CO. — Rodney Curtis
Gudel Cattle CO.
Harrison Livestock — Will Harrison
Macfarlane, Ellis
Murphy Herefords — William Murphy
Sonoma Mountain

85TH ANNUAL • JANUARY 27-31, 2026 • TEHAMA DIS

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RED BLUFF

BULL & GELDING SALE

400 BULLS • 100 GELDINGS • 20 STOCK DOGS

SCHEDULE

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2026

9:00AM

Sifting & Grading of all RANGE READY CALVING EASE AND RANGE READY BULLS.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2026

9:00AM

Sifting & Grading of all HALTER CALVING EASE AND HALTER BULLS, Don Smith Pavilion.

12:00PM

Trade Show & Art Show Open. Close at 7:00PM.

1:00PM

Working Stock Dogs, presented by Merck.

5:30PM

Kick Off Dinner. \$30/person. Cocktails 5:30PM. Dinner at 6:30PM. Kelly Twins Dueling Pianos 7-10PM, Tyler Jelly Building.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 2026

9:00AM

Sifting of GELDINGS/MARES - Shown at halter, in age order, youngest to oldest. Pauline Davis Pavilion.

9:00AM

Trade Show & Art Show Open. Close at 7:00PM.

11:00AM

WVM INTERNET FEEDER/FEMALE SALE, Don Smith Pavilion.

12:30PM

GELDINGS/MARES Work Under Saddle, Dry, Trail and Cattle Works, Pauline Davis Pavilion.

3:00PM

GELDINGS/MARES Calf Branding, Pauline Davis Pavilion.

4:30PM-6:30PM

Western Art Show Reception, presented by Tehama County Cattlewomen, Jr. Art Bldg.

5:00PM-6:15PM

Cowhorse Clinic: "The Smart Start" with Cody McNaney, presented by Bar ALE, Inc., Pauline Davis Pavilion.

6:30PM

GELDINGS & MARES - Conformation Horse Selected, Pauline Davis Pavilion. WORKING STOCK DOGS presented by Merck, Pauline Davis Pavilion.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2026

8:30AM

GELDINGS/MA Contests. SELE

9:00AM

Trade Show & A

1:00PM

WORKING OF S

3:30PM

SALE OF STOC

5:30PM

DOORS OPEN F

5:30PM

Vic Woolery's F Davis Pavilion.

6:00PM

Youth Fund Dra

7:00PM

SALE OF QUAR Casino. Pauline NEW THIS YEAR

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 2026

9:00AM

Trade Show & A

9:30AM

SALE OF ALL B

7:00PM

Red Bluff Buck Pre-Sale Gener Arena Floor Se V.I.P. Premier S

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Cole Cattle Co. — Robyn Cole
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Hudson Hil Farm — Sydney Schwenk
T&S Livestock — Richard Titus

SIMMENTAL
Cole Cattle Co. — Robyn Cole
Hinton Ranch — Lester & Paula Hinton
Hinton Ranch Simmentals — John & Shauna Hinton

GELDINGS
Bennett, Olivia — Hickman, CA
Broeckel, Mark — Chico, CA
Buckingham, Tom &

Carmen — Bruneau, ID
Campbell, Colton — Klamath Falls, OR
Coal Creek Ranch — Ridgway, CO
Cook, Ken & Vicky — Willows, CA
Davis, Peggy — Klamath Falls, OR
Dodson, Dusty — Independence, OR
Echeverria, Debbie — Granite Bay, CA
Hubbard, Curt & Pam — Corning, CA
Jones, Rick — Mineral Point, WI
Lawrence, Madison — Willits, CA
Machado, JD — Gerber, CA
Martin, Debbie — Creswell, OR
Mecham, Tyler — Red Bluff, CA
Merkley, Mike — Fallon, NV
Morford, Matt — Fields, OR
Owens, Mahlon — Red Bluff, CA
Owens, Rod & Cindy — Klamath Falls, OR
Price, Dean — Idaho Falls, ID
Puskas, Austin — Powell Butte, OR
S6 Ranch LLC — Knightsen, CA
SC Ranch Co. Inc. — Paauilo, HI
Strong, Gabe & Masey — Kelseyville, CA
Tex, Wayne — Bishop, CA
TR Quarter Horses — Burns, OR

Cole Cattle Co — Bonanza, OR
Doman, Jerett — Washington, UT
Double Arrow Livestock — Paisley, OR
Hencratt, Cara — Lindsay, CA
Humphry, Sterling & Bailey — Cassel, CA
Martin, Debbie — Creswell, OR
McNaney, Cody & Erica — Oakdale, CA
S6 Ranch LLC — Knightsen, CA
Torvik, Lena — Fallon, NV

2-YEAR-OLDS
Anderson, Crystal — Quincy, CA
Baker, Tami & Hoyt — Redding, CA
Dugo, Bill & Joyce — Escalon, CA
Hammack, Missy — Cottonwood, CA
Lingenfelter, Julie — Fernley, NV
Montarbo, Richard — Paynes Creek, CA
Price, Dean — Idaho Falls, ID
Warner, Grace — Paso Robles, CA
White, Katelyn — Princeton, OR

DOGS
Mike Collins
Koen Clausen
Merle Newton
Jaime Gonzalez
Hannah Cash
Carter Harris
Merle Newton
Shirley Shold
Jeff Clausen
Boe Suhr
Henry VanOrnum
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wing, Pauline Davis Pavilion.
TER HORSE & PAINT GELDINGS & MARES, presented by Rolling Hills
Davis Pavilion.
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26
rt Show Open. Close at 7:00PM.
ULLS, presented by Zoetis, Don Smith Pavilion.
ng Battle, Party & Dance immediately following.
al Admission: \$30/person, \$35 at the door;
ating Pre-Sale \$40/person, \$45 at the door;
eating, Reception, Appetizers: \$100/person

MORE INFORMATION

Red Bluff Bull Sale
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LOTS 1-21

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- S ARCHITECT 9051

- SS BRICKYARD

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Lot 395 - CC 00127 E16 MR. CASH 25M ET

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281	8/26/24	21075629	B47 Oaks Bold Ruler	8	1	93	170	31	0.74	0.91	78	211	352
282	8/31/24	21064917	EZAR Gettysburg 1061	13	-0.1	78	128	28	1.41	1.21	76	221	363
283	9/8/24	21064918	EZAR Gettysburg 1061	15	-0.2	81	145	31	1.13	1.04	83	205	349
284	9/8/24	21062714	K A Kindred	12	-0.6	80	145	32	1.17	0.58	68	182	304
285	10/5/24	21058876	Basin Jameson 1076	10	0.6	104	174	29	1.44	0.7	69	194	321
286	11/30/24	21143241	EZAR Gettysburg 1061	8	1.2	87	154	17	1.21	0.81	53	212	328

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\$126M program for zero-emission trucks nears launch in WA

Washington is close to opening a new incentive program for commercial fleet operators to transition trucks and other vehicles to models that run on electric or hydrogen power.

Industry groups and climate advocates anxiously await the \$126 million initiative. But the state lawmakers who championed it say it's taken far too long to come online.

The transportation sector is the biggest driver of Washington's carbon emissions. Exhaust from big trucks and buses makes up a disproportionate share of those emissions, and diesel air pollution can be especially unhealthy.

To help combat this, the Washington Zero-Emission Incentive Program, or WAZIP, is expected to launch in the spring.

"We are very eager for WAZIP to launch as soon as possible," said Leah Missik, the Washington legislative director for environmental advocacy group Climate Solutions. "We know from the experience in other states and even from the experience of people who've been able to get clean trucks here in Washington that this program will help drivers and businesses save money, and it will benefit communities."

Washington has already made some progress.

In 2024, nearly one in five new medium- and heavy-duty vehicles sold in Washington ran on zero-emission technology, according to the state Department of Ecology. Though the adoption rate varies depending on the type. Heavier trucks are harder to come by than, for example, electric delivery vans. Think of Amazon's ubiquitous Rivian vans.

Heavy trucks, on the other hand, remain prohibitively expensive for many companies, while lacking public charging infrastructure, industry groups say. And they can't go nearly as far on a charge as their diesel-fueled counterparts, not to mention they're much heavier.

The city of Seattle has tried its own incentive program offering up to \$180,000 for Class 8 heavy-duty trucks to serve the Port of Seattle. But even with that sweetener, operators found the transition still unfeasible financially.

Instead, the city in October partnered with a company called Zeem Solutions to distribute \$1.5 million to drayage operators. It follows more than \$5 million that the Northwest Seaport Alliance gave the company over the summer for a commercial fleet charging depot in the city of SeaTac.

But while Washington state moves ahead, the federal government has looked to slow the transition.

Washington has been following the lead of California in its push toward zero-emission vehicles. California has a unique ability to set emission rules that go further than federal guidelines, and other states can pick between the two.

Washington has been following California's stricter standards.

But Congress last year repealed California's opportunity to set those standards. States, including Washington, have sued the federal government over the move.

One of those rules pushes manufacturers to up their sales of zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty trucks over time. The move by Congress and approved by President Donald Trump offers a "slight ease of pressure" on the trucking industry, said Sheri Call, president and CEO of the Washington Trucking Association.

"But it also doesn't mean that we don't want to continue the conversation about what industry can do today," Call continued, "because we do have members who are motivated to reduce their carbon footprint. They just need workable solutions to do so."

The local trucking industry is also grappling with the Trump administration's cancellation of federal money meant to fuel a hub of hydrogen development in the region, which aimed to help develop cleaner semitrucks, among other things. Call said this is "very promising technology for the industry, especially in the heavy truck space."

How will it work?

The WAZIP program is funded by proceeds from the state's carbon auctions under the Climate Commitment Act.

It will offer \$82 million in vouchers for on-road vehicles, \$20 million for off-road equipment, like forklifts and farm equipment. It'll also have \$10 million reserved for small businesses.

For example, buyers of a zero-emission Class 4 medium-duty truck weighing between 14,001 pounds and 16,000 pounds could get \$60,000 off at the point of sale, though the final voucher amounts aren't yet finalized. The vouchers, which increase based on weight, cover electric and hydrogen fuel cell technology.

For reference, a Class 4 diesel truck costs around \$60,000 while the electric version is roughly \$160,000, according to John Barnes, of TEC Equipment. Diesel Class 8 trucks cost \$160,000 compared to \$600,000 for electrics.

Voucher applicants can also ask for more money to install charging infrastructure, a major barrier to transitioning to zero-emission vehicles for both businesses and individuals.

The hope is that trucking companies can get assistance with upfront costs to transition toward electric, then reap the benefits of reduced fuel costs over time.

"I cannot understate the importance of it in terms of hitting our climate targets, but also helping people save money over the long run," Missik said.

Some businesses will be eligible for even more sav-

ings. They include those with under \$10 million in annual revenue and those certified as an emerging or rising business by the state's Office of Women and Minority Owned Business Enterprises. Drayage operators, veteran-owned businesses, nonprofits and public agencies also qualify.

In the Class 4 example, these purchasers could get an extra \$10,000 off.

Businesses can also buy converted or used vehicles with vouchers of reduced value.

The initiative is modeled on similar efforts in California, where a truck incentive program has given out roughly 15,000 vouchers totaling over \$1.6 billion in savings in the past 15 years.

Call and Missik both expect WAZIP to be very popular.

What's taking so long?

But those leading the charge for WAZIP's creation think it should already be up and running.

State House Transportation Committee Chair Jake Fey (D-Tacoma) said it should've started up at least six months ago. His counterpart in the Senate agrees.

"The governor's office and the Department of Transportation know that I'm not satisfied by how long it's taken to get this done," Fey said. "It's beyond the point now that my patience is about done with this."

In response, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) noted "this is a complex program that WSDOT needs to ensure is developed and administered properly, because significant state resources are involved."

"This work includes custom software to meet Wash-

ington's unique needs," spokesperson Barbara La-Boe said in an email. "WSDOT is working diligently to deliver the pro-

gram as quickly as possible, while maintaining the high standards for compliance and usability that are required."

The agency doesn't have a date set for the launch. — **Jake Goldstein-Street, Washington State Standard**

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MARKET NEWS

MARKET SITUATION REPORT
WLJ compiles its market reports, ODJ stories and statistics from USDA and independent marketing organizations.

MARKET AT A GLANCE	This Week: 1/8/2026	Week Ago	Year Ago
Choice Fed Steers	228.60	▲	N/A
CME Feeder Index	363.15	▲	348.04
Boxed Beef Average	356.79	▲	348.20
Average Dressed Steers	360.00	▲	N/A
Live Slaughter Weight*	1,467	▲	1,467
Weekly Slaughter**	474,000	▲	429,000
Weekly Beef Production***	423.7	▲	383.9
Hide/Offal Value	11.69	▲	11.69
Corn Price	4.48	▲	4.42
* Average weight for previous week. ** Total slaughter for previous week. *** Estimated year-to-date figure in million pounds for previous week.			

BEEF REPORT: Weekly Composite Boxed Beef											
WEEK ENDING	COMPREHENSIVE Loads/Price		PRIME Loads/Price		BRANDED Loads/Price		CHOICE Loads/Price		SELECT Loads/Price		UNGRADED Loads/Price
January 2	6,007	342.15	211	367.38	994	348.48	1,795	336.42	568	335.76	2,440
December 26	5,255	354.52	198	380.04	981	361.24	1,635	350.62	500	340.61	1,941
December 19	6,973	357.82	274	385.44	1,240	362.98	2,246	355.67	626	344.91	2,587
December 12	6,738	361.52	285	393.16	1,207	368.33	2,114	357.60	631	346.08	2,500
CUTOUTS											
FED BOXED BEEF											
DATE	CHOICE		SELECT		COW BEEF CUTOUT		50% LEAN		90% LEAN		
January 8	356.79		352.06		309.42		137.79		396.28		
January 7	354.28		349.28		313.65		140.06		403.70		
January 6	351.25		351.08		316.05		135.39		406.13		
January 5	353.70		351.50		311.29		144.58		395.55		
January 2	349.97		346.92		310.79		142.74		N/A		

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Live Cattle						
	1/2	1/5	1/6	1/7	1/8	High* Low*
Feb.	23600	23588	23745	23623	23583	24678 16853
Apr.	23598	23680	23820	23695	23643	24830 16668
Jun.	23035	23143	23275	23173	23140	25018 17005
Aug.	22708	22823	22958	22863	22863	25093 18068
CATTLE FUTURES: CME Feeder Cattle						
	1/2	1/5	1/6	1/7	1/8	High* Low*
Jan.	35610	35898	36265	36248	36268	38103 21920
Mar.	35295	35558	35940	35875	35830	38280 22268
Apr.	35225	35490	35853	35770	35703	38020 22460
May	35020	35280	35625	35575	35470	37860 24118
*High and low figures are for the life of the contract.						

FED CATTLE TRADE	Head Count	Avg. Weight	Avg. Price
WEEKLY WEIGHTED AVERAGES			
Live FOB Steer	655	1,550	228.60
Live FOB Heifer	420	1,250	232.00
Dressed Del Steer	111	914	360.00
Dressed Del Heifer	N/A	N/A	N/A
SAME PERIOD LAST WEEK			
Live FOB Steer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Live FOB Heifer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dressed Del Steer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dressed Del Heifer	N/A	N/A	N/A
SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR			
Live FOB Steer	1,344	1,535	199.87
Live FOB Heifer	397	1,346	200.00
Dressed Del Steer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dressed Del Heifer	N/A	N/A	N/A

NATIONAL WEEKLY FED BEEF SLAUGHTER VOLUME: JANUARY 4, 2026		
	Domestic	Imported
Forward Contract	29,961	1,870
Formula	208,187	1,254
Negotiated Cash	67,917	52
Negotiated Grid	25,171	273
Packer Owned	7,311	N/A
Total	338,547	3,449

SLAUGHTER FORWARD CONTRACTS		FORWARD BEEF SALES	
Delivery Month		Neg. Sales 0-21 days	1,734
Jan. '26	135,994	Neg. Sales 21+ days	513
Feb. '26	153,298	Formula sales	3,692
Mar. '26	131,567	Forward contract sales	68
Apr. '26	164,112	Domestic sales	5,533
May '26	61,276	NAFTA Exports	83

CANADIAN LIVESTOCK PRICES & FEDERAL INSPECTED SLAUGHTER FIGURES		
Alberta Direct Sales (4% shrink)	Price	Weekly Change
Slaughter Steers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1300-1500 lbs	N/A	N/A
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	N/A	N/A
Ontario Auctions		
Slaughter Steers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1300-1500 lbs	N/A	N/A
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	N/A	N/A
Slaughter Cows, Cutter and Utility 1-3, 1100-1400 lbs	N/A	N/A
*Price comparison from one week ago.		

Average feeder cattle prices (CND) for week ending Tuesday, January 6, 2026			
Steers:	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Ontario
501-600 lbs	N/A	N/A	N/A
601-700 lbs	N/A	N/A	N/A
701-800 lbs	N/A	N/A	N/A
801-900 lbs	N/A	N/A	N/A
Heifers:			
401-500 lbs	N/A	N/A	N/A
501-600 lbs	N/A	N/A	N/A
601-700 lbs	N/A	N/A	N/A
701-800 lbs	N/A	N/A	N/A

USDA MEXICO TO U.S. WEEKLY LIVESTOCK IMPORTS				
Feeder cattle imports weekly and yearly volume.				
Species	Current Week	Previous Week	Current Year-to-date	Previous Year-to-date
Feeders	12/29/2025 0	12/22/2025 0	230,638	1,240,203

USDA WEEKLY IMPORTED FEEDER CATTLE	
January 8, 2026	
Mexico to United States Feeder Cattle Import Summary	
Receipts EST: N/A	Week Ago EST: N/A
	Year Ago Act: N/A
THIS REPORT WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED AFTER MAY 12TH. THE BORDER WILL BE CLOSED FOR LIVESTOCK IMPORTS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.	
Feeder heifers: Medium and large 1&2	Feeder heifers: Medium and large 1&2
500-600 lbs N/A	500-600 lbs N/A
600-700 lbs N/A	600-700 lbs N/A
700-800 lbs N/A	700-800 lbs N/A
Feeder steers: Medium and large 1&2	Feeder steers: Medium and large 1&2
500-600 lbs N/A	500-600 lbs N/A
600-700 lbs N/A	600-700 lbs N/A
700-800 lbs N/A	700-800 lbs N/A

(slide 10 cents on steers and heifers basis 300 lbs. All sales fob port of entry.)

Selected Auctions					Feeder prices for steers & heifers reflect medium and large 1 cattle, unless otherwise noted; * Indicates medium and large 1-2						
DATE	MARKET		200-300 lb.	300-400 lb.	400-500 lb.	500-600 lb.	600-700 lb.	700-800 lb.	800 lb. -up	SLAUGHTER COWS	PAIRS
No report available Blackfoot, ID											
No report available Burley, ID											
No report available Emmett, ID											
January 3	Eugene, OR	N/A		400-480* 308-434*	350-457* 320-409*	335-414* 310-370*	307-310* 285-307*			135-160 160-185	1,650-2,700
January 5	Madras, OR	1,012		475-510 452-515	498-542 422-487	443-500 390-417	377-431 335-377	357-379 334-355	338-353 320-331	125-168 165-200	
No report available Vale, OR											
January 6	Davenport, WA	175		400 385-415	365-424 300-417.50	300-410 270-400	250-370 235-327.50	250-343.50 245	252.50	117-225 130-235	
No report available Toppenish, WA											

January 1	Orland, CA	1,747			400-592 380-522	300-500 280-458	300-419 280-368	300-372 280-328	270-347 250-328		2,800-3,900 2,200-4,050
No report available Escalon, CA											
January 5	Famoso, CA	723		440-514 375-476	400-507 375-476	380-495.50 350-400	350-409 300-345	320-350	270-320 275-320	70-200 125-176.50	
No report available Galt, CA											
No report available Turlock, CA											
No report available Salina, UT											

January 5	Iowa	9,708	630	520-590 430-530	470-560 360-503	432.50-508 378-437	371-446.50 331.50-421	352-409.50 315-377.50	314-376.25 315-359	143-230 100-229	
January 6	Miles City, MT	1,039	736 652.50	635-690 505-570	556 457-517.50	445-502.50 421-450	422.50-425 375-410	387 345		91-177.50 120-180	1,950-2,950
January 7	Bassett, NE	6,535		612-50 590	560-580 497.50-522.50	456-533 430-474	422-476 365-442.50	391-445 340-452.50	371-385		
No report available Ericson, NE											
No report available Imperial, NE											
No report available Kearney, NE											
No report available Lexington, NE											
No report available Ogallala, NE											
No report available Valentine, NE											
No report available Herreid, SD											
January 7	Torrington, WY	4,502			570-610 500-547	465-512 426-513	410-464 370-421	373-413.50 341-364	345-362 320-345		

No report available Willcox, AZ											
No report available Colorado											
No report available La Junta, CO											
January 5	Loma, CO	898		525-605 475-510	475-550 440-485	425-505 410-450	375-435 350-400	350-380 305-345	200-325 175-330	145-165 170-180	
January 7	Dodge City, KS	4,862		505 510-615	540-618 480-512.50	450-522.50 411-460	394-445 352-400	353-402 329.50-355	321-370.50 310-329.50	141-189 158-185	3,300-3,850 1,675-3,000
No report available Pratt, KS											
No report available Salina, KS											
January 8	Clovis, NM	3,070	630-640 405-595	455-600 455-580	400-555 400-495	392-460 346-427	347-415 320-367	321-352 290-330	197-351 260-328		
January 7	El Reno, OK	10,128	670	580-650 470-620	450-605 400-540	400-545 360-450	340-460 325-395	354-405 310-351	295.50-369 285-330		
January 7	McAlester, OK	1,871		535-625 360-535	400-545 350-510	404-495 285-415	364-445 343-399	343-375 320-345	303-333 253-301	149-173 173-188	
January 6	Oklahoma City, OK	9,266	650 420-605	597.50-630 460-580	450-587 402-500	415-525 370-448	387.50-465 351-435	348-404.85 319-344	312.50-359 296-376		
No report available Cuero, TX											
No report available Dalhart, TX											
January 8	San Angelo, TX	911		500 465-480	440-490 360-415	410-447 340-365	334-372 319-350	324-344 320	314-325 265-287	135-154 142-187	
No report available Tulia, TX											

No report available Alabama											EAST
January 5 Lexington, KY	1,441	490-600* 400-480*	490-597.50* 410-475*	401-490* 380-450*	370-450* 352.50-400*	335-430* 322.50-375*	320-377.75* 301-333.50*	283-356.60* 296-319*	148-178 167-224	1,850-2,525 1,600-2,800	
January 5 Joplin, MO	14,176		570-640 520-610	510-600 437.50-540	425-550 377-490	380-453 341-397	348-390 328-347	317-357 287-328			
No report available Tennessee											
January 5 Virginia	242	335	305-335	340-445 335-380	395 325	365 330	350-370 290	252.50			

Data modeling drives Texas A&M war on cattle ticks

Texas A&M AgriLife scientists have uncovered new insights into how cattle fever ticks survive and spread across South Texas, revealing hidden refuges that could explain why the pest remains one of the U.S. cattle industry's greatest threats.

In two recently published studies, the research team pairs mapping cattle movement with advanced computer modeling, offering first-of-its-kind "location intelligence" tools.

This new tool guides ongoing cattle fever tick eradication strategies in South Texas. It represents an innovative approach to protecting U.S. cattle from bovine babesiosis, a deadly disease transmitted by the tick.

These studies are an important scientific step to protect the nation's food supply.

Texas A&M AgriLife Research project investigators include the Department of Entomology's Taylor Donaldson, Ph.D., associate research scientist, and Pete Teel, Ph.D., Regents Professor. Also on the team is the Department of Ecology and Conservation Biology's Rose Wang, Ph.D., senior research scientist, and William Grant, Ph.D., professor.

The research was funded via by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture and supported by experts within the USDA Agri-

cultural Research Service and Texas Animal Health Commission.

"Wildlife pose a special challenge when monitoring and eliminating cattle fever ticks in livestock herds, because they can cross fences and sustain cattle fever tick populations in areas fenced cattle don't go," Teel said. "This is the first time we've used animal tracking data and modeling to assess eradication efficiency across a broad range of factors."

Modeling cattle movement

Cattle fever ticks spread bovine babesiosis, a deadly disease that once devastated herds across the southern U.S. Starting in 1906, the federal Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program nearly eliminated the pest from the country, but infestations still flare up in South Texas—particularly where wildlife like white-tailed deer and nilgai antelope carry ticks across fences and quarantine zones.

Eradication strategies rely upon acaricide-treated cattle as trap hosts to remove ticks from infested pastures, thus their efficiency in covering all areas of pastures is directly related to eradication success.

The new studies, both published in the October issue of Current Research in Parasitology and Vector Borne Diseases, capture how ticks persist in those environments.

In the first study, "Location intelligence unveils seasonal spatiotemporal pattern shifts of habitat use and selection by cattle across a South Texas coastal landscape infested with Rhipicephalus microplus," researchers tracked cattle with global positioning, GPS, collars on the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge to map how they moved across the landscape.

"We were able to collect and analyze hourly location data from GPS-collared cattle to measure their habitat use and analyze how grazing behavior and pasture coverage changed with seasonal changes in heat stress," Teel said. "That gave us insight into behaviors and patterns in what we recognize is the intersection of cattle grazing science and the entomological science of ticks and their hosts."

In the second study, "Leveraging location intelligence

and individual-based modeling to simulate Rhipicephalus microplus infestation and eradication dynamics at the cattle-wildlife interface," they combined the real-world data into computer models that simulated how ticks survive, are spread by hosts, and might be eliminated under different conditions. The work allowed researchers to validate models never before tested against such detailed field-collected information.

The "location intelligence" approach revealed how climate, habitat and host behavior interactions might shape tick survival and spread. Teel said the studies together reveal hidden pockets of habitat where cattle seldom go but where wildlife can sustain tick populations, and methods to test new tactics to improve grazing coverage.

"We technically call these pockets 'refugia' for ticks," he said. "One of the outcomes of this work is looking at how we can get treated cattle into

those areas to support our eradication efforts."

By linking cattle movement, habitat features and climatic conditions with predictive modeling, researchers are equipping regulatory agencies like the Texas Animal Health Commission and USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service with science-based tools to better design ranch-specific eradication plans.

"While the challenges with cattle fever tick remain complex, the mission is simple," Teel said. "Eradication requires eliminating every tick."

Beyond cattle and ticks, the work demonstrates the promise of "location intelligence"—combining GPS tracking, geographic information system, GIS, mapping, drone imagery and other advanced technologies to understand how landscapes influence disease vectors.

Future advances, including miniaturized ear-tag trackers and real-time data sharing, could allow agencies and ranchers the ability to monitor treated cattle and adjust strategies as infestations unfold with shifts in climate and wildlife movement.

Teel said these two studies highlight Texas A&M AgriLife's central support role in the century-old fight to safeguard the Texas and U.S. cattle industry against emerging threats and other invasive pests. By uniting fieldwork, innovative technology and modeling, the research opens doors to more precise surveillance and smarter eradication methods to keep cattle fever ticks—and the diseases they carry—in check.

"Bovine babesiosis would be devastating to cattle ranchers," Donaldson said. "We eliminate the threat by eliminating the only thing that transmits the disease—the ticks. These studies represent an important next step in that mission as we look to protect the nation's food supply." — **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension**

Demand picks up in countryside

MARKETS (from page 1)

Feeder cattle

Feeder cattle futures made immense gains over the week. The January contract gained about \$12 to close at \$362.47, and the March contract gained about \$13 to close at \$357.72.

The CME Feeder Cattle Index gained about \$15 to close at \$363.15.

Corn futures made some slight gains over the week. The March contract gained 6 cents to close at \$4.46, and the May contract also gained 6 cents to close at \$4.54.

"It will be especially interesting to watch feeder cattle sales early this week, as the last real test seen in the countryside was the week before Christmas, and since then, the futures market has gained substantial ground," ShayLe Stewart, DTN livestock analyst, said on Monday.

Three days later, she wrote, "Demand in the countryside remains strong as buyers are busying filling orders, as the market was quiet over the last two weeks."

Missouri: Joplin Regional Stockyards in Carthage sold 14,000 head on Monday. Compared to a week earlier, feeder steers sold \$5-10 higher at the mid-session. Heavy four-weight and light five-weight steers sold up to \$45 higher. Feeder heifers sold \$5-15 higher. Bench-

mark steers averaging 762 lbs. sold from \$346-375, averaging \$362.32.

Oklahoma: Oklahoma National Stockyards in Oklahoma City sold 9,800 head on Monday. Compared to the last sale held in December, at the mid-session, feeder steers sold \$3-8 higher. Feeder heifers sold \$10-15 higher. Steer calves sold \$15-25 higher. Heifer calves under 500 lbs. sold mostly steady, over 500 lbs. sold \$20 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 777 lbs. sold from \$340-367.50, averaging \$360.19.

South Dakota: Sioux Falls Regional in Worthing sold 6,215 head on Monday. Compared to the previous auction two weeks earlier, steer calves under 800 lbs. were steady to firm, and 800 lbs. and heavier were \$5-20 higher. Heifer calves under 700 lbs. sold steady, with instances of \$10-15 higher on 600-650 lbs., and over 700 lbs. were \$5-20 higher. Yearling feeder steers were steady to firm, and yearling feeder heifers sold \$2 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 775 lbs. sold from \$352.50-386, averaging \$373.56.

Wyoming: Winter Livestock in Riverton sold 4,068 head on Tuesday. Higher prices were reported on all classes of cattle. Benchmark steers averaging 728 lbs. sold from \$384-402.50 and averaged \$388.02. — **Anna Miller Fortozo, WLJ managing editor**

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BEAR MTN NORTH STAR 5525

+*21352923

*Bear Mtn North Star x Connealy Ruger

CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	MARB	RE	\$M	\$C
+14	-1.5	+73	+124	+17	+1.20	+1.12	+62	+282

BEAR MTN PROSPER 5674

+*21353782

*Ellingson Prosper x Bear Mtn Justify

CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	MARB	RE	\$M	\$C
+5	+1.3	+83	+139	+26	+94	+1.30	+93	+347

BEAR MTN REALITY 4524 MRS

+*21037440

*Woodhill Reality x E&B Glory 9193

CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	MARB	RE	\$M	\$C
+4	+2.7	+83	+144	+24	+73	+84	+66	+283

BEAR MTN REALITY 5544

+*21394994

*Woodhill Reality x Koupals B&B On Course 5068

CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	MARB	RE	\$M	\$C
+8	-.1	+75	+132	+30	+88	+1.28	+107	+372

BEAR MTN GENUINE 5588

+*21352374

*Sitz Genuine 491L x Bear Mtn Mark II

CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	MARB	RE	\$M	\$C
+7	+1.7	+89	+152	+21	+1.05	+1.02	+78	+341

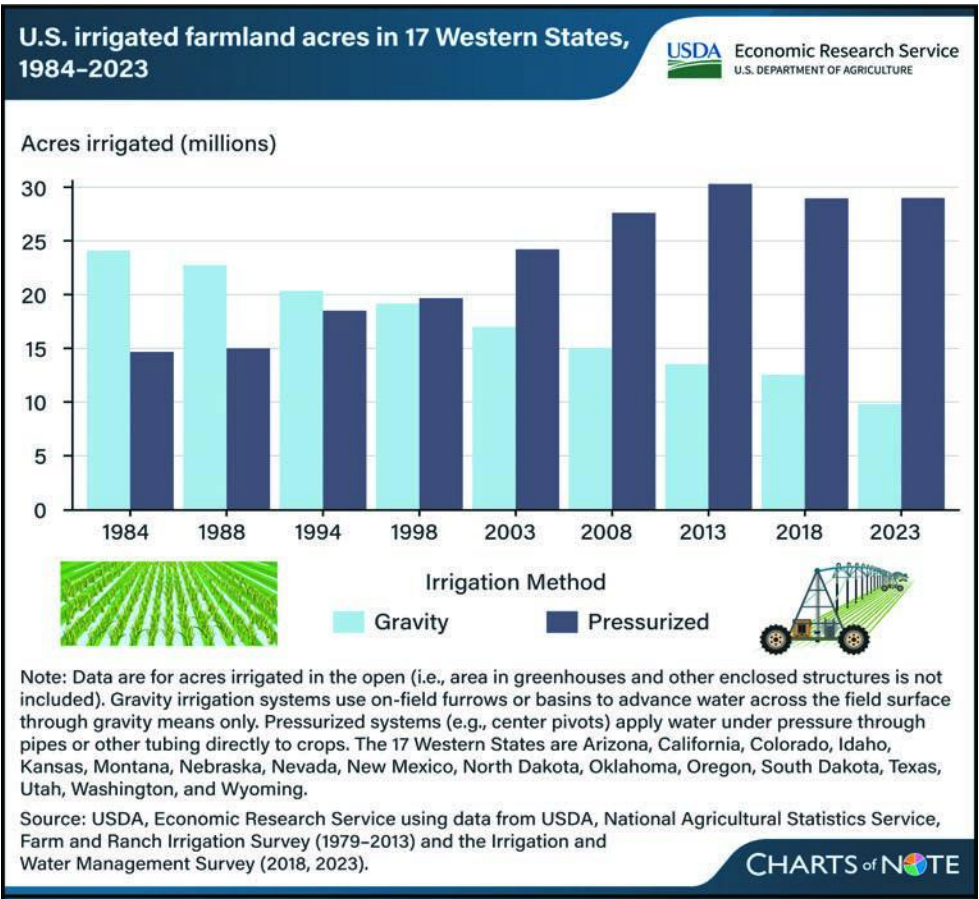
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Gravity irrigation continues to decline in West



Crops can be irrigated with gravity or pressurized systems.

Gravity systems use on-field furrows, basins, or poly-pipe to advance water across the surface of the fields through gravity only. Pressurized systems apply water under pressure through pipes or other tubing directly to crops (e.g., sprinkler and micro/drip irrigation systems).

In general, pressurized irrigation systems use water more efficiently than gravity systems because less water is lost to evaporation, deep percolation and field runoff. From 1984 to 2013, the number of acres irrigated using pressurized irrigation systems roughly doubled. Concurrently, the acreage irrigated using gravity systems declined to less than half of 1984 levels in the western states, where a generally arid climate has required irrigation in many areas.

In 2023, pressurized irrigation systems accounted for

75% of irrigated acres, up from 69% in 2013. However, this increase was due mainly to the decrease in acres irrigated using gravity systems, which declined from 13.5 to 9.8 million acres from 2013 to 2023.

Over those 10 years, acres irrigated with pressurized systems also decreased, although not as much as gravity-based systems, from 30 to 29 million acres. — **USDA Economic Research Service**

FarmHope expands mental health care

Free counseling and stress management support are available to Texas agricultural producers and their families through FarmHope, a collaborative effort of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas A&M Health Telehealth Institute.

Farmers and ranchers face some of the highest rates of anxiety, depression, substance use and suicide in the nation. Yet many rural residents struggle to access care due to distance from providers, workforce shortages, limited available services and persistent stigma.

Much of the stress comes from uncertainty about things out of their control, such as the weather and negative changes in market conditions. And, for families with generational farms and ranches, there's a pressure to continue that legacy.

To bridge that gap, Miquela Smith, AgriLife Extension health program specialist in the Disaster Assessment and Recovery unit; Tiffany Lashmet, J.D., AgriLife Extension agricultural law specialist and professor, Department of Agricultural Economics; and Carly McCord, Ph.D., Texas A&M Telehealth Institute director and Naresh K. Vashisht College of Medicine clinical associate professor, created FarmHope.

FarmHope offers no-cost telehealth counseling for Texas farmers, ranchers and agricultural workers. Services are private, easy to access, and delivered by clinicians who understand the realities of agricultural stress. If you or someone you know needs support, help is available.

FarmHope merges farm and ranch estate planning education with free, high-quality telehealth counseling delivered by licensed clinicians who understand the stressors of agriculture. Services are no-cost and available to any ag producer, ag worker or family member living in Texas—no insurance or referrals required.

"We are not just addressing this because it has been labeled as a crisis in rural America; it's more than that," Lashmet said. "We know people who have struggled. We've seen the outcomes of when people get help, and when they don't."

Texas consistently ranks among the lowest states in mental health care access, despite it being one of the nation's top agricultural producers and farming and ranching being a notably high-stress occupation.

"Farming and ranching come with more stress than most people ever see," McCord said. "In our rural communities, that stress gets magnified by long distances, few providers, and the stigma that keeps too many people just stay silent. That's why this has become a real mental health crisis—and

why telehealth and FarmHope matter so much. We're bringing care to people where they are, in ways that actually work for them."

According to the Rural Health Information Hub, in any given year, one in four adults residing in rural areas face mental health concerns, many due to stresses caused by the financial complexity of the agriculture industry, economic pressure and uncertainty, generational legacy and family dynamics, and fear of farm loss.

"So many of the factors affecting their lives and livelihoods are beyond their control," Lashmet said. "That uncertainty can take a tremendous toll on their mental health."

The urgency of the work became even clearer to Smith and Lashmet after they captured the story of Grant Heinrich of Slaton, who bravely spoke about facing multiple points of suicidal crisis. His story reflects the realities many producers experience and underscores why initiatives like FarmHope matter.

The FarmHope program is a continued push to raise awareness, provide education through farm and ranch succession planning training, and offer mental health outreach and resources for rural Texas ag producers.

Isolation, access to and cost of professional treatment and the stigma associated with asking for help have been barriers to those in agricultural and rural communities seeking the mental health care they need, Smith said.

"We realized the importance of not only encouraging these individuals who are struggling to get help but providing them with easy and free access to that help," she said.

Smith, Lashmet and McCord piloted a program to address the stress that agriculture workers face and related mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression and substance use.

Mikaela Spooner, Ph.D., psychologist and clinician at the Texas A&M Telehealth Institute, provides telehealth counseling and joined the efforts to host three farm and ranch succession planning and mental health training events that reached over 100 individuals.

Texas ag producers, farm workers and their family members can receive free, confidential counseling from a clinician who understands the unique stressors of agriculture. No insurance or provider referrals are required, and it is all private from the home.

The service is available by filling out Texas A&M Telehealth Institute's submission form or by calling the Texas A&M Telehealth Institute at 979-436-0700. — **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension**

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Farmer Bridge Assistance payments announced

USDA released the commodity payment rates for its new Farmer Bridge Assistance (FBA) Program intended to assist commodity farmers with high production costs and struggling trade deals. A total of \$12 billion will be paid to farmers in 2026, with \$11 billion consisting of one-time program payments. "These one-time payments give farmers the bridge to continue to feed and clothe America and the world while the Trump Administration continues opening new markets and strengthening the farm safety net," said USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins in a statement. Per-acre payment rates for major commodities include the following: corn, \$44.36; cotton, \$117.35; oats, \$81.75; rice, \$132.89; sorghum, \$48.11; and wheat, \$39.35. All intended row crop uses are eligible for FBA except grazing, volunteer stands, experimental, green manure, crops left standing and abandoned or cover crops. A full list of commodity payment rates is available at tinyurl.com/35majjva.

FCC bans foreign-made drones

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on Dec. 22, 2025, announced that foreign-made unmanned aircraft systems (drones) should be included on the FCC's Covered List, unless determined otherwise. The FCC Covered List includes a list of communications equipment and services that are deemed a national security risk. Drones or drone critical component parts produced in foreign countries pose "unacceptable risks to the national security of the United States and to the safety and security of U.S. persons," the FCC said in a fact sheet. The new determination does not affect the ability to use drones previously purchased or sell drones approved for use earlier in 2025, only new models.

Fair Competition for Small Business introduced

Congress introduced dual-chamber legislation intended to protect small businesses from anticompetitive pricing practices that favor large retailers. Under the Fair Competition for Small Business Act of 2025, state attorneys general would be authorized to bring civil actions for damages when retailers violate the Robinson-Patman Act. The act prohibits suppliers from charging competing buyers different prices. While state attorneys general can enforce the act, authority is limited to seeking injunctive relief. The bill was introduced in the Senate by Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) and in the House by Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA-43). "By strengthening the Robinson-Patman Act, state attorneys general would be able to hold these retailers accountable, ensuring that small businesses can compete, and succeed, on a level playing field," Booker said.

USFWS threatens CPW's wolf authority

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is threatening to remove the Colorado Parks and Wildlife's (CPW) authority to manage and proceed with its wolf reintroduction plans. Brian Nesvik, USFWS director, penned a letter Dec. 18, 2025, to the CPW, requesting a detailed account of the agency's wolf management activities, according to a report by the Coloradoan. The letter said that if CPW fails to supply a report within 30 days, USFWS will pursue legal action. Nesvik wrote that CPW was out of compliance with USFWS' Memorandum of Agreement regarding the release of wolves imported from Canada, and the release of a wolf from a pack with a confirmed history of depredation. In an X social media post dated Dec. 18, Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum wrote, "Colorado is prioritizing WOLVES over American ranchers! In January, they released 15 wolves into the wild with NO warning & recently RE-RELEASED a wolf from a pack known to kill livestock. This is a warning: if Colorado does not get control of the wolves immediately, we will!"

USDA shares 2026 research, grant priorities

USDA announced its research and development priorities for 2026, along with a standardized set of terms and conditions for grants and cooperative agreements. USDA shared five top priorities for research and development activities: increase profitability of farmers and ranchers, expand markets and create new uses for U.S. ag products, protect U.S. agriculture from invasive species, promote soil health to regenerate productivity of land, and improve human health through nutrition and food quality. "The priorities we are announcing today further reiterates President Trump's commitment to put Farmers First and provides our agricultural researchers with a strategic roadmap to help keep our producers at the forefront of productivity," Secretary Brooke Rollins said. USDA also announced a set of general terms and conditions for all futures grants and cooperative agreements. "Under this new directive, all USDA grant, cooperative agreement, and mutual interest agreement programs will utilize the same terms and conditions, and award recipients and cooperators will only need to navigate 50 or less pages of requirements," Rollins said. To view the updated terms and conditions, visit tinyurl.com/yvpfsrkk.

USDA plans to continue with reorganization plans

USDA (from page 1)

consistent terms. Of the 46,845 messages received, USDA determined that about 14% were duplicative, blank or spam. Of the remaining submissions, more than two-thirds were form or campaign emails. Still, analysis of roughly 14,000 unique comments shows overwhelming opposition: 82% expressed negative sentiment toward the reorganization, compared to just 5% positive and 7% neutral.

More than half of all comments addressed the USDA reorganization broadly, while others focused on specific agencies—most notably the U.S. Forest Service and the Agricultural Research Service (ARS). Commenters repeatedly warned that reorganizing into five regional offices would erode local knowledge, replace place-based decision-making with top-down management and weaken the USDA's ability to respond to regional agricultural and natural resource needs. Many argued that rural communities depend on county-level offices and long-standing relationships with staff that centralized regional

hubs cannot replicate.

Concerns about the Forest Service were among the most prominent themes. Stakeholders warned that restructuring could undermine the agency's capacity to manage public lands, maintain recreation access and carry out conservation and wildfire mitigation work. Many comments emphasized that centralized oversight could dilute accountability and reduce responsiveness to local conditions on federal lands.

Agricultural research emerged as another flashpoint. Comments related to the ARS—particularly the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center—were overwhelmingly negative, with more than 90% opposing closure or major reorganization. Stakeholders cited risks to long-term research projects, loss of institutional knowledge built over decades and potential harm to food security, pollinator health and climate research.

A Dec. 17, 2025, report from the USDA OIG added a new layer of concern by quantifying the scale and timing of workforce losses across the agency.

According to the OIG re-

view, USDA employed 110,384 people as of Jan. 11, 2025. Between Jan. 12, 2025, and June 14, 2025, OIG said that 20,306 employees left the department—an attrition rate of 18% over six months.

The report showed attrition surged in late April and early May, which accounted for 9,606 departures, or nearly half of all separations during the review period. The Deferred Resignation Program drove most of the decline, accounting for 15,114 exits, compared with far smaller numbers from resignations, retirements, terminations and external transfers.

Every USDA agency experienced losses, but the scale of those losses varied widely. The Forest Service lost 5,860 employees, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service lost 2,105 employees, while ARS lost 1,647. Several smaller offices experienced particularly high percentage losses, including the Office of the Secretary at 67%, the Office of Communications at 57% and the Office of Policy and Program Evaluation at 54%. Rural Development lost 1,745 employees, or 36% of its workforce.

Geographically, attrition af-

fected every state and territory, but several western states saw especially notable losses. California lost 1,268 USDA employees; Colorado, 880; Oregon, 704; Washington, 520; New Mexico, 658; and Texas, 1,025.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) released a statement after the OIG issued a staffing report she requested in March. Klobuchar said USDA is the "front door for America's farmers and ranchers," warning that the department is being weakened at a time of heightened uncertainty in rural America. She called it "particularly shocking" that agencies serving farmers and small towns lost roughly one-third of their employees, animal health agencies lost nearly a quarter of their staff, arguing that losing almost 20% of USDA's workforce leaves food supply chains more vulnerable to threats such as New World screw-worm and avian flu.

According to Government Executive, USDA is moving forward with its reorganization despite objections from employees, outside stakeholders and bipartisan congressional concerns. — **Charles Wallace**, **WLJ** contributing editor



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Waterkeeper sues DEQ over new sewer pipeline in Big Sky

Upper Missouri Waterkeeper has sued the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) alleging an unconstitutional failure of public process and lack of environmental review for a major sewer pipeline in Big Sky.

Waterkeeper, a nonprofit with a mission to protect and restore water in the Upper Missouri River Basin, said the DEQ is taking up smaller portions of a major regional wastewater system individually, but it said the agency must review the project as a whole.

Waterkeeper recently announced a Gallatin County District Court judge found the DEQ didn't take a "hard look" at water quality impacts on the Gallatin River in a different case the nonprofit had filed about a proposed subdivision.

Also in Gallatin County District Court, the most recent lawsuit brings challenges related to the new

pipeline that's part of the larger Gallatin Canyon Sewer Project, a regional wastewater collection, treatment and disposal plan the plaintiffs estimate will push disposal gallons per day from as much as 120,000 gallons to an estimated 600,000 gallons.

The plan is jointly proposed by the Gallatin Canyon County Water & Sewer District and Big Sky County Water & Sewer District. The DEQ has permitting and review authority over it.

The lawsuit said the pipeline project entails roughly 5,000 linear feet of sewage line and a second, treated effluent main line (two pipelines) adjacent to Highway 64 and running parallel to "reaches of the West Fork Gallatin River."

The project collects sewage in Big Sky's Canyon Area, a development corridor along the Gallatin. It moves it for treatment up to the Big Sky County Water &

Sewer District, and then moves the treated wastewater back to the Canyon Area for disposal through a groundwater discharge permit being considered by the DEQ, the lawsuit said.

The lawsuit alleges the DEQ has failed to provide for meaningful public participation in the project, in violation of the Montana Constitution, and it's making decisions before completing an analysis of significant environmental impacts.

The lawsuit also alleges the project could increase harms to the middle segment of the Gallatin River, already impacted with algal blooms, and even be a detriment to drinking water for people downstream.

Parts of the river are considered impaired by the Environmental Protection Agency.

In a statement, Guy Alsentzer of Upper Missouri Waterkeeper said the DEQ

is blocking the public from participating in decisions that have significant public interest and deserve transparency.

For example, an impairment determination and related restoration plan for the Gallatin River drew more than 1,000 public comments, the lawsuit said.

"Massive infrastructure projects being approved behind closed doors, without public participation, is antithetical to democracy," Alsentzer said in a statement. "DEQ is stacking the deck by considering pieces of a regional wastewater system in isolation."

"The public deserves—and the Montana Constitution guarantees—a transparent decision-making process that reviews the whole picture."

He said the pipeline is integral to a pending new municipal-scale discharge permit application, but the public is being illegally shut

out of decisions about it.

The lawsuit said the nonprofit only learned about the DEQ's decisions in November from a public records request it filed under the Right to Know of the Montana Constitution.

But that was months after the DEQ approved a critical application for the pipeline, one at which the project would become viable or would stop, the lawsuit said. And the approval took place June 18 without any public notice or public participation opportunities and without any published environmental reviews, the lawsuit said.

It alleges the DEQ failed to perform any review under the Montana Environmental Policy Act, or MEPA, for the pipeline project, and it also failed to complete a review of the larger wastewater project.

In fact, the lawsuit said DEQ has been reviewing multiple segments of the same project, without meaningful environmental review or public participation, in an action the plaintiff alleges is a "systemic

failure" that ignores the potential the overall project could be "cumulatively significant."

In an email, a spokesperson for the DEQ said the agency does not typically comment on litigation and does not have comment at this time.

The Waterkeeper is asking the court to declare the DEQ violated the right to know and right to participate under the Montana Constitution; that it violated MEPA by failing to perform environmental analysis and by segmenting its reviews of the wastewater project; and that its "informal pattern" of exempting smaller projects from public participation requirements is unconstitutional.

The Waterkeeper also asks the court to vacate the approval of the pipeline project application and remand it for public processes. It asks the court to stop the DEQ from authorizing any action connected to the wastewater project until after it has completed environmental reviews. — **Keila Szpaller, Daily Montanan**

Study reveals \$6,600 cost of losing topsoil

Losing six inches of topsoil could cost farmers more than \$6,600 in nutrients and organic matter, according to a new analysis by North Dakota State University (NDSU) researchers.

Topsoil is the most fertile layer of a soil, rich in microbial activity and essential for crop production. When it erodes, thousands of dollars' worth of nutrients and organic matter erode with it.

NDSU researchers' findings showed that the cost of direct nutrient loss and nutrient loss due to organic matter loss totals over \$1,100 for every inch of lost topsoil, or \$6,600 for a 6-inch layer.

These numbers show that soil erosion is an economic issue, not just an environmental one, said Naeem Kalwar, NDSU soil health specialist at the Langdon Research Extension Center. "Protecting topsoil from erosion is crucial," Kalwar said. "That layer is where farmers plant seed, and it is responsible for feeding the world."

Soil erosion, which is the loss of soil sediments or material, can happen due to wind, water and tillage. Tillage can worsen wind- and water-related erosion by loosening the soil. When topsoil erodes into roadside ditches, it pollutes the drinking water for humans and livestock.

"Farmers, ranchers and landowners will eventually have to pay to replace those nutrients," said Kalwar.

Kalwar set out to determine the value of an inch of topsoil in terms of replacing lost crop nutrients and organic matter. Researchers

collected a 6-inch-deep sample of topsoil that had eroded into a roadside ditch from an adjoining field and sent it to a soil testing laboratory for a comprehensive fertility analysis. Results showed appreciable quantities of essential plant nutrients and a significant amount of soil organic matter.

After calculating the cost of replacing the nitrogen, phosphorus, potash, sulfate-sulfur and iron present in the lost 6 inches of soil through commercial fertilizers, researchers determined the replacement cost to be \$2,541.22, or \$423.54 for every inch of lost topsoil.

In addition, replacing nutrients associated with organic matter loss added another \$4,141.73, or \$690.28 per inch. Combined, the total cost is \$1,113.82 per inch, or \$6,682.95 for six inches.

While fertilizers can replace nutrients, rebuilding soil organic matter could take decades, even with the adoption of best management practices. A study at the NDSU Carrington Research Extension Center determined that soil organic matter increases by 1% after 27 years of consistent livestock manure applications. Based on that rate, replacing the 5.7% of organic matter lost from six inches of topsoil could take approximately 154 years, or nearly two lifetimes.

"Preventing erosion is far more cost-effective than trying to rebuild the soil," said Kalwar. "Simple practices like reduced tillage and cover crops can save thousands over time." — **NDSU Extension**



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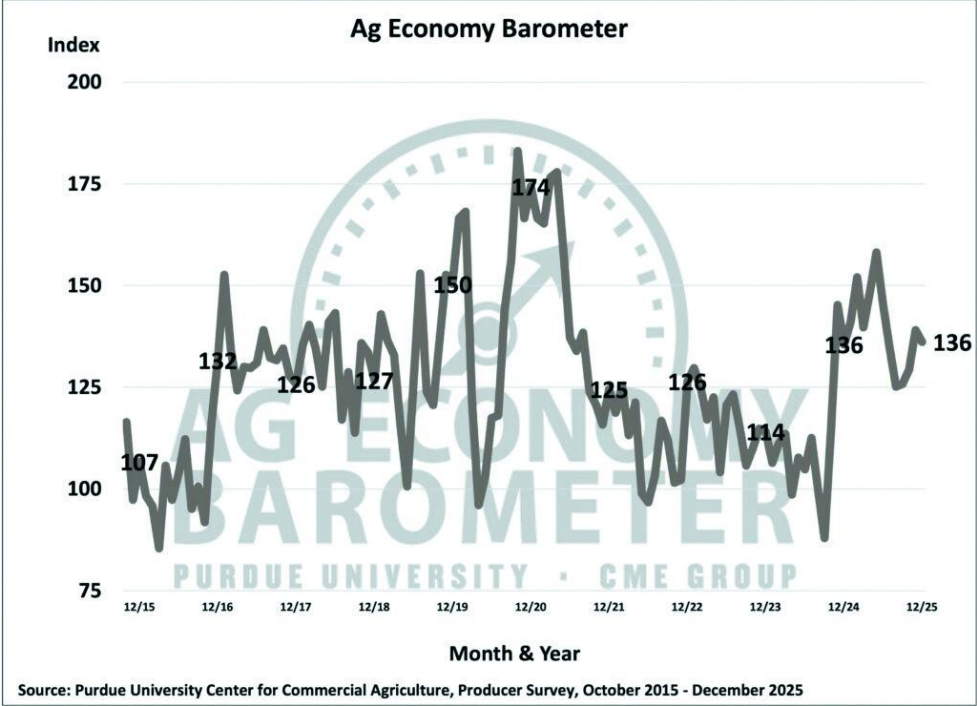
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Farmer sentiment drifts lower in December



Farmer sentiment weakened slightly in December as the Purdue University-CME Group Ag Economy Barometer Index dropped just 3 points in December to a reading of 136. Weakness in the barometer was attributable to a modest decline in producers' long-term outlook, as the Future Expectations Index fell to 140, 4 points below a month earlier.

Meanwhile, the Current Conditions Index, at 128, was unchanged from November's reading. Angst about prospects for U.S. soybean exports amid increasing competition from Brazil contributed to a slightly weaker outlook for the future among crop producers. The December barometer survey took place from Dec. 1-5, 2025.

Producers' expectations for their farms' financial performance changed little compared to November, as the financial performance index rose just 2 points to 94. Underlying the index's small improvement was a shift toward more producers saying they expect this year's farm financial performance to be about the same as last year's.

At a reading of 58, the Farm Capital Investment Index also increased 2 points compared to a month earlier. Although the investment index rose slightly in December, 60% of producers still said it was a bad time to make a large investment in their farms.

Farmers' perspectives on U.S. agricultural exports were mixed in December. Responding to a generic question about the future of agricultural exports, producers provided one of their most optimistic outlooks of the year, with just 5% of producers looking for exports to decline over the next five years.

However, when asked to focus more specifically on soybeans, a key agricultural export, their outlook was notably less sanguine. In December, 13% of corn and soybean growers said they expect soybean exports to decline over the

upcoming five years, up from 8% of growers who felt that way in November. Similarly, the percentage of growers who expect soybean exports to increase in the next five years fell from 47% in November to 39% in December.

Increasing competition from Brazil is weighing on producers' minds. Eighty-four percent of corn and soybean producers said they were concerned or very concerned about the competitiveness of U.S. soybean exports versus Brazil's, with 45% indicating they were very concerned.

Farmers remained optimistic about farmland values in December. The Short-Term Farmland Value Expectations Index and the long-term index were virtually unchanged, as both indices rose just one point compared to November. The small increase left the short-term index at 117, which was 11 points above its most recent low in September and 7 points higher than a year earlier. The long-term index reading of 166, a new record high, was 20 points above its most recent low in September and 11 points higher than a year ago.

Confidence in the use of tariffs to strengthen the U.S. agricultural economy is showing signs of waning. In December, 54% of respondents said they expect the use of tariffs to strengthen the agricultural economy, down from 58% and 59% in October and November, respectively. Farmers who are uncertain about tariffs' long-run impact rose to 19% of respondents in December, up from 17% a month earlier.

The percentage of producers who say they are uncertain about how tariff policy will affect the agricultural economy in the long run has more than doubled since this question was first posed in the spring of 2025. However, when asked if the U.S. is headed in the "right direction" or on the "wrong track," three-fourths (75%) of respondents chose "right direction" in De-

cember, which was the highest percentage recorded since this question was first included in barometer surveys starting in July.

Wrapping up

Farmer sentiment drifted lower in December as producers became slightly less optimistic about the future than in November. The small decline in overall farmer sentiment occurred despite the fact that producers held a more optimistic view of their farms'

financial performance and were slightly more optimistic about farmland values than a month earlier.

Uncertainty about the future of agricultural trade continues to influence farmer sentiment. Nearly one in five (19%) respondents said they are uncertain about how U.S. tariff policy will affect the agricultural economy in the long run. In addition to rising concerns about tariff policy impacts on agriculture, almost 9 out of 10 (86%) corn and soybean growers said they were concerned about increasing competition from Brazil affecting U.S. soybean exports, which might also underlie weakness in expectations for the future.

— **Purdue University and CME Group**

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Montana Stockgrowers announces Cattle Drive Program winners

The Montana Stockgrowers Foundation (MSF) is proud to announce the winners of the 2024 Cattle Drive Program, Montana's largest steer feedout contest. These

steers were donated in the fall of 2024 and harvested in late summer of 2025.

The awards were announced at the Cattle Drive Donor Banquet in Billings, MT, on Dec. 10, 2025. Awards recognize donors for excellence in average daily gain (ADG), carcass value and overall performance, highlighting the quality cattle genetics raised by Montana producers.

"We are continually impressed by the quality of cattle donated to the Cattle Drive Program and the dedication of the donors who make it possible," said Monty Lesh, Montana Stockgrowers Association (MSGA) second vice president and Cattle Drive Committee chairman.

"Each donation is more than just a gift," he said. "It's an investment that keeps on growing, providing valuable performance data, supporting Montana's youth and leadership programs, and strengthening the future of our state's cattle industry."

The Cattle Drive program allows ranchers and supporters to donate a steer—or the market value of a steer—to benefit MSF programs, including educational scholarships and leadership devel-

opment. Donated steers are transported to Yellowstone Cattle Feeders in Shepherd, MT, where they are fed to ideal market weight. Once harvested, all proceeds support MSF initiatives, creating a meaningful impact on Montana's agricultural community.

Benefits of participation include:

- (ADG) and carcass data on all donated steers.
- Custom-branded Cattle Drive apparel.
- NEOGEN Igenity and Igenity BCHF genomic test results.
- Opportunities to win grand prizes and incentive prizes from Montana breed associations.
- Charitable tax deductions.
- Genetic consultation opportunities with Cattle Data Genie.

Through partnerships with Montana breed associations, donors may also receive financial incentives when steers sired by registered bulls place in the contests, further showcasing the state's high-quality cattle genetics.

The steer with the highest combined scores in ADG and carcass value is recognized as the champion steer. In partnership with Western Ranch Supply and MJE Livestock Equipment, the overall 2024 winner will receive a panel trailer and set of panels valued at over \$17,000. Steers are also graded on ADG and carcass value, and the top three steers in each category were recognized at the 2026 MSGA Annual Convention & Trade Show.

Ranches of Billings. The Stovall Ranches steer was sired by a registered Angus bull through the American Angus Association and the Montana Angus Association supports this sired verified steer.

- Second place: Jim and Lesley Robinson, Lazy YE Cattle Company of Dodson.
- Third place: Garrett and Donna Harshbarger, Waterloo Land & Cattle of Waterloo. The Waterloo Land & Cattle steer was sired by a registered Hereford bull through the Hereford Association. The Montana Hereford Association supports the sire verification of this baldy steer.
- Fourth place: Lee and Madylon Cornwell, Cornwell Ranch of Glasgow.
- Fifth place: Cody Cornwell and Jake Newton, Glasgow Stockyards of Glasgow with a steer purchased from Veseth Cattle Company of Malta.
- Sixth place: Montana Stockgrowers Board of Directors and Foundation Trustees members Cheryl Curry, Kirk Donsbach, Dean Lerum, Ty McDonald and John Patterson with a steer purchased from Curry Cattle Company of Valier.
- Seventh place: Don and Pam Griffin, Griffin Ranch of Miles City.
- Eighth place: Matt & Kris Pierson, Highland Livestock Company of Livingston.
- Ninth place: Jim Steinbeisser, Steinbeisser & Sons of Sidney.
- Tenth place: Keith and Christl Bales, Bales Ranch of Otter.

Champion Steer awards

- First place: Jim and Lesley Robinson, Lazy YE Cattle Company of Dodson.
- Second place: Turk and Jenny Stovall, Stovall Ranches of Billings.
- Third place: 2023 M Bar class members, Rocky Forseth, Al Koenig, Stan Olson and Cameron Wolenetz, with a steer purchased from Cornwell Ranch of Glasgow.
- Fourth place: Cody Cornwell and Jake Newton, Glasgow Stockyards of Glasgow with a steer purchased from Veseth Cattle Company of Malta.
- Fifth place: Jim Steinbeisser, Steinbeisser & Sons of Sidney.
- Sixth place: Don and Pam Griffin, Griffin Ranch of Miles City.
- Seventh place: Ty Jones, Jones Cattle Company of Miles City.
- Eighth place: Dusty Hahn, Hahn Ranch of Townsend.
- Ninth place: Lee and Madylon Cornwell, Cornwell Ranch of Glasgow.
- Tenth place: Montana Stockgrowers Board of Directors and Foundation Trustees members Cheryl Curry, Kirk Donsbach, Dean Lerum, Ty McDonald and John Patterson with a steer purchased from Curry Cattle Company of Valier.

Carcass value awards

- First place: Gary and Tammy Heiken, Walking 5 Ranch of Lavina. The Walking 5 Ranch steer was sired by a registered Simmental bull through the Simmental Association and the Montana Simmental Association support this sired verified steer.
 - Second place: Jim and Lesley Robinson, Lazy YE Cattle Company of Dodson.
 - Third place: 2023 M Bar class members, Rocky Forseth, Al Koenig, Stan Olson and Cameron Wolenetz, with a steer purchased from Cornwell Ranch of Glasgow.
 - Fourth place: Kyle Kelley, Paws Up Cattle Company of Greenough.
 - Fifth place: John Grande, Grande Ranch of Lennep.
 - Sixth place: Jim Butcher, Gateway Simmental of Lewistown.
 - Seventh place: Turk and Jenny Stovall, Stovall Ranches of Billings.
 - Eighth place: Tyrell McClain, Sunlight Ranch of Parkman, Wyoming.
 - Ninth place: Wayne and Karalee Slaght, Two Creek Monture Ranch Company of Ovando.
 - Tenth place: Joe Dooling, Cedar Creek Land & Livestock of Helena.
- MSF invites ranchers and supporters across the state to join the 2025 Cattle Drive Program. For more information, visit mtbeeffoundation.org. — MSF



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Feeder Cattle.....12pm

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Rancher creates skin care products from tallow

A passion for the beef industry and health care led Katie Biggins to add a new enterprise using a beef by-product—tallow—to her family's already-growing ranch-to-retail beef business.

As a nurse, Biggins searches for healthy products for her family that are clean (made with all-natural ingredients) and truly work, especially when it comes to skin care.

"I had heard a lot on social media about beef tallow and its benefits, so I decided it was time to really do some research," she said. "I realized I had beef tallow in my freezer, so trying it out would be fairly easy."

She started experimenting in the summer of 2024, transforming her Gregory, SD, ranch kitchen into a lab where she measured, rendered, mixed and blended until she found the right formula. "Beef tallow may be a trend used by many today, but it's actually something our ancestors used for centuries before us for its healing properties," Biggins explained.

"It's a biocompatible superfood for your skin. It contains restorative fatty acids and nutrients nearly identical to our skin's natural lipid barrier," she continued.

The key benefits of tallow are improved skin cell health, restoration of moisture, soothing of inflammation, protection against premature aging, strengthening of the

skin barrier and easy absorption.

Initially, Biggins gave away the skin-care products to family and friends. Their praises and encouragement convinced her to sell the products starting in October 2024 under the brand Biggins Cattle Co. Tallow.

Quality counts

The now-called Biggins & Co. Tallow is made from suet, which is the highest quality fat from a beef carcass. It's rendered in small batches over three days for purity and stability. Rendering starts with multiple wet renders to remove any impurities. After the initial wet rendering and straining, the next phase involves dry rendering.

This process requires strict temperature control of around 130 F to evaporate any remaining moisture to ensure a shelf-stable and smooth-textured product, while preserving the tallow's nutrients and vitamins. The tallow is odorless—yet nutrient dense—and whipped to a soft, spreadable texture. It's also free of fillers, preservatives or synthetic fragrances.

The products are made of tallow and jojoba oil, which helps with hydration into the skin. Jojoba oil comes from the jojoba nut and has been used for centuries by Native Americans for its nourishing properties. The oil is a staple

in the cosmetic industry for its nutritional and beauty benefits. Biggins said it's not oily but is like the natural sebum that skin produces, making the tallow ideal for all skin types. Jojoba oil also helps brighten, tighten and smooth skin, which Biggins said can help balance your complexion.

Essential oils are purchased from a U.S. company that sources them from around the world. Those used in the scented products are sustainable, nontoxic, cruelty-free and vegan-produced for high quality. The vanilla is from grade A Madagascar vanilla beans with powerful antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties. Other ingredients used include frankincense, manuka, blue tansy and tea tree oil.

"I want everything to be high quality, tested and natural," she explained.

Family legacy

Katie and her husband, Jessie, bought their current cattle herd in 2010 from her dad, but it was started by previous generations of the family. The couple's children—David, 16; Gracie, 14; and Brooks, 6—are the fifth generation to carry on the ranching legacy. The family works together to care for the cattle. Gracie can also be found in the kitchen helping with tallow production.

Biggins said that when she and Jessie decided to select cattle from their herd to feed and sell for the retail beef business, they wanted the very best they could raise.

"We started looking more closely at genetics and making sure we are raising high-quality Angus beef for our beef business," she explained. "The quality extends into the tallow, as well."

Their beef business continues to grow. They handpick which animals are fed out and have a few cows calving in the fall to help provide product year-round. These same animals are the source for the tallow products. Their cattle are pasture-raised, grass- and grain-finished, hormone-free Angus cattle that are USDA inspected.

The Biggins' retail beef business started with inquir-

ies from the hundreds of hunters who travel to their ranch each fall for pheasant hunting. They asked about buying whole, halves or quarters of beef after seeing the cattle on the ranch. Eventually, these hunters became their first customers, and the rising demand for their beef led to the retail beef business.

To learn more about retail, Biggins did a mentorship with a ranch-to-retail business in California to learn the logistics of e-commerce, social media strategy and shipping. The couple also received a USDA Value-Added Producer Grant to help with business growth.

For now, a freezer trailer is used to store meat for retail sales. Beef is shipped once per month, but tallow products are shipped soon after orders are received. The Big-

ginses hope to build a shop soon to house the growing beef and tallow business.

"(I want) one that will include a commercial kitchen for rendering and whipping the tallow in a temperature-controlled space," she said with a laugh, since she's been using the family's kitchen. It will also include walk-in freezers for ease of storing the beef inventory. Biggins would also eventually like to be able to have seasonal customer events and on-site shopping.

"Our mission is to have intentional growth. We want to continue to provide an expanding line of products on the beef and tallow side, but not lose sight of the importance of raising high-quality beef with proper stewardship," she said. — **Jennifer Carrico**, DTN senior livestock editor



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ALL BREEDS

Jan. 17 – Western Elite Bull & Female Sale at NWSS, Denver, CO
Jan. 28 – Red Bluff Bull & Gelding Sale, Red Bluff, CA
Feb. 7 – Klamath Cattlemen's Association, Bull Sale, Klamath Falls, OR
Feb. 14 – Great Basin Bull Sale, Fallon, NV
Mar. 6 – Intermountain Genetic Alliance, Bull Sale, Heber City, UT

ANGUS

Jan. 16 – Foundation Angus Sale, Denver, CO
Jan. 17 – Redland Angus, Bull Sale, Buffalo, WY
Jan. 20 – Ken Haas Angus, Bull Sale, La Grange, WY
Jan. 23 – Flesch Angus, Production Sale, Shelby, MT
Jan. 23 – McConnell Angus, Production Sale, Dix, NE
Jan. 23 – Ruggles Angus, Production Sale, McCook, NE
Jan. 24 – Little Goose Ranch, Production Sale, Buffalo, WY
Jan. 26 – APEX Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Dannebrog, NE
Jan. 30 – Kovarik Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Ord, NE
Jan. 31 – 21 Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, New England, ND
Jan. 31 – Baldridge Performance Angus, Bull Sale, North Platte, NE
Jan. 31 – Schaff Angus Valley, Production Sale, St. Anthony, ND
Feb. 1 – Frey Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Granville, ND
Feb. 4 – Huwa Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Roggen, CO
Feb. 5 – Bear Mountain Angus, Bull Sale, Palisade, NE
Feb. 6 – Burgess Angus, Bull Sale, Homedale, ID
Feb. 6 – Poss Angus, Bull Sale, Scotia, NE
Feb. 6 – TJS Red Angus, Production Sale, Buffalo, WY
Feb. 7 – Ellingson Angus, Bull Sale, St. Anthony, ND
Feb. 9 – BB Cattle, Bull Sale, Connell, WA
Feb. 10 – South Mountain Cattle, Bull Sale, Marsing, ID
Feb. 10 – Werning Cattle Co., Production Sale, Emery, SD
Feb. 11 – Jindra Angus, Bull Sale, Clarkson, NE
Feb. 11 – Meadow Acres Angus, Bull Sale, Stanfield, OR
Feb. 12 – Booth's Cherry Creek Ranch, Bull Sale, Veteran, WY
Feb. 12 – Stokrose Angus, Bull Sale, Warden, WA
Feb. 13 – Bar KD Ranch, Bull Sale, Alturas, CA
Feb. 13 – Dutch Flat Angus & CX Ranch, Production Sale, Lewiston, ID
Feb. 13 – Powder River Angus, Bull Sale, Buffalo, WY
Feb. 13 – Raml Cattle, Production Sale, Goodwin, SD
Feb. 13 – Rees Bros., Production Sale, Morgan, UT
Feb. 14 – Big Rok Angus, Bull Sale, Detroit Lakes, MN
Feb. 15 – Bruner Angus, Bull Sale, Drake, ND
Feb. 16 – Eagle Pass Ranch, Bull Sale, Highmore, SD
Feb. 16 – Frank Cattle & Genetics, Bull Sale, Lodgepole, NE

Feb. 16 – Teixeira Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Terrebonne, OR
Feb. 16 – Weaver Ranch Angus, Production Sale, Fort Collins, CO
Feb. 17 – Coleman Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Charlo, MT
Feb. 17 – Kessler Angus, Bull Sale, Milton-Freewater, OR
Feb. 17 – McClun's Lazy JM Ranch, Production Sale, Torrington, WY
Feb. 18 – Shaw Cattle, Bull Sale, Caldwell, ID
Feb. 18 – Skyline Angus, Bull Sale, Stevensville, MT
Feb. 19 – Krebs Ranch, Bull Sale, Gordon, NE
Feb. 19 – Small Livestock, Bull Sale, Winnemucca, NV
Feb. 19 – Van Dyke Angus, Bull Sale, Manhattan, MT
Feb. 20 – Hoffman Ranch & Stelpflug Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Thedford, NE
Feb. 21 – Colorado State University, Production Sale, Fort Collins, CO
Feb. 21 – Redland Redbank Angus, Bull Sale, Worland, WY
Feb. 21 – Schiefelbein Farms, Bull Sale, Kimball, MN
Feb. 21 – Strommen Ranch, Bull Sale, Solen, ND
Feb. 21 – True West Genetics, Bull Sale, Moro, OR
Feb. 22 – Buchanan Angus, Bull & Female Sale, Klamath Falls, OR
Feb. 23 – Circle L Angus, Production Sale, Dillon, MT
Feb. 23 – Colyer Hereford & Angus, Bull Sale, Bruneau, ID
Feb. 23 – Reyes/Russell Angus, Bull Sale, Wheatland, WY
Feb. 24 – Barker Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Burley, ID
Feb. 24 – Connelly Angus, Bull Sale, Valier, MT
Feb. 24 – Haynes Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Ogallala, NE
Feb. 24 – Thomas Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Baker City, OR
Feb. 25 – Price Cattle & Murdock Red Angus, Bull Sale, Stanfield, OR
Feb. 25 – TC Ranch, Bull Sale, Franklin, NE
Feb. 26 – 3 String Cattle, Bull Sale, Shoshone, ID
Feb. 27 – Samaria Hills, Bull Sale, Malad, ID
Feb. 27 – Skinner Ranch, Bull Sale, Hall, MT
Feb. 27 – Star Gate Angus, Bull Sale, Twin Falls, ID
Feb. 28 – Baker Angus, Bull Sale, Vale, OR
Mar. 1 – Camas Prairie Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Lewiston, ID
Mar. 1 – Stevenson Down T Angus, Bull Sale, White Sulphur Springs, MT
Mar. 2 – Harrell Ranch, Bull Sale, Baker City, OR
Mar. 3 – Allen Brothers Cattle, Bull Sale, North Powder, OR
Mar. 3 – Ipsen Cattle, Production Sale, Online
Mar. 4 – Ox Bow Ranch, Bull Sale, Wolf Creek, MT
Mar. 4 – Snake River Valley Genetics, Bull Sale, Idaho Falls, ID
Mar. 5 – Cannon Angus, Bull Sale, Preston, ID
Mar. 5 – Split Diamond Ranch, Bull Sale, Dillon, MT
Mar. 6 – Crouthamel Cattle, Bull Sale, Stanfield, OR
Mar. 6 – Leadore Angus, Bull Sale, Leadore, ID
Mar. 6 – Parry Angus, Bull Sale, Sterling, CO
Mar. 7 – 3C Cattle, Bull Sale, Stevensville, MT
Mar. 7 – Kimm Angus, Bull Sale, Three Forks, MT
Mar. 7 – Loya/Wardell Angus, Bull Sale, Platteville, CO

Mar. 7 – Lucky 7 Angus, Bull Sale, Riverton, WY

BALANCER

Feb. 2 – Taubenheim Gelbvieh, Bull Sale, Amherst, NE
Feb. 16 – Eagle Pass Ranch, Bull Sale, Highmore, SD
Feb. 27 – Pot of Gold Bull Sale, Montrose, CO

CHAROLAIS

Feb. 11 – Broberg Charolais, Bull Sale, Tilden, NE
Feb. 17 – V-A-L Charolais Ranch, Bull Sale, Nyssa, OR
Feb. 19 – Small Livestock, Bull Sale, Winnemucca, NV
Mar. 6 – Crouthamel Cattle, Bull Sale, Stanfield, OR

GELBVIEH

Feb. 2 – Taubenheim Gelbvieh, Bull Sale, Amherst, NE
Feb. 21 – True West Genetics, Bull Sale, Moro, OR
Feb. 27 – Pot of Gold Bull Sale, Montrose, CO

HEREFORD

Jan. 19 – Van Newkirk Herefords, Bull Sale, Oshkosh, NE
Jan. 20 – Mrnak Hereford Ranch, Production Sale, Bowman, ND
Jan. 27 – Churchill Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Manhattan, MT
Jan. 29 – Ridder Herefords, Bull Sale, Callaway, NE
Feb. 2 – Pelton Polled Herefords, Bull Sale, Halliday, ND
Feb. 4 – Durbin Creek Ranch, Bull Sale, Worland, WY
Feb. 5 – Stroh Herefords, Production Sale, Killdeer, ND
Feb. 6 – Baumgarten Cattle Co., Production Sale, Belfield, ND
Feb. 6 – Elkington Polled Hereford & South Devons, Production Sale, Idaho Falls, ID
Feb. 7 – Upstream Ranch, Production Sale, Taylor, NE
Feb. 9 – BB Cattle, Bull Sale, Connell, WA
Feb. 11 – Friedt Herefords, Production Sale, Dickinson, ND
Feb. 13 – Dutch Flat Angus & CX Ranch, Production Sale, Lewiston, ID
Feb. 13 – Rees Bros., Production Sale, Morgan, UT
Feb. 13 – Topp Herefords, Bull Sale, Grace City, ND
Feb. 17 – McClun's Lazy JM Ranch, Production Sale, Torrington, WY
Feb. 18 – Shaw Cattle, Bull Sale, Caldwell, ID
Feb. 20 – Hoffman Ranch & Stelpflug Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Thedford, NE
Feb. 21 – Colorado State University, Production Sale, Fort Collins, CO
Feb. 23 – Colyer Hereford & Angus, Bull Sale, Bruneau, ID
Feb. 25 – EF1 Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Carpio, ND
Feb. 26 – L Bar W Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Columbus, MT
Feb. 27 – Jamison Herefords, Bull Sale, Quinter, KS
Mar. 2 – Harrell Ranch, Bull Sale, Baker City, OR

LIMOUSIN

Mar. 4 – Snake River Valley Genetics, Bull Sale, Idaho Falls, ID

LIM-FLEX

Mar. 4 – Snake River Valley Genetics, Bull Sale, Idaho Falls, ID

OPTIMIZER

Feb. 27 – Skinner Ranch, Bull Sale, Hall, MT

RED ANGUS

Feb. 6 – Calvo Family Red Angus, Production Sale, Online

Feb. 6 – TJS Red Angus, Production Sale, Buffalo, WY
Feb. 14 – Ludvigson Red Angus, Bull Sale, Meriden, WY
Feb. 16 – Eagle Pass Ranch, Bull Sale, Highmore, SD
Feb. 16 – Frank Cattle & Genetics, Bull Sale, Lodgepole, NE
Feb. 18 – Shaw Cattle, Bull Sale, Caldwell, ID
Feb. 25 – Price Cattle & Murdock, Red Angus Bull Sale, Stanfield, OR
Feb. 26 – McCann Red Angus, Bull Sale, Lewiston, ID
Mar. 3 – Dille Red Angus, Bull Sale, Buhl, ID
Mar. 3 – Sandhills Red Angus, Bull Sale, Sidney, MT
Mar. 7 – Redland Red Angus, Bull Sale, Hysham, MT

SIMANGUS

Jan. 18 – The One & Only Simmental Sale at NWSS, Denver, CO
Jan. 20 – Powerline Genetics, Bull Sale, Arapahoe, NE
Jan. 26 – APEX Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Dannebrog, NE
Feb. 2 – Gateway Ranch Simmentals, Bull Sale, Lewistown, MT
Feb. 10 – Werning Cattle Co., Production Sale, Emery, SD
Feb. 12 – Bar CK Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Culver, OR
Feb. 12 – Lassle Ranch Simmentals, Production Sale, Glendive, ND
Feb. 13 – Bar KD Angus, Bull Sale, Alturas, CA
Feb. 13 – Raml Cattle, Production Sale, Goodwin, SD

Feb. 16 – Bulls of the Big Sky, Bull Sale, Billings, MT
Feb. 16 – Eagle Pass Ranch, Bull Sale, Highmore, SD
Feb. 19 – Small Livestock, Bull Sale, Winnemucca, NV
Feb. 24 – Barker Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Burley, ID
Feb. 25 – Price Cattle & Murdock Red Angus, Bull Sale, Stanfield, OR
Feb. 26 – Meyring Cattle Co., Production Sale, Alliance, NE
Feb. 27 – Samaria Hills, Bull Sale, Malad, ID
Feb. 27 – Star Gate Angus, Bull Sale, Twin Falls, ID
Feb. 27 – Wishbone Simmentals, Bull Sale, Frannie, WY
Feb. 28 – Lyman Livestock, Bull Sale, Salina, UT
Mar. 3 – Allen Brothers Cattle, Bull Sale, North Powder, OR
Mar. 5 – Kearns Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Rushville, NE
Mar. 7 – Powerline Genetics, Bull Sale, Castle Dale, UT
Mar. 7 – Trinity Farms, Bull Sale, Ellensburg, WA

SIMMENTAL

Jan. 18 – The One & Only Simmental Sale at NWSS, Denver, CO
Jan. 20 – Powerline Genetics, Bull Sale, Arapahoe, NE
Jan. 26 – APEX Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Dannebrog, NE
Feb. 2 – Gateway Ranch Simmentals, Bull Sale, Lewistown, MT
Feb. 10 – Werning Cattle Co., Production Sale, Emery, SD

Feb. 12 – Lassle Ranch Simmentals, Production Sale, Glendive, ND
Feb. 13 – Raml Cattle, Production Sale, Goodwin, SD
Feb. 16 – Bulls of the Big Sky, Bull Sale, Billings, MT
Feb. 26 – Meyring Cattle Co., Production Sale, Alliance, NE
Feb. 27 – Wishbone Simmentals, Bull Sale, Frannie, WY
Feb. 28 – Lyman Livestock, Bull Sale, Salina, UT
Mar. 5 – Kearns Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Rushville, NE
Mar. 7 – Powerline Genetics, Bull Sale, Castle Dale, UT

SOUTH DEVON

Feb. 6 – Elkington Polled Hereford & South Devons, Production Sale, Idaho Falls, ID

COMMERCIAL

Jan. 14 – Maternal Merit, Bred Heifer Sale, Denver, CO
Jan. 29 – Western Video Market Auction, Red Bluff, CA
Feb. 27 – Western Video Market Auction, Cottonwood, CA

HORSE

Jan. 28 – Red Bluff Bull & Gelding Sale, Red Bluff, CA
Feb. 28 – Winnemucca Ranch, Horse Sale, Winnemucca, NV
Mar. 2 – Harrell Ranch, Bull Sale, Baker City, OR
Mar. 3 – Ipsen Cattle, Production Sale, Online

DOG

Jan. 28 – Red Bluff Stock Dog Sale, Red Bluff, CA

Montana
Performance
Bull Co-op™

with
BASIN
ANGUS · RANCH

Herd Bull quality in volume

Large Groups of Half Brothers

Annual Bull Sale

Friday • **March 20, 2026** • 1:00 pm

at the Midland Bull Test Sale Facility, Columbus, MT

Basin-Jameson-1.076

CED	BW	WW	YW	HP	CEM	Milk
+8	+2.3	+108	+170	+11.1	+9	+29
CW	Marb	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C	
+90	+1.71	+87	+85	+213	+361	

Basin True Value-30.17

CED	BW	WW	YW	HP	CEM	Milk
+7	-2.5	+72	+132	+13.3	+16	+29
CW	Marb	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C	
+64	+1.02	+89	+80	+184	+319	

Basin-Keystone-202.1

CED	BW	WW	YW	HP	CEM	Milk
+7	+0.0	+69	+131	+11.9	+16	+32
CW	Marb	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C	
+65	+1.59	+1.07	+80	+220	+365	

BCC-Rapport

CED	BW	WW	YW	HP	CEM	Milk
+12	-1.2	+80	+142	+9.7	+14	+29
CW	Marb	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C	
+62	+1.10	+54	+81	+176	+309	

Additional sire groups by:

Basin True Grit 1021 • Basin Jefferson 1104 • Basin Rangeland 3511
FHCC Foundation 1558 • FF Rito Ambitious
A A R Justified K012 • EXAR Cash 3622B

Selling
300 Bulls

For more information, contact any of the
Montana Performance Bull Co-op consignors

Brian Barragree • 406/780-1219

Rob Aumuller • 406/321-2470

Shane Whiteman • 406/366-0688

Doug Stevenson • 406/350-0350

FEBRUARY 5-8
2026

KLAMATH

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KLAMATH CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION
BULL & HEIFER SALE



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or CCI.LIVE

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Website



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Klamath County Fairgrounds



Klamath Falls, OR

For details on Event Center admission go to:



www.klamathbullsale.com

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