

INSIDE WLJ

AG BILL DISCUSSIONS — Sen. Jon Tester discussed a series of bills regarding packer concentration, negotiated cash trade, MCOOL and more with the National Farmers Union. **Page 4**

UKRAINE CONFLICT — Although Russia and Ukraine are not major U.S. export destinations, the conflict will have ripple effects for U.S. ag markets. **Page 16**

A LOOK BACK IN HISTORY

Tax season anxiety is fairly common, but a March 2004 *WLJ* article reported on an extreme case: "An interesting case of 'tax phobia' involved Douglas Kemmerer of Oldwick, NJ. ... The issue was whether the taxpayer was liable for the additions to tax for failure to timely file returns. ... He was examined by a psychiatrist, a Dr. Greenfield, in preparation for the trial. The psychiatrist diagnosed him as having a simple phobia of filing tax returns. In Dr. Greenfield's opinion, the taxpayer's infirmity prevented him from filing tax returns and also prevented him from hiring others to prepare his tax returns. Dr. Greenfield suggested no treatment for this condition." Unfortunately for Kemmerer, the diagnosis did not hold up in court.

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CA ag faces the second year of zero-water allocation

— CFB expresses disappointment

With California entering its third year of drought, the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) announced initial 2022 water supply allocations for Central Valley Project (CVP) contractors would be minimal to zero based on reservoir storage.

The BOR announced a zero-water allocation for water districts north and south of the California Delta, affecting farmers across the region. Municipal and industrial users who receive CVP water are allocated 25 percent of their historical water use.

Currently, reservoir levels are at historic lows for this time of year, and without significant rainfall, they will continue to decrease.

"We began the 2022 water year with low CVP reservoir storage and some weather whiplash, starting with a record day of Sacramento rainfall in October and snow-packed December storms to a very dry January and February, which are on pace to be the driest on record," said BOR Regional Director Ernest Conant in a statement.

Conant said the rains early in

the season fell on the American River basin and not in the upper Sacramento River basin, which supplies the Shasta Reservoir. According to BOR, the California Department of Water Resources' forecast update from Feb. 1-15 shows a total decrease in projected annual inflow to the Shasta, Oroville, Folsom and New Melones reservoirs of 1.2 million acre-feet (an acre-foot is 325,851 gallons).

Conant said water reservoir levels are 27 percent of capacity and 52 percent of the 15-year average.

"We've got our work cut out for us this year; strengthened collaboration and coordination among agency partners, water and power users, and stakeholders will be instrumental," Conant said.

Last February, BOR started with a 5 percent allocation for agriculture users and 55 percent for municipal users. However, a dry spring coupled with a lower-than-average snowpack resulted in little to no runoff, and BOR reduced the allocation to the same as the agency is starting with this year.

"We're getting a certain amount of criticism from the agricultural community for these low alloca-

tions, but we have to be prudent and cautious with these very dry conditions," Conant said. "If it doesn't rain in March, it's possible it could get worse."

Conant said certain areas in the

Central Valley would receive some water and some areas would receive none, so farmers will have to rely on groundwater if it's available.

See H2O on page 16



Jesse Pluim, BLM

California farmers are likely to receive zero-water allocations from the Central Valley Project for the second consecutive year. Pictured here, the Panoche Hills, offering views of the San Joaquin Valley in California.

Enviros want Northern Rockies wolf population listed under ESA

— Follows ESA wolf listing

Although a federal judge ruled in early February the gray wolf would once again be listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the ruling did not include the Northern Rockies wolf population. Now, environmental groups are seeking immediate protections for the wolves.

Protections were removed for

the demographic by Congress in 2011. The population includes gray wolves in Montana, Wyoming and Idaho, along with eastern Oregon, eastern Washington and a corner of Utah. The states have authority to manage their own wolf populations.

A handful of conservation groups petitioned the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

(USFWS) on March 1. The petition seeks emergency listing of the gray wolf in the Northern Rocky Mountains, claiming "Idaho and Montana have drastically altered their wolf management laws and regulations to push populations below viable levels. Idaho, for instance, allows for essentially unregulated and unlimited wolf killing."

See ESA on page 21

National Livestock Group announces acquisition of 100-year-old WLJ

— Business as usual

The National Livestock Group of Oklahoma City, OK, has announced its acquisition of the nation's leading publication for western livestock news, *Western Livestock Journal*. Under National Livestock's

direction, the 100-year-old publication will gain opportunities for tremendous growth in the livestock news industry, while remaining the local producer's leading source for accurate and unbiased livestock news.

"We congratulate *Western Livestock Journal* on their

contribution to the industry for the past 100 years," said Danny Jones with National Livestock. "We are looking forward to being a part of the future of *WLJ*, and we believe the firm foundation built has paved the way for expanded service to producers."

Western Livestock Jour-

nal was established in 1922 by Nelson Crow and remained family owned through Crow Publications for three generations. Under new ownership, the publication will remain a pillar of the industry, with the same emphasis on customer service and unbiased, fair reporting.

"It was a tough decision to end the 100-year legacy of the Crow family publishing *Western Livestock Journal*," said Pete Crow, former owner. "However, it was one that had to be made—there is no fourth generation to operate the business. National Livestock will be a good steward of *WLJ*, and I

will continue to write my column as long as I'm relevant to the livestock industry."

Western Livestock Journal LLC will continue with business as usual, striving to keep its readers well informed and up to date on

See WLJ on page 28

Market continues to trade cautiously; futures lower

Amid the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the cattle market continues to trade cautiously. Futures sank lower, except for corn, which continues to head higher with each progressing day of the conflict.

"The live cattle contracts are running lower, the cash cattle market isn't seeing much action and with tensions in Ukraine only worsening, the market will likely continue to panic in this way until something gives with Russia/Ukraine," remarked ShayLe Stewart, DTN livestock analyst, in her Thursday midday comments.

Live cattle futures lost several dollars over the week. The April contract lost nearly \$4 to close at \$135.15, and the June contract lost \$3.45 to close at \$135.15.

Through Thursday, cash trade was steady but limited in volume compared to earlier weeks' trade. As of Thursday morning, about 62,000 head had sold. Live cattle sold between \$140-143, averaging closer to \$140.50. Dressed steers sold between \$224-228, averaging about \$224.50.

Cash trade through the last week of February totaled 68,349 head, quite a few thousand head lower than the past couple of weeks. Live steers averaged \$143.17, and dressed steers averaged \$227.18.

The national weekly direct beef type price distribution for the week of Feb. 21 to Feb. 28 was the following on a live basis:

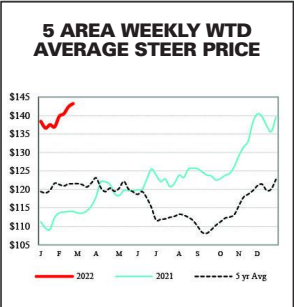
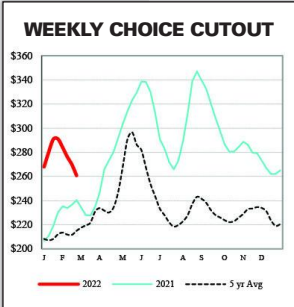
- Negotiated purchases: \$143.26.
- Formula net purchases: \$144.06.
- Forward contract net purchases: \$142.54.
- Negotiated grid net purchases: \$142.38.

On a dressed basis:

- Negotiated purchases: \$227.02.
- Formula net purchases: \$227.
- Forward contract net purchases: \$214.36.
- Negotiated grid net purchases: \$224.79.

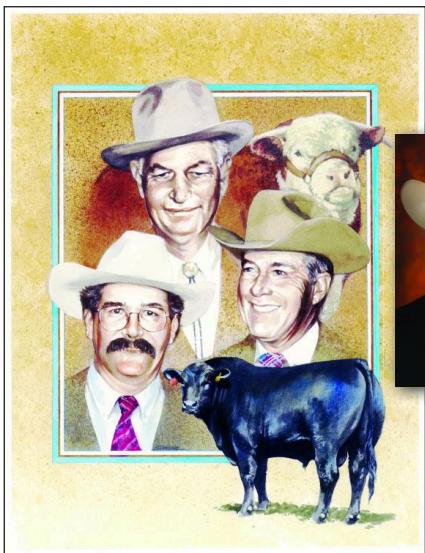
Slaughter through Thursday was estimated at 493,000 head, about 15,000 head higher than the same time a week earlier. Projected slaughter for the last full week of February is 647,000 head. Actual slaughter

See MARKETS on page 35



LIVE STEERS	DRESSED STEERS	CME FEEDER
\$140.48	\$224.92	\$157.78
WEEK ENDING: 3-3-22		

COMMENTS



CROW

Time for change

It was a difficult decision, but it had to be made. After 100 years of publishing the *Western Livestock Journal* and turning 65, I made the decision to sell *WLJ*. It took me a long time to rationalize this decision, but I'm good with it in my heart and soul. It was a big job to build and maintain the Crow legacy and *WLJ*. I'm the third generation of the Crow family to publish the weekly newspaper, and there is no fourth generation to carry on.

So, all of the rumors you have heard are true. I sold the business, and National Livestock Group in Oklahoma City, OK, is the new owner. I had several offers, but I wanted to make sure that *WLJ* would carry on with a responsible steward: someone who understands the cattle industry and our values.

This doesn't mean that I am going away; I will continue to write my column if I'm relevant. And I expect you all, our devoted subscribers and friends, to tell me if I ever go off the rails. There is no way that I could just walk away from *WLJ*.

Getting *WLJ* to 100 years old was one of my major goals, and we accomplished that one. Now, it's time to hand over the reins and let the young leaders in our business take over. From a technological point of view, I'm not the guy to take *WLJ* into the digital world—this aspect of our business moves too fast for me.

The good thing is I'm not going anywhere. I will continue to go to cattle industry events and sales. I will continue to be here and consult with the new owners as we go forward and accomplish a new set of goals.

National Livestock was the best suited new owner. I felt they understood the unique character of our business and would keep the brand going well into the future. I was honored they felt *WLJ* was a brand worth owning, which makes me feel good about our work over the years.

My grandfather started *WLJ* in the Los Angeles Stock Yards in 1922. The Union Stock Yard and Transit Company bankrolled Gramps to start a market sheet for the meat producers in the West. He was one of the first USDA market reporters in St. Joseph, MO. My dad, Dick Crow, grew up in the business and took it over from Gramps in 1967. Then I grew up in the business and took it over from Dick in 1992. It's been a life's work for the Crow tribe.

There will be no drastic changes in content, news coverage or personnel. We'll still be running things like a family business and maintaining close contact with our readers, whom I consider as friends and family. I've been on many of your ranches over the years and hope to continue to make ranch calls because that is what I like the most.

I'm excited for *WLJ* going forward; National Livestock is a dynamic group that has invested in livestock marketing assets. They own several livestock markets, and they have the resources and skills to attract good people into the industry.

They have a good handle on the digital technology that is engulfing our industry. I'm certain they will bring new products and services into the business to inform readers and help you market your livestock for maximum profit. They are livestock marketers of the best kind. They are good, honest and fair people to work with, which was an important point for me.

We will continue doing our ranch tours—our next one is this May in Kentucky, and we have one room left. This move is a simple shift in ownership; operations will be the same as you're accustomed to. Service will be better, but I still haven't tamed the post office. — **PETE CROW**



KAY'S KORNER

Export data for red meat shipments in January is due to be released Wednesday. The data, which is compiled extremely well each month by the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF), is likely to show again how important beef exports are to the value of live cattle.

That value in 2021 per head of fed slaughter equated to a record \$407.22, up a remarkable 35 percent from 2020. That was because beef exports greatly exceeded previous volume and value records in 2021, surpassing \$10 billion for the first time. This means they almost doubled in value in 10 years. Exports in 2012 totaled \$5.511 billion in value.

December beef exports totaled 121,429 metric tons (mt), up 1 percent from a year ago, while value climbed 33 percent to \$991.8 million, the third largest month on record, says USMEF. These results pushed 2021 volume to 1.44 million mt, up 15 percent from a year ago and 7 percent above the previous record set in 2018.

Export value soared to \$10.58 billion, up 38 percent from 2020 and shattering the previous record (also from 2018) by 27 percent. Exports accounted for 15 percent of total beef production and 12.8 percent for muscle cuts only, up significantly from the respective 2020 ratios of 13.5 percent and 11.3 percent, says USMEF.

The beef export results were truly remarkable, especially considering the COVID-related obstacles in the global food service sector and all the supply-side and logistical challenges faced by the U.S. industry, noted USMEF President and CEO Dan Halstrom last month. Obviously, the U.S.' large Asian markets accounted for much of the growth, but it really took broad-based global demand to reach these impressive levels.

This success story is not just about Korea, Japan and China, but also a strong performance in Taiwan, excellent growth in Central and South America and a rebound in Mexico and Southeast Asia, he said.

Another remarkable milestone in 2021 was that beef exports to South Korea, Japan and China/Hong Kong each topped \$2 billion, with Korea becoming the highest value market for U.S. beef for the first time. Japan remained the leading volume destination for U.S. beef exports in 2021 at 320,737 mt, up 5 percent from 2020 and the second largest volume of the post-BSE era, said USMEF.

Export value climbed 22 percent to a record \$2.376 billion

EXPORTS ARE HUGE SUCCESS STORY

but finished a close second to Korea. The U.S. industry remains concerned about Japan's import safeguard, which resulted in a higher tariff rate being imposed on U.S. beef in late March and early April last year. Without an adjustment to the safeguard threshold, a similar scenario is possible in 2022 and highly likely in years to come, said USMEF.

Another huge achievement was the exceptional growth in exports to China. I remember being skeptical a few years ago when predictions were made about the country becoming a \$2 billion market for U.S. beef. Now, that is close to a reality. Capitalizing on the market access gains included in the U.S.-China Phase One Economic and Trade Agreement, beef exports to China/Hong Kong also broke the \$2 billion mark at \$2.09 billion, up 114 percent from 2020, said USMEF.

Volume climbed 87 percent to 240,827 mt. Direct exports to China, which started to gain significant traction in mid-2020, jumped 346 percent in volume (190,803 mt) and 413 percent in value (\$1.59 billion). U.S. beef accounted for 6 percent of China's total imports in volume and 11 percent in value. Grain-fed beef now accounts for 11 percent of China's imports, with the U.S. as the largest supplier, providing 68 percent of China's grain-fed imports, said USMEF.

Beef exports, however, are likely to ease this year because of tighter supplies and higher U.S. prices, says USDA. In its Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Outlook 2022 report, USDA forecast total beef exports to decline to 3.27 billion pounds. U.S. exports are likely to be pressured by tightening domestic beef supplies, and the resulting higher prices may make U.S. beef less price competitive, it said. Furthermore, increased beef production in export-oriented countries such as Australia and Brazil will likely increase competition in several markets.

Variety meats were another export success story last year and showed why byproduct values remain high. Often referred to by packers as the fifth quarter of a cattle carcass, the combined value of 16 items often approaches or exceeds \$200 per head. This is for a slaughter steer reported daily by USDA, using a 1,400 lb. live weight. Many of those 16 items have no domestic market outlet, making their exports vitally important in adding value to fed cattle. — **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*.)



GUEST OPINION

Remember the story from the Bible where Jesus turned the water into wine? The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) can also perform miracles—turning dryland into a wetland under the Clean Water Act (CWA).

In fact, according to the EPA, a “wetland” can be private property that has no surface water but has water beneath the surface that flows under a paved street into a small man-made ditch that goes past other homes and eventually flows into a lake (a navigable water). Because the EPA has defined this dryland as a wetland, placing dirt on that property is regulated by the agency.

A case is now before the U.S. Supreme Court to decide whether the federal government can determine that dryland is a wetland or a “water of the United States” (WOTUS) under the CWA.

In April 2007, the Sackett family broke ground to build a home on a lot they purchased in a residential subdivision. The lot is bordered by a county-paved road on one side and residential houses on the other three sides. After the houses, there is a lake. Shortly after they began construction, the EPA sent investigators to inspect the job site for CWA compliance.

Without doing any of the technical measurements required under the law, the EPA announced that the Sacketts were violating the CWA by putting additional dirt on their land without a federal permit.

The EPA then sent the Sacketts an order, stating their lot was a “federally regulated wetland,” and commanded them to restore the lot to its natural condition and fence it for three years or face tens of thousands of dollars in daily fines. The EPA order was based on the property being adjacent to a small ditch across the street that eventually drained into a navigable lake.

TURNING YOUR ‘DRYLAND’ INTO A ‘WETLAND’?

The U.S. Supreme Court has now taken this case. The landowners are arguing the court should clarify its decision on a prior CWA case from 2006. In that case, four Supreme Court justices held that the CWA only grants federal authority over a WOTUS if the wetland exhibits a relatively permanent water flow, there is a continuous surface water connection between the wetland and a relatively permanent body of water, and it is difficult to determine where the

wetland begins and the permanent navigable water ends (called the “connected waters” test).

In contrast, four justices argued the definition of a WOTUS should be determined by the federal government as the CWA “experts.” The tie was broken by former Justice Anthony Kennedy, who said he would define a WOTUS to include a wetland if it bears a “substantial nexus” to navigable water.

Based on the Supreme Court split, every president has issued

a markedly different rule defining a “WOTUS.” Former President Barack Obama expanded the authority of the EPA over private property justified by the “substantial nexus” test. Former President Donald Trump repealed Obama's rule and developed his own definition based on the “connected waters” test. Now, President Joe Biden is writing his own rule, likely favoring greater authority for the federal government to govern the use of private property.

The ruling soon to be issued by the U.S. Supreme Court will hopefully give landowners an answer as to what lands should be federally regulated under the CWA. This firm will be supporting the private landowners in this case because while I believe that Jesus did and can perform miracles, under the U.S. Constitution, the federal government should not have that same power. — **Karen Budd-Falen, Budd-Falen Law Offices LLC**

The ruling soon to be issued by the U.S. Supreme Court will hopefully give landowners an answer as to what lands should be federally regulated under the CWA.

Letters to the Editor: Letters for publication should 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 Editorial, 7355 E. Orchard Road #300, Greenwood Village, CO 80111.

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GUEST OPINION

White Oak Pastures is a six-generation, 156-year-old family farm in Bluffton, GA. My family, the Harris family, has operated the same farm in Early County since 1866. Settled by Capt. James Edward Harris, the farm has come full circle, from a polycultural production system in the 1800s, to a monocultural cattle farm in the 1950s and then back to a polycultural system in the early 2000s.

We take pride in farming practices that focus on regenerative land management, humane animal husbandry and revitalizing our rural community. This type of management, which we refer to as “radically traditional farming,” creates products that are better for our land, our livestock and our village. We are fiercely proud of our zero waste production system that utilizes every part of the animals we pasture raise and hand butcher on our farm.

Regenerative agriculture

In the mid-1990s, Will Harris (fourth generation, my dad) became disgusted with the excesses of the commodity market. There was no burning bush moment that led him to rethink this commodity production system, but he speaks about how the unintended consequences of commodity farming are so often discounted.

The changes Dad made on our farm were incremental, starting with giving up chemical fertilizer and confinement feeding to farm more regeneratively and in tune with nature.

He decided to build his own brand, White Oak Pastures, to market the livestock raised in Bluffton. In those early days, we were able to find processing locally, but off-farm, which gave us the opportunity to gauge demand for grass-fed beef and incrementally find partners for our product.

In the early 2000s, we were blessed that our product caught traction, and Dad was successful in launching our grass-fed beef in Publix Super Markets and Whole Foods Market locations.

Processing on the farm

As we grew, processing became a bottleneck in our system, so Dad took the risk of building on-farm, USDA-inspected processing for our livestock. While it was never the plan to vertically integrate our production system, when we look back, it was certainly the thing to do.

While our context was to simply raise livestock, it became apparent that creating an infrastructure between us as farmers and “them” as customers was necessary to be successful.

Building processing on the farm allowed us to diversify the species we raise with confidence. Today, we pasture raise and hand butcher 10 species of livestock: cattle, goats, sheep, chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, guineas, hogs and rabbits. We also collect pasture-raised eggs and grow certified organic vegetables. We make leather products and pet chews from animal hides and make tallow skin care products from fat. We believe our customers appreciate our artisan, small-batch products.

One step at a time

Looking back through our evolution, we never formed a big-picture vision. We just took one step at a time to build resilience into our system. And every one of these steps has been bumpy but worth taking. Pain brings change, and change is hard.

PRACTICING ‘RADICALLY TRADITIONAL FARMING’

But, my grandfather, Will Bell Harris (third generation), always said: “If you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what you’ve always gotten.” We know what we have done in the past is simply not enough. We have been blessed with good, hard work to do and the strength to do it.

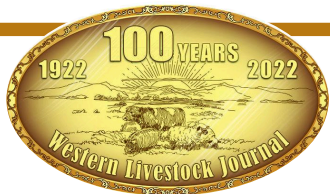
Focus on nature’s cycles

We are focused on raising food in a cyclical system that focuses on restarting the cycles of nature. We call restarting nature’s cycles “regenerative agriculture.” Cyclical thinking is the opposite of linear production, which are systems that are highly commoditized, centralized and industrialized. We believe that products raised and processed in this regenerative way are better for the animals, better for the land and better for the community.

In establishing this nonlinear system, we’ve been successful in building resilience into our farming practices. Over 170 full-time employees work together each day to raise, harvest, butcher and ship the meats, poultry, eggs, vegetables and zero waste items produced on our farm. Rebuilding our rural community was an unplanned yet positive consequence of bringing processing to the farm. We are grateful to have made our little town a nice little destination.

Resilient decisions aren’t always the efficient and profitable ones. In fact, they rarely are. So many of us, myself included, tend to get in the weeds with statistics, measuring and controlling, when the answer often can be found when you ask: “What is nature telling you?” — **Jenni Harris, fifth-generation member of the Harris family at White Oak Pastures**

(Previously published by Noble Research Institute.)



Oct. 13, 2003, Vol. 82, No. 52

Property rights case slated for trial

Judge Loren Smith of the United States Court of Federal Claims recently confirmed a May 3, 2004, trial date for the second phase of Hage v. United States. The second phase will determine if the property owned by plaintiff Wayne Hage, as determined in the January 29, 2001, Final Opinion issued by the court, was taken by the U.S. through grazing and environmental regulations.

The controversial case began thirteen years ago when Wayne and Jean Hage filed a landmark takings case after the actions of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) eliminated Hage’s ability to continue his livestock operation in central Nevada. It is the first case of its kind to assert ranchers’ private property rights on federal lands by filing a takings case in this prominent Court.

Although the government’s position is Hage did not have any property rights and was simply privileged to graze on the federal lands, the court ruled differently. In its final opinion on the status of the property rights, it determined Hage owned significant property rights on the federal lands,

importantly the water rights, ditch rights-of-way, and access to those rights.

In a later ruling, after USFS argued the case should be dismissed because Hage no longer held a valid grazing permit and could not use the property, the court again ruled against the government. It concluded failure to hold a grazing permit did not extinguish the value of his property rights, which may be compensable.

Conference scheduled

Stewards of the Range, the non-profit organization supporting the case, is holding a conference in Reno, NV, October 24. A portion of the program is devoted to understanding the precedents established by the case, so other landowners can learn to defend their rights, as determined by the court.

Featured speakers are the attorneys litigating the case, Ladd Bedford and Mike VanZandt. Other topics at the conference include updates on the LU Ranching Water Rights Case, the constitutional challenge to the ESA, and an in depth analysis of the dangers of conservation easements. Additional speakers include Wayne Hage, Fred Kelly Grant, Paul Terrill, Tim Lowry, and Frank Duran. — **WLJ**

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Tester says Senate will debate mandated cash trade, new packer watchdog bills

Speaking to members of the National Farmers Union (NFU) on Feb. 27, Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT) said Senate leaders have told him they are willing to bring a pair of bills to the floor this spring to tackle the power of meatpackers in the marketplace, including a bill that would mandate a certain level of negotiated cash trade by large packers.

A farmer himself, with roots in NFU, Tester told members about a series of

bills he is championing to tackle corporate consolidation. Tester had the perfect audience for his message challenging the influence of corporate consolidation on agriculture. NFU has been championing its "Fairness for Farmers" campaign to highlight corporate consolidation in agriculture and raise the visibility around those issues.

NFU President Rob Larew said some people may be getting tired of hearing

about fairness in competition issues, but NFU wants to turn up the volume on the topic, taking the message more to consumers.

"We know that consumers are hurting; we know they understand that there are problems out there," Larew said. Pointing to comments President Joe Biden said in a video message to NFU, Larew said, "As the president said, we can eliminate exploitation by bringing fairness back to the market-

place."

Tester highlighted he has a "suite of bills" to add more transparency to livestock markets and "reintroduce capitalism into the marketplace" for farmers and ranchers. "We need to make production agriculture for family farmers vibrant once again," Tester said.

Tester said he expects the Senate will take up a bill introduced by himself, Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE), Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and

a bipartisan mix of 14 other senators, at least nine of whom are members of the Senate Agriculture Committee. The bill would require USDA to set regional mandatory minimum cash trade for fed cattle purchased by packers for slaughter.

Speaking about the bill, Tester said, "It's really complicated, and it's really important. But what we've seen the packers do is—the packers today are manipulating the cash price. And manipulating in such a way that is forcing down formulas and forward contracts," Tester said. He added, "So it's a win-win-win deal for them, and it takes the farmers and makes them less profitable."

Grassley, Fischer and Tester have been the loudest advocates in the Senate for finding ways to force packers to rely less on contracted cattle and buy more cattle on the open market. The issue becomes regional because certain states have little negotiated cash trade, as a dominant packer in the state may contract with a handful of large feeders. Such is the case in Colorado, where JBS relies little on cash sales to supply its packing plant.

Tester told DTN the negotiated cash trade bill will simply boost the cash markets to a level that reduces the risk of price manipulation. "And if somebody else has got a better idea, I'm all ears," Tester said. "But the bottom line is what's really going on right now with Big Four meatpackers is ruining rural America, and it's really having some negative impacts. And time is of the essence here. We have to get after this because we're going to lose a lot of ranchers if we don't."

The second bill Tester said would get a floor debate would create a special investigations unit at USDA on competition issues in the meatpacking industry. The special investigator would have tools such as subpoena power to investigate possible violations of the Packers and Stockyards Act. The special investigator would work as a liaison between USDA and the Department of Justice.

"This bill would give subpoena powers, give the ability to show if they are doing any antitrust activities and hold them accountable," Tester said.

"I've gotten a commitment from leadership in the United States Senate to take the special investigators act and the spot-pricing bills to the floor, hopefully before spring," he added.

Ag committee conflicts

So far, neither bill has gotten out of the Senate Ag-

riculture Committee. Republican staff on the committee for Ranking Member John Boozman (R-AR) have been asking for outside studies to challenge the idea that more negotiated cash trade would raise prices for producers. After hearing some concerns raised at their annual meeting in January, delegates for the American Farm Bureau Federation reversed their policy to oppose any mandates on negotiated cash trade.

Tester said Boozman is a friend, and he's "not going to pick a fight with John," but Tester said committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) has said there will be a hearing and a vote on the bills.

"And if we have a hearing and a vote, we'll get these bills out of committee," Tester told DTN. "I've already been told by leadership that they're willing to take these bills to the floor because they think it's good for rural America, and they think it's good for the consumer. And so it will happen. I'm very confident about that."

MCOOL

Also preaching to the choir, Tester said he has legislation to bring back mandatory country of origin labeling (MCOOL) for meat, which was revoked by Congress in 2015 after the U.S. lost a World Trade Organization case to Canada and Mexico. Tester said he lives within 60 miles of Canada, and it's common to see "Product of Canada" labels on food or other products.

"All I'm saying is we raise some great beef in this country," Tester said. "All I want is 'Product of USA' on it. We will win this fight."

Right to repair

Tester also touched on another bill of his that would require equipment manufacturers to provide software to farmers to allow them to fix their own farm machinery. The senator noted he hasn't been able to get bipartisan backing for that bill yet.

"All we're asking the manufacturers to do is give farmers and ranchers the ability to do what they've always been able to do," Tester said.

He added, "We're not asking the software to jump up the horsepower. We just want to know the software so when a sensor goes out, we know which sensor it is. And we can go out with a three-quarter inch wrench and pop that sensor out and go buy a new one and pop it back in, and our combine doesn't sit out there in the field. Go buy the new one from the back end." —Chris Clayton, DTN ag policy editor



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Biden mentions food, competition, war in State of the Union speech

In a speech that focused heavily on the war in Ukraine, President Joe Biden still touched on issues important to agriculture, such as competition, export problems and infrastructure, during his State of the Union speech on March 1.

Biden talked briefly about agriculture as he advocated ways to bring down inflation and lower costs.

"I'm a capitalist, but capitalism without competition isn't capitalism. It's exploitation—and it drives up prices," the president said. "When corporations don't

have to compete, their profits go up, your prices go up and small businesses and family farmers and ranchers go under."

That was a theme Biden carried into the beginning of the year when the first event at the White House in 2022 was an event challenging the livestock markets and meatpacking industry.

The president then addressed issues with ocean carriers moving goods in and out of the country. Biden called to end immunity of ocean shippers from federal antitrust laws.

"During the pandemic, these foreign-owned companies raised prices by as much as 1,000 percent and made record profits," Biden said. "Tonight, I'm announcing a crackdown on these companies overcharging American businesses and consumers."

That brief mention drew bipartisan praise from a couple of members of the House Agriculture Committee. Reps. Jim Costa (D-CA-16) and Dusty Johnson (R-SD-At large) each plugged legislation they had been advocating for in this vein. Costa said the bipartisan Ocean Shipping Antitrust Enforcement Act he introduced would accomplish that goal and address unfair practices that harm American businesses.

"I am committed to working with the Biden administration to ensure fair trade practices in the ocean carrier industry, which is a crucial step in lowering prices for American consumers and creating a level playing field for American exporters," Costa said.

"With a major supply chain disruption because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we must hold foreign shipping companies accountable for their actions that harm American businesses and make everyday goods more expensive. I am proud of the president's commitment to this issue and urge my fellow congressional colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation."

Johnson said a similar bill seeks the same goal. The House already had passed the Ocean Shipping Reform Act overwhelmingly last year, "and President Biden's remarks at the State of the Union signify he's ready to sign what Congress sends him to address the supply chain crisis. Congress should strike while the iron's hot and pass these commonsense reforms."

Later in the speech, Biden pointed to the passage of the bipartisan infrastructure bill, noting that American roads, bridges and airports have fallen from being the best on Earth to 13th in the world. Biden called the bill "the most sweeping investment to rebuild America in history."

"This was a bipartisan effort, and I want to thank the members of both parties who worked to make it happen," he added. "It is going to transform America and put us on a path to win the economic competition of the 21st century that we face

with the rest of the world—particularly with China.

"As I've told Xi Jinping, it is never a good bet to bet against the American people."

Biden said the bill will create millions of jobs to focus on "modernizing roads, airports, ports and waterways all across America."

He added the bill also will provide affordable high-speed internet for every American, including "urban, suburban, rural and Tribal communities."

Highlighting the president's emphasis on the Ukraine invasion in his speech, Chandler Goule, CEO of the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG), said the conflict has caused volatility in the grain markets and increases in prices for key inputs such as fuel and fertilizer.

"With Russia and Ukraine among the top wheat-producing and exporting countries, we have seen large market fluctuations as the conflict continues," Goule said. "While we have concerns about volatility, we are deeply concerned about geopolitical stability and the needless suffering happening in Ukraine."

"The administration also highlighted its ongoing pandemic response and how it has been tackling current supply chain issues. However, supply chain issues and the availability of inputs continue to present challenges for farmers. From NAWG's perspective, the administration and members of Congress must continue to work on a multifaceted approach to resolve these ongoing challenges," Goule said.

Republicans after the speech laid problems of inflation at Biden's feet, saying the president has not done enough to help Americans. Rep. Glenn "GT" Thompson (R-PA-15), ranking member of the House Agriculture Committee, said "Between surging input costs, skyrocketing fertilizer prices, the highest inflation in 40 years and endless regulatory uncertainty, the Biden administration's failing policies remain out of touch with the challenges and everyday needs of farmers, ranchers, foresters and consumers."

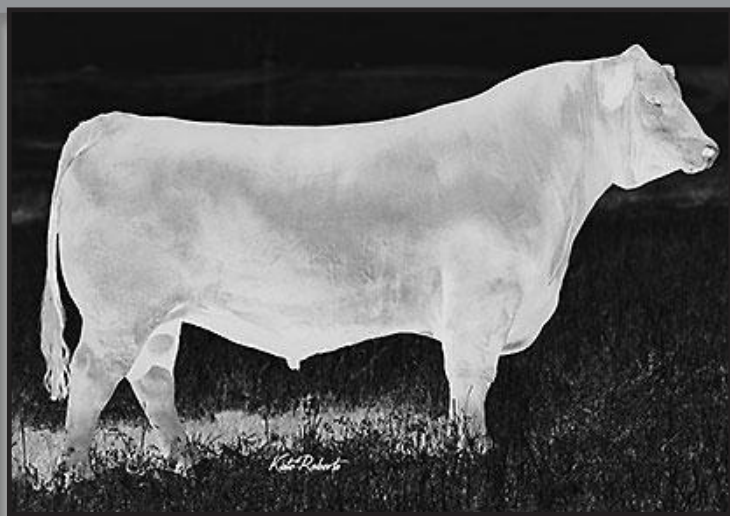
Thompson continued, "Rather than tackling these issues, President Biden continues to bend to the will of the most vocal progressives, demanding policies that yield no relief and contribute to substantial burdens on American taxpayers. Farm families need relief, reliable markets and steadfast leadership."

"President Biden missed the mark this evening, providing a great deal of Washington speak and lip service to boilerplate proposals. Despite these shortcomings, I remain committed to working with my colleagues to provide genuine relief to the hardworking men and women who feed and fuel our country." — **Chris Clayton, DTN ag policy editor; and Jerry Hagstrom, DTN political correspondent**



President Joe Biden, flanked by Vice President Kamala Harris, left, and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA-12), right, delivers the State of the Union address.

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New antibiotic restrictions soon to become reality

In 2017, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) began implementing Guidance for Industry (GFI) #213, otherwise known as the veterinary feed directive. Implementation of the veterinary feed directive focused on veterinary oversight of medically important antibiotics delivered to livestock via feed and/or water, leaving a significant loophole for products that were available over-the-counter (OTC) by other dosage forms.

Because of this, on June 11, 2021, FDA quietly published GFI #263, which put in motion the framework to

remove any remaining medically important antimicrobials from OTC marketing channels, closing this loophole.

GFI #263 recommends for sponsors of medically important antimicrobial drugs that continue to be available OTC and approved for use in animals (companion and food producing), regardless of delivery mechanism, to voluntarily bring these products under veterinary oversight or prescription marketing status.

These product labels will now contain the prescription statement: "Caution:

Federal law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian."

While very little information about GFI #263 was aimed toward livestock producers, this may have significant impacts on the way in which livestock owners are able to access antibiotic therapy for their animals.

While this change does not require the purchase of products from a veterinarian, going forward, producers will be legally required to obtain a prescription from a licensed veterinarian with whom the producer has a valid veterinarian-

client-patient relationship (VCPR).

What this means for many producers is that products they may have purchased from the local feed-store, farm supply or local co-op may no longer be on those store shelves.

Much like when the veterinary feed directive was put in place in 2017, some of these businesses may simply pull these products from store shelves and decline to offer products, as they do not have the framework in place to meet the legal burden of acting as a "pharmacy," which requires the ability to review veteri-

nary authorized prescriptions and track refills of those prescription products. For those that do continue to stock these products on their shelves, producers will have to produce a prescription prior to purchasing.

Those producers who already have a VCPR in place and purchase their animal health products through their veterinary office or who purchase through other distributors under an existing prescription system will likely notice little change in their ability to source these products.

However, those producers that don't consult with a veterinarian on a regular basis will need to establish a valid VCPR prior to purchasing these products as they start to disappear from OTC access. While the definition of a valid VCPR does vary from state to state, Nebraska's definition of a valid VCPR is outlined in the Nebraska Veterinary Medicine and Surgery Practice Act as follows:

- The veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making clinical judgments regarding the health of the animal and the need for medical treatment, and the client has agreed to follow the veterinarian's instructions.

- The veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the animal to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animal. This means that the veterinarian has recently seen and is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal by virtue of an examination of the animal or by medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal is kept.

- The veterinarian is readily available or has arranged for emergency coverage and for follow-up evaluation in the event of adverse reactions or the failure of the treatment regimen.

Furthermore, Nebraska Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) recommends that you have a written VCPR form filled out with your herd veterinarian and that you get a copy of all documented prescriptions. These records should be maintained for a minimum of two years. Nebraska BQA offers a VCPR form on their website (bqa.unl.edu) under the "resource library" tab that producers can print off and fill out with their veterinarian. This VCPR form should be updated or reviewed annually.

So, to the nitty gritty, what products should producers expect to see these changes in, and when will this happen?

The following are some products that will be seeing label changes to a prescription-only status:

- **Oxytetracyclines** — Injectables: Liqueamycin LA-200, Noromycin 300 LA, Bio-Mycin 200, Agri-mycin 200, etc. Boluses: Terramycin Scours Tablets and OXY 500 Calf Boluses.
- **Penicillins** — Injectables: Penicillin Injectable, Dura-Pen, Pro-Pen-G, Combi-Pen 48, etc. Intra-

mammary tubes: Masti-Clear, Go-dry and Albadyr Plus.

- **Sulfa-based antibiotics** — Injectables: Di-Methox 40 percent and SulfMed 40 percent. Boluses: Albon, Sustain III Cattle & Calf Boluses, Supra Sulfa III Cattle & Calf Boluses.

- **Tylosin** — Injectables: Tylan 50 and Tylan 200

- **Cephapirin, cephalixin benzathine** — Intramammary tubes: ToDAY and ToMORROW.

When GFI #263 was published on June 11, 2021, it was structured with a two-year phase-in for manufacturers of these products to make label changes and come into compliance with the guidance so that they would be able to continue marketing their products without interruption. All products covered under GFI #263 are to be removed from OTC availability by June 11, 2023.

The expectation is that producers will see familiar OTC products start to disappear from store shelves over the next 14 months as manufacturers finalize label changes and refine their marketing and distribution channels to assure compliance with prescription requirements.

It is important to remember that these critical products are not being removed from the marketplace, but instead being brought under veterinary oversight in order to combat overuse/misuse due to OTC access.

Furthermore, producers should not stock up on these products to avoid needing a prescription once this change takes effect. Again, these products will still be readily available. Animal health products have expiration dates and are sensitive to storage time and conditions. Purchasing large quantities of animal health products may lead producers to have an excess of products unused by the date of the product's expiration. Products used after the expiration date are less effective and may not work as intended and may lead to higher incidences of treatment failure.

Disposal of expired antimicrobials can present challenges as well. In the long run, it is easier and safer to purchase products only when needed under the guidance of a veterinarian. Additionally, this guidance affects only medically important antibiotic products. Antiparasitics, injectable and oral nutritional supplements, oral probiotics/prebiotics and topical nonantibiotic treatments will not be affected and will remain available through OTC marketing channels just as before.

Now more than ever, producers need to seek out and establish a VCPR with a trusted veterinarian to provide input on antibiotic selection for their operation so that the best treatment options can be selected, with antibiotic stewardship, animal welfare and livestock economics all important decision-making factors. — **Becky Funk, DVM, Nebraska Extension specialist**

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Increasing capacity for care in the face of calving season

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For example, three people may be able to provide adequate care to 300 calving heifers in good weather on a certain operation. However, in the event of a storm, the manager may have determined that one more person, space to keep five additional calves warm and training one more of the existing staff members to tube-feed a newborn calf would be necessary to continue operating effectively. Overwhelming an operation's capacity for care can rapidly lead to frustrated people and deteriorating animal health.

To prevent this, the manager in the example might be able to act now to line up someone to help if the weather turns, find the extra equipment needed to house and rewarm five more calves, and train one more of the existing staff members to tube-feed a newborn calf. Creatively increasing seasonal labor could be as extensive as hiring full calving season help or as simple as finding a neighbor that has a different calving season than your operation and discussing a labor trade. Identifying and preventing these types of bottlenecks in a system can reduce animal health problems down the road.

Another opportunity to increase capacity for care is remaining educated and knowing the facts. With the impending calving season, the following critical points are good to consider:

• **First four hours** — Due to in-utero conditions in cattle, antibody absorption cannot occur during gestation and must occur through colostrum transfer. This most effectively occurs in the first four hours post-calving, when the intestinal absorption potential of the calf is at its peak. This time frame provides the highest opportunity for transfer of passive immunity.

• **Around 30 minutes** — During cold, wet and windy weather, it can take 30 minutes or less for a newborn calf to drop below critical body temperature, decreasing its chances of survival. This varies greatly depending on a range of factors (weather combination, age of cow, calving pasture/lot status, provided protection, etc.). It is good to observe closely and act accordingly in each situation when deciding whether to take a calf in.

• **100 F** — If a calf has a rectal temperature below 100 F, you should consider methods to warm the calf before providing colostrum replacer. If the calf is above a rectal temperature of 100 F, proceed with feeding them a meal of colostrum replacer.

• **150 grams of antibodies** — The minimum amount of antibodies—sometimes called globulin proteins or immunoglobulin G (IgG)—a newborn calf needs to have provided by a colostrum replacer is 150 grams. This is different than the grams of protein the product contains. Products labeled as “colostrum replacer” should contain 150 grams or more to achieve the ideal level of

immunity.

Products labeled as “colostrum supplements” generally contain around 50 grams IgG and are best to use when the calf received colostrum but the volume or quality is in doubt. With replacer and supplement products, you usually get what you pay for.

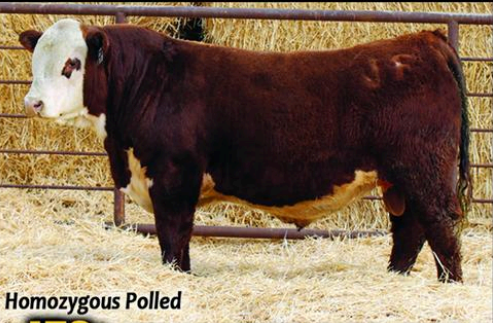
Lastly, are there investments you could make in facilities or technology that would elevate your capacity

for care that could potentially increase calving season success? Use the term “success” instead of “dollars” or “returns” because being successful through calving season can be measured in decreased stress, increased sleep and overall operation morale. It could be as simple as the previously mentioned added pen space or as advanced as a remote video observation system.

Some other things that come to mind as we face another unpredictable calving season could include addressing the amount of wind protection provided, having a suitable (clean) place to care for calves that are brought in, having a reserve of warm water in that same location to quickly care for animals brought in and being able to get back out to deal with other urgent matters.

Seeking out ways to address stress points can look extremely different from neighbor to neighbor, and remembering to sometimes take a step back to observe the system has the potential to put us 10 steps forward by increasing our capacity for care. — **Hannah Greenwell, Nebraska Extension educator, and Halden Clark, DVM/M.S., health stewardship**



Homozygous Polled

178J NJW 11B 173D CHARACTER 178J ET

CED 5.0 BW 2.7 WW 77 YW 119 MILK 31

UDR 1.20 TEAT 1.20 REA .61 MARB .19



Homozygous Polled

158J NJW 160Z 254G RIDGE 158J ET

CED 4.2 BW 4.1 WW 58 YW 99 MILK 39

UDR 1.50 TEAT 1.80 REA .66 MARB .06



Homozygous Polled

55J NJW 45C 87G GRIT 55J

CED 8.4 BW -0.1 WW 55 YW 81 MILK 33

UDR 1.20 TEAT 1.20 REA .04 MARB .30



Homozygous Polled

105J NJW 161E 173D FASHION 105J

CED -1.4 BW 3.6 WW 71 YW 116 MILK 29

UDR 1.20 TEAT 1.20 REA .67 MARB .16



Homozygous Polled

333G NJW 79Z 81E RITA 333G ET

CED 8.2 BW 1.5 WW 58 YW 95 MILK 27

UDR 1.40 TEAT 1.50 REA .98 MARB .19

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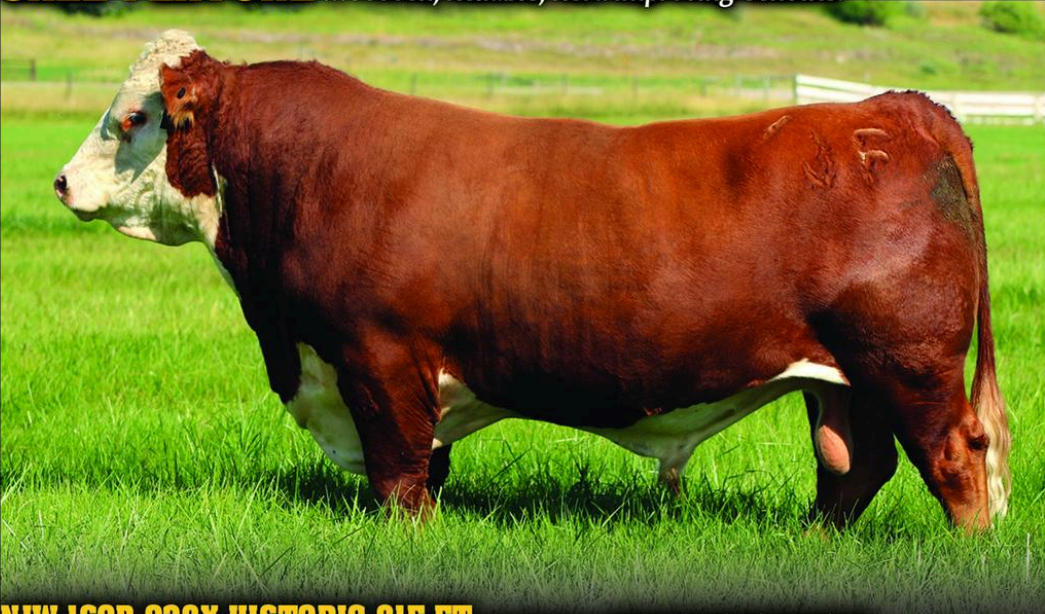
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The tool of adaptive grazing uses higher livestock

densities for short durations between long periods of rest to allow complete plant recovery and soil improvement. It is not prescriptive, but rather allows for changes in animal densities and pasture design in response to how the land and livestock respond. Adaptive grazing also can include grazing multiple livestock species together on a ranch to reap even more benefits.

Adaptive grazing

The objective of adaptive grazing is to mimic the grazing patterns of bison and elk (yes, both species occurred

Grazing different species of livestock in an operation does come with some challenges. The largest challenge is how infrastructure needs differ.

simultaneously) that once roamed large portions of the Great Plains but have since been removed. This type of grazing leads to the benefits of accelerated plant growth, improved carbon capture and water infiltration, high-

er quality forage and more. The resulting plant communities are more responsive to future grazing events and more resilient to other factors that affect ecosystem stability, such as drought.

What and how species graze

Using multiple species for grazing, such as cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and poultry, allows for greater utilization of forages, improves soil health, increases biodiversity, improves wildlife habitat and creates opportunities for additional enterprises, profitability and risk mitigation.

Grasses, forbs and woody plants are all forages that can be grazed by livestock. When using adaptive grazing, many producers find that any one species of livestock will consume a wide variety of plants, but, in general, the diets of cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and poultry do differ, and together, they use more of the total forage available. Let's just compare three ruminants.

Cattle are grazers who eat mainly grasses, but they will consume some forbs and browse (leaves, young shoots and twigs of woody plants) because the latter two are generally higher in forage quality (i.e., protein and energy) and have some medicinal qualities.

Sheep consume a greater proportion of forbs and browse compared to cattle, but this also depends on their environment. While cattle bite off large portions of a plant or plants by wrapping their tongue around forage and pulling, sheep bite off and eat select parts of plants. Sheep may only graze the youngest leaf or two and then move to the next plant.

Goats are browsers who eat a higher proportion of woody plants than most other ruminants. They will consume some forbs, and if they need to, they will eat grasses. Because of this diet, a producer can use goats to turn the liability of brush encroachment into a profitable enterprise.

Cattle, sheep and goats all have different foraging behaviors and preferences, but they may have a little bit of dietary overlap at times. For a grazer, such dietary overlap means animals will be competing for available forage. Dietary overlap will differ seasonally, with the greatest overlap occurring during the winter months (dormant season), when plant abundance and diversity are reduced.

When multiple livestock species live on a single ranch, the fact that they have different behaviors, different preferences and some dietary overlap sets the stage for increased plant and soil microbial biodiversity. Both of those outcomes are key to improving soil health.

Grazing strategies

Grazing strategies can be adapted to change animal behaviors in order to achieve the desired impact on the land. Producers can use intensity, fencing and placement of water and mineral to alter behaviors.

Intensity refers to the density of animals in a pasture/paddock that is grazed. The higher the density, the more competitive and the less selective an animal can be when grazing. This strategy encourages animals to eat what is available, even

if it isn't preferred.

Temporary fencing can be used to strategically place animals where greater intensity (or trample) is desired or to instead restrict access to areas of a pasture/paddock that need more rest. Paddock design, including shape and orientation, will affect grazing behavior. For example, pinch points in a paddock's design can be used to facilitate more hoof action in a particular area.

Water and mineral placements are also powerful tools to help manage animal distribution. These locations will almost always receive proportionally higher impacts. Water and mineral sources can be strategically placed in a pasture/paddock to draw animals into areas that would normally have minimal to no impact, such as brushy areas or areas avoided due to topography.

Challenges

Grazing different species of livestock in an operation does come with some challenges. The largest challenge is how infrastructure needs differ.

Sheep and goats, including their lambs and kids, need to be able to access water, and they need different solutions for water than cattle. As animals that are smaller in stature, they need their own waterers that are easy to reach and use.

Fencing is another challenge. Electric fences are a psychological barrier for livestock. With cattle, one strand will do the job. Although you can keep sheep and goats behind a single strand of temporary electric fence, sometimes you will need multiple strands. Goats in particular take more risks and may test the fence. One alternative for small ruminants is using a physical barrier like field fence or woven wire. However, this option is more costly and less adaptable when sectioning off pasture areas.

Predation is another concern when grazing small ruminants, so the use of guardian animals (e.g., dogs and donkeys) to protect such livestock from coyotes, wolves, feral swine and other predators is recommended. Plans and staffing will need to include feeding and care of the guardian animals.

Producers would do well to consider the benefits of having multiple livestock enterprises. Using the complementary grazing behaviors of multiple species can reduce the risk associated with a single enterprise and increase overall profitability. In addition, producers gain greater flexibility and the ability to use income-producing livestock to improve their soil and shape the landscape they want while reducing or even eliminating costly inputs. — **Josh Gaskamp, Noble Research Institute technical consultation manager and wildlife and range consultant; and Clark Roberts, Noble Research Institute ranch facility manager**

(Previously published by Noble Research Institute.)

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5	1.2	90	156	22	1.21	0.94	215	352

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#19979656



CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	MARB	RE	\$B	\$C
10	2.2	89	148	17	0.95	0.73	176	315

T/D EXCLUSIVE 0670

#19866918



CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	MARB	RE	\$B	\$C
9	1.0	83	144	28	0.98	0.41	186	334

TD MVP J11

#19993627



CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	MARB	RE	\$B	\$C
7	2.1	85	139	29	0.53	0.79	162	282

T/D NO DOUBT 1391

#20028365



CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	MARB	RE	\$B	\$C
10	2.1	62	124	27	0.78	0.67	158	269

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Most FSA offices open for farmer appointments

— FSA, COVID-19 programs

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator Zach Ducheneaux praised FSA employees for their work during the pandemic and acknowledged there are growing calls from farm groups to reopen all FSA offices back to full capacity.

Ducheneaux addressed an array of topics during a speech to members of the National Farmers Union (NFU) in Denver and during an interview with DTN on farm programs and office staffing.

FSA staff and offices

“During a global pandemic, there were producers that needed them, and they did their job,” Ducheneaux said. “They might not have been in the office, which has been a bone of contention with some organizations, but they got the job done probably to as much as 160 percent of normal.”

In addition to the standard programs, such as Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC), Price Loss Coverage (PLC), the Conservation Reserve Program, dairy programs and loan programs, FSA staff found themselves providing an array of disaster aid programs, including multiple variations of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, to deal with the economic realities producers were facing.

“It’s been a year now that I’ve been here, and it’s been the fastest year of my life,” Ducheneaux said. “But it’s also been one of the most enjoyable because I get to come to events like this and see what it’s all about.”

After talking to NFU members, Ducheneaux was asked why it is taking so long for the Biden administration to get FSA directors and other state leaders in place. As of Feb. 28, USDA has appointed 34 state FSA directors.

Ducheneaux responded, “The quality of the folks that we’re picking is indicative of the time that’s been taken.” He added, “Your point is well taken; we’re doing everything we can to get that out the door, but it’s absolutely not because it’s not important to the administration.”

Staffing at local offices continues to be a problem. Ducheneaux said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack raises that issue with lawmakers on Capitol Hill. Ducheneaux said there “is an ongoing war of attrition to deploying federal resources in this country that the NFU and others have to stand up against.” That’s especially true in counties with dwindling populations, he said.

Right now, an “overwhelming majority” of FSA offices are open at 75 percent capacity and taking appointments to have producers come in. During the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic, FSA offices limited capacity to 25 percent of workers with no in-person visits. Ducheneaux said USDA has daily reports to update staffing and capacity levels at local offices.

“We all want full participation, full in-person attendance as much as anybody, but we’ve got to protect the safety of producers and the

staff.”

Reopening some offices has been more challenging because of continued high infection rates in those areas. “We continue to tie back to the science, and vaccinations have been remarkably effective at controlling the spread and severity of COVID, and we want everybody to know that’s our position. We still require masks in our offices as of now. We are waiting for guidance from the administration on when that posture will change, but that’s all across the federal sector.”

USDA had tried to require FSA county committee members to become vaccinated to remain as members. A lawsuit blocked USDA from enforcing that requirement, and the injunction remains in effect.

“It’s ironic. County committees oftentimes enforce our programs against their fellow producers for not following good scientific practices and vaccination of their livestock. If you’ve got a proven solution and you’re not using it, you will be ineligible for programs. We try to highlight that and really bring it back to the scientific facts of the effectiveness of the vaccines preventing the spread and the severity of the disease.”

Given that a certain group of producers wants face-to-face contact with their FSA staff, Ducheneaux also suggested FSA should look at flexible schedules for their own staff to help with the producers who can’t get into an FSA office until their daytime job ends. “What if we think about stretching that flexibility for staff and having flexible schedules where producers can come in after their 5 o’clock job?”

Disaster aid

On disaster funding, Ducheneaux said the first phase of \$10 billion in total funds for 2020-21 disasters will roll out with the \$750 million in disaster aid to livestock producers. FSA is looking at the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program data to simply provide checks to producers in the coming weeks. “We’ve got the information, so we’re just going to try to send the payment out without having to go through an exhaustive application process. We’re looking for similar avenues to do the same on the crop side.”

Ducheneaux added there are new disasters. “When the (Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus) was authorized, we didn’t know what a derecho was; so, we have got these things we have to deal with.”

After passage of the disaster aid, Ducheneaux said FSA staff also had to have conversations with wine producers in California who have had two or three difficult years in a row because of fires. USDA had to understand the impact of problems such as grapes with “smoke taint and other aspects of production. So, we’re trying to be inclusive and make sure that the program is reaching those as intended participants.”

Boosting farm income

Noting the latest Economic Research Service study that shows 11 cents of the food dollar go to farmers, Ducheneaux said that’s why commodity programs are so important. Farmers continue to get “less and less of that food dollar in their pockets.” He added that 89 percent of farmers today get more than half of their income off the farm.

“If that was a choice, purely a choice, I would have no problem with that,” he said. “But it’s not a choice.”

The Biden administration “is putting our money where

our mouth is,” referring to hundreds of billions of dollars already spent to address the “shackle space shortages that the big meat conglomerates will try to convince you are the problem.” Ducheneaux challenged the messaging from large packers, saying if packers’ profits were tied to output volume, they would be building more processing capacity. But the packing industry has been profitable in the past two years.

“They are able to hold us all captive and squeeze us in the middle and keep us from our consumers who would really like to know what our product is,” Ducheneaux said.

Dairy Margin Coverage

USDA last month extended sign-ups for the Dairy Margin Coverage program to March 25 because only about 48 percent of eligible dairy farmers had signed up for the program for 2022.

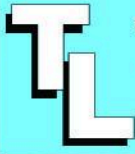
“Part of the issue is that dairy prices have rebounded and are good right now,” Ducheneaux said. “And we just want to take an opportunity to remind producers that these things are volatile, prices fluctuate and this is a very affordable protection that they can avail themselves of. So, we encourage all

of our dairy producers to take a real hard look at that.”

While the ARC/PLC sign-up ends March 15, Ducheneaux said enrollment for those programs has been on target, and he doesn’t expect to see an extension there.

Ducheneaux noted when he began last year, nearly all of his events were online, but he would give out his email so producers could reach him. “And I’m going to keep doing that as long as I get to do this job.”

Ducheneaux’s email is Zach.Ducheneaux@usda.gov. — Chris Clayton, DTN ag policy editor



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NASDA discusses priorities for 2023 Farm Bill

— Ten policy areas

State agriculture officials announced priorities to direct their policy advocacy efforts toward the upcoming 2023 Farm Bill.

The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), during their 2022 NASDA Winter Policy Conference in February, identified 10 policy areas to discuss implementing in the next farm bill. They include:

- Significant funding should be provided for agriculture research, focusing on the safety and security of the food system, Extension programs and natural resources.
- Animal disease prevention and management should be addressed, including three critical components: early disease detection and surveillance, prevention and rapid response.
- Conservation and climate resiliency should be encouraged through increasing funding for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program and Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

The House Agriculture Committee has begun farm bill hearings with commodity groups on Title I programs, including Price Loss Coverage and Agriculture Risk Coverage.



NASDA also recommends investments in incentive programs for voluntary practices and technical assistance to equip farmers and ranchers with additional tools that reduce greenhouse gases and sequester carbon.

- Cybersecurity is critical to the agriculture and agribusiness sectors, and the farm bill should continue funding to stop cyberattacks.
- Food safety should be addressed in the next farm bill with resources to assist producers in complying with the Food Safety Modernization Act.
- Hemp should be redefined to increase the total THC

concentration to 1 percent or less.

- Invasive species threaten farmers and ranchers, and NASDA endorses an increase in funding for the Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention program and the National Clean Plant Network.
- Local food systems should promote equity for socially disadvantaged, Black and Indigenous people and people of color. Funding should be increased for farmers' markets and purchases of local foods in the Farm to School grant program.
- Specialty crop block grants should receive an increase in

funding for hemp crops with horticultural uses.

- Trade promotion through the Market Access Program promotes American grown and produced food and ag products, and NASDA supports increasing funding to compete against foreign, heavily subsidized products.

NASDA CEO Ted McKinney said in a statement, "The next farm bill must remain unified, securing a commitment to American agriculture and the critical food and nutritional assistance programs for those who need it most."

McKinney stated NASDA members are often the officials closest to farmers themselves. As co-regulators with the federal government, they are uniquely positioned to lead, impact and direct policymaking solutions for the 2023 Farm Bill.

The House Agriculture Committee has begun farm bill hearings with commodity groups on Title I programs, including Price Loss Coverage and Agriculture Risk Coverage. — **Charles Wallace, WLJ editor**

BEEF BITS

\$215M for food supply chain

USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack announced USDA is making available \$215 million in grants to expand meat and poultry processing options, strengthen the food supply chain and create jobs and economic opportunities in rural areas. USDA Rural Development will make \$150 million in grants available through the Meat and Poultry Processing Expansion Program to fund startup and expansion activities in the meat and poultry processing sector. USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture will provide another \$40 million for workforce development and training. The Agricultural Marketing Service will provide \$25 million to offer technical assistance to grant applicants and others seeking meat and poultry processing resources. "For too long, ranchers and processors have seen the value and the opportunities they work so hard to create move away from the rural communities where they live and operate," Vilsack said in a statement. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) said in a statement it appreciates the Biden administration's efforts and looks forward to working toward the implementation of the funds. "The expansion of regional processing facilities will bolster resiliency within the beef supply chain and help return marketing leverage to cattle producers," said NCBA Director of Government Affairs and Market Regulatory Policy Tanner Beymer.

USDA raises beef forecast

USDA's Economic Research Service released the Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Outlook report, showing commercial beef production for 2022 is forecast to rise 210 million pounds to 27.38 billion lbs., due to expected strong fed cattle slaughter and heavier than average dressed weights. "Cattle prices will likely be supported by increased demand by packers as the sector overcomes constraints on throughput and tighter supplies of steers and heifers in feedlots," USDA said in its report. "Feeder cattle prices will likely average higher during 2022 as feedlots bid for tighter cattle supplies." According to the report, the first-quarter price for feeder steers was lowered by \$1 to \$158/cwt from last month. The feeder steer 2022 forecasts for the second, third and fourth quarters were raised by \$2 to \$158, \$162 and \$167/cwt, respectively. U.S. beef exports set a record for December at 288 million lbs., about 1 percent above a year earlier and more than 9 percent above the five-year average, due to larger year-over-year shipments to China, South Korea, Canada and Taiwan. December's beef imports totaled 273 million lbs., up 30 percent from a year ago. Canada remained the largest supplier of beef imports, accounting for 28 percent with 942.3 million lbs., followed by Mexico with 674.8 million lbs. The 2022 annual forecast for beef imports was raised 105 million lbs. from January to 3.370 billion lbs.

Caviness Beef receives incentive

The Amarillo City Council in Texas approved an economic incentive for the nearly complete processing facility expansion of Caviness Beef Packers Ltd. in late February. The agreement allows the Amarillo Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) to provide \$10,000 per position created, up to \$1 million. The agreement would enable Caviness to hire an additional 100 full-time employees over three years and increase the company's payroll by approximately \$4.5 million annually. The \$60 million new processing facility is expected to be completed in spring and will replace the company's existing facility, doubling production. "Caviness has always called the Texas Panhandle home, and we're eager to continue building on that success," said Trevor Caviness, president of Caviness Beef Packers, in a statement. "We very much appreciate the (AEDC's) mission of helping attract business growth in the region." Caviness also has a facility in Hereford, TX, built in 2005, which just recently added 130,000 square feet of plant additions and added a second shift of operations.

MO plant cited for pollution

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) conducted an emergency investigation of the Republic Foods facility in Lone Jack, MO, after receiving reports from a local resident of a small creek being contaminated and having a foul odor. Investigators in late December observed that the creek was brown in color and had a septic odor. The Missouri DNR cited Republic Foods in February with six violations, including contaminating waterways, failure to post signs and provide an emergency spillway, and failure to keep records for visual inspections at the plant. "The facility has been referred to the Water Protection Control Branch, Compliance and Enforcement Section for violations of the Missouri Clean Water Law," DNR spokesperson Brian Quinn said to news outlet Fox4 Kansas City. "Additional information regarding an ongoing enforcement case will become available once the matter has been resolved." Republic Foods is not commenting on the situation. Republic Foods opened the facility shortly after Valley Oaks Steak Co. closed in 2019.

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Comparison of partially confined and traditional cow-calf systems

Perennial grass pasture and rangelands in many parts of Nebraska, as well as the Northern Plains region, have been converted into cropland for corn and soybean production. This has resulted in limited pasture availability in these areas.

Research conducted by the University of Nebraska has demonstrated that grazing cattle on corn residue can be an excellent way to utilize this feed resource without having any detrimental impact to subsequent crop production. This corn residue is often significantly less expensive as a feed resource than grass pasture that is grazed in the spring and summer.

Annual forages

Another development that has occurred is the significant increase in the amount of annual forages or cover crops that are planted in the late summer and fall to provide soil health benefits and weed control.

These forages are often of high quality and can be utilized as a feed resource for livestock grazing during the late fall, winter and early spring. Grazing of cover crops can provide production benefits to livestock owners, as well as both economic and agronomic benefits to crop producers.

Two production systems

The combination of these conditions prompted a research study to evaluate a late summer/fall calving system (August-September) that utilized the grazing of cover crops (oats) and corn-stalk residue during the fall and winter. This system also employed drylot feeding of cows utilizing a limit fed ration consisting of modified distillers grains, wheat straw and supplement during the spring and summer months.

Cows in the alternative system calved in drylot pens from mid-July through mid to late September during the two years of the experiment. Pairs remained in the pens until late October, at which time they were placed on summer planted oat pasture for grazing until early to mid-January.

This alternative system was compared to a more traditional spring calving system (April to early June) where cow-calf pairs are grazed on perennial pasture from May through October and then grazed on corn residue from mid-November through mid-March. Hay was fed to the traditional cows from March through early May.

Cow and calf performance data was collected from both groups and compared to one another. This included cow performance, pre-weaning calf growth, post-weaning calf growth, performance in the finishing phase and carcass data.

The study was conducted over two years, with 80 cows being assigned to each of the two production systems. Within each system, cows were broken further into groups of 20 to have four replicates of each production system.

There were no statistical differences in conception rates, calving rates and weaning rates when comparing the alternative system to the traditional system. Cows in the alternative system tended to have lower body condition scores, averaging near 5 at the time of breeding, while cows from the traditional system had an average body condition score of 6 or higher at breed-

ing.

A body condition score of 5 for mature cows is considered adequate at the time of breeding to achieve acceptable conception rates. This difference in body condition score did not significantly impact conception rates, which was reflected in both groups of cows averaging just over 94 percent in a 60-65 day breeding period for both years of the experiment.

There was a significant difference between the two systems in calf performance through weaning and finishing. Although both groups of calves were weaned on average at the same number of days of age (168), the calves from the traditional spring calving production system were 99 pounds heavier than the late summer/fall calves. Post-weaning, during the backgrounding/growing phase, calves from the alternative system had greater average daily gain

and a better feed-to-gain ratio than calves from the traditional system.

In the finishing phase, the advantage was once again with the traditional calves, as they had higher average daily gains and better feed conversion after being on feed for 27 fewer days. It should be noted that the time frames in which these calves were fed differed, so weather conditions may have played a significant role in the variations in performance, with weather stress likely having a greater impact on the calves fed from the alternative system, especially in the finishing phase.

Potential application

A late summer calving production system that utilizes seasonal limit feeding of cows as an alternative to grazing summer pasture may be a viable option for

regions that have an abundance of inexpensive crop residue that can be directly grazed, as well as harvested and fed. Total feed costs and the cost of delivering harvested feed will need to be scrutinized. Management practices focused on ensuring calf health, especially if calving occurs in a drylot, are important.

In order to have acceptable pregnancy rates, fall calving cows will need to have access to high quality forage or be supplemented significantly with protein and energy when grazing crop residue prior to and throughout the breeding season. Calves from this production system will likely weigh less at weaning than calves from a traditional spring calving system and may need to be fed longer to reach the same weight at harvest. However, these calves fit a different marketing window than traditional spring born calves, which

may provide a price advantage when selling.

Spring calving cow herds can complement a late summer/fall calving production system in being a source of replacements. Young cows that do not become pregnant in the spring calving herd could be rebred for use in a late summer/fall calving herd. Use of a terminal breeding program where replacement heifers are not retained may be an option that fits a late summer/fall calving model where crop residue and seasonal drylot feeding are utilized.

This article is a summary of the 2022 Nebraska Beef Cattle Report "Comparison of Partially Confined and Traditional Cow-Calf Systems." Zac E. Carlson, Levi J. McPhillips, Galen E. Erickson, Mary E. Drewnoski and Jim C. MacDonald were collaborators on this research study and report. — **Aaron Berger, Nebraska Extension beef educator**

Vermilion Bomber J431



Lot 21 - AAA 20050339

BW	WW	YW	MILK	\$W	\$B	Act BW	Adj WW	Adj YW
+3.2	+102	+171	+17	+88	+178	104	843	1357

SIRE: *Casino Bomber N33 MGS: +*S A V Quarterback 7933

Vermilion Growth Fund J292



Lot 42 - AAA 20065567

BW	WW	YW	MILK	\$W	\$B	Act BW	Adj WW	Adj YW
+3.4	+99	+179	+27	+92	+174	90	827	1438

SIRE: +*Deer Valley Growth Fund MGS: Vermilion Endgame

Vermilion King Air J048



Lot 81 - AAA 20050240

BW	WW	YW	MILK	\$W	\$B	Act BW	Adj WW	Adj YW
+4	+80	+149	+31	+87	+159	72	701	1295

SIRE: *Connealy King Air MGS: Vermilion Playmaker Y290

Vermilion Missile J161



Lot 124 - AAA 20060950

BW	WW	YW	MILK	\$W	\$B	Act BW	Adj WW	Adj YW
+1.1	+74	+140	+30	+79	+129	80	840	1378

SIRE: *Vermilion Missile MGS: *Vermilion Re-Ride

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Vermilion Commerce J357



Lot 1 - AAA 20065597

BW	WW	YW	MILK	\$W	\$B	Act BW	Adj WW	Adj YW
+8	+89	+155	+19	+80	+139	82	827	1387

SIRE: *SITZ Commerce 670F MGS: #Connealy Countdown

Vermilion Fair N Square J280



Lot 144 - AAA 20076237

BW	WW	YW	MILK	\$W	\$B	Act BW	Adj WW	Adj YW
+3.3	+90	+152	+24	+85	+161	86	778	1316

SIRE: *Myers Fair-N-Square M39 MGS: #*Connealy Spur

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Deer Valley Growth Fund - Vermilion Spur D125
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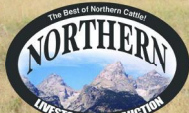
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Conflict in Ukraine fuels uncertainty for agriculture

The Russian invasion brought devastation to Ukraine, but uncertainty and volatility fueled by this conflict are rippling through the U.S. and Texas agriculture markets.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service economists said both Russia and Ukraine do not represent major destinations for U.S. commodities, ranking 56th and 80th, respectively. However, the conflict's impact on global trade, trade alliances and infrastructure could ripple throughout U.S. sectors in the near- and long-term future.

Russia imported between \$1.2 billion and \$1.6 billion of U.S. agricultural products annually until imports fell to around \$200 million to \$300 million over the last five years, following its invasion of Crimea.

David Anderson, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension economist, said this type of conflict creates a "factor of chaos." The invasion may not directly impact U.S. supply chains, but it will

likely disrupt specific sectors, commodities and products, as well as create uncertainty, which typically leads to market volatility.

For example, Anderson said the invasion and subsequent sanctions against Russia could further complicate U.S. fertilizer supplies and prices. He noted one major fertilizer product component comes from a Russian-based company.

Anderson said this type of conflict directly impacts lives in that region, but it also creates worry and uncertainty throughout all sectors and markets that ripple through the U.S. economy and many other countries to varying degrees.

"We are blessed to live in a big, diverse nation where we produce an exportable excess of many basic agricultural commodities," Anderson said. "We do import a lot of fruits and vegetables and coffee, but none of that is coming from Ukraine or Russia."

Conflict and wheat

Mark Welch, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension small grains economist, said the futures grain markets, from wheat to grains for livestock feed, will likely be affected most by the invasion. Ukraine and Russia together are expected to account for about 30 percent of global wheat exports in the current marketing year.

On March 1, Kansas City July wheat contracts, which represent harvest contracts for Texas producers, fluctuated wildly but were expected to trend higher, Welch said. Corn and soybean prices were also trading higher.

"We are pretty deep into (the Ukrainian/Russian) growing season, which ends May 31, so I do not know how much more wheat is left to be shipped in the next few months," he said. "In that respect, the timing of this invasion may limit short-term impacts. Certainly, damage to port infrastruc-

ture or shipping restrictions in the Black Sea will slow trade and make it much more expensive."

China announced it is open to grain shipments from Russia. This would provide an outlet for Russian grain sales and help China meet its grain import needs.

Much like what happened during the tariff war between the U.S. and China, trade alliances and flows may shift, Welch said.

"It's really tough to say right now because there are more questions than answers," he said. "Uncertainty fuels volatility, and when commodity supplies tighten, any disruption to the market can make an impact."

Cattle, poultry and pork

Anderson said Ukraine and Russia will have very little direct impact on U.S. protein markets, but the conflict could impact some trade sectors indirectly, including protein production.



Laura McKenzie/Texas A&M AgriLife
Wheat is among the commodities that could be impacted by the conflict between Ukraine and Russia in the near- and long-term.

According to a CME Group's Daily Livestock Report following the invasion, restrictions on Russian protein purchases in the world market are likely to have no impact on global trade of those items.

Russia once relied on imports for proteins like pork, poultry and beef, but it has reduced its dependence by increasing domestic production. In 2010, Russia imported around one-third of its pork but increased its production by 26 percent and is now a net exporter of pork.

In the early 2000s, more than half of Russia's chicken was imported, but by 2010, imports dropped to 27 percent. Last year, Russia imported 5 percent of the poultry it consumed but also exported the same amount.

Beef has been more difficult to secure because of land requirements, know-how and domestic preference, according to the CME report. Russian beef consumption has fallen 32 percent since 2010, and a lot of its beef imports come from neighboring ally Belarus. — **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension**

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200,000 acres fallowed in 2021 due to drought

H2O (from page 1)

In response, California Farm Bureau (CFB) President Jamie Johansson said the announcement underscores why California needs to act now to build water infrastructure supported by voters.

"We are disappointed, but not surprised, by the Bureau of Reclamation's Central Valley Project water allocation announcement," Johansson said. "This demonstrates the overdue need for new water storage. In 2014, California voters were promised \$2.7 billion as a down payment on building new water storage after they overwhelmingly approved Proposition 1, a \$7.1 billion water bond initiative. Construction has yet to begin."

According to the California Water Commission, water storage capacity would increase by 2.77 million acre-feet with the \$2.7 billion in bond funds from Proposition 1. The Public Policy Institute of California, a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank, stated in a June 2021 blog post just over \$150 million of the \$2.7 billion had been spent.

"We can no longer afford to neglect our aging water infrastructure, which was once the envy of the world. If we are serious about water resilience and addressing climate change, we must invest in water storage and delivery infrastruc-

ture to capture precipitation in wet periods to sustain us amid our new norm—longer, harsher periods of drought," Johansson said.

Westlands Water District, one of the largest suppliers in the San Joaquin Valley of water to agriculture users, said in a statement it is disappointed with the announcement but understands that hydrologic conditions "prevent Reclamation from making water available under the District's contract." Westlands said this is the fourth time the district has received a zero allocation in the past decade, and in 2021, a total of 200,000 acres were fallowed due to drought conditions.

Westlands also stressed the need to invest in water infrastructure, water storage and improved conveyance facilities.

In May 2021, Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) announced a proposal for a \$5.1 billion package for "drought infrastructure, preparedness and response to ensure a more climate-resilient system." According to the governor's press release, the proposal aligns with Newsom's July 2020 Water Resilience Portfolio, a plan to equip the state to deal with drought and rising temperatures while addressing the declining fish population and over-reliance on groundwater. — **Charles Wallace, WLJ editor**

Deep soil testing offers producers opportunity to reduce input costs

In the wake of high fertilizer prices, one thing farmers should do this year more than any previous year is deep soil testing, according to a team of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service specialists.

Fertilizer application helps achieve optimum crop yields by supplementing the available plant nutrients already present in the soil, and it helps meet crop fertility needs. However, producers don't always consider what is already present in the soil.

"Soil testing can help control high and variable fertilizer costs by determining the most appropriate type and rate of fertilizer needed for each commodity," said DeDe Jones, AgriLife Extension risk management program specialist, Amarillo.

The AgriLife Extension team just published their findings after analyzing the benefits of soil testing before planting corn, cotton or wheat. They found that projected savings of anywhere from \$8-116 per acre are possible by just taking advantage of the residual nitrogen already in the soil and accounting for it when making growing season decisions.

Comprised of specialists in the Texas A&M Department of Agricultural Economics and Department of Soil and Crop Sciences, the team includes Jones; Jourdan Bell, Ph.D., agronomist; Justin Benavidez, Ph.D., economist; and Will Keeling, risk management program specialist.

"This study shows that even small investments or minor operational changes can lead to large financial savings," Jones said. "We demonstrate how deep soil testing allows producers to take advantage of nitrogen

already present in the soil and apply less fertilizer."

Soil testing

Agronomists typically recommend soil testing each year as near to planting time as possible to assess the availability of nitrogen and other essential nutrients, Bell said.

"Many producers only soil sample the top zero to 6 inches, but deep soil sampling to depths of 6-24 inches or deeper, if feasible, should be done whenever possible," she said. "This allows producers to utilize the nitrogen below the upper 6 inches of soil."

Bell said in addition to reducing fertilizer input costs, proper nitrogen management in crop production systems can impact the need for and rates of other production inputs.

"For example, in cotton, we know that nitrogen in excess of the crop demand can cause aggressive plant growth, so producers have to be more aggressive with their plant growth regulators program," she said. "There is both an input and production cost."

Excess nitrogen can also delay cotton maturity, which can impact growing day limited cotton regions such as the Texas Panhandle, Bell said. So, it is extremely important that producers are aware of residual nitrogen not just to optimize input costs, but also to optimize production.

"We know residual plant nutrient levels in the soil can vary greatly from year to year based on many factors, including fertilizer application rates, rainfall and irrigation, and the cropping system and plant uptake in

the prior year," she said. "That is why annual sampling is important. Although this was only one year's worth of data, we want to highlight the potential cost savings that can be achieved through deep soil testing."

The savings add up

While plant growth is dependent on many nutrients, proper nitrogen application is critical. Prices for nitrogen fertilizer products have increased dramatically in recent months due to rising natural gas prices and supply chain disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The cost of nitrogen in 2022 is 55 percent higher than in 2021 and more than 200 percent higher than in 2020.

Corn shows the greatest benefit from reduced fertilization expenses because it has the highest nitrogen application rates, ranging from \$29 per acre with a 25 percent residual to \$116 per acre for a 100 percent residual, Jones said.

Cotton registered the second-highest advantage, with cost savings ranging between

\$18-74 per acre. Wheat showed the least benefit due to low nitrogen application rates compared to the other crops, falling between \$8-32 per acre.

"Our results show that taking advantage of even relatively low levels of residual nitrogen can make a big difference to the bottom line," she said. "For example,

if a producer applies only 75 percent of their budgeted nitrogen because testing shows 25 percent is already in the soil, they can save almost \$20,000 on a 1,000 acre irrigated farm."

Greater levels of residual lead to even bigger savings, reaching a high of \$81,570 at the zero percent of budgeted nitrogen level or if the soil

tests show 100 percent residual.

"We know, due to significant increases in 2022 production costs, it is well worth spending around \$1 per acre for deep soil testing," Jones said. "With the return on investments that we project, testing is a very smart decision." — **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension**



Jourdan Bell/Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service agronomy crew at Amarillo take deep soil tests in wheat stubble.

Livestock priorities in the event of a natural disaster

Natural disasters can happen with little warning, and in Kansas, those often come in the form of tornadoes, windstorms, fires or ice storms.

Understanding the phases of a disaster can help livestock producers anticipate what might be needed following such an event on the ranch, said the beef cattle experts at Kansas State (K-State) University.

Talking on a recent "Cattle Chat" podcast, veterinarians Brad White and Brian Lubbers were joined by Justin Waggoner, beef cattle Extension specialist located in southwest Kansas. Waggoner had a firsthand account of a wildfire.

"In many of these disasters, there is little to no time to prepare. In my case, we had a 10 minute warning on a fire that was 2 miles away and was pushed by a 50 mile per hour wind," Waggoner said. "There was enough time to quickly hook up the stock trailer and leave before the fire reached our property."

Waggoner said regardless of the type of disaster that has occurred, the phases of response are similar.

"In the first 24-48 hours following the disaster, people are processing the initial shock and doing damage assessments," Waggoner said. "In a wildfire scenario, fences and electrical poles may be gone."

Locating the livestock and

assessing their immediate health needs to happen quickly, Lubbers said.

"Of the disasters that I've been involved with, one of the biggest challenges was simply getting water to the livestock," Waggoner said, adding that assessing feed resources also needs to happen quickly.

"With a fire scenario, wheat pasture doesn't burn, so that is a potential grazing resource for cattle," Waggoner said.

After the damage assessment and immediate health evaluations are completed, next is a longer-term maintenance phase, said the experts.

"In this phase, producers and their veterinarians will be looking at the long-term health of the livestock and in some cases may be making plans for carcass disposal and euthanasia depending on the type of disaster that has occurred," Lubbers said.

In thinking through disaster scenarios, White offered the following advice: "While we can't fully prepare for all scenarios, we can come up with a plan ahead of time where we have a list of emergency numbers, know what our backup feed resources might be and how to best get cattle access to fresh, uncontaminated water. Having that plan will help us get through the initial shock and move into the recovery phase more quickly." — **K-State Research and Extension**

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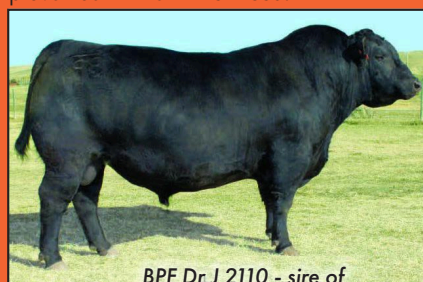
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— Ag opposes measure

A bill granting agricultural workers overtime passed the Oregon House and Senate and awaits Gov. Kate Brown’s (D) signature. On March 1, the House passed House Bill (HB) 4002 along party lines (37-23), which phases in overtime starting next year after members of the Joint Committee on Farm Worker Overtime approved the measure with an amendment creating tax credits for producers.

On March 3, the bill passed in the Senate (17-10). Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-38-Lake Oswego), one of the bill’s sponsors, told the committee that lawmakers had a responsibility to rectify a racist relic from the Jim Crow era for overtime for agricultural workers. Farmworkers were excluded from overtime in the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act. Many farmers who testified said they operate on razor-thin margins, and the bill would force them to cut

hours for farmworkers, look toward mechanization or go out of business. Rep. Shelly Boshart Davis (R-15-Albany), whose family owns a farm, said the tax credit phase-in would simply allow farmers time to mechanize. Boshart Davis suggested amendments providing a \$50 million worker relief fund to provide direct overtime payments to farmworkers, raising the overtime threshold past 40 hours, or exempting farmworkers during peak harvest season, but her amendments were not adopted.

“We’re in a time of greater uncertainty, and I don’t think that right now is a great time to overhaul a policy related to our food supply,” said Rep. Daniel Bonham (R-59-The Dalles). Agricultural groups testified they supported a compromise that improved pay and conditions, but lawmakers were unwilling to work with them. “Farm families have given tours, connected legislators with their employees, opened their books to show how HB 4002 is not economically workable and commissioned a third-party economic analysis supporting those assertions with real data,” said Mary Anne Cooper, vice president of government affairs for the Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB). “We’ve engaged in good faith from day one to today, and we’ve been disregarded throughout.” Salinas met with a group of farmers and farmworker advocates last year to reach a compromise, but that effort ended in a deadlock. OFB said in a statement the bill’s passage would mean that Oregon farms

would have to compete against states without any overtime requirements for farmworkers. OFB pointed to California, where workers are paid overtime for over 40 hours, resulting in decreased pay due to farmers being forced to cut worker hours. California is one of seven states that currently offer overtime pay to farmworkers. Kyle Fessler, a greenhouse grower and past president of the Oregon Association of Nurseries, said Democratic lawmakers were unwilling to work with producers about how HB 4002 would affect family farms. “Farmers have been clear throughout this process that we were not asking for a tax credit since it will be unworkable for many operations, yet Democrats continued to push forward an unworkable tax credit,” said Fessler. Lesley Tamura, a pear grower in Hood River County, said that a tax credit offered by lawmakers to help offset the increased costs to farmers would do little to help family farms stay afloat.

Tax credits Producers would fall under one of three tax credit programs depending on the number of employees they have. The programs do not apply to dairy producers. • For producers with fewer than 25 employees, they would receive the following percentages of excess wages paid by the employer in a calendar year: 90 percent for 2023, 80 percent for 2024 and 2025, and 60 percent for 2026, 2027 and 2028. • Those with more than 25 but fewer than 50 full-time workers would receive 75 percent for 2023, then drop incrementally to 50 percent during the aforementioned years. • For farmers with greater than 50 full-time employees, the tax credit starts at 60 percent and then falls to 15 percent during the same time period. For dairy producers, the tax credits fall into two categories: • For dairies employing more than 25 full-time employees, the percentage is 75 percent for 2023, 60 percent for 2024 and 2025, and 50 percent for 2026, 2027 and 2028. • Dairies with fewer than 25 workers would receive a tax credit rate of 100 percent of overtime payments with no limit.

Farmers would need to obtain wage records from labor contractors to benefit from the tax credits. However, labor contractors aren’t legally required to provide that information, so farmers may not be able to convince them to do so, said Boshart Davis. The total amount allowed for tax credits for overtime wages may not exceed \$55 million for all producers for any calendar year. If the Department of Revenue receives applications for the credit exceeding the amount, the department would proportionately reduce the amount of certified credits among all producers applying for the credit. The overtime rules would be phased in starting at 55 hours per week in 2023 and 2024, 48 hours for 2025 and 2026, and 40 hours after 2027. A revenue impact analysis of the bill by the Legislative Revenue Office shows a reduction in the general fund due to the tax credit ranging initially from \$17 million in the 2023-25 biennium to \$92.7 million in the 2027-29 biennium.

Administering the new tax credit would be the responsibility of the Department of Revenue, which anticipates creating a new unit in the Business Division to administer the tax credit certification. According to an analysis, it will cost \$588,569 for the 2021-23 biennium and will increase to \$2.5 million and employ 12.5 full-time equivalents for the 2023-25 biennium. — Charles Wallace, *WLJ* editor

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Promoting prescribed fire benefits through grants for landowners

Texas A&M Forest Service awarded grants to 81 recipients to conduct prescribed burns this year. For the 2022 fiscal year, the agency has approved \$522,950 in grant funds to private landowners in Texas with a goal to treat 18,250 acres.

Texas is a local government state with 95 percent of property privately owned. This means the management of lands, trees and forests—as well as the benefits they provide—rests in the hands of Texas landowners. Texas A&M Forest Service builds the capacity of landowners by providing grants, including prescribed fire grants, to help them manage their lands.

Prescribed fire is a strategic land management tool that uses low-intensity fire on a specific area of land to achieve set goals. Prescribed fire is the most efficient and effective land management tool for decreasing hazardous fuels and the risk of catastrophic wildfires.

“Over time, leaves, twigs and understory brush build up in our landscape and increase wildfire risk,” said Andy McCrady, Texas A&M Forest Service fuels program coordinator. “By conducting prescribed fire, you’re removing these hazardous fuels from the landscape in a safe and controlled manner.”

Beyond protecting communities from destructive wildfires, prescribed fire creates resilient landscapes; encourages the growth of native plant species; improves soil health; creates open forest conditions that allow wildlife to travel and forage more easily; minimizes the spread of pests, insects and diseases; and gives firefighters a safe place to work when wildfires do occur.

“Before Texas was fully settled, wildfires occurred in the natural landscape frequently, and our ecosystem actually relied on wildfires to remove the understory of forests and other areas,” said McCrady. “That’s why it is so important to treat our land with prescribed burns, to help restore this normal, natural and essential process for the land.”

According to Texas A&M Forest Service surveys, an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 acres of land are treated with prescribed fire in the state each year. Of those, Texas A&M Forest Service provides grant funding to an average of 11,650 acres annually.

Cost is a limiting factor for many landowners when it comes to managing their land, and these grants provide reimbursements to landowners up to \$30 per treated acre. This can provide significant support for landowners, as many prescribed burning contractors cost between \$25-35 per acre.

Texas A&M Forest Service offers four grants to landowners to complete prescribed fires on private lands across the state, each with their own unique goals. For residents in the Panhandle and West Texas, the State Fire Assistance for Mitigation-Plains Prescribed Fire Grant is available. The remaining available grants focus on East and Central Texas and include the Community Protection Program

Grant, the State Fire Assistance for Mitigation-Central and East Texas Grant, and the Neches River and Cypress Basin Watershed Restoration Program-Prescribed Fire Grant.

Depending on the grant, applicants must submit their application in July or September and will be notified of award money by late December. Once contracts are signed and burn letters are given, the burns are typically conducted January through March.

Prescribed fire is not without its risks, and there are requirements and restrictions related to the grant funding.

“While Texas A&M Forest Service has a robust public land prescribed burn program, we do not conduct prescribed burns for the public,” said McCrady. “Landowners typically do not personally conduct the burns either. Instead, they hire licensed and insured burn managers. We manage the funding, make sure each burn manager has proper licensing, review burn plans and monitor the ecosystem that will be burned.”

McCrady said most burns are conducted by contractors, and the grant program requires contractors to be licensed through the Texas Department of Agriculture’s Certified and Insured Prescribed Burn Manager program.

Before burn managers can start ignitions, they must notify McCrady and his staff

to make sure every procedure and safety precaution within the burn plan have been met. Once McCrady gives the go-ahead, the prescribed burn can be conducted on the award recipient’s designated property.

Following the burn, the management goals and ecosystem are monitored by McCrady and his team. According to McCrady, the landscape recovers quickly from prescribed burning. “In Texas, prescribed

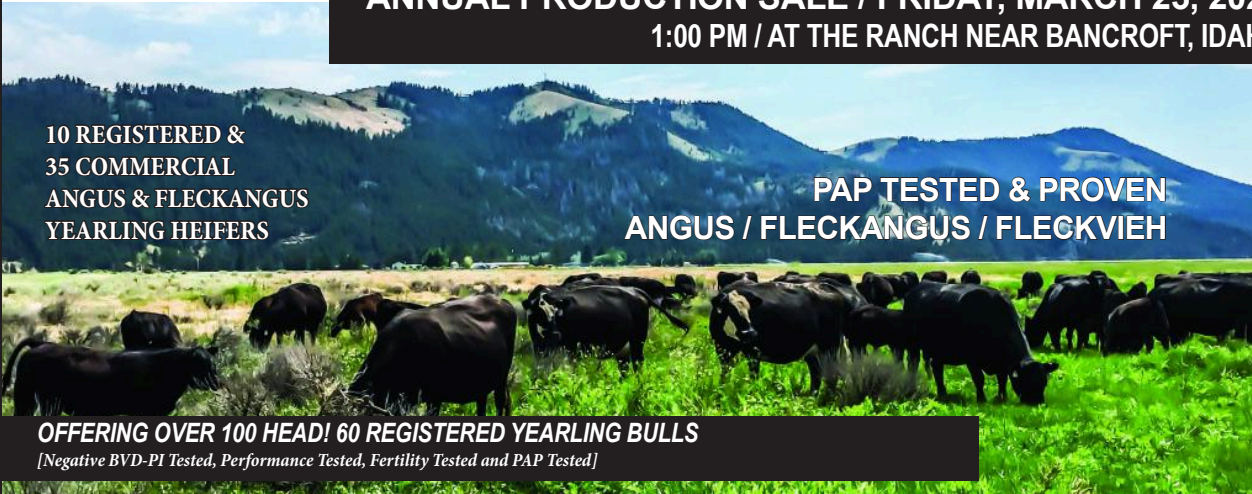
burning is often done in the cool season and the following growing season, or the spring, so the property will fully recover,” said McCrady. “By the end of that first growing season, you’ll see very little negative evidence

of the fire, besides the reduction of the fuels that were meant to burn and a transition to more native grasses, wildflowers and tender resprouting wildlife browse.” — Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

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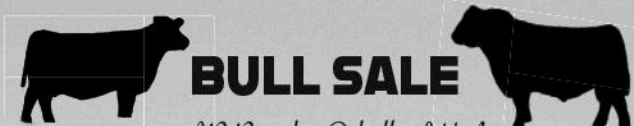
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CA drought continues to have severe impacts

— Snowpack below average

Dry conditions have caused major impacts throughout the state of California, and experts expect drought to continue for a third year.

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) recently conducted its third snow survey of the season at Phillips Station, west of Lake Tahoe, and found the snow and snow water equivalent to be 68 percent of average for the location for March. Statewide, the snowpack is 63 percent of average for this time of year.

“With only one month left in California’s wet season

and no major storms in the forecast, Californians should plan for a third year of drought conditions,” said DWR Director Karla Nemeth. “A significantly below-average snowpack combined with already low reservoir levels make it critical that all Californians step up and conserve water every day to help the state meet the challenges of severe drought.”

Although there were some early storms in the season, limited storms in January and February contributed to the below-average levels. The Northern, Central and Southern Sierra snowpacks are all just above 59-66 percent of average for March, impacting state watersheds.

“Even when we see large storms producing a lot of snow early in the season, all it takes is a few dry weeks to put us below average,” said Jeremy Hill, DWR’s Hydrology and Flood Operations manager.

Producers can visit DWR’s new website, California Water Watch, at cww.water.ca.gov to view current water conditions in their area in real time.

Subsidence continues

DWR also released new data that shows subsidence, the sinking of the land surface due to excessive groundwater pumping, continues in

the state. The areas experiencing the most subsidence in water year 2021 included the San Joaquin Valley and the Sacramento Valley.

The San Joaquin Valley showed a maximum of 1.1 feet of subsidence, and the Sacramento Valley showed a maximum of 0.7 feet of subsidence in the region. Last year’s water year experienced subsidence of greater than 0.5 feet per year in more areas than the year prior. However, fewer areas experienced higher rates of subsidence than the last drought, which ended in 2016.

“Californians rely on groundwater during drought, so it’s not surprising that land in some areas is con-

tinuing to sink,” Nemeth said. “But it is good news that compared to previous droughts, subsidence is slowing.”

DWR plans to increase its monitoring to anticipate impacts to domestic and community wells, and it received funding last year to increase the collection and reporting frequency of statewide satellite-based subsidence data from annually to quarterly.

Drought costs

Last year, the drought cost the ag sector about \$1.1 billion and nearly 8,750 jobs, according to a new University of California, Merced analysis. With the impacts on other economic sectors, total impacts are estimated at \$1.7 billion and 14,634 jobs.

The report, “The Economic Impacts of the 2021 Drought on California Agriculture Preliminary Report,” was released March 1 and details the impacts of last year’s drought in the Central Valley, the Russian River

of the San Joaquin Valley, Tulare County and Kern County were the most affected by drought. Other areas included the Russian River basin and intermountain agricultural areas in Siskiyou, Shasta and Modoc counties. The crops most significantly affected by increased fallowing include rice in the Sacramento Valley, cotton in the San Joaquin Valley, and grain and field crops statewide.

“Should dry conditions persist throughout 2022, a higher tier of adaptation measures may come into play to reduce economic impacts on agriculture and communities that host thousands of households relying on agriculture for a living,” said School of Engineering professor Josué Medellín-Azuara, lead author of the report.

The report also highlighted strong commodity prices, such as milk prices. In addition, the report noted while the beef cattle sector had to adapt to limited winter pasture and higher forage prices,

“Californians rely on groundwater during drought, so it’s not surprising that land in some areas is continuing to sink.”

basin and northern intermountain valley areas. Researchers developed estimates of economic impacts using surveys, reviews of hydrological information and remote sensing data and compared them to average conditions, along with the 2012-16 drought.

The report said there were at least an additional 395,000 acres of idled land—roughly 385,000 acres in the Central Valley alone with respect to pre-drought conditions due to drought-related water cutbacks.

Several parts of the Sacramento Valley, the west side

of the state’s beef cow herd increased, as did its share of the national cow herd, leading to potential revenue gains.”

The 2020-21 water years were the second driest two years on record, according to the report. “Sadly, we are going to see more and more droughts like this, so we need better tools to anticipate and minimize the socioeconomic impacts,” said researcher and co-author Alvar Escriva-Bou, an engineering and policy expert at the Public Policy Institute of California.

— Anna Miller, *WLJ* managing editor

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California updates black bear take policy

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) issued a new black bear take policy for the state in mid-February. According to the department, the last time the bear policies were updated was more than two decades ago in 2000. The updated policies apply statewide, although there are also sections specific to the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Most notably to producers, the policies address depredation incidents. "Existing law allows any owner or tenant of land or property that is being damaged or destroyed or is in danger of being damaged or destroyed by specific animals, including bears, to request from the Department a permit to kill the animal involved," the guidance read. This has been the case since at least

1957.

However, the permit will now be issued by CDFW after an application is submitted showing satisfactory evidence of the damage or destruction. The permit will contain information about why it is necessary, what efforts were made to solve the problem without killing the bear, corrective actions that should be implemented to prevent a recur-

rence and proper disposal of the carcass.

"The Department emphasizes that this process requires information from the applicant whether any efforts, and if so, what efforts, were made to solve the problem without the need for lethal action," the updated policy read. "If no such efforts have been made, the Department will work with the applicant to propose

nonlethal efforts first."

In addition, CDFW may add terms and conditions to the permit to protect wildlife and ensure public safety. This could include actions such as hazing, enclosing animal pens, or installing fencing, electric fencing, motion lights, sprinklers, noise machines or guard animals.

According to Section 4181.1(a) of the California

Fish and Game Code, "Any owner of livestock or the livestock owner's employee may immediately take a bear encountered in the act of, inflicting injury to, molesting or killing livestock if the taking is reported to the Department no later than the next working day and the carcass is made available to the Department." — **Anna Miller, WLJ managing editor**

Haaland expresses support for wolf population review

ESA
(from page 1)

The petition says that in USFWS' decision to delist the wolf population, the agency made the commitment to emergency list the wolves if it was determined a state changed their regulatory framework to authorize unlimited and unregulated taking of wolves.

"Given the regulatory changes in Idaho and Montana, and continued inadequacy of state management in Wyoming, the Service must

adhere to its 2009 promise to relist wolves on an emergency basis," the petition read.

The groups said a new law in Idaho allows hunters, trappers and private contractors to kill wolves year-round, at any age and with no limits. In addition, Montana now allows the killing of 85 percent of the population, which disproportionately impacts wolves from Yellowstone National Park, the petition said.

On Feb. 17, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks closed the hunting season in Montana's hunting

Region 3, which borders Yellowstone National Park, after the quota for 82 killed wolves was met. As of March 2, wolf kills in Montana totaled 252 head. The remaining six hunting regions continue to be open for the hunting season.

In addition to the petitioners, the petition says "hundreds of thousands of people across the U.S. and around the world" are asking for emergency wolf relisting, including regional Tribes, 23 senators, 81 representatives,

more than 70 directors of zoos and over 800 scientists.

"Without the emergency listing the FWS promised in 2009 would respond to new laws like these, the core of the population of gray wolves in the Northern Rockies is at risk," the petition concluded.

"Moreover, without emergency listing, the Service will set harmful precedent by condoning states with management for delisted species to change their regulations to allow and encourage take of recovered species to the point

that puts them back on the brink of extinction."

In a recent opinion piece for USA Today, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland expressed her support for wolf relisting, if necessary. "Because of the gray wolf's recovery, individual states are responsible for its welfare and sustaining that recovery. Nevertheless, we will reinstate federal protections under the ESA for the northern Rocky Mountains' gray wolf, if necessary."

She also noted the USFWS

is evaluating whether a relisting of the northern Rocky Mountains gray wolf population under the ESA is necessary.

Petition signatories include the International Wildlife Coexistence Network, Western Watersheds Project, WildEarth Guardians, Endangered Species Coalition, Wyoming Untrapped, Wyoming Wildlife Advocates, 06 Legacy and the Center for a Humane Economy. — **Anna Miller, WLJ managing editor**

ALB releases glowing 2021 annual report

Despite the pandemic, lamb promotions by the American Lamb Board (ALB) "lit a fire" with consumers through promotions funded with the Lamb Checkoff, according to ALB's 2021 annual report titled "On Fire in 2021."

"I can honestly say that your American Lamb Checkoff lit a fire with consumers this past year," said Gwendolyn Kitzan, ALB chair, in a statement. "As they took to the outdoors for entertainment and relaxation, we helped them create fabulous meals with American lamb. It's been one of our most successful campaigns to date."

Among the promotions in 2021 was a network of outdoor cooking experts in the food blogger network who contributed 34 American lamb recipes with photos and videos that had a total reach of 6.9 million consumers. ALB noted media coverage was "largely positive" about lamb, with coverage of the outdoor cooking poll and growth of lamb retail sales, including 4,400 articles written about lamb, resulting in 20 billion impressions.

ALB continued its seasonal social media campaigns with lamb lovers month, #thelambchallenge, outdoor cooking adventures and tailgate adventures, and it will continue virtual events along with in-person events. In food service, Taziki's Mediterranean Cafe tested an American lamb burger, and Lebanese Taverna created a holiday takeout pack.

The promotions were in conjunction with a funded consumer research study in 2021 to better understand the impacts of COVID-19 on consumer usage and attitudes about lamb. The study found consumers purchase lamb because it brings up images of special occasions, it's a reminder of cultural food roots and it has a unique flavor that they use to diversify their meals.

According to the study, the

majority of lamb purchasers were college-educated millennials with families who live in urban areas and have a yearly income of more than \$100,000. The group, known as heavy users, purchased lamb once a week or more.

"We have to be exceptionally savvy and in touch with our consumers. It's been about three years since our rebranding project to bring a new spark to American lamb promotions. Even though the pandemic put a wrinkle in our plans, it truly brought forward opportunities," Kitzan said.

ALB continued its industry outreach in 2021, with a lamb carcass quality video series produced by North Dakota State University Extension and the National Lamb Feeders Association Trailblazers Tour in Texas, highlighting innovative industry practices. To assist in promoting lamb, ALB provided tools to support producers and direct marketers with materials such as recipe brochures and the lamb promotional partnership program to assist local lamb groups.

ALB's research efforts continue, with phase three separating lamb by flavor profile to market to consumers. The research is being conducted by Colorado State University and Texas Tech University using technology to predict flavor attributes that correlate with consumer sensory testing. ALB is also working with Michigan State University on the first study to measure the environmental footprint of lamb production.

"Your mandatory American Lamb Checkoff has one of the smallest budgets of any national program—only Christmas trees and popcorn have less," Kitzan said. "As I retire from the board after six years, the challenges we faced brought out incredible unity and new determination from all segments of our industry. Let's keep this fire burning hot!" — **Charles Wallace, WLJ editor**

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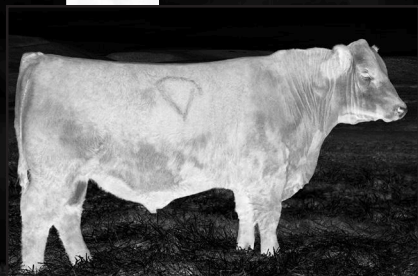
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Annual beef heifer replacement forecast for 2022 production season

— Nebraska predictions

What is a respectable beef replacement heifer value for the coming 2022 production season? This is the fifth annual beef cow replacement value forecast for Nebraska. The intention is to provide baseline replacement heifer values to producers and industry stakeholders. Forecasts provided are derived from a set of very complex interrelationships, many of which are themselves fore-

The information here is intended as a guide, which users would be expected to modify depending on their circumstances and expectations of future production costs and cow and calf values. The forecast price and cost variations are those specified by the University of Missouri's Food and Agriculture Policy Research Institute's (FAPRI) 10-year projections. The changes in percent of annual costs given by FAPRI were used to adjust the costs of Nebraska producers.

Selecting replacement heifers differs from ranch to ranch, but the value for both retained and purchased replacements generally depends on:

- Longevity, the replacement heifer's ability to stay in the herd as a productive unit.
- Productivity, both the current and future expected difference between costs and revenues (calf price and cost differences over the heifer's productive life).
- Genetic and phenotypical compatibility with herd

mates (heifer conforms with the production system and performance goals).

- Operator goals and management style (heifer contribution to future of ranch).
- Financial standing, specifically debt related to cow purchases.

This forecast assumes producers know two things about their operation:

- Annual cost of production per cow: Authors used University of Nebraska-Lincoln's (UNL) Cost Cow-Q-Lator to help calculate the three levels of costs.

- Average historical replacement rate: This is the number of heifers needed each year to replace culled cows or cull rate and is a measure of cow longevity.

The three annual costs of production for 2021 used to start the model do not include calving rate, replacement cost, depreciation expense or death loss since these are each accounted for within the simulation itself.

The 2022 three annual production costs per cow were identified as \$735.48/cow (low), \$866.30/cow (av-

placements also reduces their break-even value.

At the highest replacement rate (28 percent) and lowest annual cost (\$735.48/head), there is an \$89.34/head reduction in breakeven, as a result of financing. The largest drop in breakeven value occurs with the lowest replacement rate (14 percent) and annual production costs of \$990.32/head. That break-even value resulted in a reduction of \$47.46/head, due to borrowing money. The overall average drop in break-even val-

Figure 1. Replacement heifer breakeven value forecasted average cost and replacement rates

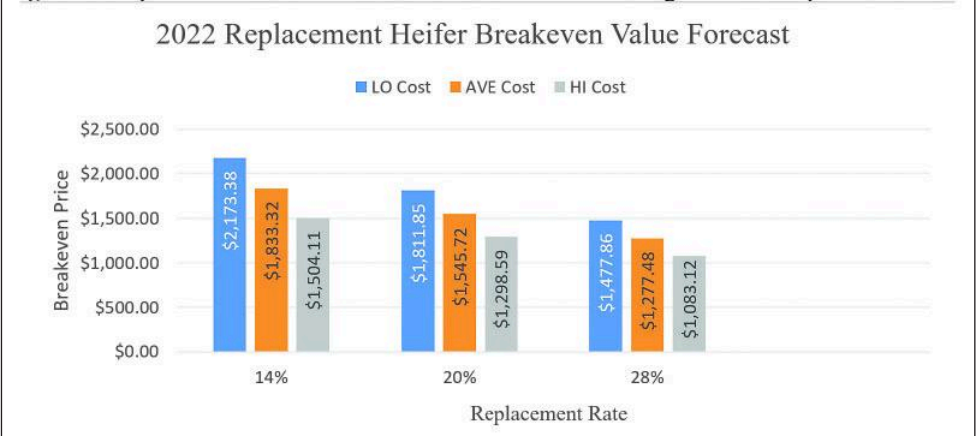
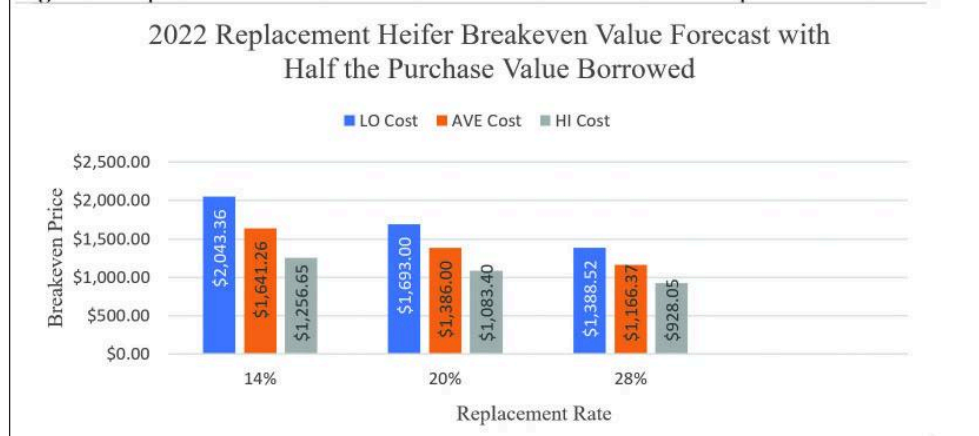


Figure 2. Replacement heifer breakeven value forecasted with 50% of purchase cost financed



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erage), and \$990.32/cow (high). Values were adjusted within the simulation using those derived from FAPRI cost differences.

These costs relate directly to the 2021 Nebraska state average low, median and high pasture rental rates found in the UNL Agricultural Economics department's 2021 Nebraska Farm Real Estate Report. These rates are a low of \$41.05/cow-calf pair, a middle rate of \$51.32/cow-calf pair and a high of \$61.27/cow-calf pair. Winter rates were half of those charged in the summer. The pasture costs ranged from about 38-43 percent of all costs and 65-68 percent of total feed costs, while feed costs ranged from 56 percent to nearly 60 percent of all costs.

Since it is difficult to anticipate and quantify all the possible conditions in which replacement cows are purchased, three representative levels of cost of production and three rates of replacement herd types were used to create a total of nine break-even value forecasts. Breakeven means that the average dollar value cost of purchasing cows equaled the dollars returned from that purchase.

The nine forecasts are a result of 1,000 randomly drawn outcomes from each simulated scenario. The nine scenarios were the result of the three cost levels described earlier and at three rates of 14 percent, 20 percent and 28 percent annual herd replacement.

To account for producers who require added working capital, the same nine scenarios were simulated with half the value of cow replacements borrowed at 5 percent interest. Cow purchase value averages \$1,437.50/head. The break-even results from the two simulations are reported in Figures 1 and 2.

As expected, both the costs of production and replacement rates affect how much can be paid for replacement heifers and ability to break even. Borrowing money to help pay for re-

ue caused by borrowing half the replacement value is \$157.65/head.

The included tables are valuable and can be used to extrapolate changes in replacement cow break-even values based on replacement rate, annual production costs and/or both. Table 2 lists the decrease in breakeven value for each percent increase in replacement rate by cull rate group.

For example, the reduction in break-even value for no borrowed money (NBM) with a replacement rate between 14 percent and 20 percent in the lowest annual per head cost group decreases by \$60.25/head. Scenarios where no money is borrowed for cow purchases have a slightly greater reduction for each percent in replacement rate increase than those with borrowed money (BM).

However, all break-even values for like scenarios of borrowed money are still less than those who do not borrow money. Finishing with an example, if a producer in the lowest cost category had an 18 percent replacement rate and a 3 percent increase, the break-even would fall by \$180.75/head. From Figure 1, that would mean it would decrease from \$2,173.38/head to \$1,992.63/head.

Table 3 demonstrates that increases in annual production costs also decrease the break-even value of cow replacements. For every dollar increase in cost, there is more than a dollar's worth of decline. The 14 percent replacement rate has the greatest impact on cow replacement value, more so with financed cow purchases.

At the 14 percent replacement rate with the highest annual production costs group, BM and NBM respectively have a \$3.10/head and \$2.65/head decrease in break-even value for every dollar increase in cost, the most for all scenarios.

The information found in Tables 2 and 3 is used to forecast break-even values for each 1 percent increase

Table 1. Captured difference of no-borrowed money (NBM) to borrowed money (BM) on breakeven values

Breakeven difference between BM and NBM \$/hd	Annual Replacement Rate		
	14% Replacement Rate	20% Replacement Rate	28% Replacement Rate
Costs/Hd./Year			
(LO) \$735.48	-\$130.02	-\$118.85	-\$89.34
(AVE) \$866.30	-\$192.06	-\$159.72	-\$111.11
(HI) \$990.32	-\$247.46	-\$215.19	-\$155.07

Table 2. Dollars decreased in cow replacement value for each % increase in replacement rate

Changes in breakeven for NBM (no borrowed money) scenarios for cull rate changes		
Costs	Replacement Rate Range 14%-20%	Replacement Rate Range 20%-28%
(LO) \$735.48	-\$60.25	-\$41.75
(AVE) \$866.30	-\$47.93	-\$33.53
(HI) \$990.32	-\$34.25	-\$26.93
Changes in breakeven for BM (borrowed money) scenarios for cull rate changes		
Costs	Replacement Rate Range 14%-20%	Replacement Rate Range 20%-28%
(LO) \$735.48	-\$58.39	-\$38.06
(AVE) \$866.30	-\$42.54	-\$27.45
(HI) \$990.32	-\$28.88	-\$19.42

animal’s ability to return as much or more value than was paid, and this is only accomplished if the operation selects the right type of animals, at the right price and at the right time. One can always find the instance where an overpriced replacement broke even or made money, as well as where an inexpensively purchased cow ended with a loss.

The important thing is that, on average, good choices outperform those that didn’t pan out. Re-

member, raising replacements doesn’t make them free. In fact, it is important to know what they cost to raise and how they rate in value relative to purchased animals. This, however, is a topic for another day.

As longevity of a replacement cow increases, the average herd age increases, and break-even values increase, except when cost exceeds revenue. Low cost, low replacement herds can afford higher valued replacement heifers and replace capital faster in their

operations. When raising or purchasing replacement heifers, each heifer’s value is based on her ability to stay in the herd and the producer’s ability to manage that productivity, control costs and use the market to their advantage. Applying these principles is key to making an operation more profitable and resilient. — **Randy Saner, Nebraska Extension educator, and Matt Stockton, Nebraska Extension ag economics specialist**

Table 3. Dollars decreased in cow replacement value for each \$1 increase in costs

Changes in breakeven for NBM scenarios for costs changes			
Costs/Hd./Year Range	14% Replacement Rate	20% Replacement Rate	28% Replacement Rate
\$735.48 to \$866.30	-\$2.60/\$1	-\$2.03/\$1	-\$1.53/\$1
\$866.30 to \$990.32	-\$2.65/\$1	-\$1.99/\$1	-\$1.57/\$1
Changes in breakeven for BM scenarios for costs changes			
Costs/Hd./Year	14% Replacement Rate	20% Replacement Rate	28% Replacement Rate
\$735.48 to \$866.30	-\$3.07/\$1	-\$2.35/\$1	-\$1.70/\$1
\$866.30 to \$990.32	-\$3.10/\$1	-\$2.44/\$1	-\$1.92/\$1

in replacement rate and for every \$10/head annual production costs increase.

Productivity changes include calving rates and calf growth rates, among others. Revenue changes also play a role in altering break-even value. Demand and supply shifts that alter cattle prices also have an impact on replacement heifer break-even value. Higher calf prices lead to higher break-even values, while lower prices lead to lower break-even values. This last point may seem obvious, but remember it is complicated by a heifer’s productive life that can span more than a decade or less than a complete season.

Accurately forecasting these values leads to better forecasting of cow replacement values. An economically successful producer, on average, buys or raises replacement heifers for no more than what is needed in net returns over their lifetime. The purchase value of any particular replacement heifer is unknown without knowing her future longevity, productivity, costs and cattle prices. In other words, the purchase of any single animal has some very real risk associated: nothing new or earth shattering, but worthy of recognition.

A positive outcome in purchasing replacements over time comes down to the



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1053J PB SM \$API 164.9 \$TI 83.6
ASA 3906454 HOOK'S FRONTLINE 40F son.

PAP 39
1451J 3/8 SM 5/8 AN \$API 171.5 \$TI 98.8
ASA 3892913 HOOK'S EAGLE 6E son.

PAP 41
1542J 3/8 SM 5/8 AN \$API 173.2 \$TI 99.2
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Farmer sentiment rises during commodity price rally

— Concern over production costs

Farmer sentiment continues to fluctuate month to month as the Purdue University/CME Group Ag Economy Barometer rose 6 points to a reading of 125 in February, a mirror image of the previous month.

The Index of Current Conditions was down 1 point to a reading of 132, while the Index of Future Expectations improved 10 points to a reading of 122. The Ag Economy Barometer is calculated each month from 400 U.S. agricultural producers' responses to a telephone survey. This month's survey was conducted Feb. 14-18, days before Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The Farm Financial Performance Index remained unchanged in February at a reading of 83. However, the sharp drop in the index, down 27 percent from late 2021 to 2022, indicates producers expect financial performance in 2022 to be worse than in 2021. The financial index is generated based upon pro-

ducers' responses to whether they expect their farm's current financial performance to be better than, worse than or about the same as the previous year.

"These survey responses suggest that concerns about the spike in production costs and supply chain issues continue to mostly outweigh the impact of the commodity price rally that's been underway this winter," said James Mintert, the barometer's principal investigator and director of Purdue University's Center for Commercial Agriculture.

Higher input costs have consistently been the number one concern identified by farmers over the past six months, according to results from the Ag Economy Barometer survey. To gain additional insight into the concerns of producers, this month, respondents were provided with a more detailed set of possible responses when answering this question.

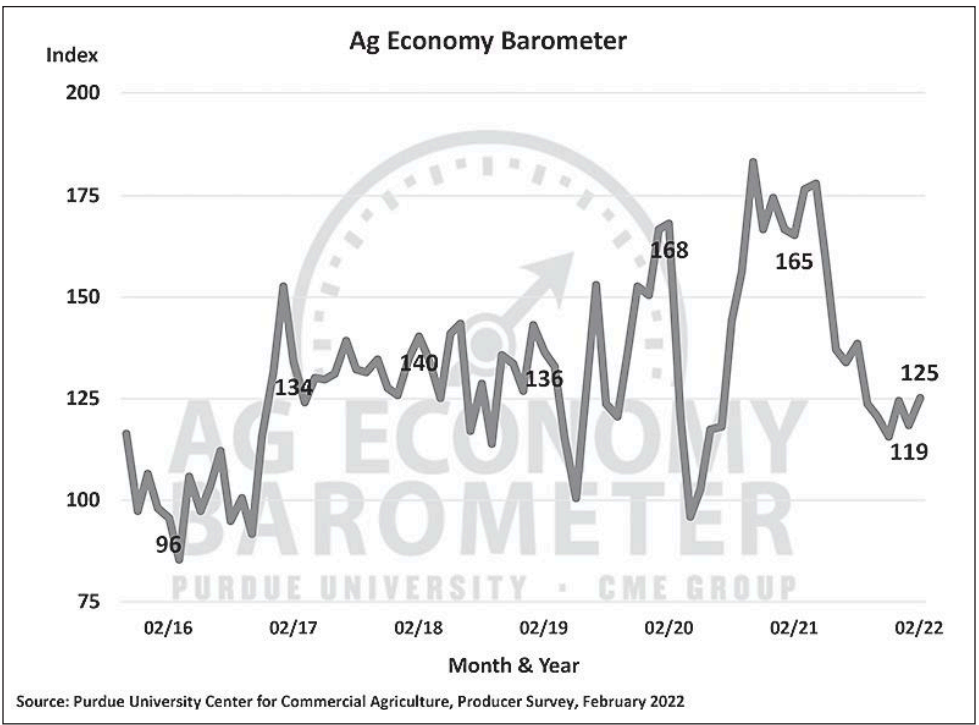
While a majority still consider input costs as their

number one concern (47 percent), it was followed by lower output prices (16 percent), environmental policy (13 percent), farm policy (9 percent), climate policy (8 percent) and COVID-19's impact (7 percent).

Tight machinery inventories continue to be a problem. In February, over 40 percent of producers stated that low farm machinery inventories are holding back their investment plans. While plans for farm building and grain bin construction were more optimistic this month, 56 percent still said their plans for new construction are below the previous year.

Thirty percent of corn and soybean producers say they've had difficulty purchasing crop inputs from their suppliers. In a follow-up question posed to corn and soybean producers who said they experienced difficulty procuring inputs, herbicides are the most problematic input to source, followed by fertilizer and farm machinery parts.

To learn more about how



crop producers are responding to surging fertilizer prices, corn producers were again asked if they plan to change their nitrogen fertilizer application rate in 2022 compared to the rate used in

2021. One-third of corn producers in this month's survey said they plan to use a lower nitrogen application rate this year than in 2021, compared with 37 percent of corn producers who said they planned to reduce their nitrogen application rate when surveyed in January.

Each winter, the barometer survey asks producers to project their farm's annual growth rate over the next five years. In 2022, 53 percent stated they either had no plans to grow or had plans to retire/exit in the next five years, 19 percent expect their farm's annual growth rate to range from 5-10 percent and 18 percent expect their farm's annual growth rate to be less than 5 percent.

The need for better broadband coverage in rural areas

has been highlighted in several legislative proposals at both the state and national level. The February barometer survey included a question asking respondents to characterize the quality of their farm's internet access. Just three of 10 respondents said they had "high quality" internet access, 41 percent said "moderate quality," 16 percent chose "poor quality" on the survey and 12 percent stated that they did not have internet access at all.

Responses to this question suggest that nearly three of 10 farms in this month's survey are unable to take advantage of many applications and services that require reasonable quality internet access. — **Purdue University Extension, CME Group**

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Salmon-killing toxin: Scientists share discoveries

— Congressional roundtable

Washington State University (WSU) stormwater researchers Jen McIntyre and John Stark shared perspectives on research to save salmon in a Feb. 25 virtual roundtable hosted by U.S. Reps. Marilyn Strickland (D-WA-10) and Derek Kilmer (D-WA-06).

McIntyre, an associate professor in the School of the Environment, and Stark, director of the Washington Stormwater Center, joined participants from the Washington State Department of Ecology, University of Washington (UW), Northwest Fisheries Science Center, the Nisqually Tribe and the U.S. Tire Manufacturers Association to discuss near-term and long-term ways to address a salmon-killing chemical in urban runoff.

In 2020, scientists from UW and WSU found that a chemical—a tire preservative called 6PPD quinone—runs off roads and into streams, ultimately disrupting the blood-brain barrier in salmon.

"We've discovered that 6PPD quinone is even more toxic than we'd initially reported—almost 10 times more toxic," McIntyre said.

Working with labs in North America, Asia and Europe, scientists measured the chemical in surface waters at concentrations of concern "basically everywhere that

it's been looked for," McIntyre added. "It's found in air pollution, urban soils and urban dust. It's ubiquitous."

Funded by the Washington State Department of Ecology, WSU scientists are working to understand environmental conditions, as well as life stages of coho, that affect toxicity. They have begun to look for the chemical's effects in other species.

Stark and McIntyre urged support for research, including establishment of a regional stormwater center of excellence that builds on WSU's decades-long efforts to understand salmon mortality.

"We built the largest stormwater research center in the country," Stark said. At Puyallup, WSU scientists lead rain garden and permeable pavement experiments in search of solutions to remove pollutants.

"We're poised to be able to address nearly all the critical data gaps," McIntyre said. "In the past year, we've been doing what we can to move forward our knowledge with minimal resources."

While it could take years, if not longer, to phase out this particular toxin, tires being sold today will pollute for decades, Stark said.

"We need to find other ways to get rid of those chemicals in a safe, effective and economic manner," he said. — **WSU Extension**

Sustainability by the numbers, market direction

During the Cattlemen's Profit Roundup at the American Gelbvieh Association (AGA) national convention, Dustin Aherin, AGA board member, shared his insights on market direction and the Gelbvieh and Balancer position within that direction.

"I want to plant a seed for where incentives are coming from," Aherin told attendees. "When we think about where the pressures have traditionally come from, we often point to consumers first. That isn't anything new. When we think back to the push for quality, those dollars ultimately came from consumers and were passed down through the supply chain: through the packers, through marketing grids, to cattle producers who increased quality."

Aherin says that a focus on sustainability is bringing new pressures. Today, the pressure is coming from the government and exists all along the supply chain, with funding allocated by the current administration to ensure that those pressures catalyze beef industry production. Within this structure are other vested groups, many breed associations and nongovernmental organizations.

There are also shareholders looking at the sustainability space as an investment opportunity, and those investors, Aherin says, are interested in directing their dollars toward environment, social and governance (ESG) opportunities.

"There's a lot of institutional funds—think pensions, for instance—that have set

guidelines that stipulate that they will only invest in companies that check the boxes around ESG," he says.

Aherin also talked about the role lenders are playing in financing sustainability efforts, which he notes is an interest rate opportunity rather than a cutoff of funding at this time.

"One way that the finance industry has started to offer some incentives on the food company side is called 'sustainability linked financing.' That's where certain key performance indicators are linked to better interest rates," Aherin shares. "At the producer level, we are just starting to see this begin to develop with a push for operations to set a baseline and begin documenting changes and improvements."

Will it pay?

"If we think about the consumer first, are they going to pay a premium for a product that's stamped 'sustainable'? More importantly, is that premium going to be enough to pay for some of the costs and supply chain needed to get it to them? I don't think we have a clear answer to those questions yet," he told attendees.

A first of its kind USDA Process Verified Program (PVP), Low Carbon Beef, says that the answer is "yes." Recent research by the group indicates that 71 percent of consumers expressed they are willing to pay a premium for beef certified as being produced with sustainable meth-

ods. The newly approved PVP will allow producers to differentiate and market beef that is raised with reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

The sheer fact that the USDA has approved a program of this type confirms that interest exists from all market stakeholders.

"From January to August 2021, we saw sustainable linked financing reach more than \$300 billion globally," Aherin says. "These dollars are growing fast; around 18 percent of cash inflows into investment funds were targeted towards funds that had some kind of sustainability metric built into them."

Aherin predicts that many of the incentives for progress within the supply chain are going to come from the targets and goals set by major food companies—a trade-off of sorts, where the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and improved sustainability don't necessarily come from the food company itself, but rather from the practices of supply chain partners those companies source ingredients from.

That's an opportunity for beef producers.

"We're already good at a lot of these things," he says. "Have you measured pounds weaned versus pounds exposed? Do you have a breeding plan that is based on marketing goals? Are you (Beef Quality Assurance) certified? So much of this is about just documenting things you are already doing, putting it in writing so there's a record."

The majority of the resources used in the beef industry are consumed at the cow-calf level, with around 75 percent of the entire beef industry feed inputs consumed in that sector.

Aherin says that AGA and other breed associations are playing an important role in facilitating the documentation and quantification of many of these important metrics at the cow-calf level.

To really know and understand the total resource use per pound of calf weaned or per pound of beef produced, producers use many metrics, essentially building a funnel of information for each cow in



Dustin Aherin

AGA

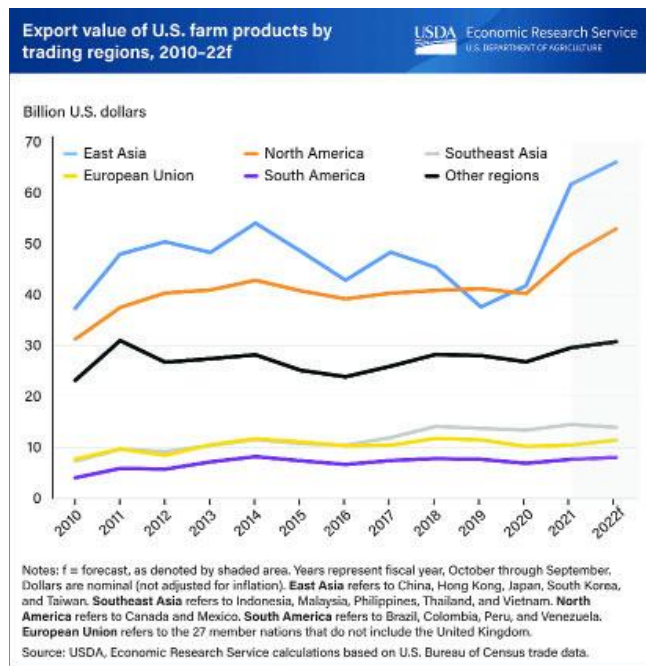
the herd. Those metrics are, more often than not, a story of sustainability.

"We are so good (as a sector) at collecting data—measuring and quantifying—and then using that data to improve cattle through EPDs. Right now, we have an incredible opportunity, and to take advantage of it, we need to step up our game and really focus on some of the traits that have sustainability impacts so we can prove through numbers what we already

know," he says.

Today, the Gelbvieh and Balancer breeds boast the smallest mature cow sizes of all major breeds, unsurpassed fertility and a level of docility that makes the breeds family friendly. The breeds hold the pieces needed for both commercial and seedstock producers to put the sustainability puzzle together. If and how operations put that puzzle together is up to them, for now. — **Laura Handke, AGA**

Ag exports spurred by grain, oilseed sales



At more than \$172 billion, the total value of U.S. agricultural exports reached a high in fiscal year (FY) 2021. Values are projected to remain elevated in FY 2022 (October–September), with the current forecast at \$183.5 billion.

Exports grew in most trading regions, although East Asia (China, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea) has recently accounted for the largest share. Exports to East Asia slipped during the 2010s from a high of \$54 billion in 2014 to a low of \$37.7 billion in 2019.

Since 2019, exports rebounded to \$61.7 billion in 2021, of which China accounts for 54 percent and Japan 22 percent, and they are forecast to exceed \$66 billion in FY 2022. Much of

the growth in East Asian exports was associated with higher consumption of grains and oilseeds as China rebuilds its pork industry after devastation caused by African swine fever.

U.S. sales to North American trading partners provided the second largest contribution to U.S. agricultural export growth. Abundant U.S. corn supplies supported the increases in grain and feed exports, especially to Mexico. In 2021, grain and feed exports to Mexico and Canada rose to \$11.8 billion.

Agricultural exports to the next largest trading regions—Southeast Asia and the European Union—were comparatively flat, with both grain and oilseed exports to the EU down in 2020 and 2021. — **USDA Economic Research Service**

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Cover practices	EBI points (approx.)
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Native grasses and other plants, low diversity	50
Softwood trees without wildlife openings	60
Wildlife habitat with non-native plants	70
Native grasses and other plants, higher diversity	70
Wildlife habitat with native plants	80
Non-mast-producing hardwood trees	90
Mast-producing hardwood trees, monoculture	90
Rare and declining habitat	100
Softwood trees with wildlife openings	110
Hardwood trees, two species	110
Pollinator habitat	120
Hardwood trees, three or more species or Longleaf pine or Atlantic cedar	120

Notes: WPZ= Wildlife Priority Zone. Practices within a WPZ are eligible for a wildlife bonus of 30 points. Chart represents the average points awarded for each practice. Averages are for offers with all, or approximately all, acreage in a single practice. The cover practice "Pollinator habitat" is rarely present on single-practice offers, and a subset of points awarded for that practice requires only the greater of 10 percent of offer acreage or one acre. Averages are calculated based on whether more than 50 percent of an offer's acreage is in a WPZ. Practices are listed using shortened descriptions and shown separately based on scoring totals, except for two aggregations. Tree practices include new and existing tree stands, which receive slightly different points. Likewise, the rare and declining habitat practice includes predominantly trees and predominantly grass or shrub, which again receive slightly different points.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service based on USDA, Farm Service Agency offer data from the 2013, 2016, and 2020 General Signups.

Spring planting, winter survival in alfalfa

Alfalfa can be successfully seeded in the spring or fall depending on field weed pressure, moisture conditions and timing. Once established, perennial alfalfa plants can compete well with weeds. However, first-year stand establishment can be a challenge when moisture is limited and weed pressure is high.

If herbicide resistant weeds are currently growing in fields, then light tillage may be needed to control these weeds while creating a firm seedbed for alfalfa drilling. Also, combining light tillage plus herbicide may be a best management seedbed preparation practice.

Since new alfalfa seedlings are susceptible to injury from many herbicides, it is critical to follow all chemical label instructions. Usually, the alfalfa will need at least two to four trifoliated leaves before herbicides are applied, and 2,4-D usage is not recommended.

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

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's "Seeding Alfalfa" NebGuide lists other steps for successfully establishing new alfalfa stands. For example, alfalfa grows best at 6.8 soil pH, with a pH range from 6.5 to 7.5. Seed alfalfa between April 1 and May 15 in eastern & southern Nebraska, and sow seed between April 15 and May 15 in western and northern regions.

The target seeding depth is one-quarter to one-half inch in the fine-textured soils and three-quarters of an inch in sandy soils. Seedlings placed too shallow will dry out rapidly and die due to poor roots. Seeds planted more than an inch deep may be unable to emerge after germinating.

The time for spring planting alfalfa is just around the corner, and selecting the right seed is crucial. Two traits we should take extra time to consider are fall dormancy and winter survival. These traits are often treated the same, but they are different. Today, let's look at winter survival.

Winter survival or winter hardiness is the ability for an alfalfa plant to make it through winter without injury once the plant goes dormant. This is different than the fall dormancy rating that measures the alfalfa's ability to prepare for and recover from dormancy. Winter survival is measured on a one to six scale, with one being extremely hardy and six not hardy. For Nebraska, a winter survival rating of three is about as high as we want to go.

As temperatures drop and days shorten, alfalfa plants change their physiology to survive freezing temperatures and make it through winter. While increased hardiness can result in reduced yield potential, for a high-dollar perennial forage, having a full stand year after year is better in the long run.

In the past, winter survival traits were linked with fall dormancy. With new varieties, this isn't always the case, so winter survival needs to be evaluated on its own.

We want to pick a winter survival ranking that will get us through winter without compromising yield. Where you are in the state plays a big role in what to pick. Winter temperatures affect the choice, but maintained snow cover is also important. As snow can help insulate the ground, parts of the state that have open winters may need higher survival ratings than colder locations with winter-long snow cover.

Bottom line, for Nebraska, a winter survival rating of three is about as high as we want to go, and areas with open winters or regularly colder temperatures should be even lower. — Todd Whitney and Ben Beckman, Nebraska Extension educators

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Virtual reality farm tour expands access to urban agriculture

One way farmers learn best practices is through their peers, but the pandemic has limited in-person meetings. And when it comes to urban farming, a growing practice across many states that is not yet mainstream, traveling to farms in other cities may be difficult even in the best of times.

Now, Cornell researchers have created the most advanced virtual reality (VR) urban farm tour ever made—an online learning experience that promises to transport urban—and rural—farmers to New York City's Red Hook Farms without ever leaving home.

"It may be the best and one of the only high-resolution 3D models of an urban farm in existence," said Tapan Parikh, associate professor of computer and information science at Cornell Tech. Parikh is the first author of the paper "Greening the Virtual City: Accelerating Peer-to-Peer Learning in Urban Agriculture with Virtual Reality Environments," which published Feb. 3 in the journal *Frontiers in Sustainable Cities*.

VR tour

The research team used drones and a technique called photogrammetry to

create a virtual model of Red Hook Farms, a youth-centered urban agriculture and food justice program in Brooklyn, NY, managed by the Red Hook Initiative.

Users will be able to view the platform with a VR headset but also through a computer or mobile phone to accommodate varied access to technology, due to lack of infrastructure or an inability to afford equipment such as headsets that can run upward of \$300. Ambient sound will add to the experience of being at Red Hook Farms.

Users will be able to "walk" around the farm and enter areas with demo and instructional videos led by farm managers. These videos will show aspects of farm production, such as cultivation, composting and weeding.

With urban farms now established across New York state in New York City, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Utica and Binghamton, VR offers urban, rural and smallholder organic farmers new ways to network.

"An in-person farm visit can be prohibitive in terms of time and resources to bring people from all across the state together," Parikh said. "We're looking for some kind of happy medium

between a situated embodied experience and the ability to convene people from across the state. We hope that's what virtual reality provides us."

The goal is to not only connect farmers and improve New York's agricultural education, but to introduce new participants to the world of agriculture. Cornell's land grant mission, which provides services and trainings through Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), has historically catered to rural farming interests, but the growth of urban agriculture expands the range of stakeholders to include inner city residents who may be invested in food justice and food sovereignty.

"This is a way to see if there are technology and engagement opportunities that are distinctly different," said Jenny Kao-Kniffin, associate director of CCE and the paper's senior author. "It's a completely different agricultural system that's being defined by people who don't own land."



A view of the 3D model of Red Hook Farms in Brooklyn, NY, featuring a processing shed and high tunnels for vegetable production.

Tapan Parikh

"Virtual reality creates more exposure that goes outside your area as well," said Koron Smiley, Red Hook Farms manager and a co-author of the paper. A former video gamer, he sees the use of VR in urban agriculture as a way of reaching new audiences to bridge the tech world with farming.

"VR is a way to show an-

other perspective of the farm, especially to people who may not know about it, who are more into virtual reality and may not go outside as much."

In the future, bridging high tech and agriculture may offer new career training opportunities, added Kao-Kniffin, who is also an associate professor in the

School of Integrative Plant Science's Horticulture Section in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

The work is funded by USDA and a Cornell Tech Urban Tech Hub seed grant. — CCE

(This story first appeared in the *Cornell Chronicle*.)

How do genetic values apply to my herd goals?

Each bull you purchase should be evaluated on the basis of what genetic potential he has to offer to your specific operation. The purchase of bulls should be viewed as an investment in genetics. The profit potential of your operation is largely dependent on bull selection. Over time, 80-90 percent of genetic change is the result of sire selection. So, as we evaluate bulls, how do we determine what genetic values are important to our operation?

Use the following steps to analyze your production system and establish breeding goals:

- **Evaluate your current level of herd performance** — You need to measure in order to identify what traits need to be improved. Some examples:
 - Percent calves born unassisted/calf vigor.
 - Mature cow weight.
 - Percent pregnancy rate.
 - Percent calf crop weaned.
 - Weaning weight.
 - Weaning weight per exposed female.
 - Yearling weight.
 - Carcass weights, quality and yield grades.
- **Consider your marketing program** — Are you selling weaned calves, yearlings, finished cattle or replacement heifers? Are you using bulls as terminal sires or selecting heifers to develop as herd replacements?
- **Identify your selection goals** — Once you have quantified levels of performance in your herd and established your marketing plan and how you will use the bulls, that information determines what traits are most economically important, what changes are

Selection pressure is a precious commodity and should be focused on genetic changes that give your operation the greatest profit potential.

needed and where efficiencies can be gained. Selection pressure is a precious commodity and should be focused on genetic changes that give your operation the greatest profit potential.

- **Evaluate the genetic values of your herd bulls** — EPDs and \$Values are comparable across time and geography. A registration paper has value. Virtually all beef registries have a pedigree search option available online that can be used, free of charge, to look up the current genetic values of the bulls you have been using. These genetic values can be equated to your current levels of herd performance to guide future bull buying decisions. — **Mark Z. Johnson, Oklahoma State University Extension beef cattle breeding specialist**

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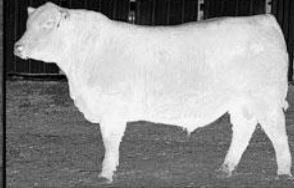
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If energy prices spike, supply chain issues continue, inflation expected to persist

In January 2022, inflation reached its highest yearly increase, at 7.5 percent, in nearly 40 years. But are these high rates here to stay, or are they only a temporary symptom of COVID-19 and the recent supply chain related disruptions?

Economists from the University of California (UC), Davis, Bar-Ilan University and the London School of Economics analyzed financial markets that trade in the risk of inflation to show how expectations of long-term inflation have changed over the last year. They found that between November 2020 and November 2021, there was over a tenfold increase in the probability of average inflation lying above 3 percent over the next five years, suggesting that many expect inflation to persist.

Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, has risen dramatically over the last year. Gas prices hit a new all-time high in November 2021, and inflation for food-at-home, electricity and new vehicles rested at 6.5 percent, 6.3 percent and 11.8 percent, respectively, in December.

Rising oil and natural gas prices, higher personal savings and increased consumer demand coming out of the lockdown, and a sluggish supply chain coming out of the pandemic may all be partially to blame for inflation over the last year.

As pent-up demand slows and supply chains adapt, their impact on inflation may

also subside. But, if the energy price spike in response to the invasion of Ukraine persists and if supply disruptions continue, it could lead consumers to demand higher wages to increase their purchasing power.

"If companies raise prices in response to higher wage demands by workers, leading to further high expectations of inflation, further wage demands and so on, then the United States could enter the wage-price spiral that is often at the heart of high and persistent inflation," said Jens Hilscher, associate professor in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at UC Davis.

They found that between November 2020 and November 2021, the probability of an average inflation of 3 percent jumped from 6.1 percent to 66.2 percent, while the probability of an average inflation of 4 percent rose from 1.6 percent to 14.1 percent, a dramatic increase.

Long-term inflation leads to higher uncertainty, making long-term planning harder for businesses and individuals alike. It also leads to lenders experiencing a loss in the real value of the money they are repaid. Over time, these factors lead lenders to charge higher interest rates to account for uncertainty and potential losses. In turn, access to credit will

"A central bank that is very committed to a stable inflation target can always bring inflation down, even if only by causing a recession."

To better understand the likelihood of long-term inflation, Hilscher and co-authors Alon Raviv, senior lecturer at Bar-Ilan University, and Ricardo Reis, A.W. Phillips professor of economics at the London School of Economics, looked at the financial markets that trade in contracts that pay off if inflation rises above a given cutoff (with one cutoff at 3 percent and another at 4 percent—both well above the Federal Reserve's target of 2 percent inflation per year). Assessing the payoffs of these two types of contracts allowed them to determine the probability of the average inflation being above 3 percent or 4 percent over the next five years.

suffer.

Hilscher noted, "A central bank that is very committed to a stable inflation target can always bring inflation down, even if only by causing a recession. We will see over the next several months which risk the Fed perceives to be the greater threat to our economy."

To learn more about the risk of long-term inflation, read the full article, "Inflation Risks are on the Rise," by Hilscher, Raviv and Reis, published by UC Giannini Foundation of Agricultural Economics in ARE Update magazine, free online at giannini.ucop.edu. — **UC Agriculture and Natural Resources**

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BW: -0.6 WW: 70 YW: 122 MILK: 27



Lot 2 :: 20263875 :: Sitz Resilient 10208
BW: 1.3 WW: 52 YW: 97 MILK: 28



Lot 16 :: 20263873 :: V D A R Maga 3068
BW: 3.1 WW: 73 YW: 122 MILK: 27



Lot 20 :: 20263817 :: GDAR Leupold 7439
BW: 0.4 WW: 62 YW: 111 MILK: 32



Lot 31 :: 20264685 :: Basin Rainmaker 4404
BW: 0.9 WW: 71 YW: 122 MILK: 31



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(from page 1)

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Learn more about National Livestock at nationallivestock.com and Western Livestock Journal LLC at wlj.net. — **WLJ**



COMING EVENTS

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

March 18-19—Cattlemen's Weekend is returning to the Prescott Livestock Auction in Chino Valley, AZ, for its 31st year, and the 24th Annual Arizona Ranch Remuda Sale is transforming into the American West Horse Sale. Cattlemen's Weekend is also hosting the 45th Annual Arizona Hereford Association Bull Sale, the 22nd Annual Arizona Angus Association Bull Sale, the 34th Annual Prescott All Breed Bull Sale, the 31st Annual Cattlemen's Trade Show, the 2nd Annual Cattlemen's Weekend Jackpot Roping and the 2nd Annual

Yavapai County Fair Catch-a-Calf Contest. More info: cattlemansweekend.com or Cattlemen's Weekend Program and American West Horse Sale Facebook pages.

March 30—The Public Lands Council's Legislative Conference will be held virtually, with no cost to attend. The event will be a half day of interactive sessions and policy briefings with the Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, Congressional Western Caucus and more. Register at publiclandscouncil.org under the "Events" and "Legislative Conference" tabs.



Benefits of cover crops extend to dry areas

Cover crops do far more than cover soils. They provide an array of benefits, such as the ability to reduce soil erosion and increase soil health. They can help attract pollinators, repel pests, turn into green manure or be used as feed for livestock.

A new study shows that the benefits of cover crops extend even into semiarid areas. This review was recently published in the *Soil Science Society of America Journal*, a publication of the Soil Science Society of America.

"Much of the research data we have on cover crops is from regions with high precipitation," says Humberto Blanco, lead researcher at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. "So, questions remain about ecosystem services provided by cover crops in drier regions."

Some skeptics have argued that growing cover crops in more arid areas could use too much water. In turn, it could reduce subsequent food crop yields. But the research concludes that isn't necessarily the case.

"We found that cover crops can improve most ecosystem services in water-limited environments," says Blanco. "In the majority of cases, these improvements come without negative effects on food crop yields."

To determine how well cover crops work in semiarid areas, Blanco and colleagues assembled and analyzed the limited number of studies on cover crops in dry regions. They emphasized studies fo-

cusing on the semiarid Great Plains in the U.S.

The researchers looked at cover crops in connection with several ecosystem services. These included the amount of organic carbon in soils, soil microbial properties, weed management and food crop yields, among others.

One of the key soil features the researchers focused on was soil organic carbon.

"Soil organic carbon is the catalyst for many other changes in soil properties and soil services," says Blanco. "Soils in water-limited regions are often low in organic carbon."

The researchers found that in dry areas, cover crops increased soil organic carbon levels close to 60 percent of the time.

"This accumulation of organic carbon is critical to these soils," says Blanco. That's because soil organic carbon is the food source for many soil organisms, like microbes. Ultimately, these soil organisms play a vital role in maintaining healthy, fertile soils.

Cover crops also suppress weeds in dry areas. This is especially important because several weed species are resistant to current herbicides. The suppression of weeds by cover crops has a knock-on effect of increasing water conservation and preventing soil erosion.

"Herbicide-resistant weeds can lead to tillage of typically no-till systems," says Blanco. "This can reduce the water

conservation ability of those agroecosystems." Tilling can also make soils more susceptible to erosion.

Cover crops also provide food for livestock in dry areas. "Grazing or haying cover crops can improve net returns without negating benefits to soils," says Blanco. That's because even when grazed, a significant portion of the cover crop remains on the fields. Also, cover crop roots persist even when grazed, holding soils together and providing many benefits.

The study found that cover crops can reduce food crops' yields in some cases. These instances typically coincided with intermittent drought conditions. Water availability for cover and food crops decreased during these years.

"Adapting crop rotations and cover crop use to accommodate weather conditions is critical," says Blanco. "Farmers in drier areas may not be able to plant a cover crop every year. They can target wet years when cover crops can be successful."

Blanco aims to continue researching cover crops in dry areas.

"Long-term research is critical to identify the enduring effects of cover crops," he says. "Yet, long-term research data for cover crops in arid and semiarid areas are virtually absent in the literature."

— **American Society of Agronomy, Soil Science Society of America and Crop Science Society of America**



Augustine Obour

Comparing grazed and ungrazed portions of a cover crop field in Alexander, KS.

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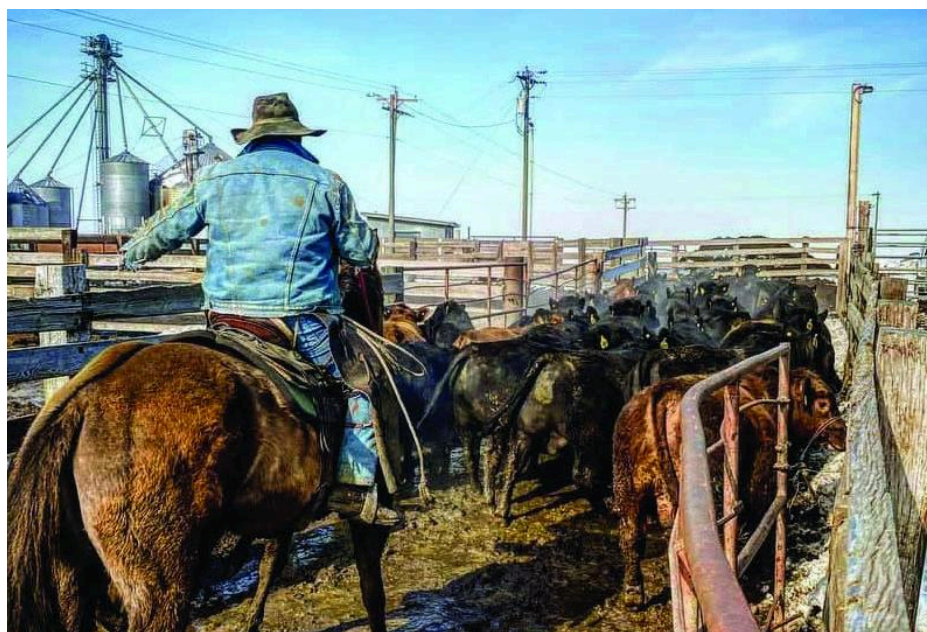
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MARCH 16TH, 2022

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Invention to improve health and welfare of farrowing sows

A patented Purdue University invention designed to cool sows and lower their respiration rate while farrowing has been licensed to Innovative Heating Technologies for further beta testing and commercialization.

Company President Chris Grant said Innovative Heating Technologies has more than 25 years of experience producing energy-efficient equipment for the agricultural industry. He said licensing the sow cooling pads is a perfect fit and the next logical step for the company.

"Our primary focus is working with pork producers in a very narrow application: We manufacture the most energy-efficient heat mat for farrowing and nursery applications," Grant said. "Introducing a cooling product specifically designed to reduce stress and improve animal welfare is a direct complement to our existing business."

The cooling pads, developed by Allan Schinckel, a professor in the Department of Animal Sciences, and Robert Stwalley, clinical assistant professor in the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, are 2-by-4-foot aluminum tread plates on top of copper pipes that circulate water. Since there is only room for the sow on the pad, piglets that need to stay warm are off the edge while they feed. Sensors in the pad can determine if the sow is getting too hot and circulate new

"Conversations on heat stress and sow cooling have been prioritized by producers and veterinarians."

water, cooling the pad again.

Schinckel, Stwalley and their students have published several peer-reviewed papers on sow lactation heat production, feed intake and the technology in journals, including Applied Engineering in Agriculture, the Journal of Animal Science, the Professional Animal Scientist and the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers.

"These published papers show the sound science around our design for efficient, effective heat removal," Schinckel said. "We have recently published data that demonstrate how the cooling pads increase the piglet weaning weights during times of higher temperatures."

"Conversations on heat stress and sow cooling have been prioritized by producers and veterinarians. They are eager to implement new technology related to animal welfare," Grant said. "We're looking forward to participating in continued research

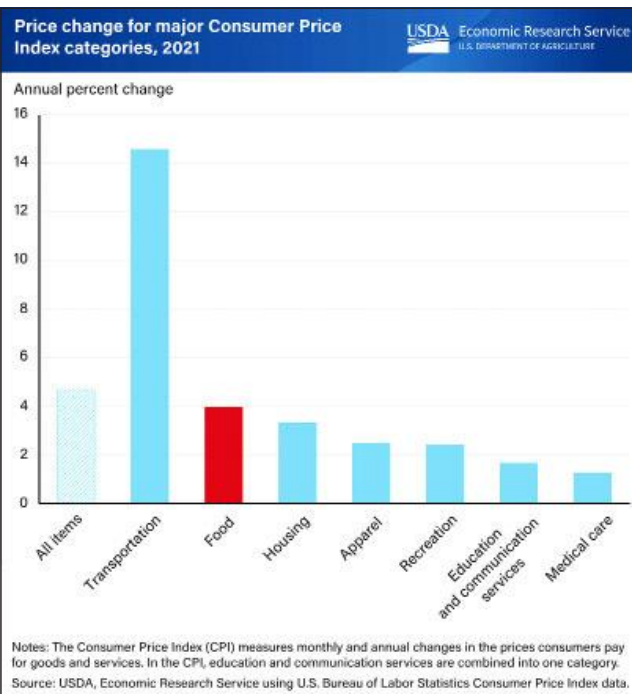
with Purdue and have set a goal to introduce a commercial-ready cooling pad into hog facilities as soon as possible."

Grant said the hog market is changing. Producers are driven to adopt and integrate new technologies related to improving sustainability and animal welfare.

"When the sow cooling pads are tested, our main goal will be to verify the efficiency and performance of the pads and the impact they have on the sows' welfare and performance over time," Grant said. "This is the data our customers will want to see."

Schinckel and Stwalley's research received funding from a Purdue Agricultural Science and Extension for Economic Development grant, Trask Innovation Fund grant, National Pork Board Student Research or Extension Experience grant, and the Wabash Heartland Innovation Network. — **Purdue University Extension**

Food prices were below overall inflation in 2021



Food prices overall increased by an average of 3.9 percent in 2021 compared to 2020, the highest annual increase since 2008. Food prices grew more slowly than the all items and transportation consumer price indexes (CPIs) but more quickly than all the other major groups tracked by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The CPI for all items rose 4.7 percent in 2021. Among the food categories that constitute the food CPI, the food-away-from-home (restaurant purchases) CPI increased 4.5 percent, compared with an increase of 3.5 percent for food-at-home (grocery stores or other purchases from food retailers).

The highest price increases in food-at-home categories in 2021 were for beef and veal (9.3 percent), pork (8.6 percent) and fresh fruit (5.5 percent). Using the CPI data, USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) researchers project overall food prices will increase between 2 and 3 percent in 2022.

A five-year comparison of changes in major CPI categories is available in the "Food Prices and Spending" section of ERS' Ag and Food Statistics: Charting the Essentials data product, and a time-series visualization of the data appears in the Food Price Environment data tool. — **USDA ERS**

Western Livestock Journal.

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Proper nutrition is important in the development of bulls

The nutritional management of bulls in a cow/calf operation is critical, as bulls contribute half the genetics of a cow herd. Their fertility is just as important as cows.

Cattle producers should consider performing a breeding soundness exam (BSE) on each of their bulls 30 to 60 days before the start of the breeding season. Bulls also need to be watched closely and given protection in cold weather to avoid frostbite.

In a presentation at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) Extension 2022 Cow-Calf College, Kacie McCarthy, UNL Extension cow-calf specialist, detailed some of the reasons why bull management is important. Bulls need proper nutrition from the start to ensure they are able to breed.

All three time periods of pre-weaning, post-weaning and breeding season are important times to ensure the proper nutrients are being provided to bulls, she said.

Pre-weaning nutrition is important, as rapid Sertoli cell development occurs when the bull is 4-20 weeks of age. These cells will allow for higher sperm levels in bulls, she said. Poor pre-weaning nutrition can lead to smaller testicle size, lower sperm production and a higher age of puberty.

McCarthy said proper forage quality during this time is key, and the use of supplements can ensure cow and bull nutrient needs are met. She also recommended that bulls from mature cows be selected over bulls born to heifers.

In post-weaning environments, a high energy diet is needed. This will influence scrotal growth and semen quality, McCarthy said.

Breeding season nutrition

Nutrition during breeding season is important, as studies show bulls can lose anywhere from 100 to 400 pounds during the season. This weight must be regained before the next breeding season.

Bulls should remain in the range of 5.5 to 6.5 in body condition score (BCS). This is a moderate condition, and cows should also be in this range, she said.

"The age and weight of bulls matter when thinking about breeding season nutrition," McCarthy said.

A mature 2,000 lb. bull has different nutritional requirements compared to a 1,200 lb. yearling bull, she said.

According to research, a young bull gaining 2 lbs./day will need 26 lbs. of dry matter intake, 63 percent total digestible nutrients (TDN) and 8.4 percent crude protein (CP). The older bull, meanwhile, is not gaining any more weight and will need 31 lbs. of dry matter intake, 48 percent TDN and 6.8 percent CP.

McCarthy said if bulls are on a concentrate diet

in the pre-breeding season, they should gradually be stepped off of this diet. This should be done 30 to 60 days prior to turnout.

During the breeding season, producers should continue to assess the BCS of bulls. With bulls losing weight during the season, it is important to keep a close eye on them, she said.

"There can be a ton of variability with bulls, so watch them closely," she said.

Post-breeding season nutrition also needs to be considered, McCarthy said. Cattle producers should consider separating bulls by age groups and feeding them differently, as young bulls are still gaining weight.

Another nutritional aspect to consider in the post-breeding season is a mineral program for bulls.

Several minerals are critical for bulls, she said. Selenium is important for normal spermatogenesis (production of sperm), while zinc plays a critical role in sperm cell plasma membrane integrity and tail morphology.

McCarthy said the bull-to-cow ratio depends on the capability of each individual bull. A study compared the ratio of 1:15 up to 1:50, and the report showed 1:25 was the best dollar value for the bull-to-cow ratio.

The impacts of age, social dominance and libido all play roles in the effectiveness of bulls, she said.

Complete a BSE

McCarthy said cattle producers should do a BSE annually. BSE is a uniform method of assessing a bull's likelihood of establishing pregnancy in an appropriate number of open, healthy and cycling cows or heifers in a defined breeding season.

The exam checks to make sure they can do their jobs and to make sure nothing is wrong with them physically or with sperm production. Some producers do not utilize this exam because they believe it costs too much money, but research shows about a \$6-7 per-cow return on the BSE investment, she said.

"We recommend doing a BSE four to six weeks prior to breeding season," McCarthy said. "This way you can still have some time to purchase bulls before the season."

Most BSEs are made up of four parts: physical exam, scrotal circumference, sperm motility and sperm morphology. All body parts are examined, including the eyes, ears, teeth, mouth, feet, legs and reproductive parts. In addition, internal accessory glands are checked.

McCarthy said semen is collected, and morphology and motility are checked. To pass a BSE, bulls should have 70 percent normal sperm morphology and at least 30 percent sperm motility.

Watch weather and bulls

Bulls can become infertile during periods after cold weather due to frostbite on the scrotum, McCarthy said. Cold weather and wind chill can result in lower sperm counts for bulls. Frostbite can cause blisters and scabs on the scrotum and can cause discoloration, she said.

Spermatogenesis in bulls is a 61-day process after a frostbite injury, which, depending on when the injury occurred, could affect the breeding season. McCarthy recommends for bulls with a frostbite injury to be reevaluated with a BSE about 45 to 60 days after the injury.

"Bulls need some time to recover from frostbite," she said. "We encourage producers with bulls a few years old to get BSE so we can catch these issues."

McCarthy said producers need to use some cold weather prevention practices to ensure their bulls are protected. These would include giving bulls plenty of space, shelter and windbreaks to get out of the cold and providing bedding to ensure bulls and their reproductive parts are not laying on cold, frozen ground. — **Russ Quinn**, DTN staff reporter



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When the budget is tight, beef is still an option

The price of beef has skyrocketed since 2020, and consumers are looking for ways to trim their grocery budget without sacrificing flavor.

“From the beginning of the pandemic to the fourth quarter of 2021, Choice boxed beef—which is equivalent to a carcass level price—is up 28.5 per-

cent,” said Derrell Peel, Oklahoma State University (OSU) Extension livestock marketing specialist. “Even when you compare prices from the initial pandemic shutdown when meatpacking plants closed and there were massive supply chain disruptions, our most expensive cuts of meat—such as the tender-

loin and ribeye—were higher in 2021.”

As restaurants and food service industry companies come back online, demand for middle meat cuts, including ribeye, T-bone, porterhouse and filet steaks, will remain strong, Peel said.

“We set an all-time record level of beef produc-

tion in 2021, and yet, we had record prices,” he said. “We’re going to see production fall a little bit, and supply is going to get tighter. Prices are going to stay high with no change in the high consumer demand.”

When a fancy ribeye at the butcher counter is too costly, said Joel Jackson,



Todd Johnson

OSU Extension specialists report the prices of Choice boxed beef have increased 28.5 percent since the beginning of 2020.

“We’re going to see production fall a little bit, and supply is going to get tighter. Prices are going to stay high with no change in the high consumer demand.”

pilot plant manager at the OSU Robert M. Kerr Food and Agricultural Products Center, consumers can still find cuts of beef fit for the dinner table.

“The chuck eye steak, also known as the Delmonico, is located right in front of the ribeye and has decent marbling,” Jackson said. “It’s not an uncommon cut and is a fraction of the cost versus a ribeye from the same animal.”

Another option that has gained popularity in the past two decades is the flat iron steak, a cut that originates from the top of the front shoulder blade.

“The beef industry has done a good job of promoting the product, which has added to its value,” Jackson said. “It’s still a less expensive option than what you would pay for a middle meat cut.”

Jackson said the tri-tip craze started over 10 years ago on the West Coast and has slowly spread across the U.S. Featured recipes inspire consumers to experiment with the cut and increase its demand.

“We get requests for it quite often now, and it’s surprisingly good, considering it’s typically ignored

or incorporated into ground meat,” Jackson said.

In other instances, the most cost effective method when shopping for beef is to purchase a familiar cut but alter cooking techniques to create a more flavorful and tender meal.

“Crockpots are lifesavers. You can take a pretty inexpensive roast, cook it all day and make a great meal out of it,” Jackson said.

From a nutrition standpoint, bison meat is often considered a healthier, leaner option to beef, but that doesn’t mean it’s cheaper. More comparable to grass-fed cuts, bison meat is marketed at a premium in specialty grocery stores.

“Bison require working pens that are built stronger and taller,” Jackson said. “The streamlining and efficiency of grain-fed beef cattle production and processing is a science, but bison, like grass-fed beef, require nearly double the amount of time before slaughter. This results in consumers paying more for these specialty or niche products.” — **OSU Extension**



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YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

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

March 18 – The Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association has an internship opportunity for students to assist during the summer months in the headquarters office in Fort Worth, TX. A cover letter, resume and letter of recommendation should be sent to education@tscra.org. Details: tscra.org/who-we-are/employment.

March 31 – Dairy MAX will award three \$2,500 academic scholarships. Scholarship applications are now open until March 31, 2022. Students must reside in the Dairy MAX region, be a graduating high school senior or an undergraduate student currently enrolled in college and be a 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 North American

Limousin Junior Association is looking for a media intern for the duration of the 2022 National Junior Limousin Show and Congress, June 25-July 1. If interested, please send a resume, cover letter and two references to mallory@nalf.org.

April 15 – The Kansas State University Department of Animal Sciences and Industry has opened applications for the Kansas State University Animal Science Leadership Academy, which will be held June 22-25 and June 29-July 2 in Manhattan, KS. The academy is available to high schoolers from across the U.S. Registration and more information are available at www.asi.k-state.edu.

June 15 – Tavaputs Ranch is honoring the memory of the late Tate Jensen through an annual \$2,500 scholarship. Applicants must be seniors in college or in a graduate student program and studying agriculture or natural resources. Applications must include an essay with the applicant's background, college involvement and their future plans. Applications can be submitted to jennie.m.jensen@gmail.com or by mail to Jennie Christensen at P.O. Box 725, Price, UT 84501.

Record spring crop insurance guarantees form strong safety net

This year's spring crop insurance guarantees are some of the highest on record, keeping pace with soaring input costs to provide a solid financial backstop in a growing season shrouded in volatility and uncertainty.

The spring crop insurance guarantee for corn is \$5.90 per bushel, \$1.05 higher than last year and the highest since 2011. For soybeans, the guarantee set a record

are in their area.

Farmers should also expect premiums to increase along with the higher coverage levels.

"This crop insurance guarantee, I think, has given farmers a lot more peace of mind and confidence to get out there and plant no matter what the uncertainty on the table," DTN Lead Analyst Todd Hultman said. "And I think that gives the market, in general, a lot of

since the agency didn't adjust for surging input prices, he doubled the costs for fertilizer and chemicals and increased fuel expenses by 50 percent to arrive at his cost estimates. The estimates do include land costs, although those are also highly variable.

Assuming farmers make USDA's trend line yield of 181 bushels per acre, the cost of production is \$4.97 per bushel. If the farmer averages 200 bushels per acre, their cost of production falls to \$4.50 per acre. If they purchase an 80 percent revenue protection policy, they're guaranteed a price of \$4.71 per bushel.

On soybeans, a trend line yield of 51.5 bushels per acre results in a production cost of \$11.65 per bushel compared to an 80 percent guarantee of \$11.46 per bushel.

"Farmers are not going to make out like bandits because the guarantee levels are so high this year," Hultman said. "They're still not quite up to production costs, and that highlights just how high and expensive fertilizer and fuel have become."

Farmers who have not yet enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage or Price Loss Coverage programs for the 2022 crop year have until March 15, 2022, to sign a contract, according to USDA's Farm Service Agency. — **Katie Micik Dehlinger, DTN farm business editor**

comfort knowing that farmers are going to do their best at production this year."

Hultman said dry weather is limiting production prospects in South America, while the war between Russia and Ukraine helped drive up crop prices during February.

"Even though grain prices are high, we also have high input costs and a lot of volatility and uncertainty," he said.

Hultman said fertilizer, chemical and fuel costs will be considerably higher this year, although each farm's individual cost structure will vary based on the timing of purchases and other factors. On average, he estimates it will cost about \$900 to grow an acre of corn and \$600 per acre of soybeans.

Hultman started with USDA's average crop production cost forecasts, but

at \$14.33, up \$2.46 from last year. Spring wheat also established a record at \$9.19 per bushel, increasing 41 percent from last year's guarantee.

The guarantees are an essential component of revenue protection crop insurance policies, the most popular subsidized insurance option among U.S. farmers. The spring guaranteed prices are computed by averaging the daily closing price of the December corn, November soybean and September spring wheat contracts throughout February.

Those numbers are combined with the farm's actual production history to determine a level of revenue. Farmers can elect to insure up to 85 percent of that revenue, with most choosing to purchase 75 percent, 80 percent or 85 percent depending on what the premiums

MU Extension launches Mizzou Crop and Pest News

University of Missouri (MU) Extension has launched Mizzou Crop and Pest News, an electronic newsletter for agriculture professionals and Extension specialists that provides information on current agronomic challenges.

Mizzou Crop and Pest News is an updated version of the Integrated Pest and Crop Management (IPCM) newsletter. The new format will provide readers with more concise information, including estimated read times and one-sentence summaries of articles, said Mandy Bish, MU integrated pest management coordinator.

"The idea to launch Mizzou Crop and Pest News stemmed from a 2021 survey of over 500 Missouri professionals in row crop production," Bish said. "Respondents ranked electronic newsletters as a highly preferred source of information and indicated Extension as the most trusted source."

Bish said the newsletter will include new topics, as well as content that subscribers to the IPCM news-

letter have come to expect, such as state Extension weed specialist Kevin Bradley's weed management articles.

"We believe that this newly formatted newsletter will prove to be a valuable source of information for producers and other agricultural professionals throughout Missouri," Bradley said.

"We have a series of 'Top Three' newsletters lined up for early March," Bish said, "and we plan to include info on crop insurance considerations, climate, mental health resources and more. These are topics that go hand in hand with crop production and pest management but have not traditionally been covered in the newsletter."

Following the "Top Three" series, the newsletter will be published as questions and needs arise throughout the season, she said.

To sign up for email notifications when new issues are published, visit ipm.missouri.edu/subscribe or email ipm@missouri.edu. — **MU Extension**



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MARKET NEWS

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

MARKET AT A GLANCE	This Week: 3/3/2022		Week Ago	Year Ago
Choice Fed Steers	140.48	▼	143.94	113.85
CME Feeder Index	157.78	▼	161.82	136.07
Boxed Beef Average	254.35	▼	259.24	233.88
Average Dressed Steers	224.92	▼	227.04	179.98
Live Slaughter Weight*	1,402	▼	1,404	1,382
Weekly Slaughter**	647,000	▼	663,000	660,000
Weekly Beef Production***	544.7	▼	559.2	550.3
Hide/Offal Value	14.07	▲	14.05	9.78
Corn Price	7.51	▲	6.95	5.46
*Average weight for previous week. **Total slaughter for previous week. ***Estimated year-to-date figure in million pounds for previous week.				

89BEEF REPORT: Weekly Composite Boxed Beef											
WEEK ENDING	COMPREHENSIVE Loads/Price		PRIME Loads/Price		BRANDED Loads/Price		CHOICE Loads/Price		SELECT Loads/Price		UNGRADED Loads/Price
February 25	7,065	267.94	271	302.63	1,417	268.60	2,182	265.04	785	261.07	2,410 242.99
February 18	7,457	276.13	264	313.87	1,188	276.59	2,044	270.90	624	266.65	3,338 253.36
February 11	6,948	279.81	245	325.01	1,448	280.53	2,329	274.73	691	271.52	2,236 254.68
February 4	6,924	284.92	192	333.54	1,244	288.00	2,170	280.33	723	275.59	2,595 261.63
Cutouts ----- FED BOXED BEEF -----											
DATE	CHOICE		SELECT		COW BEEF CUTOUT		50% LEAN		90% LEAN		
March 3	254.35		241.79		228.05		97.16		282.67		
March 2	255.72		251.34		230.32		98.67		286.41		
March 1	256.68		251.52		228.75		100.88		283.42		
February 28	257.51		253.41		229.47		101.33		282.73		
February 28	258.27		255.41		228.13		94.51		281.86		

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Live Cattle						
	2/25	2/28	3/1	3/2	3/3	High* Low*
Feb.	13928	14050	14053	14010	13835	14375 10527
Apr.	14193	14143	13705	13650	13515	14783 10920
Jun.	13830	13770	13706	13670	13565	14385 12525
Aug.	13743	13715	14305	14355	14285	14355 13055
CATTLE FUTURES: CME Feeder Cattle						
	2/25	2/28	3/1	3/2	3/3	High* Low*
Mar.	16003	15773	15628	15830	15635	17025 15385
Apr.	16475	16200	15980	16300	16053	17275 15425
May.	17060	16780	16525	16800	16550	17755 16625
Aug.	18288	18008	17808	18033	17873	18665 17450
*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	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
SAME PERIOD LAST WEEK			
Live FOB Steer	8,323	1,526	143.93
Live FOB Heifer	4,111	1,394	143.46
Dressed Del Steer	7,139	965	227.04
Dressed Del Heifer	3,246	891	226.82
SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR			
Live FOB Steer	19,194	1,417	113.85
Live FOB Heifer	9,780	1,336	113.91
Dressed Del Steer	8,889	954	179.98
Dressed Del Heifer	3,520	840	179.92

NATIONAL WEEKLY FED BEEF SLAUGHTER VOLUME		
	Domestic	Imported
Forward Contract	35,565	4,292
Formula	266,633	627
Negotiated Cash	107,988	215
Negotiated Grid	35,812	0
Packer Owned	9,212	0
Total	455,210	5,134

SLAUGHTER FORWARD CONTRACTS		FORWARD BEEF SALES	
Delivery Month		Neg. Sales 0-21 days	2,036
Feb '22	177,787	Neg. Sales 21+ days	1,418
Mar. '22	218,621	Formula sales	3,467
Apr. '22	234,110	Forward contract sales	143
May '22	148,278	Domestic sales	6,050
Jun '22	137,438	NAFTA Exports	111

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	126.99	+1.29
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	125.06	+0.56
Ontario Auctions		
Slaughter Steers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1300-1500 lbs	136.27	-0.2
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	135.14	-0.19
Slaughter Cows, Cutter and Utility 1-3, 1100-1400 lbs	70.91	+1.26
*Price comparison from one week ago.		

Average feeder cattle prices (CND) for week ending Friday, February 18, 2022			
Steers:	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Ontario
501-600 lbs	182.90	181.23	178.77
601-700 lbs	169.34	167.68	167.58
701-800 lbs	156.61	155.44	161.52
801-900 lbs	148.64	147.92	147.50
Heifers:			
401-500 lbs	161.29	161.35	148.27
501-600 lbs	155.60	154.30	154.06
601-700 lbs	145.64	145.31	148.46
701-800 lbs	139.45	137.09	137.97

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
	2/26/2022	2/19/2022		
Feeders	18,652	19,340	145,771	175,199

USDA WEEKLY IMPORTED FEEDER CATTLE		
Friday 2/25/22		
Mexico to TX. & NM. Weekly Feeder Cattle Import Summary		
Receipts EST: 15,000	Week Ago Act: 15,789	Year Ago Act: 22,629
Compared to last week, steer calves and yearlings sold steady to 1.00 higher. Heifers steady to 2.00 higher. Trade very active, demand very good. The bulk of the supply consisted of steers and spayed heifers weighing 300-700 lbs.		
Feeder steers: Medium and large 1&2, 300-400 lbs 187.00-198.00; 400-500 lbs 172.00-183.00, few 184.00; 500-600 lbs 162.00-173.00, few 174.00; 600-700 lbs 150.00-160.00, few 161.00. Medium and large 2&3, 300-400 lbs 172.00-183.00; 400-500 lbs 157.00-168.00; 500-600 lbs 147.00-158.00.		
Feeder heifers: Medium and large 1&2, 300-400 lbs 162.00-174.00;400-500 lbs 152.00-164.00; 500-600 lbs 142.00-154.00; 600-700 lbs 132.00-144.00.		
(All sales fob port of entry.)		

Selected Auction Week Ending March 3, 2022				Feeder prices for steers & heifers reflect medium and large 1 cattle, unless otherwise noted; * Indicates medium and large 1-2					
DATE MARKET		STEERS / HEIFERS						SLAUGHTER COWS SLAUGHTER BULLS	PAIRS REPLACEMENTS
		200-300 lb.	300-400 lb.	400-500 lb.	500-600 lb.	600-700 lb.	700-800 lb.		
February 25 Blackfoot, ID	N/A			155-199 155-182	150-195 145-178	147-185 142-157	142-157 135-145	135-145 127-145	67-83.25 80-103.5
February 24 Burley, ID	N/A		220	200-216 190	188-198 176.75-180	166.50-177 146-162	145.50-151.50 145	133 124	75-79.50 82-103
No report available Emmett, ID									
February 28 Eugene, OR	646		120-137.50	130-150* 130-156.50*	130-155* 130-155*	128-150* 126-150.25*	130-148.50*	122-145* 100-119*	62-69.75 89-97.75
No report available Madras, OR									
February 23 Vale, OR	665		173-193	153-164		147-151	140-152		73-85.50 83-98
February 28 Davenport, WA	N/A		90	165-171	150 60-136	145 55	76	105-121	51-84 44-93
February 24 Toppenish, WA	1,000			200-204*		141*			55-75 90-108.50
									850

NORTHWEST

February 24 Orland, CA	1,121			140-182 176	130-162 145	125-160 144	120-145 135		40-78	1,000-1,650 1,000-1,235
February 28 Escalon, CA	N/A		130-171 125-156		125-160 120-153		120-140 100-135	100-125 95-115	52-63 80-102	800-1,300 700-1300
February 28 Famoso, CA	309		150-180 120-140	150-180 120-140	150-170 110-150	140-150 110-120	120-140 95-115	110-120	50-83.50 75-100	
March 2 Galt, CA	889			165-185 150-160	165-168 150-155	145-160 135-140	130-155 125-150.35	125-140 95-115	30-80 90-120	
March 1 Turlock, CA	1,042		160-177.50 140-160	155-175 140-164	145-166 137-158	140-155 130-140	132-145 120-131		65-83 84-102	
March 1 Salina, UT	853		160-192.50 145-169	155-196 142.50-175	152.50-200 142-172	150-168 133-163.50	139-163 128-146	123-151 78-148.50		

February 28 Iowa	18,550		202.50-231 179-217	193-237 169-200.75	177.50-228 144-191.75	162-199.75 146-177.50	145-179.75 137-163.50	134-166.75 115-161.25	64-100.13 53-117	
March 1 Miles City, MT	970			233 199-206	200-221 178-193	173-204.50 171-184			61.50-85 73-106	1,275
No report available Bassett, NE										
February 26 Ericson, NE	2,803		238-240 202	225-246.50 184-201	188.50-232 175-194.50	182.50-207.50 157-175.75	169-177 153-157	161.75-164 147		
No report available Imperial, NE										
February 23 Kearney, NE	2,531			218-226 184-186	182.50-219 168-176.50	171-198 154-173.75	154.50-173.75 145-160	151-162 141-151.25		
February 25 Lexington, NE	2,617		210	221.50	202-218 171-190	183-211 153.50-174.25	171-173.50 150-153.25	148-162 143.75		
No report available Ogallala, NE										
February 24 Valentine, NE	3,890		191-205	225-253.50 192-204	227-241.50 177-202.50	179-212 154.50-196.50	164-175 147.50-175	149.75-164.25 149		
No report available Herreid, SD										
February 23 Torrington, WY	2,989		216-217	224-232 195-215	215-223 176-194	172-207 163-187	155.50-175 158-162.50	159.50	75-100 98-114.50	

February 24 Willcox, AZ	N/A	182-216 139-170	200-231 142-174	171-190 154-162.50	170-189 149-156	159-165 129-156			62-90 78-85	975-1,075
February 28 Colorado	2,612	193	212-227 184-195	195-222 176-194	187-209 164-182	167-194 155-177.50	157.50-168 150-155	150-159.75	51-96 90-112	
February 23 La Junta, CO	519		201-212 181-193	196-210 165-181	191-201 163-176	168-186 153-160	165-170 149-152		82-89.50	
February 28 Loma, CO	200			127.50	178 170	167.50 157-158	153-159 147-149.50	140 125-137	85-96 98-104.50	
March 2 Dodge City, KS	6,247		209-227 193-215	173-231 171-182.50	177-224 168-188.50	167-200 143-163	148.50-171 135-148.75	140.75-162.50 135.25-139	80-100 90-117	
March 3 Pratt, KS	6,000		180	176-204 170	158-178	167 141-160	135 135.50-144.75	135-139 130-140.10		
February 24 Salina, KS	2,110		226-230 178-187	211-230 170-183.50	195-219 167-181	166.50-196.25 148-158	146-169 142-147	141-153.50 127-143.50		
March 2 Clovis, NM	1,683	223	210-220 175-199	184.50-207 163-189.50	171-193 140-164	150-166 141-149.50	146-155 139.50-146.50	127-153.25 135-136		
March 1 El Reno, OK	2,500		212.50-240 193-206	206-235 179-187.50	181-215 164-175	169-192 146-172				
March 1 McAlester, OK	1,160		202-227 173-189	202-230 171-185	187-218 146-171	154-177 139-154	138-152 115-140	119 120	82-100 104-125	775-1,375 725-1,225
March 1 Oklahoma City, OK	5,458	209-225	208-230 188-200	200-237 180-194	193-218 160.50-188	167-199 148-168.50	152-168 140-166	142-154.85 130.50-141		
February 25 Cuero, TX	627	166-180 167-215	183-230 162-218	169-214 152-200	155-211 143-166	151-165 138-160	144-155 117-135		50-90 83-106	850-1,400
February 24 Dalhart, TX	2,338			162-180	190-207 160-163	168-180 153-162	163.25-166.75 149.25-153	150.25-164 135-142	70-86.50 92-106	
February 24 San Angelo, TX	535		165-186 145-170	150-177 139-165	142-158 125-152	142-158 122-143	142-139		80-93.50 77-109.50	850-1,660
February 24 Tulia, TX	1,058		179	190-221 177	175-186 153.50-160	155-167 145-153.50	145-150 144.75-146.50	136-156.50	96-100	

SOUTH CENTRAL

Profit maximization for cattle producers

With both revenues and costs rising, cattle producers must adjust cattle production and marketing to maximize profits. Economists model this decision mathematically, resulting in the rule that profit maximization is the point at which marginal revenues equal marginal costs. This balance occurs when the value of the last unit produced equals the additional cost of producing that last unit.

Of course, cattle producers don't use mathematical models to maximize profits, but they should use marginal thinking to adjust to

changing market conditions. Marginal decision-making means that production is adjusted at the margin, i.e., with minor modifications and tweaks to production systems rather than major changes.

Higher revenues generally suggest that producers will try harder to increase production. This might mean, for example, a bit more time and effort to save an additional calf. Or it might mean more attention on cow body condition and supplement needs to ensure good pregnancy rates. Or it might mean culling fewer

cows or breeding a few more heifers to expand production next year.

Higher cattle prices and changes in feeder cattle prices by weight both change the value of forage and may impact producer decisions about producing weaning calves versus using forage to add additional weight to feeder cattle.

However, input costs for cattle production are higher as well. This implies that producers should think about cost adjustments at the margin as well. Higher fertilizer prices may mean that fertilizer use should be

concentrated on the best hay meadows and pastures and cut back a bit on more marginally productive areas. Or it might mean additional efforts to assess nutritional programs and identify feed alternatives to optimize feed costs. For example, extra efforts to store and feed hay with minimal waste are more important now.

Specific circumstances for individual cattle producers will determine whether the net impact of higher revenues and higher costs creates a need to cut back slightly on production, hold steady or increase produc-

tion. Producers more dependent on some inputs, such as fertilizer, may be more constrained in response to higher cattle prices, compared to, say, range-based ranches that use less purchased inputs.

Although the decisions made will vary across different types of cattle production in different regions, all cattle producers should engage in the process of marginal adjustments in production and cost management.

There are short-term and long-run considerations and risks as well. Care should be taken so that short-term ef-

forts to manage higher costs do not, for example, jeopardize herd health by cutting vaccination programs or skimping on nutrition and risking decreased future herd productivity.

Markets are extremely volatile now and are likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. Producers should consider the use of risk management to protect revenues and potentially use forward pricing or other means to manage input costs. — **Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension livestock marketing specialist**

Corn prices now above \$7; feeder futures sink lower

MARKETS (from page 1)

through the week ending Feb. 19 totaled 670,195 head.

Boxed beef prices were lower another week. The Choice cutout lost nearly \$5 to close at \$254.35, and the Select cutout lost about \$6.75 to close at \$247.79.

According to the Feb. 24 Daily Livestock Report, restrictions on Russian protein purchases in the world are unlikely to impact global trade.

"However, Russia and Ukraine are major contributors to global grain and oil trade and they are also major suppliers of fertilizers," the report read. "High feed and energy costs are negative for U.S. livestock producers and they will negatively impact their ability to bring more product to market."

Feeder cattle

"The war will not change the numbers of cattle but skyrocketing grain prices will change their value," wrote the Cattle Report. "Those selling feeder cattle were finding lower bids replaced by even lower bids."

Feeder cattle futures also headed lower over the week. The March contract lost \$2.75 to close at \$156.35, and the April contract lost about \$3.30 to close at \$160.52. The CME Feeder Cattle Index lost about \$4 to close at \$157.78.

Corn futures sailed to \$7 and then higher. The March contract gained 56 cents to close at \$7.51, and the May contract gained 57 cents to close at \$7.47.

"There's one thing we need to get clear about the markets right now: These prices reflect war and fear and are not a reflection of the fundamentals of the feeder cattle market," Stewart said. "As corn prices shoot to new highs, the feeder cattle complex is left with no other option but to shoot lower."

Colorado: Winter Livestock in La Junta sold 1,202 head Tuesday. Compared to a week earlier, steers under 700 lbs. sold steady to \$3 lower, with the decline on 650-700 lbs. Steers over 700 lbs. were lightly tested. Heifers under 600 lbs. sold steady to \$2 higher, with the advance on 450-500 lbs. Heifers 600-700 lbs. sold \$3-5 lower, and over 700 lbs. sold \$2-3 lower.

Iowa: Russell Livestock in Russell sold 3,680 head Monday. Compared to the previous auction, steer calves under 700 lbs. were mostly

steady to \$5 higher; over 700 lbs. sold mostly \$3-5 higher. Heifer calves under 600 lbs. were mostly \$2 higher, while the heavier heifers were mostly steady to \$2 lower. Benchmark steers averaging 721 lbs. sold between \$161-176.50, averaging \$171.36.

Kansas: Winter Livestock in Dodge City sold 6,247 head Wednesday. Compared to the previous auction, feeder steers 550-1,000 lbs. sold steady to \$5 lower. Steer calves 400-550 lbs. sold \$4-6 higher. Feeder heifers 650-900 lbs. sold \$5-8 lower. Heif-

Benchmark steers averaging 720 lbs. sold between \$166-177.50 and averaged \$169.15.

New Mexico: Clovis Livestock in Clovis sold 1,683 head Wednesday. Compared to the last auction, feeder steers and heifers sold \$2-5 lower. Benchmark steers averaging 770 lbs. sold between \$149.50-154.50 and averaged \$153.66.

Oklahoma: Oklahoma National Stockyards in Oklahoma City sold 6,000 head Monday by the mid-session. Feeder steers and heifers

pared to the previous auction, steer and heifer calves traded \$3-6 lower. All of the offerings consisted of long-

time weaned calves, with most of the trade being smaller package trade. Benchmark steers averag-

ing 736 lbs. sold between \$164-170.50 and averaged \$169.08. — **Anna Miller, WLJ managing editor**

"These prices reflect war and fear and are not a reflection of the fundamentals of the feeder cattle market."

ers 550-650 lbs. sold \$7-10 lower. Heifer calves 400-550 lbs. sold \$3-4 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 781 lbs. sold between \$148.50-157.50, averaging \$153.70.

Missouri: Joplin Regional Stockyards in Carthage sold 4,500 head Monday by the mid-session. Feeder steers traded steady, and feeder heifers traded \$2-4 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 785 lbs. sold between \$161-163.50.

Nebraska: Tri-State Livestock in McCook sold 1,775 head Monday. Compared to the last auction, steers and heifers under 700 lbs. were steady to \$7 higher, while over 700 lbs. sold steady to \$6 lower. Demand was good on lighter feeders and moderate on the larger cattle.

sold unevenly steady, with a light test for most weight classes. Benchmark steers averaging 770 lbs. sold between \$153-159.50.

South Dakota: Sioux Falls Regional in Worthing sold 4,380 head Monday. Compared to the previous auction, feeder steers traded steady to \$5 lower, except 650-700 lbs., which were \$1-4 higher, and 750-800 lbs., which sold \$6-9 higher. Feeder heifers traded steady to \$5 lower, except for 450-600 lbs., which were steady to \$5 higher, and 700-750 lbs., which sold \$2 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 726 lbs. sold between \$166-176, averaging \$171.60.

Wyoming: Torrington Livestock in Torrington sold 4,375 head Wednesday. Com-



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ALL BREED

Mar. 13 – Snyder Livestock Company Inc., Bulls for the 21st Century Bull Sale, Yerington, NV
Mar. 16 – Western Breeders, Bull Sale, Eltopia, WA
Apr. 7-8 – Midland Bull Test, Bull Sale, Columbus, MT

ANGUS

Mar. 8 – Veltkamp Angus, Bull Sale, Manhattan, MT
Mar. 8 – Wagon Wheel Ranch, Bull and Commercial Female Sale, Yuma, CO
Mar. 9 – Hornung Livestock, Bull and Commercial Female Sale, Stratton, CO
Mar. 9 – RA Brown, Production Sale, Throckmorton, TX
Mar. 9 – Sitz Angus, Bull Sale, Dillon, MT
Mar. 9 – Udy Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Rockland, ID
Mar. 10 – Sunny Okanogan, Production Sale, Okanogan, WA
Mar. 11 – Reid Angus, Production Sale, Brush, CO
Mar. 11 – Rollin Rock, Bull Sale, Stanfield, OR
Mar. 11 – Yardley Cattle Co., Bull Sale,

Beaver, UT
Mar. 12 – Diamond Peak Cattle, Bull Sale, Riverton, WY
Mar. 12 – Koberstein Farms, Bull Sale, Ogallala, NE
Mar. 12 – Montana Ranch Angus, Bull Sale, Big Fork, MT
Mar. 12 – Riverbend Ranch, Bull Sale, Idaho Falls, ID
Mar. 12 – Western Colorado Angus Association, Bull Sale, Delta, CO
Mar. 14 – Parry Angus, Bull Sale, Sterling, CO
Mar. 14 – Pine Coulee Angus, Bull Sale, Hardin, MT
Mar. 14 – Spring Cove Ranch, Production Sale, Bliss, ID
Mar. 15 – Blevins Angus, Production Sale, Charlo, MT
Mar. 15 – Quirk Land & Cattle Co., Production Sale, Hastings, NE
Mar. 16 – Lufkin Angus, Bull Sale, Leadore, ID
Mar. 16 – Stevenson Angus, Bull Sale, Hobson, MT
Mar. 16 – Wagonhammer Ranches, Bull Sale, Albion, NE
Mar. 17 – Carter Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Blackfoot, ID
Mar. 17 – Vallad/Oft, Bull Sale, Vale, OR
Mar. 18 – Leadore Angus, Bull Sale, Leadore, ID
Mar. 18 – Montana Performance Bull Co-op, Bull Sale, Columbus, MT
Mar. 18 – T/D Angus, Bull Sale, North Platte, NE
Mar. 19 – Gray Angus, Bull Sale, Harrison, NE

Mar. 19 – Nelson Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Salmon, ID
Mar. 19 – Ward Ranches, Bull Sale, Minden, NV
Mar. 21 – Whistling Winds Angus, Production Sale, Hingham, MT
Mar. 21 – Harrer's Lost Lake (Angus), Production Sale, Great Falls, MT
Mar. 21 – JR Ranch/Sackmann Cattle, Bull Sale, Othello, WA
Mar. 23 – Nebraska Bull Test, Bull Sale, Broken Bow, NE
Mar. 23 – Peterson Grain and Cattle, Bull Sale, Havre, MT
Mar. 24 – Gartner-Denowh, Bull Sale, Sidney, MT
Mar. 24 – Vermilion Ranch, Commercial Female Sale, Billings, MT
Mar. 25 – Vertical Edge Genetics, Production Sale, Bancroft, ID
Mar. 25 – Schurrtop Angus & Charolais, Bull Sale, McCook, NE
Mar. 25 – Vermilion Ranch, Bull Sale, Billings, MT
Mar. 26 – Basin Bull Fest, Bull Sale, Klamath Falls, OR
Mar. 26 – Diamond Peak Cattle, Bull Sale, Loma, CO
Mar. 26 – Connealy Angus, Bull Sale, Whitman, NE
Mar. 29 – Silver Bit Ranch, Bull Sale, May, ID
Mar. 29 – Thomas Angus, Bull Sale, Shoshone, ID
Apr. 2 – Brooks Chalky Butte, Bull Sale, Bowman, ND
Apr. 5 – Daigger-Orr Angus & Red Angus, Bull Sale, North Platte, NE
Apr. 5 – Hinman Angus, Bull Sale,

Malta, MT
Apr. 7 – Arntzen Angus, Bull Sale, Hilger, MT
Apr. 8 – Midland Bull Test, Angus Bull Sale, Columbus, MT
Apr. 9 – Bar T Bar Ranches, Bull Sale, Winslow, AZ
Apr. 9 – Fink Beef Genetics, Angus and Charolais Bull Sale, Randolph, KS
Apr. 9 – Redd Ranches, Bull Sale, Paradox, CO
Apr. 11 – Cook Angus, Bull Sale, Billings, MT
Apr. 11 – Herbster Angus Farms, Bull Sale, Marysville, KS
Apr. 11 – Jorgensen Land & Cattle, Production Sale, Ideal, SD
Apr. 12 – Hilltop Angus, Production Sale, Denton, MT
Apr. 14 – Carr Angus, Production Sale, Hobson, MT
Apr. 14 – Jocko Valley Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Missoula, MT
Apr. 14 – McClun's Lazy JM Ranch, Bull Sale, Torrington, WY
Apr. 15 – DeGrand Angus, Bull Sale, Baker, MT

BALANCER

Apr. 9 – Bar T Bar Ranches, Bull Sale, Winslow, AZ
Apr. 9 – Redd Ranches, Bull Sale, Paradox, CO

BRANGUS

Mar. 22 – Geneplus-Suhn Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Eureka, KS

CHAROLAIS

Mar. 15 – Romans Ranches, Production Sale, Westfall, OR
Mar. 16 – Wagonhammer Ranches, Bull Sale, Albion, NE
Mar. 25 – Schurrtop Angus & Charolais, Bull Sale, McCook, NE
Mar. 26 – Valley View Charolais, Bull Sale, Polson, MT
Mar. 28 – Axtell Cattle Company, Production Sale, Sterling, CO
Apr. 2 – DeBruycker Charolais, Bull Sale, Great Falls, MT
Apr. 9 – Fink Beef Genetics, Angus and Charolais Bull Sale, Randolph, KS
Apr. 9 – Hebbert Charolais, Bull Sale, Hyannis, NE

FLECKANGUS

Mar. 25 – Vertical Edge Genetics, Production Sale, Bancroft, ID

FLECKVIEH

Mar. 25 – Vertical Edge Genetics, Production Sale, Bancroft, ID

GELBVIEW

Apr. 9 – Bar T Bar Ranches, Bull Sale, Winslow, AZ
Apr. 9 – Redd Ranches, Bull Sale, Paradox, CO

HEREFORD

Mar. 7 – Harrell Herefords, Bull Sale, Baker City, OR
Mar. 9 – Udy Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Rockland, ID
Mar. 14 – Holden Herefords, Production Sale, Valier, MT
Mar. 14 – Spring Cove Ranch, Production Sale, Bliss, ID
Mar. 15 – Cooper Herefords, Production Sale, Willow Creek, MT
Mar. 17 – Vallad/Oft, Bull Sale, Vale, OR
Mar. 23 – Nebraska Bull Test, Bull Sale, Broken Bow, NE
Mar. 23 – NJW Herefords, Bull & Female Sale, Sheridan, WY
Mar. 29 – Silver Bit Angus, Bull Sale, May, ID
Apr. 14 – McClun's Lazy JM Ranch, Bull Sale, Torrington, WY

MAINE ANJOU

Mar. 11 – Yardley Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Beaver, UT

OPTIMIZER

Mar. 19 – Ward Ranches, Bull Sale, Minden, NV

RED ANGUS

Mar. 8 – Loosli Red Angus, Production Sale, Ashton, ID
Mar. 9 – RA Brown, Production Sale, Throckmorton, TX
Mar. 9 – Udy Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Rockland, ID
Mar. 11 – Leland Red Angus Ranch, Production Sale, Sidney, MT
Mar. 12 – Ludvigson Stock Farms, Cornhusker Bull Sale, North Platte, NE
Mar. 14 – Feddes and C-T Red Angus, Production Sale, Manhattan, MT
Mar. 14 – Lautenschlager and Sons, Bull Sale, Othello, WA
Mar. 15 – Green Mountain Red Angus, Bull Sale, Logan, MT
Mar. 16 – Klompien Red Angus, Bull Sale, Manhattan, MT
Mar. 19 – Lorenzen Red Angus, Bull Sale, Madras, OR
Mar. 19 – Milk Creek Red Angus, Bull Sale, Plevna, MT
Mar. 21 – JR Ranch/Sackmann Cattle, Bull Sale, Othello, WA
Mar. 23 – Nebraska Bull Test, Bull Sale, Broken Bow, NE
Mar. 23 – Westphal Red Angus,

Production Sale, Grass Range, MT
Mar. 28 – Axtell Cattle Company, Production Sale, Sterling, CO
Apr. 1 – Pieper Red Angus, Bull Sale, Hay Springs, NE
Apr. 5 – Daigger-Orr Angus & Red Angus, Bull Sale, North Platte, NE
Apr. 8 – 5L Red Angus, Bull Sale, Sheridan, MT
Apr. 9 – Ludvigson Stock Farms, Bull Sale, Shepherd, MT
Apr. 9 – Redd Ranches, Bull Sale, Paradox, CO
Apr. 12 – Beckton Red Angus, Bull & Female Sale, Sheridan, WY

SIMANGUS

Mar. 9 – Hornung Livestock, Bull & Commercial Female Sale, Stratton, CO
Mar. 12 – Diamond Peak Cattle, Bull Sale, Riverton, WY
Mar. 14 – Parry Angus, Bull Sale, Sterling, CO
Mar. 16 – Wagonhammer Ranches, Bull Sale, Albion, NE
Mar. 24 – Western Cattle Source, Production Sale, Crawford, NE
Mar. 26 – Diamond Peak Cattle, Bull Sale, Loma, CO
Mar. 26 – T-Heart Ranch, Bull Sale, La Garita, CO
Apr. 9 – Redd Ranches, Bull Sale, Paradox, CO

SIMMENTAL

Mar. 11 – Yardley Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Beaver, UT
Mar. 14 – Bar CK Ranch, Bull Sale, Culver, OR
Mar. 24 – Western Cattle Source, Production Sale, Crawford, NE
Mar. 26 – T-Heart Ranch, Bull Sale, La Garita, CO
Mar. 28 – Vertical Edge Genetics, Production Sale, Bancroft, ID
Mar. 31 – Open Gate Simmental, Bull Sale, Augusta, MT
Apr. 2 – Big Country Genetics, Bull Sale, Powell, WY

STABILIZER

Mar. 27-28 – Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Bull & Female Sale, Fort Collins, CO

COMMERCIAL

Mar. 8 – Wagon Wheel Ranch, Female Sale, Yuma, CO
Mar. 9 – Hornung Livestock, Female Sale, Stratton, CO
Mar. 16 – Cattlemen's Livestock Market, Special Feeder Sale, Galt, CA
Apr. 14 – Western Video Market, Turlock, CA

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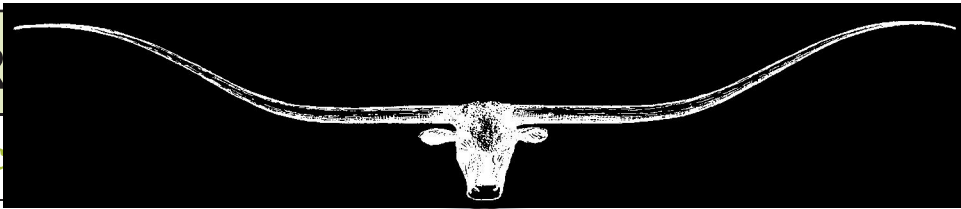
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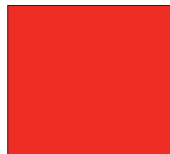


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CURIOUS ABOUT CLASSIFIEDS?

Holding onto calves through a down market

First it was just drought, and now we have war in eastern Europe. On Feb. 24, feeder cattle futures markets were down over \$4 for most months, and live cattle were down over \$2. Corn and wheat were up over \$0.50/bushel. The futures market jitters have given a lot of us more to worry about.

Producers have asked about keeping calves through these low markets until prices improve. Whether this is possible or advisable depends on the ability to lock in prices to control the risk of further price erosion. There are several ways that cattle can be retained to delay marketing, and the recommendation of which production system to use depends on several factors related to the size and type of cattle, available resources and producer risk tolerance.

By the end of February, growing cattle should have some graze-out wheat available since we have gotten moisture from winter storms and temperatures are warming up. With wheat futures over \$9/bushel, will the wheat intended for graze-out earlier in the year still be grazed? To harvest a grain crop, the calves will need to be coming off pasture within a few weeks. If markets haven't recovered and producers want to keep them longer, we have a few options for retaining ownership and adding further value.

Larger cattle kept on graze-out

wheat weighing over 650 pounds should not be held over on warm-season grass. On graze-out wheat pasture, these calves often gain over 2.5 lbs. per day. Over the years, cattle on graze-out wheat pasture studies conducted in Oklahoma and Arkansas show gains from 2.2-3.3 lbs. per day from late February to early May (65 to 80 days). These cattle can gain 150-250 lbs. and should go to the feedyard weighing 800-900 lbs.

Calves from research in Arkansas were placed on feed at 880 lbs. following an extended wheat grazing program. These cattle gained 3.4 lbs./day during finishing and weighed 1,283 lbs. at slaughter. In another Arkansas trial, yearlings fed after wheat pasture gained 4.9 lbs./day and were slaughtered at 1,323 lbs. These two sets of cattle provide a range of performance expectations from about average to much better than average.

A summary of yard closeouts from Hitch Enterprises shows that steers weighing 900 lbs. when entering the feedlot were slaughtered at 1,466 lbs., were on feed for an average of 142 days and gained 3.78 lbs./day, with 6.38 lbs. of feed required per pound of gain.

Lighter steers weighing 700 lbs. were on feed for 183 days, gained 3.48 lbs. per day, required 6.13 lbs. of feed per pound of gain and were slaughtered at 1,402 lbs.

The "Focus on Feedlots: Kansas Feedlot Performance and Feed Cost Summary" report of feedlot closeouts from December shows steers gained 3.83 lbs./day, and cost of gain was \$108.37/cwt with expected cost of gain to be \$115/cwt for cattle placed on feed that month.

Corn getting more expensive and high fertilizer prices may reduce the corn acres planted this spring. Research indicates that the cost of corn explains 58-67 percent of variability of cost of gain, but the price of fed cattle and feeder cattle explains 70-80 percent of feeding profit risk. This will have a big impact on the price of feeder cattle and the willingness of feeders to purchase cattle.

Live cattle futures are right at \$138-142 for when feeders going on feed today will be marketed in August through October. Cattle placed on feed in June will be coming off feed at a higher market of \$147. There is considerable risk in this, but there is potential for positive movement in the market. Even so, don't bet the farm without some form of risk protection in place.

Figuring out a way to keep calves until markets improve can be tricky with high feed prices. — **Paul Beck, Oklahoma State University Extension beef cattle nutrition specialist**

HYLINE ANGUS RANCH ANNUAL BULL SALE Feb. 25, Three Forks, MT 60 Bulls.....\$4,785

Auctioneer: Kyle Shobe
TOPS: Hyline Pilot 041, 10/10/20 by Hyline Pilot 144; to Stanford Angus Farm, Rienzi, MS, \$12,000. Hyline Rito 381, 2/16/21 by WH A032 Rito 8756-8704; to Stanford Angus Farm, Rienzi, MS, \$10,000. Hyline Horsepower 061, 10/10/20 by Hyline Horsepower 26B; to Dykema Livestock, Manhattan, MT, \$7,750. Hyline Horsepower 021, 9/29/20 by Hyline Horsepower 26B; to Hustad Ranch, Jackson, MT, \$7,500. Hyline Pilot 151, 11/3/20 by Hyline Pilot 144; to Dingwall Ranch Co., Drummond, MT, \$7,000. Lucht 0408H, 1/27/20 by VDAR Sonny Boy 4688; to Van Dyke Angus Ranch, Manhattan, MT, \$7,000. — **DEVIN MURNIN**

CIRCLE L ANGUS ANNUAL PRODUCTION SALE Feb. 28, Dillon, MT

99 Total bulls\$6,234
6 Registered open
heifers2,583
30 Commercial open
heifers1,563

Auctioneer: Joe Goggins
TOPS: Circle L Relevance 02J, 1/7/21 by Woodhill Relevance; to KG Ranch, Three Forks, MT, \$15,000. Circle L Resilient 35J, 1/24/21 by Sitz Resilient 10208; to Simonson Angus, Dunning, NE, \$14,500. Circle L Advantage H46, 8/18/20 by Sterling Advantage 809; to Jeff Berger, Williston, ND, \$12,500. Circle L Landmark 49J, 1/26/21 by Circle L Landmark; to Hollow Top Angus, Pony, MT, \$11,500. Circle L Stunner H69, 9/6/20 by Musgrave 316 Stunner; to Hollow Top Angus, Pony, MT, \$10,000. Circle L Mountain Program H8, 8/14/20 by CA Mountain Program 445; to 40 Bar Ranch, Wisdom, MT, \$10,000. — **DEVIN MURNIN**

APEX ANGUS ANNUAL PRODUCTION SALE March 1, Valier, MT

105 Yearling bulls.\$5,124
33 Commercial 4-10-year-old
pairs.1,749
150 Commercial open
heifers1,365
Auctioneer: Roger Jacobs
TOPS: Apex Gold Rush 2711, 1/12/21 by EZAR Gold Rush 6001; to Freeman Ranch, Au-

gusta, MT, \$16,500. Apex Exclusive B3311, 1/24/21 by Musgrave 316 Exclusive; to Heuckert's Willow Creek, Hensel, ND, \$13,000. Apex Deluxe 021, 1/11/21 by Diablo Deluxe 1104; to Harrer's Lost Lake Ranch, Great Falls, MT, \$10,000. Apex Huntley 3511, 1/14/21 by Vermilion Huntley; to Rappold Ranch, Dupuyer, MT, \$9,000. Apex Deluxe 01, 1/11/21 by Diablo Deluxe 1104; to Heuckert's Willow Creek, Hensel, ND, \$9,000. — **DEVIN MURNIN**

SANDHILL RED ANGUS ANNUAL PRODUCTION SALE March 1, Sidney, MT

52 Yearling bulls.\$3,827
Auctioneer: Ty Thompson
TOPS: SRJJ Jump-Start 1203, 3/27/21 by SRJJ Maverick 9046; to McCann Red Angus, Lewiston, ID, \$8,250. SRJJ Fortunate Son 1151, 4/4/21 by Red U2 Fortunate Son 382F; to Clear Bent Bars Inc., Leiter, WY, \$6,000. SRJJ Blue Collar 1162, 3/27/21 by Red U2 Blue Collar 295E; to Tom Laible, Merna, NE, \$5,500. SRJJ Leading Edge 1012, 2/21/21 by 5L Leading Edge 15383-1117C; to Mike German, Phoenix, AZ, \$5,000. SRJJ Fortunate Son 1160, 3/21/21 by Red U2 Fortunate Son 382F; to Darren Hagen, Glendive, MT, \$5,000. — **DEVIN MURNIN**

OX BOW RANCH ANNUAL BULL SALE March 2, Wolf Creek, MT

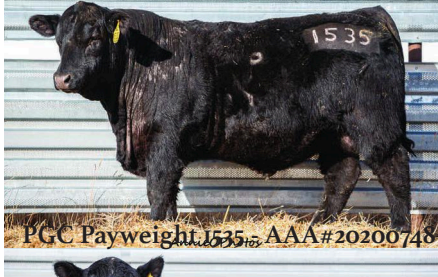
83 Total bulls\$6,078
15 Older bulls.6,900
68 Yearling bulls.5,897
Auctioneer: Roger Jacobs
Sale Manager:
Andras Cattle Services
TOPS: OX Cowboy Kind 1006, 1/8/21 by HA Cowboy Kind 8157; to Mission Valley Farms, Pablo, MT, \$14,500. OX Atlantis 1613, 1/24/21 by Square B Atlantis 8060; to Mrnak Ranch, Bowman, ND, \$14,500. OX Raindance 0390, 2/14/20 by SAV Raindance 6848; to Shotgun Ranch, Post, OR, \$11,000. OX Raindance 0341, 1/28/20 by SAV Raindance 6848; to Shotgun Ranch, Post, OR, \$10,750. OX Raindance 0352, 1/29/20 by SAV Raindance 6848; to Shotgun Ranch, Post, OR, \$10,500. OX Atlantis 1203, 1/15/21 by Square B Atlantis 8060; to Eagle Ridge Ranch, White Horse, SD, \$10,500. — **DEVIN MURNIN**



PGC Stellar 1019 - AAA#20233811



PGC Forge 101 - AAA#20194074



PGC Payweight 1535 - AAA#20200748



PGC True North 1065 - AAA#20194090



PGC Blueprint 1014 - AAA#20198715



PGC Stellar 1070 - AAA#20194087



PGC Blueprint 104 - AAA#20198713

PETERSON Grain & Cattle

Selling 85 Yearling Angus Bulls 12 Yearling Angus Open Heifers

March 23, 2022

Sire Groups Include:
Sitz Stellar 726D
Woodhill Blueprint
Square B True North 8052
PGC Forge
PGC Reload 813
BDAR Cool C65
Basin Payweight 1682

- 4 Flush brothers •
True North x PGC Shoeshone Girl 4106
- 3 Flush brothers •
Payweight 1682 x PGC New Design 562
- 4 Flush brothers •
Stellar x Holman Blackbird 733

• 45.77

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Ranch & Development Lot • 18211 Rd 325 N, Havre
Sale Facility • 32116 Rd 230 N, Havre

Nelson Angus Ranch

Saturday, March 19, 2022 @ 12:30 PM
Join Us FRIDAY NIGHT AT 6 PM
ULTRASOUND DEMONSTRATION & PAP SCORING
LIGHT DINNER & ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Nelson Resilient 1118

CEP 6
BW 2.1
WW 88
YW 155
SC 1.81
DOL 20
MILK 28
CLAW .50
ANGLE .37
HP 12.2
PAP -1.31
MARB .61
RE .79
SW 88
TW 95
SC 289

SELLING High Elevation PAP TESTED BULLS!

Nelson Capitalize

CEP 13
BW 2.5
WW 63
YW 112
SC 2.03
HP 13.5
CLAW .40
ANGLE .33

Nelson Capitalize

CEP 13
BW 2.5
WW 63
YW 112
SC 2.03
HP 13.5
CLAW .40
ANGLE .33

Nelson Capitalize

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WW 63
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HP 13.5
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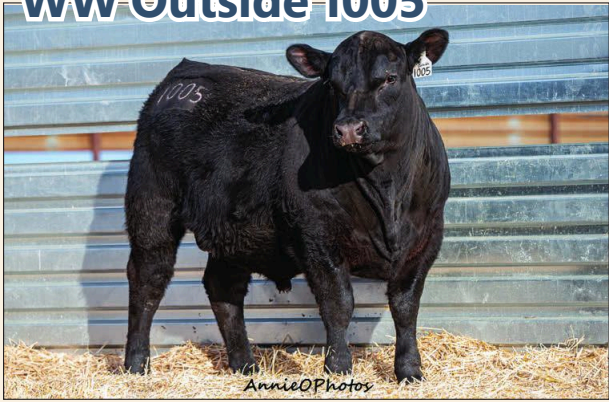


Whistling Winds Angus

Annual
Production
Sale

Monday 1:00
March 21
2022
at the Ranch
14504 Road 6 North
Hingham, Montana

WW Outside 1005



sire **A A R Outside 9052** birth date **02/22/21**
Act BW **87** 205 Wt **747** WR **114**

CED	BW	WW	YW	Milk	Marb	RE	\$M	\$W	\$B
+10	+0.6	+74	+127	+32	+.90	+.65	+80	+87	+158

Selling . . .
45
Yearling
Angus
Bulls

WW Chaps 8160 1512



sire **WW Chaps 8160** birth date **02/03/21**
Act BW **65** 205 Wt **735** WR **107**

CED	BW	WW	YW	Milk	Marb	RE	\$M	\$W	\$B
+16	+1.8	+66	+124	+28	+.49	+.44	+77	+77	+116

WW Rainmaker 1264



sire **Basin Rainmaker 4404** birth date **02/13/21**
Act BW **84** 205 Wt **722** WR **104**

CED	BW	WW	YW	Milk	Marb	RE	\$M	\$W	\$B
+7	+0.3	+60	+113	+38	+.54	+.56	+89	+79	+142

WW Prototype 1624



sire **Big Dry Prototype G31** birth date **02/11/21**
Act BW **87** 205 Wt **753** WR **109**

CED	BW	WW	YW	Milk	Marb	RE	\$M	\$W	\$B
+13	-0.7	+57	+108	+32	+.72	+.60	+80	+71	+128

WW Rainmaker 1497



sire **Basin Rainmaker 4404** birth date **02/09/21**
Act BW **93** 205 Wt **722** WR **104**

CED	BW	WW	YW	Milk	Marb	RE	\$M	\$W	\$B
+2	+1.2	+69	+123	+28	+.50	+.50	+82	+77	+140

WW Stellar 1691



sire **Sitz Stellar 726D** birth date **02/13/21**
Act BW **92** 205 Wt **769** WR **117**

CED	BW	WW	YW	Milk	Marb	RE	\$M	\$W	\$B
+3	+2.7	+74	+136	+24	+.57	+.75	+49	+68	+153

Offering Sons of

Musgrave Crackerjack • Basin Rainmaker 4404
Paintrock Trapper • WW Hi Line 9290
Mohnen Homeraised 3758

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