

INSIDE WLJ

BEEF QUALITY — USDA Select and Prime grade beef quality continues to increase. Page 3

LIVESTOCK INSURANCE — USDA announces a series of updates to livestock insurance programs for 2027. Page 5

A LOOK BACK IN HISTORY

"Not surprisingly, President Bush vetoed the Farm Bill last Wednesday after it passed out of the Senate and House of Representatives by enough votes in each body to override a presidential veto. What did catch members off guard was the fact that the bill vetoed by the president was not the bill they voted on. Congress sent a version of the bill to the White House that was missing 35 pages, making Bush's veto and the subsequent override vote in the House unconstitutional," read the May 26, 2008, *WLJ* cover story.

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Lawsuit challenges McDermitt Caldera lithium exploration



Greg Shine, BLM

Conservation groups are challenging the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) approval of expanded lithium exploration in southeastern Oregon. Pictured here, cattle grazing on rangelands below Jackson Summit in Oregon.

—Environmental concerns raised

After the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approved the expansion of lithium exploration on public lands in southeastern Oregon, conservation groups are fighting back.

The Oregon Natural Desert Association, Great Old Broads for Wilderness and Great Basin Resource Watch filed suit against the agency on April 27, expressing concerns about the exploration project's effects on the environment and wildlife species.

In late 2025, the BLM issued a Record of Decision approving Australian mining company HiTech Minerals to drill, pump groundwater, construct roads and other exploration activities on a 7,200-acre project area within the McDermitt Caldera at the southern end of Malheur County, OR, near the Nevada border.

See **LITHIUM MINE** on page 3

Trump-Xi summit boosts optimism for US ag trade

—\$17 billion in ag products

President Donald Trump's recent trip to China and meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping produced what administration officials are describing as a major reset in U.S.-China trade relations, with agriculture emerging as a central focus of the discussions.

While the summit also addressed geopolitical concerns involving Iran, stability in the Strait of Hormuz and broader strategic relations between the two nations, the clearest near-term impact for U.S. agriculture came through renewed market access commitments and large-scale purchase agreements tied to American farm and ranch products.

The White House said Trump and Xi agreed to "build a constructive relationship of strategic stabil-

ity on the basis of fairness and reciprocity," and to establish new trade mechanisms to create more formal channels for managing economic relations between the two countries.

The summit also included Chinese commitments to address U.S. concerns about shortages of rare-earth minerals and restrictions on rare-earth production and processing technologies.

China additionally approved an initial purchase of 200 American-made Boeing aircraft, the first major Chinese Boeing purchase commitment since 2017.

Agriculture commitments

The White House announced that China agreed to purchase at least \$17 billion annually in U.S. agricultural products from 2026

See **CHINA TRADE** on page 8

Genetic considerations and breed differences when restocking the cow herd

—Part three

When considering the proper genetics needed to rebuild the cow herd, it is important that cattle carry a balance of traits that give the different segments of the industry—cow-calf, feedlot and packer—a reasonable opportunity to be profitable.

However, the recent article by this author that appeared on page 24 of the spring edition of *The Wire* magazine demonstrated that while genetic potential for production traits has exponentially increased, the payweights for commercial cow-calf operations have remained largely unchanged.

The U.S. commercial cow herd of recent years has been dominated by Angus, which has provided feeders and packers with cattle with the genetic potential for fast gains, heavy carcasses and high-quality beef. Conversely, it has often resulted in cow herds with higher maintenance requirements than the

environment and feed resources in which they are managed can sustain.

When this occurs, the result is decreased reproductive efficiency and stagnant feeder cattle payweights. Essentially, many commercial cow-calf producers are equipping their cows with "jet engine" genetics and then trying run them on regular fuel. Conversely, when these cattle get to finishing yards with steam-flaked grains and ideally balanced rations, they have the "jet fuel" to express these genetics.

However, when we rebuild our commercial cow-calf herd, if it is done with cows whose genetic potential for production exceeds what they and their calves can express, we will have set ourselves up for failure.

It is also important to remember that efficient and inefficient cows come in all sizes, and ultimately what is paramount is that a cow herd's genetics are custom fit to each

operation's unique matrix of environment, management, feed resources and market. The bottom line is, one size does not fit all.

For instance, in cases where cows have access to plentiful nutrient dense feed, a large cow with high production potential is called for. However, where feed is sparse, like certain desert ranges where stocking rates can be as extreme as one cow per 100 acres, smaller cow size is called for so that she can travel and eat enough to meet her nutrient requirements each day.

Likewise, a colder environment favors larger cows than a hot environment. This is because metabolic body weight is the relationship of body surface per pound of body weight. Larger cattle have less body surface per pound, which makes them more efficient in maintaining body temperature in cold environments.

See **HERD REBUILDING** on page 7

Cattle futures fall amid placement, processing concerns

Cattle futures closed lower as uncertainty ahead of USDA's Cattle on Feed report weighed on the market, with analysts expecting placements to rise above year-ago levels due to drought-driven movement of feeder cattle into feedlots and slower marketings. Adding to the pressure, ongoing union-related disruptions at the Cargill plant in Fort Morgan, CO, led to the plant's lockout of workers.

Live cattle futures were lower, with the June contract down \$2.92 to \$249.15 and the August contract \$6.80 lower to \$239.35.

"Wednesday afternoon, the live cattle complex pulled back slightly, mildly uncomfortable by the market's resistance," ShayLe Stewart, DTN livestock analyst, wrote in her Thursday midday comments. "However, at Thursday's open, the market pulled back abruptly, as if someone had accidentally put their hand on a red-hot burner, pulling back with sheer instinct and without hesitation."

Cash trade through Thursday totaled about 30,000 head. Live steers sold from \$258-261, and dressed steers sold from \$408-412.

Cash trade for the week ending May 17 totaled 89,722 head. Live steers averaged \$262.86, and dressed steers averaged \$410.86.

The national weekly direct beef type price distribution for the

week of May 11-18 was the following on a live basis:

- Negotiated purchases: \$262.79.
- Formula net purchases: \$259.66.
- Forward contract net purchases: \$242.57.
- Negotiated grid net purchases: \$261.51.

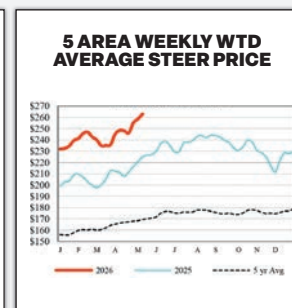
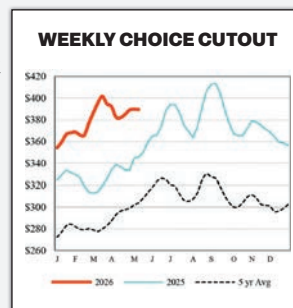
On a dressed basis:

- Negotiated purchases: \$411.34.
- Formula net purchases: \$406.21.
- Forward contract net purchases: \$381.61.

- Negotiated grid net purchases: \$394.65.

See **MARKETS** on page 5

PERIODICAL: Time Sensitive Priority Handling



↑	↑	↓
LIVE STEERS	DRESSED STEERS	CME FEEDER
\$264.35	\$412.10	\$372.44
WEEK ENDING: 5-21-26		

COMMENTS

The devil's in the details

Over the past few months, the White House has made several "major" announcements, all in the name of the betterment of farming and ranching. While ranching has felt its share of good days with the multi-year market gains surrounding the overall supply shortage, farming across the U.S. has experienced some of its worse days in decades. In some rural areas, there have been talks that 35-40% of farms will either go under or enter a debt realignment in order to stay afloat. Without question, commodity prices have felt a major impact due to drought, input costs and unfortunately, political theatre across the globe.



IPSEN

Recently, the Trump administration announced a renewed agricultural trade deal with China that has created cautious optimism across rural America, especially in the grain, beef and poultry sectors. Following meetings between President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping earlier this month, the White House announced that China has agreed to significantly increase purchases of U.S. agricultural products over the next three years.

According to administration officials and several media outlets, China has committed to purchasing at least \$17 billion annually in U.S. agricultural goods from 2026 through 2028. The agreement reportedly includes soybeans, beef, poultry, wheat, sorghum and other farm commodities that were heavily impacted during recent tariff disputes between the two countries. China's farm imports from the U.S. still face an additional 10% levy after last year's rounds of tit-for-tat tariffs sharply curtailed trade, which fell 65.7% year on year to \$8.4 billion in 2025, according to a Reuters article.

Soybeans remain at the center of the agreement. China has historically been one of the largest buyers of U.S. soybeans, but the trade war pushed Chinese importers toward Brazil and other suppliers. The White House stated that China plans to purchase at least 25 million metric tons of U.S. soybeans annually beginning in 2026, while also resuming purchases of sorghum and other feed products.

The beef and poultry industries also stand to benefit. China reportedly agreed to restore access for American beef facilities and resume poultry imports from states considered free of avian influenza concerns. These measures could reopen valuable export channels for U.S. livestock producers who have faced uncertainty in international markets over the past several years.

Initially, commodity markets reacted with mixed reviews, but overall responded positively to the news. Soybean, wheat and corn futures all moved higher following the announcement as traders anticipated stronger export demand. Some analysts believe the renewed relationship with China could help stabilize grain prices heading into harvest season, especially as U.S. farmers prepare for another large soybean crop. This was a short-lived surge as markets quickly responded in an adverse direction as varying reports of the trade talks become muddled in their messaging.

While the headlines seem like they are bringing positive news to the farming community, the deal simply lacks details at the moment. We've seen this from the Trump administration before, but this is a hugely important issue when talking about the livelihoods of the farming communities across this nation. Through several announcements, this administration has been touting that food security is national security. While this rhetoric is great to hear, there needs to be some "teeth" to the announcement. Headlines only support surges in market trading, but action is needed to sustain a trend.

"When you make an announcement that is light on specifics, the markets don't like that at all. The market does not like ambiguity," said Peter Meyer, a principal economist and partner at Muddy Boots Ag LLC, in a U.S. Farm Report interview with host Tyne Morgan.

Following the announcement, however, China walked back the talking points as Chinese officials denied being held accountable to Trump's guaranteed ag purchases. While initial reports suggest China is simply trying to hold their cards to their chest ahead of purchases, the back and forth between what was actually agreed upon lacks overall details and the vague sentiment isn't setting well in the markets. Taking into consideration that you have a highly vocal Trump and a vastly quiet and stealthy nation like China, there's going to be mixed signals. The proof will be in actual trade numbers that we won't see until after they've been executed.

Still, questions remain about the long-term impact of the deal. While the Trump administration has promoted the agreement as a major victory for American farmers, some economists note that China's dependence on U.S. agriculture has declined substantially over the past decade. Brazil now supplies a significant share of China's soybean imports, and analysts caution that political tensions between the two countries could still disrupt trade in the future.

For now, however, many farm groups are viewing the announcement as a positive development. After years of uncertainty tied to tariffs, inflation and volatile markets, the possibility of renewed Chinese demand offers hope for stronger exports and improved profitability across American agriculture. Whether the agreement delivers lasting results will depend on how quickly both countries follow through on their commitments and whether the fragile trade relationship can remain stable moving forward. — **LOGAN IPSEN**

UNITED WE STAND



with Doris Mold

This bimonthly column highlights the common ground in the livestock industry, uniting us around the issues that impact us all.

As the world recognizes the International Year of the Woman Farmer, it is an important moment to reflect on the indispensable role women play in agriculture and the systems that support their growth, leadership and long term success. Women are farmers, ranchers, growers, landowners, educators and innovators—managing risk, stewarding land and sustaining agricultural enterprises of every size and type. One organization that has consistently advanced this work is Annie's Project, a national nonprofit dedicated to empowering women in agriculture through education, networks and resources.

Founded in 2003, Annie's Project is a 501(c)(3) national nonprofit with a mission: to empower women in agriculture to be successful. Since its founding, the program has educated more than 29,000 people across the U.S. and its territories,

while reaching hundreds of thousands more through radio, television, podcasts, social media and print media. Its impact extends well beyond the classroom, shaping confidence, decision-making and leadership in modern agricultural enterprises.

The need for such programming is clear. Women represent a significant portion of the agricultural community, with 1,224,726 women producers in the U.S.—36% of all producers. These women manage and contribute to farms and ranches of every scale and type. The median size farmed or ranched by Annie's participants is 500 acres, from half-acre urban farms to operations spanning 95,000 acres of rangeland. Some participants do not yet own or operate land. This reflects Annie's Project's reach among both established producers and those preparing to enter agriculture.

At the core of Annie's Project is education grounded in risk management. The Annie's Project 101 course focuses on the five key areas of risk management and emphasizes discussion, shared learning and practical application. Course evaluations show a dramatic increase in participant knowledge across all five areas from pre course to post course assessments, with scoring that also highlights opportunities for continued learning through follow up courses and educational activities. Just as importantly, the results indicate that participants recognize the value of continued education, often seeking follow up training to strengthen their operations further. To further

participants' education, Annie's Project also features other curriculum focusing on a wide range of risk and business management topics.

What distinguishes Annie's Project courses is not only what is taught, but how it is taught. The program uses a unique, women centered methodology designed to build confidence, develop networks and foster lifelong learners and leaders. Courses provide a dynamic learning environment where mentoring occurs organically, discovery is encouraged and shared experience creates a sense of trust and safe harbor. At least half of class time is dedicated to discussion and activities, while vetted educators present research based, unbiased information. While the approach centers on women, all participants are welcome, reinforcing collaboration and inclusivity within agricultural communities.

The results of this approach are evident in the actions participants take after completing a course. Participants report developing business plans, updating wills and trusts, drafting land agreements, calculating cost of production and exploring new enterprises and agriculture initiatives that will add to their resiliency. Many describe improved communication within family farm operations, including holding regular farm meetings and approaching decision making as equal partners. These outcomes demonstrate that education through Annie's Project translates directly into action, resilience and improved farm and ranch management.

Annie's Project's reach is amplified by its network of more than 1,000 trained facilitators who plan, deliver and evaluate programming nationwide. Through these facilitators, the organization has reached more than 25,000 farms and agricultural operations, touching a diverse range of enterprises. Participants are involved in cattle, dairy, hogs, poultry, row crops, fruits, vegetables, ornamentals, greenhouses, nurseries, oysters, llamas, horses, agritourism ventures and value added businesses, reflecting the breadth of women's involvement in agriculture today.

Importantly, Annie's Project is also a responsible steward of resources. Ninety-three percent of its budget is dedicated directly to program expenses, ensuring that investments support education that empowers and leads to meaningful action. This commitment underscores the organization's focus on impact and accountability as it works to strengthen women's roles in agriculture.

As the International Year of the Woman Farmer shines a spotlight on women's contributions to global agriculture, Annie's Project stands as a powerful example of how targeted education, supportive networks and practical resources can transform lives and enterprises. By building knowledge, confidence and connection, Annie's Project helps ensure that women farmers, ranchers, and growers are not only recognized, but fully equipped to lead agriculture into the future. — **Doris Mold, CEO of Annie's Project, St. Paul, MN**

GUEST OPINION

A STEP FORWARD ON THE FARM BILL

Farmers and ranchers can handle hard work and tough seasons. That's in our DNA. What gets more difficult to manage is prolonged uncertainty. After years of economic pressure, farm families need the stability and certainty that comes with a new, modernized farm bill.

That's why the vote in the House of Representatives matters. The bipartisan passage of the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 is an important step toward giving America's farmers and ranchers the support and certainty they need. We appreciate Chairman Glenn "GT" Thompson's (R-PA-05) leadership in moving this legislation forward and building a bipartisan path for action.

But farmers know better than anyone that starting the job is not the same as finishing it. Now, the Senate must act.

Food security is national security

I've said it many times because it is true: food security is national security. When America's farmers and ranchers are struggling, it has a ripple effect far beyond the farm gate. Farmers work every day to provide a safe, nutritious food supply for American families. But they cannot continue doing that without policies that reflect today's economic realities.

The last farm bill was written nearly a decade ago in a very different economic environment. Farm families have been facing tightening margins for years, and the pressure keeps building. USDA projects farm income to be roughly \$48 billion below the highs we saw in 2022. Expenses are rising,

markets are shifting, and low commodity prices keep squeezing balance sheets on family farms.

The farm bill passed by the House includes important updates to research and conservation, increased loan limits, and clarity on interstate commerce. Those updates will help give farmers and ranchers stronger tools to navigate today's challenges and prepare for the future.

The farm bill is more than legislation for rural America. It is an investment in America's future. It strengthens our food system, supports rural communities, and helps ensure the next generation can continue farming and ranching.

Senate must pass the bill

The House passage of the farm bill should spur action in the Senate. Farmers and ranchers have been waiting for more than three years for the certainty they need to keep planning, investing, and producing our nation's food supply. Now it's time for senators on both sides of the aisle to step up and move quickly to pass a strong, bipartisan farm bill.

Farm Bureau members across the country have spent years sharing their stories with lawmakers. They have spoken up about the financial pressures facing agriculture and the need for certainty. Those stories matter, and this House vote shows that lawmakers are listening.

America's farmers and ranchers stand ready to keep producing a safe, healthy and secure food supply. Congress must do its part by getting a farm bill across the finish line. — **Zippy Duvall, American Farm Bureau Federation president**

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

LITHIUM MINE (from page 1)

"The HiTech lithium exploration project represents a significant step toward achieving the nation's energy goals and reducing dependence on foreign critical minerals—key priorities under the President's agenda," said BLM Acting Malheur Field Manager Tara McLain in December.

The project is located entirely on BLM-managed lands.

"The authorized activities threaten not only sage-grouse and the dwindling habitat areas they and other sage steppe species rely upon in southeastern Oregon, but also scarce water resources, irreplaceable wildlands, and Tribal and local communities," the lawsuit read.

Last spring, *WLJ* spoke with area rancher Nick Wilkinson about potential impacts from the proposed lithium exploration project.

"I've changed my operation from night and day from the way my dad ran it," Wilkinson said at the time, "and it cost a lot of money to make it what it is today. And now that we've finally got on our feet and rolling to where it is a good operation, nobody cares about the fish or the sage grouse anymore."

Wilkinson is a member of the Great Basin Resource Watch, one of the groups contesting the project's approval.

"HiTech's proposed actions threaten the ecological balance we have spent generations protecting and the very existence of our operation," said Nick and Jaimi Wilkinson in a recent news release. "This is not theoretical harm—it is

immediate, material, and permanent. HiTech's project would dismantle critical habitat, degrade essential water resources, and ultimately eliminate a six-generation cattle operation that has long been part of the solution—not the problem."

Oregon Natural Desert Association, Great Old Broads for Wilderness and Great Basin Resource Watch have opposed the project since BLM began its planning process in 2023. BLM received more than 2,000 public comments on the project's environmental assessment, with many comments raising issue with environmental impacts and how the agency's draft assessment downplayed concerns, the groups said.

"People living near proposed mining activities deserve a greater voice in how and if these projects go forward," said John Hadder, executive director of Great Basin Resource Watch. "They will have to shoulder the burdens brought by mining—potentially an unhealthy environment, loss of lifestyle, and permanent loss of culture associated with the lands."

The groups asked the court to declare the BLM's project approval as unlawful under the National Environmental Policy Act, Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the Administrative Procedure Act. The lawsuit also asked the court to set aside and vacate the project approval until a new decision complies with legal requirements.

Plan details

BLM's decision will allow

HiTech to construct up to 168 drill sites, sumps for drilling waste, 21.5 miles of new access roads and a 90,000-square-foot equipment staging and laydown area. The project would pump an estimated 18,000 gallons of groundwater per day, the lawsuit said, although the company also obtained a state water permit authorizing up to 41,250 gallons per day.

"BLM estimates that HiTech will need to pump more than 31.5 million gallons (or 96.84 acre-feet) of groundwater over the five-year life of the exploration project," the law-

suit read.

The suit plaintiffs are especially concerned with the wildlife habitat that falls within the project, all of which is designated as priority habitat for sage grouse conservation.

"Of the hundreds of species of fish and wildlife that live in southeastern Oregon, many are sagebrush 'obligate' species—meaning they rely upon healthy, intact sagebrush plant communities to provide their food, cover, and seasonal habitats year-round," the suit read.

In its Record of Decision, the BLM said the proposed

project is in accordance with the 2015 Oregon Greater Sage Grouse Approved Resource Management Plan.

"After the close of the comment period the BLM received additional comments from the public with concerns about sage-grouse, mule deer, and invasive annual grasses; these comments referenced a few recent papers and reports," according to the Record of Decision. "The BLM considered these comments and the cited references and determined that they do not provide significant new circumstances or information

that would impact the analysis or its outcome."

While some sensitive plant species may experience minor impacts, the effects are limited and would not trend species toward listing under the Endangered Species Act, BLM said. In addition, the agency said that greater sage-grouse habitat would be minimally affected.

The Findings of No Significant Impact also determined the project would not result in significant impacts to the human environment, BLM said. — **Anna Miller Fortozo, WLJ managing editor**

Beef carcass quality continues to increase

The percentages of USDA Select and Prime grade beef carcasses continue to shift in the direction of higher quality, more marbling-rich beef. Through the early part of 2026, Select grade percentages dropped into the single digits, while the percentage of Prime is reaching new highs.

During the month of March, the percentage of carcasses grading Select was approximately 8% of the harvest mix, down about 4% from a year ago. The percentage of Prime advanced to 15%, up roughly 4% from March 2025.

The 73-74% of carcasses grading Choice are basically unchanged from last year and the previous five year average. Quality grades lower than Select have declined to less than 3% of the harvest mix.

As recently as 2010, Select grading beef represented 30% of the quality grade mix, while

Prime and Choice accounted for less than 65% that year. In 2025, Select was down to 13% of all graded beef carcasses, while Prime and Choice exceeded 84%.

Why? Increased additive genetic potential for marbling is the foundation of the increase in beef carcass quality. Without question, increased days on feed and pushing cattle to historically higher finished weights contribute to tapping this genetic potential for marbling.

What is the impact? Consumers have responded favorably to improving beef quality. Since the turn of the century, beef demand has continued upward. The CattleFax Beef Demand Index hit another record in 2025, up roughly 50% compared to 1998-99. The beef industry is experiencing greater demand for Prime and the upper two-thirds of Choice.

Greater supply of Prime and upper two-thirds of Choice has allowed more consumers to try the higher-quality product. Consumers like it and are willing to spend more to enjoy it.

The phenomenon has increased demand across the entire beef industry. — **Mark Z. Johnson, Oklahoma State University Extension beef cattle breeding specialist**



COMING EVENTS

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

May 27-29 – Registration is open for the 142nd Montana Stockgrowers Association MidYear Meeting in Great Falls, MT, at the Great Falls Civic Center. Details: mtbeef.org/event/midyear-meeting.

June 1-3 – The International Year of the Woman Farmer ACE Summit in Washington, D.C. will empower, equip and connect women farmers, ranchers and agribusiness professionals. Details: tinyurl.com/2unspzen.

June 16-18 – Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund, USA will host its 2026 National

Convention and Trade Show at The Monument in Rapid City, SD. Details: rcalfconvention.com.

June 24-25 – The California Cattlemen's Association 2026 MidYear Meeting will be at the Atlantis Casino Resort in Reno, NV. Details: tinyurl.com/mvmds854.

Sept. 15-17 – The Stockmanship & Stewardship event in Grand Island, NE, will help ranchers gain practical, hands-on knowledge that strengthens animal care, enhances cattle handling skills and supports the sustainability of their operations. Details: stockmanshipandstewardship.org.

BOWMAN LIVESTOCK MARKETING

Spring Catalog Horse Sale

THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 2026 | BOWMAN, ND

Online Bidding:



APACHES BLUE CAT



Lot 56 - 2022 Blue Roan Gelding sired by Cats Playin On Time, nice young prospect.

NEW GUN N TOWN



Lot 16 - 2022 Palomino gelding sired by Hollywood Cool Gun, excelling at the ranch shows.

Preview: 9 am MST, All Seasons Arena

Horse Sale: 1 pm MST,
Bowman Livestock Marketing

CASH N BIG CHECKS



Lot 19 - 2018 Sorrel gelding sired by TR Illuminator Cash, finished head and heel horse.

AMANDA KAMMERER
605-484-3784



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605-210-1124

MARKET NEWS

MARKET SITUATION REPORT

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

MARKET AT A GLANCE This Week: 5/21/2026 Week Ago Year Ago
Choice Fed Steers 264.35 262.30 229.22
CME Feeder Index 372.44 373.86 297.64
Boxed Beef Average 391.48 387.45 360.67
Average Dressed Steers 412.10 410.32 361.65
Live Slaughter Weight* 1,468 1,471 1,432
Weekly Slaughter** 535,000 527,000 566,000
Weekly Beef Production*** 480.4 473.8 494.3
Hide/Offal Value 14.74 14.02 11.05
Corn Price 4.69 4.56 4.65

BEEF REPORT: Weekly Composite Boxed Beef
WEEK ENDING COMPREHENSIVE PRIME BRANDED CHOICE SELECT UNGRADED
May 15 6,201 391.12 310 401.26 1,121 396.64 1,937 387.92 472 387.56 2,360 369.40
May 8 5,853 391.69 278 400.53 1,126 396.14 1,815 388.66 439 386.31 2,195 367.83
May 1 6,360 390.40 309 401.87 1,105 392.83 1,945 387.84 574 384.97 2,428 364.53
April 24 6,572 386.90 350 398.38 1,230 390.37 2,076 383.75 450 379.46 2,467 365.98

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Live Cattle
5/15 5/18 5/19 5/20 5/21 High* Low*
Jun. 25390 25338 25568 25485 25348 25873 16853
Aug. 24793 24715 24835 24743 24550 25598 16668
Oct. 23988 23895 24035 23938 23700 25120 17005
Dec. 23915 23800 23960 23875 23665 25093 18068

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Feeder Cattle
5/15 5/18 5/19 5/20 5/21 High* Low*
May 36868 36800 36985 37118 37050 38103 21920
Aug. 36145 35885 36413 36613 36575 38280 22268
Sep. 35918 35620 36130 36275 36243 38020 22460
Oct. 35618 35310 35805 35903 35835 37860 24118

FED CATTLE TRADE Head Count Avg. Weight Avg. Price
WEEKLY WEIGHTED AVERAGES
Live FOB Steer 2,769 1,545 264.35
Live FOB Heifer 1,459 1,371 263.68
Dressed Del Steer 4,372 1,005 412.10
Dressed Del Heifer 94 906 415.00

NATIONAL WEEKLY FED BEEF SLAUGHTER VOLUME: MAY 17, 2026
Domestic Imported
Forward Contract 39,606 2,541
Formula 207,352 2,345
Negotiated Cash 87,004 296
Negotiated Grid 26,966 1,221
Packer Owned 10,590 N/A
Total 371,518 6,403

SLAUGHTER FORWARD CONTRACTS FORWARD BEEF SALES
Delivery Month Neg. Sales 0-21 days 1,686
May '26 110,386 Neg. Sales 21+ days 564
Jun. '26 131,295 Formula sales 3,866
Jul. '26 91,829 Forward contract sales 84
Aug. '26 140,034 Domestic sales 5,681
Sep. '26 81,803 NAFTA Exports 135

CANADIAN LIVESTOCK PRICES & FEDERAL INSPECTED SLAUGHTER FIGURES
Alberta Direct Sales (4% shrink) Price Weekly Change
Slaughter Steers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1300-1500 lbs N/A N/A
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs N/A N/A

Average feeder cattle prices (CND) for week ending Tuesday, May 19, 2026
Steers: Alberta Saskatchewan Ontario
501-600 lbs N/A N/A N/A
601-700 lbs N/A N/A N/A
701-800 lbs N/A N/A N/A
801-900 lbs N/A N/A N/A

USDA MEXICO TO U.S. WEEKLY LIVESTOCK IMPORTS
Feeder cattle imports weekly and yearly volume.
Species Current Previous Current Previous
Week Week Year-to-date Year-to-date
5/11/2026 5/4/2026
Feeders 0 230,638

USDA WEEKLY IMPORTED FEEDER CATTLE
May 21, 2026
Mexico to United States Feeder Cattle Import Summary
Receipts EST: N/A Week Ago EST: N/A Year Ago Act: N/A
THIS REPORT WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED AFTER MAY 12TH 2025. THE BORDER WILL BE CLOSED FOR LIVESTOCK IMPORTS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

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

Selected Auctions Week Ending May 21, 2026
Feeder prices for steers & heifers reflect medium and large 1 cattle, unless otherwise noted; * Indicates medium and large 1-2
DATE MARKET 200-300 lb. 300-400 lb. 400-500 lb. 500-600 lb. 600-700 lb. 700-800 lb. 800 lb. -up SLAUGHTER COWS PAIRS
NORTHWEST
May 14 Burley, ID 474 568-577 486-538 485 431 372 250-345 155-199 3,800
May 16 Eugene, OR 1,196 360-480* 340-455* 330-360* 330-395* 309-410* 300-340* 180-195 2,700-4,300
May 18 Madras, OR 533 600-680 535-620 475-530 420-455 365-371 315-345 150-180 3,500-3,700
May 13 Vale, OR 625 515-530 475-535 427-445 380-400 330-370 290-325 195-222 2,500-2,750
May 19 Davenport, WA 270 355-417.50 252.50-414 292.50-411 282.50-375 322-345 181-347.50 99-276 4,000-4,700
May 14 Toppenish, WA 1,956 530-595* 497-557.50* 430-510* 374-451* 327.50* 164.50-200.50 193-233.50 3,100-3,200
NORTH CENTRAL
May 17 Iowa 6,231 660 612.50-650 506-600 418-539 377.50-470 362-440.75 325-399.25 158-295
May 19 Miles City, MT 462 535-600 472.50-570 392.50-490 435* 356.50-416 322.50-380 316-341.25 150-275
May 16 Ericson, NE 1,060 560-590 525-610 490-505 422 399.50 336.50-365.50 329-345 3,900-5,050
May 14 Willcox, AZ N/A 555 493-540 434-480 400-440 362-402 150-186
May 13 La Junta, CO 944 590-680 490-552.50 435-512.50 390-435 352.50-385 325-345 170-192
May 18 Loma, CO 1,015 575-650 520-590 440-525 385-460 350-405 250-360 177-200 4,050-5,375
May 20 Dodge City, KS 2,115 622.50 500-577.50 462-497.50 404-441 350-385 320-366.75 170-282.50 3,200-3,900
May 14 Pratt, KS 2,123 522.50-605 517-532.50 420-507.50 388-475 368-414 334-374 171-287.50 2,800-4,900
May 14 Salina, KS 2,034 560 610-670 540-605 474-563 438-491 367.50-425 348-381 324-348 188-244 2,300-3,450
May 20 Clovis, NM 1,818 705-730 590-640 465-555 404-530 366-505 336-400 240-336 160-190 2,250-4,300
May 20 El Reno, OK 11,311 630-645 505-630 355-465 360-417 342-372 312-349 282-365 185.50-230 1,300-3,400
May 19 McAlester, OK 825 495-555 450-550 437-503 375-440 353-383 303-355 167-193 2,100-4,100
May 19 Oklahoma City, OK 7,116 465-615 450-530 398-440 368-408 320-600 290-333 204-236 2,200-3,650
May 15 Cuero, TX 918 610-760 543-695 470-580 420-475 402-434 372-400 162-195 3,550-3,950
May 14 Dalhart, TX 1,189 550-695 501-600 452-645 417-600 372-425 329-422 202-230 2,350-3,100
May 14 San Angelo, TX 554 695 580 537.50 430-545 421-435 378-397.50 162-192
May 14 Tulia, TX 1,671 655-690 500-550 480-545 400-520 375-452 377.50-380 282.50-320 148-175 3,000-4,600
SOUTH CENTRAL
May 15 Alabama 6,080 595-700 545-625 480-595 410-495 365-445 315-390 320-330 158-196
May 18 Lexington, KY 1,184 580-695* 522.50-560* 489-540* 420-516* 411-467* 372* 250-371* 170-210 2,850-5,400
May 18 Joplin, MO 10,397 640 600-740 530-600 450-540 410-475 372-420 312-374 162-192
May 18 Tennessee 7,051 550-800 460-670 450-605 380-545 350-480 335-412 280-358 117-215 2,500-4,450
May 18 Virginia 4,849 510-590 445-570 350-577.50 349-495 337-400 255-355 170-210 1,700-4,350
EAST
May 20 Lethbridge, Alberta 586 620-720 590-640 574-656 535-614 532-543 400-562 208-246 270-466

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USDA updates livestock insurance programs for 2027

The USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) announced a series of updates to the Livestock Risk Protection (LRP), Livestock Gross Margin (LGM) and Dairy Revenue Protection (DRP) insurance programs beginning with the 2027 crop year.

"These updates expand coverage options, update eligibility definitions and strengthen program consistency across RMA's livestock portfolio," said RMA Administrator Pat Swanson. "These enhancements are another way we are putting Farmers First. We want to ensure that livestock and dairy operations across the country have the best tools available to manage risk."

RMA said several updates will apply uniformly across LRP, LGM and DRP. Those changes include adding subsidy capture language to address off-exchange contracts, updating the definition of beginning farmer or rancher and subsidy percentages to align with the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, permitting concurrent coverage between similar livestock programs and allowing policies that have not

earned premium for three consecutive years to be subject to cancellation.

Additional changes include revising the transfer-of-coverage language to clarify when coverage can be transferred and updating the general policy language to be consistent with other RMA insurance products.

Under the LRP program, which protects livestock producers against declining market prices, RMA approved several program-specific updates. The agency expanded guidelines for the forage disaster exemption to address extended drought and other natural disasters and established specific grazing dates for when the exemption may apply.

RMA also increased the maximum weight threshold for fed cattle types, extended Cull Cow coverage to a maximum of 52 weeks and added three new feeder cattle types: Unborn Bulls and Heifers Weight 2, Unborn Brahman Weight 2 and Unborn Dairy Weight 2. Those new categories cover livestock weighing between 6 and 9/cwt, broadening coverage op-

tions for producers with unborn livestock.

Changes to the LGM program, which protects cattle, dairy and swine producers against declines in gross margins, include increasing the maximum insurable weight for LGM Cattle to 1,800 pounds. The agency also revised target weight definitions for feeder cattle and live cattle, increasing allowable target weights for both yearling and calf finishing operations.

In addition, RMA modified the definition of "share" under LGM Cattle to require producers to own calves for at least five months in yearling finishing operations or eight months in calf finishing operations.

For dairy producers, the DRP program received one key update. RMA moved the sales period end date to the following calendar day, making the program consistent with the sales period structure used in other livestock insurance programs.

RMA noted LRP, LGM and DRP are available in all states and counties. Producers interested in coverage can work through private crop insurance agents,

with additional information available through the

RMA Agent Locator at turl.com/2wnwan49.

— Charles Wallace, WLJ contributing editor

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Corn futures lower despite trade summit

MARKETS (from page 1)

Slaughter through Thursday was 427,000 head, 1,000 less than the prior week. Total slaughter for a week earlier is estimated to be 527,000 head. Actual slaughter for the week ending May 9 was 525,175 head. The average steer dressed weight was 985 lbs., 7 lbs. above the prior week.

Boxed beef prices were mixed, with the Choice cutout up \$4.03 to \$391.48 and the Select cutout down \$3.35 to \$385.65.

Feeder cattle

Feeder cattle futures were mixed for the week. The May contract was up \$1.55 to \$369.12, the August contract was \$1.48 lower to \$356.52 and the September contract was down \$1.85 to \$353.37.

The CME Feeder Cattle Index was down 79 cents to close at \$372.44.

Corn futures closed lower despite climbing sharply after news on the U.S.-China trade summit. The July contract was down 5 cents to \$4.62, and the September contract lost 6 cents to \$4.68.

"More than anything, the disconnect currently seen between the market's fundamentals and the futures complex is nauseating," Stewart wrote on Thursday. "And, with the Cattle on Feed report expected to be bearish as well, plenty of bearishness has seeped into the market."

The pre-report estimates

for Friday's Cattle on Feed report showed that feedlots with 1,000 head or greater will be 101.6% for cattle on feed in May. Placements in April are estimated to be 104.6%, and marketings for April are predicted at 90.7%.

Iowa: Russell Livestock in Russell sold 3,994 head on Monday. Compared to the last auction, steers under 550 lbs. sold mostly \$5-11 lower, while steers 550 lbs. and heavier sold \$3-10 higher, except 650-700 lbs., which sold \$11 lower. Heifers sold sharply higher. Benchmark steers averaging 713 lbs. sold from \$404-433, averaging \$423.23.

Missouri: Joplin Regional Stockyards in Carthage sold 10,397 head on Monday. Compared to the last auction, feeder steers under 750 lbs. sold steady to \$8 lower and over 750 lbs. sold steady to \$7 higher. Feeder heifers under 600 lbs. sold \$5-10 lower and over 650 lbs. sold steady to \$10 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 764 lbs. sold from \$372-377, averaging \$375.94.

Oklahoma: Oklahoma National Stockyards in Oklahoma City sold 7,116 head on Monday. Compared to the last auction, feeder steers and heifers traded mostly steady. Benchmark steers averaging 782 lbs. sold from \$363-382, averaging \$372.34.

South Dakota: Sioux Falls Regional in Worthing sold 2,348 head on Monday. Compared to the last auction, feeder steers and heifers sold steady. Benchmark

steers averaging 741 lbs. sold from \$401-415, averaging \$407.82. — Charles Wallace, WLJ contributing editor



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Taking advantage of breed complementarity, heterosis

HERD REBUILDING (from page 1)

Meanwhile, in hot climates, smaller cattle have more body surface per pound, so they can dissipate heat easier than a larger cow. This is magnified in Bos indicus, or "eared" cattle, whose loose hides provide even more body surface to serve as a radiator to dissipate heat.

Two of the most underutilized tools in the cattle industry are the use of heterosis and breed complementarity. Breed differences need to be celebrated and strengthened rather than trying to convert breeds so that they are all the same. However, there are too many examples of this occurring.

One of these is a recent study headed by Mulim and his colleagues at Purdue University, which found that genetic drift in the Red Angus gene pool has resulted in it being uniquely different than their black counterparts. This makes perfect sense when one considers that the Red Angus Association of America was formed in 1954 to build a breed based on objective measures including required reporting of weaning weights.

In 1995, the reds implemented mandatory whole herd reporting and set a breed goal to become "the

maternal common denominator in progressive commercial producers crossbreeding systems." This included pioneering genetic predictions for female reproductive traits. Meanwhile, black Angus was leading the industry in identifying carcass merit and many breeders were geared to "supply the brand," emphasizing terminal traits. Both were successful in meeting their goals resulting in the unique gene pools found between the two populations.

Inexplicably, many Red Angus breeders today are in a mad rush to incorporate black genetics into their programs. This is occurring just as their black counterparts may be needing to consider a course correction, because the genetic production potential of the average of the breed exceeds what can be expressed in the environment most commercial cow herds are managed. Meanwhile, the red cattle emphasis on reproduction and longevity has put them in an envious position that is quickly being bred out of the cattle with black genetics.

Other examples would include Gelbvieh, which according to the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center's cross-breed EPD adjustments have the highest genetic milk potential among

the mainstream European and British breeds, but tend to be below average in marbling. Cattle with the genetics for high milk production have higher maintenance requirements due to a higher percentage of high maintenance organ and gut tissue.

Therefore, one would think that producers breeding Balancers (Gelbvieh-Angus hybrid) would use Angus bulls that would moderate milk while significantly increasing marbling. Breeders are increasing the genetic potential for marbling in their Balancer breeding programs, but are further increasing genetic milk potential instead of moderating it.

Some producers with high percentage, high horsepower Angus-based commercial herds are looking to Hereford to crossbreed to make baldy cows, but many breeders are selecting Hereford cattle with extremely high growth potential. Although the producers' cattle will gain from heterosis, from a breed complementary standpoint, they are selecting stock very similar to the Angus they want to moderate, which largely defeats the purpose that they set out to achieve.

Bos indicus (eared or humped cattle) influenced cattle—also known as the American breeds—have much to offer in a cross-

breeding system in hot humid environments. Most of the American breeds like Brangus and Santa Gertrudis were designed to have five-eighths Bos taurus blood (Angus, Shorthorn, etc.) and three-eighths Bos indicus (Brahman, Zebu) genetics. Three-eighths was considered the minimum amount of indicus needed for the cattle to sweat, which allows Bos indicus to dissipate heat better than traditional breeds that primarily pant to lose heat.

Indicus cattle sweat is different than what most people think. Although it does contain some fluids that result in evaporative cooling, it is mainly oils that keep the hair slick to better dissipate heat, as well as reflect sunlight and repel insects.

In addition, Bos indicus-influenced cattle's loose hides allow them to better dissipate heat, and they have a tremendous advantage in maternal calving ease. Many of the American breeds have drifted more toward taurus-type cattle, losing the ability to sweat, developing tighter hides that reduce heat dissipation and giving up much of the maternal calving ease found in Brahman genetics.

Taking advantage of breed complementarity and heterosis is one of the quickest ways to custom fit a cow herd to a producer's environment, management, feed resources and market. For instance, some of the highest Stayability cattle can be found in the subset of performance breeders found in the Shorthorn breed. Also, utilizing

terminal sires is another way to run moderate cows and still achieve desired carcass weights.

Ultimately, seedstock producers must maintain, and even enhance, what makes their breed useful in a crossbreeding system, while making sure they are adequate in other traits so that they are useful in a broad range of production systems. — **Dr. Bob Hough, WLJ correspondent**

(Editor's note: This article is part three of a three-part series about rebuilding the cowherd. Parts one and two were published in the May 11 and May 18 issues of WLJ. A comprehensive feature article may also be found in the spring edition of The Wire on page 24.)

SALE REPORTS

QUEEN ANN CATTLE CO. SALE
May 9, Loma, CO
58 Angus bulls... \$11,395
38 Commercial open heifers... 3,430
9 Quarter Horses... 14,861

Auctioneer: Jace Thompson
TOPS: Q A Audacious 5075, 4/26/2025 by S A V Arithmetic 3204; to Flag Bar Livestock, Craig, CO, \$19,500. Q A Armsman 5121, 5/3/2025 by S A V Arithmetic 3204; to Little Cripple Creek, Gillette, WY, \$18,000. Q A Agile 5080, 4/29/2025 by S A V Arithmetic 3204; to Little Cripple Creek, Gillette, WY, \$17,500. — **TY GROSHANS**

FEATHER RIVER COLLEGE HORSE SALE
May 16, Quincy, CA

19 Horses... \$19,947
Auctioneer: Eric Duarte
TOP: FRC Big Pippin, 1/1/2023 by Frosted Metallic; to Buyer, CA, \$48,000. — **JARED PATTERSON**

SIGNATURE COLLECTION 2.0 FEMALE SALE
May 16, Dos Palos, CA
4 Angus pairs... \$25,250
25 Angus bred heifers... 7,000
1 Angus open cow... 6,250
20 Angus bred cows... 5,005
3 Commercial bred heifers... 4,433
1 Angus pregnancy... 6,250
1 Angus flush... 6,250
6 Angus embryo packages... 2,850
4 Angus semen lots... 684

Auctioneer: Steve Dorran
Sale Manager: The Judge Source
TOPS—Bred cow: BCC Barbara 6276-2077, 2/15/2022 by Baldrige Alternative E125 bred to RSA True Balance 1311; to Bar KJ Angus, Wasco, CA, \$15,000. **Bred heifer:** Vintage Rita 4580, 8/29/2024 by Baldrige Heat Seeker H925 bred to V A R Landman 4194; to Avila Cattle Co., Clements, CA, \$13,500. **Embryo package:** Vintage Blackcap 1084, by De-Su New Order 343G; to Byrd Cattle Co., Los Molinos, CA, \$6,600. **Open heifer:** Byrd Blackcap A100 0514-5523, 7/27/2025 by Byrd Bullseye 1186-A100; to 6-X Dairy, Oakdale, CA, \$17,500. — **JARED PATTERSON**

SALE CALENDAR

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ANGUS

Jun. 1 – TK Angus, Bull & Female Sale, Valentine, NE

COMMERCIAL

Jun. 12 – Western Video Market Sale, Cottonwood, CA

Jun. 17 – Cattlemen's Livestock Market, Pair & Bred Cow Sale, Galt, CA

Jun. 20 – Visalia Livestock Market, Female Sale, Visalia, CA

Jun. 30 – Cattle Country Video Sale, Laramie, WY

Jul. 13 – Western Video Market Sale, Reno, NV

Jul. 7 – Turlock Livestock Auction Yard, Female Sale, Turlock, CA

Jul. 25 – Cattlemen's Livestock Market, Bred Female Sale, Galt, CA

Aug. 1 – Turlock Livestock Auction Yard, Bred Female Sale, Turlock, CA

Aug. 4 – Cattle Country Video Sale, Gering, NE
Sep. 10 – Cattle Country Video Sale, Cheyenne, WY

HORSE

Jun. 4 – Bowman Livestock, Horse Sale, Bowman, ND

Jun. 6 – Rancher's Horse Sale, Juntura, OR

Jun. 13 – Shelman Family, Horse Sale, Burns, OR

Jul. 11 – High Desert Quarter Horse Sale, Redmond, OR

Aug. 22 – Memory Ranches, Foal Sale, Wells, NV

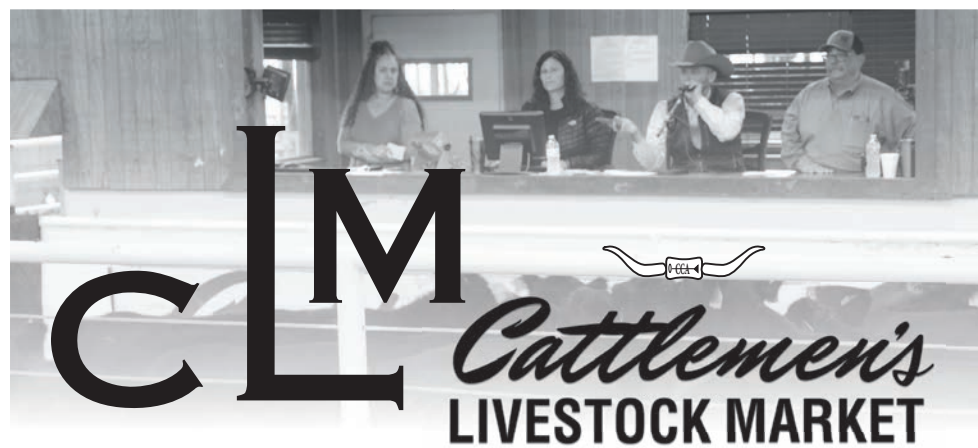


VIDEO AUCTION

May 14, Hudson Oaks, TX
Superior Livestock Auction hosted its video auction live on May 14 from the Superior Livestock Auction Studio in Hudson Oaks, TX. Cattle producers sold 19,665 head of calves, yearlings and bred stock totaling 174 lots from 18 states for this offering. Strong buyer participation from several bidders throughout the

auction resulted in 75 different successful buyers. Cattle were sold under contract to be delivered immediately through December 2026. Cattle futures had been very volatile all week leading up to the May 14 video auction, and some buyer reservations were observed. Regions 3/4/5/6 feeder steers were sold at \$5-7 lower. Feeder heifers from the same regions

were steady to \$5 lower than our last auction. Regions 1&2 feeders were only lightly tested at \$10 lower. There was a large string of Florida calves offered and moved out at as much as \$100/cwt higher than this same auction last year. The remainder of the calves from regions 3/4/6 were mainly summer delivery and were steady with the last auction.



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Feeder Cattle12pm

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- WEDNESDAYS -

MAY 27

JUNE 10 • JUNE 24

CATTLEMEN'S FEEDER SPECIALS

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MONDAY, JUNE 1

CONSIGNMENTS WELCOME FROM ALL CA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS WITH A DONATION BEING MADE BACK TO LOCAL ASSOCIATION

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WEDNESDAY

JUNE 17

SATURDAY

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CONSIGNMENT DEADLINE JUNE 4

JULY 13-15 - RENO, NV
CONSIGNMENT DEADLINE JUNE 25

China reauthorizes registration for beef establishments

CHINA TRADE (from page 1)

through 2028, adding to earlier soybean purchase commitments made during previous trade negotiations.

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said the administration expects “double-digit billion-dollar” agricultural purchase commitments extending beyond soybeans. Greer emphasized the commitments could create opportunities across U.S. agriculture, including livestock products and feed grains such as sorghum.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi confirmed the two countries agreed to continue trade negotiations aimed at expanding bilateral commerce under a reciprocal tariff-reduction framework while also working through agricultural market access issues.

USDA Secretary Brooke

Rollins emphasized the significance of the summit outcomes for producers in a post on X following the meetings.

Rollins highlighted the administration secured “\$17B in NEW purchase commitments, in addition to the 25MMT (million metric tons) soybean commitment,” while also noting that U.S. poultry products would again be eligible for export to China.

She additionally emphasized the importance of renewed beef facility registrations, writing that “U.S. beef is also on the menu, as China is renewing licenses for more than 400 beef facilities, and is adding new listings.” Rollins said restoring beef access was the “No. 1 ask” from ranchers seeking additional value from products often marketed internationally, including hides, skins, tongues, tendons and tripe.

Beef access restored

Among the most significant developments for cattle producers was China’s decision to restore market access for U.S. beef by renewing expired registrations for more than 400 U.S. beef facilities and adding additional facilities eligible for export.

The U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) announced that China renewed five-year registrations for 425 U.S. beef facilities and approved 77 additional establishments for export eligibility. Thirty-eight facilities remain suspended, though 25 of those had their registrations renewed despite still being restricted from exporting beef to China.

USMEF President and CEO Dan Halstrom called the development a critical step forward for the U.S. beef industry.

“China’s renewal of U.S. beef establishments is excellent news for the U.S. beef industry and for the customers in China who are anxious to resume purchases,” Halstrom said.

The timing is particularly important given the sharp decline in beef exports to China over the past year.

According to DTN, U.S. beef exports to China reached \$1.95 billion in 2022 and remained near \$1.5 bil-

lion in 2024 before falling sharply to \$468 million in 2025. Through March of this year, USDA export data showed just \$11 million in U.S. beef exports had moved to China.

Poultry exports followed a similar trend. U.S. poultry exports to China exceeded \$1.1 billion in 2022, then fell to \$542 million by 2024 and to \$106 million last year.

China also agreed during the summit to resume poultry imports from U.S. states designated by the USDA as free of highly pathogenic avian influenza.

Industry groups react

Reaction from agricultural organizations was largely positive, though several groups stressed the importance of seeing long-term implementation and enforceable access.

The U.S. Cattlemen’s Association (USCA) said restoration of beef facility registrations represented an essential step toward rebuilding stable trade with China.

USCA President Justin Tupper said the organization appreciates the administration prioritizing beef access during the summit but cautioned that producers still need more certainty and transparency in the marketplace.

Tupper noted that China’s

quota-managed import system and ongoing uncertainty about the agreement’s details continue to raise concerns for cattle producers. He added that U.S. trade officials should continue to pursue “truly free and fair trade” that delivers enforceable, stable market access for American beef.

The National Cattlemen’s Beef Association said in its Weekly Bulletin that it has worked closely with the administration over the past year to restore access to one of the industry’s top export

markets and continues monitoring the situation as more details become available.

Meanwhile, the American Soybean Association (ASA) welcomed continued dialogue between the two countries and expressed optimism regarding future soybean purchases.

ASA President Scott Metzger said reliable trade relationships remain critical for soybean growers as producers continue planting the 2026 crop. — **Charles Wallace, WLJ contributing editor**



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.)

May 31 – Applications for the Sheep

Heritage Foundation Scholarship are now open through the American Sheep Industry Association. This scholarship provides \$3,000 in financial support for a graduate student that is pursuing a sheep-related study that will support the advancement of the U.S. sheep industry, lamb and wool. Details: tinyurl.com/4356awwv.

HOOVES & HORNS BY A.W. ERWIN



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