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INSIDE WLJ

FAR WEST EDITION — This week's issue of *WLJ* reports optimism from brokers for 2023 real estate in the Far West region as increased water allocation pushes prices higher. Page 25

STATES CALL ON USDA — Leaders from four state agriculture departments penned a letter to the USDA for relief in the face of persisting winter weather conditions. Page 21

A LOOK BACK IN HISTORY

As breeding season begins, we are looking back at the history of improvement in AI technologies from its onslaught in the 1930s. Even since two decades ago, AI has grown leaps and bounds. In the March 4, 2022, issue, *WLJ* reported on three keys to effective artificial insemination. "Knowledge of these three things—the cow's reproductive tract and how it works, the estrous cycle and what it means and embryonic/fetal development after fertilization occurs—should result in more AI-sired calves on the ground next year. They should also result in vast improvements in the genetic quality of your cow herd," read the article.

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The US enters into contraction phase

— Production declines expected

Beef prices reached records in many regions last year, thanks to continued consumer demand and tighter beef supplies. However, softening consumer sentiment and weaker beef prices toward the end of the year have flowed into this year, Rabobank said in its latest Beef Quarterly Q1 report. Beef supplies are favorable to higher beef prices, but consumer confidence will continue to be tested, the report read.

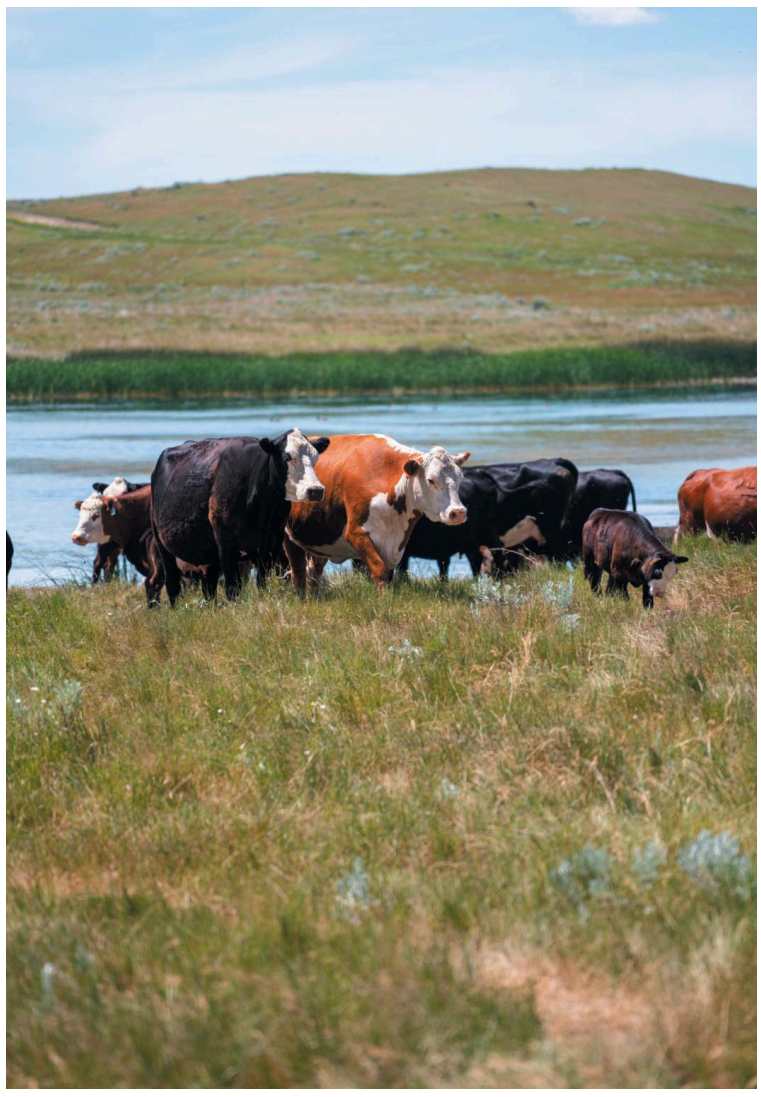
"China will remain a focal point, as the world watches to see how quickly the giant emerges from Covid lockdowns amid a slowing economic environment," the report read. "It is anticipated that Chinese demand for beef will pick up in (the second half of) 2023, boosting global beef prices."

Rabobank said the U.S. will be the other focal point after it set records in beef volume and value in 2022. The beef cattle inventory has dropped to its lowest point since 1962 and feedyard inventories are declining, which will lead to a drop in global beef supplies. Beef production through the rest of the first quarter will be steady, although a small boost in Australian and Brazilian production will come close to offsetting declines in the U.S., European Union 27 and New Zealand. While most regions have seen downward cattle prices, the U.S. has seen higher prices due to limited supplies.

Eyes on China

China's extended COVID-19 restrictions influenced beef consumption more than in other countries, and the removed restrictions will likely affect beef consumption and impact global markets. China's reopening will offer

See RABOBANK on page 23



USDA NRCS Montana

The U.S. is entering a contraction phase, and beef supplies are projected to be tighter. Pictured here, Ray Banister Ranch in Wibaux County, MT.

Real estate prices have stabilized in the Far West

— Water rights garner higher prices

Real estate prices stabilized in 2022 in the Far West region, partially due to the economic situation, with buyers looking for income opportunities from the land. Buyers are pulling out of the stock market and hedging against inflation.

Ken Bentz, owner of Bentz Warner Ranch Land LLC, told *WLJ* 1031 Exchanges are "still a really big deal" for real estate listed in the $6-12 million range in Oregon and Nevada. However, Bentz continued, there are still a lot of cash buyers. The availability of the Pasture, Range and Forage (PRF) insurance program also drives some of the bigger deals. The PRF insurance program is designed to protect against losses of forage produced for grazing or harvested for hay, resulting in increased feed costs, destocking or other actions.

Bentz noted low inventory levels for working ranches in Oregon, Nevada and Idaho. Low inventory levels have kept price levels steady, and he doesn't anticipate they will drop in 2023.

According to AgWest Farm Credit's land values market snapshot, inventory for agriculture real estate is low, and demand remains strong. However, higher interest rates, input costs, commodity prices and the ongoing drought are risk factors for the Northwest market in 2023.

As of Dec. 22, 2022, the AgWest Farm Credit property sales database recorded 932 land sales with an average value of $5,881 per acre in the Northwest.

USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service's (NASS) Land Values 2022 Summary showed the average farm real estate price per acre in the Pacific region of California, Oregon and Washington was $7,040/acre, up 9.7% from 2021. California has the highest average value per acre at $12,000/acre, followed by Washington at $3,100/acre and Oregon at $3,040. The region's average cropland value per acre was $8,580/acre, up 10.9% from 2021.

Bryon Clarke, a broker with Hayden Outdoors in Washington, told *WLJ* that last year the market was a little slow due to the economic conditions and after talking with builders in the area, they pulled back slightly but are ready to jump back into the market this year. Clarke said they had quite a few 1031 Exchanges from people in the area and out of state from buyers looking for a family retreat with some income and to put some acreage under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or into easements.

See FAR WEST on page 27

Producers: Beware of false livestock buyers and sellers

— Scam opportunities are ripe

As technology has increased over the decades, so has the potential for scammers and con artists. A number of agriculture producers and organizations are warning against an increase in scam artists within the livestock industry now.

Ranchers in Oregon spoke with Capital Press about some scams they were wary of after a few different red flags alerted them of a potential scam. Santos Angus Ranch sells bulls, cows and heifers, and received text messages from a potential buyer who was interested in the animals. The ranch said they had a bull that was available, and a price and delivery location was agreed upon with the texter.

The buyer then sent payment from a Houston, TX, address to the Santos Angus Ranch for $1,900 more than what was originally agreed upon. When asked about this payment, the buyer said that their company had made a mistake and asked for the Santos Angus Ranch to wire back the balance.

"They wanted us to wire $1,900 back in a personal or cashier check to a South Carolina account," said Santos in his interview with Capital Press. He then called the Houston company to check on its status. "It was supposedly a financial company, but when I called, it just rang and rang

See AG SCAMS on page 36

Cattle futures mixed; cash trade higher

PERIODICAL : Time Sensitive Priority Handling

Cattle futures were mixed for the week, despite a neutral-to-bullish Cattle on Feed (COF) report, higher cash trade, lower corn futures and boxed beef prices not showing any signs of faltering.

The COF report showed cattle and calves on feed for feedlots with a capacity of 1,000 head or more totaled 11.7 million head on Feb. 1. The inventory was 4% below Feb. 1, 2022. Placements in feedlots during January totaled 1.93 million head, 4% below 2022, and marketings of fed cattle during January totaled 1.85 million head, 4% above 2022.

Live cattle futures closed lower, with the April contract down $1.22 to $164.10 and the June contract down $1.65 to $159.45.

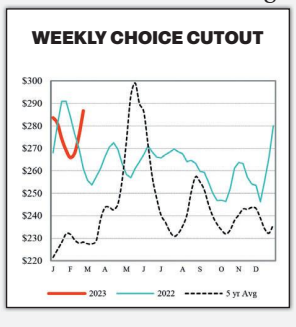
Cassie Fish, market analyst for The Beef, wrote on Tuesday that the February live cattle contract expiring at $167.50 "establishes for the record books that 2023 live cattle futures have reached the historically high territory of 2014."

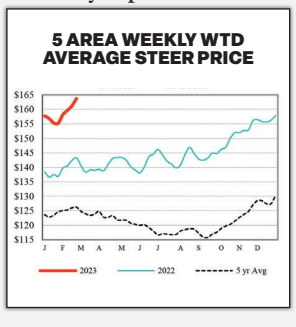
"On February 1, the high in April cattle was $163.92 and today's low is $164.10, which illustrates how this market has spent a lot of time going sideways," Fish wrote on Thursday. "April live cattle is just 200 points of the high it made last week. More chopping and down days in futures are likely short-term."

Cash trade through Thursday was 15,800 head. Live steers sold between $161-166, averaging $164.12, and dressed steers sold for $262. Most sales were reported in Nebraska and Iowa, $1 higher than the previous week's weighted average.

"Expectations for this week's negotiated fed cattle market are higher, another buck from last week's almost $3/cwt gain," Fish wrote on Tuesday. "Last time cash was this high, packers were red. Not so this time with boxed beef values averaging $26/cwt last week above one year ago. Packer margins actually expanded last week, pushing back above $100 per head which is remarkable."

Cash trade for the week





LIVE STEERS $164.58 | DRESSED STEERS $265.00 | CME FEEDER $183.04

WEEK ENDING: 3-2-23

See MARKETS on page 41

COMMENTS

More of the same



CROW

Here we go again, another effort by the same actors to change the way the Beef Checkoff and other commodity marketing boards operate. This has been an ongoing battle by the same people ever since our industry institutions consolidated almost 30 years ago to become more efficient.

Again, we have a group of senators and congresspeople worried about oversight of the many checkoff programs expenditures. The Beef Checkoff generates around $40 million from cattle producers who are charged $1 per head when they market cattle. Everyone pays and receives an 11:1 return on investment,

I would say these senators have much bigger government oversight issues to deal with than the Checkoff. Let's start with forgiving school loans, some of the grant money the agencies doll out or the billions of dollars given to the Ukraine war effort. War is big business, and you know someone is taking a commission somewhere in the name of humanity.

This checkoff program bill, The Opportunities for Fairness in Farming Act, was reintroduced in the Senate by our friend, Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ), who wants to turn the beef industry on its head and is vegan; Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT), who lives in the home state of the largest ranch company in North America, Deseret Ranches; Sen. Rand Paul, (R-KY)—go figure?; Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), the communist; and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY). Reps. Nancy Mace, (R-SC-01) and Dina Titus, (D-NV-01) introduced the House bill.

The bill is asking for more transparency and fairness in checkoff programs, along with audits. It also claims it will prohibit anti-competitive, deceptive and disparaging practices. And it will prohibit checkoff boards from doing business with parties who work to influence government policy. In their unified press release, the authors say "unfortunately, some checkoff programs have developed a reputation for unscrupulous behavior." However, every checkoff program is under fire because of a few poor decisions or mistakes. Yes, we all know that the Beef Checkoff paid for an NCBA officer's international travel bill, which was rectified.

The Agricultural Marketing Service has oversight over all these checkoff programs and that should be enough. The irony is the same people who tried to harm the Beef Checkoff 25 years ago are still at it. R-CALF, Organization for Competitive Markets, Farm Action Fund, Animal Wellness Action, and the list goes on. There is an anti-animal agriculture element behind most of these groups.

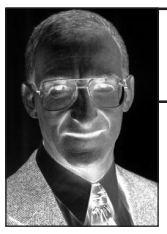
The checkoff has been in and out of court its entire lifetime—since 1986. Cattle producers continue to support it. Cattle folks had their opportunity two years ago to sign a petition calling for a referendum. This was attempted by our friend at R-CALF, Bill Bullard, who has made a career of being an anti-NCBA activist. NCBA may not be perfect, but I trust their efforts to promote a positive business environment in Washington D.C. for cattle people.

These anti-Beef Checkoff activists have tried everything in the book to maim NCBA. The checkoff was a democratic process and the majority of cattlemen who voted in 1986 got their self-help program. Now that we live in a political world, everyone is looking to government to fix any little perceived problem. The checkoff is not a problem. As far as government goes, I'd say they have other more important issues to deal with than commodity checkoff programs. NCBA has spent $3.5 million over the last 20 years defending the Beef Checkoff, and those are NCBA dues dollars, not checkoff funds.

We have the best beef demand in history, and cattle prices are on a strong upward trajectory and will remain that way until we start herd expansion, which is at least two years away. And we have good moisture in much of the West. Grass and greenbacks, what could be better?

I would give the Beef Checkoff and the Federation of State Beef Councils a lot of credit for the cattle and beef market we have. The checkoff did the market research and the product research, and discovered new beef cuts to get us where we are. The cattle industry took control of their destiny with the Beef Checkoff. We also changed the product and started value-based marketing and did genetic research to produce the best beef product in the world.

If you don't like the fact that the two organizations work in the same office, I would suggest you get over it. There is not a lot to complain about this industry going forward. I would, however, continue to pray for spring rain. — **PETE CROW**



KAY'S KORNER

RAIN AND PRICES MEAN OPTIMISM

Cattle producers can be excused for feeling slightly euphoric right now. The year could not have begun more positively in several ways. Widespread rains, particularly in the West, have helped reduce the area of cow-calf country that is under drought conditions. Secondly, cattle markets have responded to smaller cattle numbers by reporting sharply higher prices than a year ago.

Drought conditions out West, particularly in California, were extreme last fall. But much larger rainfall up to now and a huge snowpack in the Sierra mountains mean that most ranchers will enjoy ample water supplies this year. However, those relying on aquifers will be less well off, as aquifers take years to recover.

Sustained moisture is critical to ending herd liquidation and for beginning the process of herd rebuilding in earnest, says Andrew Gottschalk of HedgersEdge.com. A comparison of recent data versus the same period in 2022 provides a view of an improved drought situation, given recent moisture. That said, 53% of the cattle inventory remains in areas posting varying degrees of drought. The feeder cattle and calf markets are entrenched in the next phase of this bull market. Feeder cattle and calf prices are trading at the low end of their respective up-trending channel versus fed cattle prices. Significant price gains have yet to be realized for feeder cattle prices, he says.

The nationwide drought is and has been impacting inventories and has been having the greatest impact on states with the largest numbers, says Katelyn McCullock, for Livestock Marketing Information Center (LMIC). The Jan. 1 cattle inventory report showed that Oklahoma showed an 11.5% year-on-year decline in cattle numbers, while North and South Dakota showed 6.4% and 6.6% reductions, respectively. Iowa, Ohio and Mississippi were all down 5.5% or slightly less. California, Arizona and New Mexico were steady. Increases were only in Missouri, Hawaii and states with more dairy animal numbers, she says.

There is a difference between what is occurring in the beef herd and the dairy herd, says McCullock. Beef cows that have calved were down 3.6% from 29.983 million head to 28.918 million head. While dairy cows that have calved were up 0.3% from 9.377 million head to 9.403 million head, all cows and heifers that have calved were down 2.6% from 39.360 million head to 38,320 million head. This is the sharpest drop in beef cow numbers and all cow and heifer numbers in over 20 years, she says.

As noted, the decline in beef cattle numbers has helped lift prices so far this year. The average price of a 600-750 pound Georgia feeder steer the week before last was $185.36/cwt, which was up 21% on the same week last year. The average price of a 700-750 lb. Oklahoma City steer the week before last was $190.40/cwt, which was up 19% on the same week last year. Not to be outdone, live-fed steer prices the same week averaged $163.72/cwt, up 14.3% on the same week last year. This represented an $8.47/cwt advance in four weeks.

The latest Cattle On Feed (COF) report confirmed that feedlot numbers are declining and that cattle feeders can expect firm to higher prices for much of the year, apart from the normal summer dip. Placements of cattle into feedlots in January declined 72,000 head or 3.6% versus a year earlier, marking the fifth successive month of lower placements. The cumulative decline in placements since last September was 559,000 head.

The COF report also indicated there were 26,093 feedlots in the U.S. in 2022, This was 1,027 fewer than reported in 2021. The smallest category reported, less than 1,000 head, declined by 1,000 to 24,000 feedlots. Each feedlot size category with fewer than 7,999 head declined in number between 2021 and 2022. Each size category over 8,000 head either had the same number or grew in number over the year. Two more feedlots with over 50,000 head were reported in 2022, to make a total of 80 feedlots. Feedlots in this largest category marketed 35.2% of all fed cattle marketings in 2022, up from 34.6% in 2021. There were 2,093 feedlots with 1000 head of capacity or more, and they had a total capacity on Jan. 1 of 17.100 million head, the same as the year before.

Front-end fed cattle supplies will begin to decline sharply relative to last year during May, said Gottschalk. Provided estimated marketing levels are achieved, the decline from the March 1 estimate to the July 1 estimate is projected to be 217,000 head. This is in sharp contrast to last year and the previous five-year average, when front-end supplies increased 78,000 head and 279,000 head, respectively. Thus, the composition of the projected supply will improve from previous years, he said. That's why cattle feeders will enjoy strong prices this year. — **Steve Kay**

***(Steve Kay is editor/publisher of Cattle Buyers Weekly, an industry newsletter published at P.O. Box 2533, Petaluma, CA, 94953; 707-765-1725. Kay's Korner appears exclusively in* WLJ.)**

RESOURCE SCIENCE

WOLVES IN COLORADO: THE NEED FOR MANAGEMENT

A ballot initiative to introduce wolves into Colorado was passed in 2020. In preparation for bringing wolves into the state, the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) produced a Draft Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan and accepted public comments online and at meetings.

I wrote scientific reports analyzing a wolf introduction and estimated the potential number of wolves in Colorado (672-1,108 wolves), the annual rate of wolves preying on elk (17 elk per wolf per year) and the potential number of elk killed by wolves per year in Colorado (11,269-18,581 elk/year). These estimates are preliminary because wolves have not been introduced yet, and the analyses need to be refined with more detailed assessment of elk habitat and other prey such as moose, deer and bighorn sheep in Colorado. However, these reports provide science-based methods and numbers that can serve as a template for CPW's efforts to manage wolves. See the references at wlj.net for more information on wolves.

Another science issue regarding wolves in Colorado is the vague category of subspecies, which are populations that can be listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Mexican gray wolf is considered an endangered subspecies and great effort and expense have been spent to manage them in Arizona and New Mexico. The wolves that were native to Colorado and other Rocky Mountain states were considered the Plains wolf subspecies, but the wolves introduced to Montana, Wyoming and Idaho are the northern wolf subspecies. As far as I know, the source of wolves to be introduced to Colorado is not yet determined. It's confusing, and there are no definite scientific criteria for designating subspecies (see references). It probably doesn't really matter because wolves act as large predators wherever they are, but the government makes a big deal about subspecies when subspecies support their agenda (like getting the Mexican wolf and northern spotted owl on the ESA list) and ignores subspecies when subspecies don't support their agenda (like bringing the northern wolf into the Rockies).

Wolves in Colorado will likely disperse to neighboring states including Arizona and New Mexico where they might interbreed with and genetically change Mexican wolves. This needs to be assessed with rigorous science and the entire ESA subspecies issue reviewed objectively by professional scientists.

I think the most important point is that wolves must be managed in Colorado to achieve multiple-use objectives, including big game hunting and outfitting, livestock ranching, outdoor recreation, resource extraction like oil, gas, timber, and minerals, and protection of Colorado citizens' property rights. The U.S. Forest Service and other agencies have multiple-use management mandates, and professional wildlife management focuses on management objectives to achieve desired population numbers, distribution and habitat quality. This is what fish and game agencies do in establishing game management units and hunting and trapping seasons. Stockmen do the same when setting objectives for the numbers of stock they will breed, raise, cull and sell. Game species like deer and elk are managed with hunting to achieve management objectives for each species and management area. States that currently have wolf populations (for example Montana and Alaska) do the same with hunting, trapping and removal of wolves preying on livestock.

Wolves in Colorado will need to be managed as their population grows, with or without deliberate introductions. Wolves have a high reproductive rate with annual breeding and large litters of up to 10 pups. Maintaining a wolf population is easier than other species like grizzly bears, which have a slow reproductive rate. But effective management will require killing wolves (called "lethal take"), as with game species. Some people, and possibly the final Colorado wolf plan, will oppose lethal take of wolves. I suppose because it's considered cruel. But wolves killing prey and wolves killing other wolves in dominance and territorial fights is also cruel. Ranchers know that nature is cruel by seeing calves, lambs and wild animals die from cold, deep snow, starvation, coyote and eagle predation, and disease. The argument that killing wolves is cruel, although well-intentioned, is not particularly logical with regard to wolf management. Wolves should not be elevated above other animals and "sanctified" (see references).

Another suggestion is that killing wolves is not necessary because they will be regulated by the numbers of prey and by social interactions within and among packs. This idea of natural regulation does not appreciate the impacts of predators on wildlife populations and livestock. Letting other wildlife like deer and elk self-regulate has resulted in habitat deterioration and population crashes. Maintaining stable wildlife populations consistent with available habitat and other uses (e.g., livestock grazing) is standard practice, and wolves should be actively managed in our multiple-use system.

Wolf management by other states like Montana has been effective in maintaining viable wolf and prey populations and can provide guidance for Colorado. CPW can implement a management program with clear objectives, similar to that of Montana, and promote professional multiple-use management. The keywords on this issue are "multiple-use management" and "management objectives." These are the guiding principles of professional wildlife management and should be emphasized in Colorado's efforts with wolves. **— Dr. Matthew Cronin**

(Matthew A. Cronin is a scientist with Northwest Biology Company LLC in Bozeman, MT. He can be contacted at croninm@aol.com. A full list of references may be found online at wlj.net.)

WLJ

Letters to the editor: Letters for publication must be no longer than 675 words, must refer to an article that has appeared within the month, and must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Addresses and phone numbers will not be published. Letters may be shortened for space requirements. Send a letter to the editor by emailing editorial@wlj.net or mailing it to Western Livestock Journal, Attn: Editorial Dept., 7355 E. Orchard Road #300, Greenwood Village, CO 80111.

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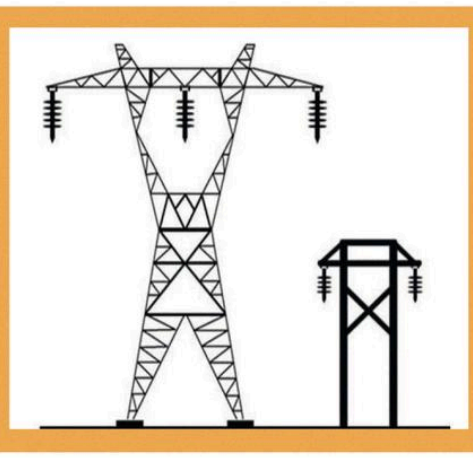

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THE VIEWPOINT

with Shaye Koester

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.

Shaye Koester has always had a passion for beef cattle and wanted to start a business within the beef industry. Her desire to be in education because of how it can empower people to live better lives, combined with having a "communications bug," led her to start her podcast, "Casual Cattle Conversations."

Shaye was born and raised in North Dakota and grew up on a commercial and registered Red Angus ranch in Steele. She attended college at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and studied animal science and entrepreneurship in the Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program. Shaye said the Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program is unique in that it helps students discover their passions and purpose, and helps empower students to pursue them no matter what they are, whether it is starting their own business or taking their entrepreneurial mindset to another career.

"The podcast was an easy entry to get into and see if that is what I like to do," Shaye told *WLJ*. "I started by interviewing ranchers I knew about what they are good at and sharing that with other people in the beef community. Now it's been 3 1/2 years and I've just let it grow. It's been a lot of fun to have different ranchers on the show, people researching beef or supporting industries, whatever it may be, (being) able to connect to cattle producers with the resources or information they need to keep the wheels turning and think of new ways to improve their operation."



Elizabeth Street Photography

Shaye Koester

Shaye said topics for the podcast are chosen based on what may be happening in the next few months to give time for ranchers to think about an issue and see if they want to make any changes to their operation.

"I think about, management-wise, what a lot of producers are going to be doing, and I think about current events and other things that are happening in the industry itself," Shaye said. "There are 52 weeks in the year, and I have an episode every week, so there's a lot of slots to fill. Sometimes it needs to be a management show or management episode. Other times, it needs to just be a good story that inspires people; there's value in both of those pieces and I try to have a mixture of it."

In addition to the podcast, Shaye also has a weekly newsletter and a monthly "RancherMind" Q&A event with producers and experts on different topics. The event is a monthly Zoom call to allow people to connect with others in the industry and ask how they have solved issues they are facing. Shaye said each quarter they discuss a different topic on the call. For instance, in the next quarter, she will be talking about labor challenges and business management, and she will have people discuss using the H-2A temporary agricultural program, hiring interns, and navigating employee benefits and wages. Shaye said the conversation doesn't stop at the RancherMind calls but continues with a private Facebook group for producers to share information throughout the month.

Further involvement

After graduating from UNL in 2022, Shaye moved back to Steele to help her parents part time with the operation while continuing to grow her business. Shaye said returning to the operation in May was hectic with everything going on, but she returned with the mindset of what she wanted to do to improve her skills on the ranch, as there was still so much to learn. She added that going back was a little tricky at first, but she was fortunate to have older friends who returned immediately to the ranch to advise her and warn her it's not like going back to the ranch for the summer.

"I really enjoyed it, though," Shaye said. "It's a blessing to come back to a family operation, it really is. But you also have to remember: it's a business too. You have to be flexible, but you have to set goals and outcomes and be honest with everyone on the operation, how you want to provide value back to the ranch, and what you want to do and what you want to learn."

In addition to her business and working on the family operation, Shaye completed her year in the Trailblazers program developed by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), which gives participants the tools and training they need to promote beef to new audiences while addressing and correcting myths. Shaye said the program trained participants on how to be better advocates and how to help producers be their own advocate telling the beef story.

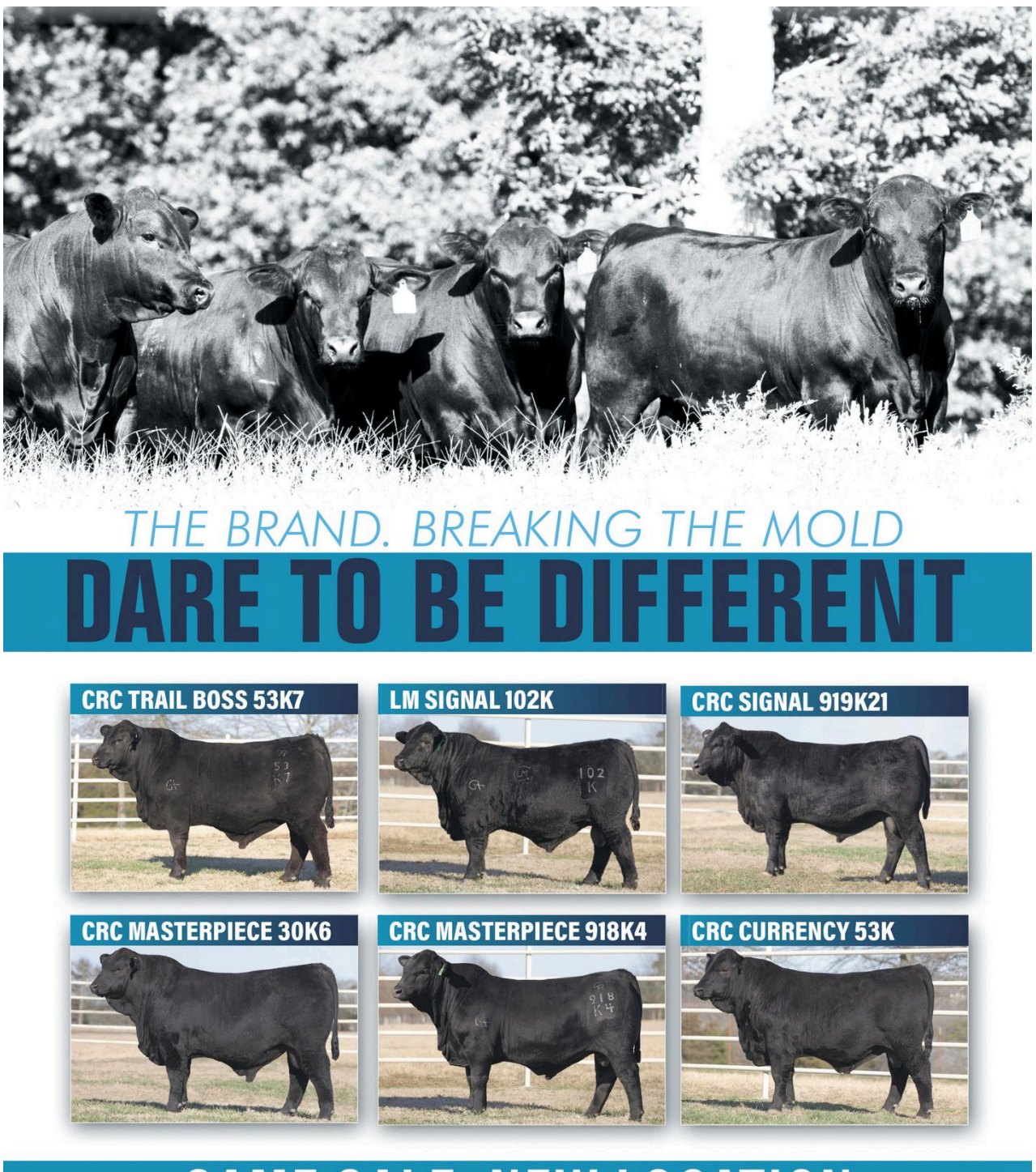
"I really enjoyed the program," Shaye said. "It opened your eyes to what the consumer thinks because I think sometimes in rural America, it's easy for us to say, 'Oh, I live in a rural community, people know where beef comes from,' but we forget that we're 2% of the population. There are people in Chicago, New York City, Dallas, Los Angeles or any of those other larger towns that don't have a clue where any of their food is coming from. So, it really just opened your eyes to why we need to share our own stories. And that doesn't mean just sharing on social media, it just means sharing it in a way that works for us."

Shaye said the Trailblazers program helps participants talk beyond the agriculture echo chamber and reach consumers who may have heard misleading information about the beef industry. Through information from NCBA and the Beef Checkoff, Trailblazers were told what issues were of concern to consumers, whether it was the environment, the nutritional value of beef, animal welfare or any other issues.

Shaye said if producers or others involved in the beef industry want to take advocacy to the next level, they should think about their own beef story, what makes that beef story unique and why they are proud of their own story that consumers can relate to. In addition to breaking out of the agriculture echo chamber, Shaye said, "Think about who you are as a person. What else are you involved with?" Shaye encouraged people to talk about their church groups, whether their kids play in sports or even participate in 4-H or FFA because there are some people who participate who did not come from an agricultural background.

"Look at how you can connect to other people through those other aspects of your life that are not directly tied to agriculture because that's where you're going to break out of the echo chamber and look at how you relate to them as a person," Shaye said. "Are you a parent? Are you a fellow college student? Do you know you share the same career path? That's kind of where I would start looking at—what is your story? What are the good pieces of your story and the truth that you can share, and who are those going to connect with?"

Shaye said while working on the ranch is No. 1 in her heart, she will continue growing the business of providing value to cattle producers. However, she always wants to maintain sight of what it is like working on the ranch and living that life because it helps her connect with cattle producers who listen to her podcast and RancherMind events. — **Charles Wallace, *WLJ* editor**



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WW GROWTH FUND 2390



lot 1

sire **Deer Valley Growth Fund** birth date **02/04/22**
Act BW **84** 205 Wt **790** WR **110**

CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	HP
+10	+0.2	+87	+157	+22	+15.7
Adj SC	Marb	REA	$M	$W	$C
40.26	+.35	+0.69	+83	+79	+279

WW GROWTH FUND 2160



lot 2

sire **Deer Valley Growth Fund** birth date **02/08/22**
Act BW **78** 205 Wt **741** WR **103**

CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	HP
+8	-0.3	+68	+122	+37	+16
Adj SC	Marb	REA	$M	$W	$C
35.97	+.69	+0.30	+93	+80	+253

WW GROWTH FUND 2970



lot 4

sire **Deer Valley Growth Fund** birth date **02/04/22**
Act BW **91** 205 Wt **801** WR **113**

CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	HP
+4	+1.6	+81	+150	+28	+11.4
Adj SC	Marb	REA	$M	$W	$C
37.36	+.36	+0.68	+84	+78	+271

WW CRACKERJACK 2327



lot 6

sire **Musgrave Crackerjack** birth date **01/31/22**
Act BW **68** 205 Wt **759** WR **100**

CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	HP
+11	-1	+82	+136	+25	+12
Adj SC	Marb	REA	$M	$W	$C
37.36	+.62	+0.51	+78	+85	+238

WW STUNNER E 2966



lot 8

sire **Musgrave 316 Stunner** birth date **02/13/22**
Act BW **86** 205 Wt **715** WR **100**

CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	HP
+8	+0.1	+66	+108	+31	+13.9
Adj SC	Marb	REA	$M	$W	$C
35.13	+.24	+0.61	+74	+74	+230

WW HI LINE 2435



lot 21

sire **WW Hi Line 9290** birth date **02/11/22**
Act BW **80** 205 Wt **759** WR **106**

CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	HP
+6	-0.2	+66	+117	+32	+17.3
Adj SC	Marb	REA	$M	$W	$C
35.28	+.42	+0.39	+93	+74	+242

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12 Sons and Grandsons of Basin Rainmaker 4404
9 Grandsons of S A V Rainfall 6846

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2023

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US moving towards dispute settlement with Mexico over biotech corn

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack was asked in a recent press conference about the U.S. dispute with Mexico over biotech corn. A reporter pointed out lawmakers and farmers are urging the Biden administration to take the next step and ask for a formal dispute settlement consultation with Mexico under the USMCA.

"It's coming. It's coming," Vilsack replied.

The secretary spoke to reporters during the USDA Outlook Forum.

The Biden administration and Mexican officials have been going back and forth about biotech corn for a year. Mexico earlier in February essentially issued an immediate ban on the use of biotech corn for products used as food such as tortillas.

Asked for more details on the situation, Vilsack said the U.S. Trade Representative's Office will essentially begin having what are called SPS (sanitary and phytosanitary) conversations and consultations. "And that process will begin very soon. That is an information sharing process, which I think is important. And then following that, assuming no resolution, you go to a formal process on the USMCA."

Vilsack added that the U.S. and Mexico are headed towards a formal dispute settlement case under the USMCA.

"That is going to happen, because we're essentially in a circumstance where this is not a situation that lends itself to compromise," the secretary said. "And the reason it doesn't is, from our perspective, you're talking about a fundamental principle to our trade, our understanding of trade, which is that you need a science-based, rules-based system.

"And if you begin to inject things that are not scientific, or not supported by science, it's a very slippery slope. And it creates a circumstance where it would not only be difficult for us in terms of our relationship with Mexico. It would be difficult in terms of our relationship with all our trading partners. And we're just not going to go down that road."

Earlier in February, Mexico's government withdrew its earlier decree setting a 2024 date to ban glyphosate and genetically modified corn but issued a new modified stance to immediately ban the use of transgenic corn used for human food.

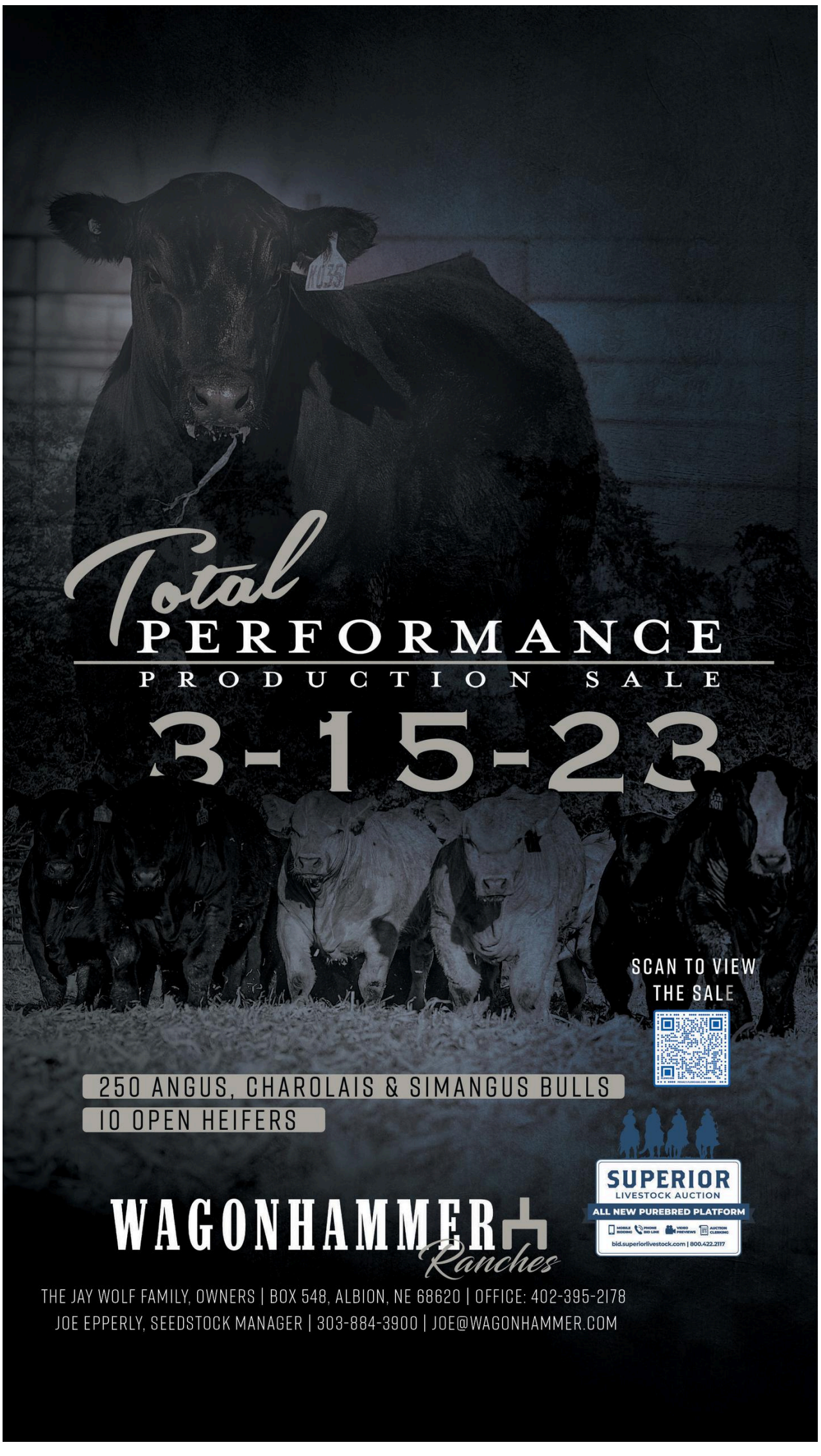
The new decree is limited to white corn and "prohibits the use of genetically modified corn for dough and tortillas." In bold, the Mexican government stated this "does not affect trade or imports in any way, among other reasons, because Mexico is self-sufficient in the production of white corn free of transgenics."

The decree added, "What it is about is consolidating such sovereignty and food security in a central input in the culture of Mexicans." The decree also sets up new research "on the possible impacts on people's health of genetically modified corn." The decree stated such studies will be carried out with health agencies in other countries.

The National Corn Growers Association immediately called for the Biden administration to move towards a dispute settlement case with Mexico.

"The Biden administration has been more than patient with Mexico as U.S. officials have sought to enforce a rules-based trading system and stand up for American farmers," said National Corn Growers Association President Tom Haag on Feb. 14.

"The integrity of USMCA (U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement), signed by Mexican President Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador himself, is at stake. Singling out corn—our number one ag export to Mexico—and hastening an import ban on numerous food-grade uses makes USMCA a dead letter unless it's enforced." — **Chris Clayton, DTN ag policy editor**



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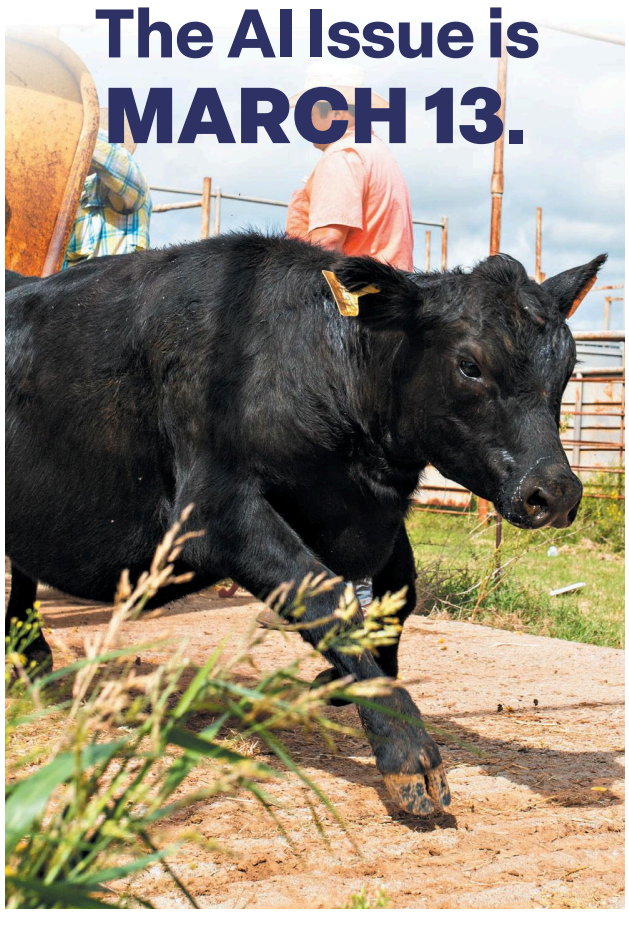

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Milk	25



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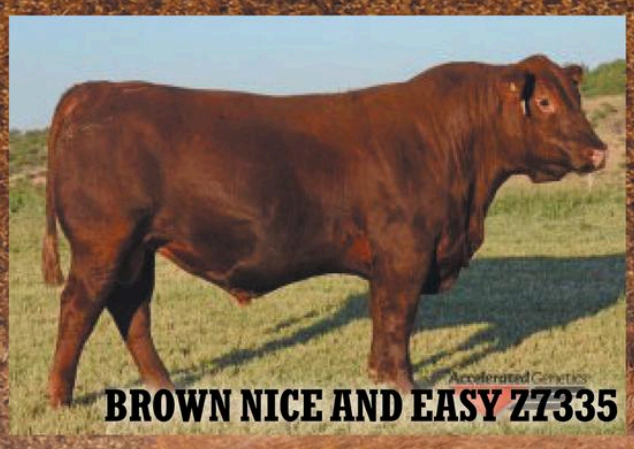
CED	17
BW	-0.1
WW	66
YW	128
Milk	22



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CED	71
BW	18
WW	-5.1
YW	56
Milk	1.01



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CED	17
BW	-4.5
WW	72
YW	118
Milk	31



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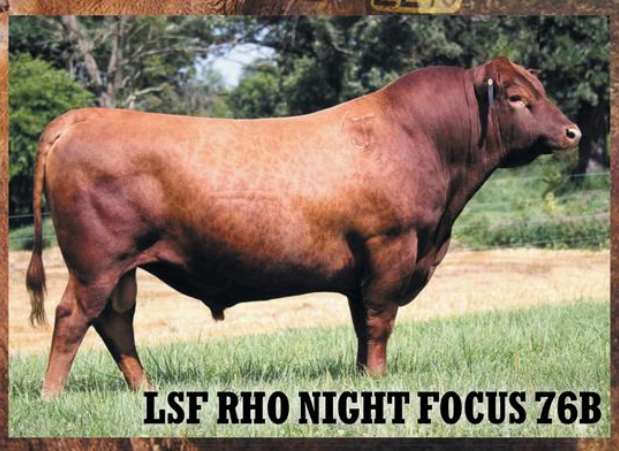
CED	41
BW	17
WW	-6
YW	55
Milk	1.56



LSF RHO NIGHT FOCUS 76B

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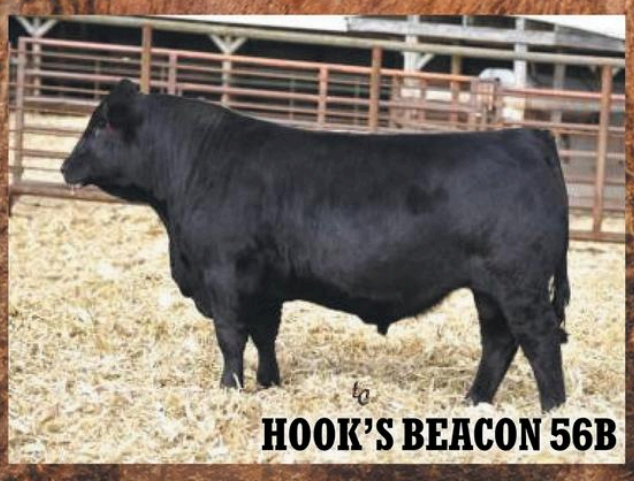
CED	72
BW	14
WW	-3
YW	75
Milk	1.7



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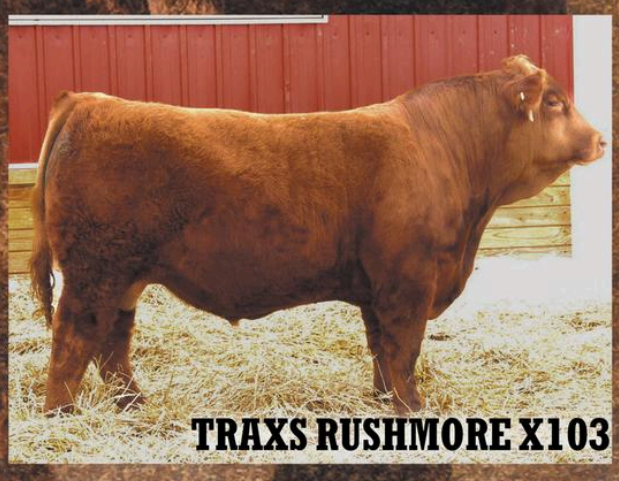
CED	17
BW	-3.2
WW	81
YW	122.8
Milk	11.8



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FDA guidance allows plant-based products sold as milk

The email box filled up after the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released draft recommendations involving plant-based foods that are marketed and sold as "milk." A lot of the emails revolved around these plant-based products using the term "milk."

Sens. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Jim Risch (R-ID) issued a bi-partisan statement in which they "slammed" FDA for allowing dairy terms for these products. The FDA's draft guidance, "Labeling of Plant-based Milk Alternatives and Voluntary Nutrient Statement," allows plant-based products to continue to use dairy terms despite not containing dairy, nor having the nutritional value of dairy products, the senators noted.

"America's dairy farmers work hard to produce second-to-none products with the highest nutritional value, and plant-based products should not be getting away with using their good name," Baldwin and Risch wrote.

"This misguided rule will hurt America's dairy farmers and our rural communities. Since the FDA is failing to enforce its own definitions for dairy terminology and stop imitation products from deceiving consumers, we will be reintroducing our DAIRY PRIDE Act to stand up for America's dairy farmers and the quality products they make."

The FDA draft guidance keeps using the term "milk" for these plant-based milk alternatives (PBMA), but recommends "voluntary nutrient statements" for the labeling of some plant-based milk alternatives to highlight to consumers the difference between dairy products and PBMA products.

"Today's draft guidance was developed to help address the significant increase in plant-based milk alternative products that we have seen become available in the marketplace over the past decade," said FDA Commissioner Robert M. Califf, M.D.

"The draft recommendations issued today should lead to providing consumers with clear labeling to give them the information they need to make informed nutrition and purchasing decisions on the products they buy for themselves and their families."

> *FDA wants these alternative proteins to provide voluntary nutritional statements detailing how their products compare with dairy milk, based on USDA's fluid-milk criteria for nutrient substitutes.*

FDA pointed to the increasing variety of products including "soy, rice and almond to include cashew, coconut, flaxseed, hazelnut, hemp seed, macadamia nut, oat, pea, peanut, pecan, quinoa and walnut-based beverages." All of them involve plant extracts in some form but are called "milk."

FDA wants these alternative proteins to provide voluntary nutritional statements detailing how their products compare with dairy milk, based on USDA's fluid-milk criteria for nutrient substitutes. For example, FDA pointed out, the label could say, "Contains lower amounts of Vitamin D and calcium than milk."

FDA defended not making changes to the word "milk," stating that more than 13,000 comments back in September 2018 showed "consumers generally understand" that PBMA products do not contain milk. "However, many consumers may not be aware of the nutritional differences between milk and PBMA products."

The milk guys—the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF)—credited FDA with guiding companies that make plant-based beverages "to disclose their nutrient inferiority" and the FDA guidance also "acknowledges the public health concern of nutritional confusion over such beverages."

"Today's FDA announcement is a step toward labeling integrity for consumers of dairy products, even as it falls short of ending the decades-old problem of misleading plant-based labeling using dairy terminology," said Jim Mulhern, president and CEO of the NMPF.

"By acknowledging both the utter lack of nutritional standards prevalent in plant-based beverages and the confusion over nutritional value that's prevailed in the marketplace because of the unlawful use of dairy terms, FDA's proposed guidance today will provide greater transparency that's sorely needed for consumers to make informed choices."

Yet, NMPF noted FDA's decision continues to permit PBMA beverages to continue using what has always traditionally been considered dairy terminology. "We reject the agency's circular logic that FDA's past labeling enforcement inaction now justifies labeling such beverages as 'milk' by designating a common and usual name. Past inaction is poor precedent to justify present and future inaction."

Offering their counter-argument, the plant-based advocates at the Good Food Institute (GFI) saw the FDA's effort as recognizing that consumers understand the difference between plant-based milk and cow's milk. Still, the Good Food Institute complained that FDA was seeking to impose standards on PBMA products that are not required for dairy products.

"GFI supports commonsense labels that use terms consumers understand and themselves use. The government's role is to ensure a level playing field," said Madeline Cohen, GFI's senior regulatory attorney. "FDA should not impose de facto labeling requirements on plant-based milks while giving cow's milk a free pass."

Pointing out the FDA document was simply guidance, GFI disagrees that companies should be required to make a direct comparison between their PBMA products and cow's milk.

"The guidance is premised on the idea that consumers are somehow confused by plant-based milks' nutrition, despite the fact that FDA already requires key nutrients to be included on the Nutrition Facts panel," Cohen stated.

Internally, the FDA guidance also led to a spate of email office discussions about milk as well. As one senior DTN staffer described, "As someone who had several generations of dairy farmers before me in my family, I just don't understand why these products get to be called 'milk.' Unless you are pulling some oat or nut teats, it's not milk. Milk doesn't come from plants. How hard is this? Why not call it oat/nut juice? Is this any different than calling it 'milk'? — **Chris Clayton, DTN ag policy editor**

Vermilion Ranch

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5,500 ANGUS SELL

Vermilion G017 Bomber K061
Lot 1 - AAA 20352476

BW	WW	YW	MILK	$W	$C	Act BW	Adj WW	Adj YW
+.2	+91	+154	+22	+83	+276	70	844	1466

SIRE: *Vermilion Bomber G017 MGS: Vermilion Want To

Vermilion G017 Bomber K022
Lot 4 - AAA 20352437

BW	WW	YW	MILK	$W	$C	Act BW	Adj WW	Adj YW
+1.2	+98	+162	+26	+91	+271	88	806	1456

SIRE: *Vermilion Bomber G017 MGS: Connealy McIlroy

Vermilion Fair-N-Square K302
Lot 207 - AAA *20368285

BW	WW	YW	MILK	$W	$C	Act BW	Adj WW	Adj YW
+3.1	+71	+122	+24	+64	+254	72	754	1308

SIRE: *Myers Fair-N-Square M39 MGS: Connealy Countdown

Vermilion Mcilroy K188
Lot 65 - AAA *20352578

BW	WW	YW	MILK	$W	$C	Act BW	Adj WW	Adj YW
+2.4	+85	+154	+28	+78	+317	76	729	1342

SIRE: Connealy McIlroy MGS: Vermilion Privilege C206

Vermilion Savvy K263
Lot 79 - AAA 20374868

BW	WW	YW	MILK	$W	$C	Act BW	Adj WW	Adj YW
+4.5	+91	+152	+25	+72	+267	92	807	1381

SIRE: *SITZ Savvy 732H MGS: Vermilion Sirloin

Vermilion Three Rivers K179
Lot 33 - AAA *20352569

BW	WW	YW	MILK	$W	$C	Act BW	Adj WW	Adj YW
-.7	+75	+133	+27	+74	+282	74	782	1384

SIRE: *Ellingson Three Rivers 0065 MGS: *Casino Bomber N33

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Bill seeks to restrict MT's access to perpetual conservation easements

A broad assortment of industry groups, conservation nonprofits, ranching families, and hunting and fishing access advocates recently testified in opposition to a Montana bill that would impose term limits on many conservation easements acquired with state funding.

If passed, Senate Bill (SB) 357 would put a 40-year term limit on many conservation easements purchased with state funding by agencies such as Montana, Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP). The measure includes exceptions for easements that are smaller than 1,500 acres or purchased with Forest Legacy Program funds. Easements seeking to protect critical habitat for endangered and threatened species or further greater sage-grouse conservation efforts would also be exempted from the term limit.

> *Hinebauch said he's also concerned that cash-strapped landowners surrendering the ability to develop their property will be left with "pretty much peanuts" down the line.*

Opponents argued that reducing property owners' access to perpetual conservation easements could threaten landowners' ability to keep agricultural properties in family ownership, compromise lumber companies' access to working forests and adversely affect the open spaces that support wildlife habitat and recreational access.

The lone SB 357 proponent, United Property Owners of Montana Policy Director Charles Denowh, said perpetual easements create "lopsided" transactions that tend to shortchange both existing landowners and future potential property owners, who are "held hostage" by the terms of an agreement they didn't necessarily agree to.

During his opening remarks, Sen. Steve Hinebauch (R-MT-18) described SB 357 as a property rights bill that seeks to address his concerns about the proliferation of conservation easements hampering the construction of power lines, pipelines and roads. That's true, he said, even in remote parts of eastern Montana where he ranches.

"Even in our country, there are spots where we can't build a powerline or a pipeline or a road because these easements won't allow that—they don't allow development," he said. "That's a big concern of mine—we're going to block ourselves from things we really need."

Hinebauch said he's also concerned that cash-strapped landowners surrendering the ability to develop their property will be left with "pretty much peanuts" down the line. Future generations' ability to secure a loan in order to purchase additional acreage or build a house could be hampered, he said.

"No bank is going to come in and loan money on a place that has an easement on it," he said.

Denowh said permanent easements create transactions that bestow easement holders with much longer-lasting benefits than the landowners selling development rights.

"If there is some compelling public interest to subsidize conservation easements, then why are we only subsidizing perpetual easements?" he added, arguing that the transaction could be executed without the investment of public funding that amounts to a "government tax break."

Trust for Public Land Northern Rockies Director Dick Dolan countered that transactions for conservation easements involve willing buyers and willing sellers, and are essential to maintaining "the best of Montana." Ravalli County voters' recent decision to reauthorize an open space bond demonstrates Montanans' support for conservation easements, he said. More than 70% of voters approved a $10 million bond building off of the county's 2006 bond, which helped the Open Lands Program conserve more than 10,000 acres of open space in one of Montana's fastest-growing counties.

Dolan also said properties with easements stay on tax rolls and support agricultural and timber jobs, which also support local tax bases.

At least three ranch families who've put property under a conservation easement in recent decades also testified in opposition to the bill, arguing that easements have aided in succession planning, supported public elk hunting opportunities or affirmed their families' commitment to conservation and land stewardship.

"We willingly and consciously surrendered the opportunity to subdivide and develop in order to preserve the opportunity for my kids, and the generations after them, to live with and from the land," Tyrell Hibbard with Sieben Livestock Company said of his family's nearly 16-year-old easement. "There's nothing broken that needs to be fixed."

Lumber companies argued that perpetual conservation easements that allow for some timber harvest support sawmill jobs, family-owned lumber operations and the private property rights that are important to northwestern Montana communities. They also argued that the exception for the Forest Legacy Program, which supports timber harvest, recreational and wildlife-related initiatives, fails to appreciate the complexity of that program given the multiple pots of funding that are sometimes used to execute an easement sale.

> *The Montana Stockgrowers Association, Treasure State Resources Association, Montana Logging Association and Montana Wood Products Association registered opposition against SB 357.*

Dolan said there's an oversight mechanism for easements purchased with state funding if that's the concern. The Fish and Wildlife Commission, the seven-member, governor-appointed body that oversees wildlife and state park administration, must sign off on FWP-acquired easements, and the Montana Land Board has the ability, per a measure passed by the 2021 Legislature, to vote up or down on acquisitions involving more than $1 million or 500 acres.

The Montana Stockgrowers Association, Treasure State Resources Association, Montana Logging Association and Montana Wood Products Association registered opposition against SB 357, as did conservation and hunting-oriented groups ranging from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Montana chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers to Wild Montana and Montana Conservation Voters.

The Senate Fish and Game Committee did not take immediate action on the bill. — **Amanda Eggert, Montana Free Press**



Frozen or fresh beef? For taste, consumers say it doesn't matter



K-State Research and Extension
While freezing meat might not impact how it tastes, the thawing method might.

A Kansas State (K-State) University doctoral student is reporting results indicating that freezing and thawing beef doesn't impact consumers' eating experiences, compared to eating the same product fresh.

Erin Beyer was set to present her results during K-State's 110th annual Cattlemen's Day on March 3. Her session—Beef Sensory Update—highlights the afternoon program.

"There are three studies that I'm going to highlight, looking at the impact of freezing and thawing on meat quality, and the impact of ground beef color on the purchasing habits of consumers," Beyer said.

Her work included freezing meat cuts, then thawing them in the refrigerator or in cold water, then comparing consumers' eating preferences with a similar, fresh cut.

"While fresh, never-frozen beef of varying aging times resulted in a juicier product, the previously frozen product was more tender," Beyer said. "Ultimately, freezing beef does not positively or negatively impact the (consumer's) overall liking of a steak."

A second study still being conducted compares methods used to thaw frozen beef. "While freezing meat might not impact the eating experience, the thawing method does," Beyer said.

That study so far indicates that thawing the meat in a microwave or as part of the cooking method results in a lower quality product compared to thawing it in the refrigerator or in cold water. Beef also should not be thawed in warm or hot water, she said.

"Ensuring meat is fully thawed before cooking is not only imperative for food safety, but also for the eating experience," Beyer said.

She added that the research gives consumers better information when considering grocery store purchases, or when storing meat at home.

"Right now, previously frozen meat is sold at a discount, so knowing that frozen meat is not lower quality could save the consumer some money at retail," Beyer said.

Beyer, who will complete her doctoral program at K-State in May, has also conducted a study on how discoloration of retail ground beef affects consumers' purchasing decisions.

"As meat scientists, we know ground beef color is not usually an indicator of wholesomeness," she said.

But consumers apparently don't see it that way, according to her research: "It turns out consumers are very picky with ground beef color and are not swayed to purchase discolored ground beef even at a reduced price," Beyer said.

Discolored ground beef, she adds, "is the number one most important factor for purchasing motivators, so these results were not surprising." — **K-State Research and Extension**

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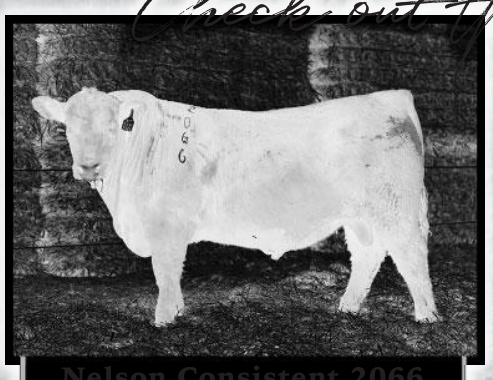

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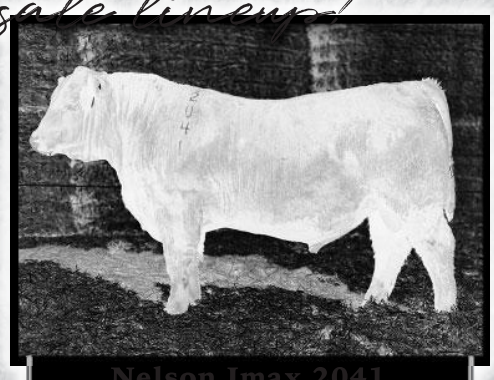

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She sells as Lot 124!
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Impressive IMAX daughter!



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BW -0.4 WW 66 YW 116 MB 1.13 $C +290

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Getting ready to spring plant alfalfa

Alfalfa can be successfully seeded in the spring or fall depending on field weed populations, moisture conditions and timing. Based on higher snowfall, our 2023 spring may be a very successful time to establish new alfalfa stands.

> *Remember that live alfalfa roots emit an ethylene chemical toxin which impedes new alfalfa growth.*

Although it may be tempting to drill or broadcast more seeds into open spaces in thin alfalfa fields, remember that live alfalfa roots emit an ethylene chemical toxin which impedes new alfalfa growth. This "autotoxicity" weakens or kills any new alfalfa plants and accumulates in soil over time. Therefore, it is better to drill into new fields than seed where previous older alfalfa plants have been grown within the past one to two years.

Once established, alfalfa as a perennial can compete well with weeds. If herbicide-resistant weeds are currently growing on fields, then light tillage may be needed to control weeds while creating a firm drilling seedbed. Also, combination light tillage plus herbicide may provide improved seedling establishment.

Since new alfalfa seedlings are very susceptible to herbicide injury, carefully follow any chemical label restrictions. Usually, new alfalfa plants must reach two to four trifoliated leaf development before herbicides are applied; note that 2,4-D usage is not recommended.

Glyphosate-tolerant or Round-Up Ready varieties provide more flexibility for controlling weeds currently growing in fields. Initial glyphosate application should occur between alfalfa emergence and fourth trifoliate leaf growth stages to remove non-glyphosate tolerant alfalfa seedlings and control weeds that are present.

Target seeding 1/4 to 1/2 inch depth in fine-textured soils and 3/4 inch depth in sandy soils. Seedlings placed too shallow will dry out rapidly and die due to poor roots. While seeds planted more than one inch deep may be unable to emerge after germinating. Further establishment guidelines are outlined in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln "Seeding Alfalfa" NebGuide G2247. — **Todd Whitney, Nebraska Extension educator**

MT Fish and Wildlife Commission gains two new members

Ravalli County Commissioner Jeff Burrows and Bozeman, MT, based campground owner Susan Kirby Brooke are officially joining the Fish and Wildlife Commission, the governor-appointed body charged with establishing hunting and fishing regulations and reviewing Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) land acquisitions. The Montana Senate recently confirmed Burrows' and Brooke's nominations as well as the reappointment of two sitting commissioners.

Burrows is assuming the position previously held by Jana Waller, who's moving out of state and did not reapply for another term. Burrows is an environmental engineering graduate of Montana Tech who previously worked for the U.S. Air Force in Colorado Springs, CO, as a civilian engineer. He has served on the Ravalli County Commission since 2012 and in January assumed another four-year term in that seat. Burrows also serves on the Montana Forest Action Advisory Council and the Ravalli County Collaborative, both of which engage in natural resource management issues.

Brooke will take over the seat formerly held by Pat Byorth. She grew up on a Madison Valley ranch and previously served on the Board of Environmental Review, the quasi-judicial body that adjudicates disputes between the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and the industries it regulates, and on the Reserved Water Rights Compact Commission, which was tasked with helping the state negotiate compacts with Tribes possessing federally reserved water rights.

Questions from committee members during the hearing on their nomination shed some light on how Burrows and Brooke intend to approach their positions on the commission, an essentially all-volunteer body that tends to draw heated public comment. (One commenter, Matt Lumley with the National Trappers Association and the Outdoor Heritage Coalition, said south-central Montana is "probably the hottest wildlife district in the nation" given the presence of bison, wolves and grizzlies, all three of which have some relationship to the Endangered Species Act.)

Asked by committee members how he intends to balance the interests of private property owners, the outfitting industry and non-outfitted hunters and anglers, Burrows said he would "err first and foremost on the side of landowners" while also recognizing the importance of hunting and angling on public lands.

Sen. Pat Flowers (D-MT-32) asked Brooke about her understanding of Madison River recreation management, one of the hot-button issues Region 3 has grappled with for years. She said she thinks of it as an overcrowding issue, not a matter of fishery health. She added that she expects the state will eventually address crowding on its most popular rivers by moving to a daily permitted or ticketed system similar to what Glacier National Park instated in 2021.

The Senate also approved the reappointments of Phillips County rancher and current commission chair Lesley Robinson and Ismay rancher Bill Lane, but not without a bit of scrutiny from Sen. Brad Molnar (MT-R-28), who's sponsoring a bill that would make commission appointments nonpartisan, paid and elected rather than appointed, criticized Robinson's recent handling of elk tag allocations.

Molnar accused the commission of setting up an out-of-cycle work session to grant bull elk tags to brothers Dan and Farris Wilks, who participate in an FWP program that distributes bull elk tags to a handful of large landowners in exchange for some public elk hunting. (The Wilks brothers own hundreds of thousands of acres of ranchland across Montana, many of which are used for trophy hunting.)

"That does not lead me to believe that the leadership is in a direction I would like to go," Molnar said.

Molnar was the lone Republican to vote against Senate Resolution 3, the measure advancing the appointees' nominations. He was joined by all but three of the Senate's Democrats.

The appointees will serve four-year terms. — **Amanda Eggert, Montana Free Press**

Attend a free BQA training this spring

Kansas cattle producers will have the opportunity to become Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) certified, or renew an expired certification, this spring through four in-person trainings across the state. BQA is a nationally coordinated, state implemented program that offers education for cattle producers on up-to-date best management strategies with a commitment to quality through every segment of the beef industry.

The BQA trainings will be offered by Kansas State (K-State) Research and Extension, Kansas Livestock Association and the Kansas Beef Checkoff. At no cost to them, producers can attend one of the following trainings:

- March 28, 6 p.m. — City Limits Convention Center, Colby, KS.
- March 30, 6 p.m. — Butler County Community and 4-H Building, El Dorado, KS.
- April 11, 6 p.m. — Stanley Stout Center, Manhattan, KS.
- April 13, 6 p.m. — Hilton Garden Inn, Hays, KS.

Each BQA training will kick off with a dinner sponsored by Certified Angus Beef (CAB). As part of the dinner, attendees will hear how CAB is sharing the BQA story of every cattleman's commitment to raising healthy, nutritious and high-quality beef with beef consumers and the brand's licensed partners.

"Certified Angus Beef supports BQA because it's an easy and effective way for producers to communicate cattle care to people on the opposite end of the beef supply chain," said Bruce Cobb, CAB executive vice president of production. "Besides sharing producer stories and helping to drive demand for premium beef, providing a meal to attendees is the most direct way we can support cattlemen who get BQA certified at these events."

During the BQA training, Dr. A.J. Tarpoff, DVM, associate professor and beef Extension veterinarian at K-State, will walk through BQA best practices. Topics will include cattle care, extreme weather planning, stockmanship and other critical topics for cattle production.

BQA certification is good for three years. These continuing education programs are not only valuable to you and your operation but attending these sessions also proves to our downstream consumers that we are committed to producing the highest quality, safest beef supply in the world.

Each workshop is free of charge and includes a complimentary meal. To register for one of the sessions contact Brooke Wines at brooke@kla.org or 785-273-5115. Onsite registration will also be available at each location. — **K-State Research and Extension**

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MT legislation for right to repair begins

The transmittal deadline was right around the corner, and the Montana Legislature was working hard to wrap up any general bills remaining before the March 3 deadline. The Montana Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) advocated on over a dozen bills ahead of the deadline, but right to repair and exempt water wells legislation were the most critical to its members.

On Jan. 8, the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with John Deere to ensure farmers' and ranchers' right to repair their own farm equipment. This MOU is the product of several years of discussion between AFBF and John Deere and serves as the first of what MFBF believes will be agreements with multiple original equipment manufacturers (OEMs).

On Feb. 21, Senate Bill (SB) 347, Revise right to repair laws relating to agriculture, sponsored by Sen. Willis Curdy (D-MT-49); and House Bill (HB) 475, Generally revise laws related to agricultural equipment repair, sponsored by Rep. Tom France (D-MT-94) were heard by their respective agriculture committees.

HB 475's language is specific to the pricing of tools and information that can be shared by OEMs, while SB 347's language closely resembles the AFBF and John Deere MOU, but adds troubling language regarding embedded software. So why oppose state legislation similar to Farm Bureau's MOU? MFBF's opposition is based on their members' preference to pursue a free market solution instead of state or federal legislation. Its members support and believe that a private-sector agreement between farmers, ranchers and OEMs is the best approach and legislation is not needed at this time.

There is also a concern that if states across the country start passing their own right-to-repair legislation it would create a patchwork of legislation that is difficult to navigate for OEMs and farmers alike. The MOU is not intended to serve as a "template" for state or federal legislation but is a negotiated document between members of Farm Bureau and an individual company and MFBF believes more agreements like the AFBF-John Deere MOU are coming soon.

HB 642, Revise exempt wells laws, sponsored by Rep. Casey Knudsen (R-MT-33) was introduced at the last minute before the transmittal deadline and looks to revise exceptions to water rights permit requirements. MFBF, along with many of the stakeholders that participated in the Comprehensive Water Review and other organizations, adamantly oppose HB 642 as introduced because it significantly expands the exemption so municipalities, large-scale industrial and large-scale commercial users will be able to pump more water without any consideration to the harm it causes to existing water users.

Exempt water users do not have to go through the normal permitting process, which means there is no opportunity for water users to challenge new water uses if there are implications to their water rights. Exempt wells cannot be challenged or revoked, even if there are negative impacts to other water users. HB 642 also allows the development of at least 10 acre-feet per 20 acres, or enough water to cover every 10 acres 2 feet deep, every year.

This could "stack" multiple exemptions together and will result in a massive increase of water usage with no sideboards to protect agriculture's senior water rights. As this bill was introduced at the last minute, it must be voted on rapidly. MFBF is in strong support for collaborative efforts to solve such complex issues. The Comprehensive Water Review process is the best place to do this and create solutions similar to the work that went into other water issues seen this session.

For more legislative updates and details on these issues, follow MFBF's Live with Your Lobbyist broadcast each Friday at noon on the Montana Farm Bureau Facebook Page. — **Rachel Cone and Nicole Rolf, MFBF**



FACA releases farm bill policy recommendations

The Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance (FACA) released policy recommendations for the 2023 Farm Bill. The farm bill is essential legislation that impacts every family in America and has enormous potential to help the food, agriculture and forestry sectors achieve their climate mitigation potential while preserving and creating new economic opportunities.

Further reducing emissions throughout agricultural and forestry supply chains will require a comprehensive effort involving financial and technical assistance, research investments, proactive response to innovation, public-private partnerships and a commitment to equitable opportunities for all producers.

FACA's recommendations, developed by the 23-member steering committee, are divided into six categories:

- Conservation, risk management and credit.
- Energy.
- Food waste.
- Forestry.
- Livestock and dairy.
- Research, Extension and innovation.

FACA's past recommendations have provided guidance to members of Congress and administration officials and have been credited with shaping federal laws and programs. FACA now urges both chambers of Congress and the president to act this year to pass a farm bill that advances voluntary bipartisan climate solutions.

FACA's founding organizations and co-chairs celebrated the policy recommendations and the impact they will have.

Zippy Duvall, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, said, "Despite a pandemic, severe weather, volatile markets and rising costs, farmers continue to meet the growing needs of America's families, and the farm bill helps make that possible. We look forward to working with Congress to strengthen Title I programs, improve risk management tools, and utilize these FACA recommendations to advance our sustainability mission in a manner that respects farmers and ranchers as partners."

Rob Larew, president of National Farmers Union, said, "Climate change continues to be a serious threat to farmers, ranchers and their communities. Farmers are already implementing practices to address the climate crisis and make their farms more resilient. The farm bill presents an opportunity to build upon the programs that support these voluntary, incentive-based practices. FACA's farm bill recommendations will establish a strong foundation to support farmers and ranchers in sequestering carbon, building soil health and reducing emissions for years to come."

Chuck Connor, president and CEO of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, said, "Throughout our work, FACA has been driven by the recognition that the farm bill is also a food bill, having importance beyond agriculture and impacting every family in America. Consumers are increasingly interested in both where their food comes from and the climate impact of what they eat. By helping America's farmers, ranchers, and growers continue adoption of more climate-friendly farming practices, the recommendations will help producers meet growing consumer preferences. Also, by building on and strengthening efforts to combat food waste in the 2018 farm bill, the recommendations would ensure that the resources put towards growing and producing food are used as efficiently as possible."

> *FACA now urges both chambers of Congress and the president to act this year to pass a farm bill that advances voluntary bipartisan climate solutions.*

Elizabeth Gore, senior vice president for Political Affairs at Environmental Defense Fund, said: "The farm bill is one of the biggest opportunities to advance conservation and climate solutions in the U.S. FACA's recommendations will make it easier for farmers, ranchers and foresters to help stabilize the climate, while building resilience to climate impacts that are already affecting crops and livestock. In doing so, they can continue to produce food for a growing population and support vibrant agricultural and rural economies." — **FACA**

Legume frost seeding in eligible pastures

Are you looking to increase production from pastures or hay fields? Interseeding legumes might just work in your operation.

Nitrogen is one of the key ingredients for productive pastures. A way to get more nitrogen in a pasture is to plant legumes. Alfalfa, birdsfoot trefoil, clovers and other legumes all fix atmospheric nitrogen and can reduce nitrogen costs. These legumes are also very high in forage quality.

Not all pastures are good candidates for adding legumes, however. First, legumes need adequate phosphorus and a pH usually above 6, while some prefer a pH closer to 7. Next, good seed placement is needed. When interseeding with a no-till drill is not an option due to frozen ground or topography, frost seeding is an option to consider.

Frost seeding uses broadcasting seed in winter to allow the natural freezing and thawing of the ground to plant the seed for you, resulting in good seed-to-soil contact. Frost seeding success can vary and while more invasive, drilling is almost always a better option if the pasture would allow it. Because frost seeding requires seed to be close to the soil surface after broadcasting, snow-free or very little snow is preferred.

Lastly, heavy flash grazing several times in the spring will reduce the competition from existing grasses and help promote the legume seedlings. Once the grass is three to four inches taller than the seedlings, graze quickly until the grasses are grazed down to the height of the legume seedlings.

Legumes can help reduce fertilizer cost and create higher-quality pastures and hay. Frost seeding is an economical approach that might work to establish legumes in your operation. — **Brad Schick, Nebraska Extension educator**



Tips on controlling black vulture damage





USDA National Wildlife Research Center

Black vultures feed on dead animals, but can also gang up and prey on calves, piglets, lambs and kids.

Missouri's growing population of black vultures has led to increasing attacks on vulnerable livestock. Black vultures often inflict damage to the eyes and tongues of young livestock, kill and feed on domestic fowl, and scar animals that survive.

A new University of Missouri (MU) Extension guide provides information for livestock producers to prevent and control problems with black vultures. "Controlling Nuisance Black Vultures in Missouri," available at extension.missouri.edu/g9466, was developed by MU Extension state wildlife and fisheries specialist Bob Pierce, and Travis Guerrant, Wildlife Services state director for Missouri and Iowa at the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

The guide details nonlethal damage control techniques, including the use of effigies, lasers, pyrotechnics or loud noises to scare vultures, and provides livestock management recommendations such as moving cattle with calves nearer to protected areas, Pierce said.

"Black vultures are legally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, so a permit to use lethal control methods is required," he said. The guide outlines the process for obtaining a permit should it be warranted.

USDA APHIS Wildlife Services is charged with responding to conflicts with migratory species, including black vultures, Guerrant said. He advises Missouri livestock producers who suffer damage from black vultures to first contact the Wildlife Services state office in Columbia, MO, at 573-449-3033, ext. 10, to discuss the problem and/or schedule a site visit for a customized damage management plan.

If warranted, livestock owners who have experienced depredation from black vultures may obtain a permit to use limited lethal measures through Missouri Farm Bureau.

Turkey vultures are also common in Missouri but tend to be less aggressive than black vultures, which are known to gang up and prey on calves, piglets, lambs and newborn goats. Both species are native to Missouri.

Vultures do play a critical role in the environment as scavengers of carrion, reducing the risk of diseases spreading from dead animals, Pierce said.

"While black vultures can be found all the way to Canada, I don't think that is common," said Guerrant. "Ten years ago, we rarely saw them in Missouri. Now they are in the state nearly year-round in the far south of the state. I think the warmer winters and food availability are contributing to the northward expansion of their range."

"As with other wildlife species, they will take advantage of resources that are available to them," Pierce said. "This can cause issues when it involves conflicts with human dwellings and, in some cases, livestock operations." — **MU Extension**



STORY SHORTS

True West Beef hosts open house

True West Beef hosted an open house at its Jerome, ID, facility on Feb. 25. The 270,000-square-foot facility plans to open in April and will process 500 head per day. The plant is a new business concept where ranching families invested in the facility provide cattle for the operation and collaborate with Agri Beef. "There are 40 ranching families who are also owners of True West Beef," Melissa Delgadillo, public relations manager for True West Beef, told Twin Falls-based television station KMVT. "So (it's) super exciting to have a processing facility that has so many families involved. We have families right here in the Magic Valley. So, it's incredible for them to bring their cattle and have them processed here locally." The Jerome processing plant will mainly produce under Agri Beef's Snake River Farms and Double R Ranch labels.

AZ man guilty of cattle theft

Jason Lenstrom of Arizona recently pled guilty to three felony counts of theft of livestock and one felony count of theft of property. Lenstrom purchased 126 head of cattle from Rio Grande Classic Livestock Auction in El Paso, TX, on Jan. 19, 2021, and Feb. 2, 2021. Lenstrom paid for the cattle with three separate checks totaling more than $50,000, all of which were later declined due to insufficient funds. Rio Grande Livestock contacted Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association Special Ranger Clay McKinney, who contacted Lenstrom to arrange payment. However, Lenstrom failed to settle his debts. Lenstrom was arrested Aug. 23, 2021, in Holbrook, AZ. Lenstrom agreed to nine years deferred adjudication probation, payment of over $50,000 in restitution and 250 hours of community service for the crimes.

Mexican wolf numbers surpass 200

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced the population of Mexican gray wolves surpassed 200 head, with a minimum of 241 wild wolves documented in 2022. The population has increased by 23%—the seventh consecutive year of population growth—from the minimum 2021 population of 196 wolves. "This milestone has been 25 years in the making," said Brady McGee, USFWS Mexican wolf recovery coordinator. "To go from zero wild Mexican wolves at the start to 241 today is truly remarkable. In 2022, we recorded more packs, more breeding pairs and a growing occupied range, proving we are on the path to recovery. These achievements are a testament to partner-driven conservation in the west." Environmental groups noted while the increase in numbers is a sign of progress, "the genetic diversity of the wild population still needs improvement." The groups are encouraging more wolves to be released from captivity and the need to roam outside the current Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area. "This count marks the progress of the last 25 years since wolves were first re-introduced, but there are serious warning signs pointing to a fragile population and inadequate recovery efforts," said Chris Smith, southwest wildlife advocate for WildEarth Guardians. "We should celebrate that there are 241 lobos, but we will remain vigilant in advocating for their restoration."

Rural vet shortage survey

The Colorado Cattlemen's Association (CCA) has put together a survey regarding rural veterinary services and the veterinary area shortage to help inform legislation for this legislative session. The rural veterinary shortage in Colorado concerns CCA, and the organization has been actively working with legislators and other leaders to find potential solutions for addressing the industry's concerns. CCA is asking producers to complete the survey by March 7 to learn more about the shortages producers are experiencing and possible services that could be allowed with indirect or direct veterinary supervision.

Beyond Meat loses millions in 2022

Beyond Meat Inc. reported a loss of $366 million for the fiscal year 2022 ending Dec. 31, 2022. The loss was more than the $182 million the company reported for the fiscal year 2021. Sales for 2022 were down 10% from the prior year to $419 million. Ethan Brown, president and CEO, said during an analyst call on Feb. 23 the company was taking action toward a positive cash flow and sustainable growth in 2023. In addition to laying off 19% of its workforce, the company will reduce the number of co-packers in North America from eight to three. The company will also focus on its core products through marketing, promotions and targeted discounts, and increase distribution of Beyond Steak in the frozen foods aisle. Beyond Meat projects sales in fiscal 2023 between $375-415 million, and according to Meat+Poultry, management is targeting achieving cash flow positive operations within the second half of the year.

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AAA 20385730
OAR Benchmark 402
Mill Brae Benchmark 9016 x Basin Payweight 1682
CED BW WW YW MILK MRB RE $W $B $C
+15 -1.7 +72 +139 +34 +.75 +.46 +80 +144 +272


AAA 20421728
Lisonbee Troubadour 2211
Tehama Patriarch F028 x Jindra Acclaim
CED BW WW YW MILK MRB RE $W $B $C
+13 -.3 +71 +141 +32 +.89 +.9 +69 +158 +262


AAA 20421731
Lisonbee Pacific 2209
Sterling Pacific 904 x Connealy Confidence Plus
CED BW WW YW MILK MRB RE $W $B $C
+7 +1.7 +66 +123 +23 +1.04 +.75 +61 +167 +298


AAA 20382948
OAR Recharge 642
OAR Recharge 287 x Connealy Consensus 7229
CED BW WW YW MILK MRB RE $W $B $C
+9 -.5 +67 +108 +28 +.60 +.53 +72 +114 +226


AAA 20427907
OAR Atlantis 852
Square B Atlantis 8060 x V A R Discovery 2240
CED BW WW YW MILK MRB RE $W $B $C
+4 +3.5 +78 +121 +24 +.92 +.87 +74 +137 +274


AAA 20189036
Lisonbee Growth Fund 2145
Deer Valley Growth Fund x Rito 9M25 of Rita 5F56 Pred
CED BW WW YW MILK MRB RE $W $B $C
+8 +1.4 +89 +165 +36 +.47 +10.6 +85 +183 +301


AAA 20427906
OAR Atlantis S842
Square B Atlantis 8060 x V A R Discovery 2240
CED BW WW YW MILK MRB RE $W $B $C
+4 +2.5 +82 +147 +23 +1.27 +.32 +73 +160 +291


AAA 20421741
Lisbonbee Zander 2210
Connealy Confidence Plus x V A R Discovery 2240
CED BW WW YW MILK MRB RE $W $B $C
+6 +4.3 +97 +159 +33 +.97 +1.10 +89 +187 +307

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Steve Oldroyd
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435-828-5050

Late pregnancy, winter weather increase livestock energy demands

January exited with a blast of arctic cold. About this time, many gestating ewes and cows entered the third trimester, marking the last phase of pregnancy in which the bulk of fetal growth occurs.

The energy demands of cold temperatures and pregnancy increase the nutritional requirements of ewes and cows, and this is especially true for yearling ewes or first calf heifers that are still making gains toward their mature body size.

The 2022 University of Wyoming Extension bulletin "Supplementation Considerations for Ewes Managed on Dormant Winter Pastures and Rangelands" contains an excellent overview of nutritional requirements of sheep during this period with critical environmental and physiological burdens.

On the beef cattle side, see the 2015 University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension bulletin "Supplementation Needs for Gestating and Lactating Beef Cows and Comparing the Prices of Supplement Sources." Find these publications online at bit.ly/winter-ewe and bit.ly/winter-cow, respectively.

Supplementing with alfalfa, distillers grains or range cake supplies rumen degradable protein, formerly known as degradable intake protein. This protein boosts the rumen microbes that break down low-quality forages and helps the animal access energy that would otherwise be locked up in cellulose.

> *Common symptoms of pregnancy toxemia include an animal going off feed and showing lethargic behaviors, progressing to recumbency and death in severe cases.*

When forage is low in quality, as it often is during winter and after drought, it can become physically impossible for animals to consume enough to meet their energy or protein needs—they simply run out of space in their digestive systems. The growing fetus and expanding uterus further restrict the rumen and capacity for feed intake. Without proper management, the animal can go into a negative energy balance and begin to metabolize stored energy in the form of body fat reserves. This puts the body into a state of ketosis.

If sustained for long periods, ketosis can develop into a metabolic disease known commonly as pregnancy toxemia. This is not the result of a calcium deficiency, as in milk fever, or a deficiency of magnesium, as in tetany, although these diseases should be ruled out when you consult with your veterinarian.

Pregnancy toxemia is most likely to present late in gestation in sheep and goats carrying multiple offspring or in obese individuals, due to the spatial restrictions imposed on the rumen. Less frequently observed in cattle, pregnancy toxemia is most likely at or near peak lactation in high-milking capacity individuals fed poor-quality diets that similarly enter a negative energy balance.

Common symptoms of pregnancy toxemia include an animal going off feed and showing lethargic behaviors, progressing to recumbency and death in severe cases. Neurological signs such as head pressing or circling may also occur as a result of ketone buildup in the blood.

As ranchers make their daily animal checks, they should look closely for any individuals that appear depressed and "out of it." Are they tracking movement? Are their ears up and eyes bright? Are they keeping their heads up as the rancher approaches? Are they up and eating at feeding time? These are routine livestock husbandry observations, but catching any problem animals early can lead to the best outcomes.

If pregnancy toxemia is suspected, work with a veterinarian to develop a treatment plan. Since the cause is a deficit in available energy, supplementation with rapidly available glucose is often the simplest and least invasive therapy. Many over-the-counter oral drenches are available to counter the effects of ketosis, but be sure that the product you have is labeled for use in the correct species.

Something that is labeled for use in cattle may not be labeled for use in sheep and vice versa. In extreme cases, a veterinarian can administer an intravenous glucose infusion. Watch affected animals closely for secondary infection during recovery from pregnancy toxemia.

While treatments are available, it is best to prevent pregnancy toxemia/ketosis from occurring in the first place. Ensure that animals consume a high-quality, balanced diet and have access to clean water from late gestation to peak lactation. Use body condition scoring (BCS) to maintain breeding females in moderate flesh (BCS 3-4 for sheep, BCS 5-6 for cattle), avoiding both the thin and obese extremes of the scale.

Utilize grain or concentrate supplements as appropriate, especially to provide sufficient protein when grazing dormant winter range, as animals enter the third trimester of gestation (days 100-150 of gestation for sheep, months 7-9 for cattle), or to counter the effects of severe winter weather events.

For the rancher, nutritional management is one of the most powerful tools to prevent disease and enhance productivity. Work with your local Extension if you have questions about your winter livestock rations. — **Micah Most, University of Wyoming Extension agriculture and natural resources educator**

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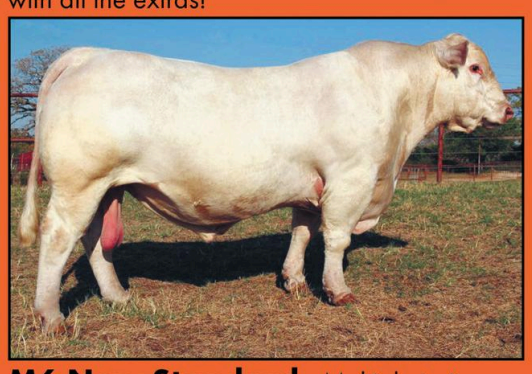

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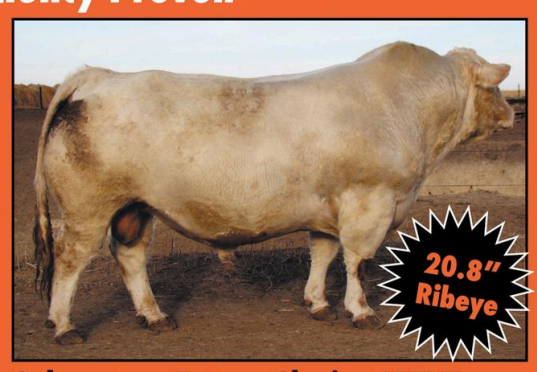

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New assay accelerates E. coli testing process

A team led by Purdue University's Bruce Applegate has developed a new time-saving assay to detect an especially severe strain of E. coli in ground beef.

The toxin produced by E. coli accounts for 175,000 illnesses annually in the U.S. The USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has maintained zero tolerance for O157:H7, an E. coli strain that can be life-threatening, since 1994. Zero tolerance means that if even one cell of E. coli is detected in a standard 325-gram (11.4-ounce) sample of ground beef, the entire batch is flagged as unfit for consumption.

"The issue is, you need to have a detection technology where you can find one cell in your sample," said Applegate, a professor of food science. But one E. coli cell is almost impossible to find in a 325-gram sample. "There's not a technology able to do that unless you do what we call an enrichment."

The enrichment process entails preparing a special environment that allows E. coli O157:H7 to outcompete all other microorganisms in a food sample before testing.

"Instead of one cell in this 325-gram sample, I will have 10 million to 100 million of these cells in there. I can guarantee I will find it then," Applegate said.

"For us, time to detection is the main problem. The faster you have results, the faster you release the product," Coronel-Aguilera said. "You're using enrichment during transportation, so when the product arrives, you can already have a positive or negative result."

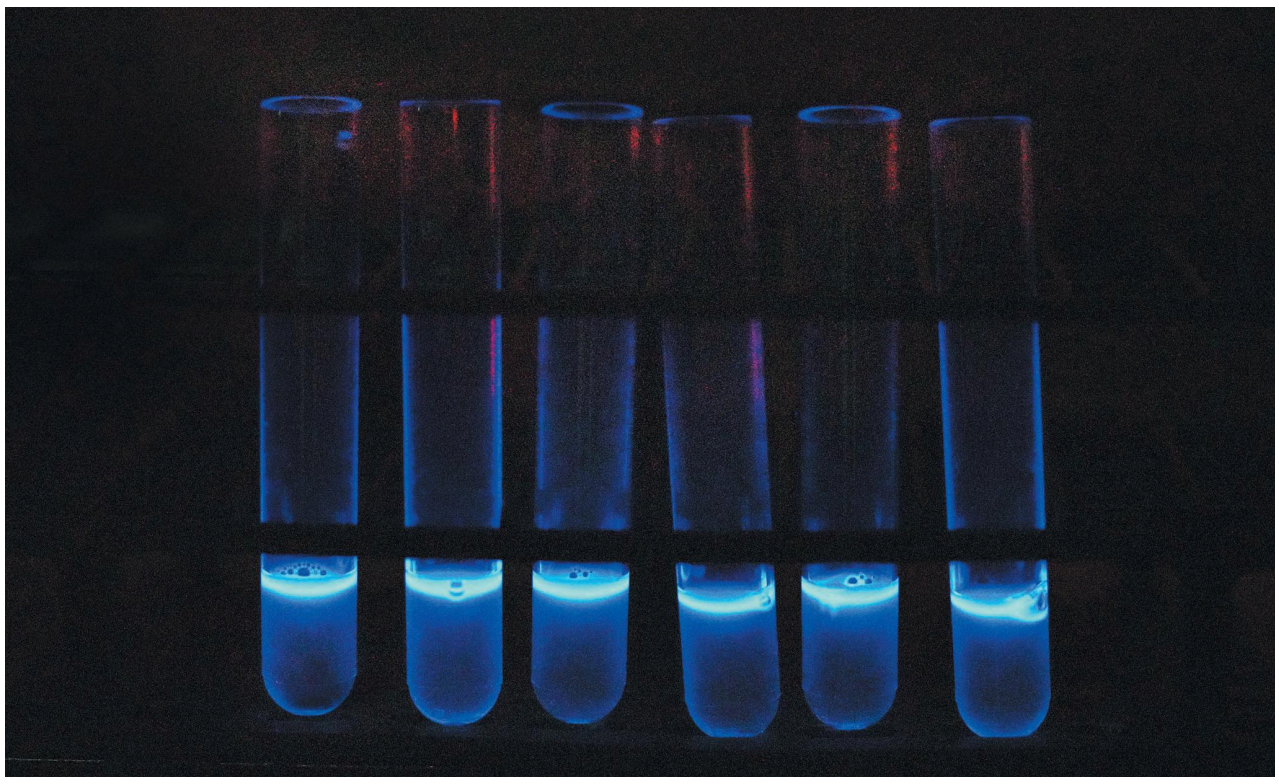
The new assay has promising implications for nations in Africa, South America and elsewhere that have fewer resources than the U.S. to invest in food safety.

"The testing methods that we have in the U.S. are expensive," Coronel-Aguilera said. But the method described in the Foods paper is a fast, easy and much less expensive version of the highly effective lab methods. "That will be a game changer," she said.

The system is based on phages—viruses that infect specific bacteria.

"We genetically modified this phage in such a way that it would infect the bacteria and cause it to produce light," Applegate said.

After infecting E. coli O157:H7, the phage integrates its genome into the bacterial cells' chromosome. Once integrated into the E. coli O157:H7 chromosome, the phage produces an enzyme that makes light and causes the infected cells to glow. A glowing culture indicates the presence of the pathogen.



Tom Campbell/Purdue Agricultural Communications

New, faster test for pathogenic E. coli in beef is based on using a modified phage, a virus that infects bacteria. After infecting the pathogenic E. coli, the phage produces an enzyme that causes the bacteria to glow.

> *"Having an accurate reading in a very short amount of time means everything to not just the food industry, but safety as a whole."*
>
> *— Chuyan Chen*

The assay both enriches the sample and can detect E. coli during the 15 hours or more needed to ship samples from a production facility to a testing laboratory of the FSIS. Applegate and five co-authors published the details of their assay in the journal Foods.

The new assay saves time by combining enrichment and detection during shipment. "Having an accurate reading in a very short amount of time means everything to not just the food industry, but safety as a whole," said Chuyan Chen, co-lead author of the Foods paper. Chen, who received her master's degree in food safety and microbiology at Purdue in 2018, now works in the consumer packaged foods industry. Chen noted that the work can be adapted for application to other food pathogens as well.

"We know that O157:H7 isn't the only microorganism that can get humans sick. There are many others," she said.

Claudia Coronel-Aguilera, another co-lead author and a former postdoctoral researcher in Applegate's lab, now works as a research scientist in the dairy industry.

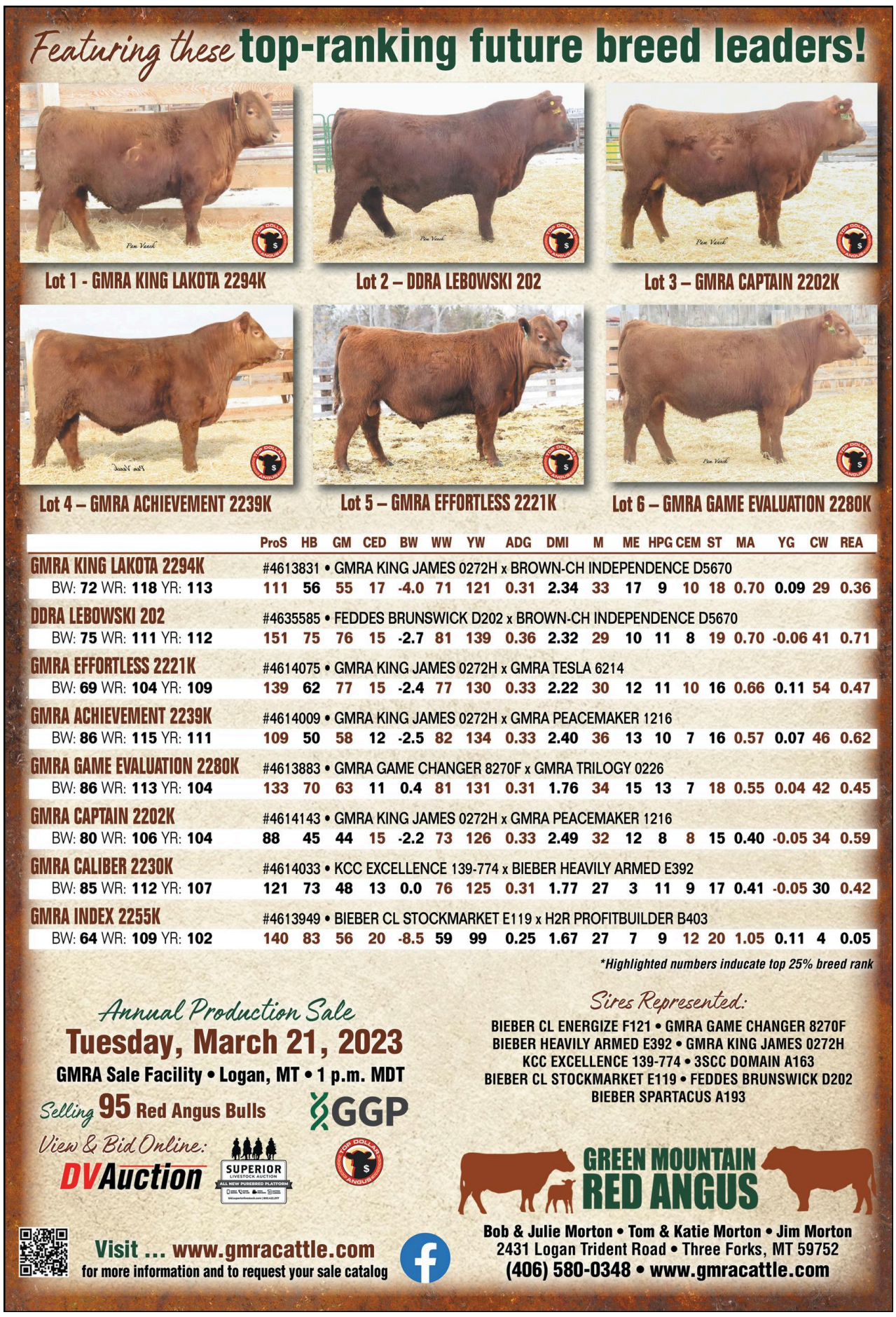
"Then you're making more bacteria glow over time. It's like shingles in a way," Applegate explained. "You get chickenpox. You get blisters from the dying cells, but also that virus gets into your cells and then you get shingles later on."

The talk Chen gave about the work won the Best Oral Presentation Award at the 20th International Symposium on Bioluminescence and Chemiluminescence in 2018 in Nantes, France. The phage, she noted, is specifically evolved to infect only one type of bacterium.

"Our phage is not specific to any E. coli, only to E. coli O157:H7," she said.

Additional co-authors of the Foods paper include Arun Bhunia, a Purdue professor of food science, and Andrew Gehring and George Paoli of the USDA's Agricultural Research Service in Wyndmoor, PA. Gehring and Paoli's collaborations with Applegate are part of a long-standing cooperative agreement between the USDA's Agricultural Research Service and Purdue's Center for Purdue Food Safety Engineering.

— Purdue University Extension



Smith Family Farms receives OK Leopold Conservation Award

Smith Family Farms of Elk City, OK, has been selected as the recipient of the 2022 Oklahoma Leopold Conservation Award.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the prestigious award recognizes farmers, ranchers and forestland owners who inspire others with their dedication to land, water and wildlife habitat resources in their care.

In Oklahoma, the award is presented annually by Sand County Foundation, American Farmland Trust, Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association, Noble Research Institute, Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture, ITC Great Plains, Oklahoma Conservation Commission and the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service.



Sand County Foundation

Jimmy and Cathy Smith and their children, Spencer and Calli.

Jimmy and Cathy Smith and their adult children, Spencer and Calli, are cotton growers from Beckham County. The Smiths were presented with $10,000 and a crystal award at the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts' Annual Meeting on Feb. 27.

"The Smith family has a true passion for land stewardship. They are in a continual process of learning, always working toward improvement of their land," said Hugh Aljoe, Noble Research Institute director of producer relations. "They move beyond their own operation, serving as leaders and educators in their community and inspiring others to be better stewards."

Oklahoma landowners were encouraged to apply (or be nominated) for the award early last year. Applications were reviewed by an independent panel of agricultural and conservation leaders.

The first Oklahoma Leopold Conservation Award was presented to Jimmy and Ginger Emmons of Leedey, OK, in 2017. Last year's award was presented to Lazy KT Ranch of Freedom, OK.

The Leopold Conservation Award in Oklahoma is made possible thanks to the generous contributions from American Farmland Trust, Noble Research Institute, Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture, ITC Great Plains, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, Sand County Foundation, McDonald's, Oklahoma State University and the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts.

Sand County Foundation presents the Leopold Conservation Award to private landowners in 25 states for extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation. For more information on the award, visit www.leopoldconservationaward.org.

Smith Family Farms

People didn't use the term "cover crop" 50 years ago, but the Smiths were growing one.

Like his father and grandfather before him, Jimmy Smith grows rye as a companion to cotton. What some would call an innovation has long been considered a necessity in western Oklahoma. The year-round presence of a living root retains precious moisture in a drought-prone region and prevents wind erosion of sandy soils.

Jimmy and Cathy Smith farm with their children Spencer and Calli. They credit conservation practices and technological advances with saving time and money and benefitting the landscape.

Growing rye as a cover crop has improved the Smith's soil, which averages 2-4% organic matter compared to the statewide 0.5% average. They began interseeding rye on their fields prior to harvesting cotton in 1998. There was a time when they used a moldboard plow to integrate rye back into the soil each spring. They now terminate the cover crop with herbicides rather than tilling it. Jimmy had completed a transition from conventional tillage to strip tillage to no-till practices across his 2,200 acres of cotton by 2010.

Smith Family Farms also grows 200 acres of rye, some of which is used to graze their herd of 40 beef cattle. The rest produces the seed used to plant that year's cover crop. Rye grows on the farm's sandiest soils that cannot produce cotton.

To improve water quality in the Elk City Lake watershed, the Smiths utilize nutrient management plans and have fenced off riparian areas from cattle with assistance from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services. They also retrofitted watering facilities for wildlife, resulting in an uptick of local turkey and deer populations.

Much of Smith Family Farms borders residential areas of Elk City, OK. The Smiths maintain neighborly relations using precision application technology that reduces drift of fertilizers and pesticides. They make positive impacts off the farm in other ways as well.

Smith Family Farms became a cooperator with the North Fork of the Red River Conservation District in 1988, and Jimmy has served on its board since 2001. Spencer serves on the USDA's Farm Service Agency Committee for Beckham County. Smith Family Farms hosts field days for fellow farmers, researchers and agribusiness professionals to learn more about their conservation practices.

Jimmy and Spencer's ingenuity led to the creation of an agriculture manufacturing business. When the Smiths switched to no-till practices, they noticed their planter gauge wheels quickly wore out. After working with a machinist to build stronger tires, other farmers took notice. The Smiths partnered with machinist Jake Hunter to launch 4 AG MFG, which now produces and sells wheels for no-till planters and air seeders internationally.

It's the latest reinvention in a story that began when Jimmy's great grandparents, Edmond and Martha, purchased the farm's original 300 acres in 1913 to grow cotton and raise cattle. Smith Family Farms survived the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl and witnessed nearby Elk City's run as a booming cotton town from the 1930s to the 1970s, with nine cotton gins in operation.

When Jimmy returned home from college to farm with his father and grandfather, soil health wasn't a commonly used term. Yet his efforts to improve the soil, water and wildlife in his care ever since earned him an induction into the Oklahoma Conservation Hall of Fame in 2021. — **Sand County Foundation**



The surprising benefits of using sheep for grazing on campus

Bicycles whirr by, students rush to class, staff and faculty are grabbing lunch or coffee on the go—and sheep graze the grassy knolls among the traffic, bleating every now and then. The grazing is their job.

The 25 wooly sheep who seasonally—for the past two years—leave their University of California (UC) Davis barns to graze on lawns at various central campus locations are doing much more than mowing, fertilizing and improving the ecosystem. The sheep also are improving people's mental health.

The sheep—four breeds of Suffolk, Hampshire, Southdown and Dorset—first took on this role in 2021 when COVID-19 masking and social-distancing protocols were in full swing. The goal was to determine whether sheep could benefit urban lawn landscapes and make a case for increasing their usage. The program is growing and exploring additional benefits sheep provide.

"This started out as an experiment to test their mowing abilities, and we have now published research on how they make people feel peaceful," said Haven Kiers, the lead author of a new study, director of the sheep mowers project and an assistant professor of landscape architecture in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

"I can't believe this is research; it's so much fun," Kiers regularly exclaims.

The research has important relevance, especially at a time when, nationwide since the 1980s, students of all ages have expressed that they struggle with stress and their mental and physical health. Kiers, co-authors and researchers surveyed about 200 students, staff, faculty and community members about their experiences walking by, or even hanging out in Adirondack chairs studying, sketching and painting watercolors among the sheep.

"We found that there was a significantly lower likelihood of current feelings of being 'very stressed' or 'stressed' among the sheep mower group when compared to the group that did not experience sheep mowers," she said of the study, which researched four sheep-mowing events in spring 2022. "The group with the sheep was just so much happier," Kiers said.

The paper, co-authored with Carolyn S. Dewa, of the UC Davis Department of Public Health, and Kelly M. Nishimura, a 2020 graduate of UC Davis and urban designer in the Office of Campus Planning and Development, was published in January in The International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.

Mina Bedogne, a research assistant on the project and now in her fourth year of undergraduate work, said the distraction seems to make most people happy.

"Just taking a break from a chaotic workday and mindlessly observing the flock has brought joy to so many people," said Bedogne, an environmental science and management major. "Some students find our grazing events so therapeutic that they'll stay there for hours eating lunch, doing work and catching up with friends."

That is much of the vision behind the program, said Dewa, who is also chair of the Graduate Group in Public Health Sciences and professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. Dewa first met Kiers when they were examining the impacts on well-being of Kiers' Nature Rx course, and they began a partnership that would evolve into this latest research. Nature Rx is a program at UC Davis and other universities that seeks ways to improve mental and physical health by looking to the external environment.

Meet the sheep online

The sheep mowers program reaches out beyond the grazing site too. The sheep have an Instagram account and live "sheep cam" which provides a way for viewers to look at sheep on social media when they cannot visit them in person. Additionally, a witty, creative website not only includes information on the research but introduces the sheep (and researchers) with clever individual bios, photos, sheep-inspired artwork and plenty of baaaahd puns.

Davis High School had its own sheep event, with Kiers' help, in December 2022, to give students a mental health break as finals began. High school counselors requested the help and invited sheep from a local farm.

Heather K. Barr, a doctoral student in public health sciences who conducts research with Dewa, works with the Aggie Mental Health Ambassadors as well as therapy dogs, which are used on the Sacramento health campus. She helped at the UC Davis High School sheep event. "It's great to see students interacting with new people and socializing after two years of Zoom school."

Other universities are adopting programs for their campuses, too.

Margaret Vickery, a lecturer and undergraduate program director in the History of Art and Architecture at the University of Massachusetts (UMass), Amherst, read about the UC Davis program shortly after it began. Hoping to create pastoral scenes on her campus similar to those found in art history, she consulted with Kiers and teamed up with colleague Kelly Klingler, a lecturer in wildlife conservation, who took on the ecological and wildlife habitat management perspective of the project. Also a land-grant university, the Amherst school is taking an interdisciplinary approach to the project, aptly named "Sustainable EweMass."

EweMass is involving other disciplines including literature, art, public history, ecology and of course, animal science, and is holding events with community fiber artists and even included an event featuring old, rare books held by the Arthur F. Kinney Center for Interdisciplinary Renaissance Studies that feature animal husbandry and sheep. Their sheep come from Hadley Farm, UMass Amherst's education farm for equines and livestock.

More studies on the UC Davis campus are expected. Kiers is still analyzing data on soil, mowing effects (did the sheep do a better job mowing than lawnmowers or not?) and beneficial insects attracted to the sites. Waste wool, or the short strands of wool from the animal's belly and underside, is being studied to see if it can be valuable in the garden, and Kiers is in talks with faculty in the UC Davis Department of Design to use the wool in student projects.

Lucy Yuan, who wrote her senior thesis on the project last year and now works in the campus planning department, said she hopes to see sheep mowers move beyond a tourist attraction or novelty to a mainstream tool. She said she listed in her thesis about 50 potential uses.

She noted sheep could be useful for mowing hilly areas and remote reserves that are difficult for humans and machinery to access.

"Sheep can be used to mow sports fields; they can be used on golfing greens while you play — they can be part of the appeal. There are so many ways they can be used." — **UC Davis College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences**



Gregory Urquiaga/UC Davis

Students pass grazing sheep outside of Bainer Hall on UC Davis' campus.



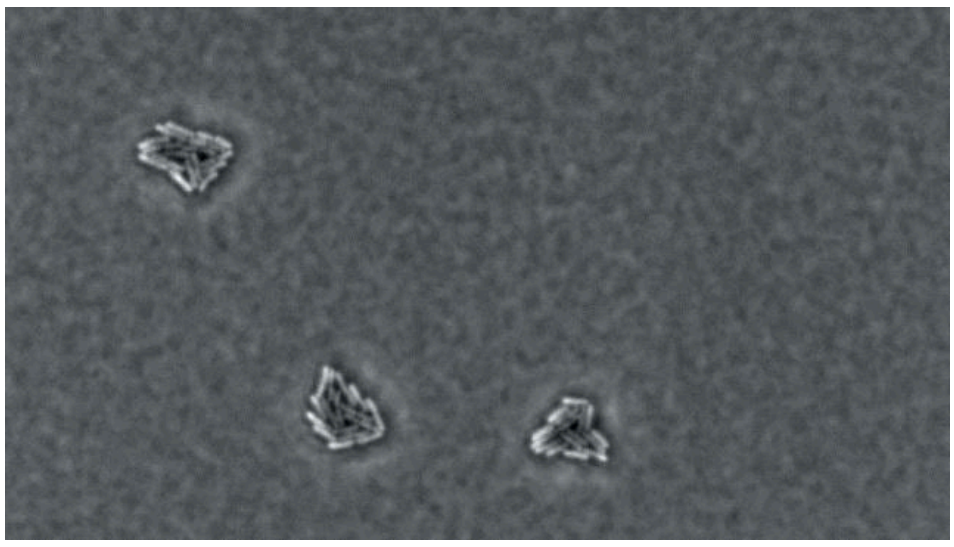
How artificial intelligence may improve food safety

Artificial intelligence (AI) could be a valuable tool for the future of food safety. New research out of the University of California (UC), Davis, finds that a technique using AI and optical imaging can quickly and accurately identify bacteria in food, making it a promising approach for preventing foodborne outbreaks and illnesses.

The study, published by journal Applied and Environmental Microbiology, finds using an algorithm called You Only Look Once (YOLO, version 4) to detect bacteria is a simple, cost-effective and rapid approach compared to conventional pathogen detection methods.

The team of interdisciplinary researchers took digital images of romaine lettuce with a conventional microscope equipped with white light and used AI-enabled software to detect and identify bacterial microcolonies.

When put to the test, researchers said the real-time object detection algorithm accurately identified 11 out of 12 lettuce samples that were contaminated with E. coli.



UC Davis

Microscopic image of E. coli used in the study.

Time-saving technology

Researchers said this AI-assisted detection has another advantage—its high speed. Luyao Ma, lead author and postdoctoral researcher with the Department of Food Science and Technology, said this technology can finish analysis within three hours, while conventional pathogen detection methods that rely on microbial culture can take several days before getting results.

"Once the food is processed, it can be tested and, on the same day, you can make sure there's no pathogens and distribute it," Ma said. "That is a very rapid screening."

Ma said YOLO is commonly used in several real-world applications, including autonomous cars. She said they wanted to determine if the machine learning that identifies objects like cars or traffic lights can similarly identify different bacteria on a single microscopic image of a food item.

"People are using this algorithm to change people's lives," Ma said. "As food scientists, we can bring this knowledge into the agricultural food system."

Telling bacteria apart

Nitin Nitin, professor with both food science and technology and biological and agricultural engineering, said the study also analyzed if the AI-enabled approach was capable of differentiating features of various bacteria. They found that YOLO discriminated E. coli from seven other common foodborne bacterial species, including salmonella, with an average precision of 94%.

"With YOLO, we were able to both detect where these microcolonies are spatially located and identify which microorganism they belong to, and it was powerful enough to even differentiate among different strains of E. coli within that matter," Nitin said.

He hopes their findings can help provide a framework to strengthen the ability to detect bacteria that can lead to outbreaks. There's also potential to create automated food safety inspections using this AI method.

"With this advancement, we can deliver an even higher level of safety," Nitin said. "Food safety is an essential part of food business, so if we can strengthen that area by providing a cost-effective, rapid, highly-sensitive and specific approach, I think the method, overall, should give consumers more confidence in our food systems as we move forward."

Other authors of the study are Mason Earles with the Department of Viticulture and Enology, Nicharee Wisuthiphaet with the Department of Food Science and Technology and Jiyoon Yi, who was with the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering during the study. — **UC Davis College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences**

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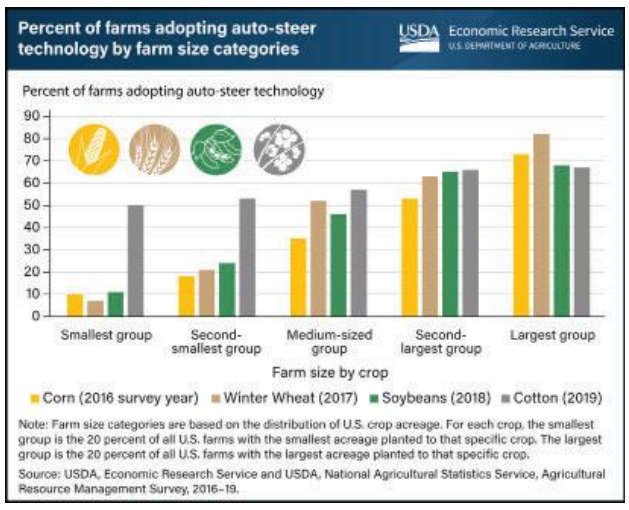


U.S. farms are adopting precision technologies at different rates, with the largest farms adopting auto-steer guidance technology at significantly higher rates. USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) researchers used data from four successive Agricultural Resource Management Surveys to assess the adoption of precision agriculture technologies across four major field crops.

After sorting farms into five equally sized groups based on farm size, they found that the largest farms across all commodities had adopted guidance at the highest rates. Specifically, of farms growing corn in 2016, 73% of farms in the largest size category adopted guidance.

The rates were similar for the group of largest farms growing other commodities in later years: 82% of the largest winter wheat farms in 2017, 68% of the largest soybean farms in 2018 and 67% of the largest cotton farms in 2019.

Conversely, among the smallest farms, adoption of guidance systems was much lower: 10% of the smallest corn farms in 2016, 11% of the smallest soybean farms in 2018 and 7% of the smallest winter wheat farms in 2017, with the exception of cotton, which starts at a relatively high rate of 50% for the smallest cotton farms in 2019.

Adoption rates vary based on field terrain, soil characteristics, the scale and scope of production and farmers' risk preferences. Other factors affecting adoption rates include the type of crop produced and farmers' socioeconomic characteristics, such as age, education level and years of experience. — **USDA ERS**

States ask USDA for assistance with winter weather

— Pen letter to FSA

Leaders from Colorado, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming's Agriculture departments have penned a letter to USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator Zach Ducheneaux asking for relief due to the persistence of snow causing higher levels of supplemental feed.

"This winter has been particularly hard for livestock producers in the Western United States," the letter reads."The winter season started early and we have heard reports from producers that they were forced to commence much higher levels of supplemental feed and will need to sustain these operations for a longer period than at any time in recent memory."

The letter states producers have purchased higher levels of supplemental feed due to the lack of available forage in traditional wintering grounds and animal performance has been hampered.

Producers have also had difficulty moving animals off Bureau of Land Management (BLM) allotments due to the inability to use snow removal equipment, as BLM prohibits supplemental grazing on its allotments.

"If you're a grazing permit this time of the year, a lot of those winter permits were snowed over early," J.J. Goicoechea, director of the Nevada Department of Agriculture, told the Mountain West News Bureau. "And then none of that vegetation was showing through, especially as that snow continued to accumulate."

Goicoechea said hay and forage that producers would typically use this time of year were in short supply due to the ongoing drought.

Goicoechea and other state agricultural leaders are asking Ducheneaux for "any flexibility and innovative ideas from the FSA perspective that could expand eligibility and use of emergency programs to provide relief." They are asking for supplemental feed locations to move livestock, snow removal assistance and reimbursement for transportation expenses. The state leaders have asked producers to document losses and conditions to their local FSA office.

In addition to Goicoechea, the letter was signed by Craig Buttars, commissioner of the Utah Department of Agriculture; Kate Greenberg, commissioner of the Colorado Department of Agriculture; and Doug Miyamoto, director of the Wyoming Department of Agriculture. — **Charles Wallace, *WLJ* editor**

Take precautions when using heat lamps for newborn livestock

As spring approaches, many ranchers are preparing a clean, dry and warm place for newborn animals. Frigid temperatures in the upper Midwest make it a challenge for producers to keep our newborn livestock warm and protected from the harsh, winter elements.

One option for keeping newborn livestock warm is to provide supplemental heat by installing heat lamps. However, severe risks can accompany the use of heat lamps inside a barn.

"As livestock producers, we want to do everything in our power to establish the best outcome for our newborn stock," said Travis Hoffman, North Dakota State University (NDSU) and University of Minnesota Extension sheep specialist. "Sometimes we need to help our newborn livestock by providing supplemental heat to prevent hypothermia."

The lower critical temperature for newborn lambs and kids is 50 F. Providing additional heat in the form of heat lamps for newborn lambs, kids and calves inside a "hot box" can aid in newborn survivability.

Unfortunately, the use of heat lamps also adds increased fire risk to barns, especially when heat lamps are placed over deep, bedded straw.

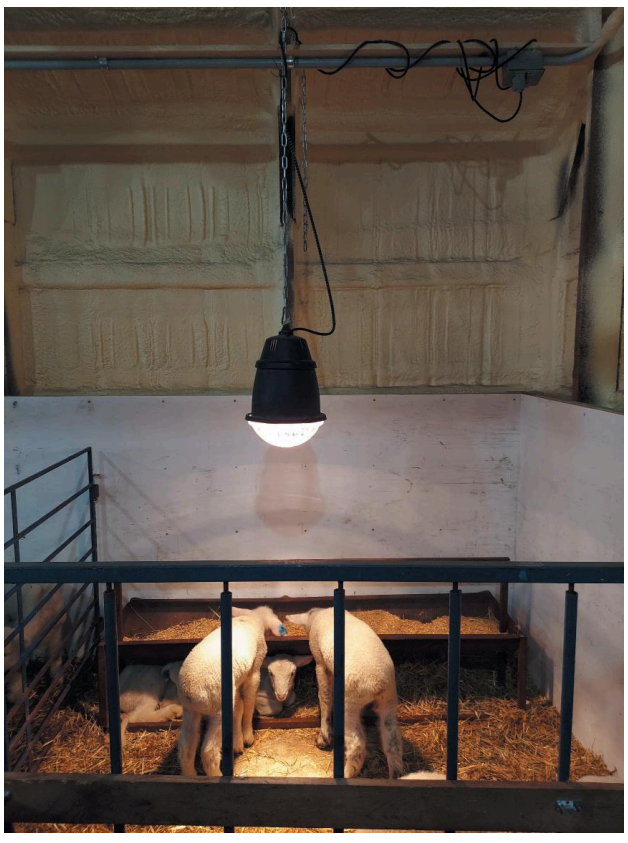
"The risk of barn fires increases anytime you add a heating system to your barn, especially the use of heat lamps," said Angie Johnson, NDSU Extension farm and ranch safety coordinator. "Ranchers must use extreme caution and preventative measures when using heat sources for your barn, especially heat lamps."

If ranchers decide that using heat lamps is their best option to provide a supplemental heat source for newborn livestock, Johnson and Hoffman provide the following tips to help reduce the risk of fire:

- Secure all heat lamps with a non-flammable hanger. The best option is to use a chain and a locking chain connector to prevent the heat lamp from falling into the straw. Do not use twine or rope. Heat lamps should be secured as if they are permanent.
- Purchase high-quality, heavy-duty heat lamps and thick glass bulbs. Utilize a heat lamp that is designed to withstand a fall and lay in a pen without starting a fire. Utilize heat lamp bulbs that won't break if they fall into the pen. Farm and ranch stores that specialize in lambing and kidding equipment have heat lamp and bulb options.
- Clean off dust, cobwebs and dead insects before using the heat lamp.
- Inspect heat lamps for exposed wiring, loose bulb sockets or broken bulbs stuck in the heat lamp socket before using.
- Directly plug your heat lamp into an outlet, not an extension cord. Outlet receptacles should be both ground fault (GFCI) and arc fault (AFCI). An arc fault is an unintended arc created by a current flowing through an unplanned path that could create a fire, such as a heat lamp sparking when knocked into the pen. Ground fault trips when there is a sudden change in the amount of current going out versus coming back. Together, these two help prevent fire from a spark or electrocution if an animal chews on the wire. Additionally, ensure that you do not overload the circuit.
- Place a fire extinguisher near each entrance of the barn. Have a 10-pound, ABC-rated (multipurpose) fire extinguisher ready to use in case of a fire. Check extinguishers periodically to ensure that they have maintained their charge by reading the indicator dial.

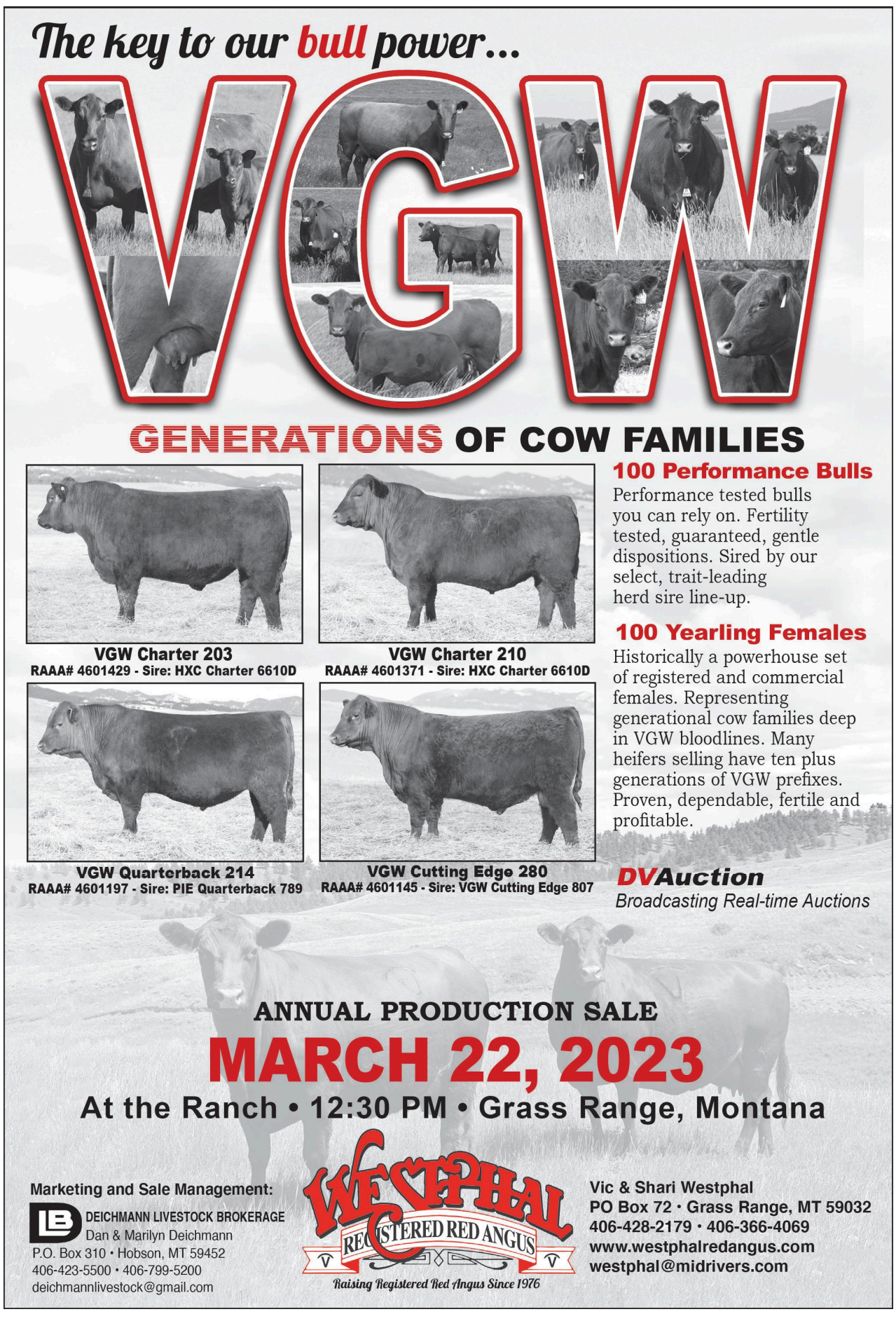
Consider investing in a barn temperature monitoring system or fire monitoring system.

"Using heat lamps in your barn means that ranchers must be diligent in checking the heat lamps every day, multiple times a day," said Johnson. "If one animal bumps the heat lamp or chews on the electrical cord, causing exposed wires, a barn fire could easily occur in a matter of minutes. However, with proper safety considerations, heat lamps can be a viable option for protecting newborn livestock." — **NDSU Extension**



NDSU

When used properly, heat lamps can help newborn livestock stay warm during harsh weather.



Identifying your competitive advantage



Troy Walz

What is it about your product, skill, reputation, business structure, location or service that sets you apart from others?

Livestock producers can enhance success by identifying and exploiting their competitive advantage in relation to their competition. What is special or unique about the product you produce, your skills, background, reputation, business structure, location or service that sets you apart from others? What gives you a "leg up" on the competition?

Are you having a hard time identifying your potential competitive advantages? Consider asking questions that can help you identify what they might be. This process can reveal where there may be an opportunity that hasn't been considered or the recognition of a new way to further develop a resource that may help you grow a competitive advantage. If you find yourself in a bit of a mental struggle to perceive what your competitive advantage might be, consider asking yourself questions around these five "P" categories: place, passion, problem, people and position.

Place

What is it about your place, your location or your climate as it relates to resources that is unique? There is a saying that "there are three things that matter in valuing real estate: location, location and location." What benefits does your location provide that most others don't have? How can your location be leveraged to your advantage? What could these advantages be for beef production as well as other potential enterprises?

In thinking about cattle production, the competitive advantage of a cow as compared to pigs or chickens is its ability to harvest forage and effectively convert that into a high-quality, desirable protein. What is the quality and quantity of the forage your location grows? What is the market value of that forage throughout the year? What class of cattle best matches the primary forage resource available? Could other ruminants such as sheep and goats consume underutilized or problematic forage resources as a complement to cattle?

What are other enterprises that could utilize available resources and complement livestock production? For example, the seclusion of a ranch location might be seen as a disadvantage. However, there is a segment of the population that is longing for experiences in isolated areas away from others. How could what uniquely characterizes your ranch's location and natural resources be valued and marketed to others?

Passion

What passions do you have as it relates to natural resource management or livestock production that differentiates you from others? Do you have a unique combination of skills or experiences? How can you harness and develop yourself to be a point of leverage that can enhance business success? What are you enthusiastic about that other people value and are willing to pay for? How can your skills and passion in this area be further developed and effectively marketed?

Many ranchers are passionate about caring for the land. Increasingly as land transitions to the next generation, absentee landowners are looking for competent, committed people to steward land resources. Those who have skills and a proven track record for excellent land management will likely have opportunities to steward land for others.

Problem

What problems could you solve that would make what you produce or the service you provide unique and highly desirable? People are often willing to pay generously to have a "problem" solved. What product or service could you deliver that would set you apart as compared to what others do? When something you are passionate about can also be used to solve a problem for someone else, exciting opportunities often begin to appear.

For example, as the average age of ranchers continues to increase, the demand to have someone else custom calve heifers or cows appears to be increasing as well. Do you enjoy calving heifers or cows? Could you leverage your labor, facilities and equipment to provide a service to custom calve for someone else?

People

How are your people skills? How would you rate your communication, motivation, conflict resolution and leadership of others? What are you naturally good at as it relates to people skills? What areas do you need to grow in to enhance or develop a competitive advantage?

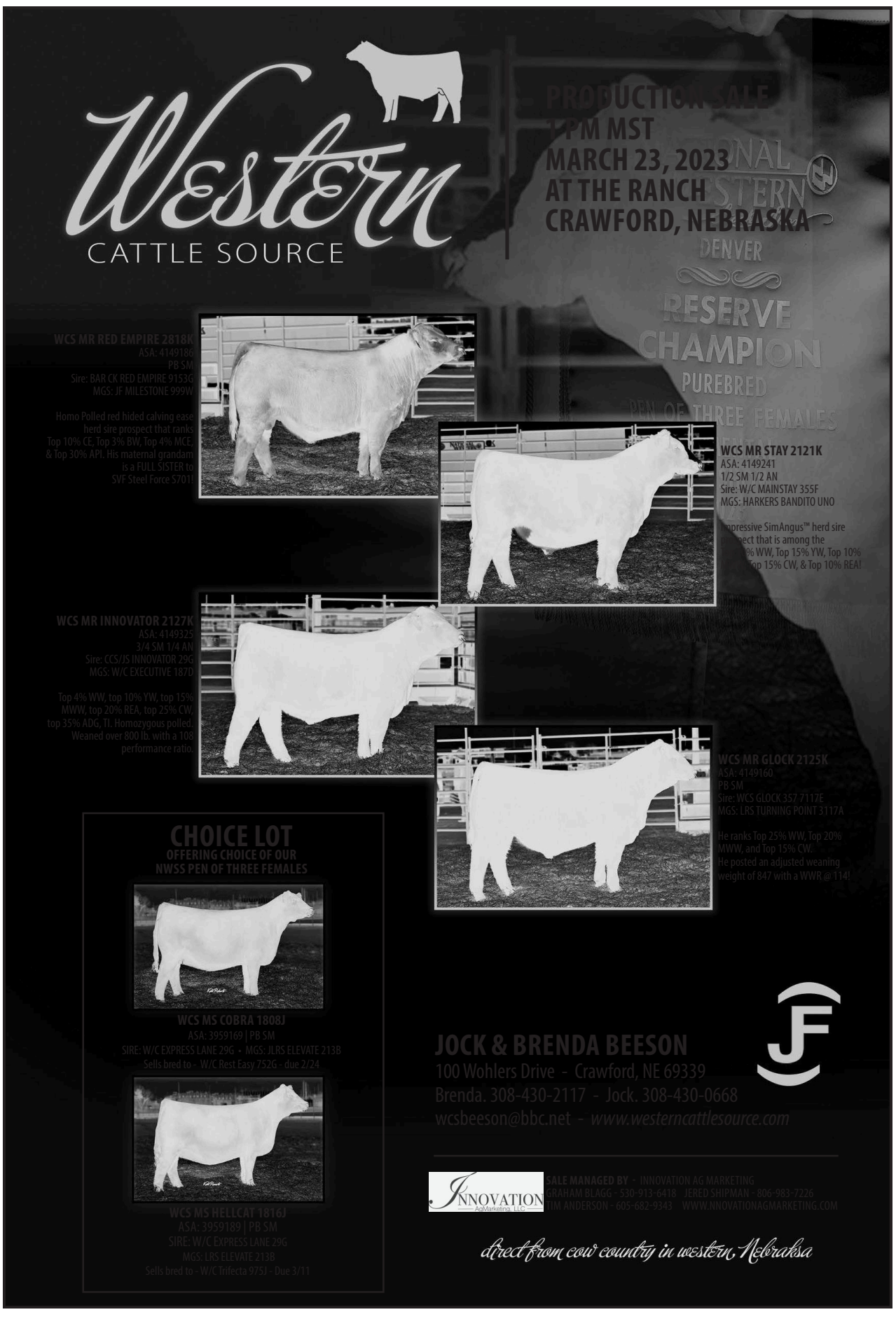
Who are the people you currently serve or could serve with the product or service you provide? What do they want? Is there a customer desire that you haven't considered? What could be the financial advantage to you if that desire could be met? Are there potential customers outside of the people who currently purchase the products you produce or service you provide that you could serve also? How can you connect with them and develop a business relationship?

Position

What is your position in life? Are you early in your career with the willingness to be nimble and can quickly adjust to an opportunity? Do you readily have the availability of labor and energy to give to a prospect? Or are you established in your business with a standing reputation and a strong financial position that you can leverage to weather challenging financial times and take advantage of opportunities? Recognizing your position in life and the strengths and weakness of that position will help you to discern potential competitive advantages.

In exploring the competitive advantage of your operation, consider involving other members of your family, employees and trusted advisors in this discussion as well. Get their perspective on what they see as being current or possible competitive advantages. Also consider interacting with people who are successful at business, but outside of agriculture to give you input as to potential competitive advantages. A fresh perspective from an outside source could open your eyes to seeing a new opportunity that you hadn't considered before.

Commodity beef production on farms and ranches has historically been a highly competitive, low-margin business. However, within that business arena, there are often opportunities to develop enterprises that serve others and complement beef production that producers can utilize to their advantage. Identifying what your competitive advantage is, or what it could be, can bring focus to where efforts and investments should be made to grow and develop the business. — **Aaron Berger, Nebraska Extension beef educator**



Parnell takes ownership reins of Cattlemen's Livestock Market

Jake Parnell is no stranger to Cattlemen's Livestock Market (CLM) in Galt, CA, where he has managed the yards for the past 16 years. Now, Parnell has taken ownership of the company.

CLM has been in business since 1968 under the ownership of the Loretz family. The market is one of the largest cattle yards in the state of California and the Western U.S., and after 55 years of operating the company, Frank Loretz made the decision to sell the business to Parnell and his wife, Molly.

"Molly and I are very honored that Mr. Loretz decided to trust us with continuing Cattlemen's Livestock's legacy in Galt, CA," Parnell said. "We will do our best to serve the industry and the cattlemen of Nevada, California and southern Oregon to the best of our ability."

Parnell added that the venture is an opportunity for his family to grow their involvement in the livestock business, especially as his 7-year-old twins, Parker and Ben; and 8-year-old son, Jack, get older.

Loretz will continue to stay involved in the cattle business. Parnell said the market is not going to change much in its operations, and the market will continue to have the same commitment to customer service and dedication to the cattle industry.

> "We will do our best to serve the industry and the cattlemen of Nevada, California and southern Oregon to the best of our ability."
>
> — Jake Parnell

Parnell emphasized that he will continue to help producers improve their cow herds and their genetics by auctioning at purebred cattle sales in addition to his role at CLM, where his ultimate goal is to help producers make their product more valuable.

"Producer profitability is our focus," Parnell said. "We will continue to help producers in California, Nevada and southern Oregon maximize their opportunities for success."

CLM sells 100,000 head annually through its Wednesday afternoon sales and also serves as a representative for Western Video Market, a role that will continue to be a priority focus for Parnell and the CLM team. — ***WLJ***

WLJ *thanks Frank Loretz and the CLM team for their continued support and decades of loyalty over the years.* WLJ *looks forward to furthering its relationship with the Parnell family.*



Courtesy photo

Jake and Molly Parnell and their children, Ben, Parker and Jack.

China beef demand expected to increase

RABOBANK
(from page 1)

opportunities, but also volatility in the market. Household beef consumption is expected to bounce back from 2022 lows, but Rabobank poses the question will the pent-up consumption be sustainable?

"After three years of living under Covid policies, we believe Chinese consumers are becoming more pragmatic, spending more money on the products which they perceive to be practical, valuable and worthy," the report said. "Seeking added value will be important for consumers."

Younger generations, middle- to high-income families and health-conscious people are increasing their beef consumption, the report said, which they forecast will lead to a gradual increase in quality beef consumption. However, total beef consumption may increase more slowly.

The Chinese beef market is also beginning to change, with an increase in beef sales in retail channels and not just foodservice channels. This is likely due to growth in cooking tech. The pre-prepared dish market is also growing, which has seen double-digit growth in the past two years, the report said. This is expected to continue over the next five years, albeit at a slower rate.

Rabobank expects China beef consumption to rise and for the beef market to steadily expand in the coming years, despite headwinds in the overall economy. However, the entity does expect a slowdown in beef imports in the first half of 2023, as the high inventory of frozen beef will take months to consume. Total import volumes in 2023 may be flat or only slightly higher compared to the year prior.

China became a top three U.S. beef exporter in 2022, but growth in export volumes slowed throughout the year, the report said. The U.S. will face headwinds into the China market as U.S. supplies decline and prices increase.

Domestic outlook

Production declines in the U.S. will become increasingly prevalent by spring and summer, the report said. Historically low cattle numbers support the forecast for smaller 2023 beef production.

Winter weather also impacted cattle slaughter at the end of 2022 and the beginning of 2023. Weekly slaughter levels declined as plants were slowed by colder temperatures, and cattle-feeding regions were hit by heavy snowfall, reducing cattle weights and performance. As a result, steer weights are down 9 lbs. over the last five weeks and first-quarter beef production is expected to be down 2-3%.

The All Fresh Beef retail price declined in 2022, down 4%, signaling an increased willingness from retailers to pass discounts on to consumers, the report said. The wholesale beef market was consistently weaker than year-ago levels, with boxed beef cutout values 12% lower on average. "Weaker real consumer incomes and ample U.S. animal protein supplies were also motivating factors," the report finished. "Expect first quarter U.S. retail beef prices to be 1-2% softer than prior year." — **Anna Miller,** ***WLJ*** **managing editor**



Early herd rebuilding could happen through the bred cow market

The USDA Cattle Inventory report showed a 4% reduction in beef cows, a 6% decrease in heifers held back for retention and a 5% reduction in heifers expected to calve this year. Feeder cattle supplies will be reduced nationally in 2023. Continued liquidation in 2023 will depend on the profit margins producers expect to receive.

Higher prices for feeder cattle are expected but higher feed costs, especially hay and other inputs are limiting the profit potential. Some producers have already run out of hay as heavy snow has limited winter grazing and persistent drought conditions shortened the grazing season and reduced overall hay production.

Much has been said about the El Niño-Southern Oscillation weather patterns changing this year. If this weather pattern does materialize, the change will benefit the southern Plains with a cool and wet spring/summer whereas the northern Plains generally stay dry in the summer before a cool/wet fall. For northern Plains cattle producers, it may get a bit tougher before things improve from a feed perspective.

There will be producers who have feed resources and believe profits are to be had in 2023 and 2024. The quickest way for these producers to increase the feeder cattle supply is through the addition of bred cows or bred heifers. Bred heifers receive a premium over bred cows. For example, the price ratio of bred heifers to bred cows has averaged 2.5% over the last five years. In other words, bred heifers are on average 2.5% more expensive than bred cows. The premium is the widest in the spring (March-May) and lowest in the fall (September-November). There is a premium due to the longer useful life of the cow in the herd but smaller than expected due to potential issues with calving which can occur with first calf heifers.

However, the national bred cow price masks several factors that impact price. Age, weight, months bred, genetics and market conditions are the primary drivers of bred cow prices. One study using Oklahoma City, OK, bred heifer and bred cow sales from 2000-2015 estimated the premiums and discounts for each of these factors in the bred cow market.

To illustrate how these factors could impact producers' decisions to either buy or sell bred cows this year, here are several scenarios assuming we have a three-year-old bred cow that is six months pregnant, is a medium/large 1-2, and black hided. February 2023 prices for this type of cow in Oklahoma City, OK, is $1,150 but has averaged $870 over the past three years.

Producers selling cows older than this should expect to receive a discount and the discounts tend to decrease almost linearly from 0-20% as cows age. A 4-year-old bred cow would cost $1,150 (0% discount), a 7-year-old bred cow would cost $1,035 (10% discount), and a 10-year-old bred cow would cost $920 (20% discount). Producers considering marketing older cows as bred should acknowledge the heavy discounts assigned as age increases.

Similarly, the closer the cow is to calving, the more expensive the bred cow becomes relative to a 6-month-old bred cow. Discounts and premiums are nearly linear between a 4% premium ($1,196) for an 8-month-old bred cow, a 5% discount ($1,092) for a 4-month-old bred cow, and a 12% discount ($1,012) for a 1-month-old bred cow. These premiums and discounts exist as there less risk of losing a calf as age increases, lower production costs before the calf's birth, and revenue is received more quickly when late-gestating cows are purchased.

Selling this same bred cow at different times of the year will impact the price received. Producers looking to buy bred cows in the late winter or early spring should expect to pay a premium. The highest premiums are in February and March, as many producers are purchasing cows that are on the same calving cycle in anticipation of summer grass and pastures. Prices peak in early March at approximately an 8% premium ($1,242). Prices are lowest in the summer and fall months in areas that are heavy spring calvers as producers are culling their herds and determining which heifers to be retained—a 4% discount ($1,104). Selling the same quality, age and pregnancy age results in a difference of $138 per cow.

Current market conditions will also play a role in the price of bred cows. The feeder cattle and corn markets are the two largest drivers of bred cow prices. Higher feeder cattle prices create incentives for more calves to be brought to market and bred cows are the quickest way to do so. Higher corn prices increase the cost of gain in feedlots. This puts downward pressure on feeder cattle prices although the impact is delayed as it takes at least 6-8 months before the potential calf will reach the feedlot. Combining these impacts and current price forecasts can show the premiums and discounts producers can expect to receive for a bred cow.

Premiums/discounts are relative to our bred cow (3-year-old that is six months pregnant) and current CME feeder cattle ($210/cwt) and corn ($6/ bu.) contracts. Table 1 shows these premiums and discounts. The nearby feeder cattle price at the time of sale has a much larger impact than the nearby corn price. For example, relative to the BASE, a 50-cent decline would increase the price of our bred cow by 0.77% whereas a $10/cwt increase in the feeder cattle contract increases the price by 5.29%. Producers looking to rebuild herds through the bred cow market should be aware of these and other factors before buying or selling bred cows. — **Elliott Dennis, livestock marketing and risk management economist**

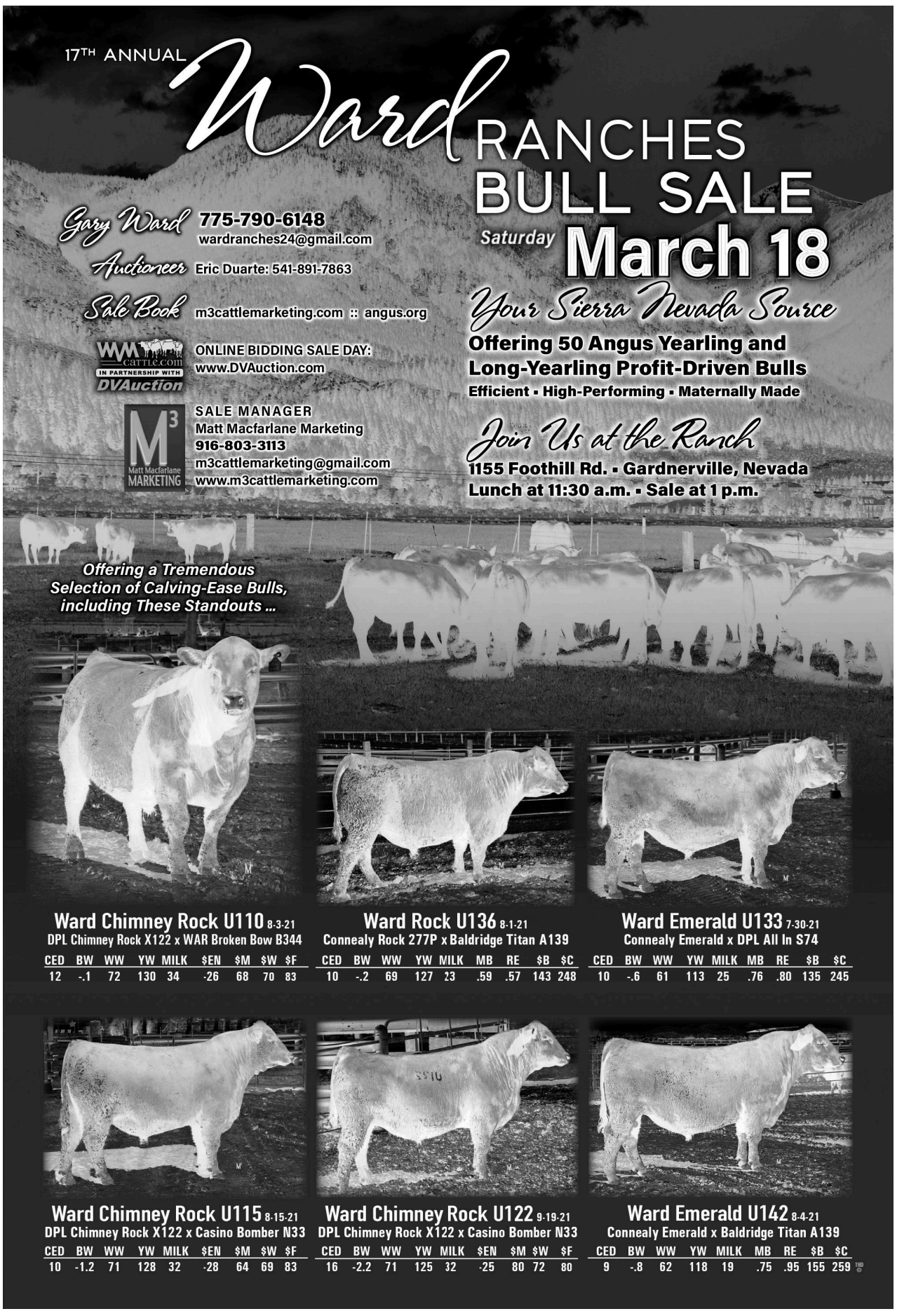
Table 1. Nearby CME Feeder Cattle and Corn Price Expectations on Bred Cow Premiums and Discounts.

		CME Corn Price Expectations ($/bu.)				
		5.00	5.50	6.00	6.50	7.00
CME Feeder Cattle Price Expectations ($/cwt.)	180	-14.34%	-15.05%	-15.70%	-16.29%	-16.83%
	190	-9.05%	-9.81%	-10.49%	-11.12%	-11.69%
	200	-3.74%	-4.54%	-5.26%	-5.92%	-6.53%
	210	1.61%	0.77%	BASE	-0.70%	-1.34%
	220	6.98%	6.09%	5.29%	4.55%	3.88%
	230	12.38%	11.45%	10.60%	9.83%	9.12%
	240	17.81%	16.83%	15.94%	15.13%	14.39%

Source: Authors' calculations using estimates from Mitchell et al. (2018)
Note: Estimates are for a 3-year-old bred cow that is 6 months pregnant.

The national bred cow price masks several factors that impact price.

Elliot Dennis



COMING EVENTS

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

March 27-29 – The American Sheep Industry Association's Spring Trip to Washington, D.C., is set for March 27-29. Sheep producers from state and national associations across the U.S. will visit the nation's capital to meet with their congressional delegations on issues of interest to the industry. Producers interested in joining the trip should contact their state sheep association executive, or Peter Orwick at peter@sheepusa.org.

April 24-25 – The Public Lands Council's 2023 Legislative Conference will be held in-person in Washington, D.C. Attendees will hear from congressional members, policy experts, scientists, partner group representatives and other industry professionals dedicated to Western lands, waters and perspectives. Details: publiclandscouncil.org/2023-legislative-conference.

May 4-5 – The 2023 Animal Agriculture Alliance's Stakeholders Summit is slated for May 4-5 in Arlington, VA. Full agenda and registration: whova.com/portal/registration/annua5_202305.

May 21-27 – Save the date for the Nebraska Sandhills Ranch Tour, presented by Western Livestock Journal. For more details, visit www.wljtours.com or contact Devin Murnin at 406-696-1502.

May 24-26 – The California Cattlemen's Association Feeder Council and Arizona Cattle Feeders Association Meeting will be held in San Diego, CA, at the Marriott Marquis. Registration: calcattlemen.org/event/2023-feeder-meeting.

July 5-8 – The Wolf Point Wild Horse Stampede will celebrate its 100th year in Wolf Point, MT. Tickets are available after June 21 by calling 406-653-1770.

Jan. 21-Feb. 2, 2024 – Mark your calendars for the 2024 Cattle Industry Convention & National Cattlemen's Beef Association Trade Show, which is heading to the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, FL. Additional information will be available soon at convention.ncba.org.

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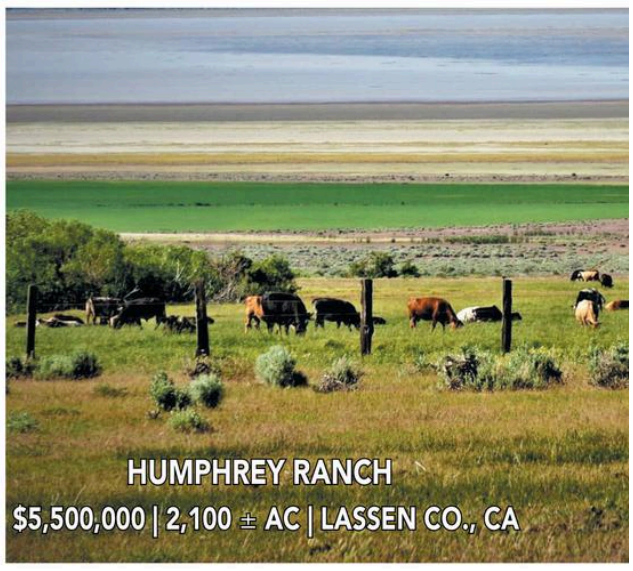

Lawson Ranch *Price Upon Request* | 2,971.51 ± Ac | Elko Co., NV

Bently Ranch $100,000,000 | 12,393.29 ± Acres | Douglas Co, NV

Carroll Ranch $15,595,000 | 3,068 ± Ac | Shasta Co., CA

Reservation Ranch $12,950,000 | 1,668 ± Ac | Del Norte Co., CA pending

Biaggi Ranch $10,900,000 | 1,382.50 ± Ac | Mendocino Co., CA

Hagemann Ranch 2 $7,950,000 | 215.30 ± Ac | Sonoma Co., CA

Eshom Valley Ranch $7,900,000 | 3,775 ± Ac | Tulare Co., CA

Winter Falls Ranch $7,300,000 | 1,455 ± Ac | Shasta Co., CA

Humphrey Ranch $5,500,000 | 2,100 ± Ac | Lassen Co., CA

Adobe Valley Ranch $5,300,000 | 5,733.29 ± Ac | Stanislaus Co., CA

Baccala Ranch $4,750,000 | 5,956 ± Ac | Tehama Co., CA

Arnerich Ranch $4,399,000 | 2,928 ± Ac | Santa Clara Co., CA

Reese Reservoir Ranch $3,800,000 | 748 ± Ac | Shasta Co., CA

Hat Creek Cattle & Hay Ranch $3,590,000 | 260.77 ± Ac | Shasta Co., CA

Cantinas Ranch $3,500,000 | 587.33 ± Ac | San Luis Obispo Co., CA

Jensen Ranch on Fall River $3,200,000 | 268 ± Ac | Shasta Co., CA

Highway 20 Ranch $2,950,000 | 2,607 ± Ac | Colusa Co., CA

Magonigal Ranch $2,700,000 | 359 ± Ac | Placer County

Blodgett Ostman Ranch $2,595,000 | 901 ± Ac | Amador Co., CA

Huntley Ranch $2,350,000 | 256.66 ± Ac | Yuba Co., CA

County Rd 11 Farm $2,010,000 | 240 ± Ac | Yolo Co., CA

RR Ranch $1,998,000 | 1,796 ± Ac | Shasta Co., CA

Smithneck Ranch $1,600,000 | 355.86 ± Ac | Sierra Co., CA

Hermley Ranch $1,430,000 | 159.84 ± Ac | Yolo Co., CA

San Antonio Valley Ranch $1,395,000 | 667 ± Ac | Santa Clara Co., CA

Hunters Ranch $799,000 | 1,566 ± Ac | San Luis Obispo Co., CA

Elk Creek Ranchette $597,000 | 133 ± Ac | Glenn Co., CA

Personeni Ranch $495,000 | 116.46 ± Ac | Nevada Co., CA

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Farmers expected to get increased water allocations

Winter storms that bolstered the Sierra Nevada snowpack and added to California reservoirs prompted federal and state water managers to announce increases in anticipated water allocations for the 2023 growing season.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation recently announced an initial allocation of 35% of contracted water supplies for agricultural customers south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

The announcement brought a measure of certainty for farmers, ranchers and agricultural water contractors after officials provided zero water allocations for agriculture from the federal Central Valley Project (CVP) in 2021 and 2022.

Ernest Conant, director of the California Great Basin region of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which manages the CVP, said the project began the 2023 water year with 3.6 million acre-feet of storage in its six key reservoirs. That was just 29% of capacity after three years of drought.



California Farm Bureau Federation

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation recently announced an initial allocation of 35% of contracted water supplies for agricultural customers south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

But storm events in December and January changed the water picture. The precipitation added another 3 million acre-feet to the state's upstream reservoirs and built average snowpack levels to 205% of average on Feb. 1.

The improved forecast for federal water allocations was welcomed by Fresno County farmer Jeff Fortune, board president of Westlands Water District, a CVP water contractor.

"We'd been anticipating a much lower release initially, but we stressed to the Bureau that the farmers need a higher initial allocation so they know what they can do in the spring at planting time," said Fortune, who farms tomatoes, almonds and pistachios in Cantu Creek just west of Five Points.

Now some fellow farmers are planning increased plantings.

"One of my neighbors, as soon as the initial allocation came out, he called his seed vendor and ordered 600 acres of feed corn that he was going to have to idle," Fortune said. "This will be a salvation for this year, and we're hopeful that future hydrology will allow this initial allocation to increase."

Westlands Water District officials reported that the past two years of no water led to fallowing of more than 223,000 acres, or 36% of the district's farmland.

For the 2023 water year, Fortune said, he was ready to make tough decisions about removing trees and row crops based on the forecasted allocation amount.

"If we had a zero allocation this year, we were going to have to fallow all of our row crops and pull out 600 acres of permanent plantings. We needed at least 25% this year to farm everything," he said. "We thought we may have to lay off a third of our employees, and now we don't have to lay anybody off."

Due to gains in the Sierra Nevada snowpack, the California Department of Water Resources also increased its forecasted allocation last week from the State Water Project to 35% of requested water supplies, up from 30% forecast in January.

In addition, Gov. Gavin Newsom's (D) Feb. 13 executive order gave state water agencies the guidance and flexibility to move and store water.

That order allows the State Water Resources Control Board to reevaluate requirements for reservoir releases and diversion limitations to maximize water supplies north and south of the delta.

Senior water rights holders, including the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Settlement Contractors, are now due to receive 100% of their historical allocation. However, the federal allocation may be reduced, Conant said, based on inflows into Lake Shasta, the CVP's largest reservoir.

Fritz Durst, a Sacramento River settlement contractor who farms rice alfalfa, sunflowers, tomatoes and cereal crops near Knights Landing, said he is hopeful but still has serious concerns about this water year.

"Unfortunately, this year we haven't seen nearly the rain on the coast range to the west or to the north in the Shasta area," he said. "While many parts of California suffered from floods, we are way under in terms of what we would normally get, so it's g`oing to be tough."

Sacramento River Settlement Contractors received an 18% water allocation last year, but Durst said it was not known whether farmers would be able to access the river. As a result, he said, "people didn't even plant their 18% because they didn't know if they would have a dry period for two to three weeks in the middle of summer where they couldn't get any water. You couldn't take that risk."

For this year, Durst said, "Right now, I'd say it is pretty much a 95% chance we're going to get 50% of our water."

Durst is a trustee for Reclamation District No. 108, which delivers water to nearly 48,000 acres of farmland in Colusa and Yolo counties. He said farmers need a more solid water allocation amount in the next six weeks to move forward with plans to plant rice.

Affected by reduced water supplies last year, rice farmers across the Sacramento Valley fallowed about 250,000 acres of rice ground, or half of the state's rice crop.

"With the requirements of Shasta Reservoir, it's not just about how much water comes out of the reservoir for the fish, but it's also about the temperature of that water," said Durst.

He noted that fisheries agencies do not yet have a temperature management plan. "If it doesn't rain much more, it is possible that they could back off from that 100%," Durst said. "So we really don't know."

After receiving no contracted water last year, Reclamation officials announced that north-of-delta irrigation water-service and repayment contractors will receive 35% of their contract total. Municipal and industrial contractors along the Sacramento and American Rivers, and municipalities in the delta and south of the delta, are allocated 75% of historical requests.

Friant Division, Class 1 contractors are allocated the first 800,000 acre-feet of supply, and Class 2 contractors may receive the next amount, up to 1.4 million acre-feet.

Looking ahead, Conant said, "While we are cautiously optimistic, we are also cognizant of the uncertainties that exist and the fluctuating nature of California's climate with the possibility that dry conditions will return."

CVP provides an annual average 5 million acre-feet of water for farms, 600,000 acre-feet of water for municipal and industrial uses, and water for wildlife refuges and maintaining water quality in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Allocations may be adjusted as the water year progresses. — **Christine Souza, assistant editor of Ag Alert, California Farm Bureau Federation**

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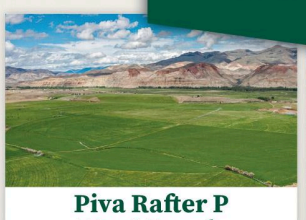
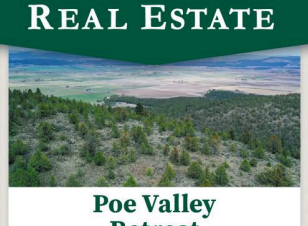
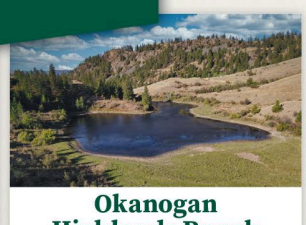


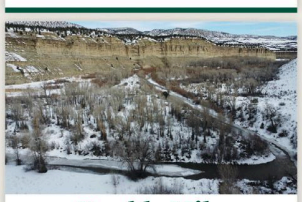
Piva Rafter P West Ranch
CUSTER COUNTY, ID
$8,000,000 | 790 Acres
Austin Callison 208.870.1757



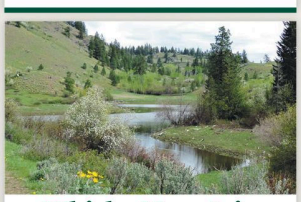
Poe Valley Retreat
KLAMATH COUNTY, OR
$2,525,000 | 2,625 Acres
Austin Callison 208.870.1757



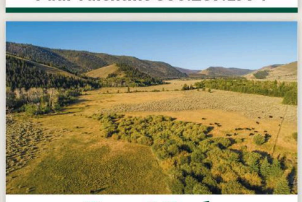
Okanogan Highlands Ranch
OKANOGAN COUNTY, WA
$8,495,000 | 6,898 Acres
Bryon Clarke 253.226.2280
Paul Valentine 360.239.1994



Double Mile River Ranch
DUCHESNE COUNTY, UT
$4,990,000 | 1,074 Acres
Lonnie Gustin 970.629.0520



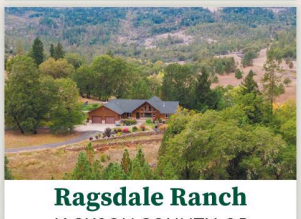
Whisky Mountain Ranch
OKANOGAN COUNTY, WA
$4,500,000 | 3,646 Acres
Bryon Clarke 253.226.2280
Paul Valentine 360.239.1994



Burnt Fork Ranch
DAGGETT COUNTY, UT
$2,500,000 | 1,075 Acres
Lonnie Gustin 970.629.0520



Marshes Flat Ranch
TUOLUMNE COUNTY, CA
$2,400,000 | 938 Acres
Kevin Brunk 209.604.2912



Ragsdale Ranch
JACKSON COUNTY, OR
$2,900,000 | 79.01 Acres
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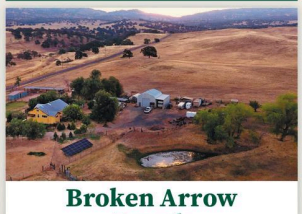
Dan Fox 541.480.0763



Broken Arrow Ranch
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$1,750,000 | 160 Acres
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FAR WEST Farm & Ranch Edition
California • Oregon • Washington • Nevada • Idaho • Utah • Arizona

Most brokers optimistic about 2023

FAR WEST
(from page 1)

Clarke said they were able to match the buyers with ranchers who held grazing leases prior to closing the sale, in order to generate income for the property and keep it in agriculture status to save on property taxes.

David Harris, owner of California Ranch and Land and Golden West Land Company Oregon and Idaho, told *WLJ* the dynamic of buyers has changed since the pandemic, from buyers purchasing property as a second home to keeping the property as a working ranch.

Harris said most buyers were cashing out of investments in the latter half of 2022, and business was active during that period.

"A lot of people that were sitting on the fence decided good ground is an excellent hedge against inflation," Harris said. "A good piece of ground that has water rights or is very productive as far as grass production is going to be a good hedge against inflation."

California

The California chapter of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers' (ASFMRA) "2022 Trends in Agricultural Land and Lease Values" report showed rangeland sales were limited in the northern San Joaquin area. Values were highest in the eastern and northern portions of the region due to higher rainfall and closer proximity to populated areas. Grazing land in San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced counties was appraised between $600-3,000/acre, and prices were holding steady.

In other portions of the state, sales of ranches were mostly for rural residential, recreation and agricultural use, with prices typically ranging from $650-2,000/acre in the Monterey area. Sales in the Central Coast region are typically divided into two groups: parcels of 1,500 acres and smaller and parcels of 1,500-15,000 or more acres. Prices range from $750-7,000/acre for smaller parcels and $300-1,500/acre for larger parcels. ASFMRA noted that sales had been limited and prices had been stable for the two regions.

Sales in the Sierra Foothills were primarily for home sites with grazing uses and the expansion of existing cattle operations. Prices comprised a wide range, with the lowest in Mono and Inyo counties at $500-2,000/acre, to east El Dorado and Amador counties at $2,500-8,000/acre.

Harris said there had been a slight softening in prices of just a few percentage points, but concurred with some of the figures ASFMRA stated. He said on the east side of the upper Central Valley, prices for dryland ground were $2,500-3,000/acre, and on the west side, they were about $1,500-2,000/acre. Harris said prices go down the further north you move up the state.

Harris said buyers are breathing a sigh of relief from the recent rains, but properties with reliable water rights are the ones that will garner the highest prices. Harris noted these properties would typically go for double the average price per acre and are going from grassland to being planted into orchards and vineyards. Harris said cattle operations are either moving into the foothills of California or moving out of state to Oregon and Idaho, as land prices in the two states are lower and more economically viable for ranchers.

Washington

Clarke said people who are selling are concerned about water rights and current regulations regarding riparian setbacks. However, he noted that buyers from states such as Montana or Idaho are seeing that "you get more bang for your buck" in Washington.

AgWest Farm Credit noted dryland values are stable to increasing in value due to competition between long-time landowners and out-of-area investors. According to NASS, non-irrigated land values were $1,450/acre in 2022, 10.7% above 2021.

"There's a limited supply of irrigated agricultural real estate," AgWest Farm Credit said in their report. "Market participants are cautious because in many cases, commodity prices have not kept pace with rising interest rates and input costs." NASS pegged irrigated land values averaged $8,400/acre, up 7.7% from 2021.

Clarke said grazing acreage with timber in the state's eastern portion sells between $1,000-3,000/acre, depending on water availability. Clarke said they recently sold riverfront property for $4,000/acre to Western Rivers Conservancy. Irrigated apple orchard land can garner between $30,000-50,000-plus per acre, depending on the variety of apples planted. Clarke said land planted with newer apple varieties such as Honeycrisp and SugarBees would command higher prices while the classic varieties get less per acre.

Clarke said buyers have been "sitting on the fence and seeing if properties are going to drop on these ranch properties" and noted prices have been steady.

"We're getting calls now from people who are saying 'We've been watching your listings for a long time and we think this is a good time for us to make the jump right now and buy something,'" Clarke said. "So, it sounds like based on the number of calls and leads we're getting it's going to be a very productive summer for us."

Oregon

According to Land and Farm, an online real estate listing service, recent data shows almost 300,000 acres of ranches for sale in Oregon, valued at a combined $575 million. The average price of ranches for sale in Oregon is $4.8 million.

Harris said dry land values in eastern Oregon sell for around $1,000-1,500/acre for productive ground and $750/acre for less productive acreage. Harris saw a piece of irrigated ground with excellent water rights in the state's northeastern portion sell for $7,000/acre.

Bentz, who has been a broker for 20 years and also ranches close to 1,000 head of cattle, said the majority of his business is working ranches and investors. Bentz said for properties with 500-600 head in Oregon, the price would be $7,500-10,000 per animal unit month, but the numbers change upward if you can have PRF insurance.

Bentz said the value of water continues to outpace the value of land as more buyers pay attention to water rights—whether ground or surface rights.

Bentz said in addition to water availability, buyers are looking for ways to control wintering costs with access to fall feed.

"Most of these ranchers have fairly early spring turnout, pretty good summer grass, but few have good fall food unless you are lucky enough to be on some sort of river or wild meadows trying to find fall feed is sometimes difficult," Bentz said.

Brokers are optimistic about 2023 despite the economic uncertainty and expressed that prices will remain stable as there are more buyers currently than inventory. — **Charles Wallace, *WLJ* editor**

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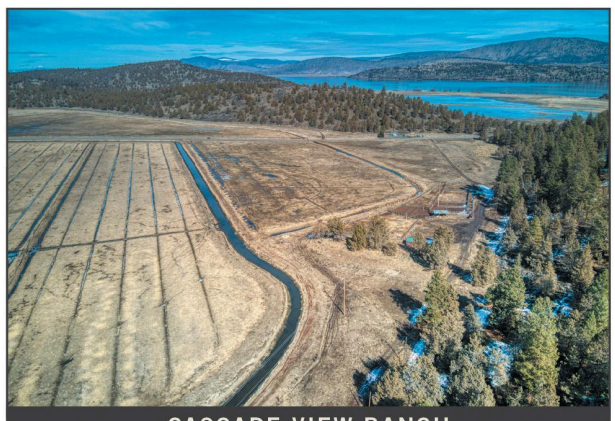

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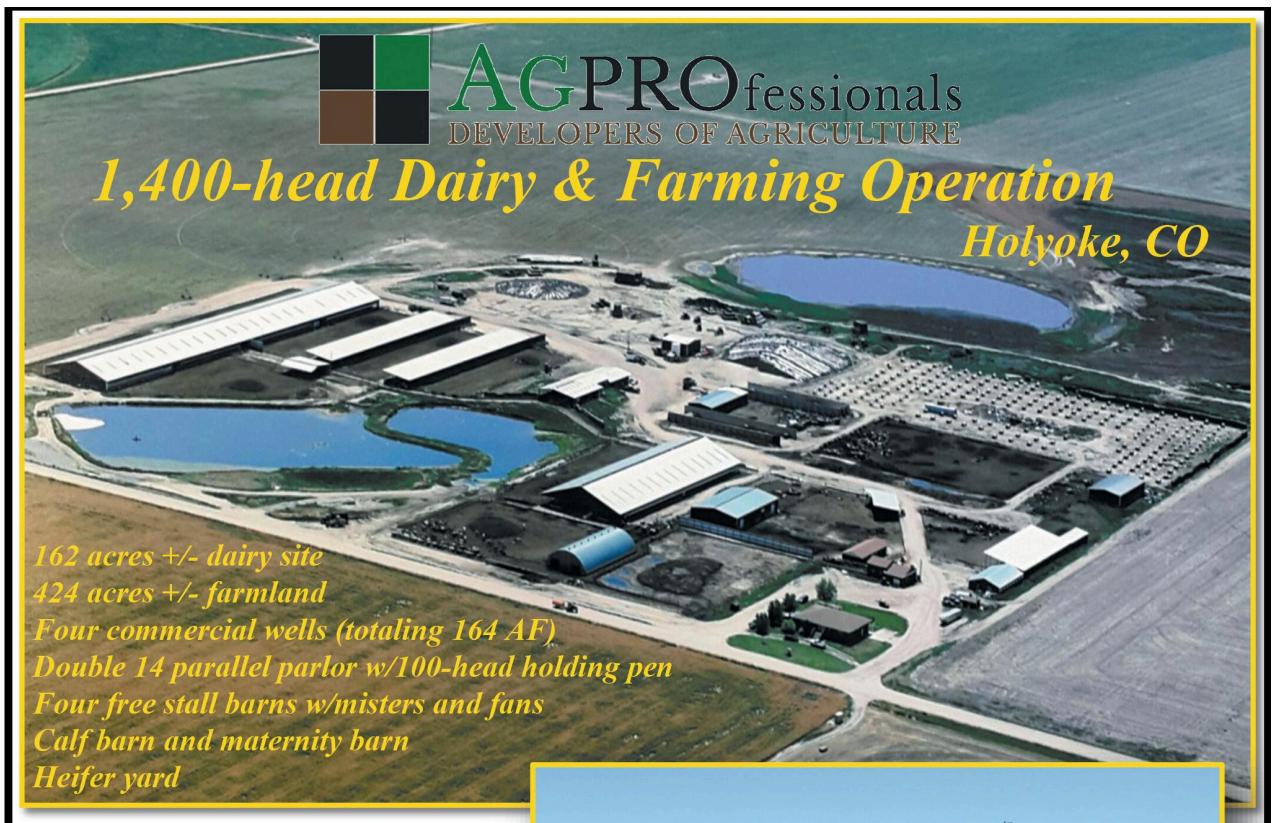

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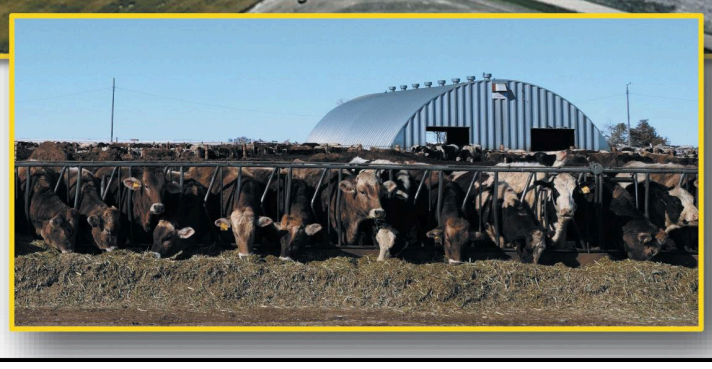

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What's the price of a good bull for you?

Bull Purchase Price	$3,000	$6,000	$9,000	$12,000
Cost/cow bred *(157 cows between 1-6 years)*	$19.10	$38.21	$57.32	$76.43
Cost/year *(6 years of service)*	$500	$1,000	$1,500	$2,000

The question of what a good bull is worth has been asked forever—or at least as long as we have been breeding cattle with the notion of trying to make the next generation better. It is a classic and timeless question. It is an important question. At this time of year, when many bulls are being marketed and we are planning ahead for spring breeding season, it is the question that is asked a lot.

The answer

I remember first hearing the answer nearly 40 years ago as a student at Oklahoma State University (OSU): "A good bull is worth the value of five calves he sires." I've heard that answer again many times over the years. I believe it is a good answer and a good rule of thumb to follow; the problem is it doesn't exactly narrow down the range. If we do a little "cowboy math," this answer may in fact lead to more questions. Such as the following:

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

According to the most recent USDA cattle market report from Oklahoma National Stockyards in Oklahoma City, OK:

- 523 pound weaned steer calves (large, 1) are worth about $2.31/lb. for a value of $1,208 per head. Therefore, if my future marketing plan is to sell weaned steers, $1,208 x 5 = $6,040.
- 874 lb. yearling steers (large, 1) are worth about $1.78/lb. for a value of $1,555 per head. Therefore, if my future marketing plan is to sell yearling steers, $1,555 x 5 = $7,775.
- 1,400 lb. finished beef steers are worth $164.50/cwt live for a value of $2,303 each. Therefore, if my future marketing plan is to retain ownership through finishing and sell fed cattle on a carcass value basis, $2,303 x 5 = $11,515.

So, in the current market, a good bull is worth somewhere between $6,040-11,515 to a commercial cattle operation. Where exactly in that range you fall depends on your marketing plan and the market conditions at that time. It's not an exact number because there are many layers to this onion.

One key point illustrated here is that the longer you will 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. And we haven't even considered the value added to replacement females if we select daughters as our next generation of cows.

I encourage cow-calf operations to consider their production system and marketing plan. Doing so dictates where to apply selection pressure. Genetics pay when you purchase a bull capable of improving genetic potential for the specific traits that will translate to added value at your intended marketing endpoint.

Keep the included chart in mind as another way to evaluate ownership cost of bulls on a per-cow or annual basis. — **Mark Z. Johnson, OSU Extension beef cattle breeding specialist**

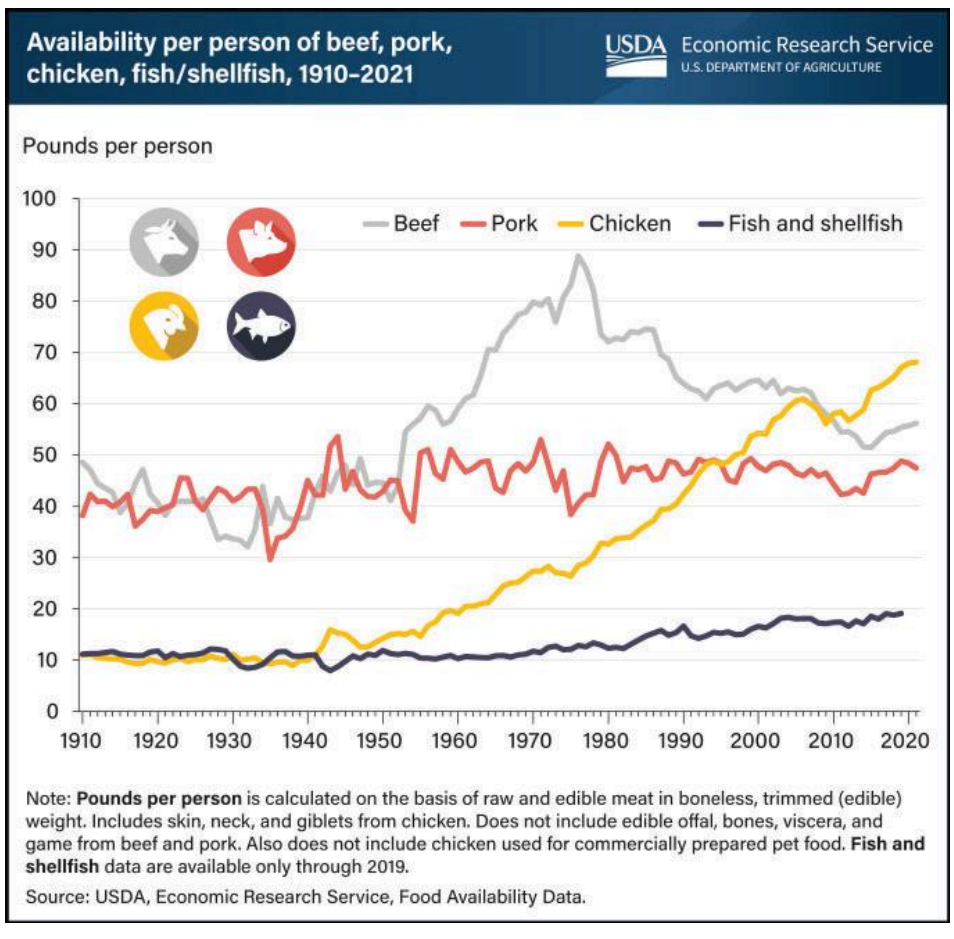


Chicken leads U.S. per person availability of meat over decade

The supply of chicken available to eat in the U.S. continues to outpace beef, according to food availability data from the USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS). In 2021, 68.1 pounds of chicken per person were available for human consumption (on a boneless, edible basis), compared with 56.2 lbs. of beef.

The availability of chicken began to increase in the 1940s, overtaking pork availability in 1996 and surpassing beef in 2010 to become the meat most available for U.S. consumption. Since 1980, U.S. chicken availability per person has more than doubled from 32.7 lbs.

There were 47.5 lbs. of pork available in 2021, after fluctuating between 42.4 and 49.9 lbs. per person over the last four decades. Per-person fish and shellfish availability data are available only through 2019, when 19.1 lbs. were available per person in the U.S., up from the low of 8 lbs. in 1943. — **USDA ERS**



89% of all farms are small family farms

In 2021, about 89% of all farms were small family farms. Small family farms operated 45% of U.S. agricultural land and produced 18% of the total value of production.

> *In 2021, about 89% of all farms were small family farms. Small family farms operated 45% of U.S. agricultural land and produced 18% of the total value of production.*

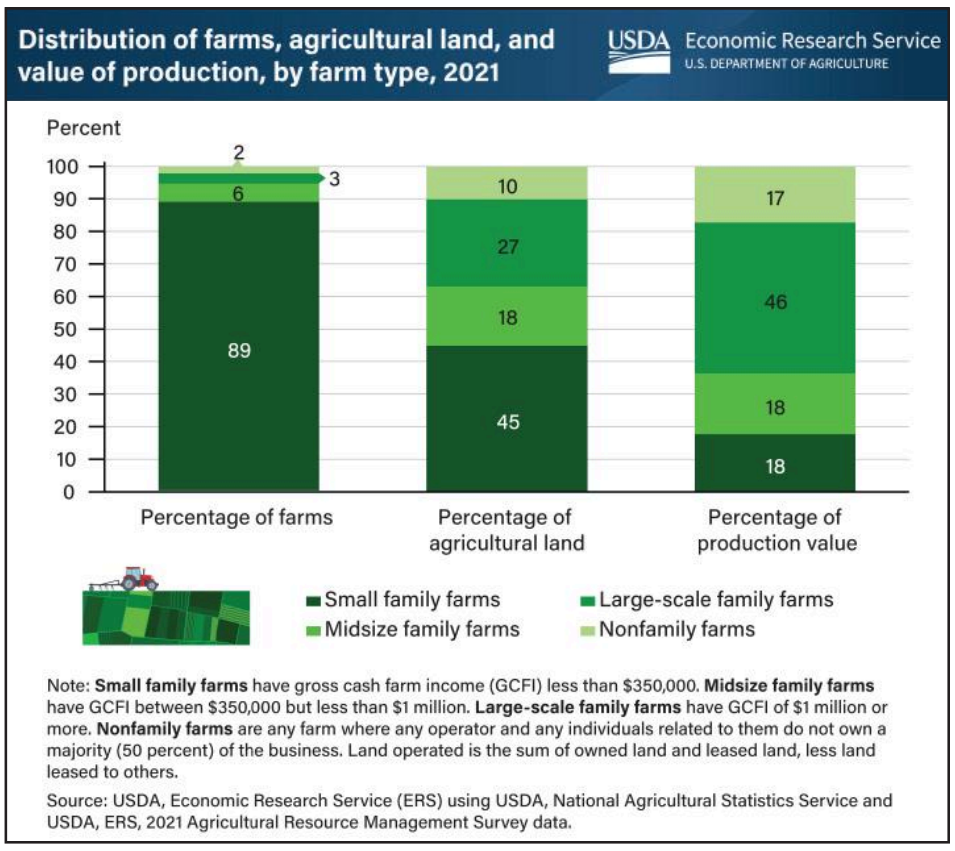
Farm size classifications are based on annual gross cash farm income, a measure of a farm's revenue—including sales of crops and livestock, payments made under federal agricultural programs and other farm-related cash income—before deducting expenses.

Small family farms have gross cash farm income (GCFI) below $350,000. In comparison, large-scale family farms, with GCFI above $1 million, operated 27% of agricultural land and were responsible for 46% of the total value of production in 2021.

Midsize family farms, with GCFI between $350,000 and $1 million, operated 18% of agricultural land and similarly generated 18% of the total value of production. Overall, family farms of all sizes comprised about 83% of the overall production value while making up 98% of all farms.

The remaining 2% of farms were classified as nonfamily. This category includes partnerships (of unrelated partners), nonfamily corporations and farms with a hired manager unrelated to the owners. Despite accounting for such a small percentage of farms, the nonfamily category was responsible for 17% of the total value of production.—**USDA Economic Research**

> *The remaining 2% of farms were classified as nonfamily.*



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$M +81
$C +355

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YW +127
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Marb +.93
RE +.78
$M +82
$C +282

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$C +238

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Farmers tout technology as essential for growing future

Growers beset by high cultivation costs are turning more consistently to technology to provide relief on multiple fronts, a trend that is here to stay.

More than 100 exhibitors at the World Ag Expo, held Feb. 13-15 in Tulare, CA, showcased their agricultural technology, such as behemoth tractors and implements, with demand for outdoor demonstration spaces nearly exceeding supply across 2.6 million square feet of space.

Citing concerns about the cost and reliability of labor, water restrictions, increased regulations and the need to streamline tasks, more farmers are considering and often adopting new practices.

"It's comfortable coming out here each year because I can see what new products are available," said citrus farmer David Johnson of Sanger, CA. "I am looking for anything with automation that can help in saving water and labor costs."



California Farm Bureau Federation

The World Ag Expo was held in Tulare, CA, from Feb. 13-15.

> *"I am looking for anything with automation that can help in saving water and labor costs."*
> *—David Johnson*

Technology, some in initial stages of development and others fully implemented, were on display spanning all facets of farming, from irrigation management software to autonomous sprayers, fruit-picking robots and electric tractors. Curious onlookers took lengthy cellphone videos or simply stood in wonder as self-driving tractors with empty seats made loops in front of them.

Felix Braeuel, CEO of KARL, a startup based in Copenhagen, Denmark, arrived at the show to connect with farmers, investors and industry professionals. The company's intelligent scheduling application will coordinate daily tasks for a farming operation based on weather, soil moisture and more.

"This is our first time showing our product to American farmers," Braeuel said. "We are looking for a soil irrigation sensor to integrate into our model. We are in the stage now where we are ready to push the technology and find those willing to help us test it."

After attending a few seminars, Braeuel left with a connection to Fresno State University's Center for Irrigation Technology, where the application will undergo more testing in the field.

Agtonomy, a farm tech firm based in south San Francisco and Sonoma County, debuted its autonomous tractor amid a small plot of transplanted grapevines. It deployed a sprayer filled with water to show how the vehicle can navigate terrain.

CEO Tim Bucher, a Northern California grape grower and engineer, designed the tractor and accompanying software known as TeleFarmer as a way to reduce his own farming costs.

"The pain kept getting greater in farming," he said. "Through the decades, I had to bring the technology to the crop because we are all trying to do more with less and farm in a more efficient way."

He said most farmers would like a clone of themselves to manage daily tasks. But the technology must be easy to use and work in a messy, chaotic farming environment.

"I told my developers that they had to think of the farmer first," Bucher said. "I wanted to give farmers a solution to duplicate themselves and keep them in control of their operation. Most farmers have a smartphone, so I made sure our app was designed to be used from the cab of pickup. Ease of use is critical."

Kern County farmer Jack Frey watched the Agtonomy display for several minutes.

"Stuff like this takes a lot of thought," he said. "It's got great potential with the way safety regulations are forced on us, and looks like the most economical option when you consider the cost of minimum wage, safety training and workman's comp."

Frey said he could envision a similar setup on his own ranches, where he farms carrots, potatoes, pistachios and more. "If it allows you to have four pieces of equipment running with one operator, that is a benefit," he said.

One concern is not being able to find human help that may be needed at various times throughout the year.

"There is a balance to be found between mechanization and humans to handle various tasks," Frey said. "I wouldn't want to eliminate help and then try to find an organization to get the work done."

Standing near a shiny fleet of tractors and GUSS Automation, Greg Christensen, marketing manager for the John Deere 5 Series and high-value tractors, said incorporating technology is not a generational issue.

"It is the sheer challenge of getting people on the farm," he said. "Autonomous vehicles can spray 24/7, they don't call in sick and they are reliable. They can spray the same way every time. This is a huge step for farming."

Some farmers learned how to avoid common mistakes when incorporating technology at the "How to Adopt Ag Technology" seminar.

Tom Devol, field outreach and education senior manager at the Almond Board of California, encouraged farmers to research and think through their investment in technology. He advised four steps: make a plan, pick a champion to execute the plan, select the technology and validate the data.

"So often, we get caught up in the pieces of hardware," he said. "We forget that once you install a sensor in the field, hopefully that is the last time you look at it. To engage with the sensor, we must use the software platform. If you can't use the software, your experience will not be a good one. Software is the most important part of the solution."

He said other tips are to make sure farm staff is trained and willing to use the technology, know what type of field service is available should the technology malfunction and make sure the technology will grow with the farming operation.

Tom Shapland is CEO of Tule, an irrigation firm that uses sensors to measure water used by crops and offers a program that allows grape growers to take midday leaf water potential readings using a smartphone camera. He said farmers who have success incorporating technology are curious, energetic, ambitious and fearless.

"There is so much that needs to go on in the field that it requires a lot of extra work to take on new initiatives," he said. "Successful farmers who take on these extra initiatives want to make more money and get more done."

But Shapland cautioned, "Be comfortable with failure, especially publicly." He explained, "We're talking about farming here. It is inevitable that something will not go according to plan."

Frey, the farmer from Kern County, said new technology is necessary if growers are to keep meeting global food demands.

"It's good that they want to try to innovate," he said. "We always need to try to do a better job." — **Lisa McEwen for Ag Alert, California Farm Bureau Federation**

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+5	+1.7	+68	+126	+29	+65	+.73	+.80	+169	+259


LOT 57 - BAKER
AAA 20475007
Butchs Trustee x BUBS Southern Charm AA31

CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	CW	MARB	RE	$B	$C
+4	+3.7	+73	+131	+29	+63	+.77	+1.00	+183	+312


LOT 11 - HEBER
AAA 2047499
Poss Rawhide x V A R Generation 2100

CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	CW	MARB	RE	$B	$C
+13	+.1	+79	+128	+27	+70	+.70	+.91	+175	+308


LOT 29 - BAKER
AAA 20418325
Ellingson Rangeland x V A R Discovery 2240

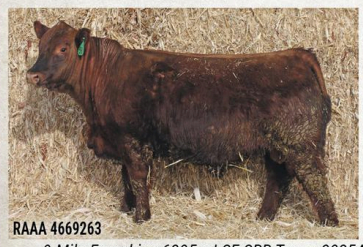
CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	CW	MARB	RE	$B	$C
+4	+4.0	+71	+135	+34	+66	+.83	+.66	+175	+297


LOT 31 - HEBER
AAA 20418320
V A R Magnum 7048 x WR Journey-1X74

CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	CW	MARB	RE	$B	$C
+6	+1.0	+80	+133	+36	+66	+.45	+.75	+153	+273


LOT 64 - BAKER
AAA 20539067
Spring Cove Cavalry 22G x Three Trees Xceptional B0048

CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	CW	MARB	RE	$B	$C
+15	-.7	+70	+141	+32	+55	+.71	+.57	+146	+255


LOT 59 - HEBER
RAAA 4669263
9 Mile Franchise 6305 x LSF SRR Tyson 3025A

CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	YG	MARB	RE	HB	GM
13	-3.5	62	105	32	.04	.40	.42	51	44


LOT 38 - BAKER
ASA 4109002
Yardley Lady H327 x 3F Epic 4631

CE	BW	WW	YW	MILK	YG	MARB	RE	API	TI
12	-.9	80	127	22	-.04	.35	.65	128	80

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Scientists unlock key to drought-resistant wheat plants

Growing wheat in drought conditions may be easier in the future, thanks to new genetic research out of the University of California (UC), Davis.

An international team of scientists found that the right number of copies of a specific group of genes can stimulate longer root growth, enabling wheat plants to pull water from deeper supplies. The resulting plants have more biomass and produce higher grain yield, according to a paper published in the journal Nature Communications.

The research provides novel tools to modify wheat root architecture to withstand low water conditions, said Gilad Gabay, a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Plant Sciences at UC Davis and the first author on the paper.

Roots key to better yield in drought

"Roots play a very important role in plants," he said. "The root absorbs the water and the nutrients to support plants' growth. This finding is a useful tool to engineer root systems to improve yield under drought conditions in wheat."

Much has been done to improve wheat production but losses from water stress can erase other improvements. Plants that can adapt to low water conditions but having increased yield will be key to growing enough food for a growing population in the face of global warming.

Until now, little has been known about the genes that affect the root structure of wheat. The discovery of the gene family—known as OPRIII—and that different copies of these genes affect root length is a significant step, said Distinguished Professor Jorge Dubcovsky, the project leader in the lab where Gabay works.

"The duplication of the OPRIII genes results in increased production of a plant hormone called Jasmonic acid that causes, among other processes, the accelerated production of lateral roots," Dubcovsky said. "Different dosages of these genes can be used to obtain different roots."

From genomics to breeding

To get longer roots, the team of researchers used CRISPR (clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats) gene editing technology to eliminate some of the OPRIII genes that were duplicated in wheat lines with shorter roots. By contrast, increasing the copies of these genes caused shorter and more branched roots. But inserting a rye chromosome, which results in decreased OPRIII wheat genes, caused longer roots.

"Fine-tuning the dosage of the OPRIII genes can allow us to engineer root systems that are adapted to drought, to normal conditions, to different scenarios," Gabay said.

Knowing the right combination of genes means researchers can search for wheat varieties that have those natural variations and breed for release to growers planting in low-water environments.

Junli Zhang, Germán Burguener and Tyson Howell from the Department of Plant Sciences contributed to the paper, as did researchers from China Agricultural University in China, Fudan University in China, Howard Hughes Medical Institute in Maryland, Karolinska Institute in Sweden, National University of San Martin in Argentina, Technological Institute of Chascomús in Argentina, UC Berkeley, University of Haifa in Israel and UC Riverside Metabolomics Core Facility.

Funding for the researchers came from BARD US-Israel Agricultural Research and Development Fund, USDA, Howard Hughes Medical Institute and National Natural Science Foundation of China. — **UC Davis College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences**



UC Davis

Roots that contain different dosages of a family of genes that affects root architecture, allowing wheat plants to grow longer roots and take in more water.

Questions to ask before growing cover crops

Cover crops have gained a great deal of popularity in the past several years. Producers often contact us wanting information about which cover crop they should grow. Before we can give a good answer, we must first ask and answer a multitude of other questions.

Wondering what cover crop to grow? Three key questions must be answered before a cover crop is planted.

1. What are your goals for the cover crop?

This is the first and most important consideration.

Are you growing a cover crop to keep the soil covered, provide living roots, provide habitat for pollinators and other beneficial insects, fix nitrogen in the soil, break a compacted soil layer, provide pest control, or some combination of these or many other potential goals?

Answering this question helps determine if a cover crop is the right tool to use and which cover crop plant species could be most beneficial.

2. What about pesticides?

In order of importance, herbicide use is probably the second most important factor when considering cover crops. What herbicides have been applied in the previous two seasons? Many herbicides can have residual activity that will prevent some cover crops from germinating or growing well for up to two years after application.

Can cover crop planting and termination be done without herbicides? Yes! It is possible to plant and terminate cover crops without using herbicides by planting green, using a grazing or harvest event or using the weather and natural senescence, but these things need to be considered in advance.

Have you thought about how to deal with other pest issues like insects? Cover crops can be grown without pesticides if there is a plan to deal with those pests in another way. Grazing animals can be a tool to remedy many weed and insect problems.

3. What resources do you have?

Before you decide to grow a cover crop, inventory your resources to determine what is feasible. Consider:

- What are your soils and weather like?
- Can an appropriate seedbed be prepared, and are planters or seed drills available?
- What is your knowledge level, skill set, time availability and management ability?
- Do you have sufficient financial assets to purchase seed and pay for other management inputs?

Are the appropriate seeds available locally or will they need to be ordered and shipped in?

Other considerations

For some growers, crop insurance and government farm programs may limit cover crop activities. Other complications may arise from lenders, partners or, in the case of tenant farmers, landowners. These challenges don't necessarily rule out the use of cover crops. A cover crop just needs to be well thought out ahead of time.

Thinking through all these considerations ahead of time will help determine if cover crops are right for you. — **Jim Johnson, senior soils and crops consultant at Noble Research Institute**



Lawmakers say USDA is lax in tracking ag land

A group of 28 federal lawmakers is calling out the USDA for what they describe as lax in tracking foreign investments in U.S. agriculture land, in a letter to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack.

The agency has faced increased scrutiny regarding how extensively it attracts foreign ag land purchases, most recently playing out when a U.S. unit of China's Fufeng Group Ltd. planned to buy farmland near an Air Force base in North Dakota. The transaction was ditched by local officials after Air Force officials raised concerns about building a corn mill near an air base.

In particular, the members of the U.S. House of Representatives questioned the Vilsack department's decision not to assess any penalties between 2015-18 related to lapses in reporting foreign purchases of U.S. farmland. The USDA later resumed penalties.

The lawmakers said in the letter that more oversight is needed as foreign acquisition of ag land increases.

While concern about foreign agriculture land ownership in the U.S. and news headlines center primarily on China, Russia, North Korea and Iran, the real-world data shows all of those nations are small players in the U.S. ag market game.

Clayton Michaud, USDA agricultural economist for the Economic Research Agency, said during a recent Ag Outlook presentation in Washington, D.C., that historically concerns about foreign ag investments have centered primarily on economics.

"More recently it has kind of evolved where now we have a lot more concerns that are rooted in things like national security," he said.

"The prospect of foreign companies buying up land close to the military bases, for example. We also have natural resource scarcity concerns, right, so foreign companies using land and in drought-ridden areas to produce, let's say alfalfa that then they shipped back for domestic cattle production. And then also, of course, we have supply chain issues that given COVID and the war in Ukraine have become all the more relevant."

Legislative efforts in Congress aimed at preventing land from getting in the wrong hands have focused on China, Russia, North Korea and Iran.

As of Dec. 31, 2021, foreign investors held about 40 million acres of American land. Michaud said that is about 3% of all the privately held agricultural land. That is an increase of about 2.5 million acres since the previous year.

In 2021, Canada accounted for 12.7 million acres or 32% of all foreign land holdings in the U.S., according to USDA. The Netherlands came in a distant second at 4.7 million acres, followed by Italy, United Kingdom and Germany. Those five countries, Michaud said, accounted for 62% of all foreign holdings in the U.S.

China's holdings in U.S. ag land comes in at about 1% of all foreign holdings, Michaud said, while North Korea, Iran and Russia all come in below 0.01%.

China's land holdings

Mykel Taylor, associate professor at Auburn University, said in total China owns about 352,000 U.S. acres.

"But you'll notice their big entry into our market came in 2013 with the purchase of Smithfield Foods, which acquired the subsidiary Murphy Brown and all of their land holdings," she said. "And so that was a big jump up and in Chinese land holdings in the U.S. with just that one purchase."

The rate of foreign investment in ag land, however, has increased since about 2015. Between 2009 and 2015, foreign holdings increased by about 800,000 acres per year. Since 2015, Michaud said, the rate of increase is about 2.2 million acres annually.

Taylor said data shows there's been a "significant amount of acquisitions" of cropland by foreign entities in the past 30 years. Taylor and her colleagues at Auburn have been studying land acquisitions in the U.S.

By state, Texas leads the way with about 4.8 million acres of agriculture and forest land owned by foreign interests, according to 2020 data collected under the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA). Maine is second at 3.5 million acres, with Alabama (1.8 million) and Colorado (1.78 million) rounding out the top four.

When you look at states with the highest ag and non-ag land acquisitions, the four Plains states of Oklahoma, Texas, Colorado and Kansas lead the way in foreign investment. Taylor said that is because many countries have been investing in expanding wind energy.

Taylor has studied foreign ag land purchases in the U.S., looking for differences and similarities between land purchases made by U.S. and foreign entities.

Foreign sales date

In particular, Taylor looked at AFIDA sales transactions and collected information from the Farm Service Agency covering sales from 1900 to 2020. Her study focused on foreign land sales in 11 states including Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Taylor said foreign buyers are likely to be "systematically different than domestic buyers." They target different types of farmland, different geographical regions or pay different prices because of transaction costs of buying in the U.S.

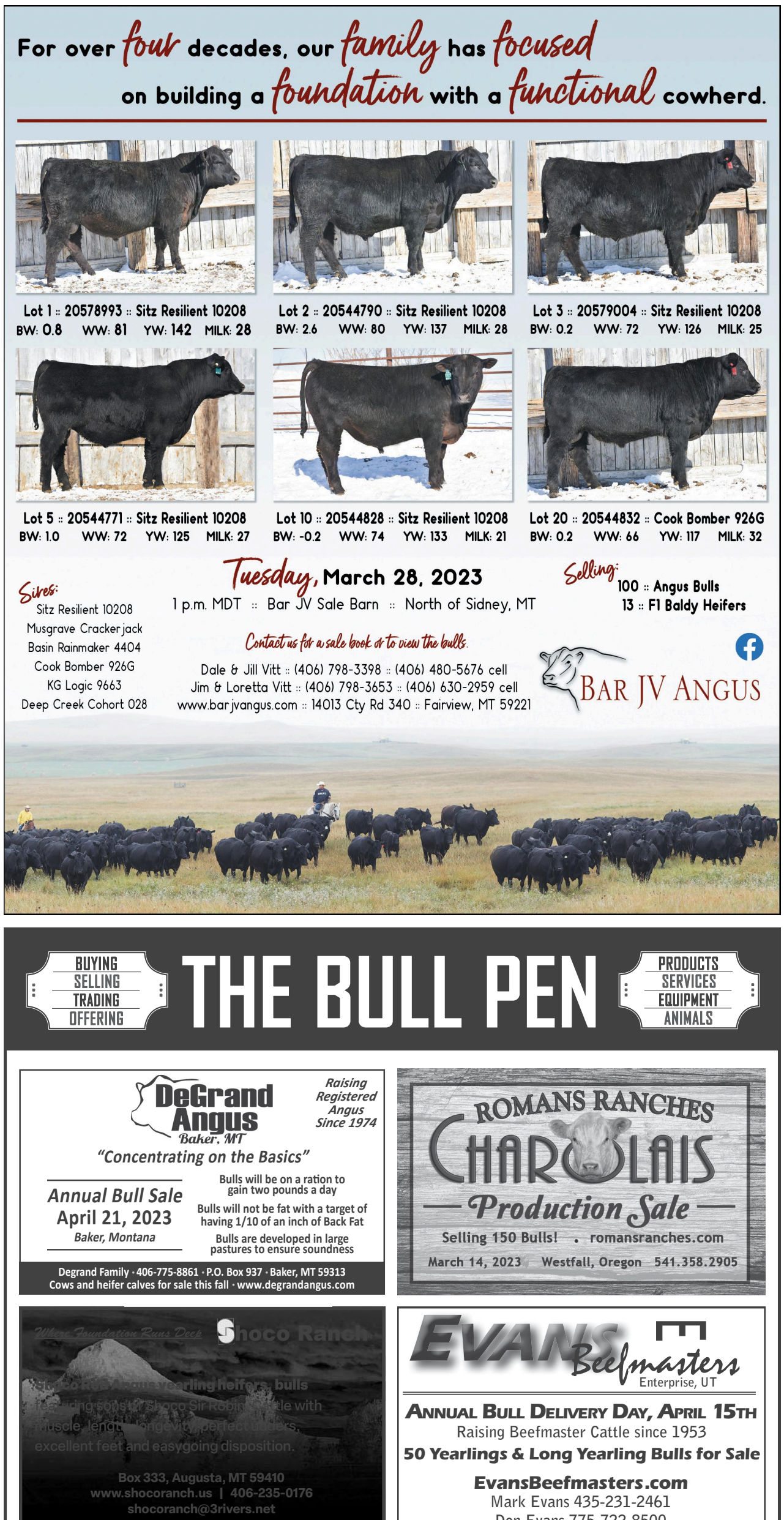
Most notably, the study found foreign buyers paid higher average prices than U.S. buyers—on average $6,536 per acre compared to $5,745 by domestic buyers.

"Foreign buyers in the Midwest pay a 13.7% premium for agricultural land over domestic buyers," Taylor said.

Although China has been a minor U.S. ag land investor, Taylor said the current environment is "very politically charged" when it comes to China and ag land purchases.

Many states have been putting forth legislation to restrict or even ban foreign ownership of ag land, as have federal lawmakers.

"I'll go back to this chart that I showed you earlier and say where's China on this list?" Taylor said. "It's actually number 18 and for some people they don't realize that they're not a big player in this market. They actually hold very few acres." — **Todd Neeley, DTN staff reporter**



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Checkoff bills receive mixed support

Legislation reintroduced in the House and Senate to reform commodity checkoff programs has received mixed support from cattle groups. The Opportunities for Fairness in Farming Act was reintroduced by a handful of legislators who say "checkoff programs have repeatedly been shown to use funds to influence policy directly or by partnering with organizations that lobby; the unlawful use of checkoff programs funds benefits some agricultural producers while harming many others." While the bill has the support of the Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund, United Stockgrowers of America (R-CALF), the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) opposes the bill. "The decades-old Beef Checkoff program is ill-suited to meet the needs of today's cattle farmers and ranchers, in fact, the program promotes corporate control and globalization over the interests of America's cattle producers," said R-CALF CEO Bill Bullard. NCBA disagreed, with NCBA President Todd Wilkinson countering, "Congress has plenty of work to do that could be far more beneficial to Americans. They should focus in areas of urgent need, rather than wasting time on these unwelcome 'reform efforts' that would only benefit anti-agriculture activists."

DOL to crack down on child labor

After food safety sanitation service provider Packers Sanitation Services was fined $1.5 million for employing at least 100 children in hazardous working conditions, the Department of Labor (DOL) announced further efforts to stop violations. "Too often, companies look the other way and claim that their staffing agency or their subcontractor or supplier is responsible. Everyone has a responsibility here," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh. As part of their efforts, DOL will create a task force to combat child labor exploitation, begin a national initiative to strategize where violations are most likely to occur, hold all employers accountable, mandate follow-up calls for unaccompanied children who report safety concerns, expand post-release service for unaccompanied children, increase funding, call on Congress to increase civil monetary penalties, audit companies and produce training material for children to know their rights.

USFS concludes aerial cattle shooting

After a three-day operation, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) concluded on Feb. 28 its aerial shooting of estray cattle in the Gila National Forest of New Mexico. A total of 19 head were killed. "What a waste of taxpayers' money," said Loren Patterson, New Mexico Cattle Growers Association president. "Reporting 19 head killed over several days of flight just shows that the United States Forest Service has absolutely no idea about the actual herd numbers in the Wilderness, and has no evidence to support its claims that a herd of 150 head was causing dire terror and environmental damage. The environmental organization the USFS apparently listens to has failed it." Patterson continued that unless USFS turns to "long-term tried and trued solutions," estray cattle will move back into the area and the aerial shooting will have accomplished nothing.

BSE confirmed in Brazil

After another atypical case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) was reported in Brazil, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) called for a halt of Brazilian beef imports. "In order to protect the safety and security of the U.S. herd and American cattle producers, we demand USDA take immediate steps to block further beef imports from Brazil," said NCBA President Todd Wilkinson. "If they can't play by the rules, they don't deserve access." Sens. Mike Rounds (R-SD) and Jon Tester (D-MT) have reintroduced their legislation to suspend Brazilian beef imports to the U.S. until experts can review the country's standards. "Our bipartisan legislation would make certain Brazilian beef is safe to transport and eat before it is brought into our markets, neutralizing Brazil's deceptive trade tactics," Rounds said. The bill is supported by NCBA.

UT introduces animal burglary bill

Rep. Carl Albrecht (R-UT-70) recently introduced a bill that would make it illegal to remove an animal from its owner due to the animal's health. The Theft Defense Amendments bill would amend Utah's criminal code to say it is not a burglary defense to remove livestock from its owner if the animal was sick or injured. "I can't think of anywhere else where it's OK to trespass and steal property," Utah Gov. Spencer Cox (R) said in support of the bill during a PBS Utah Governor's Press Conference program. The bill was introduced shortly after members of an animal activist group were found innocent after stealing piglets from a Smithfield Farms facility.









K-State Research and Extension

Providing a clean environment and not keeping calves less than a month of age in close contact with older calves are ways to keep the newborns healthy.

Ways to minimize scours in young calves

The importance of limiting exposure to disease has been top of mind for folks these past few years and many of the prevention strategies also apply to livestock, specifically newborn calves, said Kansas State (K-State) University veterinary experts on a recent "Cattle Chat" podcast.

"Prevention and early detection are two keys in reducing the spread of disease in newborn calves," said veterinarian Brad White.

One disease that is of great concern for newborn calves is scours, otherwise known as diarrhea, said veterinarian Bob Larson.

"Scours often impacts calves in the first month of life because of their developing immune system, and if they lose too many electrolytes, they can develop metabolic acidosis, which can be fatal if not promptly treated," Larson said. "Once the calves reach a month of age, they are much more resilient to the severe effects of scours."

> "Scours often impacts calves in the first month of life because of their developing immune system, and if they lose too many electrolytes, they can develop metabolic acidosis, which can be fatal if not promptly treated."
>
> —Bob Larson

Larson said the disease typically spreads through animal-to-animal transmission, but this risk can be minimized depending on how the cows and calves are managed during the calving season.

"Keeping the older calves away from the newborns is one management strategy to reduce the likelihood of disease spread," Larson said. "A calf that is a few weeks of age tends to shed a lot of germs, putting the newborns at risk."

The veterinarians recommend having multiple calving pastures. In this system, every two to three weeks the pregnant cows are moved to a new location thereby leaving the cow-calf pairs in the pasture where they calved, White said.

"By moving the pregnant cows to a new pasture, producers can be sure those calves are being born in a clean environment," he said.

Another management strategy is to focus sanitation and age-separation efforts on calves born to heifers since these calves are less likely to consume enough high-quality colostrum compared to the calves born to cows.

To help make sure the cows are giving the calves optimum immunity, good nutrition prior to calving is key, said beef cattle nutritionist Phillip Lancaster.

"The antibodies in the colostrum passed from the dam to her calf (are) the calf's first defense against any of those pathogens, so it is important to have the cows at a body condition score of five or six when they calve," he said.

Once the cows calve, Larson recommends adjusting how the hay is delivered to minimize the congregation of the herd.

"During calving season, feeding hay in round bale feeders can lead to a lot of manure buildup in a small area, increasing the risk of disease spread," Larson said. "Instead, producers should unroll the hay on the ground and move that location to help spread out the cows, even though it means there will be some hay wastage."

White agrees, adding that "cattle are going to stay around where the hay and water are located, and they don't tend to roam if they are not grazing."

To hear the full discussion, listen to the "Cattle Chat" podcast online or through your preferred streaming platform. **— K-State Research and Extension**

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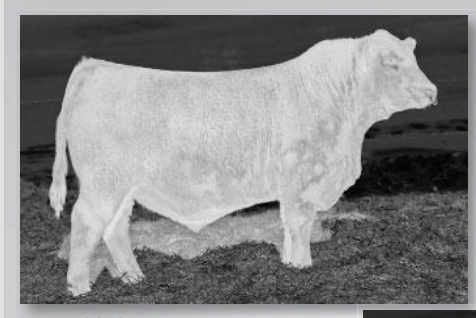

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Reg 750878



MJB INDEPENDENCE 318K
Sire: MAC F1 FREEDOM 150F
BD: 3/11/22

CED	BW	WW	YW	Milk
10.1	0.5	67	102	18

Reg 750699



MJB LIBERTY 308K
Sire: MAC F1 FREEDOM 150F
BD: 3/05/22

CED	BW	WW	YW	Milk
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NDSU to host perennial cool-season invasive grasses workshop

Cool-season invasive grasses have dramatically impacted the northern Great Plains, including North Dakota, since the mid-1990s.

"Kentucky bluegrass, smooth bromegrass and crested wheatgrass have invaded rangelands at unheard of levels, regardless of grazing management practices, since a wet cycle started in 1993," said Shawn DeKeyser, North Dakota State University (NDSU) Natural Resources Management program leader.

These invasive grasses reduce biodiversity of native plants, decrease forage quality for grazing livestock during dry summers, reduce forage production and reduce habitat for pollinator insect species and many bird species.

The Perennial Cool-Season Invasive Grasses of the Northern Great Plains Workshop was developed for land managers and livestock farmers and ranchers in the region to provide updates on the latest research and management options. The workshop will be held March 15-17 at the Memorial Union on the NDSU campus in Fargo, ND.

The workshop will feature presenters from across the Great Plains in the U.S. and Canada. Speakers will address the ecological drivers of invasion, a diversity of management strategies and frequency of management applications.

The NDSU School of Natural Resource Science, NDSU Extension, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, USDA Agricultural Research Service, North Dakota Wildlife Society and the Society for Range Management are hosting the event.

The conference will start at 12:45 p.m. on March 15 and wrap up at noon on March 17. The registration fee for the conference is $75 for general admission and $45 for students. To learn more about the workshop and register, visit ndsu.ag/invasivegrasses. — **NDSU Extension**



NDSU

Kentucky bluegrass is one of several invasive cool-season grasses that have dramatically impacted rangelands in the northern Great Plains.

Looking at replacement heifer dynamics in 2023

Drought-accelerated herd liquidation the past two years has made the beef cow herd the smallest in 61 years. With continuing drought conditions, it is uncertain when, but it is certain that there will be strong interest in rebuilding the herd whenever conditions permit. Leaving aside the question of more drought, what is possible in 2023 given current availability of replacement heifers?

The number of beef replacement heifers on Jan. 1 was 5.16 million head, down 5.8% year over year. This follows a 5.5% year-over-year decrease in 2022. Beef replacement heifers represented 17.9% of the beef cow herd on Jan. 1, the lowest proportion of beef replacement heifers since 2012.

> *More likely in 2023 is increased retention of heifer calves and breeding of yearling heifers that will fuel herd expansion beginning in 2024. If that happens, both beef cow and heifer slaughter will decrease sharply in 2023.*

Beef replacement heifers average 18.4% of the beef cow herd, and during the last herd expansion, beef replacements reached a cyclical peak level of 21% of the beef cow herd. The reported inventory of beef replacement heifers consists of bred heifers and heifer calves in development for breeding.

For the past 23 years, USDA has provided a total number of the beef replacement heifers that will calve in the current year. These bred heifers typically make up about 61% of the total beef replacements. The number of bred heifers on Jan. 1 was 3.17 million head, 61.4% of the total beef replacement heifers.

The number of bred heifers on Jan. 1 was down 5.1% year over year and was the lowest beef bred heifer total since 2011. This follows a 4.8% year-over-year decrease in bred heifers in 2021.

Subtracting the number of beef bred heifers from the total beef replacement heifer inventory leaves the number of heifer calves in development to be bred this year. This calculated total of replacement heifer calves for 2023 was 1.995 million head, the lowest in the data series. This total was down 6.9% year over year and follows a 6.1% year-over-year decline in 2022. These beef replacement heifer calves are assumed to have been retained from last year's calf crop and will become bred heifers next year.

The number of beef replacement heifer calves each year is not enough to account for the total inventory of bred heifers the following year. Over the past 20 years, the number of beef replacement heifer calves represents 63.8% of the bred heifers the following year. This means that extra heifers were bred during the year that were not reported as replacement heifers on Jan. 1. These extra heifers are assumed to come out of the inventory of other heifers.

For example, on Jan. 1, the inventory of bred beef heifers was 3.17 million head, made up of replacement heifer calves from last year (2.14 million head) and another 1.03 million head of extra heifers bred out of the inventory of other heifers from last year. This calculated total 1.03 million head of extra heifers bred is the lowest total in the data back to 2001. The calculated number of extra heifers bred decreased 12.1% year over year in 2021 and decreased another 1.8% in 2022.

The decreased number of beef replacement heifer calves and extra beef heifers bred in 2021 and 2022 helps explain increased heifer slaughter the past two years. Heifers diverted from breeding to feeding contributed to the 4% year-over-year increase in 2021 and the 4.8% year-over-year increase in 2022 in heifer slaughter. All of which contributes to the limited number of replacement heifers available in 2023.

The numbers suggest that beef cow herd expansion is not possible in 2023. The available number of bred heifers, combined with a decrease in beef cow slaughter in excess of 20% lower year over year, might make it possible to hold the beef cow herd steady this year. A low level of additional herd liquidation is more likely.

More likely in 2023 is increased retention of heifer calves and breeding of yearling heifers that will fuel herd expansion beginning in 2024. If that happens, both beef cow and heifer slaughter will decrease sharply in 2023. — **Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension livestock marketing specialist**

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Exhibit caution with social media, text messages

AG SCAMS
(from page 1)

and rang. I left a message, but was never called back."

Santos then turned the check into his bank, which followed up stating there were insufficient funds. Additional red flags that Santos noticed in the interaction were that the "buyers" were asking for health papers. Considering the buyer wanted the bull to be transferred to another Oregon location and claimed to be an Oregon resident, health papers were not required—only if the livestock crossed state lines.

Santos Angus Ranch said they've begun to hear of these scenarios happening to others in the industry. They have encouraged others in the industry to invite these potential buyers to whatever online or live sale they do business through, if they do not have concrete knowledge that the buyer is legitimate.

Across the country, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) has also seen reports of increased scams over the past few years, especially during the increase of technology that came with the COVID-19 pandemic. KDA provided insight and advice for those who are concerned that they potentially are being targeted.

"The Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) has received several reports of fraudulent hay-buying activity," Commissioner Ryan Quarles said in a 2020 report, noting at least three Kentucky producers were targeted multiple times by scammers, with one losing $1,000. "Farmers should take extra care to protect themselves from scam artists when buying or selling commodities such as hay or livestock, especially when contacted through email, social media or text message," he said

> *Ranchers and farmers are encouraged to remain vigilant in their business practices and if anything seems concerning to bring it to the attention of authorities.*

Additionally, KDA warned buyers to also beware of fraudulent sellers. Some "sellers" even create false Facebook pages and websites to mimic legitimate businesses. Buyers and sellers are encouraged to not do business if any warning signs are present and communication has not been transparent. They also advise creating a written contract to protect against issues if there is any hesitancy about the transaction.

In April of last year, a Wisconsin operation was on the other side of these scams. Golden E Dairy in Kewaskum, WI, began receiving messages through Facebook, text messages and voicemails asking about cattle that were available. Some individuals even arrived on site, stating they made a down payment already and were told to pick up at the location.

Authorities were contacted in this case, and the Facebook posts were flagged for fraudulent content. Kim Saari, one of the Golden E Dairy staff members that was caught up in the Facebook scam, has been working to try and respond to all the messages from scammed buyers. She told the Mid-West Farm Report, "It's sad because these people have put a down payment on cattle that don't exist—at least not here."

Ranchers and farmers are encouraged to remain vigilant in their business practices and if anything seems concerning to bring it to the attention of authorities. It is better to beware of potential scams than to be a victim.

— Chloé Fowler, *WLJ* correspondent

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 15 – The Nebraska Cattlemen Research and Education Foundation is now accepting scholarship applications for the 2023-24 academic year from qualified youth in Nebraska with an interest in the beef industry. Applications for $1,000 scholarships are due by March 15. Applications can be found at nebraskacattlemen.org.

March 17 – The Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association is now accepting applications for two summer 2023 internship programs. All experiences are paid and offer hands-on opportunities to play an active role in association happenings. Details: tscra.org/who-we-are/employment.

March 17 – The Public Lands Council is awarding two Nick Theos scholarships for $250 (in addition to hotel and registration costs) to attend the annual Spring Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., April 24-25. Details: publiclandscouncil.org/nick-theos-plc-scholarship-program.

March 24 – The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) is accepting applications for public policy interns for the fall 2023 semester. Applications are available at ncba.org/about/opportunities-for-students. Questions about the internship program may be directed to Justyn Tedder at jtedder@beef.org.

March 26 – The Oklahoma Cattlemen's Foundation plans to award more than $30,000 in scholarships to undergraduate students. The scholarships are available for current college students at an Oklahoma college or university with definite plans to continue in the fall or graduating high school seniors who have an interest in the beef cattle industry. Application details: okcattlemen.org/scholarship-opportunities.

March 31—The Livestock Marketing Association is launching a new one-time scholarship to applicants who are interested in or display knowledge or understanding of the importance of the agriculture industry and its supporting entities, as well as plan to use their career to advocate for the advancement of the livestock marketing industry. Details: www.lmaweb.com/about/scholarships.

March 31 – The Montana Stockgrowers Association Summer Internship Program was created to provide students with a hands-on experience of the various facets of association event planning and execution, policy development, social media engagement and coverage and member engagement. Application: www.mtbeef.org/careers.

March 31 – Dairy MAX will award three $2,500 academic scholarships to the child of a dairy farmer, child of a dairy farm employee, or an FFA/4-H dairy show participant. Details: DairyMAX.org/dairy/scholarships.

April 1 – The International Brangus Auxiliary scholarships are now open for current junior members. Members must submit an official transcript and complete the online application to apply for the scholarships. Details: juniorbrangus.com/scholarships.

April 1 – The Montana Farm Bureau Foundation and the Montana Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee are offering several scholarships for students pursuing higher education. Details: mfbf.org/Foundation/foundation-scholarships and mfbf.org/programs/womens-leadership-committee. For more information call 406-799-9955 or email alenas@mfbf.org.

April 1 – The American Lamb Board is sponsoring the 36th Annual National Lamb Feeders Association Howard Wyman Leadership School. This year's event is scheduled for July 9-13 in Columbus, OH. Attendees must be at least 20 years of age. Application: lambfeedersusa.org.

April 3 – The Nevada Cattlemen's Association (NCA) has two 2023 scholarship opportunities. The $1,500 NCA Scholarship will be awarded to a first-year college student beginning to pursue an education within the agricultural industry. The $2,000 Marvel/Andrae Scholarship is available to graduating high school seniors or students currently enrolled in college. Applications: www.nevadacattlemen.org, 775-738-9214 or nca@nevadabeef.org.

April 21 – The Kansas Livestock Foundation now is accepting applications for 2023-24 scholarships. Applicants must be graduates of a Kansas high school and enrolled at a Kansas community or senior college for the fall 2023 semester. Application: www.kla.org/programs/klf-scholarships.

May 1 – The American National CattleWomen (ANCW) Foundation is accepting applications for their Legacy Scholarship. Two collegiate members who are daughters, granddaughters or nieces of current ANCW members and are majoring in an ag-related field will receive a $1,000 scholarship from the ANCW Foundation. Applications: ancw.org/foundation.

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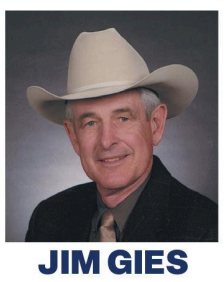

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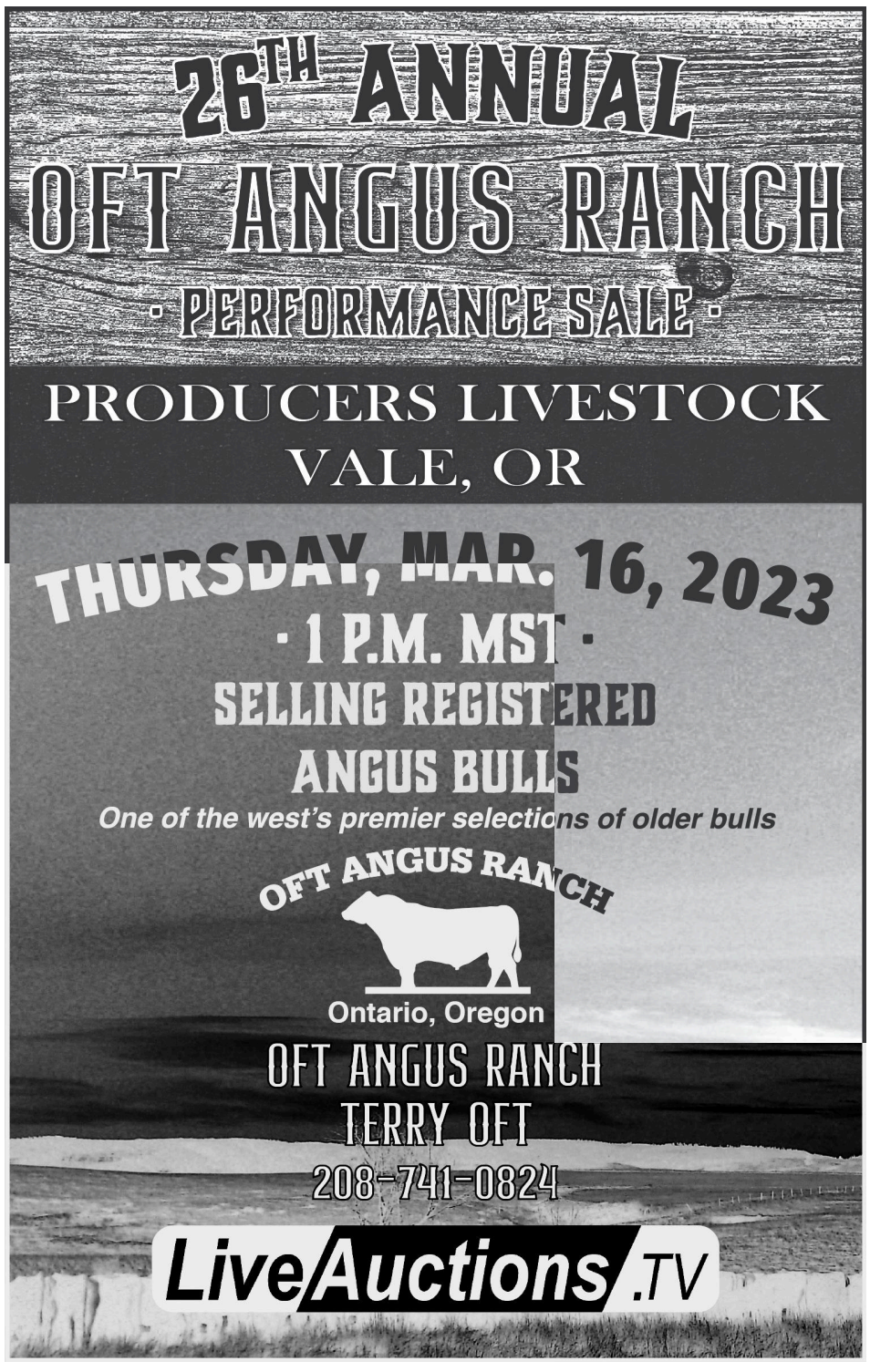

Calf prices strengthen, cattle herd shrinking

Texas' cattle herd numbers continue to shrink, but calf prices remain strong, according to a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service expert.

Future cattle prices could hinge on weather and subsequent grazing availability and/or input costs, such as grain, said David Anderson, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension livestock marketing economist. Retail beef prices could be influenced by beef imports and the largest amount of beef in cold storage since 2016.

However, future cattle and beef prices hinge on the long-term size of the U.S. herd, Anderson said.

Calf prices remain strong, and the market experienced recent increases, but Anderson expects herds to continue to shrink in 2023. He expects calf and beef prices to climb, but it could be 2024 before the market pushes them toward new records.

"We're getting there in terms of fewer animals and calves, but demand for cattle and beef hasn't been subject to a supply-demand imbalance that could really impact prices," he said.



Michael Miller/Texas A&M AgriLife

Calf prices are expected to climb once Texas cattle producers are convinced the drought is over and begin rebuilding their herds.

Consumer demand steady

So far, there has been no real change in beef demand, Anderson said. A record amount of beef—28.3 billion pounds—was produced in 2022 on the heels of deeper-than-usual herd culling by Texas ranchers, according to the USDA. The agency also reported 544 million lbs. of beef in cold storage, which is the second highest since tracking began in 1973.

Demand for hamburgers and steaks remains steady despite inflation and interest rate hikes by the Federal Reserve, which have slowed the economy. But Anderson said he wonders at what point might consumer demand for beef decline as shoppers look for cheaper options and how any decline might impact cattle prices.

Calf prices in the southern Plains market were $2.3/lb. compared to $2/lb. the same time last year, and the five-year average was $1.69/lb. for 500-600 lb. calves. They were even higher—$2.42/lb.—at the 400-500 lb. weight class, compared to $2.16/lb. last year and the five-year average of $1.87/lb.

Feedlots are buying steers amid strong cutout value, Anderson said. Cutout relates to the value average across seven major primal cuts, including chuck, loins, ribs and briskets, at wholesale.

Cutout values were relatively flat—$2.76/lb.—compared to $2.70/lb. in 2022, but 30% higher than the five-year average of $2.12/lb. Anderson said retail beef prices were down slightly compared to last year.

"People are still buying beef, and that's a good thing," he said. "We had a lot of beef out there this past year, and the runups in calf prices at that point were related to higher production costs in relation to calf prices."

Market imbalance

The high cost of grains and other supplemental feed coupled with poor grazing and forage production led many producers to cull before costs surpassed the profit potential of strong prices.

Despite widespread rain over recent weeks, many parts of the state continue to experience extremely dry conditions, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. Around 77% of Texas is dealing with some degree of drought, and 31% of the state is in severe to exceptional drought.

Producers in many areas continue to reduce cattle numbers or liquidate herds according to AgriLife Extension agent reports. But agents in other parts of the state are reporting vastly improved soil moisture conditions.

There is an expectation that grazing on native grasses or improved cool-season grasses like winter wheat and ryegrass could boom with sunny days and warmer temperatures.

"It will take everyone deciding the drought is over before the Texas herd begins expanding again," he said. "Some producers with good moisture and grazing may take on more calves to take advantage of the opportunity for good low-cost gains. That could drive calf prices up some more, but I still don't think that causes an imbalance."

The market "imbalance" scenario is likely to play out like the last statewide drought in 2011, Anderson said. Prolonged drought and an arid summer with poor grazing, hay production and limited water resources led Texas cattle ranchers to cut the state herd from almost 5 million to 3.9 million by 2014.

Anderson said prices were strong after 2012, but by 2015, calf prices were setting all-time records as ranchers moved to rebuild their herds and take advantage of strong consumer demand and reduced supply, thus driving beef prices upward.

"I don't expect price escalation to happen until we rebuild the herd," he said. "That means producers are holding back more heifers to replace cows, and so there will be fewer head ending up in grocery stores. That process really constricted the beef and cattle markets and drove prices up." — **Texas A&M AgriLife**





Sale Calendar

Sale Calendar is a service to our advertisers. There is a minimum advertising requirement to be eligible to be listed in the Sale Calendar. Contact your fieldman for more information or to have your date added to the Sale Calendar. We will only run auction sale dates or private treaty start dates.

ALL BREEDS

Mar. 7 — Ipsen Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Dingle, ID
Mar. 15 — Western Breeders Association, Bull Sale, Eltopia, WA
Mar. 18 — Utah Beef Improvement Association, Bull Sale, Salina, UT
Mar. 19 — Intermountain Genetic Alliance, Bull Sale, Baker, NV
Apr. 6-7 — Midland Bull Test, Bull Sale, Columbus, MT
Apr. 18 — Treasure Bull Test, Bull Sale, Great Falls, MT

ANGUS

Mar. 6 — Harrell Hereford Ranch, Production Sale, Baker City, OR
Mar. 7 — Allen Brothers, Bull & Female Sale, Baker City, OR
Mar. 7 — Ipsen Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Dingle, ID
Mar. 8 — Hornung Livestock, Production Sale, Stratton, CO
Mar. 8 — Sitz Angus, Bull Sale, Dillon, MT
Mar. 8 — Udy Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Rockland, ID
Mar. 9 — Sunny Okanogan Angus Ranch, Production Sale, Okanogan, WA
Mar. 10 — Reid Cattle Co., Production Sale, Brush, CO
Mar. 10 — Rollin' Rock, Bull Sale, Pilot Rock, OR
Mar. 11 — Diamond Peak Cattle, Bull Sale, Riverton, WY
Mar. 11 — Koberstein Farms Angus, Bull Sale, Holyoke, CO
Mar. 11 — Riverbend Ranch, Bull Sale, Idaho Falls, ID
Mar. 13 — Spring Cove Ranch, Bull Sale, Bliss, ID
Mar. 14 — Stevenson's Diamond Dot, Bull Sale, Hobson, MT
Mar. 14 — Veltkamp Angus, Bull Sale, Manhattan, MT
Mar. 14 — Wagon Wheel Angus, Bull Sale, Yuma, CO
Mar. 15 — Lufkin Angus, Bull Sale, Leodore, ID
Mar. 15 — Stevenson Angus Bull, Bull Sale, Hobson, MT
Mar. 15 — Wagonhammer Ranches, Bull Sale, Albion, NE
Mar. 16 — Carter Cattle, Bull Sale, Pingree, ID
Mar. 16 — Vallad/Oft Angus, Bull Sale, Vale, OR
Mar. 17 — Leadore Angus, Bull Sale, Leodore, ID
Mar. 17 — Montana Performance Bull Coop, Bull Sale, Columbus, MT
Mar. 17 — TD Angus at Rishel Ranch, Production Sale, North Platte, NE
Mar. 17 — Weiss Bros. Angus, Production Sale, Red Cloud, NE
Mar. 18 — Nelson Angus Ranch, Production Sale, Salmon, ID
Mar. 18 — South Montana Angus Assoc., Bull Sale, Butte, MT
Mar. 18 — Ward Ranches, Bull Sale, Minden, NV
Mar. 20 — Angus in the Basin, Bull Sale, Duchesne, UT
Mar. 20 — Genetic Opportunity Angus Bull Sale, Purdum, NE
Mar. 20 — JR Ranch & Sackmann Cattle, Bull Sale, Othello, WA
Mar. 20 — Whistling Winds Angus, Bull Sale, Hingham, MT
Mar. 21 — Blevins Angus, Bull Sale, Charlo, MT
Mar. 21 — ELK Angus, Bull Sale, Buffalo, WY
Mar. 22 — Nebraska Bull Test, Bull Sale, Broken Bow, NE
Mar. 22 — Peterson Grain and Cattle, Bull Sale, Havre, MT
Mar. 23 — Vermilion Commercial Females, Billings, MT
Mar. 24 — Gartner-Denowh, Bull Sale, Sidney, MT
Mar. 24 — Schurrtop, Bull Sale, McCook, NE
Mar. 24 — Vermilion Bull Sale, Billings, MT
Mar. 25 — Connealy Angus, Bull Sale, Whitman, NE
Mar. 25 — Diamond Peak Cattle, Bull Sale, Loma, CO
Mar. 26 — Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Female Sale, Ft. Collins, CO
Mar. 27 — Harrer's Lost Lake, Bull Sale, Great Falls, MT
Mar. 27 — Herbster Angus Farms, Bull Sale, Marysville, KS
Mar. 27 — Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Bull Sale, Ft. Collins, CO
Mar. 28 — Bar JV Angus, Bull Sale, Sidney, MT
Mar. 30 — Silver Bit Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, May, ID
Apr. 1 — Botts Angus, Bull Sale, Huntley, MT
Apr. 1 — Brooks Chalky Butte, Bull Sale, Bowman, ND
Apr. 1 — Gray's Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Harrison, NE
Apr. 3 — FBA Angus Sale, Havre, MT
Apr. 4 — Hinman Angus, Bull Sale, Malta, MT
Apr. 6 — Arntzen Angus, Bull Sale, Hilger, MT
Apr. 8 — Fink Beef Genetics, Bull Sale, Randolph, KS
Apr. 10 — C-Spear Angus, Bull Sale, Billings, MT
Apr. 11 — Hilltop Angus, Bull Sale, Denton, MT
Apr. 13 — Carr Angus, Bull Sale, Hobson, MT
Apr. 13 — Jocko Valley Angus, Bull Sale, Missola, MT
Apr. 13 — McClun's Lazy JM Ranch, Bull Sale, Torrington, WY
Apr. 17 — Jorgensen Land & Cattle, Bull Sale, Ideal, SD
Apr. 19 — Milk River Genetics, Bull Sale, Chinook, MT
Apr. 21 — Degrand Angus, Bull Sale, Baker, NV
Apr. 21 — ELK Angus, Bull Sale, Buffalo, WY
Apr. 22 — Herring Angus, Bull Sale, Encampment, WY
Apr. 25 — Currant Creek, Bull Sale, Miles City, MT

BALANCER

Apr. 8 — Bar T Bar, Bull Sale, Winslow, AZ
Apr. 8 — Redd Ranches, Bull Sale, Paradox, CO

BEEFMASTER

Apr. 20-21 — NextGen Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Paxico, KS

BRANGUS

Mar. 28 — Geneplus Brangus, Bull Sale, Concord, AR

CHAROLAIS

Mar. 14 — Romans Ranches, Production Sale, Westfall, OR
Mar. 15 — Wagonhammer Ranches, Bull Sale, Albion, NE
Mar. 24 — Schurrtop, Bull Sale, McCook, NE
Mar. 25 — Valley View Charolais, Bull Sale, Polson, MT
Mar. 26 — Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Female Sale, Ft. Collins, CO
Mar. 27 — Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Bull Sale, Ft. Collins, CO
Apr. 1 — Debruycker Charolais, Bull Sale, Great Falls, MT
Apr. 8 — Fink Beef Genetics, Bull Sale, Randolph, KS
Apr. 8 — Hebbert Charolais Ranch, Bull Sale, Hyannis, NE
Apr. 14 — Cobb Charolais, Bull Sale, Great Falls, MT
Apr. 20-21 — NextGen Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Paxico, KS

GELBVIEH

Apr. 8 — Redd Ranches, Bull Sale, Paradox, CO

HEREFORD

Mar. 6 — Harrell Hereford Ranch, Production Sale, Baker City, OR
Mar. 7 — Ipsen Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Dingle, ID
Mar. 8 — Udy Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Rockland, ID
Mar. 13 — Holden Herefords, Production Sale, Valier, MT
Mar. 14 — Cooper Hereford, Bull Sale, Willow Creek, MT
Mar. 16 — Bar Star Cattle, Bull Sale, Musselshell, MT
Mar. 22 — NJW Herefords, Bull Sale, Sheridan, WY
Mar. 22 — Nebraska Bull Test, Bull Sale, Broken Bow, NE
Apr. 13 — McClun's Lazy JM Ranch, Bull Sale, Torrington, WY
Apr. 15 — Stuber Ranch, Bull Sale, Bowman, ND
Sept. 16 — Ehlke Herefords, Bull Sale, Townsend, MT

LIMOUSIN

Apr. 1 — Magness Land & Cattle, Bull Sale, Platteville, CO

LIM-FLEX

Apr. 1 — Magness Land & Cattle, Bull Sale, Platteville, CO

RED ANGUS

Mar. 6 — McCann Red Angus, Bull Sale, Billings, MT
Mar. 7 — Sandhills Red Angus, Production Sale, Sidney, MT
Mar. 8 — Udy Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Rockland, ID
Mar. 10 — Leland Red Angus, Production Sale, Sidney, MT
Mar. 13 — Feddes and C-T Red Angus, Bull Sale, Manhattan, MT
Mar. 13 — Lautenschlager Red Angus, Bull Sale, Othello, WA
Mar. 14 — Loosli Red Angus, Production Sale, Ashton, ID
Mar. 15 — Klompein Red Angus, Bull Sale, Manhattan, MT
Mar. 18 — Iron Triangle/Lorenzen Ranches, Bull Sale, Madras, OR
Mar. 18 — Milk Creed Reds, Bull Sale, Plevna, MT
Mar. 21 — Green Mountain Red Angus, Bull Sale, Logan, MT
Mar. 22 — Nebraska Bull Test, Bull Sale, Broken Bow, NE
Mar. 22 — Westphal Red Angus, Bull Sale, Grass Range, MT
Mar. 26 — Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Female Sale, Ft. Collins, CO
Mar. 27 — Axtell Cattle Co., Production Sale, Sterling , CO
Mar. 27 — Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Bull Sale, Ft. Collins, CO
Mar. 31 — Pieper Red Angus, Production Sale, Hay Springs, NE
Apr. 8 — HanSine Ranch, Bull Sale, Hayes, SD
Apr. 8 — Ludvigson Herdbuilder Sale, Shepherd, MT
Apr. 8 — Redd Ranches, Bull Sale, Paradox, CO
Apr. 11 — Beckton Red Angus, Bull and Heifer Sale, Sheridan, WY
Apr. 14 — 5L Red Angus, Bull Sale, Sheridan, MT

SALERS

Mar. 28 — MJB Ranch, Bull Sale, Billings, MT

SIMANGUS

Mar. 7 — Allen Brothers, Bull & Female Sale, Baker City, OR
Mar. 8 — Hornung Livestock, Production Sale, Stratton, CO
Mar. 10 — Yardley Cattle, Bull Sale, Beaver, UT
Mar. 11 — Diamond Peak Cattle, Bull Sale, Riverton, WY
Mar. 19 — Western Cattle Source, Bull Sale, Crawford, NE
Mar. 25 — Diamond Peak Cattle, Bull Sale, Loma, CO
Mar. 25 — T-Heart Ranch, Bull Sale, La Garita, CO
Mar. 26 — Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Female Sale, Ft. Collins, CO
Mar. 27 — Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Bull Sale, Ft. Collins, CO

SIMMENTAL

Mar. 27 — Vertical Edge Genetics, Bull Sale, Bancroft, ID
Mar. 31 — Open Gate Ranch, Bull Sale, Augusta, MT

HORSE

Jun. 24 — Memory Ranch, Horse Sale, Wells, NV

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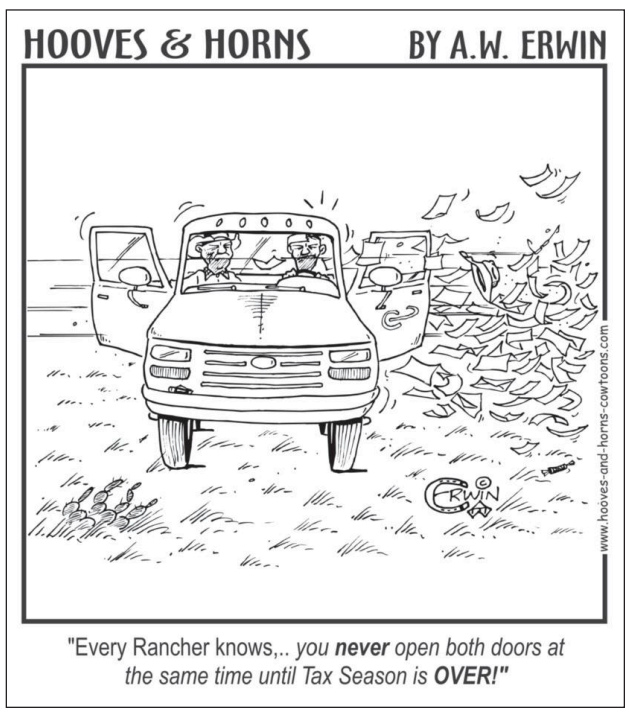

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67 Fall yearling Hereford bulls .. 5,493
104 Spring yearling Hereford bulls 6,726
20 2-Year-old Hereford bulls 6,350
16 Hereford heifers 4,641
Auctioneers: Joe Goggins and Rick Machado

TOPS—Angus bulls: Stellpflug Stagecoach 2008, 12/24/21 by Hoffman Stagecoach 1908; to ST Genetics, Navasota, TX, and Select Sires Inc., Plain City, OH, $300,000. Stellpflug High Road 2019, 1/6/22 by Hoffman High Road; to Kroupa Pukwana Cattle Co. LLC, Pukwana, SD, $19,000. Stellpflug High Road 2016, 12/28/21 by Hoffman High Road; to Lazy JB Angus, Montrose, CO, $17,000. Hoffman Iconic 209, 1/14/22 by DB Iconic G95; to Keyes Angus, Brewster, NE, $17,000. Hoffman Thedford 233, 2/11/22 by Hoffman Thedford; to Wagonhammer Ranches, Albion, NE, $16,000. Hoffman Barricade 204, 1/1/22 by Sitz Barricade 632F; to Rollin Rock Genetic Partners, Helix, OR, $16,000. **Hereford bulls:** H High Time 2236 ET, 3/6/22 by Gerber High Time H65; to Rausch Herefords, Hoven, SD, $41,000. Stellpfug Homemaker 8G 222, 2/11/22 by JDH AH Benton 8G ET; to Brumley Farms, Orovada, NV, $36,000. H High Time 2220 ET, 3/1/22 by Gerber High Time H65; to XA Cattle Co., Moorefield, NE, $22,000. H PG Entice 2349 ET, 1/15/22 by UPS Entice 9365 ET; to Genoa Livestock, Minden, NV, $19,000. H Broadway 2345 ET, 1/12/22 by Churchill Broadway 868F; to Stellpflug Cattle Co., Glenrock, WY, $16,000. H United 232 ET, 2/19/22 by Haroldson's United 33D 36G; to Lorenzen Farms, Chrisman, IL, $15,000. H DS Broadway 2346 ET, 1/20/22 by Churchill Broadway 868F; to Todd Boettcher, Spencer, NE, $14,000. **Angus heifer:** Hoffman FN Complete 2046, 2/24/22 by TEX Scout 9001; to Stellpflug Cattle Co., Glenrock, WY, $7,000. Hereford heifer: H DS Kelly 2309 ET, 1/27/22 by Churchill Broadway 858F; to Cumming Land & Cattle, Hollis, OK, $30,000. —**JIM GIES**

TC RANCH BULL SALE
Feb. 22, Franklin, NE
73 Yearling bulls $5,664
11 Open heifers 1,863
Auctioneer: Joe Goggins

TOPS—Bulls: TC Home Town 2110, 1/3/22 by G A R Home Town; to Wilde Angus Ranch, Shevlin, MN, $15,000. TC Alternative 289, 1/26/22 by Baldridge Alternative E125; to Gary McPherson, Watonga, OK, $13,500. TC Iconic 244, 1/17/22 by DB Iconic G95; to Adam Brayton, IA, $11,000. TC Cut Above 205, 1/2/22 by High Point Werner Cut Above; to Bradyn Werth, Ellis, KS, $11,000. TC Cut Above 208, 1/3/22 by High Point Werner Cut Above; to William Boyer, Liberty, NE, $10,000. TC Home Town 2104, 1/31/22 by G A R Home Town; to Double G Angus, Tiffin, IA, $10,000. **Open heifer:** TC Ruby 2061, 2/14/22 by High Point Werner Cut Above; to Kevin Pioelz, KS, $3,750. — **JIM GIES**

REYES/RUSSELL ANGUS BULL SALE
Feb. 27, Wheatland, WY
240 Coming 2-year-old bulls $6,899
Auctioneers: Lex Madden and Lander Nicodemus

Tops: MR Next 00131, 5/22/21 by Next Gen 36 Next Step 189; $21,000. MR outside 34791, 6/4/21 by KR Outside 7687; $20,000. MR Ideal 36671, 5/22/21 by Ideal 4223 of 1168 BLKBRD x KMR Cash 355; $20,000. MR Ideal 36121, 5/26/21 by Ideal 4223 of 1168 BLKBRD x McConnell Duty 5291; $20,000. KMR Exclusive 532, 12/3/21 by Musgrave 316 Exclusive x Sitz Uncommon; $18,000. — **JIM GIES**

HAYNES CATTLE CO. BULL SALE
Feb. 28, Ogallala, NE
109 Yearling bulls $6,275
Auctioneer: Kevin Schow
Sale Manager: CK6 Consulting

TOPS: HAYNES Patriarch 236, 1/7/22 by Tehama Patriarch F028; to Hunt Angus, Milburn, NE, $17,000. HAYNES Exponential 2280, 1/27/22 by K C F Bennett Exponential; to Chris Cagle, Grant City, MO, $11,500. HAYNES Patriarch 202, 1/22/22 by Tehama Patriarch F028; to Connell Ranch, Hyannis, NE, $10,250. HAYNES Patriarch 213, 1/4/22 by Tehama Patriarch F028; to Troy Dubs, Ashby, NE, $10,000. HAYNES Exponential 2433, 2/2/22 by K C F Bennett Exponential; to Connell Ranch, Hyannis, NE, $9,750. — **JIM GIES**

VAN DYKE ANGUS RANCH BULL SALE
Feb. 23, Manhattan, MT
138 Older bulls $6,219
Auctioneer: Roger Jacobs
Sale Manager: Ron Frye Marketing

TOPS: VDAR Manhattan 1462, 1/21/22 by VDAR Manhattan 1379; to VLS Angus, Dunn Center, ND, $20,000. VDAR Cedar Wind 2092, 1/10/22 by VDAR Cedar Wind 5126; to Sam Risse, Martin, SD, $14,500. VDAR Gallatin 1372, 1/17/22 by VDAR Gallatin 7586; to Adams Angus, Brigham City, UT, $12,000. VDAR Cedar Wind 2112, 1/10/22 by VDAR Cedar Wind 5126; to Bernard Betz, Clearmont, WY, $11,000. VDAR Maga 2042, 1/7/22 by VDAR Maga 2042; to Gnerer Angus, Hammond, MT, $11,000. VDAR Twenty Twenty 1262, 1/14/22 by VDAR Twenty Twenty 2020; to Mark Nemmings, Avon, SD, $11,000. — **DEVIN MURNIN**

HYLINE ANGUS RANCH ANNUAL BULL SALE
Feb. 24, Three Forks, MT
40 Bulls $5,256
Auctioneer: Kyle Shobe

TOPS: Hyline Nebraska 402, 10/18/21 by Conley Hyline 8045; to Stanford Angus Farm, Rienzi, MS, $22,000. Hyline Turning Point 242, 9/19/21 by Conley Hyline 8045; to R and R Turkey, Cherokee, TX, $12,000. Hyline Pilot 252, 9/20/21 by Hyline Pilot 144; to Ken Speckman, Park Valley, UT, $8,000. Hyline Pilot 472, 10/29/21 by Hyline Pilot 144; to Tri-Mountain Angus, Townsend, MT, $7,500. Hyline Turning Point 182, 9/15/21 by Conely Hyline 8045; to Roger Sanderson, Toston, MT, $7,500. — **DEVIN MURNIN**

SKINNER RANCH SEEDSTOCK ANNUAL BULL SALE
Feb. 24, Hall, MT
81 Yearling Angus bulls $6,737
13 Older Angus bulls 5,942
31 Salers Optimizer bulls 6,264
Auctioneer: Joe Goggins

TOPS—Angus: SRS Honest 0209K, 2/17/22 by SRS Honest 3136H; to Powder River Angus, Spotted Horse, WY, $13,000. SRS Ripper 1047K, 2/2/22 by Reich Ripper 37B; to Dean Klement, Whitebird, ID, $12,000. SRS Stellar 5207K, 1/25/22 by Sitz Stellar 726D; to Gravely Black Mountain, Avon, MT, $12,000. SRS Atlantis 5220k, 2/4/22 by Square B Atlantis 8060; to Gravely Black Mountain, Avon, MT, $12,000. SRS Headline 9300K, 2/8/22 by SRS Headline 2277H; to Lund's B Bar Angus, Wibaux, MT, $11,500. **Optimizer:** SRS El Dorado 0122K, 1/17/22 by SRS El Dorado 4147E; to TG Ranch, Martinsdale, MT, $8,250. —**DEVIN MURNIN**

POPPE CATTLE CO. ANNUAL BULL SALE
Feb. 26, Fallon, MT
48 SimAngus bulls $5,781
Auctioneer: Greg Goggins

TOPS: PCC Sedona 5136K, 3/20/22 by JC MR Huron 7262G; to P Diamond Livestock, Rand, CO, $9,500. PCC Bonanza 5126K, 3/21/22 by JC MR Huron 7262G; to Joe Brown, Powderville, MT, $8,000. PCC Showdown 5135K, 3/28/22 by JC MR Huron 7262G; to Joe Brown, Powderville, MT, $8,000. PCC Dillon 5128K, 3/20/21 by JC MR Huron 7262G; to Joe Brown, Powderville, MT, $8,000. PCC Cheyenne 5138K, 3/26/22 by C MR Huron 7262G; to Owl Mountain Ranch, Rand, CO, $6,750. PCC Ponderosa 5152K, 3/17/22 by PCC Total Package 5114F; to Tim Wyse, Lindsay, MT, $6,750. —**DEVIN MURNIN**

CIRCLE L ANGUS ANNUAL PRODUCTION SALE
Feb. 27, Dillon, MT
112 Total bulls $6,639
9 Registered open heifers 3,672
40 Commercial open heifers 1,594
Auctioneer: Joe Goggins

TOPS—Bulls: Circle L Resilient 449K, 1/29/22 by Sitz Resilient 10208; to Lazy 3X Cattle, Mack, CO, $16,000. Circle L Stellar K440, 1/28/22 by Sitz Stellar 726D; to Carl Windler, Yampa, CO, $14,000. Circle L Trapper J6, 8/4/21 by Paintrock Trapper; to Arntzen Angus Ranch, Hilger, MT, $10,500. Circle L Commodore 412K, 1/24/22 by Kesslers Commodore 6516; to Ty Bevan, Mesa, CO, $10,000. Circle L Timberline K470, 2/1/22 by WXW Timberline W287; to J Reverse J, Morgan, UT, $10,000. Circle L Silver Bow 477K, 2/3/22 by Circle L Silver Bow 200H; to West Pass Ranch, Parkman, WY, $10,000. Circle L Essential 554K, 2/26/22 by A A R Essential; to Centennial Livestock, Dillon, MT, $10,000. **Open heifer:** Circle L Molly 462K, 1/31/22 by Baldridge Alternative E125; to Green Mountain Angus Ranch, Ryegate, MT, $7,000. —**DEVIN MURNIN**

CONNELLY ANGUS RANCH ANNUAL PRODUCTION SALE
Feb. 28, Valier, MT
109 Total bulls $5,055
20 Registered open heifers 1,922
Auctioneer: Roger Jacobs

TOPS—Bulls: CAR Legendary 260, 1/25/22 by CAR Legendary 026; to Duke Starr, Geddes, SD, $10,000. CAR Pacific 286, 1/28/22 by Sterling Pacific 904; to Eddie McCauley, Cut Bank, MT, $8,750. CAR Swagger 242, 1/26/22 by Windy Ridge Swagger 714; to Dvorak Angus, Lewistown, MT, $8,500. CAR Swagger 241, 1/22/22 by Windy Ridge Swagger 714; to Duke Starr, Geddes, SD, $8,500. **Open heifer:** CAR Miss Patty 214, 1/19/22 by Sterling Pacific 904; to Flesch Angus, Shelby, MT, $3,000. —**DEVIN MURNIN**

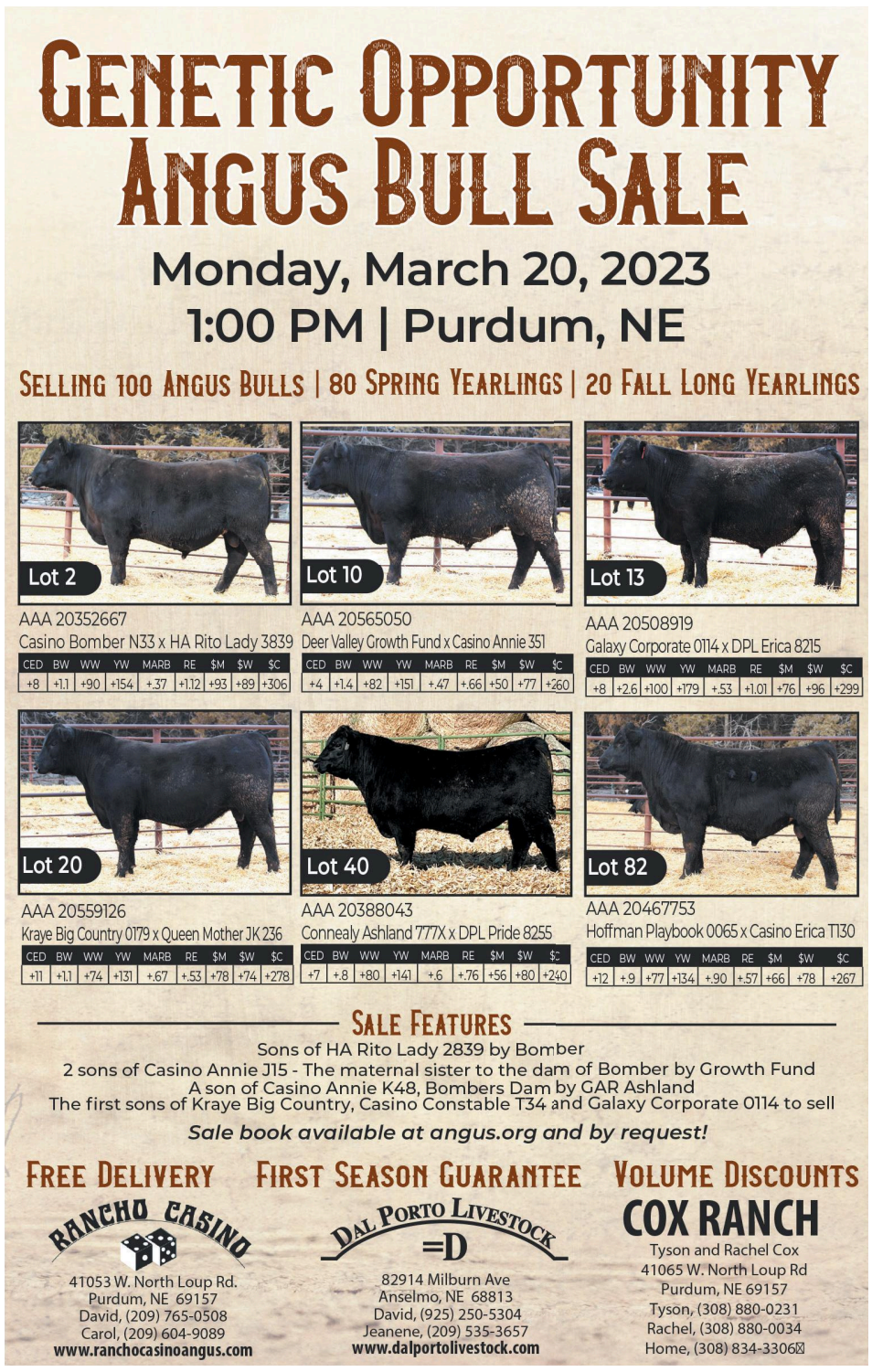
J.C. HEIKEN & SONS ANNUAL PRODUCTION SALE
Feb. 28, Miles City, MT
119 Yearling bulls $6,711
Auctioneer: Joe Goggins
Sale Manager: Ron Frye Marketing

TOPS: Heiken Incentive 2030, 1/29/22 by SITZ Incentive 704H; to Thousand Hills Angus, Toston, MT, $16,000. Heiken Incentive 2070, 2/6/22 by SITZ Incentive 704H; to Richard Angus Ranch, Belfield, ND, $14,000. Heiken Resilient 2087, 2/9/22 by Sitz Resilient 10208; to Vermilion Ranch, Billings, MT, $13,000. Heiken Broadview 2412, 2/20/22 by Heiken Broadview; to Stevenson's Diamond Dot, Hobson, MT, $12,500. Heiken Broadview 2004, 1/25/22 by Heiken Broadview; to Ed Beers, Isabel, SD, $10,000. Heiken Cowboy Kind 2058, 2/6/22 by HA Cowboy Kind 8157; to Buyan Ranch, Sheridan, WY, $10,000. — **DEVIN MURNIN**

OX BOX RANCH ANNUAL BULL SALE
March 1, Wolf Creek, MT
61 Yearling bulls $7,102
25 Older bulls 6,105
86 Total bulls 6,812
Auctioneer: Roger Jacobs
Sale Manager: Andras Cattle Services

TOPS: OX Vindicator 2167, 1/27/22 by OX Vindicator 0017; to Botts Angus, Huntley, MT, and Kerly Ranches, Powell Butte, OR, $45,000. OX Outrider 2028, 1/5/22 by HA Outrider 9672; to Mitch Schoelerman, Mobridge, SD, $13,000. OX MVP 2201, 1/31/22 by B/R MVP 5247; to Mitch Schoelerman, Mobridge, SD, $10,500. OX MVP 2161, 1/27/22 by B/R MVP 5247; to Shotgun Ranch, Post, OR, $10,500. OX Mytty 2507, 1/29/22 by Mytty Resource 7701; to Kyle Grygail, Watertown, SD, $9,000. —**DEVIN MURNIN**





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: 3/2/2023		Week Ago	Year Ago
Choice Fed Steers	164.58	▲	162.37	140.48
CME Feeder Index	183.04	▲	182.57	157.78
Boxed Beef Average	288.50	▲	287.91	254.35
Average Dressed Steers	265.00	▲	N/A	224.92
Live Slaughter Weight*	1,380	▼	1,397	1,402
Weekly Slaughter**	618,000	▼	627,000	647,000
Weekly Beef Production***	509.8	▼	517.5	544.7
Hide/Offal Value	13.92	▲	13.12	14.07
Corn Price	6.38	▼	6.61	7.51

*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	COMPREHENSIVE Price	PRIME Loads	PRIME Price	BRANDED Loads	BRANDED Price	CHOICE Loads	CHOICE Price	SELECT Loads	SELECT Price	UNGRADED Loads	UNGRADED Price
February 24	6,284	281.86	192	315.16	1,191	285.03	1,917	280.83	604	265.10	2,380	246.94
February 17	6,593	272.72	217	306.89	1,336	275.08	2,121	272.59	629	257.20	2,290	237.78
February 10	7,359	267.65	224	296.05	1,464	270.55	1,944	265.69	789	252.46	2,939	231.51
February 3	6,803	267.47	231	299.98	1,354	270.44	2,223	265.62	635	250.30	2,361	228.76

Cutouts — FED BOXED BEEF

DATE	CHOICE	SELECT	COW BEEF CUTOUT	50% LEAN	90% LEAN
Mar 2	288.50	277.58	207.82	0.00	263.90
Mar 1	287.83	276.43	208.11	124.82	264.54
Feb 28	288.95	279.25	207.72	122.87	263.79
Feb 27	288.34	279.25	205.95	0.00	260.72
Feb 24	287.28	277.08	207.09	122.19	262.98

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Live Cattle

	2/24	2/27	2/28	3/1	3/2	High*	Low*
Feb.	16520	16500	16750	N/A	N/A	16750	13055
Apr.	16538	16498	16548	16513	16410	16548	14003
Jun.	16108	16088	16135	16060	15945	16245	15388
Aug.	15978	15965	16025	15968	15873	16025	15310

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Feeder Cattle

	2/24	2/27	2/28	3/1	3/2	High*	Low*
Mar.	18908	18918	18980	18830	18858	18980	16958
Apr.	19358	19423	19508	19385	19385	19508	17595
May	19805	19873	19963	19900	19883	19963	18303
Aug.	21153	21228	19963	21263	21270	21270	18755

*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	2,690	1,507	164.58
Live FOB Heifer	1,912	1,399	164.86
Dressed Del Steer	213	924	263.75
Dressed Del Heifer	119	837	265.00
SAME PERIOD LAST WEEK			
Live FOB Steer	3,507	1,494	162.37
Live FOB Heifer	3,449	1,360	162.61
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	14,271	1,476	140.48
Live FOB Heifer	8,874	1,370	140.83
Dressed Del Steer	8,386	962	224.92
Dressed Del Heifer	4,242	857	224.95

NATIONAL WEEKLY FED BEEF SLAUGHTER VOLUME: FEBRUARY 26

	Domestic	Imported
Forward Contract	21,132	3,032
Formula	270,760	1,544
Negotiated Cash	79,063	156
Negotiated Grid	39,676	1,557
Packer Owned	8,886	N/A
Total	**419,497**	**6,289**

SLAUGHTER FORWARD CONTRACTS

Delivery Month	
Feb. '23	111,208
Mar. '23	152,050
Apr. '23	148,344
May. '23	10,683
Jun. '23	77,165

FORWARD BEEF SALES

Neg. Sales 0-21 days	1,685
Neg. Sales 21+ days	729
Formula sales	3,630
Forward contract sales	240
Domestic sales	5,648
NAFTA Exports	77

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	209.97	+65.45
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	212.01	+65.52
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	N/A	N/A
Slaughter Cows, Cutter and Utility 1-3, 1100-1400 lbs	114.27	+30.95

*Price comparison from one week ago.

Average feeder cattle prices (CND) for week ending Friday, February 17, 2023

Steers:	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Ontario
501-600 lbs	335.50	338.84	326.20
601-700 lbs	310.47	308.90	295.84
701-800 lbs	285.76	284.58	283.86
801-900 lbs	263.40	263.65	271.08
Heifers:			
401-500 lbs	292.35	288.67	256.05
501-600 lbs	278.87	276.73	265.53
601-700 lbs	258.73	256.75	264.92
701-800 lbs	242.90	241.36	248.99

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
	2/25/23	2/18/23		
Feeders	23,049	25,747	180,705	145,771

USDA WEEKLY IMPORTED FEEDER CATTLE

Friday, February 24, 2022

Mexico to TX. & NM. Weekly Feeder Cattle Import Summary

Receipts EST: 17,000 Week Ago Act: 20,484 Year Ago Act: 14,160

Compared to last week, steer calves and yearlings sold 1.00-2.00 higher. Heifers steady to 2.00 lower. Trade very active, demand very good. The bulk of the supply consisted of steers and spayed heifers weighing 300-700lbs.

Feeder steers: Medium and large 1&2, 300-400 lbs 221.00-232.00, few 233.00; 400-500 lbs 201.00-212.00, few 213.00; 500-600 lbs 181.00-192.00, few 193.00; 600-700 lbs 166.00-177.00, few 178.00. Medium and large 2&3, 300-400 lbs 206.00-217.00; 400-500 lbs 186.00-197.00; 500-600 lbs 166.00-177.00.

Feeder heifers: Medium and large 1&2, 300-400 lbs 185.00-198.00; 400-500 lbs 175.00-188.00; 500-600 lbs 165.00-178.00; 600-700 lbs 155.00-168.00.

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

Selected Auction — Week Ending March 2, 2023

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 / SLAUGHTER BULLS	PAIRS / REPLACEMENTS	
February 24 Blackfoot, ID	N/A			185-221	175-206	175-206 165-194	170-187	155-176	80-05 100-114		NORTHWEST
February 23 Burley, ID	365		185	225 200-204	198-203			169.50	88-105.50 107-112		
No report available Emmett, ID	465		180-233 180-204	194-230 154-198	160-211 143-195	128-179			84-104 104-121	650-1,700 1,140-1,570	
February 25 Eugene, OR											
February 27 Madras, OR	240		240-265 200-215	265-275 200-225	215-265 200-226	180-214 180-192.50	180-190 170-180		85-95 100-108		
February 22 Vale, OR	655		225-300 222-252.50	240-265 210-254	220-255 190-212.50	185-216 175-182	168-182.50 161-170.50	148-165 120-131	92-102.50 100-119		
No report available Davenport, WA											
February 23 Toppenish, WA	992		215*	262.50*	260* 199*				90-104.50 105-112.50	1,500	
February 23 Orland, CA	1,922		190-307 170-265	175-287 155-225	165-230 145-179	150-207 130-170	125-175		95-109 90-126	1,300-2,850	FARWEST
February 27 Escalon, CA	N/A		160-200 135-169		150-210 145-175		125-170 135-157	100-125 95-120	55-75 80-100	800-1,500	
February 20 Famoso, CA	213		175-235 140-200	175-235 150-200	140-220 150-183	160-190 135-150	150-162 125-140		85-97 95-104.50		
No report available Galt, CA											
February 21 Turlock, CA	1,330		190-224 140-189	200-245 134-199	190-220 130-189	170-195 123-169	162-174 118-161	105-150	88-111.50 102-133.50	2,750-2,825	
February 21 Salina, UT	914		192.50-243 170-214	185-232.50 165-210	170-213 155-200	165-206 145-181	150-183 143.50-172.50	130-176 125-167	79.25-112.25 111.75-124.35		
February 27 Iowa	14,003	170-180	215-274 180-229	211-265 175-225	184-269 170-218.50	180.50-230 159-197	171-203.75 142-195.50	163.50-190.50 145-175	88.50-106 81-125		NORTH CENTRAL
February 28 Miles City, MT	893			261-273 225-226	230.50-261 220.25-224.50	214-228.50 179-193.25	184-200.50 172.50	177	83-97.50 77-123.50	1,225	
No report available Bassett, NE											
February 25 Ericson, NE	3,420		265 203	267.50-272.50 212-215.50	223-241.75 186-219	196-232.75 172-197.50	178-204 166.50-190.50	170-190.50 162-173			
February 28 Imperial, NE	1,120			243	228-233.50 196.50-198	207-208 189.50-190	186 176.25-178	179.25-190 169-172.50			
February 22 Kearney, NE	3,000			225-241	208-237 186-206	198.50-219 182.50-189	183.50-198.50 168.50-177.50	166.50-185 164.50-171.50	81-97 107-115		
February 24 Lexington, NE	2,248		240-259 214-236	229-255 215-226	203-237 196.75-226	194-221 179-186	176-202.75 173.75-176.85	172.75-186.75 162.50-166.50			
February 23 Ogallala, NE	4,640			246-266 221-235.50	230-247 196.50-226	200-235 178.50-203	183-206.50 172-187	171-189 165.50-173.50			
No report available Valentine, NE											
No report available Herreid, SD											
February 22 Torrington, WY	2,597			240-257 212-221	222-244 193-222	199-227.50 175-210	189-202 166-173	172			
February 23 Willcox, AZ	914	228-249 196-206	223-245 180-210	201-229 185-197	198-216 180-186	180-93.50 156-164.50			65-100 85-106	1,075-1,225 1,125-1,400	SOUTH CENTRAL
February 27 Colorado	4,169		239.50-255	198-248 197-219	197-222.50 176-203.50	184-210.50 171-186	181-187 163.50-175	166-182.50 135-171	60-105 95-121	850-2,250 1,285-1,485	
February 22 La Junta, CO	1,414		243-255 198-210	212-245 194-201	202-220 180-190	185-206 171-179	178-184 168-175	173.25-178 156-171	73-92 101-121		
February 27 Loma, CO	319	240	240-264 223-240	228-253 218-241	212-234 205-229	185-214 185-207	177-189 165-177	148-182 144-167	87-106 100-116		
March 1 Dodge City, KS	2,662		227-261 212-239	207.50-233 193-212	200-229 171-214	184.50-218.50 174.50-198.25	177-192.85 170.50-180	170-187.50 159-170.10	81-104 90-123	1,450	
March 2 Pratt, KS	3,500			220 194-216	215-237 182.50-211	177-213 170-193.50	175-195 172-185.75	166-192.25 151-177.75			
February 23 Salina, KS	3,114		257.50-267 224-225	237.50-264 209-225	233-255 198-213	203-238.50 177.50-194.50	176-200 166.50-177	163-186 155-179			
March 2 Clovis, NM	1,598	220 200	248-273 205-271	185-261 201-229	198-229 170-201	180-197 161-190.25	166-181 144-163	113-178.50 110-148	57.50-100 73-114	800-1,075 760-1,675	
March 1 El Reno, OK	8,247		267.50-285 230-237.50	233-272.50 202.50-235	210-247.50 195-211	188-222.50 177.50-195	180-202 172.50-186	170-186 162-175.50			
March 1 McAlester, OK	1,180		238-286 206-249	233-263 203-221	230-251 181-206	181-225 156-174	180-188 155-173	159-167 149-150	88-109 100-120	735-1,500 825-1,250	
February 28 Oklahoma City, OK	8,082	270	236-293 213-241	225-270 207-247	217-255 198-245	193-215 182.50-197	183-196 170-185.75	174-182 164			
February 24 Cuero, TX	1,809	169-242 158-239	198-258 174-244	186-240 170-236	188-230 165-216	172-207 157-179	162-187 144-165	75-96 85-122	1,300-1,475		
February 24 Dalhart, TX	2,707		244-321 230-256	269-279 200-244	214-245 195-207	189-209 184-190	181-188.50 165-170	125-176.50 155	70-112 96-120		
February 23 San Angelo, TX	761	284 197-200*	254-292 206-210	224-240 180-189*	210-223 179-181	193 169*	167-171* 151		55-97 89-123	1,260 1,100-1,225	
February 23 Tulia, TX	1,177	255 225			194-223 168-205	186-207 165-180.50	176-180 170-173.50	149-183.25	80-90 100		
February 24 Alabama	9,479	244-250 212-255	211-255 184.50-210	196-237 175-207	185-219 159-190	170-210 142-180	155-191 137-152	166-167.50	72-104 79-117	825-2,500 775-1,650	EAST
February 27 Lexington, KY	885	175-215*	204-220* 170-207*	190-249* 165-199*	176-218* 155-190*	166-196.50* 158-171*	160-181.50* 138-149*	178-186.75* 115-139*	73-113 95-147	1,975-2,000 1,010-1,175	
February 27 Joplin, MO	6,932		250-265 191-227.50	240-265 200-218.50	223-248 194-216	203.50-222.50 180-197	187-199 169-176.25	174.75-181.50 166-174.25			
February 27 Tennessee	5,309	230-255* 167.50-217*	200-255* 137-230*	185-245* 162.50-222.50*	170-228* 139-187.50*	165-207* 139-168	149-181* 125-162*	117-173.75* 107-142*	69-107.50 74-137	1,100-1,425 775-1,550	
February 27 Virginia	2,885		217-230 170-184	162-231.50 163-174.50	189-220 140-180	164-214 117.50-166	131-206 142-156	130-168 115-155			
CANADA											
March 1 Lethbridge, Alberta	2,916		320-359	315-354 270-312	305-332 270-309	285-330 266-282	262-294.75 230-258.50	236-273 222-242	100-119 129-156	2,550-3,100	

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Reflecting on the OQBN sale season

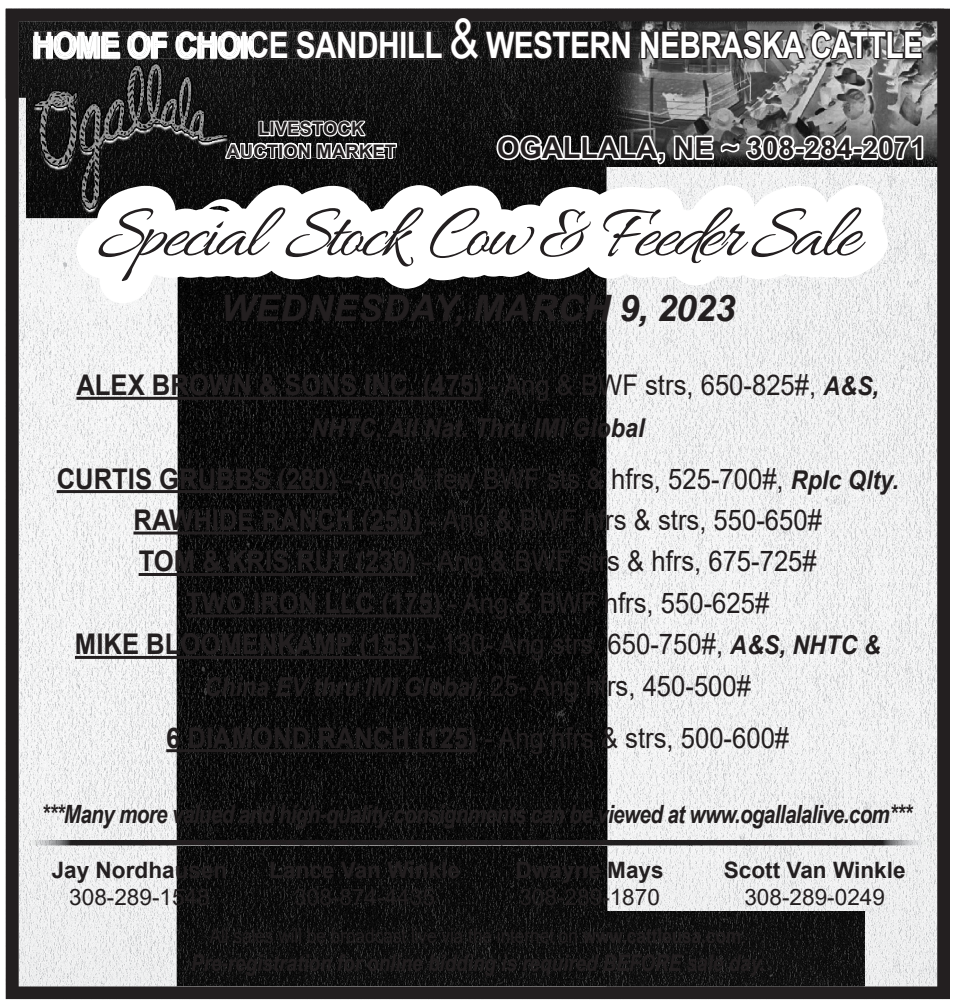
Oklahoma Quality Beef Network (OQBN) Vac-45 sales recently wrapped up with the final winter sale held on Feb. 7 at McAlester Union Stockyards in McAlester, OK. Oklahoma's cow-calf producers persevered through many challenges in 2022. Raising cattle during prolonged drought conditions while contending with exorbitant feed and fertilizer costs is difficult, requiring determination and deserving admiration.

The livestock auction facilities that held OQBN Vac-45 sanctioned sales have been top-notch hosts. Even with drought and elevated input costs, over 3,200 calves from 61 different ranches were enrolled in the OQBN Vac-45 program, matching last year's participation. A memorable highlight was Leflore County Stockyard in Wister, OK, holding its first OQBN-sanctioned sale in December and selling over 800 OQBN calves.

For calves to be eligible to participate in the OQBN Vac-45 program, calves must be castrated, dehorned and weaned for a minimum of 45 days prior to the date of sale. Calves must be vaccinated twice against respiratory pathogens and twice against clostridial bacteria (blackleg vaccinations) prior to sale. While many beef calf preconditioning programs are available, the OQBN Vac-45 and a few other programs have the unique requirement of third-party verification.

Following program enrollment, an Extension educator will conduct a ranch visit and verify that calves meet the necessary requirements to participate in an OQBN-sanctioned sale. This extra step in the preconditioning process provides ranchers and buyers with added confidence that OQBN calves will remain healthy upon entering the next phase of the beef supply chain.

On average, calves participating in OQBN sales received premiums over similar non-preconditioned calves selling in the same sale. Recent sale data is being analyzed and overall premiums for OQBN calves sold in the past sale season (2022-23) should be available soon. Past sale data compiled by Oklahoma State University (OSU) Extension professionals from 2011-21 indicated an average market premium of $12.55/cwt for OQBN calves compared to similar non-preconditioned calves selling in the same sales. We expect this trend to continue for the foreseeable future, due to the continued demand for preconditioned beef calves. — **Paul Vining, OSU Extension OQBN coordinator**



Corn futures sharply lower

MARKETS
(from page 1)

ending Feb. 26 totaled 81,059 head. Live steers averaged $163.69, and dressed steers averaged $260.99.

The national weekly direct beef type price distribution for the week of Feb. 20-27 was the following on a live basis:

- Negotiated purchases: $163.69.
- Formula net purchases: $162.93.
- Forward contract net purchases: $168.
- Negotiated grid net purchases: $164.70.

On a dressed basis:

- Negotiated purchases: $261.12.
- Formula net purchases: $260.11.
- Forward contract net purchases: $248.75.
- Negotiated grid net purchases: $257.55.

Slaughter through Thursday was estimated at 501,000 head. Slaughter for the week earlier was projected to be 618,000 head, down 33,000 head from last year. Actual slaughter for the week ending Feb. 18 was 625,272 head. Average dressed steer weights were 906 lbs., up 4 lbs. from the previous week.

Boxed beef prices were higher, with the Choice cutout up 59 cents to $288.50 and the Select cutout up $1.71 to $277.58.

Feeder cattle

Feeder cattle futures were mixed, with the March contract down 65 cents to $188.57 and the April contract up 18 cents to $193.85. The CME Feeder Cattle Index was up 47 cents to $183.04.

"The cash cattle market still hasn't seen cattle trade, but when trade does begin to develop, prices are expected to be higher, which will also bode well for the feeder cattle contracts," ShayLe Stewart, DTN livestock analyst, wrote in Thursday's midday comments. "Even with the slight stability found Wednesday afternoon in the corn complex, feeder cattle demand remained incredibly strong in sale barns as buyers know that the closer we get to spring, the higher prices are going to get."

Corn futures were sharply lower, with the March contract down 23 cents to $6.37 and the May contract down 26 cents to $6.33.

Colorado: Winter Livestock in La Junta sold 1,397 head on Tuesday. Compared to the previous sale, steer calves under 650 lbs. sold steady, except 500-550 lbs. sold $3-5 higher, with instances of $10 higher. Steers 650-700 lbs. sold $2-3 higher, and over 700 lbs. sold steady to $1 higher. Heifer calves under 500 lbs. sold steady, 500-600 lbs. sold $3-5 higher and over 600 lbs. sold steady to $1 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 763 lbs. sold between $184.50-186.25, averaging $185.19.

Kansas: Winter Livestock in Dodge City sold 2,662 head Wednesday. Compared to the last auction, feeder steers and heifers 600-900 lbs. sold $2 lower; however, high quality and fancy steers and heifers sold $2 higher. Steer and heifer calves 400-600 lbs. sold $2-4 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 772 lbs. sold between $177-184.25 and averaged $179.96.

Nebraska: Huss Livestock Market in Kearney sold 4,281 head Wednesday. Compared to the previous auction, steers under 650 lbs. sold steady, and over 650 lbs. sold steady to $3 higher. Heifers under 750 lbs. sold $5-10 higher, and over 750 lbs. sold steady. Benchmark steers averaging 780 lbs. sold between $186-193.25, averaging $188.15.

South Dakota: Sioux Falls Regional Cattle Auction in Worthing sold 3,692 head Monday. Compared to the previous auction, feeder steers sold $1-4 higher, except 600-700 lbs. sold steady to $1 lower. Feeder heifers sold steady to $3 higher, except 650-700 lbs. sold $6-9 lower. Benchmark steers averaging 770 lbs. sold between $187-196.50 and averaged $191.59. — **Charles Wallace, *WLJ* editor**



SIRE #	BULL #	DOB	BW	205 AWW	STAY	DAM MPPA
KRP MAKE A MILL 2054 #1546984	#4525905	4/24/21	80	744	26	100
KRP OLY T'S ANSWER 8689 #3984648	#4526189	4/18/21	75	813	22	105
KRP KANYON MAKER 3853 #1622622	#4525957	4/21/21	76	744	23	99
KRP EPIC WANDER 6407 # 3564494	#4526019	4/16/21	78	717	20	101
KRP HOLY PAY DAY 8221 #3984374	#4525997	4/18/21	75	701	24	100
KRP OLY'S WANDER 7500 #3783603	#4525853	4/29/21	81	746	23	101
BUF CRK THE RIGHT KIND U199 #1260155	#4526235	4/05/21	72	712	18	100
RED U2 MALBEC 195D #3721545	#4526251	3/29/21	75	713	19	100
BUF CRK FINAL ANSWER W004 #1329487	#4526233	3/30/21	74	710	25	101
KRP EPIC KAN ANSWER 9689 #4172818	#4526093	4/15/21	72	733	23	103
KRP DOK KANYON BRITE 7359 #3783459	#4526095	4/28/21	69	768	24	103

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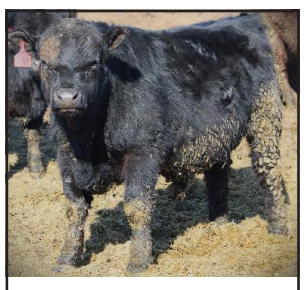

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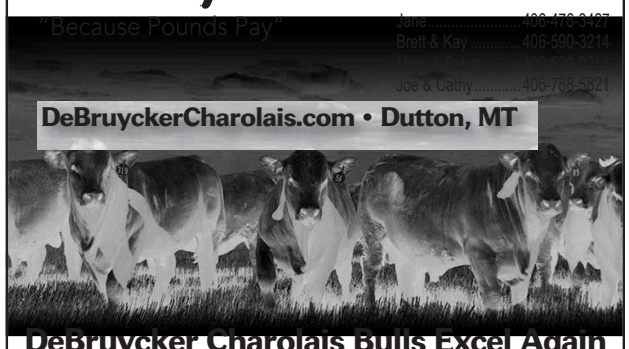

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VIDEO AUCTION

Superior Livestock Auction
Feb. 16, Hudson Oaks, TX

Superior Livestock Auction hosted their Feb. 16 video auction live from the Superior Livestock Auction Studio in Hudson Oaks, TX. Cattle producers offered over 38,500 head of calves, yearlings and bred stock from 25 states for this auction. Cattle were sold on contract to deliver immediately through November 2023.

Despite some uncooperative weather patterns, the market has remained very resilient and the demand for beef continues to be high, leaving Superior Livestock with a bullish market report and an optimistic spring outlook.

Regions 3/4/5/6 feeder steers and heifers saw strong prices at $5-7 higher, with some moving out as much as $12 higher to a wide base of buyers. Regions 1 & 2 feeder steers and heifers were steady. Regions 1 & 2 weaned calves saw solid advances on all weights. Beef-dairy crosses also saw strong demand moving out $10-15 higher. Regions 3/4/5/6 weaned calves were also in strong demand as most of the area was met with much needed moisture.

TOPS—Feeder steers: Brooke Dunlap, Goldthwaite, TX, sold 219 feeder steers @ 700 lbs. Angus cross, Charolais cross, Red Angus cross & a few English Exotic cross carrying 1/4 or less Brahman influence. $191.50, March 1-10 delivery.

Dennis Cattle Co., Grady, NM, sold 72 feeder steers @ 725 lbs. VAC 60, Superior Verified, NHTC, Verified Natural Beef, Veg. Fed Approved, Owner Certified Natural Plus, Superior Progressive Genetics. Out of reputation, home-raised Angus & a few BWF cows by reg. Express Ranches, R.A. Brown & Pohlman black Angus bulls. 100% black hided. $204, March 14-15 delivery.

Sadler Ranch, Phil Sadler, Alba, TX, sold 60 feeder steers @ 775 lbs. VAC 60, NHTC, Superior Progressive Genetics, Beef CARE certified. Out of Angus, Angus cross & Brangus cows (some show up to 1/4 Brahman influence) by pred. Angus bulls & a few by Charolais bulls. Most showing 1/8 ear to 1/4 Brahman influence. Possibly a few Brangus. Source Verified by IMI Global but not Age Verified. $178, Feb. 20-March 6 delivery.

Koenen Feedlot, Hawarden, IA, sold 136 feeder steers @ 800 lbs. BQA certified, Angus & SimAngus cross. Approx. 60% black or BWF & 40% red or RWF. $178.50, Feb. 20-March 6 delivery.

Feeder heifers: McLaughlin Livestock Production, Spearman, TX, sold 65 feeder heifers @ 700 lbs. VAC 60 & VAC PRECON, Superior Verified, NHTC, Verified Natural Beef, Veg. Fed Approved, Owner Certified Natural Plus, Superior Progressive Genetics, BQA certified, Angus & Angus cross by Beckton Red Angus bulls. Pred. Red Angus w/very few Charolais. $189, March 1-15 delivery.

JRC Ranch LLC, Stigler, OK, sold 569 feeder heifers @ 725 lbs. VAC PRECON, BQA certified, Angus, Angus cross, Red Angus cross & Charolais. Not carrying much ear. $174.50, Feb. 20-24 delivery.

Ware Farms, Bovina, TX, sold 400 feeder heifers @ 750 lbs. VAC PRECON, black & Red Angus cross & Charolais cross. Approx. 70% black, 30% red & Charolais. $177.50, April 1-20 delivery.

Wayne & Pat Mittleider, Tappen, ND, sold 85 feeder heifers @ 610 lbs. VAC 60, Superior Verified, NHTC, Verified Natural Beef, Superior Progressive Genetics. Out of SimAngus cows AI'd to Select Sires & cleaned up w/Simmental, black Angus & Red Angus (Dakota Xpress, Ellingson Simmental, Keller Broken Heart, C Diamond & Wilkinson) bulls selected for high performance & carcass traits. Approx. 60% black & 40% red. $209, Feb. 21-March 1 delivery.

Beef-dairy crosses: S-D Feeders, Syracuse, KS, sold 120 beef-dairy cross steers @ 400 lbs. VAC PRECON, Superior Verified, NHTC, Superior Progressive Genetics, BQA certified. Out of Holstein cows AI'd to reg. Angus (44 Second Act X811, Quaker Hill Royal Flush, Quaker Hill Disciple, Quaker Hill Big Stuff, 2 Bar Mile High & Quaker Hill Chieftain) & Cowboy SimAngus bulls. Bred for muscling. Some w/ white under belly, head, socks & tip on tail. $238, July 1-Aug. 1 delivery.

Penta B Cattle Co. LLC, Houston, TX, sold 77 beef-dairy cross steers @ 650 lbs. VAC PRECON, Superior Verified, NHTC. Out of Holstein cows AI'd to reg. Angus bulls. $194, Oct. 1-Nov. 1 delivery.

Trinity Feedyard LLC, Rising City, NE, sold 148 beef-dairy cross steers @ 650 lbs. VAC 60, BQA certified. Out of pred. Holstein w/a few Holstein cross cows AI'd to reg. Angus (KCF Bennett Spitfire, DPL Revived & KCF Bennett Blast) bulls selected for growth, feed efficiency & carcass yield & quality. 100% black hided, some w/ white under belly, head, socks & tip on tail. No Jersey. $205, March 5-10 delivery.

J7 Dairy, Tribune, KS, sold 90 beef-dairy cross steers @ 515 lbs. Out of Holstein cows AI'd to reg. black Gelbvieh & Balancer bulls. (Hugo 732H, Mr Watchman WCR59 8156F) ST Genetics & Grund Gelbvieh. 100% black hided. $206, Feb. 17-21 delivery.

Weaned steer calves: Shamrock Ranches, Inc., Wallace, NE, sold 202 weaned steer calves @ 525 lbs. Approx. 80% black & BWF, balance Red, RWF, Charolais cross & 1-2 Hereford. Approx. 8% exotic cross (Maine Anjou, Shorthorn, Simmental & Brangus). $235, Feb. 28 delivery.

Kasperbaur Land & Cattle, Fort Laramie, WY, sold 35 weaned steer calves @ 560 lbs./55 weaned heifer calves @ 550 lbs. $12/cwt back. VAC 60. Out of black Angus cows by black Angus bulls & out of Red Angus cows by Red Angus & one Hereford bull. Both herds run separately in the same program. $200, Feb. 17-28 delivery.

Flag Ranch LLC, Torrington, WY, sold 265 weaned steer calves @ 580 lbs. VAC PRECON, Angus & Angus cross. Approx. 95% black & 5% BWF. No exotic influence. $249, April 10-15 delivery.

Reed Carter Farms & Cattle, Beaver, UT, sold 76 weaned steer calves @ 640 lbs. VAC 60 & VAC PRECON, Superior Progressive Genetics, SimAngus & Red Angus cross. AI sires include Sitz Invasion, Mill Bar Hickok & KM Broken Bow. Purchases Gib Yardley's best bulls. 100% black hided. $205, March 1-15 delivery.

Charles Edwards, Fairview, OK, sold 54 weaned steer calves @ 525 lbs./29 weaned heifer calves @ 500 lbs. $15/cwt back. VAC 60. Out of pred. Angus, some Angus Hereford cross & Red Angus cross cows by reg. Goss & Lott Angus bulls. Approx. 94% black hided, few black motley faces, five Charolais Angus cross & one Red Angus cross. $230, Feb. 27-March 4 delivery.

Golliher Cattle, Fort Stockton, TX, sold 43 weaned steer calves @ 550 lbs./39 weaned heifer calves @ 550 lbs. $12/cwt back. VAC 45. Out of Angus & Angus cross cows by Angus & Hereford bulls. $199, Feb. 20-March 1 delivery.

Weaned heifer calves:

Sebo Land & Cattle, Spiro, OK, sold 83 weaned heifer calves @ 600 lbs. VAC 60, Superior Progressive Genetics. Out of Brangus & Red Angus cows by Mound Creek Ultrablack, Langford Hereford, Judd Ranch Gelbvieh, Leachman Charolais & Balancer bulls. $172, Feb. 20-24 delivery.

Smith Valley Farms, Houston, MO, sold 85 weaned heifer calves @ 600 lbs. Pred. Angus with a few Angus Hereford cross, a few Angus Charolais cross & a few Red Angus. Approx. 90% black hided. $206, Feb. 20-25 delivery.

Dees Cattle Co. Ltd., Schulenburg, TX, sold 100 weaned heifer calves @ 480 lbs. English & exotic cross with pred. 1/4 or less Brahman influence. May have some with a tic more ear, depending on sort. Pred. Charolais & black, balance red & RWF. $210, March 20-26 delivery.

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JCS BINGO 2342
AHA P44377507 • 3/13/22 • Polled
JCS Bingo 9671 x JCS 240 Dominette 8333
CED +1.0, BW +3.4, WW +57, YW +95, SC +1.3, MILK +27, CW +69, REA +.41, MRB +.30, CHB +131



JCS 1479G DOMINO 2307
AHA 44381699 • 2/15/22 • Horned
SR Dominator 1479G x JCS Mrs. Langdon 0729
CED +4.8, BW +2.2, WW +55, YW +92, SC +1.1, MILK +34, CW +66, REA +.25, MRB +.04, CHB +89



JCS 1479G DOMINATOR 2301
AHA 44401302 • 2/11/22 • Horned
SR Dominator 1479G x JCS Miss Spartan 0809
CED +9.6, BW –1.4, WW +51, YW +89, SC +1.3, MILK +26, CW +79, REA +.56, MRB +.21, CHB +129



JCS 7314 COPPER 2356
AHA 44379457 • 3/14/22 • Horned
JCS 124Y Copper 7314 x JCS Homebrew 7154
CED –3.7, BW +5.3, WW +64, YW +104, SC +0.8, MILK +32, CW +79, REA +.48, MRB +.10, CHB +126

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30 REGISTERED YEARLING Heifers
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SPRINGCREEK ADVANCE 118H / ASA# 3939153
IPU Advance x LFE McDavid
FleckAngus Sons Sell

DOUBLE BAR D JUSTUS 269X / ASA# 2724264
Shawacres Jahari x MFI Whistler
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TCM TRI-STAR MR BRICK 50G / ASA# 3861729
SRH Brick x Silverlake Zeeman
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Other sires represented: Soo Line Motive, VE Jetfleck Elation, OCC Zamir, OCC Blueprint, VE-EDP Cut Right, Big Hills Value

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Senators put down markers for USDA conservation programs

— Farm bill debate

In preaching the emphasis of "voluntary, incentive-based" conservation programs at USDA, members of the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee on March 1 also put down some markers and red lines for conservation incentives in the next farm bill.

Leaders for USDA conservation and forestry programs testified before the committee, which continues to check off hearings for different parts of the farm bill.

Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), chairwoman of the committee, stressed the importance of senators moving to "pass the next farm bill with strong bipartisan support." She credited support lent to conservation and forestry through roughly $40 billion in combined funding under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). With that funding, Stabenow said, "We are finally able to address the backlog of farmers who want to be able to use these important conservation tools."

Sen. John Boozman (R-AR), ranking member of the committee, reiterated the need for "working lands conservation" and ensuring that programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) provide flexibility to deal with "producer-focused concerns" at the local level.

Boozman noted, "Cover crops might not work in dry climates," but capturing water, preventing erosion and providing wildlife habitat are equally as important as sequestering carbon and reducing greenhouse-gas emissions, Boozman said.

Boozman also stressed that the push for conservation should not mean Congress "take on risky proposals that endanger the safety net." He added, "Tying crop insurance to incentives for certain conservation practices—dictated by those in Washington, D.C.,—should be off the table so we can ensure this program continues to serve as a vital risk management tool for producers."

Those comments came after the Congressional Accountability Office last month issued a report recommending USDA add more conservation requirements or incentives for crop insurance and commodity programs.

A collection of 80 farm and environmental groups, the Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance, recently proposed providing more incentives for farmers to adopt cover crops and other climate-smart practices, possibly through "new crop-insurance policies and endorsements."

Stabenow asked Terry Cosby, chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), what more could be done to "identify practices that have a carbon benefit" for specialty crop producers as well as dairy, livestock and farmers impacted by drought in western states. Stabenow said she has heard from fruit and vegetable producers "who would like to do more" on climate-smart production.

Cosby highlighted the $19.5 billion in funding in the IRA for USDA conservation programs as a "historic, once-in-a-generation investment and opportunity" to address climate change.

The funding also will help deal with the backlog of producers who want to enroll in Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program, or conservation easement programs. Since the 2018 Farm Bill, Cosby said USDA has been able to fund about 30% of the applications for those programs. Cosby said EQIP alone had more than 100,000 applications last year. In mid-February, NRCS released $850 million to boost enrollment in some of its programs.

"The IRA is going to give us an opportunity to expand these programs," Cosby said.

CRP rental rates

Zach Ducheneaux, administrator for the Farm Service Agency (FSA), fielded questions about the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), which is authorized for 27 million acres, though about 23 million acres are in the program right now. Ducheneaux said enrollment is on the rise as USDA has enhanced rental payments for landowners who establish land cover in programs such as the grasslands component of CRP.

"We now have the program on an upward trajectory of enrollment," Ducheneaux said.

Ducheneaux had opposing conversations with senators over those CRP rental rates. Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) pointed to the historic drought in western states, adding he will sound like a "broken record" on those issues throughout the work on the farm bill. On CRP, Bennet said his farmers and landowners are being offered as low as $13-15 an acre in some counties "in the heart of the Dust Bowl region," while farmers in other areas of the country are getting $300 an acre.

"CRP rates need to better reflect the reality of the situation we are all confronting in the West," Bennet said.

Yet Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) said the Biden administration is taking actions that take more farmland out of production, arguing a conservative claim that the administration's plan to conserve 30% of land, "30x30" is impacting land access for producers.

Cosby told Grassley that conservation under the 30x30 program includes working lands that are part of USDA programs, though CRP has been part of that discussion.

Grassley also challenged USDA for boosting CRP rental rates with incentives for certain climate-smart practices. Those boosts in payments violate Congress' move to cap CRP rates at 85% of the county rental rates. The premiums to CRP rates "compete with farmers," Grassley said.

Regulatory headaches

Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA) said she has heard from farmers talking more about the regulatory burdens of enrolling in USDA conservation programs. "I'm just not going to participate because there is too much involved here," Ernst said, asking how USDA can streamline program enrollment.

Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE) followed up on a similar theme as Ernst. She pointed to both flooding and wildfire disasters in her state. Fischer said farmers were told to sign up for the Emergency Conservation Program, but producers faced paperwork headaches and a slow payment process getting that aid.

Ducheneaux agreed that the problem needs to be solved, adding that if farmers and livestock producers face problems enrolling in programs in their time of need, that's going to prevent them from being proactive and trying to use USDA conservation programs in the future.

"We really need to contemplate the cost of exclusion," Ducheneaux said.

Fischer also pressed for a commitment from Cosby to ensure livestock producers get an equal chance at the $8.45 billion in EQIP funds under the IRA bill. The farm bill requires livestock producers to get 50% of EQIP funding, but that language was not in the IRA.

> "Iowa has the most productive farmland in the world, and we should not be putting that land into permanent conservation."
>
> — Chuck Grassley

"Iowa has the most productive farmland in the world, and we should not be putting that land into permanent conservation," Grassley said.

Ducheneaux said FSA works with local county offices on the rental rates and also maintains the cap of enrolling under 25% of the acreage in a county. He also agreed with Grassley that CRP should "only be setting aside the most environmentally sensitive and marginal," as Grassley stressed.

"We try hard on this committee to be bipartisan and we work together to try to address noncontroversial issues," Fischer said. "Shouldn't USDA follow what the authorizing committee sets forth, no matter where the money is coming from?"

Cosby replied, "Whatever this committee decides, that's what we will follow." — **Chris Clayton, DTN ag policy editor**

