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INSIDE WLJ

HAY HEIST — Kansas man pleads guilty to drought-driven deception. Page 3

HOPPER HAVOC — Grasshopper swarms devastate Montana land. Page 7

A LOOK BACK IN HISTORY

"Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-KY, recently introduced The Common Sense Consumption Act, a bill that will stop lawsuits targeting restaurants and food manufacturers for their customers' obesity. 'It's not Ben and Jerry's fault if you eat too much ice cream. It's not Sara Lee's fault if you eat too much cake,' McConnell said," the July 28, 2003, *WLJ* Beef Bits article read.

INDEX

Preston Keres/USDA

A federal judge has denied Simplot's motion to dismiss a lawsuit challenging the company's waste discharges.

CWA case against Simplot feedlot allowed to proceed

— Alleges unlawful waste discharges

A lawsuit challenging one of the biggest feedlot companies in the world and its waste discharges will continue after a court ruled against the company's dismissal to dismiss.

J.R. Simplot Co. and Simplot Livestock Company (Simplot) were sued in a May 2023 complaint by the environmental advocacy group Snake River Waterkeeper (SRW) for what the group alleges are unlawful pollution discharges into Idaho's Snake River.

Simplot filed a motion to dismiss the case in July 2023, stating SRW "failed to describe exactly where, when, and how such alleged illicit discharges occur." On June 24, 2024, a federal court judge dismissed Simplot's motion, allowing the suit to continue.

"In sum, the court finds SRW's notice adequately identified the Grand View facility as the location of the violation and in conjunction with the extensive information included with the notice," Judge David C. Nye wrote in the ruling.

Background

Simplot owns a feedlot in Grand View, ID, with a capacity of about 150,000 head. The feedlot is the largest confined animal feeding operation (CAFO) in Idaho, and one of the largest in the U.S. SRW alleges Simplot has failed to manage its manure at the facility, allowing manure to flow through streams, canals and ditches into the Snake River. The group conducted water quality sampling over a six-year period in the Snake River and said its data showed the feedlot routinely discharges waste that contains high levels of fecal coliform and E. Coli bacteria, along with nitrate and suspended solids.

"For decades, Simplot's Grand View feedlot has used the Snake River as a sewer system to move manure downstream and pollute our water," said Snake River Waterkeeper Executive Director Buck

See SIMPLOT on page 7

Study: Beef Checkoff adds $3.3B to industry

— ROI of $13.41 for producers

A recent independent economic study assessing the Beef Checkoff's effectiveness and financial benefits revealed substantial positive effects, including an incremental $3.3 billion added to the beef industry in 2023. The study was commissioned by the Checkoff Evaluation Committee and conducted by Dr. Harry M. Kaiser of Cornell University.

"We're extremely pleased with the results of this latest study," said Cheryl DeVuyst, chair of the Beef Checkoff Evaluation Committee and current secretary-treasurer of the Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB). "The Beef Checkoff's primary goal is to increase beef demand here in the U.S. and worldwide. The statistics uncovered by this study tell us that we're achieving that goal and providing producers and importers with an excellent return on their national Checkoff investments."

The economic analysis of the national Beef Checkoff program was conducted to achieve three primary objectives.

The first was to measure the impact of demand-driving activities on domestic and international beef demand. The results indicated that domestic beef demand from 2019-23 would have been 8.5% lower without these activities, while demand for U.S. beef imports in key markets would have been 11.5% lower.

The study found the Beef Checkoff increased domestic and international beef demand and led to higher steer prices for beef producers. Without the domestic

See CHECKOFF STUDY on page 5

Beef x dairy survey shows room for improvement

— Calf health is a major concern

In 2017, significant changes in the dairy steer industry led to packers ceasing the purchase of fed dairy steers, pushing producers to adopt new genetics and breeding strategies. Traditionally, dairy cattle accounted for about 20% of the beef supply.

This shift prompted a survey by the Iowa Beef Center, which sought to understand the management practices, challenges and outcomes associated with beef-on-dairy (beef x dairy) crossbred calves.

The survey focused on two primary objectives:

- Understanding the management practices employed by dairy producers and calf ranches raising beef x dairy crossbred calves.
- Identifying challenges related to finishing beef x dairy calves from commercial feedlot operators.

Calf raisers

The survey involved over 30 contacts with calf raisers in or near Iowa and received responses from 11 producers representing more than 21,000 calves annually. Five of the participants were current dairy producers. Only two out of the 11 respondents exclusively fed beef x dairy steers, while the remaining nine fed both beef x dairy steers and heifers.

The survey covered various aspects, including calf health, preweaning and post-weaning death loss and starter feed diets.

Calf health is a significant concern with beef x dairy calves, prompting questions on how they are sourced. The majority of the respondents purchase calves directly from dairies, five respondents raise calves from their own dairy and the remaining two buy from auctions or a broker.

Almost all calf raisers either test for adequate colostrum intake upon arrival or confirm with the dairy before shipping. Five respondents provided colostrum on day one, four communicated with dairies and five tested for passive immunity.

Key health concerns included respiratory/pneumonia issues and scours. On average, calf raisers reported a pre-weaning death loss of 4.4% and a post-weaning death loss of 2.85%. Additionally, 22% of calves required health treatments before weaning.

See SURVEY on page 4

Live cattle see modest rally over the week

Despite a summer slowdown in beef demand, cattle feeders found leverage over the week, finding encouragement from the board and holding out against packers.

Live cattle futures climbed several dollars over the week. The August contract gained $4.63 to close at $188.90, and the October contract gained about $3 to close at $188.60.

USDA did not release its Thursday afternoon cash trade report ahead of *WLJ* press time. Cash trade through Wednesday was about 6,000 head.

"Negotiated fed cattle prices have dropped the last couple of weeks but this week looks like a steady go at worst," wrote Cassie Fish, market analyst, in The Beef on Wednesday. "Just a few thousand cattle have traded at steady money, but steady bids have been passed as cattle feeders price cattle higher."

Fish continued that a modest futures rally was all the encouragement feeders needed to wait packers out. "Cattle feeders are enjoying having the stick," she added.

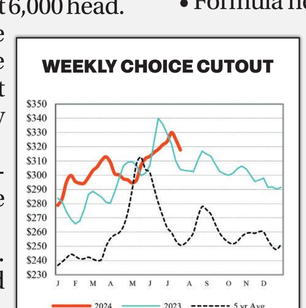
Cash trade for the week ending July 21 totaled 71,749 head. Live steers averaged $193.95, and dressed steers averaged $310.21.

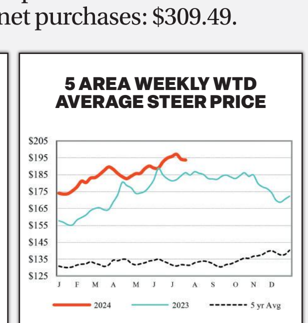
The national weekly direct beef type price distribution for the week of July 15-22 was the following on a live basis:

- Negotiated purchases: $193.75.
- Formula net purchases: $195.40.
- Forward contract net purchases: $192.96.
- Negotiated grid net purchases: $196.71.

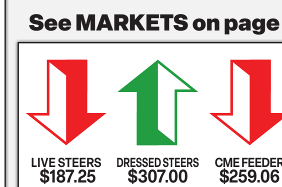
On a dressed basis:

- Negotiated purchases: $310.22.
- Formula net purchases: $309.49.
- Forward contract net purchases: $297.29.
- Negotiated grid net purchases: $314.42.





See MARKETS on page 9



PERIODICAL : Time Sensitive Priority Handling

COMMENTS

Fire season

IPSEN

As of this writing, there are over 150 active fires in the state of Oregon alone with over 800,000 acres burned. In the western U.S., there has been nearly 2,000,000 acres burned in this season alone. In Idaho, there are 17 active fires with evacuation orders in place. There are almost 25,000 people working on these fires across the West.

The National Interagency Fire Center records data from the 11 western states, Alaska included. Comparing year-to-date stats (Jan. 1 through July 25), this year is now beating the average acres burned by 300,000 acres. Compared to 2022, this is 2 million acres less with 12,000 less fires reported. Interestingly, last year with the cool summer season we felt, there were 74% less acres burned at this point. Currently, two fires that are actively burning on the Idaho/Oregon border have surpassed 400,000 acres.

Our spring and early summer season felt like it was going to be much the same. Cooler temperatures with frequent moisture supported by plentiful runoff from snowpack amped up the fire fuel load. Most areas in Oregon, Idaho and Washington held snowpack levels between 100-105% of normal. Spring season moisture continued to bring ample moisture to continue grass growth and development. Throughout much of the West, this spring's season was ideal and fire fuel is in abundance.

Pacific Northwest data records the average high temperature for the month of June as 67 F. That same area jumped to an average of 84 F in July. Keep in mind this data includes coastal regions. For perspective, Boise, ID, has had more days in July over 100 F than have been below.

Data supported by the National Centers for Environmental Information shared some interesting trends. Looking specifically at the Northwest U.S., the past 30 years (1991-2020 data), shows a balanced look of moisture and weather change. Most Pacific Northwest regions show overall average precipitation with a slight increase in mean temperature change—most regions being up 0.5 to 1 degree F. The data becomes more interesting when broken down to the reported months, January, April, July and October. The data tracked annual precipitation and temperature change. January showed an increase in both moisture and temperature. April and October showed a larger increase in moisture with a cooldown in temperature. July showed a drastic drop in moisture with a modest increase in temperature.

The mere reason I bring this data in is to show overall trends. The data supports more highs and lows that balance into slight means trends. Is there a warming pattern? All the data says yes. Is it manmade and do we have an impact on this? This is where it gets murky, and propaganda driven. Many of *WLJ*'s readers will remember in the 1970s when the concern was a "Little Ice Age." Since 1976, though, Earth's temperature has gotten warmer by about a quarter of a degree each decade. For reference and rolling my eyes at the beef cattle emissions piece, there were 128 million head on inventory in 1976 compared to today's number of 87.2 million head. Hard to convince me that cows have anything to do with this trend when we have so fewer cows, but the atmosphere continues to change.

Basically, my stance on this is from several fronts. The first being how public land is being managed and funds being readily available. Fire season is a large economy for many sectors of government and its contractors. We are seeing fire fuel being abandoned for decades while homes are continuing to breach into wilderness areas. More and more structures are being threatened, especially in areas in California. People are moving deeper into wilderness areas and with brush, grass and debris management not able to maintain safety levels, we are seeing more towns and communities threatened. Canada is facing many of the same situations in this regard. It is estimated that wildfires nationally account for between $400-900 billion each year in damages. The government allocates $20-25 billion for fire suppressing measures each year. Most of the resources are a reactive allocation rather than a preventative approach.

Simply put, the weather patterns have supported for fire fuel over the past few years. This year created a perfect situation, especially in areas like Oregon, Idaho, Washington and Montana. Good spring rains with excellent growing temperatures followed by an aggressive heat wave that zapped moisture, crisped grasses and created an opportunity for fire to explode across the region. We can't look at individual days and go screaming global warming or global cooling. What we can do is look at seasons, situations and management and realize many of the problems stem back to the organization and utilization of resources that agencies deal with.

We pray for all those affected by the current wildfires. Please look through this issue for directions on how to help those affected in many areas by the current fires. We pray for rain and the safety of those battling the blazes and hope this fire season ends soon. — **LOGAN IPSEN**

GUEST OPINION

THE FIGHT OVER THE FARM BILL'S BIGGEST PROGRAM

Disagreements over the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as food stamps, aren't the only obstacle to passing a farm bill this year. They may not even be the most important one. They are, though, among the most partisan of farm-bill disagreements. And their impact is big; SNAP is far and away the largest farm-bill program, accounting for more than 75% of the spending.

This year House Republicans are proposing to help pay for increased payments to farmers by taking around $30 billion from SNAP over 10 years. Farm bills are five-year laws, but they are scored for costs over 10 years. Food-stamp benefits wouldn't go down, but they also wouldn't go up as much as they might have had the president retained the discretion the 2018 Farm Bill gave him.

In an inflationary environment like today's, the Democrats call this a cut. They say they won't agree to any food-stamp cuts.

It makes sense that the Republicans, the party of rural America, propose taking from SNAP to pay farmers—and that the Democrats, the party of urban America, oppose it. But the disagreement also reflects the parties' principles. Reining in the welfare state has always been a Republican priority, just as providing for the poor has always been a Democratic one.

With principles at stake, could either side compromise? What often prompts a willingness to compromise is being unlikely to prevail. Until recently the power dynamics favored the Democrats. The Republican House can pass SNAP cuts, but they won't fly in the Democratic Senate and the Democratic president has the veto.

Now, though, the Republicans have reason to hope for getting control of both houses of Congress and the presidency in the November election. If that happens, they would be able to pass a farm bill in the next Congress that slashes SNAP even deeper. There's less pressure on the Republicans to settle.

But there are conflicting pressures. Groups lobbying for big farmers want a farm bill now. As DTN Ag Policy Editor Chris Clayton pointed out, passing a farm bill in this Congress would give farmers higher reference prices in 2025. Failing to pass it would delay that benefit until at least 2026.

More than just the party of rural America, the Republicans are the party of big agriculture, representing 81 of the top 100 Congressional districts measured by agricultural sales. They care about what commercial farmers think.

Wearing their party-of-rural-America hat, the Republicans should also pay attention to a point that doesn't get enough attention: Food insecurity is as much a rural problem as an urban problem.

Naturally the urban hungry outnumber the rural hungry; many more people live in the cities than the country. But consider:

- In an October 2023 paper by USDA's Economic Research Service, 14.7% of households outside metropolitan areas were food insecure compared with 12.5% inside metropolitan areas.
- The wife of an Iowa farmer who volunteers at a food bank in a nearby town of 1,500 says two years ago, 10 families were relying on the food bank. Today the number is 50.
- According to the non-profit group Feeding America, nine out of 10 American counties with the highest food-insecurity rates are rural.
- Wages in rural America tend to be lower, which is why a good many rural SNAP recipients are people with full-time jobs, like the Oklahoma mother with three teenagers profiled recently by the Washington Post.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 24.1% of 2020 adult SNAP recipients worked every month and another 14.3% worked some months. While Republicans want SNAP to encourage work and discourage reliance on the government, many SNAP recipients end up working AND relying on the government.

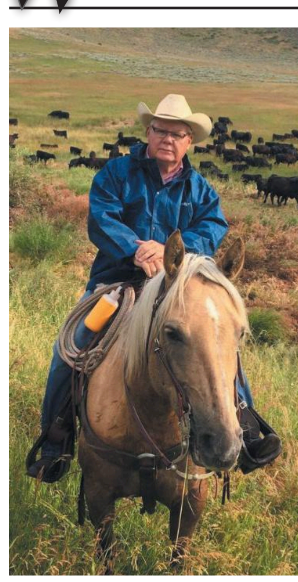
These points don't seem to sway Republicans. A House Republican staffer attacked Feeding America and other groups advocating a more generous food-stamp program as "hunger weirdos," claiming they use poor people as props and only care about keeping their cushy jobs. Putting aside the klutzy and needlessly offensive choice of words, is there anything to the charge?

According to Feeding America's publicly disclosed tax return, it paid six-figure salaries to 18 executives in 2022; its CEO made close to a million dollars. Six-figure salaries, though, are common in big, complicated organizations and Feeding America's revenue was close to $5 billion. It used that revenue to provide cash and food to more than 240 food banks across the country. (The list of food banks and the amounts to each take up several pages of the tax return.) Forbes magazine says 98% of Feeding America's total expenses went to fulfilling the group's charitable purpose, well above the 87% national average.

In May, the University of Notre Dame gave Feeding America's CEO, Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, the Laetare Award, which it says is the most prestigious award given to American Catholics.

I'll let you decide for yourself whether "hunger weirdos" was a fair comment. — **Urban Lehner, DTN editor emeritus**

OBITUARY



William 'Bill' Pelton; 1946-2024

William "Bill" R. Pelton, age 77, passed away in his home with family on July 10. Bill loved helping others, bringing humor and good cheer to friends and strangers alike, and living life in Montana. Bill was born on Sept. 27, 1946. He spent his childhood at the C.L. Pelton Ranch on the West Rosebud. He was incredibly proud of his time at the Fishtail Grade School with the "Fishtail Five." He graduated from Absarokee High School in 1964 where he played football and was active in FFA, serving in several leadership roles.

Bill's upbringing and interests led him to Montana State University (MSU) where he received a bachelor of science degree in animal science and ag production. He remained a loyal and proud Bobcat throughout his life. To support his family and to pay for school, he milked at the college dairy and did custom hay stacking. He married Colleen Weast and was blessed with a set of twin daughters in 1966, Marci and Darci, while still attending MSU. He continued to participate in agricultural related leadership opportunities and was recognized as the Little International Livestock Show Overall Showman in 1967 and participated on the MSU Livestock Judging Team. In 1968, he was blessed with a third daughter, Gerele.

In 1970, he began his career as a loan consultant at Midland Production Credit Association. Bill worked managing feedlots in Shepherd, Vaughn, Choteau and Laurel before relocating his family back to Absarokee. He assumed a regional sales position for Moorman Manufacturing and was named as a top 25 salesman nationwide. For the remainder of his professional life, he had many agricultural based positions that allowed him to support rural families with their financial planning and insurance needs, ag marketing, animal science and ag production. All of this experience led Bill to open his own livestock marketing and consulting business, Bill Pelton Livestock. Bill thrived in business ownership by utilizing his skills and network and providing customer service that he felt all rural families deserved. Bill truly lived his motto: "We work every day, not just sale day!"

Bill was committed to community service. He donated his time to many non-profit organizations, serving on the board of directors for the NILE and as a founder and director of the NILE Merit Heifer Program. He also served on the Billings Chamber Ag Committee, the Metra Park Advisory Committee, the Vocation Advisory Scholarship Fund for Absarokee High School, and the Stillwater County Fairground Committee. He also supported the Absarokee Lending Library. He loved working with youth who had an interest in agricultural careers and serving rural communities.

When Bill was not working, you could find him helping others to gather cattle, brand or fix fences. He loved every minute he rode horses, especially the last few years on Old Yeller. He was 100% Cowboy—from the C to the Y.

Bill had a strong faith and served his God. He had an abiding belief in Psalm 23 and John 3:16—whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. Although Bill will be missed, heaven needed another good cowboy, and Bill was one of the best.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to: Fishtail Community Center, Montana FFA Foundation or NILE Merit Heifer Program.

WLJ

Letters to the editor: Letters for publication must be no longer than 675 words, must refer to an article that has appeared within the month, and must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Addresses and phone numbers will not be published. Letters may be shortened for space requirements. Send a letter to the editor by emailing editorial@wlj.net or mailing it to Western Livestock Journal, Attn: Editorial Dept., 6021 S Syracuse Way, Ste #103, Greenwood Village, CO 80111.

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LEGAL LEDGER

USFS pauses BIDEH proposed rule

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has paused a policy proposal regarding biological integrity, diversity and environmental health (BIDEH) on the National Wildlife Refuge System. In February, the agency released a proposed rule and updated policy that many ag groups opposed. The proposal included prohibiting the use of genetically engineered organisms, as well as the use of ag practices unless they are determined necessary. "These proposals by the Service seemed to suggest top-down, one-size-fits-all solutions rather than solutions that incorporate local guidance and local management experience," said Carlyle Currier, Colorado Farm Bureau president, in a statement.

House Ag members ask for agency reviews

Following the Chevron deference ruling, members of the House Committee on Agriculture are requesting reviews on agency regulations. "As the committees of jurisdiction overseeing your agency, we assure you we will exercise our robust investigative and legislative powers not only to reassert forcefully our Article I responsibilities but also to ensure the Biden administration respects the limits placed on its authority by the Court's Loper Bright decision," the members wrote in a letter to USDA.

WA wolves stay endangered in state

The gray wolf will remain listed as "endangered" in Washington. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife recommended downgrading the wolf's status from "endangered" to "sensitive" ahead of a July 19 Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting, but the commission voted 5-4 to keep wolves listed as endangered. The department received more than 13,000 comments after its recommendation, with nearly 90% of comments opposing the downlisting. Gov. Jay Inslee (D) also sent a letter requesting the wolf's status remain endangered. Gray wolves remain federally protected in the western portion of the state. "If it's well, 'maybe it's endangered, maybe it's threatened, maybe it's sensitive,' you don't change a listing," Commissioner Melanie Rowland said, who voted against the downlisting.

DOD backs off lab meat plan

The Department of Defense (DOD) has pulled back on its plan to serve military members lab-grown meat. "After weeks of engaging with Congress and speaking out against this plan, we are thrilled to have DOD confirmation that lab-grown protein is not on the menu for our nation's servicemembers," said National Cattlemen's Beef Association President Mark Eisele in a statement.

Letter against JBS' IPO proceeding

Rep. Harriet Hageman (R-WY-At large) penned a letter to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on July 12, expressing concern with the potential initial public offering (IPO) by JBS. "The fact that JBS has a history of bribery, deception and corruption should be enough to deter the SEC from approving JBS' registration statement," Hageman wrote. "JBS, the world's largest meatpacker, perpetuates the problem of vertical integration and political corruption that boxes out small farmers and keeps them from competing with other large-scale food producers." Hageman requests SEC decline to move forward with the company's registration.

Bill aims to encourage land conservation

The Saving Our Interconnected Lives Act would amend the farm bill to encourage producers to voluntarily conserve soil and wildlife habitat on their land. The bill would prioritize applications for projects that address both concerns under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Conservation Stewardship Program. It would also increase financial incentives for farmers using soil and habitat conservation practices. "At the current federal reimbursement rate, many landowners cannot afford to cover the upfront cost of implementing conservation practices," said Congresswoman Julia Brownley (D-CA-26).

OR fires the biggest in the US

Fires continue to rage across the West, with the Northwest in particular seeing a large amount of wildfire activity. As of July 24, 98 large active wildfires were being managed and had burned more than 1,611,000 acres, according to the National Interagency Fire Center. Oregon had 34 active fires, California 15 fires, Arizona 11 fires and Washington 9 fires (numbers do not include individual fires within complexes). The Durkee Fire burning near the Oregon-Idaho border and the Cow Valley Fire, just south of the Durkee Fire, merged on the afternoon of July 24. "The wildfires in Eastern Oregon have scaled up quickly," Gov. Tina Kotek said in a news release Wednesday. "We are facing strong erratic winds over the region that could impact all fires. Rain is not getting through. Some communities do not have power." As of July 25, the Durkee Fire grew to nearly 270,000 acres and was 0% contained. The Cow Valley Fire was at 134,000 acres and was 91% contained. To donate to the Oregon Cattlemen's Association Wildfire Fund, visit orcattle.com/wildfire-fund-donations.

Kansas man pleads guilty to hay scam

A Kansas man has pleaded guilty to wire fraud in connection with a scheme to defraud tens of thousands of dollars from ranchers in Montana and Wyoming who were looking for hay supplies for their cattle during the 2021 drought, according to court documents and information from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Jory D. Parks, 43, of Logan, KS, was arraigned on and pleaded guilty to wire fraud in the U.S. District Court for the District of Montana in Billings. Parks faces up to 20 years in prison, a $250,000 fine and three years of supervised release.

Drought in the summer of 2021 created a hay shortage for ranchers in Montana and Wyoming. According to court documents, Parks advertised on Facebook that he was selling large amounts of hay and was willing to deliver to Montana and Wyoming from out of state.

Parks, operating as Heart Cross Ranch, LLC, received money from customers in exchange for promises to deliver hay.

"Instead, Parks used the money for unrelated business and personal expenses and made false promises about what he would deliver and the scale and success of his business," according to a news release from the U.S. Attorney's Office in Montana.

"In September 2021, when Parks was trying to convince a prospective customer that he had a successful business selling high-quality hay, he told the victim that he had sold all his hay the previous year to a known horse-racing facility in Nebraska to feed racehorses. After interviewing the CEO of the facility and analyzing Parks' financials, the FBI determined that Parks' statements were false."

A ranching business owned by a couple in Ingomar, MT, responded to one of Parks' Facebook ads in which he claimed to be selling hay cheaper than they had been able to find.

The couple signed a contract with Parks to buy 190 tons of hay from Parks for $43,300 and mailed half of the amount, $21,650, as a down payment to Heart Cross Ranch, according to the attorney's office.

"Parks deposited the check into his business account in a bank in Colorado," according to a news release.

"Three weeks later, Parks delivered the couple's first shipment of 23 tons of the 190 tons they had purchased but never delivered the additional hay or repaid the remainder of the down payment."

According to court documents, Parks continued the scheme in Kansas, Colorado and Nebraska through December 2021.

Parks has agreed to make "complete restitution" in the case, according to a plea agreement reached in the case. He was released from jail on July 18 pending sentencing. — **Todd Neeley, DTN environmental 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.)

Sept. 15 – The Montana Stockgrowers Association is accepting internship applications for its 2024 Annual Convention, scheduled for Dec. 4-6 in Billings, MT. Details: mtbeef.org/careers.

Sept. 27 – Lallemand Animal Nutrition is offering five scholarship opportunities for full-time students: two scholarships for undergraduate students, one for a master's student, one for a doctoral candidate and one for a doctor of veterinary medicine student. Details: tinyurl.com/2pm2w3tx.

New book unveils history of Aberdeen-Angus breed

"For over a thousand years, polled black cattle have roamed the landscape in Scotland, yet their origin remained shrouded in mystery. Finally, curiosity and legend prompted a collaboration of three writers with vast knowledge of the livestock industry in the United Kingdom and the United States to uncover the most comprehensive history of the Aberdeen-Angus breed to date."

So begins the Preface of "The History of Aberdeen-Angus in the U.S., UK and Worldwide," a new 544-page "coffee table" book exploring the evolution of a cattle bred for a purpose: the efficient production of tender, juicy beef.

This fascinating volume traces the breed back to the ancient native cattle of northeast Scotland and describes the determination, gumption and grit of key individuals from generations of farmers, breeders, marketers and exhibitors who have made Angus the world's No. 1 breed.

"Angus is a meld of the best of the native cattle of the early 19th century from the Scottish counties of Aberdeenshire, Banffshire, Kincardineshire and Angusshire," the Introduction reads. "Some were horned and some were polled with 'humlie' or 'dodded' describing the polled strains of cattle in Old Scottish writings. However, over time, due purely to practicality, polled became the desired standard, along with a preference for all black."

The book culminates a three-year trans-Atlantic collaboration of three cattle historians: Dr. Bob Hough, a frequent contributor to *WLJ*; Andy Frazier, whose work with Aberdeen-Angus spans four decades as a stockman, exhibitor, author, podcaster and commentator; and one of the most experienced Angus minds on U.S. soil—Tom Burke, who heads the American Angus Hall of Fame in Smithville, MO.

Hough says the book resulted from a conversation with Burke. "Tom read the Shorthorn book we published in 2021 and said, 'We have to have a history book like this for Angus.'" Hough posed the opportunity to Frazier, who quickly came on board.

While books have been written about Angus in several countries, the authors say no one had covered the breed's rise to global domination with the depth and breadth of this book.

Burke commented, "Bob was the key driver in ensuring that the book's scope encompassed more than Angus—the bigger picture of beef production. Anyone interested in the livestock industry and American history will enjoy reading this book," Burke said. "It's a definitive source of not only the history of Angus cattle but the history of the United States, of trans-Atlantic trade and the history of the global beef industry."

The story comes to life in rare photographs and artwork, as well as insightful sidebars of important historical figures. It's a veritable "who's who" of global agricultural influencers of the 1700s and 1800s, from Hugh Watson and William McCombie to such forward-thinking agriculturalists as Robert Bakewell on breeding methods, Lord Charles "Turnip" Townshend on crop rotation, and Jethro Tull on farm implements, which spurred the British agricultural revolution.

It's a volume filled with surprising "who knew" moments in history, where Angus played a role in settling the New World and establishing the cattle industry in North America, railroads, stockyards and cattlemen associations.

Who knew that Aberdeen-Angus breeder McCombie "was the one who stayed the course with the local strains of cattle more than anyone?" posed Hough. "He went to the Paris World Fair's livestock exhibition in 1878 and swept it! It made such an impression on people all over the world that it went a long way to putting the breed on the map."

Who knew that department store magnate J.C. Penney and General Dwight D. Eisenhower were also cattlemen who raised Angus?

The book details the random yet relevant, including one of history's most lucrative land deals when Russia relinquished its claim of Alaska: "Russia was also struggling with the debt accrued during the disastrous Crimean War (1853-1856), which made subsidizing a colony in America an unattractive expenditure. In the late 1850s, Russia made multiple attempts to sell its Alaska territory to the U.S. but the uncertainty leading up to the U.S. Civil War made it an inopportune time to make such an investment ... In 1867, negotiations concluded with the U.S. agreeing to pay Russia $7.2 million for the Alaska territory or approximately 2 cents an acre." When Alaska established an Agriculture Experiment Station in the early 20th century, it was of course stocked with Aberdeen-Angus.

"The History of Aberdeen-Angus in the U.S., UK and Worldwide" is available at www.AngusHistoryBook.com. — **Kathy Weiss, *WLJ* correspondent**

More research needed on beef x dairy protocols

SURVEY
(from page 1)

When asked about their reasons for raising beef x dairy calves, respondents noted increased income to the dairy; lower purchase cost compared to beef cattle; better health, growth, and market value compared to straight dairy calves; and demand, traceability and sustainability.

Respondents stated more research is needed in areas such as reducing liver abscesses, sire genetics and selection, improving carcass cutout and the prevention and treatment of mycoplasma.

Beef x dairy finishers

The Iowa Beef Center surveyed 21 producers who finished beef x dairy calves to compare the calves' performance, protocols and marketing with traditional beef and dairy calves. Among the respondents, 13 finished beef cattle and 10 finished dairy cattle.

Producers were asked about the timing and causes of morbidity and mortality. For beef calves, the majority of morbidity occurred within the first 90 days, especially in the first 30 days. Dairy feeders noted that most morbidity and mortality happened within the first 30 days or following a stress event, though one reported mortality throughout the feeding period.

The survey also explored implant strategies, liver abscess incidence and cattle marketing practices. Given the variation in current practices, the Iowa Beef Center highlighted the need for more research to identify cost-effective implant strategies for beef x dairy cattle. Ideally, beef x dairy cattle should have a distinct implant protocol compared to beef cattle due to differences in days on feed, marbling genetic merit and muscle characteristics. However, seven respondents used the same implant protocol for all cattle types, while only two had specific strategies for beef x dairy cattle. Several producers indicated they defer the first implant until later in the feeding period rather than at arrival.

The survey specifically asked Iowa producers about discounts received for abscessed or condemned livers. None of the respondents reported liver abscess discounts, although one mentioned "no discounts as long as fewer than 40% have abscesses." The survey did not inquire about any mitigating practices.

Of the 20 producers who fed beef x dairy cattle, 12 sold to major packers who purchase beef and dairy cattle, making it difficult to determine whether the cattle fit high-quality beef grids. Five producers still market some or most of their fed cattle through local sale barns, often using this as a cleanup option for cattle with white markings. However, 15 reported selling crossbreds to packers who typically do not purchase dairy cattle and focus on sourcing high-quality, mostly black-hided cattle. Most respondents said they received the same price for beef x dairy steers, while three reported receiving a $2-6/cwt discount.

Feeders finishing beef x dairy cattle shared several concerns and questions. Key issues include the need to educate packers, consumers and dairy farms on the quality and availability of beef x dairy cattle, especially during cattle cycles with higher numbers on feed.

They emphasized the importance of using correct bull semen, managing health problems in the first 50 days, optimizing forage/fiber for performance and rumen health, developing effective implant strategies, and employing risk management tools like forward contracting and Livestock Risk Protection. Additional concerns include genetic selection, health issues like calf scours and liver abscesses, chronic fallouts, cattle adjusting to different diets and behavioral problems influenced by dairy genetics.

The Iowa Beef Center noted that while progress has been made in the beef x dairy segment, there remains significant room for improvement. Sharing knowledge and continuing research are essential for enhancing the quality and performance of beef x dairy cattle and ensuring their success in the market. — **Charles Wallace, *WLJ* contributing editor**

Harvesting summer annual forages

Putting up good-quality hay from summer annual grasses like sorghum-sudan hybrids, pearl millet and forage sorghums can be tricky. Here are some tips to help make sure these hays are of good quality and dry, so it won't heat or mold.

Nearly all problems making good summer annual grass or cane hay are caused by their stems. Stems are low in protein and energy, slow to dry, and the lower stems could contain potentially toxic nitrates.

There usually is a wide range of spring and early summer planting dates for these annuals, but cutting early before plants become excessively tall is important. When cut at about 4 feet in height, stems are smaller, eaten more readily and the hay contains more protein and energy. Also, there is less plant volume. So, with smaller stems and fewer of them, the hay will dry quicker. Although you will have less tonnage when cutting early, you are creating more days for regrowth and a good second cutting.

Regardless of when you harvest though, cut it high, leaving 8 to 10 inches of stubble. Tall stubble pays off three ways: it helps plants begin regrowth quicker, it holds hay off the ground so air can help dry underneath and it keeps many nitrates out in the field stubble rather than harvesting them all in your hay.

And finally, always crimp the hay. Even when stems are small, the waxy coating on the stems causes slow drying. But if you break open these stems by crimping, water will be able to escape and evaporate more quickly.

So cut it early, cut it high, crimp the stems and they will dry. — **Ben Beckman, Nebraska Extension**

Biosecurity can help keep cattle safe from H5N1

Complete biosecurity on cattle farms when animals are living outside can be a challenge, particularly with the recent detection of H5N1 influenza in dairy cattle. But having a good biosecurity plan in place can help prevent diseases from entering the herd, experts say.

"When we look at dairy and beef cattle, we realize biosecurity is a little harder than it is in the hog and poultry industries," said Phillip Jardon, Iowa State University (ISU) Extension dairy veterinarian. "Pigs and chickens are in complete confinement. Workers can shower in and shower out, facilities are closed up, and restrictions are put in place to keep diseases out. It is more difficult on dairy and beef farms."

Veterinarians are still baffled by the spread of the highly pathogenic avian influenza, subtype H5N1, across the country.

A group of researchers at the ISU College of Veterinary Medicine recently found some interesting information regarding how the H5N1 virus may spread.

Sialic acid, a sugar molecule found on the surface of some animal cells, acts as a receptor for influenza. Without sialic acid providing an entry point to attach, invade and infect, a flu virus is unlikely to find a potential host hospitable.

This group looked at sialic acid levels in the mammary glands of cattle, which hadn't been looked at prior to this flu outbreak in dairy herds. Scientists didn't know the udder would be a good target for influenza.

"In livestock, we hadn't usually looked in milk for viruses. Bacteria, sure. But not so much viruses," said Eric Burrough, professor of veterinary diagnostic and production animal medicine at the ISU school.

Samples from the mammary glands of two infected cows found a rich supply of sialic acid and shed some light on how the virus attaches to hosts, which could help develop measures to slow the spread of the virus. The ISU group is trying to determine if the transmission could be through milking machines.

Since milk that is sold commercially in stores is pasteurized, it is safe, as research consistently shows pasteurization neutralizes viruses such as influenza. But the cows on the farm still provide a suitable home for the flu virus. Burrough said this could show mammary glands as being passively infected by the virus.

The ISU study was based on just a few positive samples, and researchers plan to continue looking at how other infected cows could be shedding the virus. The total number of cows affected by this virus as of July 23 was 169 in 13 states, a much smaller number than the millions of birds that have been euthanized since the start of the H5N1 outbreak. The virus spreads much more quickly in poultry barns and is lethal to birds, but not to cows. Infected dairy cows usually have a reduction in milk production, which alerts the dairy of an issue.

Biosecurity helps prevent spread

ISU Extension beef specialist Denise Schwab said the announcements of H5N1 cases in dairy cows should remind beef cattle producers to be aware of their herd health and examine their current biosecurity plan.

"Basic biosecurity practices are essential daily steps for the prevention of all diseases, and cattlemen should always be alert to the potential of disease spread," she said. "Diseases can be spread by aerosol, direct animal-to-animal contact, oral (through feed or water), reproduction, vector-born (biting or sucking insects), or by vehicles and fomites (shoes, clothes, contaminated feed, needles). Everything we do to prevent spread reduces the risk of diseases."

Jardon said cattle producers and dairies should have a good biosecurity plan in place. The use of protective equipment such as gloves, clothing and face shields is helpful in dairy parlors, he said.

"We use several boot washes throughout the farm to keep waste from one area out of another area," Jardon said. "The disinfectant in these is changed at least once per day. When trailers are leaving or entering the farm, the outside and tires are sprayed down with disinfectants, too."

Jardon said he knows of farms who have bird deflectors such as plastic owls or sounds to scare away the birds.

Veterinarians and other visitors should have boots designated to that farm or use disposable boots to prevent bringing in anything on their footwear.

Any animals brought from another facility or farm should be quarantined to be observed for any health problems.

"We do think there could be a link to cases from farms who have seen a positive," Jardon said. "Producers should be aware of where they are getting animals and keep new cattle quarantined for at least 30 days."

It is impossible to prevent all disease spread risks, but producers can minimize the impact by using good management practices. — **Jennifer Carrico, DTN senior livestock editor**

Checkoff ROI increased $1.50 per dollar spent

CHECKOFF STUDY
(from page 1)

demand-driving activities from 2019-23, steer prices would have been 7.8% lower per year compared to actual results.

The second objective was to evaluate the financial benefits to the beef industry, calculating an overall return on investment (ROI) for the program. The analysis found that each dollar invested in the program generated $13.41 in financial benefits for producers and importers, reflecting a significant improvement from the previous evaluation conducted for 2014-18, which reported an ROI of $11.91.

The third objective assessed the program's indirect benefits on the broader economy. The study found the Beef Checkoff program also contributed to broader economic growth by increasing U.S. employment by nearly 46,581 jobs, raising employment income by $2 billion, and boosting the U.S. gross domestic product by almost $9.5 billion. Additionally, the program's activities increased federal, state and local tax revenues, totaling $743 million in 2023.

Overall, the study concluded the Beef Checkoff's demand-driving activities enhanced beef demand and delivered extensive economic benefits.

"While we're pleased Beef Checkoff programs are having a positive impact, we know there's always room for improvement," DeVuyst said. "The CBB is dedicated to making the best possible decisions on behalf of beef producers and importers. As we head into the remainder of FY24, we'll take what we've learned from this study and continue moving the needle forward."

Every five years, all commodity boards independently evaluate their program's effectiveness following the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service guidelines for commodity research and promotion programs.

For the complete study, executive summary or more information about the Beef Checkoff and its programs—including promotion, research, foreign marketing, industry information, consumer information and producer communications—visit DrivingDemandForBeef.com. — **Charles Wallace, *WLJ* contributing editor**

"Gosh,..... *I miss the world we once had!*"

Cover crops benefits may outweigh CA water use

Cover crops are planted to protect and improve the soil between annual crops such as tomatoes or between rows of tree and vine crops, but growers may be concerned about the water use of these plants that don't generate income.

"Cover crops are one of the most popular practices we see farmers employ through our Healthy Soils Program," said Karen Ross, secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). "Cover crops supply a host of benefits, such as helping to protect against soil erosion, improving soil health, crowding out weeds, controlling pests and diseases, and increasing biodiversity; and they can bring increased profitability as the number of other inputs are reduced. They also provide water benefits such as improved infiltration and reduced runoff."

These potential benefits are especially salient in the San Joaquin Valley, where groundwater challenges are more acute. A new report evaluates the water implications of cover cropping practices to lay the groundwork for their adoption in the context of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) which is intended to protect groundwater resources over the long-term.

"Yes, cover crops require a nominal amount of water to establish—and sometimes rainwater is sufficient—but the myriad co-benefits are worth it," Ross said.

Growers, water resource planners and managers, crop consultants, irrigation practitioners and policymakers may find the cover crops report useful.

The report is the product of a convening process jointly developed by the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, CDFA, Natural Resources Conservation Service of California, and University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR), and assembled by nonprofit Sustainable Conservation.

The multidisciplinary group of more than 30 individuals has published "Cover Cropping in the SGMA Era." The literature review, policy analysis and recommendations pertain to the water impacts of cover crop practices in California's Central Valley under SGMA.

"Wintertime rain-fed cover cropping does not necessarily significantly increase water losses compared to bare ground in the winter months," said Daniele Zaccaria.

"Wintertime rain-fed cover cropping does not necessarily significantly increase water losses compared to bare ground in the winter months," said co-author Daniele Zaccaria, associate professor in agricultural water management for Cooperative Extension at UC Davis. "Cover cropping can significantly improve soil-water dynamics, increasing soil water infiltration and storage and reducing surface runoff."

To reap the benefits of cover crops using minimal water, Zaccaria said growers will need to know how the plants perform under different conditions.

"We need to develop and implement a coordinated research effort to increase understanding of net water impacts of cover crops under various meteorological conditions—dry, wet, average," he said.

Report findings

To understand the potential of cover cropping under SGMA, the report's authors came together to answer the following questions:

- What are the impacts of cover crops on water cycles (both benefits and use)?
- How does SGMA management account for cover cropping and is it capturing cover crop benefits alongside their water use?
- How can we ensure that this practice remains available to growers where and when it makes sense?

"Cover Cropping in the SGMA Era" contains a literature review, policy analysis and recommendations pertaining to the water impacts of cover crop practices in California's Central Valley under SGMA.

This report synthesizes the learnings from the collaborative initiative including 100-plus multidisciplinary experts, a policy analysis, interviews with Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) staff and consultants, and the expertise contributed by its 30-plus authors. In light of these findings, the report advances a series of recommendations aimed at bridging critical knowledge gaps, enhancing the integration of cover crops into policies and incentive programs, and bolstering data infrastructure and other mechanisms to support sustainable groundwater management initiatives.

One vital throughline is the need for additional guidance from the state to support local GSAs in facing the complex challenges of developing and implementing groundwater management strategies for their local watersheds. These measures aim to optimize cover crop integration within SGMA frameworks and promote sustainable water management practices crucial for the region's agricultural resilience and environmental health.

"This report is unique because the university collaborated closely with state agencies and private sector partners to ensure that the different perspectives provided both the best science available as well as viable policy options," said Glenda Humiston, University of California vice president for agriculture and natural resources. "By taking a comprehensive view, we can advance recommendations for cover crop policy that help us meet multiple goals, manage our natural resources more effectively, and avoid unintended consequences."

Sarah Light, UC Cooperative Extension agronomy farm advisor, is one of the UC ANR experts who provided science-based information during the convening sessions and co-authored the white paper.

"Cover crops are a valuable soil health practice that can help ensure the resilience of California farms to climate extremes," said Light. "As we balance the complexities of water and soil management, it is important to understand the role that cover crops play in an annual water budget so that they are not disincentivized in certain parts of the state. This paper can provide guidance to GSAs and policymakers who are charged with implementing SGMA in their regions."

The report "Cover Cropping in the SGMA Era" can be downloaded for free at tinyurl.com/mkcyde7p. — **UC ANR**

Wickens family to receive MT Leopold Conservation Award

Wickens Salt Creek Ranch of Hilger has been selected as the recipient of the 2024 Montana Leopold Conservation Award. The award honors ranchers, farmers and forestland owners who go above and beyond in the management of soil health, water quality and wildlife habitat on working land.

Wickens Salt Creek Ranch's owners, Eric and Emma Wickens, who are Fergus County Farm Bureau members, will be presented with the award at the Montana Farm Bureau Annual Convention in November. They receive $10,000 for being selected.

Eric and Emma Wickens want to leave land, water, wildlife and relationships better than they found them.

As engaged college graduates, they returned home to take the reins of his family's Wickens Salt Creek Ranch in 2007. They have since prioritized conservation practices to improve the health of their grasslands. Doing so nourishes their cattle and builds a more resilient ranch and rural community for their five children.

By emulating the natural behaviors of bison herds, rotationally grazing their black Angus cattle contributes to nutrient cycling and carbon sequestration. With assistance from the federal Conservation Stewardship Program, prairies have been restored for livestock grazing and wildlife habitat.

Elsewhere on their 4,700 acres they grow a diverse rotation of peas, barley, hay and wheat using no-till practices. A mix of sunflower, turnip, sorghum and radish cover crops maintains continuously living roots in the soil to improve water infiltration and increase soil health.

"There is a large circle of life to study on our ranch," Emma said. "Recognizing how each part has an important purpose really serves to inform the stewardship decisions we make."

Healthy grasslands provide habitat for sage and sharptail grouse, which eat fly larvae, naturally controlling pest populations around cattle herds.

The Wickens family have reduced their reliance on surface water for their cattle by plumbing their pastures with water lines and drinking tanks equipped with escape ramps for birds and wildlife. Strategically fencing water tanks forces cattle to naturally disperse their urine and manure elsewhere across pastures to feed the soil's microbes. Bale grazing is also used on areas of thin or clay soils to provide the benefits of hoof impact and to supply additional organic matter from manure and compost.

To slow the flow of water through their hilly terrain, the Wickens family has installed analog beaver dams. In addition to creating a deep, slow-flowing creek and recharging a water table recently stricken by drought, beavers are returning to the ranch.

Eric is noticing a wildlife resurgence. Deer and bird populations are more abundant than they were in his youth. For the first time in his life, herds of elk migrate through Wickens Salt Creek Ranch, and grizzly bears are returning to central Montana.

Early on in their ranching career the Wickenses decided to move their calving season later into the spring. Warmer weather and drier ground reduced sickness in the calves.

They also switched from raising only cow-calf pairs to raising yearlings, stockers and bred heifers. In addition, they developed a backgrounding lot to feed calves and finish fat cattle in the winter with a locally grown ration of barley, peas and legumes.

Wickens Ranch Beef, a direct-to-consumer branded beef business, offers an opportunity to share their conservation story with consumers. Diversifying their livestock and crop production has generated new streams of cash flow.

"Resilience is directly related to diversity," Eric summarized. "The diversity of our business and biological communities within the ranch create resilience in our entire operation."

Later this year, Wickens Salt Creek Ranch will become a regenerative agricultural education center known as a "Savory Hub." Off the ranch, Eric's community involvement ranges from fighting local fires, to serving on "One Montana" a non-profit striving to bridge the gaps between rural and urban communities.

"For generations, Montana's farmers and ranchers have been dedicated stewards of our land and water resources," said Gov. Greg Gianforte (R). "It's great to recognize Eric and Emma of the Wickens Salt Creek Ranch with this year's award and thank them for setting the standard as exceptional caretakers of our working landscapes." — **Sand County Foundation**

Control needed as grasshoppers continue to devastate MT land

During meetings in Washington earlier this month, the Montana Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) continued to stress the need for grasshopper control while visiting with congressional leaders. In talking with Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT) and Rep. Matt Rosendale (R-MT-02), and with the staff of Sen. Steve Daines' (R-MT) and Rep. Ryan Zinke's (R-MT-01) offices, farm bureau leaders explained the negative impact of the destructive insects and the need for help with control.

"It's clear that our outcry for grasshopper control is being heard, but in this tight budgeting process, securing additional funds is more difficult than it would seem," said MFBF Senior Director of Governmental Affairs Nicole Rolf, who had been in Washington with MFBF President Cyndi Johnson

"We recently learned that around 550,000 acres have been treated through USDA APHIS's Grasshopper Suppression Program in Montana during fiscal year 2024. While that is helpful, there are hundreds of thousands of additional acres which would have benefited from the cost share program, had it been funded more substantially."

Rolf continued, "That's why we are asking for additional funding in fiscal year 2025, and are also asking for direction to APHIS, guiding them to prioritize funding to areas with the greatest infestations."

According to the map of USDA Animal and Plant Inspection Service (APHIS), the majority of Montana has a grasshopper infestation; parts of eastern Montana are seeing 15-plus grasshoppers per square yard.

"The scale by which APHIS counts grasshoppers measures levels of economic impact. Fifteen grasshoppers per square yard is their maximum count because at that level, they predict severe losses. In talking to farm bureau members around the state, we know that infestations are much higher than that with some counts at fifty 'hoppers or greater," added Rolf.

Efforts are still underway to add funding to the 2025 budget, and directive language has been added, requiring APHIS to direct funding to areas most greatly impacted by grasshopper populations. The Senate version of agriculture appropriations, which was passed on July 11, does not include increased funding. However, a manager's amendment was added to the House ag appropriations bill, increasing funding for the program by $1.5 million dollars for the suppression and control of grasshoppers and Mormon crickets on private and public lands.

"This is fantastic news for the farmers and ranchers of Montana and throughout the West. Now we just need to make sure it is included in the final appropriations legislation with the House and Senate conference," Rolf said.

Daniel Munch, economist for the American Farm Bureau, researched grasshoppers and shared information about their devastating impact. He published an article regarding the insects' economic effect on agriculture in the West and efforts to manage and mitigate their populations.

"When learning U.S. history, narratives of vast swarms of locusts ravaging millions of acres of farmland are often recounted. Not all grasshoppers are locusts, and the swarms aren't quite as big as they were in the 1800s, but grasshoppers and Mormon crickets remain a persistent risk to agriculture, inflicting significant damage to rangeland and crops," Munch explained.

Grasshoppers compete with cattle and other herbivores (including wildlife like deer and elk) for forage and are more likely to become a threat in areas with less than 30 inches of rainfall annually. They can consume up to 50% of their body weight each day. Just 30 pounds of grasshoppers will eat as much as a 600-lb. steer in a day. Grasshoppers are an even bigger menace to crop farmers and ranchers on public and private lands when drought conditions are added to the mix.

"Grasshopper and cricket outbreaks not only result in the physical destruction of forage and crops but also contribute to soil erosion and degradation, disrupt rangeland nutrient cycles, and impede rangeland water filtration, which can have lasting impacts on rangeland ecosystems," Munch explained.

"Western landowners face heightened risks from grasshoppers due to the substantial amount of federally owned land in the region," he said. "In the absence of grasshopper and cricket management on federal lands, insects can migrate onto private lands, undermining the effectiveness of common private pest management efforts."

Through the Plant Protection Act of 2000, APHIS has the congressional mandate to control grasshoppers on rangelands via the Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program. The program offers treatments for federal, state and private rangelands through a cost-share model within APHIS when funding is available.

Munch noted that information on current economic impacts of grasshoppers on agriculture is limited. "Generally, monetary losses either fall under the value of crops or rangeland consumed by insects that could no longer be sold on the market or consumed by ruminants to produce meat or wool and the cost to treat populations that have reached pest-concern levels," said Munch.

"In total, conservative estimates put production value losses in 2023 due to grasshopper infestations at $318 million," Munch noted. "This represents a baseline number with true impacts likely hundreds of millions of dollars higher. Losses of this magnitude are detrimental to operations already operating on small and often negative margins and reveal the true threat of these insects on farmers' and ranchers' livelihoods.

"The economic impact of these insects on rangeland and crops remains significant, with millions of dollars in losses reported annually across affected counties," Munch said. "Continued coordination and efforts among the federal government, states and private landowners is essential to safeguarding the livelihoods of farmers and ranchers against these small but hungry pests."
— **MFBF**

Simplot, SRW ordered to complete litigation plan

SIMPLOT
(from page 1)

Ryan. "It's time for Idaho to stop offering zero accountability to one of our nation's biggest feedlot polluters and prioritize clean water and healthy aquatic habitat."

The Clean Water Act requires companies to obtain a national pollutant discharge elimination system (NPDES) permit for any facility discharging pollutants into a public waterway. Violations can lead to fines of up to $66,000 per day, per violation.

The SRW lawsuit said Simplot has been operating without a NPDES permit for decades and was warned by the Environmental Protection Agency in 2012 but continues to operate without a permit.

The group gave notice of its intent to sue on Jan. 31, 2023, ultimately bringing the suit forward on May 9, 2023. Simplot answered the complaint on June 5, 2023, filing a motion to dismiss on July 5, 2023.

Legal standing

Simplot admits it does not have a NPDES permit authorizing discharges from the Grand View feedlot, but asserts the feedlot does not discharge pollutants, so a permit is not required.

"In its Motion to Dismiss, Simplot does not suggest this contention deprives the Court of jurisdiction and, even if it had, SRW clearly disputes it," Nye's decision reads. "As such, the merits of Simplot's defense that it does not discharge pollutants is not currently before the Court."

Simplot's motion to dismiss argued the court lacked subject matter jurisdiction due to the alleged insufficiency of SRW's notice, and that the notice failed to establish that "so-called" discharges were "ongoing." The company contended the complaint should be dismissed for failure to state a claim.

"Although Simplot does not specify whether it brings a facial or factual attack, Simplot's jurisdictional challenge neither contests the truth of SRW's allegations, nor relies on matters outside of the pleadings," Nye said. "Simplot has thus brought a facial attack on the Court's subject matter jurisdiction."

The court therefore accepts the allegations in SRW's suit as true and draws all reasonable inferences in favor of the group. Nye ordered the parties to submit a joint litigation plan and discovery plan ahead of a July 22 deadline, and then planned to enter a scheduling order. — **Anna Miller, *WLJ* managing editor**

EPA changes timing of pesticide drift analyses

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced plans to step up the timing of when it assesses farmworker and other human exposure to pesticide spray drift by 15 years. Historically, the agency assesses human exposure to spray drift at the time of a chemical's registration review that takes place every 15 years.

"EPA will now assess the potential for people to be exposed to a pesticide when it drifts away from where it is applied earlier in the agency's review process," the agency said in a news release.

"This applies to new active ingredient pesticide registrations and new use decisions. This updated process will protect people from pesticide spray drift 15 years sooner in the review process for new pesticides than has historically occurred."

Starting immediately, the EPA said it will also complete a chemical-specific spray drift analysis during the initial registration process or the review process for new and amended uses of existing products.

This is to ensure that any "needed protections" are put in place from the beginning of the pesticide's use, rather than delaying them for 15 years.

"This will also ensure both new and old pesticide registrations are held to the same standard," the agency said.

EPA said it will use chemical-specific human health spray drift analyses to determine specific label instructions to protect against and reduce the occurrence of spray drift. That includes droplet sizes and buffer distances for each pesticide and use.

"Additionally, if EPA identifies spray drift risks for people living or working nearby or non-target species, the agency will protect against those risks," the agency said.

Human health spray-drift analyses will now be included for any new active ingredients. This includes new submissions for domestic uses of new active ingredients.

In addition, the analyses will be conducted for any new chemical use and amended use registration submissions where an active ingredient has previously received a chemical-specific spray drift analysis.

The new policy also includes currently pending registrations under review by the EPA.

"During and after application, pesticides can drift to unintended areas like residential or recreational areas where people can get it on their skin or eyes, causing different symptoms depending on the pesticide," the agency said.

"By assessing the amount of a pesticide that drifts beyond its intended target, EPA can identify measures that will protect people from unintended pesticide exposure."— **Todd Neeley, DTN environmental editor**

MARKET NEWS

MARKET SITUATION REPORT

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

MARKET AT A GLANCE

MARKET AT A GLANCE	This Week: 7/25/2024		Week Ago	Year Ago
Choice Fed Steers	187.25	▼	189.71	188.32
CME Feeder Index	259.06	▼	261.32	242.29
Boxed Beef Average	312.46	▲	N/A	302.86
Average Dressed Steers	307.00	▲	N/A	N/A
Live Slaughter Weight*	1,382	▼	1,383	1,343
Weekly Slaughter**	584,000	▼	601,000	628,000
Weekly Beef Production***	491.7	▼	506.0	509.2
Hide/Offal Value	11.50	▼	11.56	13.42
Corn Price	4.04	▲	3.98	5.33

*Average weight for previous week. **Total slaughter for previous week. ***Estimated year-to-date figure in million pounds for previous week.

BEEF REPORT: Weekly Composite Boxed Beef

WEEK ENDING	COMPREHENSIVE Loads	COMPREHENSIVE Price	PRIME Loads	PRIME Price	BRANDED Loads	BRANDED Price	CHOICE Loads	CHOICE Price	SELECT Loads	SELECT Price	UNGRADED Loads	UNGRADED Price
July 19	6,548	317.30	209	347.19	1,171	325.56	2,202	317.07	745	300.58	2,257	291.69
July 12	6,562	320.79	224	344.03	1,184	332.21	1,961	322.25	810	301.89	2,383	292.90
July 5	5,226	324.47	163	345.42	997	331.73	1,414	325.60	569	305.27	2,083	293.48
June 28	6,577	318.44	224	340.53	1,172	326.91	1,875	318.42	737	302.95	2,569	288.91

Cutouts — FED BOXED BEEF

DATE	CHOICE	SELECT	COW BEEF CUTOUT	50% LEAN	90% LEAN
July 25	312.46	295.11	296.72	144.41	N/A
July 24	312.68	293.96	296.80	146.45	380.94
July 23	313.21	296.66	294.06	140.92	N/A
July 22	313.44	298.33	294.71	135.81	375.26
July 19	313.83	298.80	295.01	N/A	N/A

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Live Cattle

	7/19	7/22	7/23	7/24	7/25	High*	Low*
Aug.	18310	18393	18630	18715	18905	19633	15310
Oct.	18348	18460	18613	18660	18603	19975	16853
Dec.	18468	18603	18740	18783	18700	18878	16668
Feb.	18665	18790	18910	18950	18828	19000	17005

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Feeder Cattle

	7/19	7/22	7/23	7/24	7/25	High*	Low*
Aug.	25560	25640	25875	25910	25640	26390	21608
Sep.	25578	25650	25860	25878	25523	26460	21920
Oct.	25565	25625	25843	25868	25633	27095	22268
Nov.	25538	25583	25768	25805	25538	26625	24910

*High and low figures are for the life of the contract.

FED CATTLE TRADE

FED CATTLE TRADE	Head Count	Avg. Weight	Avg. Price
WEEKLY WEIGHTED AVERAGES			
Live FOB Steer	795	1,251	187.25
Live FOB Heifer	782	1,195	187.08
Dressed Del Steer	40	778	307.00
Dressed Del Heifer	577	820	308.00
SAME PERIOD LAST WEEK			
Live FOB Steer	908	1,429	189.71
Live FOB Heifer	401	1,236	191.24
Dressed Del Steer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dressed Del Heifer	N/A	N/A	N/A
SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR			
Live FOB Steer	825	1,500	188.32
Live FOB Heifer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dressed Del Steer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dressed Del Heifer	14	800	292.00

NATIONAL WEEKLY FED BEEF SLAUGHTER VOLUME: JULY 21, 2024

	Domestic	Imported
Forward Contract	18,447	2,767
Formula	265,749	3,118
Negotiated Cash	69,892	211
Negotiated Grid	50,889	2,109
Packer Owned	9,848	N/A
Total	**414,825**	**8,205**

SLAUGHTER FORWARD CONTRACTS / FORWARD BEEF SALES

Delivery Month		FORWARD BEEF SALES	
Jul. '24	88,208	Neg. Sales 0-21 days	1,882
Aug. '24	93,714	Neg. Sales 21+ days	909
Sep. '24	103,200	Formula sales	3,711
Oct. '24	108,459	Forward contract sales	81
Nov. '24	154,197	Domestic sales	6,015
		NAFTA Exports	83

CANADIAN LIVESTOCK PRICES & FEDERAL INSPECTED SLAUGHTER FIGURES

Alberta Direct Sales (4% shrink)	Price	Weekly Change
Slaughter Steers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1300-1500 lbs	187.72	-0.20
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	186.32	+0.18
Ontario Auctions		
Slaughter Steers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1300-1500 lbs	182.08	N/A
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	180.56	N/A
Slaughter Cows, Cutter and Utility 1-3, 1100-1400 lbs	122.58	+2.54

*Price comparison from one week ago.

Average feeder cattle prices (CND) for week ending Friday, July 23, 2024

Steers:	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Ontario
501-600 lbs	320.53	N/A	309.49
601-700 lbs	304.57	N/A	300.15
701-800 lbs	274.60	N/A	264.19
801-900 lbs	249.40	N/A	244.64
Heifers:			
401-500 lbs	N/A	N/A	269.14
501-600 lbs	282.79	N/A	280.59
601-700 lbs	260.72	N/A	249.86
701-800 lbs	251.79	N/A	223.80

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
	7/15/2024	7/8/2024		
Feeders	25,498	33,806	810,023	662,681

USDA WEEKLY IMPORTED FEEDER CATTLE

July 17, 2024

Mexico to United States Feeder Cattle Import Summary

Receipts EST: **Week Ago EST: 5,450** **Year Ago Act: 8,800**

Columbus, NM

Compared to Wednesday, steer calves and yearlings sold steady. Heifers steady to 2.00 higher. Trade active, demand good. Supply consisted of steers and spayed heifers weighing 300-700 lbs.

Feeder heifers: Medium and large 1&2	
300-400 lbs	280-290
400-500 lbs	260-270
500-600 lbs	240-250
Feeder steers: Medium and large 1&2	
300-400 lbs	278-288
400-500 lbs	258-268
500-600 lbs	238-248

Santa Teresa, NM

Compared to Wednesday, steer calves and yearlings sold steady. Heifers steady to 2.00 higher. Trade active, demand good. Supply consisted of steers and spayed heifers weighing 300-700 lbs.

Feeder heifers: Medium and large 1&2	
300-400 lbs	280-290
400-500 lbs	260-270
500-600 lbs	240-250
Feeder steers: Medium and large 1&2	
300-400 lbs	278-288
400-500 lbs	258-268
500-600 lbs	238-248

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

Selected Auctions Week Ending July 25, 2024

Feeder prices for steers & heifers reflect medium and large 1 cattle, unless otherwise noted; * Indicates medium and large 1-2

DATE MARKET		200-300 lb.	300-400 lb.	400-500 lb.	500-600 lb.	600-700 lb.	700-800 lb.	800 lb. -up	SLAUGHTER COWS SLAUGHTER BULLS	PAIRS REPLACEMENTS
NORTHWEST										
July 19 Blackfoot, ID	N/A					235-271	230-258	215-250	120-158 135-169	
No report available Burley, ID										
No report available Emmett, ID										
July 20 Eugene, OR	778					205-252*	201-259* 173-226*	203-249*	105-136 140-165	
No report available Madras, OR										
July 17 Vale, OR	411					272-283 235-260	247-270.50 231-245	233-246.50	113-137 152-180	
July 23 Davenport, WA	285		290-319 277.50-285	255	217.50-222.50	135-230 142.50-242.50	221-245 217-234	165-235 100-215	110 92-192.50	2,450-2,850
July 18 Toppenish, WA	865		350*				227*		139-151 174-179	
FARWEST										
July 18 Orland, CA	1,615			225-325 205-300	225-355 205-293	215-325 190-288	210-251 200-241	180-247 160-226	100-151 125-170	2,200-3,325 1,700-2,800
July 19 Escalon, CA									75-127 90-153	
July 22 Famoso, CA	561		265-310 225-274	280-310 225-274	265-270 225-270	240-260 220-245	225-242	210-230 210-224	120-160 125-147	
July 17 Galt, CA	1,830				285-350 240-300	255-325 210-272	240-260 210-250	225-250	80-145 130-160	
No report available Turlock, CA										
No report available Salina, UT										
NORTH CENTRAL										
July 22 Iowa	4,071	425 385	375-405 320-375	300-367.50 305.50-330	295-360 261-321	272-334 257-306	259-286.50 237-253	226-265.75 225-229	120-167 95-205	
July 23 Miles City, MT	518								111-151.50 138-186.50	
July 24 Bassett, NE	3,150		409 345-357.50	371-396 337.50-355	348-362.50 322.50-327	295-328 289-318	288.50-302.50 256-276.50	224.25-274 225.50-251		
No report available Ericson, NE										
July 23 Imperial, NE	334					260	254.25	258.50-265.75 241		
July 24 Kearney, NE	2,000			362	335.50-351	303	276.50	243.25-268.50	143-157 146-180	
July 19 Lexington, NE	1,035						254	245-261.50 211-246		
No report available Ogallala, NE										
No report available Valentine, NE										
No report available Herreid, SD										
July 24 Torrington, WY	1,146				312-319 298-301	287-305 275-287	275-281 251.50-262.50	240-261 218-246		
SOUTH CENTRAL										
July 18 Willcox, AZ	1,625	313.50-335 268.50-312.50	290-345 245-290	283.50-319 240-287	260-294 231.50-260	243-270 198-228			100-166 130-174	1,525-2,000 1,275-1,475
July 22 Colorado	763							201-241 200-233.50	80-167.50 121-175	
July 17 La Junta, CO	732		390-442.50 337.50-400	313-343 291-337.50	289-323 291-301	276-298 261-281	267-272 241-252		130-145 152-170.50	2,885-3,050 2,075-2,500
July 22 Loma, CO	178		350-400 335-370	335-360 290-340	300-335 270-300	285-315 245-275	240-285 220-235	185-250 175-220	180-210	
July 24 Dodge City, KS	816		348-356	327-342.50 307.50	315	252.50 256-302	239-268 228-245	242-253.50	128-160 156-181	1,550-2,350
July 18 Pratt, KS	498		393	315-324 288-306	274-305	274-300 250-256	245-264 245-248	235.50-252.25 198-222	120-150.50 140.50-184.50	2,300
July 18 Salina, KS	2,837		345 340	327-393 284-309	323-350 273-311	284.50-328 257-288.50	259-297 240-263.50	232-262 226.50-239.25		
July 18 Clovis, NM	1,616	372-417 302-317	342-412 324-350	314-390 274-315	250-317 243-284	226-287 230-246	235.50-255 221	204-240 194.50-196	130-145 131-176	1,475-2,800 1,250-1,900
July 23 El Reno, OK	1,400		375-430 325-360	325-380 280-340	287.50-337.50 262.50-290	262.50-312.50 247.50-277.50	262.50			
July 23 McAlester, OK	1,070		359-381 321-357	301-359 279-301	284-312 241-274	258-281 220-260	235-270 200-240	208-228 162	129-152 155-176	1,631-2,450 1,325-2,450
July 23 Oklahoma City, OK	4,020		369-405 330-337.50	320-379 269-325	307-347 257-308	258-312 243-276	256-288 230-259	194-262 203-243.50		
July 19 Cuero, TX	1,364	279-400 295-338	304-390 292-375	276-334 267-324	263-300 246-290	236-284 222-296	221-246 190-235		95-149 155-174	1,700-3,000 1,150-1,600
July 18 Dalhart, TX	1,367	410	359-392 314-321	314-373 281-322	320-324 274-289	274-291 244-256	231-247	205-252 217-224.50	110-140.50 155-170	
July 18 San Angelo, TX	1,286			282.50-292	298-306 250-260	278-293	244 211-223		112-142 139-170	1,850-2,100 1,550-2,200
July 18 Tulia, TX	1,503		357	276-291	261	255-287 235-254	246-263 231-236	233-246 225-233.50	125-135 135-155	
EAST										
July 19 Alabama	9,514	355-410 330-375	320-380 298-345	310-375 270-310	280-320 243-282	262.50-288 225-252.50	232-259 215-233	235	124-162 144-184	1,400-3,575 900-2,800
July 22 Lexington, KY	1,565	293*	305-391* 280-335*	306-390* 250-311*	279-302.50* 250-299*	256-299* 230-266*	240-273* 215-253.10*	195-250* 200-206*	120-158 155-174	2,000-2,525 1,275
July 22 Joplin, MO	5,321		420 335-347	312-385 295-344	297-340 271-310	275-323 253-280	261-284 241-262	248-264 223-244		
July 22 Tennessee	9,176	317.50-400 275-350	293-350 265-330	285-345 247.50-300	265-322.50 242.50-277.50	237.50-285 182-245	230-257 200-234	226-236 197.50-218	115-158 126-182	1,125-3,140 850-2,300
July 22 Virginia	2,964		292.50-322 250-292	230-305 200-274	252-300 212.50-256	239-282.50 225-256	206-260 190-236	160-246 170-238		
CANADA										
No report available Lethbridge, Alberta										

Feedlot inventories slowly reflecting cattle numbers

The latest USDA Cattle on Feed report showed a July 1 feedlot inventory of 11.304 million head, fractionally higher year over year at 100.5% of last year. June marketings were about as expected at 91.3% of one year ago. The marketings total seems low but June 2024 had the rare situation of having two less business days compared to last year, so average daily marketings in June were actually slightly higher compared to one year ago.

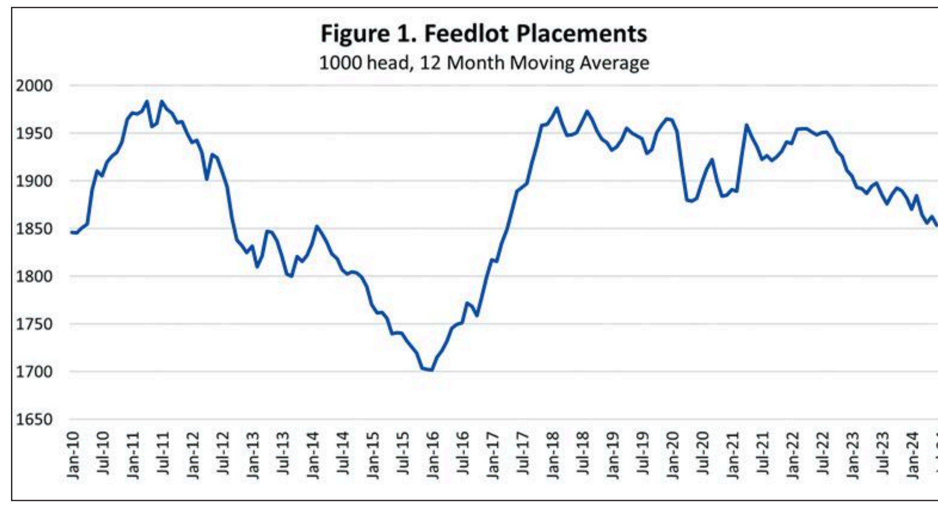
June feedlot placements were 91.2% of last year, slightly less than average pre-report expectations. The placement total was the smallest June total since 2016. Although the feedlot inventory has been slow to decrease, feedlots have been placing fewer cattle as feeder supplies have dwindled in recent years.

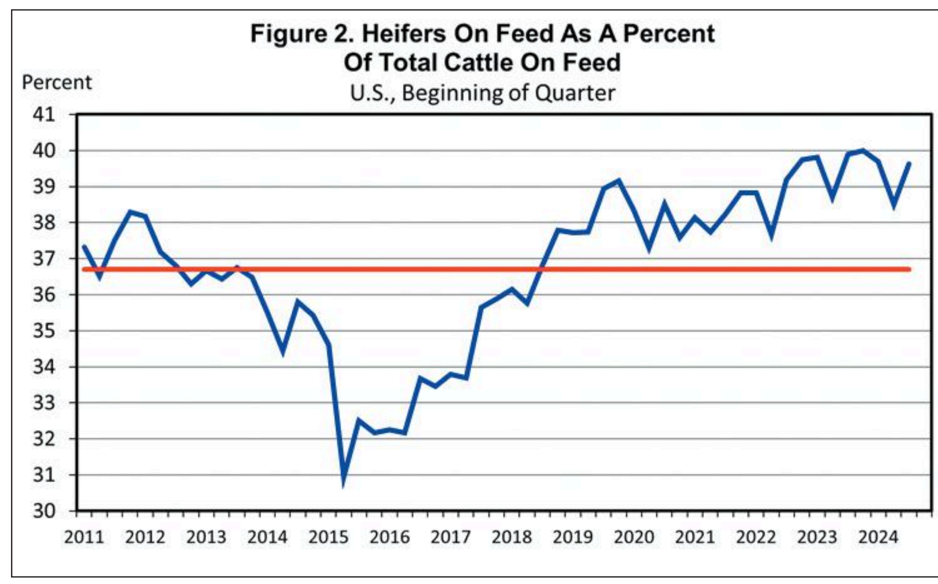
The total U.S. calf crop peaked in 2018 in the most recent cattle cycle and has been declining each of the past five years. The 2024 calf crop is estimated to be another 1.5% smaller year over year leading to a total decline since 2018 of 8.9% or 3.2 million head.

Figure 1 shows that average feedlot placements have decreased with the 12-month moving average for June at the lowest level since April 2017.

The July Cattle on Feed report included the quarterly breakdown of steers and heifers in feedlots. Steers on feed inventory was 100.8% of one year ago while the heifer inventory was essentially unchanged with a scant 5,000 head more heifers in feedlots compared to last year. The heifer inventory confirms that heifers continue to be placed in feedlots. As of July 1, heifers make up 39.6% of total feedlot inventories.

Figure 2 shows cyclical variation in the heifer feedlot percentage, ranging from a low of 31% in April 2015 to a maximum of 40% in January 2024. The current heifer feedlot percentage is near the highest levels in the past 20 years. The heifer percentage of feedlot inventories drops below the average level (36.7%) during periods of heifer retention and herd rebuilding and is above average during periods of herd liquidation. — **Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension livestock marketing specialist**





Boxed beef prices continue their downward trend

MARKETS
(from page 1)

Slaughter through Thursday totaled about 480,000 head. Total slaughter for a week earlier is projected at 584,000 head. Actual slaughter for the week ending July 13 totaled 604,573 head. The average steer dressed weight was 915 lbs.

"This week's slaughter is not expected to make up for the cuts as it is estimated at 600k head, again the lowest since 2016," Fish said.

Boxed beef prices dropped several dollars lower. The Choice cutout lost about $6 to close at $312.46, and the Select cutout lost about $3 to close at $295.11.

"Slower summer demand for beef will be tested again this week as packers struggle with short supplies of fed cattle and struggle even more trying to get paid more money for the boxes," the Cattle Report wrote. "The dynamic price action this creates will set the stage for packers to hold a governor on slaughter volumes in an attempt to jump start the box prices."

ShayLe Stewart, DTN livestock analyst, added in her Wednesday closing comments that boxed beef prices may have seen their peak for this summer.

Feeder cattle

Feeder cattle futures sold mostly steady over the week. The August contract gained 7 cents to close at $258.62, and the September contract lost $1.56 to close at $257.90.

"With midday boxed beef prices higher, all the live cattle contracts higher and with buyer demand still incredibly strong in the countryside—traders feel supported enough to now have advanced the spot August contract back above the market's 100- and 40-day moving average," wrote Todd Hultman, DTN lead analyst, in his Thursday midday comments.

The CME Feeder Cattle Index lost $2.26 to close at $259.06.

Corn futures saw some modest gains, with the September contract up 8 cents to $4.06 and the December contract up 9 cents to $4.20.

Kansas: Winter Livestock in Dodge City sold 247 head on Wednesday. Feeder steers 450-550 lbs. sold steady. Heifers under 750 lbs. were not well tested, but over 750 lbs. sold $7 lower. Benchmark steers averaging 768 lbs. sold from $239-268, averaging $261.59.

Missouri: Joplin Regional Stockyards in Carthage sold 5,321 head on Monday. Compared to a week earlier, feeder steers under 800 lbs. sold from $8-20 higher. Steers over 800 lbs. sold steady to $3 higher. Feeder heifers sold mostly $3-10 higher with light five-weight heifers up to $20 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 769 lbs. sold from $261-278, averaging $270.08.

Nebraska: Bassett Livestock Auction sold 3,150 head on Wednesday. Compared to two weeks earlier, there was a limited number of comparable offerings. Steers 600-750 lbs. and 1,000-1,050 lbs. sold unevenly steady, and steers 900 lbs. traded steady. Heifers 600 lbs. traded steady. Benchmark steers averaging 758 lbs. sold from $288.50-301, averaging $295.77.

Oklahoma: Oklahoma National Stockyards in Oklahoma City sold 4,000 head on Monday. Compared to a week earlier, steers and heifers sold steady to $4 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 767 lbs. sold from $258.50-269, averaging $263.64.

South Dakota: Sioux Falls Regional Cattle Auction in Worthing sold 1,769 head on Monday. Compared to a week earlier, 950-lb. steers sold mostly steady. Heifers 750 lbs. sold $6 higher and 800-850-lb. heifers sold mostly $1-6 lower.

Wyoming: Torrington Livestock in Torrington sold 1,146 head on Wednesday. Compared to a week earlier, feeder steers and heifers traded $1-3 lower. Benchmark steers averaging 740 lbs. sold from $275-281, averaging $277.64. — **Anna Miller, *WLJ* managing editor**

CALENDAR COMING EVENTS

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

Sept. 17-19 – Registration is now open for the Public Lands Council's 56th Annual Meeting that will be held in Grand Junction, CO. Details: tinyurl.com/2car3wwv.

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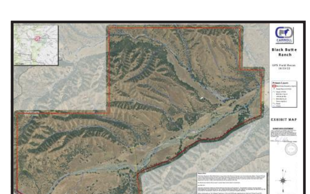

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ALL BREEDS

Sep. 15 – Visalia Livestock, Bull Sale, Visalia, CA
Oct. 5 – Turlock Livestock All-Breeds Bull Sale, Turlock, CA
Oct. 6 – Cal Poly Bull Test Sale, San Luis Obispo, CA
Oct. 19 – FAMOSO All Breeds Bull Sale, Famoso, CA
Nov. 2 – World of Bulls Bull Sale, Galt, CA

ANGUS

Aug. 24 – Riverbend Ranch, Female Sale, Idaho Falls, ID
Sep. 5 – Vintage Angus, Bull Sale, LaGrange, CA
Sep. 6 – Byrd Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Red Bluff, CA
Sep. 7 – EZ Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Farmington, CA
Sep. 8 – Heritage Bull Sale, Wilton, CA
Sep. 9 – Rhoades Angus, Bull Sale, Cambria, CA
Sep. 10 – O'Neal Ranch, Bull Sale, Madera, CA
Sep. 11 – Teixeira Cattle, Bull Sale, Pismo Beach, CA
Sep. 12 – Donati Ranch & O'Connell Cattle, Bull Sale, Oroville, CA
Sep. 13 – Tehama Angus, Bull Sale, Gerber, CA
Sep. 14 – Arrelano Bravo, Bull Sale, Galt, CA
Sep. 17 – Poss Angus, Female Sale, Scotia, NE
Sep. 18 – Bullseye Breeders, Bull Sale, Modesto, CA
Sep. 19 – Rancho Casino/ Dal Porto Livestock, Bull Sale, Denair, CA
Sep. 20 – Dixie Valley Angus, Bull Sale, Galt, CA
Sep. 21 – Jorgensen Land & Cattle, Female Sale, Ideal, SD
Sep. 24 – Thomas Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Galt, CA
Sep. 26 – Beef Solutions, Bull Sale, Ione, CA
Sep. 28 – K Bar D Ranch, Female Sale, Redmond, OR
Sep. 28 – Gohr Cattle, Show Heifer Sale, Madras, OR
Sep. 28 – Marcy Livestock, Female Sale, Gordon, NE
Sep. 29 – Traynham Ranches, Bull & Female Sale, Ft. Klamath, OR
Oct. 4 – Elwood Ranch, Fall Bull Sale, Red Bluff, CA
Oct. 5 – Colyer Hereford & Angus, Female Sale, Bruneau, ID
Oct. 5 – Topline/Leachman California Sale, Aromas, CA
Oct. 8 – 9 Peaks Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Ft. Rock, OR
Oct. 12 – Vintage Angus Ranch, Female Sale, Modesto, CA
Oct. 13-14 – EZ Angus Ranch, Complete Dispersal Sale, Farmington, CA
Oct. 17 – Thomas Angus Ranch, Production Sale, Baker City, OR
Oct. 19 – Fink Beef Genetics, Bull Sale, Randolph, KS
Oct. 25 – Birch Creek Angus, Bull Sale, Ruby Valley, NV
Oct. 26 – Bear Mountain Angus, Female Sale, Palisade, NE
Oct. 28 – Dal Porto Livestock, Female Sale, Brewster, NE
Oct. 30 – SpringLake Angus, Dispersal, Lynch, NE
Nov. 7 – Stokrose Land & Livestock, Bull Sale, Moses Lake, WA
Nov. 13 – Riverbend Ranch, Bull Sale, Idaho Falls, ID
Nov. 14 – Hoffman Ranch, Bull Sale, Thedford, NE
Nov. 15 – Jorgensen Land & Cattle, Bull Sale, Arcadia, FL
Nov. 16 – TLC Ranch & Sugar Top Angus, Bull Sale, Jerome, ID
Nov. 21 – JR Ranch & Sackmann Cattle, Bull Sale, Othello, WA
Nov. 22 – TD Angus, Female Sale, North Platte, NE
Nov. 23 – Baldridge/ Tiedeman & Frank Cattle and Genetics, Female Sale, Chappell, NE
Nov. 23 – Diamond Peak Cattle Co., Female Sale, Loma, CO
Nov. 23 – Spring Cove Ranch, Female Sale, Bliss, ID

CHAROLAIS

Oct. 19 – Fink Beef Genetics, Bull Sale, Randolph, KS

HEREFORD

Sep. 5 – Sierra Ranches, Bull Sale, LaGrange, CA
Sep. 9 – Genoa Livestock, Bull & Female Sale, Minden, NV
Sep. 28 – Gohr Cattle, Show Heifer Sale, Madras, OR
Oct. 5 – Colyer Hereford & Angus, Female Sale, Bruneau, ID
Oct. 19 – Lambert Ranch, Bull Sale, Oroville, CA

RED ANGUS

Sep. 22 – Stegall Cattle, Bull Sale, Colusa, CA
Sep. 28 – McPhee Red Angus, Production Sale, Lodi, CA
Nov. 2 – Bet on Red Sale, Reno, NV
Nov. 18 – Lautenschlager Red Angus, Female Sale, Othello, WA

SIMANGUS

Sep. 18 – Bullseye Breeders Bull Sale, Modesto, CA
Sep. 25 – Eagle Pass Ranch, Bull Sale, Dos Palos, CA
Sep. 26 – Beef Solutions, Bull Sale, Ione, CA
Sep. 29 – Traynham Ranches, Bull & Female Sale, Ft. Klamath, OR
Oct. 16 – Yardley Cattle Co., Female Sale, Beaver, UT

STABILIZER

Oct. 12 – Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, Ozark, AR
Oct. 26 – Leachman Cattle, Stabilizer Sale, Dinuba, CA
Nov. 9 – Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, Location TBD
Nov. 16 — Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, Alma, NE

COMMERCIAL

Jul. 29 – Aug. 2 — Superior Livestock Auction Video Royale Sale, Winnemucca, NV
Aug. 3 — Turlock Livestock Auction Special Female Sale, Turlock, CA
Aug. 12 — Western Video Market Cheyenne Sale, Cheyenne, WY
Aug. 19 — NLVA Early Fall Preview, Billings, MT
Aug. 19 - 23 — Superior Livestock Auction Big Horn Classic, Sheridan, WY
Aug. 24 — Mobile Cattle Marketing Female Sale, Petaluma, CA
Sep. 16 — NLVA Fall Premier Special, Billings, MT
Nov. 15 – Rollin' Rock Angus Bred Heifer Sale, Pilot Rock, OR
Nov. 18 – COLA's 21st Century Female Sale, Madras, OR
Nov. 23 – Spring Cove Ranch Fall Female Sale, Bliss, ID

HORSE

Aug. 17 — Memory Ranch Foal Sale, Wells, NV
Sep. 21 – Snaffle Bit Futurity Sale, Reno, NV

Market-ready cattle maintain meat quality on low-input diets

A new study led by the Virginia Tech's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences reveals that market-ready steers can maintain meat quality and yield even when fed lower-cost, low-input maintenance diets for longer periods than previously understood.

The finding is especially useful to cattle producers and feedlot operators during times of market unpredictability and processing slowdowns such as those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the early stages of the pandemic, social distancing measures and lockdowns led many meat processors to shut down or scale back operations. As a result, many beef producers and feedlots had to retain cattle for long periods of time under uncertain market conditions and risk financial loss.

The study, led by Virginia Tech's School of Animal Sciences in collaboration with colleagues at the University of São Paulo in Brazil, sought to determine whether finished steers could retain their ability to produce high-quality beef when transitioned and held on less-expensive maintenance diets while markets improved.

The research focused on 16 finished commercial Angus-crossbred steers, each weighing approximately 590 kilograms, or about 1,300 pounds. Once market ready, these steers were placed on one of two maintenance rations consisting of predominately forage or grain diets for 60 days. At the end of this holding period, cattle were harvested and the quality of the beef was assessed using American Meat Science Association standards for color, weight, yield, maturity and marbling.

The study, published in the journal Translational Animal Science, found no significant differences in meat quality between the two diet groups.

"Our data show that beef quality is rather resilient," said Professor David Gerrard, the lead author and director of the School of Animal Sciences. "Despite huge dietary changes, the intrinsic qualities of the meat—like its color and texture—remained unaffected. This suggests there's more flexibility in feeding strategies than previously thought. Producers can use this knowledge to better plan and manage marketing decisions without jeopardizing losses in meat quality."

Consumers tend to favor beef quality grades—such as Prime and Choice—along with the visual cues of color and marbling in their purchasing decisions. The study substantiates that even with altered feeding practices, these quality indicators can be retained for an extended period of time. **— Virginia Tech**