

INSIDE WLJ

PRICE WARS — Industry pushback against VP Harris' grocery price gouging plan. Page 8

LAND BATTLE — Utah's lawsuit against federal control of 18.5M acres aims to reclaim state sovereignty. Page 14

A LOOK BACK IN HISTORY

"The importance of the western range in the war effort looms more important each day. Vast grazing lands of the West—extensive private ranges, national forests, grazing districts, Indian reservations, and state lands—are indispensable in growing needed livestock. As in World War I, they are furnishing meat, hides, and wool vital to war production and to armed forces of the United States and its allies," read the August 1943 WLJ article by R.S. Campbell.

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Solar projects expected to incorporate more ag land

— Higher lease rates

The U.S. energy system is rapidly evolving, shifting toward low-carbon, renewable sources led by solar energy. A significant portion of this growth is taking place on farmland and in rural communities, fueled by federal policies such as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, alongside solar investment tax credits. However, a key driver of this expansion is the declining costs of solar installation, which have made solar projects increasingly economically viable.

According to the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA), solar power has led to new generating capacity additions to the grid for the past three years. In 2023, solar accounted for 55% of all new electric capacity, marking the first time in 80 years that a renewable energy source dominated new capacity additions. By the first quarter of 2024, solar represented 75% of new capacity, increasing its share of U.S. electrical generation from 0.1% in 2010 to over 6% today.

A 2021 study released by the U.S. Department of Energy and the Na-

tional Renewable Energy Laboratory suggests that with significant cost reductions, supportive policies and widespread electrification, solar could provide up to 40% of the nation's electricity by 2035 and 45% by 2050.

The study said to reach this level, solar deployment must average 30 gigawatts (GW) annually through 2025, increasing to 60 GW per year between 2025 and 2030, reaching a total of 1,000 GW by 2035. By 2050, solar capacity would need to expand to 1,600 GW to support a zero-carbon grid with increased electrification of end uses like motor vehicles and building heating.

Solar on ag land

A recent Market Intel article by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) said to meet the growing demand, farmland meets the needs of solar developers as it is flat, clear and close to existing grid infrastructure.

"While solar energy leasing can help farmers who own land diversify their income, it can be a double-edged sword for farm operators, as more than half of cropland is rent-

ed," AFBF wrote. "As solar development in rural areas grows, it drives up demand for land. And as demand goes up, so do land values and rental prices—representing

another increasing input cost for farmers."

AFBF cited statistics in May 2024

See SOLAR on page 11



Lance Cheung/USDA  
The use of solar projects on ag land has increased over the years, offering opportunities for landowners, but ag groups call it a double-edged sword.

CoBank: Herd rebuilding could take years

— Upside to sell now

Rebuilding the U.S. cattle herd could take years, as current market dynamics are pushing ranchers to sell rather than retain cows, according to a CoBank Knowledge Exchange research brief.

With steer and heifer calf prices at record highs, experts predict it may be 2026 or 2027 before heifer retention rates and the beef cow population begin to rebound.

"When it comes to cow-calf operations, a financial analysis helps

determine if a producer will make a better margin from keeping a calf or selling it," CoBank analyst Abbi Prins wrote. "Softening feed prices have improved incentives to retain heifers, however beef calf prices are at record high. These unique market conditions mean a no-brainer decision for some cow-calf operators to sell new crop calves for immediate cash flow."

Prins wrote the prolonged and steep decline in beef cow numbers has raised some concerns.

The U.S. is now in its fifth con-

secutive year of shrinking beef cow numbers, which have dropped by 2.5% year over year to 28.2 million head. According to USDA data, this represents the lowest inventory level since 1961.

Drought has been a key factor in the decline of cows producing calves in recent years. Prins noted after ranchers endured drought in 2021 and 2022, relief happened in 2024. With hay prices easing in 2024 compared to the early

See COBANK on page 14

BLM wins right to gather WY feral horses

— Horse advocates appeal decision

A federal judge has ruled in favor of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in a feral horse roundup battle in southern Wyoming that has

lasted more than a decade.

Judge Kelly Rankin of the U.S. District Court for the District of Wyoming ruled on Aug. 14 to authorize BLM's plan to reduce feral horse populations across millions of "checkerboard" (public-private)

lands in the state.

Background

Last spring, the BLM released its final management plan for the Rock Springs and Rawlins field offices in Wy-

oming, which called for removing horses in two herds and eliminating two herds entirely. The plan was finalized to comply with an April 2013 legal settlement with the Rock Springs Grazing Association, whose members pushed the

agency to remove the free-roaming horses from their private property.

Shortly after the plan's release, a coalition of horse advocacy groups filed suit.

"This case represents yet another in a line of BLM deci-

sions determined to stamp out wild horses in the Wyoming Checkerboard, an area where federal and non-federal lands are interspersed with one another," the groups

See HORSE SUITS on page 21

Markets face pressure ahead of COF report

The cattle markets saw declines over the week on the board and with cash trade. Market sentiment remained bearish ahead of the latest Cattle on Feed (COF) report's release.

Live cattle futures were lower over the week. The August contract lost \$1.35 to close at \$182.70, and the September contract lost about \$4 to close at \$176.82.

"The 2024 'bull' market was reserved for June LC only, as it managed to reach all-time highs for any spot live cattle futures contract in history, \$195.65," wrote Cassie Fish, market analyst, in The Beef on Thursday. "Looking at a spot continuation chart, that June LC high is perched a mile above all other spot highs, looking like an outlier—or a major top, depending on the interpretation."

Cash trade through Thursday totaled about 47,000 head. Live steers sold from \$182-190, averaging \$184.51. Dressed steers sold from \$288-295, averaging \$293.

"A few more clean-up sales here and there are likely, but all in all it's looking like the bulk of the week's trade could be done," ShayLe Stewart, DTN livestock analyst, wrote on Thursday.

Cash trade through Aug. 11 totaled 76,196 head. Live steers

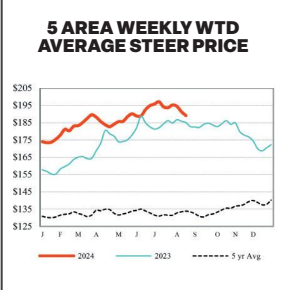
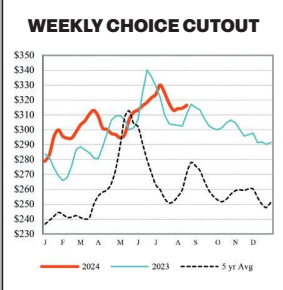
averaged \$191.59, and dressed steers averaged \$304.23.

Slaughter through Thursday was estimated at 484,000 head, about 8,000 head more than a week earlier. Projected slaughter for the week prior is 602,000 head. Actual slaughter for the week ending Aug. 10 was 587,582 head. The average steer dressed weight was 925 lbs., 2 lbs. above the prior week.

Boxed beef prices sold mostly steady. The Choice cutout lost 95 cents to close at \$315.99, and the Select cutout remained unchanged at \$302.03.

Analysts released their pre-report estimates for Friday's release of the July Cattle on Feed report. Cattle on

See MARKETS on page 19



|                       |                |            |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------|
| LIVE STEERS           | DRESSED STEERS | CME FEEDER |
| \$184.84              | \$293.98       | \$242.67   |
| WEEK ENDING: 08-22-24 |                |            |

# COMMENTS

## Derailed

Canadian railways are transporting nearly \$1 billion worth of goods every single day along the shared railways from the U.S. in- to and across Canada—that is, until a strike last week shut down the two largest railways. The impasse is creating a major headache for both the U.S. and Canada as businesses, including many in agriculture, are having to adjust to a growing and constantly changing situation. Last year, Canada was the third largest im- porter of U.S. agricultural goods valuing \$28.2 billion dollars.

By all means, this stoppage has the indications that an agreement will soon come, but as of *WLJ* press time, the stalemate had continued. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has chosen to stay neutral, forcing the Team- sters Canada Rail Conference union and two major rail- way companies, Canadian National Railway Co. and Canadian Pacific Kansas City Ltd., to come to an agree- ment outside of government intervention. On Thursday morning, railway workers were locked out of access to the rail centers. The ripple effect stopped all traffic im- mediately, including any freight carrying import and ex- ported goods, as well as the public who use the trains to commute to work every single day.

Usually, union labor strikes are centered around wage rates in respect to annual inflation. In this case, worker conditions following the 2020 pandemic haven’t im- proved as much as unions would like to see, and the stalemate began to take form. The three largest issues were crew scheduling, safety and worker fatigue that shaped the demands of a new contract for the union’s nearly 10,000 workers.

From an economic standpoint, a challenge we face is that Canadian inflation didn’t peak as fast as the U.S. and recently felt a 40-month low at a rate of 2.5%. Cana- da is the first G7 country to lower interest rates, which they have now done twice in 2024. The U.S. has aver- aged 3.2% inflation per month through July of this year. Canada’s overnight interest rate currently sits at 4.5% while the U.S.’ prime interest rates hasn’t been lowered yet this year and sits at 8.5%. A majority of analysts ex- pect rates to lower next month, but until this happens, we have to expect it to stay the same.

The log jam this is creating instantaneously will take weeks to sort through, even if an agreement is found immediately. Jim Vena, CEO of Union Pacific, wrote in a letter to Canadian Labor Minister Steve MacKinnon that upwards of 2,500 of his railroad’s cars could be stuck in Canada. “For every one day of disruption, you can ex- pect at least 3-5 days of recovery—perhaps even more, given two Canadian railways are impacted,” he wrote.

According to rollcall.com, although the Canadian routes extend into the U.S., the Brotherhood of Locomo- tive Engineers and Trainmen, a union that represents U.S. rail workers, said each company’s workers would still be required to report for duty at their ongoing U.S. operations. Both unions are affiliated with the Team- sters.

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture wrote in an opposition letter when word of the strike was eminent that agriculture organizations would be majorly impact- ed with a stoppage of products including grain and feedstuffs for cattle, poultry and pets. An issue that is be- coming more evident is that farming infrastructure in areas like British Columbia do not have adequate stor- age facilities to handle harvested grain. This jam has freshly harvested grain on halt hoping to be sent by rail immediately.

If this strike continues over an extended period of time, this grain stands the chance of being a complete loss. Farmers in the area are sitting on pins and needles hoping an agreement is made and commerce returns to normalcy. Ag products make up nearly 25% of railway shipments between the two impacted railways. This could have a major impact on individuals and business- es across the Canadian provinces as well as deep into the U.S.

The ripple effect this poses just adds into the long line of hits that seem to be stacking up against U.S. markets. Fundamentals and infrastructure continue to tell U.S. that things are going to balance out. The slide we’ve seen over the last 60 days can be blamed for quite a few things, but most of the reasoning is indirectly related to cattle production. This election year is creating head- lines every day right now and November can’t come soon enough. Simply put, the markets need confidence again and constant derogatory news continues to give reason to suppress any chance of gains.

In other words, we need to get all the trains back on the tracks and get back to work. — **LOGAN IPSEN**



IPSEN



# GUEST OPINION

Within days of the Federal Reserve’s broad hint on July 31 that an interest-rate cut is coming in September, the prospect of lower rates gained support from two big developments.

The one that got the most attention was the dramatic worldwide stock-market crash Aug. 5, in which the S&P 500 fell 3% and Japan’s Nikkei plummeted 12%. Stocks recovered the next day, but volatility (which means fear) is high, so more bad news for stocks could lie ahead. Some panicky Wall Streeters called for the Fed to hold an emergency meeting and lower interest rates a whop- ping three-quarters of a point.

The more important development was the Aug. 2 re- port that unemployment in the U.S. rose another two percentage points in July from June, to 4.3%, and was up eight percentage points from a year ago. While 4.3% is not a terrible unemployment rate, the continuing in- creases raise the possibility that a recession looms.

That unemployment report could have caused stocks to rise. On numerous past occasions, bad news for the economy has been good news for stocks, raising hopes of interest-rate cuts. Lower interest rates make bonds less attractive and stocks more attractive.

This time, though, stocks fell the day of the report, as investors feared the Fed had waited too long to lower rates and could no longer fend off a recession. Recessions aren’t good for stocks.

In addition, markets began anticipating a bigger Fed reaction. Before the unemployment news, investors were anticipating a quarter-point cut in September. After it, they’re pricing in a half-point cut.

It’s best to think of the stock market crash three days later as only tangentially related to the unemployment report. It began in Japan and was first of all a reaction to events there. Japan’s central bank had recently raised interest rates for the first time in years, giving a big boost to the value of the yen. That’s bad news for Japanese exports.

It’s bad news, too, for Americans and Europeans who’ve borrowed yen at low interest rates, converted the funds to dollars and invested the proceeds in high- yielding American financial assets. They rushed to un-

## THE ODDS OF AN INTEREST RATE CUT INCREASE

wind this so-called “carry trade,” selling the American assets and pulling U.S. markets down.

And, of course, many American investors had felt stocks were overvalued for some time but had kept buy- ing and realizing big paper gains. Once the big selling began, they decided to lock in some of those gains before they evaporated. Selling prompted selling.

Supporting financial markets is not one of the Fed’s jobs. Some market crashes have been so serious—think 2008—that the Fed has been forced to intervene lest they throw the economy into depression. This latest crash doesn’t come close to qualifying.

Unless things get much, much worse and a genuine financial-market meltdown occurs, there won’t be any emergency Fed meeting. We’ll all have to wait for the Fed’s regular September meeting.

What happens next will be interesting to watch. If the government statistic mills pour out more bad economic news, the Fed could very well lower interest rates a half- percentage point or more at its September meeting.

If the economic news remains mixed, especially if the unemployment rate remains at 4.3% or even goes down in the months ahead, the Fed will have to debate in September whether to cut more deeply than a quarter point.

The worst-case scenario would be a resurgence of inflation combined with further increases in unemploy- ment. That would put the Fed in a bind: Higher rates to fight inflation? Lower rates to cure unemployment?

Over the past couple of years Fed officials have made two things clear. One, they won’t lower rates until they’re confident inflation is headed to their 2% target. Two, if bringing inflation to 2% requires putting the economy in recession, they’re willing to pay that price, as much as they’d prefer a “soft landing.”

While a hard landing might hasten interest-rate cuts, it would leave millions of Americans jobless. No one should want that.

We’re on the cusp of getting both interest rate cuts and a soft landing. That’s the best-case scenario farmers and ranchers and indeed all Americans should be hoping for. — **Urban Lehner, DTN editor emeritus**



# OBITUARY



**Louis C. Dubs, III; 1954-2024**

Louis C. Dubs, III, of Billings, MT, passed away on Aug. 6, sur- rounded by his beloved wife and daughters, after a sudden battle against endocarditis.

Louis was born on Jan. 16, 1954, in Genoa, NE, to Louis “Louie” Dubs, II, and Gertrude “Trudi” Baumgartner Dubs. Like many immigrant midwestern families, Louie and Trudi raised their children on a small farm, filled with corn and cattle. When Louis was about 5 years old, Louie and Trudi purchased a cabin up the Boulder River Valley in Montana, igniting a lifelong love of the mountains within Louis. Louis and his siblings, Christine and Alfred “Fred” Dubs, spent their summers with- out electricity, subsiding on fish

they caught and piles of books from the local Big Timber Library.

From a young age, Louis showed the signs of a hardwired drive to create and build. He was very active in FFA, in which he showed cattle and earned a Ne- braska Star Farmer award. He also enjoyed playing basketball and the saxophone. After gradu- ating from St. Edward High School, Louis attended the Uni- versity of Nebraska-Lincoln, ob- taining a Bachelor of Science degree in Microbiology and Psy- chology. He then attended the University of Nebraska Medical Center, College of Dentistry, ob- taining his D.D.S. in 1980. Subse- quently, he practiced dentistry in Genoa and St. Edward, NE, during which time he met the love of his life, Kathy Marie Vo- taw, a small-town ranch girl also from Nebraska.

Louis and Kathy were married on Sept. 2, 1984, in North Platte, NE. They lived on their farm out- side of St. Edward, where they started their Winding River An- gus cattle herd while Louis con- tinued to practice dentistry. Louis and Kathy welcomed their eldest daughter, Katrina, on March 1, 1987. In 1988, the moun- tains of Montana called Louis back, thus he and Kathy moved their young family to Billings, where Louis purchased the den- tal practice from Dr. Jim Hanna.

Louis, Kathy and Katrina wel- comed the younger of the Dubs girls, Allison, on Dec. 31, 1991.

The 1990s and 2000s were filled with Angus cattle, den- tistry, farming and mountain liv- ing. Louis enjoyed growing his dental practice, Teddy Bear Den- tal, where he cared deeply about each of his patients and staff. He strove to make a positive impact on the community by providing excellent care. Louis and Kathy purchased their ranch north of Columbus in 1997 and their farm south of Bridger in 2000. As the father of two active 4-Hers, Louis was the beef leader of Ruff Riders and City Kids 4-H Clubs. He also stayed active in the Mon- tana Angus Association and Mid- land Empire Angus Association, with Louis and Kathy hosting multiple Montana Angus Tour stops over the years.

Louis shared his love of Angus cattle with his girls by hauling show calves around the region and country, taking the family along to the ranch and farm, and patiently seeking their input along the way. A ceaseless worker, Louis taught his family integrity, the worth of hard work and generally how to “figure it out” whenever confronted with a challenge.

A dream of Louis’ was to once again have a cabin up the Boul- der Valley, which was fulfilled in

2011 when Louis and Kathy built one. Over the last few years, Louis, with no prodding, instilled his love of ranching and farming into his grandchildren, Reagan Louise Petersen, an avid horse girl, and Rhett Jeffrey Petersen, a tractor-obsessed future farm- er. Louis deeply enjoyed his trips to his family farm in St. Edward with his brother, Fred, attending Husker football games, critically discussing Husker football with his brother-in-law, Steve Klie- wer, spending weekends with his family at the cabin, and continu- ing to plan the betterment of the Winding River Angus herd, ranch and farm for the benefit of his beloved family.

Louis is proceeded in death by his parents, Louis and Gertrude Dubs; and his sister, Christine Dubs. Left to cherish his mem- ory are his wife, Kathy Dubs; daughters, Katrina (Adam) Pe- tersen and Allison Dubs and grandchildren, Reagan and Rhett Petersen, all of Billings; brother, Alfred Dubs of Coos Bay, OR; and many other ex- tended family members and friends.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Angus Foundation, 3201 Frederick Ave., St. Joseph, MO 64506 or the Sweet Grass County Recre- ation Association, P.O. Box 922, Big Timber, MT 59011.

**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](mailto: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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| +9  | +4.1 | +85 | +142 | +71 | +1.55 | +1.20 | +225 | +364 |

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| CED | BW   | WW  | YW   | CW  | MARB  | RE    | \$B  | \$C  |
|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-------|-------|------|------|
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| CED | BW    | WW    | YW   | MILK | DOC  | CLAW | ANGLE |      |
|-----|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| +17 | -2.7  | +81   | +153 | +32  | +19  | +55  | +56   |      |
| CW  | MARB  | RE    | \$M  | \$W  | \$F  | \$G  | \$B   | \$C  |
| +71 | +1.16 | +1.13 | +80  | +84  | +113 | +82  | +195  | +333 |



AAA \*20958420 BD: 08-14-2023



AAA \*20824476 BD: 01-31-2023



Dam of M587.

**M587** Sitz Resilient 10208 x Woodhill Blueprint  
Square-hipped, big-topped and outstanding balance in person and on paper. Build a cowherd around him.  
WR 119 - YR 107 - IMF R 100 - RE R 117  
DAM WR 2@115 YW 2@106

| CED | BW    | WW  | YW   | MILK | DOC | CLAW | ANGLE |      |
|-----|-------|-----|------|------|-----|------|-------|------|
| +4  | +1.5  | +81 | +135 | +33  | +27 | +34  | +40   |      |
| CW  | MARB  | RE  | \$M  | \$W  | \$F | \$G  | \$B   | \$C  |
| +56 | +1.01 | +98 | +94  | +88  | +90 | +73  | +163  | +305 |

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individuals*



AAA \*20958310 BD: 08-15-2023

**M316** Boyd Justification x Tehama Tahoe E425  
From our ET program this good-looking, balanced-trait stud sells along with his flush and paternal brothers from one of our best sire groups. Productive young donor dam BR 3@96 WR 3@105 YR 2@108

| CED | BW   | WW  | YW   | MILK | DOC | CLAW | ANGLE |      |
|-----|------|-----|------|------|-----|------|-------|------|
| +4  | +0   | +80 | +133 | +25  | +27 | +45  | +45   |      |
| CW  | MARB | RE  | \$M  | \$W  | \$F | \$G  | \$B   | \$C  |
| +56 | +99  | +71 | +107 | +84  | +92 | +69  | +160  | +315 |



AAA \*20958401 BD: 08-20-2023

**M159** B A R Dynamic x Baldrige Command C036  
This bull is elite in his quality, kind, birth to yearling spread and checks all the boxes. Hard to find one with top 10% CED and BW with top 3% WW and 4% YW. Coming with a WR of 108, he also has as much shape and look as you can put in one!

| CED | BW   | WW  | YW   | MILK | DOC  | CLAW | ANGLE |      |
|-----|------|-----|------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| +12 | -1.0 | +91 | +157 | +25  | +33  | +37  | +45   |      |
| CW  | MARB | RE  | \$M  | \$W  | \$F  | \$G  | \$B   | \$C  |
| +64 | +85  | +60 | +77  | +88  | +103 | +58  | +161  | +286 |



AAA \*20867527 BD: 02-04-2023

Dam of M625.

**M625** Sitz Virtue x S S Niagara Z29 One of the most impressive individuals we have produced. Extra length, three-dimensional and stout. The maternal side is for real! Flush and paternal brothers sell. WR 112 - YR 112 - IMF R 114 - RE R 113 - DAM WR 4@106 YW 4@105

| CED | BW    | WW    | YW   | MILK | DOC  | CLAW | ANGLE |      |
|-----|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| +11 | +0.7  | +84   | +145 | +33  | +27  | +45  | +52   |      |
| CW  | MARB  | RE    | \$M  | \$W  | \$F  | \$G  | \$B   | \$C  |
| +65 | +0.44 | +0.92 | +65  | +86  | +101 | +43  | +144  | +252 |



AAA \*20776981 BD: 02-19-2023



Dam of M683.

**M683** Woodhill Authentic x Tehama Patriarch F028  
A calving-ease, high-marbling bull with a value-added, high maternal pedigree. His donor dam is a full sister to the ST Genetics \$75,000 Sire, Tehama Testament!  
WR 105 - YR 104 - IMF R 150 - RE R 96  
DAM WR 2@105 YW 2@105

| DAM WR 2@105 YW 2@105 |       |     |      |      |     |      |       |      |
|-----------------------|-------|-----|------|------|-----|------|-------|------|
| CED                   | BW    | WW  | YW   | MILK | DOC | CLAW | ANGLE |      |
| +11                   | +2    | +64 | +114 | +35  | +25 | +35  | +46   |      |
| CW                    | MARB  | RE  | \$M  | \$W  | \$F | \$G  | \$B   | \$C  |
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# More cuts expected for Colorado River despite supply improvement

After Lake Mead hit an all-time low two years ago, the Colorado River's water supply is in a much better position this summer, but it hasn't improved enough to prevent further cuts this year.

While conservation efforts and two hardy winters have improved the short-term outlook for the Colorado River, Lake Mead is currently at 33% of capacity, meaning cuts this summer are likely, said Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton in Las Vegas on Aug. 14.

"Where we're going to be, most likely, is in a tier reduction. But the good news is it's not where we were two years ago, and the lake is in a better place," Touton said.

In 2021 and 2022, Lake Powell and Lake Mead—the two largest reservoirs in the nation—both fell below critical thresholds, triggering emergency water cuts in Nevada, Arizona and California and federal action to protect the lakes.

A historic and extended drought on the Colorado River has severely impacted regional water supply, but recent conservation efforts have federal, state and local leaders cautiously optimistic.

During the second annual Southern Nevada Water Summit at the Springs Preserve in Las Vegas, Democrat Rep. Susie Lee (NV-03) highlighted \$141 million in federal funding for 20 water projects across Nevada under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, including funding for the Las Vegas Wash, which carries millions of gallons of treated wastewater to Lake Mead.

In 2022, Congress also passed the Inflation Reduction Act to provide \$4 billion in funding to the Bureau of Reclamation to mitigate drought in the western U.S., prioritizing the Colorado River Basin. That funding has already secured 1.7 million acre-feet of water conservation through 2026, when current guidelines for managing the river expire.

"We've been able to stabilize the system in the short term, and now we are focused on what this river looks like for the future, for the next decade, for the next two decades, recognizing that climate change is real," Touton said.

Touton praised Colorado River Basin states' voluntary efforts to reduce water use, highlighting an agreement by the Imperial Irrigation District in California to leave up to 700,000 acre-feet of water in Lake Mead through 2026.

A robust water year for the Colorado River in 2022 and 2023 gave states a few more years of stability, but the river—which provides water for 40 million people across seven states and parts of Mexico—was on the verge of collapse, say federal water managers.

"We really were on the brink of catastrophe if we got another dry year," said Reclamation hydrologist Shana Tighi. "Mother Nature was kind to us, and Congress was very kind to us, and those two things together are what enabled us to get there voluntarily."

In 2022, federal officials gave western states the option to either reach a consensus to voluntarily reduce water use or be forced to by the federal

government. California, Arizona and Nevada agreed to collectively reduce water use by at least 3 million acre-feet through the end of 2026.

While the lower and upper portions of the Colorado River Basin are each allocated 7.5 million acre-feet of water, for a total of 15 million acre-feet, officials acknowledge only 12.4 million acre-feet flows from the river each year, and

flows continue to shrink due to climate change. Hydraulic studies by the federal government show that flow will likely decrease by another 3 million acre-feet of water in the next decade.

"We are going to have to come up with a way to bear really big shortages due to climate change," Touton said.

Based on Reclamation's most recent hydraulic models, Lake Mead water level could drop to 1,050 feet, or a Tier 2 shortage, by the end of 2025, making continued conservation efforts critical, Tighi said.

"We are not out of the woods yet," Tighi said. "These conservation programs are working. Yes, it's painful, but it's working, and it's preserving a very critical and vital water source for this entire area." — **Jennifer Solis, Nevada Current**

# To feed or not to feed rye grain

Cereal rye grain possesses many uses within crop and livestock production. Growers make rye part of their corn-soybean crop rotation to boost yields, while ranchers needing an alternative feed might use it for their livestock.

Recently, a listener who plants rye as a cover crop asked the hosts of Kansas State (K-State) University's "Cattle Chat" podcast if rye grain can be included in cattle rations. K-State beef cattle nutritionist Phillip Lancaster said "yes," noting it depends on the class of cattle.

"Cattle can have rye grain in their diets," he said. "It is nutritionally similar to other cereal grains like oats and barley, with a higher fiber content than wheat."

Producers often plant rye for its cold tolerance and relatively low soil and moisture

requirements. Lancaster said an after-harvest benefit includes rye grain's ability to replace corn (one of the more expensive feedstuffs) in certain cattle diets.

"There is a study that looked at growing cattle on rye instead of corn as a grain source and those researchers saw no difference in cattle performance," he said. "Whether it is growing replacement heifers or backgrounding feeder cattle, I think a producer could pretty much substitute all of the corn in a diet with whole rye grain."

On the other hand, producers may not want to feed rye grain to cattle in the finishing phase of the feeding period.

"Another part of that research evaluated finishing cattle on rye grain rather than corn," Lancaster said. "Overall, the cattle that had rye grain in their diet had a lower dry matter intake, their average daily gain was lower and feed conversion was worse."

Producers who elect to feed rye grain do not need to have it processed before feeding, according to Lancaster.

"The same study assessed hammer milling rye versus feeding it whole. Processing did not seem to improve cattle performance, so I do not think producers need to spend the money to have it milled," he said.

Additionally, producers should scout the rye seed heads in a field prior to feeding, K-State veterinarian Bob Larson said, to avoid health problems caused by ergot fungus.

"Rye is at a bigger risk for ergot fungus than other cereal grains," he said. "It can be quite damaging to animals that consume it. The arteries in their body constrict, and the blood flow to their tails and feet can be restricted to a degree where they are damaged and may even fall off."

"Go out and walk through that field you are planning on feeding rye from and look at the seed heads. The fungus is a little bigger than a rye seed and will be a dark black or brown."

Larson said even if only a portion of a field has ergot fungus, a producer should not feed any grain from that crop to livestock.

K-State veterinarian Brad White wrapped up the conversation, saying: "I think with that caution (regarding ergot toxicity) in mind—and depending on the kind of cattle you are feeding—rye can certainly be a component of a ration." — **K-State Research and Extension**

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AAA 20678753 BD: 03/04/23 **STERLING 3016**

Poss Deadwood x PA Valor 201

| CED | BW  | WW  | YW   | MB    | RE   | \$M | \$B  | \$C  |
|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|------|-----|------|------|
| +10 | -.4 | +79 | +152 | +1.43 | +.97 | +65 | +203 | +328 |



AAA 20681136 BD: 02/21/23 **STERLING 3008**

Connealy Craftsman x LD Capitalist 316

| CED | BW   | WW  | YW   | MB   | RE   | \$M | \$B  | \$C  |
|-----|------|-----|------|------|------|-----|------|------|
| +5  | +1.9 | +74 | +136 | +.88 | +.79 | +83 | +166 | +298 |



AAA 20821087 BD: 08/11/23 **STERLING 3234**

SG Salvation x Connealy Confidence Plus

| CED | BW  | WW  | YW   | MB    | RE   | \$M | \$B  | \$C  |
|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|------|-----|------|------|
| +11 | +.4 | +86 | +148 | +1.27 | +.73 | +98 | +216 | +378 |



AAA 20821087 BD: 09/09/23 **STERLING 3162**

Poss Deadwood x Connealy Confidence Plus

| CED | BW  | WW  | YW   | MB    | RE   | \$M | \$B  | \$C  |
|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|------|-----|------|------|
| +6  | +.9 | +73 | +132 | +1.77 | +.70 | +56 | +244 | +372 |



AAA 20840576 BD: 08/11/23 **STERLING 3251**

Poss Ratified x Hoover No Doubt

| CED | BW   | WW  | YW   | MB    | RE   | \$M | \$B  | \$C  |
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# Less severe forest fires can reduce intensity of future blazes

Not all forest fires have devastating effects. Low- and moderate-severity forest wildfires can reduce the intensity of future conflagrations for as long as 20 years in certain climates, according to new research by the University of California (UC), Davis.

The extent of reduced severity of these second fires, or reburns, and the duration of the moderating effect, varies by climate, forest type and other factors. But initial fires continue to mitigate future severity even during extreme weather, such as wind, high temperatures and drought, research published in the journal *Ecological Applications* finds.

The researchers used satellite remote sensing to study more than 700 reburn fires over the past 50 years throughout the western U.S. The findings shed light on the positive effect some of these blazes can have on forest resilience and could play a key role in helping land managers decide where

to focus risk reduction efforts while adapting to a changing climate.

"We're living in a time with increasing wildfire, which poses challenges for our communities and landscapes," said lead author Claire Tortorelli, an ecologist for the U.S. Forest Service who did the research while a postdoctoral scholar at UC Davis. "Some previous fires can have moderating effects on future fire behavior. It's important to understand how past wildfires are going to affect what happens in the future."

## A knowledge gap

A lot of research has focused on high-severity fires, but there's a gap in knowledge when it comes to less intensive fires where most of the tree canopy is left intact. Tortorelli and others sought to better understand what happened after these low- and moderate-severity fires.

In addition to the remote sensing data, they examined

severity of the first and second fires and factors such as weather, forest type and climate. Then they modeled the reburn severity to determine how long and how strong the effect of the first fire was on later fuels and risk under different climate, weather and forest conditions.

Researchers found that forests of the California coast and Southwest have longer lasting effects than those in the Sierra and Cascades.

"It's all about the vegetation and fuels that are coming back after fire," Tortorelli said. "We still need a more nuanced un-

derstanding of local fuels for managers to know how their specific system is going to burn in a future fire or how soon to come back and re-treat."

The reduced severity could last up to 20 years in some systems but the effect lessened over time. Follow-up treatments such as prescribed burns or mechanical thinning can help prolong the work the initial fire did in reducing fuels and future fire risk.

"We can leverage lower severity fires as a kind of initial fuel reduction treatment," Tortorelli said. "While I don't

think they're going to do all the work for us, and we need to pair them with management actions, they can do some of the heavy lifting, especially that initial lift."

## Widespread effect

The reburn effect could be widespread even in areas with high-severity wildfires because many of those blazes have areas that burn with low to moderate severity, said Andrew Latimer, a co-author and Department of Plant Sciences professor who co-supervised Tortorelli's research.

"If you add up how much area that is, that's way more than we've so far been able to treat through mechanical thinning and prescribed burning, and so it's the biggest form of fuel reduction that's happening," Latimer said. "It opens this window of opportunity to keep forests in good shape."

Derek Young in the Department of Plant Sciences co-supervised the research, which was supported by the UC National Lab Fees Research Program. — **UC Davis College of Agricultural and Environmental Science**

## When should ranchers start tax planning?

Does it seem too early to start planning for taxes?

Even though calves await weaning, and crops still stand in the fields, September and October are excellent times to meet with your tax accountant and start looking ahead for tax purposes.

Pre-tax planning allows producers to plan for upcoming income and expenses. Make or hold off on major equipment purchases, sell or wait to sell livestock and crops—pre-tax planning will help avoid unforeseen tax implications of your decisions.

What should you do when planning a pre-tax meeting with your tax accountant?

- Start early. Set an appointment with your accountant. September and October will allow for time to make end-of-the-year decisions. Planning in advance is an advantage for cattle producers, where livestock are not as easy as crops to sell quickly, if needed, and sale checks are sometimes larger.

- Come prepared. Get your books up to date and bring these to your pre-tax meeting. Email your tax accountant any reports for the year. Electronic bookkeeping programs, like Quickbooks and Quicken, have templates for reports, or you can create a custom report, and share information in Excel or PDF form.

- Look ahead. What are estimated future expenses? Will any additional income come in before Dec. 31?

- Did you purchase or trade any equipment? Bring the purchase agreements/trade papers for this year's equipment purchases.

After reviewing the numbers, if your operation has a surplus, what sound business decisions can you make with the profit?

- Estate and transition planning for your operation. Some of your attorney's fees may qualify as tax-deductible expenses.

- Maintenance and repairs. Schedule a time before the end of the year to repair equipment, buildings, pivots, or make land improvements, such as fence, new tanks or stock wells, or control invasive species.

- Pay down debt, with a plan. According to Tina Barrett, executive director of the Nebraska Farm Business Inc, "excess funds are tricky." To have extra cash to pay down debt, you need taxable income.

"But if someone takes \$100,000 and pays down a land note, they may get to the end of the year and realize their taxable income is \$100,000 higher than usual. It is not a pleasant surprise when there is no money to pay expenses," Barrett explained. Every situation is different, so ask your accountant about your position.

- Do not spend money on tax-deductible expenses just to reduce tax payments.

"If you didn't spend that \$100,000 on stuff that's not needed, and if instead, you could have spent \$30,000 on taxes and \$70,000 to reduce debt you would be further ahead financially," Barrett said. Again, each tax situation is unique, so ask what works best for your operation.

Ask your accountant how hard it has become, or if it's still a good plan, to try and meet the March 1 deadline to submit taxes for agricultural producers. An alternative is to make an estimate by Jan. 15, pay the estimate, then producers have until April 15 to file and pay the difference. This can be beneficial with late information, or if income is higher this year than the previous year.

With weaning and harvest around the corner, take the time to prepare and set up a pre-tax planning appointment with your tax accountant. — **Bethany Johnston and Aaron Berger, Nebraska Extension**

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| CED | BW  | WW | YW  | MILK | MARB | RE   | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|-----|----|-----|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 10  | 1.8 | 89 | 155 | 23   | 1.03 | 1.37 | 65  | 211 | 339 |

**BAR R FOREVER 3008** 2/17/23  
HA FOREVER X CONNEALY ABSOLUTE POWER



| CED | BW   | WW | YW  | MILK | MARB | RE   | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|------|----|-----|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 7   | -1.2 | 60 | 110 | 35   | 1.02 | 0.93 | 66  | 155 | 267 |

**BAR R FREEDOM 3014** 2/26/23  
G A R FREEDOM X CONNEALY CONFIDENCE PLUS



| CED | BW  | WW | YW  | MILK | MARB | RE  | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|-----|----|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 10  | 1.6 | 75 | 131 | 14   | 1.08 | .81 | 49  | 169 | 268 |



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| CED | BW  | WW | YW  | MILK | MARB | RE   | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|-----|----|-----|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 8   | 1.2 | 67 | 118 | 14   | 1.03 | 0.84 | 56  | 173 | 280 |

**TRI T PACIFIC 643 3127** 1/31/23  
STERLING PACIFIC 904 X SILVEIRAS TEN X 3034



| CED | BW  | WW | YW  | MILK | MARB | RE   | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|-----|----|-----|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 9   | 1.5 | 73 | 127 | 16   | 0.71 | 0.25 | 63  | 136 | 239 |

**TRI T POWER PLAY 842 3111** 1/17/23  
V A R POWER PLAY 7018 X SILVEIRAS TEN X 3034



| CED | BW  | WW | YW  | MILK | MARB | RE   | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|-----|----|-----|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 8   | 2.9 | 80 | 138 | 25   | 0.74 | 0.64 | 77  | 146 | 266 |



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# Meat industry pushes back on Harris’ price gouging plan

The meat industry is pushing back on Vice President Kamala Harris’ plan to call for a federal ban on “price gouging” when it comes to groceries, especially meat prices.

Harris laid out her economic agenda in a speech in North Carolina on Aug. 16.

The Harris campaign stated her plan for the first 100 days in office would be to “bring down costs for American families.” That includes creating “the first-ever federal ban on price gouging on food and groceries.” Harris wants more authority for the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and states to investigate companies for antitrust practices.

“Extreme consolidation in the food industry has led to higher prices that account for a large part of higher grocery bills,” Harris’ campaign stated. “To confront this issue, Vice President Harris will also direct her administration to crack down on unfair mergers and acquisitions that give big food corporations the power to jack up

food and grocery prices and undermine the competition that allows all businesses to thrive while keeping prices low for consumers. And her plan will support smaller businesses, like grocery stores, meat processors, farmers, and ranchers, so those industries can become more competitive.”

What’s unclear is how a federal ban on retail price gouging would work. Such a move also could translate into suppressing prices for livestock producers in the process.

The Biden administration has focused heavily on increasing competition in the meat industry by providing \$1 billion in grants and loans to smaller meatpackers and local meat lockers to compete against larger packers.

When it comes to retailers, the FTC in March released a report looking at the actions of the country’s largest grocery markets during the pandemic. The investigation found the country’s largest grocery retailers took advantage of COVID-19 supply-

“Consumers have been impacted by high prices due to inflation on everything from services to rent to automobiles, not just at the grocery store. A federal ban on price gouging does not address the real causes of inflation.”

— Julie Anna Potts

chain disruptions that worsened food shortages and inflated prices. Among the report’s findings, “Grocery retailer profits rose and remain elevated, warranting further consideration by the (FTC) and policymakers.”

The Trump campaign said Harris “blames everybody but herself for the once-in-a-generation inflation crisis she created. The fact that gasoline is up 30%, families can’t afford baby formula,

and seniors on a fixed income are having to come out of retirement has nothing to do with price gouging and everything to do with Kamala Harris’ failed economic and energy policies over the past four years.”

### Meat industry reaction

Julie Anna Potts, president and CEO of the Meat Institute—the lead trade associa-

tion for meatpackers—pushed back on criticisms against the food inflation, saying Harris’ campaign rhetoric unfairly targets the meat and poultry industries. Food prices are coming down from pandemic highs, Potts noted, and meat prices are based on supply and demand. The livestock and poultry industries have faced avian influenza and a shortage of cattle, along with higher energy costs and a tight labor market.

“Consumers have been impacted by high prices due to inflation on everything from services to rent to automobiles, not just at the grocery store,” Potts said. “A federal ban on price gouging does not address the real causes of inflation.”

Potts added that the prices livestock producers receive are based heavily on supply and demand. “Prices for cattle producers especially are at record highs, surpassing the 2014-15 previous record highs,” she said. Today, well into 2024, cattle prices remain at record levels because the U.S. has the lowest cattle inventory since Harry Truman was president.

Major meat companies have reported losses during the Biden-Harris administration, with some closing facilities and laying off workers, Potts noted. Tyson Foods, for instance, has closed several pork and poultry processing facilities over the last two years. In March, Tyson announced it would close one of its Iowa pork plants in Perry, IA.

The National Chicken Council (NCC) also responded to Harris’ take on price gouging. “Americans are seeing inflation in nearly every part of their livelihoods—rent, gas, automobiles, furniture—not just in the meat case,” said Gary Kushner, NCC interim president.

“Chicken prices are largely affected by supply and demand, by major input costs like corn, soybeans, energy, packaging, transportation, and by fiscal policy and burdensome government regulations—not price gouging,” Kushner said. “It’s time for this administration to stop using the meat and poultry industry as a scapegoat and a distraction for the root causes of inflation and the significant challenges facing our economy.”

### Efforts in Congress, DOJ

Just two years ago, Congress was holding hearings on cattle markets and senators from both parties were pushing a bill that would require more cattle to be sold through cash-trade sales rather than formula contracts. Backers pointed to market control exerted by four major packers that control 85% of fed-cattle slaughter nationally. Opponents claimed the cattle price discovery bills would actually cost producers money.

The CEOs of Cargill, JBS, National Beef and Tyson Foods all testified in a House hearing that livestock and beef prices are set based on

supply and demand. The cattle contract bill failed, but Congress and USDA have created a cattle contract library to provide more transparency to producers.

USDA and the Department of Justice (DOJ) started an investigation into cattle markets during the pandemic, but no conclusion was reached or report ever released on the findings.

### Ag secretary weighs in

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack was asked to respond to Harris’ call to crack down on price gouging with food companies, as well as increase antitrust enforcement. Vilsack said he could not discuss what the vice president is suggesting in the context of a political campaign.

“But I will say this, we have been pleased with the partnership we have had with the Department of Justice as we have informed DOJ in certain circumstances to prevent mergers or to allow them under certain conditions which are beneficial to producers,” Vilsack said. “We’ve been pleased with the work the Department of Justice has made in terms of cracking down on potential antitrust violations.”

The Justice Department has been active in bringing antitrust cases, especially against the poultry industry. DOJ has sued poultry companies over worker wages as well as exit fees against poultry producers for leaving contracts.

In one of the more complicated cases going on right now, the DOJ and six states have sued an Indiana statistics company, Agri Stats, over allegations of price fixing with major chicken and turkey companies. DOJ brought the suit against Agri Stats last year and a federal judge in May rejected a motion to dismiss the cases. DOJ alleges data Agri Stats collected and provided to poultry companies was used by major players in the industry to set and match prices.

Still, dozens of grocery chains and food distributors last year lost a six-week civil trial in federal court when a jury ruled Sanderson Farms did not conspire with rival poultry companies to raise chicken prices.

Vilsack also said USDA is in the process of completing its own retail study, “which I think will be coming out very soon, and I think that will raise some valid questions and issues about practices within the industry that ultimately impact and affect the price that people pay,” he said.

The secretary also cited a study into the costs of crop seeds that was done and led to recommendations allowing farmers to have more of a voice in the patenting of seed technology, “which, we think, over time is going to make it easier for farmers to have more choice, greater transparency, and maybe even less costs in terms of the seed options that they have.” — **Chris Clayton, DTN ag policy editor**

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### USDA investigating Tyson Foods

USDA's Packers and Stockyard Division (PSD) is investigating Tyson Foods for violations of the Packers and Stockyard Act. In a report by Investigate Midwest, a USDA employee confirmed that an investigation has been ongoing since early August. The agency did not confirm or deny an active investigation. "PSD does not comment on any investigative activity, or the absence thereof," the agency said in a statement provided to Investigate Midwest. "As a regulatory agency, PSD closely monitors all industry participants, including meat packers and poultry companies, for compliance with the Packers and Stockyards Act."

### Pilgrim's Pride to pay \$100M settlement

Pilgrim's Pride has agreed to pay a \$100 million settlement to settle claims that it conspired with competitors to underpay chicken farmers. The case alleged large poultry producers colluded to keep farmers' pay low by sharing confidential compensation information and agreeing not to recruit each other's farmers. The settlement is the largest in the seven-year-long antitrust case, according to a Reuters report. Tyson Foods, Sanderson Farms, Koch Foods and Perdue Foods previously settled for \$21 million, \$17.75 million, \$15.5 million and \$14.75 million, respectively. A preliminary settlement was filed on Aug. 16 with the U.S. District Court in Muskogee, OK. If approved, the total recovery will be \$169 million, minus legal fees and other expenses, Reuters said.

### FL sued over lab meat ban

Upside Foods, a cultivated meat company, is challenging a Florida law that bans the production, distribution and sale of cultivated meat products. The company has partnered with the Institute for Justice, a nonprofit public interest law firm, to take on the case in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida. In May, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed into law a bill that banned and criminalized the manufacture and sale of lab-grown meat in the state. "Florida is fighting back against the global elite's plan to force the world to eat meat grown in a petri dish or bugs to achieve their authoritarian goals," DeSantis said. "We will save our beef." Paul Sherman, an attorney for Institute for Justice, said: "This law is not about safety; it's about stifling innovation and protecting entrenched interests at the expense of consumer choice."

### CO ag groups send letter about wolves

A coalition of Colorado ag groups penned a letter to the Colorado Parks and Wildlife, expressing concern with the implementation of the Colorado wolf reintroduction effort. "The depredations in the areas encompassed by these local organizations, as well as the recent denial of a Middle Park Stockgrowers' application for a Chronic Depredation Permit, underscores broader systemic issues that we believe jeopardize not only the livelihood of livestock producers but also the long-term viability of a balanced wolf-livestock management strategy in our state," the letter read. The groups said they are committed to working with state agencies to find solutions that work for both producers and wildlife, but that requires a fair and balanced management framework. The letter was signed by the Colorado Cattlemen's Association, Middle Park Stockgrowers Association, North Park Stockgrowers Association, and Routt County Cattlemen's Association.

### Greens sue to protect wildlife species

Two new lawsuits are on the table to protect wildlife species, and headway has been made for other species up for protection. A group of environmental organizations filed suit in mid-August to challenge the U.S. Forest Service's plan to build new roads in the Chiricahua Mountains in southeastern Arizona. The groups allege the roads will compromise jaguar and spotted owl recovery plans. Groups also sent notice to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) of their intent to sue the agency for failing to protect the pygmy rabbit under the Endangered Species Act. "The agency has been aware of the pygmy rabbit's imperiled status since 1991, but it has never been protected," the Western Watersheds Project said. In California, the state's Department of Fish and Wildlife found that protecting the western burrowing owl under the California Endangered Species Act may be warranted. The decision comes following a March 2024 petition by environmentalists. On Aug. 16, the USFWS announced nearly \$20 million in funding for endangered species recovery efforts. The funding will support species like the Hawaiian and Pacific Island plants, butterflies, moths, freshwater mussels and Southwest desert fish.

### Money allocated for OR grazing lands

An investment through the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, made available by the Inflation Reduction Act, will enhance conservational grazing for livestock in Oregon. A total of \$540,523 for the Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council and \$300,000 for Wallowa Resources will expand Oregon ranchers' access to conservation practices on grazing lands. "At a time when so many Oregon ranchers are facing extreme drought, substantial wildfires and hard choices, I'm gratified this investment supports their efforts to employ climate-smart grazing practices that respond directly to the challenges they face," said Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) in a news release.

# The benefits of using cover crops

The systematic and strategic use of cover cropping systems is vital for sustainable agricultural production as this practice can help alleviate soil stress as a result of intensively managed agricultural land.

Cover crops offer multiple ecosystem benefits including reducing soil erosion, conserving and enhancing soil quality by increasing soil organic matter, reducing fertilizer use, disrupting crop pests and disease cycles, increasing biodiversity and weed suppression. Several studies have reported positive effects of cover cropping on soil microbial biomass and diversity, and total soil carbon and nitrogen. In addition, cover crops have been reported to enhance soil structure and water retention, reduce nitrogen leaching and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Most cover crop species make excellent cattle forage (for stocker and cow-calf operations alike) and thereby can reduce the expense of feeding hay. Cool season le-

gumes can be used to improve wildlife habitat during winter and early spring when warm season feed resources are scarce.

That being said, cover crop success depends on the selection of the best adapted cover crop varieties depending on the goal you plan to achieve. For example, winter wheat may yield the most pounds of beef produced per acre whereas a mixture of clover, winter cow peas and radishes will do more to break through a hardpan soil and reduce the need for nitrogen fertilizer.

Accordingly, when choosing a cover crop, producers should consider a variety of factors, including the cost of the seed, the intended use (cover only, grazed or harvested for forage), how the cover crop fits into the cash crop rotation in relation to anticipated planting and harvest dates, and long-term management goals such as preventing soil erosion or to improve soil organic matter.

Soil and climate, as well as

the availability of financial assistance, are also important factors. In 2017, approximately one-third of U.S. acres that planted cover crops received a financial incentive payment from either a USDA working lands conservation program or a similar state program.

Consider the following to determine what, when and if to utilize cover crops:

- Determine your purpose. Start by setting goals.

- Diversity of the cover crop mix has advantages and reduces risk over monocultures.

- A well-maintained and properly calibrated planter or drill is key when planting, especially for a diverse crop mix. A diverse cover crop mix consists of both large and small seeds, making calibration a challenge. This can be helped by making it a standard practice to physically stir the seed in the seed box every hour or so and keep planting speeds below 5 mph.

- Planting depth is important. Successful cover-crop-

pers have found that planting at 1-1.5 inches depth provides a more uniform stand.

- Monitor the weather and soil moisture which will impact planting depth and potentially time of planting. Typically, in Oklahoma, plan to seed wheat and rye for grazing by early September, but this is not a fixed rule for all cover crops. Weather forecasts should be considered when determining the best time to get seed in the ground.

- Establish cover crops by no-till (when possible) to help retain soil moisture.

- Establish a budget and stay within it. Determining what cover crop mix works best for your operation may take some trial and error. Start small, keep records and monitor success. Think long-term.

- Discuss your goals with seed dealers and Extension specialists to arrive at the best cover crop mixes to meet the goals of your operation. — **Mark Z. Johnson, Oklahoma State University Extension beef cattle breeding specialist**

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# MT Commission sets wolf hunting regulations

Following pressure from Yellowstone National Park and locals living north of the park boundary, the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission unanimously adopted an amendment to the wolf and furbearer regulations for the upcoming hunting season that will split Wolf Management Unit 313 (WMU) —just north of the park boundary—back into two units and only allow three wolves to be killed in each.

The commission also approved another amendment that will again ban the use of telemetry and motion-tracking devices when people are hunting wolves. It had been banned up until the 2021-22 wolf hunting season, when the commission again allowed the practice for wolf hunting, as well as the use of bait and night hunting on private lands.

Both amendments were offered by Region 3 Commissioner Susan Kirby Brooke, who said they came as a result of a year's worth of meetings with locals and business owners in Park and Gallatin counties, as well as leadership at Yellowstone National Park.

Park Superintendent Cam Sholly sent the commissioners a letter in June directly requesting the two changes and summarizing a host of reasons, which was cited by multiple speakers during public comment, as to why the commission should adopt the changes.

"The public, I think, weighed in in a pretty big way that they did not like the concentrated harvest that close to the city of Gardiner and the impact for the businesses of the wolves being harvested—that many wolves right close to where their businesses are," Brooke explained to the commission. "And a lot of these people are taking tourist business into these areas, and it hurts their business to have that many wolves taken out of that small of an area."

WMU 313 will be split into two units, 313 and 316 again for the 2024-25 season, as had previously been the case, and each will have a wolf quota of three for the season. WMU 313 had a

six-wolf quota last season, which was reached on Dec. 25 last year. In 2022, the six-wolf quota was reached on Feb. 6. Commissioners and others at the recent meeting said 316 was a more difficult and remote area to hunt, while 313 funnels animals down into the valley, making them easy targets.

In his June letter, Sholly said 13 wolves from Yellowstone packs had been killed this past winter, including eight killed legally in Montana, accounting for about 10% of the wolf population in Yellowstone. Six of those eight were killed in WMU 313, and they came from three different Yellowstone packs. Two more Yellowstone wolves were taken in Region 3 near its boundary with WMU 313, and another Yellowstone wolf was poached in WMU 313 in February, Sholly said.

He added that two other collared wolves died this past winter from gunshots the park believes the wolves sustained inside WMU 313 but could not verify.

"In all, these mortalities re-

sulted in the dissolution of three Yellowstone packs that counted toward the 2023 park population," Sholly wrote to the commissioners.

He said that 20 years of radio collar data shows the Yellowstone packs remain inside the park boundaries at least 96% of the year, and that when hunters in Montana and other states kill breeding wolves and alphas, their deaths have multiple effects for packs and breeding.

"From this information, there are relatively few resident wolves in WMU 313 beyond the transboundary movements of a few Yellowstone packs," Sholly wrote. "The state population counting methodologies that rely on the iPOM model to estimate wolf abundance and guide harvest recommendations are unable to provide fine-scale wolf abundance metrics in the WMU adjacent to the park."

Sholly said in some cases, the human-caused death of wolves leads to declining pup production, while in other cases, like in the 2021-22 season when an

alpha female from the 8-Mile pack was trapped in WMU 313, three subordinate females started breeding, and 18 pups were born in 2023.

He also asked the commission to ban the use of telemetry for wolf hunting, saying it went against the ethics of fair chase hunting. And he told the commissioners that there have been fewer than 10 livestock depredations caused by wolves during the past 10 years in Park County, meaning one of the state legislature's primary reasons for setting a goal of having a declining wolf population in Montana was not occurring.

Further, he said, the state's elk population is at or above the stated objectives in Hunting District 313, in Region 3, and statewide, and more bull elk have been harvested in Hunting District 313 during the past decade than during the previous decade.

"These data suggest that elk are doing well statewide and locally, while living in a landscape with multiple predator species that include wolves, cougars, grizzly bears, black bears, and human hunters," Sholly wrote.

He said in his letter, and many others noted during the meeting and in public comments submitted this summer, that wolf watching in Yellowstone brings in around \$80 million to local economies in Gardiner and the surrounding area. They said that is critical money for the region that could be jeopardized if the wolf population dips too low or people see wolves being killed near the park, cities and towns.

Greater Yellowstone Coalition Wildlife Program Manager Brooke Shifrin told commissioners the group and others in the region were thankful for the amendments and they felt their voices had been heard by Brooke and the other commissioners.

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**Wolf quota is 334 for season**

The commission also agreed to increase the statewide wolf quota to 334 for the upcoming season, up from 313 last year. Hunters and trappers took 286 wolves during the last season and did not meet quotas in Regions 1 or 2, but it was the first season in which wolf trapping was limited to Jan. 1 to Feb. 15 in Regions 1 through 5 because of a court order handed down that said trapping outside that window posed dangers to threatened grizzly bears who might still be outside of their winter dens.

During the full license year, which runs from Sept. 2 through March 15, another 21 wolves were taken through controlled removals, the lowest number during the past five years. Total harvest was up to 307 last season, six more than the prior season, but down 70 wolves from the five-year high of 377 wolves killed in Montana in the 2019-20 season, according to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks data.

The state estimates there were 1,096 wolves in Montana as of Dec. 31 last year, which is when the state performs its annual wolf estimates. That number is also highly disputed by some conservation groups who do not believe the model captures the true population and believe it is actually much lower, perhaps even half the number.

The commission did not set wolf trapping season dates and where those will apply at the recent meeting; those will be set at the commission's Oct. 10 meeting. The federal court decision that limited wolf trapping season last year was limited to the 2023-24 season, but the reasons behind the injunction will again have to be considered by the commission in setting dates. — **Blair Miller, Daily Montanan**



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|-----|-----|----|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 10  | 1.4 | 85 | 165 | 1.31 | 1.46 | 62  | 249 | 385 |



**BRAVO BREAKING BARRIERS 3411** 4-15-23  
EXAR Cover The Bases O819B x S A V Resource 1441

| CED | BW | WW | YW  | MARB | RE   | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|----|----|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 12  | 0  | 75 | 130 | 1.24 | 1.11 | 60  | 187 | 303 |



**BRAVO NAUTILUS 3400** 2-8-23  
V A R Conclusion O234 x V A R Discovery 2240

| CED | BW   | WW | YW  | MARB | RE   | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|------|----|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 15  | -0.4 | 84 | 154 | 1.48 | 0.79 | 51  | 192 | 300 |



**BRAVO CONCLUSION 3403** 2-16-23  
V A R Conclusion O234 x V A R Discovery 2240

| CED | BW  | WW  | YW  | MARB | RE   | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 7   | 1.2 | 101 | 184 | 1.27 | 0.76 | 44  | 216 | 324 |



**BRAVO CONCLUSION 3076** 4-20-23  
V A R Conclusion O234 x Baldridge 38 Special

| CED | BW  | WW  | YW  | MARB | RE   | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 8   | 1.6 | 103 | 181 | 0.89 | 1.26 | 64  | 200 | 323 |



**BRAVO DESTINO 3433** 5-6-23  
V A R Conclusion O234 x G A R Prophet

| CED | BW  | WW | YW  | MARB | RE   | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|-----|----|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 8   | 1.6 | 87 | 157 | 0.95 | 0.82 | 79  | 188 | 323 |

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## Managing late summer pasture weeds

August always seems to be a time when certain weeds can become quite noticeable in pastures. There can be a variety of common annual weeds like sunflowers, lambsquarters or kochia.

Perennial weeds like western ragweed, ironweed and verbena can be plentiful in some pastures as well. In areas of pastures that have relatively thin grass stands, in areas where animals congregate, or if some overgrazing has occurred, they can be very visible.

Spraying weeds now does little good. Many weeds are too large to kill. On both annual and perennial species that produce seed, herbicides might only reduce some seed production. If the goal is to improve appearance, shredding areas that have an abundance of weeds might be the best option, and may reduce some seed production too, if it's not already too late.

Two other approaches are better for long-term weed control. First, focus on the grazing management of your pastures. This includes using the proper stocking rate and developing a good rotational grazing plan.

An important objective is to increase the health, vigor and density of your grass. Healthy, competitive grass stands are essential to reduce weed populations economically over time.

Second, target herbicide applications for when they will do the most good. Both perennial and annual species can be better targeted with a spring application when plants are smaller and able to be controlled. For perennials, if a second application is needed, waiting closer to a killing frost is best. These fall applications can be more effective as more product is translocated down to the roots of the weeds.

Pasture weeds may look unsightly now; but hold off on spraying. Improve grazing management and time herbicides for the best window of control so herbicides won't be needed as often in the future. On the bright side, for areas that have had good rains this summer, it is likely that annual weeds will be less abundant next year as pasture grasses had a chance to build up vigor and reproduce. — **Jerry Volesky, Nebraska Extension**

# Grasshoppers gobble crops, farm profits

That buzzing noise in Northern California is the sound of grasshoppers chewing a path of destruction through crops and pollinator-friendly plants as they hop across an expanding area.

This is the fifth year in a row that massive numbers of grasshoppers have overrun Modoc County and “probably the worst I’ve seen yet,” said Laura Snell, a University of California (UC) Cooperative Extension livestock and natural resource advisor in Modoc County, located in the northeastern corner of the state.

In past years, Snell has heard from farmers who have lost up to 70% of their hay crop. This year, she is hearing of grasshopper damage from farmers

who grow a wider array of crops, including onions and garlic—crops that the pests eschewed in past years.

“I’ve had an even broader group of producers contact me about damage,” Snell said.

“Our local vegetable producers are being affected, decreasing farmers market and food hub products. Bee producers are not seeing good honey yields due to grasshoppers eating huge amounts of pollinator plants.”

Modoc County isn’t alone. Lassen, Sierra, Plumas, Siskiyou, Tehama, Butte, Placer and Nevada counties are being invaded by grasshoppers.

“The county ag commissioners are circulating a survey to get an idea of other counties

that may be affected,” Snell said. “Things like droughts and—I suppose, fires as well—would affect grasshopper migrations.”

While scientists don’t know what’s causing the explosive growth of grasshopper populations, there are some contributing factors, according to Tom Getts, UC Cooperative Extension weed ecology and cropping systems advisor for Lassen, Modoc, Plumas and Sierra counties.

In the past, grasshopper outbreaks seemed to be more isolated, and the populations tended to crash after a year or two.

Getts said, “For whatever reason, the population cycle does not appear to have been broken, and they continue to have high numbers.”

Grasshoppers can consume 30-250% of their body weight per day, according to a fact sheet about grasshoppers, co-authored by Getts. While grasshopper nymphs walk, adults

can fly 15 miles or more.

Getts and UC Cooperative Extension farm advisors have been giving presentations throughout the intermountain region on grasshoppers and the various control methods.

“The difficulty to controlling them is the scale and their ability to move,” Getts said. “The insects need to be targeted at a small growth stage for the tactics to be most efficacious. Once they are adults, it doesn’t matter what one grower does to control them if their neighbor doesn’t do anything.”

UCCE farm advisors in multiple counties are working on abatement options.

They recommend monitoring in April-May to control grasshoppers while they are still nymphs and susceptible to insecticides.

Birds, spiders, rodents and fungi also can help keep the insects in check, but years of drought have reduced the fungi.

## Grasshoppers

“The population of grasshoppers in the region have increased in size, scope and density in recent years,” said Rob Wilson, a UC Cooperative Extension agronomy and pest management advisor and director of the Intermountain Research and Extension Center in Tulelake.

The massive growth and spread of the pests is a problem because 30 pounds of grasshoppers can eat as much forage as a 600-pound cow can eat per day, he explained.

Part of the challenge of controlling grasshoppers is their changing behavior. In the past, grasshoppers would go away after a couple of years, now they persist. They used to thrive in dry fields, but last year, grasshoppers migrated 10 to 20 miles into irrigated fields, Wilson said.

Wilson, who has been monitoring grasshoppers near Tule Lake since early April, said that

in some fields, there were 20 to 30 nymphs per square yard. More than eight nymphs per square yard can cause economic damage.

As if the grasshoppers themselves weren’t enough of a nuisance, they attract other pests, including blister beetles.

“As the grasshopper population increases, you are bound to see an increase in all of the species that eat them over time,” Getts said. “Blister beetles cause terrible blisters when they get on your skin, hence the name, but they can also be problematic for livestock if they contaminate bales of hay.”

Getts recommends that growers take steps to prevent grasshopper populations from building over successive years. Growers should coordinate with neighboring growers to treat their fields due to the limited longevity and efficacy of treatments on individual fields.

— UC Agriculture and Natural Resources

## AFBF: Prioritize ag land preservation

### SOLAR (from page 1)

by USDA’s Economic Research Service (ERS), which reported that from 2009 to 2020, 43% of solar installations were on former cropland and 21% on pasture or rangeland. ERS estimated that as of 2020, solar energy occupied about 336,000 acres of rural land, but this figure is outdated, with solar capacity more than doubled since then. Based on recent estimates, approximately 1.25 million acres of farmland have now been converted for solar use, representing about 0.14% of U.S. farmland.

AFBF noted that solar developers are offering landowners significantly higher payments than traditional farming leases, often guaranteeing long-term leases of 30-35 years, which could drive up cash rental prices.

According to the July 2024 Purdue Ag Economy Barometer, 16% of respondents reported discussing farmland leases for solar energy production within the last six months, a slight decrease from the 19% and 20% reported in April and May, respectively. Lease rates have steadily risen since data collection began in 2021.

In July, 69% of respondents were offered long-term lease rates of \$1,000 per acre or more, a significant increase from 27% in June 2021. Additionally, 27% of respondents reported being offered lease rates of \$1,500 per acre or more.

According to AFBF, solar companies’ rental rates are far above the nationwide average cash rental rate of \$146 per acre for non-irrigated land.

### Agrivoltaics

AFBF noted that while there are several concerns related to solar and agriculture, promising developments could lead to a sustainable future for both industries. Agrivoltaics, the practice of combining agricultural production with solar energy generation on the same land, is gaining traction. Many agrivoltaic projects currently involve sheep grazing, but research is underway to include

cattle grazing and crop production.

The American Solar Grazing Association held a webinar in April 2024 detailing the results of their solar grazing census conducted in 2023. The results found that 100,000 acres of solar sites are being grazed in the U.S. by over 80,000 sheep in 27 states.

One such project recently approved is by Enel North America, which is set to introduce over 6,000 sheep for vegetation management at eight solar plants across Texas. Enel North America is collaborating with Texas Solar Sheep Co., a family-run business specializing in vegetation management for large solar sites, to enhance sustainable practices in renewable energy.

Texas Solar Sheep will manage more than 10,100 acres of solar land with their flock, making this one of the most substantial single contracts for dual-use solar, as noted by the American Solar Grazing Association.

According to Enel, their solar grazing program has shown significant progress in soil health, with some sites achieving over a 200% increase in organic matter. The presence of sheep also supports pollinator-friendly environments by enabling native plants to mature and flower. It also contributes to local economies by offering sheep producers a new source of income.

“Solar energy can be a great tool in the reduction of greenhouse gases, but it risks de-commissioning our most productive agricultural lands,” AFBF wrote. “As we navigate towards clean energy solutions, it is critical that we prioritize the preservation of agricultural land.”

“America needs renewable energy sources, and it also needs resilient farms and ranches to continue providing the food, fiber and fuel we all depend on,” the group continued. “Ultimately, the issue is not whether we have solar energy production, but where and how we have solar energy production.” — Charles Wallace, WL/contributing editor

## TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2024

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|  <p><b>O'Neals Wildcat 3155</b></p> <p>E &amp; B WILDCAT 940 X VAR POWER PLAY 7018</p> <table border="1" style="margin: 0 auto;"> <tr> <th>CED</th><th>BW</th><th>WW</th><th>YW</th><th>MILK</th><th>RE</th><th>MARB</th><th>\$B</th><th>\$C</th></tr> <tr> <td>9</td><td>2.7</td><td>91</td><td>152</td><td>37</td><td>0.99</td><td>0.59</td><td>164</td><td>270</td></tr> </table> | CED  | BW | WW  | YW   | MILK | RE   | MARB | \$B | \$C | 9 | 2.7 | 91 | 152 | 37 | 0.99 | 0.59 | 164 | 270 |  <p><b>O'Neals Rawhide 3166</b></p> <p>POSS RAWHIDE X R TREASURE CHESTER</p> <table border="1" style="margin: 0 auto;"> <tr> <th>CED</th><th>BW</th><th>WW</th><th>YW</th><th>MILK</th><th>RE</th><th>MARB</th><th>\$B</th><th>\$C</th></tr> <tr> <td>3</td><td>1.5</td><td>81</td><td>133</td><td>18</td><td>0.37</td><td>1.10</td><td>184</td><td>273</td></tr> </table>     | CED | BW | WW | YW | MILK | RE | MARB | \$B | \$C | 3 | 1.5 | 81 | 133 | 18 | 0.37 | 1.10 | 184 | 273 |  <p><b>O'Neals Real-Tank 3207</b></p> <p>SAV REAL TANK X O'NEALS RIGHT ANSWER 2109</p> <table border="1" style="margin: 0 auto;"> <tr> <th>CED</th><th>BW</th><th>WW</th><th>YW</th><th>MILK</th><th>RE</th><th>MARB</th><th>\$B</th><th>\$C</th></tr> <tr> <td>5</td><td>3.6</td><td>82</td><td>148</td><td>32</td><td>0.67</td><td>0.91</td><td>168</td><td>287</td></tr> </table> | CED | BW | WW | YW | MILK | RE | MARB | \$B | \$C | 5  | 3.6  | 82 | 148 | 32 | 0.67 | 0.91 | 168 | 287 |
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# Consider options for pregnancy diagnosis

The profitability of any business is crucial, and livestock production is no different. With most revenue originating from the sale of calves produced, retaining non-pregnant cows in a cow-calf operation is hard to justify. Therefore, this time of year is traditionally pregnancy detection season.

“Cattle producers have or soon will be removing bulls from their spring-calving cow herds, bookending another breeding season, and will need to identify which cows will calve next year before winter feed resources are allocated,” said Lacey Quail, North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension livestock management specialist.

Quail recommends ranchers compare several pregnancy detection options to determine the best fit for their herd management program, as each option has unique benefits and disadvantages. Factors include cost, timing, training required and completeness of the information gained.

**Expense**

Cost is the first consideration for many producers when deciding the best way to diagnose pregnancy in their herds. Quail recommends producers assess cost along with accuracy, result timeline and completeness of the method used. For example, monitoring estrus behavior in the herd after breeding is very affordable; however, this method carries considerable opportunity cost.

Observing cattle for estrus behavior is time-consuming and potentially inaccurate due to the individuality of estrous cycles and the impacts of nutrition, lactation and environment on cyclicity in cattle. Additionally, with estrus detection, the result is simple: pregnant or open. This method provides no other valuable information regarding fetal age or sex. On the other hand, techniques such as transrectal palpation or ultrasound are more comprehensive, but more expensive.

**Timing**

Pregnancy detection requires logistical planning as cows may be on summer pasture without handling facilities, or the area veterinarian may have limited availability, among other considerations. Specific methods may align better with the production timeline.

For instance, transrectal ultrasound and blood antigen tests can diagnose pregnancy as soon as 28 days after the last possible breeding date, whereas diagnosing pregnancy by transrectal palpation requires a little more time (typically around 40 or more days after breeding).

While blood antigen tests are accurate early in gestation, they do not give an immediate result, as it takes time to run the samples. Thus, cattle must be resorted after performing the test, which can be a deterrent due to labor demands.

“If feed resources or cattle handling facilities are limiting

factors, it is important to know when each pregnancy detection method can be performed,” Quail said. “Retaining and feeding cows is costly, and opting for earlier detection is often beneficial so that open cows can be marketed earlier.”

**Training**

Each pregnancy detection method requires varying levels of training or expertise. Quail acknowledges the importance of this factor, as trained professionals are often few and far between in many remote areas devoted to cattle production. The detection of estrus and blood antigen tests both require very minimal, if any, training. They are accomplished by visual observation or simply drawing a blood sample.

Both methods can be very convenient options for operations that may not have access to trained professionals. As a trade-off, these methods are not as comprehensive as those

requiring more extensive training. Ranchers should consider how the timeline and expense of these methods may fit into their management plan.

**Completeness**

Observing for estrus behavior and testing for pregnancy-specific factors with a blood antigen test are the least comprehensive methods of pregnancy detection. There is little reliable information for producers to gain aside from whether a female is pregnant or open. In some operations, that may be all that is necessary; however, in others, it is essential to know if cattle are carrying a calf sired by artificial insemination or natural service, the predicted calving date, or whether to expect a bull or heifer calf at calving. Rectal palpation or ultrasound are the most comprehensive options for answering these questions.

Fetal age is valuable information, Quail said. In operations utilizing synchronization and fixed-time artificial insemination, it is common for natural service sires to be introduced to the cow herd around 10 days after AI. In this case, distinguishing pregnan-

cies by artificial insemination from natural service is a breeze with palpation or ultrasound.

Determining an accurate fetal age can also be helpful for producers to concentrate labor during their calving season and identify females that conceived late in the breeding season as potential cull animals. In these situations, a more accurate fetal age determined by palpation or ultrasound is necessary. Pieces of the puzzle that can only be determined by ultrasound are fetal heartbeat and fetal sex. If early embryonic loss (no detection of fetal heartbeat) is in question, or females need to be sorted by those carrying bull or heifer calves, ultrasound is the only option.

“Every operation that raises beef cattle can benefit from pregnancy diagnosis; however, the method used can vary from herd to herd,” Quail said. “To find the most cost-effective method for your operation, consider how soon after breeding you need to detect pregnancy, the labor required, the availability of trained professionals, and the information you need to gain for your management system.” — NDSU Extension

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## Making genetic progress in the fescue belt

“In Kentucky and Tennessee, we’ve been fortunate to have some cost-share dollars that have been going into a genetic improvement program that each of the states has done independently,” said Dr. Darrah Bullock, University of Kentucky Extension professor, Lexington.

Bullock gave his presentation “Genetic Improvement Programs in the Fescue Belt: Do Incentives Raise the Bar or Just the Price?” during the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Symposium June 11 in Knoxville, TN.

**Bull cost-share programs**

The Kentucky Beef Cattle Genetic Improvement Program and the Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program, both established in the early 2000s, were designed to assist cattle producers in making genetic progress through bull cost-share initiatives. Bullock explained bulls must meet EPD requirements and be genomically tested to enter the program. Bulls are categorized by their general strengths, including calving ease, terminal production and trait balance. These programs are built on science and technology, including EPDs from various breed associations, genomic data and research from the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center.

While implementing bull cost-share programs has led to faster genetic progress in cattle, that is not the only goal of the projects. “The educational part is huge,” Bullock explained. “For us to go out and actually educate commercial cattlemen on the best way to buy bulls, as well as other manage-

ment practices, is a huge aspect of these programs.”

Continued education is a requirement to participate in either program; specifically, sound management practices, such as breeding soundness exams, Beef Quality Assurance training, vaccination programs and crossbreeding, are encouraged.

**Program successes to date**

Highlighting some successes of these programs, Bullock touched on behavior changes observed in producers and a comparison between beef genetics in the fescue belt and the national average. Since the start of each initiative, breed associations have seen an increase in data submissions and use of genomic technology by seedstock producers.

Commercial producers have gained a better understanding of EPDs and the benefits of genomically enhanced EPDs. Based on data provided by the American Angus Association, cattle in Kentucky and Tennessee are currently better than average for multiple EPDs and important selection indexes. Bullock also pointed out that genomic testing in these regions has significantly increased.

While only a small percentage of bulls sold each year in Kentucky and Tennessee go through the cost-share programs, these initiatives are proving to have a significant impact on beef genetics in the region.

For more information about this year’s Symposium and BIF, including additional presentations and award winners, visit BIFSymposium.com. — BIF

# Cow-calf producers weigh options for herd replacements

At the current time, economic and climate conditions forecast for the coming months/years cast some doubt on the proposition of expanding the cow herd rapidly, according to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service experts.

Ranchers should expect volatility in the markets and weather as they make plans to expand their cow herds.

That was the message for Texas beef producers at the 70th annual Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course, hosted by AgriLife Extension and the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Department of Animal Science.

More than 1,800 attended the annual event, which was themed "Rebuilding the Cow Herd."

Texas ranchers find themselves in a similar situation as the drought of 2011-12, which led to deep culling and herd consolidations. But not all is the same this time.

With some of the lowest cow numbers in the U.S., the market indicates now is a good time for ranchers to start rebuilding their cow herds, but careful consideration is needed on many decisions to ensure mistakes are not repeated, said Jason Cleere, Ph.D., conference coordinator and AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist in the Department of Animal Science.

"We wanted to provide some tools for ranchers to begin to decide what they can afford for replacement heifers," Cleere said. "The short course provided a lot of scientific and experiential knowledge ranchers took home and hopefully can apply to their operations with short-term and long-term success."

## Returns aren't materializing yet

David Anderson, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension livestock marketing economist and professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics, said a decade ago, there were record-high calf prices, and the expansion took place faster

than many thought possible.

Several reasons exist for expansion to be slower this time, Anderson said, including higher input costs, interest rates and discounts on the futures market that are keeping the return over cash costs low.

"Even with record high prices, that doesn't correspond to record high returns," he said. "Economically, we've seen no real indication of expansion because the returns haven't been there to make it worthwhile."

Anderson said the last time around should remind ranchers they can pay too much for replacements if they aren't careful.

"The calf crop and productivity are the most important factors going forward," he said. "If the cow doesn't make a calf every year, that takes away from what I can pay. Replacements this time will be the most expensive ever, at record highs. But so are the calf prices."

He said it is important to know operational costs and the factors that could determine what price is too high.

"You don't want to still be paying for those replacements when they are long gone," Anderson said.

## Finding the right scenario

One key part of the equation for rebuilding the herd is selecting replacement females—and there are about 16 options ranchers could make, said Ron Gill, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist and professor in the Department of Animal Science.

Ranchers must consider if they want to retain ownership of their own heifers or buy lightweight or heavyweight heifers, bred heifers, first-calf pairs, three-in-one sets, older or younger bred cows, pairs of cows and calves of different ages, or open females that all range in prices and availability.

"Looking at these different options may not be the normal way to do things, but this is a unique sce-

nario we are in," Gill said.

Some things for ranchers to consider when determining the best females to rebuild their herd include environmental adaptability, mature size, calving difficulty and marketability.

"You want to build in some flexibility to your beef system to prevent forced management," Gill said. "Last time, we spent a lot of money on females in rebuilding, and then some folks were forced to sell a lot of them pretty quick before they had them paid off."

## Economic considerations

Gill weighed in on some of the key economic management aspects of that selection process:

- What is the quantity and quality of the animals available? That helps determine what you can se-

lect.

- What is your initial investment cost? That can be a pretty big number, so you want to make sure you get it right.

- Development phase: How long until the first calf is on the ground, and what will it cost? Should we pay more upfront for an animal that will produce faster?

- Rebreeding potential: Sometimes, we grossly underestimate the culling percentages of purchased cattle. Within three years, 50% will be gone. You need to be able to cull them to make the upfront cost work. If they can't make that run, their cost must be covered by the remaining cattle.

- Market flexibility: If the weather turns against you, how easy will it be to get rid of them at the price needed? For instance, if you buy large heifers and the market or weather turns, you

can sell them as feeder cattle. Or you can sell them to someone else as breeding females.

Gill said some other factors ranchers should consider are genetic potential, longevity, dystocia, weaning weight, nutritional requirements and cull rate.

## Compare the different variables

Timing to get a calf on the ground is everything in this rebuilding phase, Gill said.

Retaining herd heifers may mean their first calf won't drop until the market starts to change, he said. So, buying a higher-priced female that will have a calf before that might be better. However, that's where those risk factors must be weighed to avoid losses in the long run.

"If you look at it from a purely economic standpoint, you might look at

selling your heifers and buying a female to run during this period that will sell calves for you," Gill said. "Then you can purchase lightweight heifers and be ready to breed."

There's also the choice of buying bred heifers. There's a higher cost involved in that, but they can put a calf on the ground sooner.

"You need to be considering at least a three-year period, and you need to raise heifers you have the most confidence in," Gill said. "That development phase, the cost to grow them and being able to participate in this high market might be where you want to rethink some things. But also, if you chase some fad or opportunity, you can mess up your whole system. So, if you have a good system, don't necessarily go chase rabbits." — **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension**



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# UT suit to take control of 18.5M acres of federal lands

Utah is suing the federal government over how it manages public land in the state, again. But unlike past legal challenges, which target specific national monuments or policies, the scope of the lawsuit filed with the U.S. Supreme Court on Aug. 20 is massive, questioning whether the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) claim to 18.5 million acres of land—about 34% of the entire state—is legitimate.

State politicians call it “historic.” Environmental and public land advocacy groups say it’s a “land grab.” Regardless, the lawsuit has the potential to upend how the BLM operates in Utah and possibly the western U.S.

The lawsuit targets “unappropriated” public land. That doesn’t include Utah’s five national parks, or any of the state’s national monuments, national forests, or recreation or wilderness areas, which represent about half of the federal public land in the state.

The other half, which is about 34% of the entire state, according to officials, is unap-

propriated land “that the U.S. government is simply holding on to, without properly reserving it for any designated purpose,” said Attorney General Sean Reyes.

That deprives Utah of its sovereignty, Reyes said, by holding land regardless of how it impacts residents or state business.

“Utah cannot manage, police or care for more than two-thirds of its own territory because it’s controlled by people who don’t live in Utah, who aren’t elected by Utah citizens and not responsive to our local needs,” Reyes said.

That means the state can’t impose taxes on that land or impose eminent domain to build “critical infrastructure” like public roads or communication systems, Reyes said. Nor can the state exercise legislative authority over how to use the land.

The 90-plus page complaint asks the U.S. Supreme Court whether it’s constitutional for the federal government to hold unappropriated land in the state indefinitely.

“This is a question we and many western states have had for decades,” Utah Gov. Spencer Cox said, speaking to a room packed full of lawmakers, bureaucrats, county-level politicians and reporters. Reyes, as well as Senate President Stuart Adams (R-Layton) and House Speaker Mike Schultz (R-Hooper) also spoke.

There are only a handful of entities allowed to petition directly to the U.S. Supreme Court, including states that have a dispute with the federal government. Even though it could be a more streamlined process than filing with a lower court, the process could still take years. And that’s assuming the high court agrees to hear the case.

If the Supreme Court declines to take up the case, Cox said the state will go back and file a complaint with a federal district court.

Whether it’s the Supreme Court or a lower district, the legal challenge will cost taxpayers money. The legislature appropriated about \$20 million to fight the legal challenge,

Reyes said, though he believes it won’t cost nearly that much.

“What we’ve spent currently or plan to spend is, I don’t have an exact number, but it’s a fraction,” Reyes said, telling reporters the state will save money by filing the lawsuit with the Supreme Court because it won’t have to litigate in federal district courts.

In an email, University of Utah law professor John Ruple agreed with some of the governor’s sentiment, telling Utah News Dispatch there is room for improvement when it comes to how federal land is managed.

“However, the U.S. Constitution is clear that Congress, not the individual states, makes decisions about our federal public lands,” said Ruple, a research professor of law at the university’s S.J. Quinney College of Law, and director of the Wallace Stegner Center for Land, Resources and the Environment’s Law and Policy Program.

To rule in Utah’s favor, Ruple said the Supreme Court would have to reinterpret longstanding

constitutional provisions, upsetting “150 years of settled Supreme Court law and destabilizing land ownership throughout the West.”

“That’s a big lift. I can’t help but wonder whether a less adversarial approach would have been more effective,” he said.

## What if Utah wins?

If Utah’s lawsuit is successful, setting forth a process where 18.5 million acres is placed under state control, it would unravel the current, decades-old structure of federal land management.

But it’s something state officials have anticipated for years, passing a bill in 2017 that creates the prospective Utah Department of Land Management, which would essentially become Utah’s version of the BLM.

Much of that unappropriated land is offered up as parcels for grazing, oil and gas production, mining or recreation—those leases would instead be managed by the Department of Land Management.

Redge Johnson, director of the state’s Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office, said Utah would honor all existing leases, but instead of the BLM, lease holders would meet with state employees. Johnson, acknowledging that it’s very much still a hypothetical scenario, said the state would likely hire many BLM employees.

“They’re great people, we have a lot of good people at the local level that we work with. It’s the decisions that come out of (Washington) D.C. that we find problematic,” he said.

Other federal entities, like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which doesn’t necessarily own unappropriated land but does work on it, would likely be able to operate as it did previously.

The state has long had grievances with the federal government’s hold on land. It has filed

lawsuits looking to repeal the Biden administration’s re-designation of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments, a travel plan in Grand County that closed a number of rugged dirt roads near wilderness areas, and a recent rule allowing parcels of BLM land to be leased for conservation.

Those policies were all cited as examples of federal overreach.

“For the entire time that we’ve existed as a state, Utah’s public lands have been a treasured heritage for all of us. For many years, decades even, the question of how to best manage Utah’s lands has been at the forefront of our state’s critical issues,” Cox said. “The crazy thing is that all this time, we have not had control of nearly 70% of our land. I want you to think about that for just a second. Utah does not have the ability to manage over two thirds of our state.”

A number of environmental groups responded to the announcement, calling Utah’s lawsuit an attempted land grab and accusing the state of wasting taxpayer money, while threatening some of the state’s most iconic landscapes.

The Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, a litigious nonprofit that has previously intervened in several lawsuits in opposition to Utah, called the announcement another example of Utah being “the most anti-public lands state in the country.”

The Center For Western Priorities, a public lands advocacy group, said Utah’s legal argument was likely to fail, telling Utah News Dispatch it “isn’t worth the paper it’s printed on.”

And the Wilderness Society said the lawsuit was another example of Utah trying to undermine federal land management, pointing to the state’s other lawsuits. — **Kyle Dunphy, Utah News Dispatch**



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## Heifer retention not likely until 2025 or later

### COBANK (from page 1)

pandemic years, cow-calf operators can begin replenishing their winter feed supply once they recover from the financial strain of high hay costs in recent years. However, Prins said hay prices remain significantly higher than during the last herd rebuilding cycle from 2014-19.

While forage conditions and prices have improved, Prins said there is a \$300 upside for producers to sell calves rather than raise them.

“Right now, it’s not worth the risk to hold onto the heifers as the potential upside of selling the calf has immediate pay off,” Prins wrote.

Prins cited that the 2024 average prices for 550-pound Kansas heifers was \$276/cwt. Steers fetched \$314/cwt, according to the Livestock Marketing Information Center and USDA. A weaned calf priced at \$294/cwt at 550 lbs. could sell for \$1,617 to be finished at a feedlot.

On the flip side, according to the Kansas State University Beef Cow-Calf Budget, raising

that heifer for one year could cost \$1,315, or over \$2,600, before she has her first calf. Average bred heifer prices range from \$1,500-2,600 per head in states like Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Texas.

CoBank said that even if ranchers began retaining heifers this year, the heifer could not have her first calf until 2026. Heifer retention may not begin in earnest until 2025 or later.

Meanwhile, fewer cattle entering processing plants will keep beef and cattle prices elevated for cow-calf and feedlot owners while packer margins tighten. By July 2024, beef packers were losing nearly \$100 per head, according to the Sterling Beef Profit Tracker. This trend can’t continue indefinitely, as even with rising cattle prices, the supply of animals for sale is limited.

“Once the herd does start rebuilding, a drastic change in beef cow numbers is unlikely as the growth could look more like a slight bump in cow inventory,” Prins wrote. — **Charles Wallace, WLJ contributing editor**

# Yellowstone plan sets the stage for bison expansion in MT

A highly anticipated update to how Yellowstone National Park manages bison is setting the stage to expand the animal's range in Montana, Tribes and conservationists say.

After years of work, Yellowstone released its new bison management plan this summer. More than 27,000 people commented on the document, which calls for more bison compared to the previous plan from 24 years ago. It also incorporates management changes that have been put into effect over the past two decades, including a surge in bison hunting near park boundaries and a new program to transfer live, disease-free bison to tribal nations.

"We have come a very long way since the last bison management plan was signed in 2000," Yellowstone Superintendent Cam Sholly said in a release. "This new plan solidifies much of the progress made over the past two decades and provides a foundation for future decision making."

The plan, written as an environmental impact statement, has raised questions about what an increased herd size in the national park means for management outside the park.

Yellowstone analyzed three alternatives in developing the new plan and chose to use existing hunting and transfer efforts to manage for a herd size of 3,500 to 6,000 bison. The population has averaged about 5,200 for the past decade.

Tom McDonald, vice chairman of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai (CSKT) Tribes of the Flathead Reservation, called the new plan a step toward restoring buffalo on the larger landscape.

Expanding where Yellowstone bison can go would help make tribal and state hunting safer, McDonald told Montana Free Press (MTFP). Most hunting occurs outside the park's north entrance, in Beattie Gulch, where bison are shot as they leave the park in winter searching for food.

Each year, CSKT members receive between 100 and 400 hunting tags to harvest buffalo outside the park. More than 1,000 tags are distributed across all Tribes that hold treaty rights to hunt buffalo, and that number has grown over the decades.

McDonald said safety concerns necessitate seasoned

hunters. Last year, a Nez Perce hunter was grazed by a stray bullet that ricocheted across the narrow gulch. Some groups have organized to stop the hunting, pointing to dangers for humans and high bison mortality in years that feature large migrations.

"As more people crowd the landscape, we do get hunters that just don't want to go. They just don't want to risk the headache of too many folks there," McDonald said. "Which also points to the fact that we need to have more buffalo all over the landscape and be able to provide that, because the demand is there."

Josh Hemenway, wildlife program manager for Custer Gallatin National Forest, said U.S. Forest Service officials are supportive of having bison present in the forest year-round.

Currently, bison are allowed in tolerance zones outside northern and western Yellowstone. But allowing bison to disperse beyond those zones could help improve hunter safety in the "bottleneck" of Beattie Gulch, Hemenway said in an interview.

That hasn't happened yet, but the 2022 Custer Gallatin Forest Plan outlined bison grazing as a future management goal. The new Yellowstone plan supports that vision, Hemenway said.

Hemenway said a combination of factors is limiting bison distribution currently. Balancing tribal treaty hunts with state regulations aimed at containing brucellosis creates "a complex challenge to try and sift through," he said.

Yellowstone Bison have historically been confined to the park due to concern that they can spread brucellosis to cattle. But as the new plan notes, updated research found has found that elk—whose movement in and out of the park is not restricted—have transmitted brucellosis to cattle more than two dozen times since 2000, while there has not been a single recorded case of bison-to-cattle transmission of the disease.

"I think that there's a lot of interest in getting bison distributed out further," Hemenway said. "But everyone has their own concerns, intentions and ideas on how to make that happen. It just hasn't quite lined up yet."

Some preparation is already happening. Compared to 30 years ago, there are far fewer cattle grazing allot-

ments in the forest that could conflict with bison, Hemenway said. Many allotments closed because of conflicts with grizzly bears, and the Forest Service has removed miles of fencing that could restrict migratory bison.

Future actions could remove more fencing and ensure that grasslands remain suitable habitat by addressing conifer encroachment and treating weeds, Hemenway said. Down the line, the agency would work to separate grazing livestock and bison both spatially and temporally. For example, bison could graze national forestland in winter while cattle are on lower-elevation private land.

Other groups are working beyond the public lands surrounding Yellowstone to return bison to Tribes.

Chamois Andersen, a senior field representative with nonprofit Defenders of Wildlife, said she's thrilled the plan "explicitly describes the

transfer program as being instrumental to Yellowstone's ability to manage within that population range."

That opens the door to future private and government grant dollars to improve quarantine facilities and infrastructure for tribal herds, Andersen said. Along with the Greater Yellowstone Coalition and Yellowstone Forever, Defenders of Wildlife raised more than \$500,000 to start the Bison Conservation Transfer Program.

Since 2019, the program has transferred more than 400 disease-free bison to 26 Tribes across the country. Bison are first quarantined in Yellowstone, then sent to the Fort Peck Reservation for assurance testing. From there, the animals are transferred to other Tribes through the Intertribal Buffalo Council.

Robbie Magnan, who runs the Fort Peck buffalo program, said expanding the transfer program would al-

low him to meet the high demand for buffalo.

When Tribes maintain their own herds, they can harvest buffalo year-round rather than having to go to Yellowstone in the winter to hunt. That's significant because many ceremonies centered around buffalo take place in the summer, Magnan said. There's also a year-round demand for meat to support programs on the reservation.

Magnan said there is more demand for Yellowstone buffalo nationwide than supply. That's true for Fort Peck, too—last year, nearly 500 people applied for the 50 buffalo hunting tags available on the reservation.

Alongside the praise, Yellowstone's management of bison has also faced criticism.

Jared Pettinato, an attorney who filed litigation in 2019 to push the National Park Service to update the old plan, called the new approach

"disappointing."

By continuing to limit their population growth and range, the National Park Service and the Forest Service are not managing bison as wildlife and instead caving to the livestock industry and the state of Montana, he said.

"They had a once-in-a-generation opportunity to do something good for bison, for the Tribes and for the American people, and they backed down in the face of Montana saying we don't want to do that," Pettinato said.

However, the Gianforte administration said the park service excluded state agencies from decision-making regarding the new plan and called it "yet another insult to the state of Montana."

Gianforte has previously threatened to sue over any plan that allows for a herd size over 3,000. A spokesperson for the governor told MTFP in mid-August the state was reviewing its options. — **Isabel Hicks, MTFP**



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## YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

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

**Sept. 20** – Applications are now being accepted for the annual National Cattlemen's Foundation W.D. Farr Scholarship program. Two \$15,000 grants are awarded to graduate students. Details: [www.nationalcattlemensfoundation.org](http://www.nationalcattlemensfoundation.org).

**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/2pnm2w3tx](http://tinyurl.com/2pnm2w3tx).

**Oct. 1** – Internship and scholarship applications for the California Cattlemen's Association are now open. Any young, regular or feeder member is eligible to apply for the scholarship and internship. Details: [calcattlemen.org/scholarship](http://calcattlemen.org/scholarship).

**Oct. 15** – The New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association, in partnership with Purina Mills and Depot Farm and Ranch Agency, announced fall scholarship applications are open. Details: [www.nmagriculture.org](http://www.nmagriculture.org).

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# Rio Grande Valley agriculture faces water uncertainty

Recent rains in South Texas helped agricultural production in the short term but did little to address the long-term outlook for irrigation water supplies in a region critical to the U.S. food supply.

“Having some rain locally has been helpful, but it would have been better if it had rained on both sides of the border to help fill the reservoirs,” said Luis Ribera, Ph.D., Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service economist and director of the Center for North American Studies (CNAS) in the Department of Agricultural Economics.

The Rio Grande Valley, which produces a wide range of crops, relies on water released from Lake Amistad near Del Rio and Falcon Lake south of Laredo, but reservoir capacities have been declining.

Ribera said currently Falcon Reservoir and Lake Amistad, which are below 13.5% and about 25% capacity, respectively, did not benefit much from rains brought by either Tropical Storm Alberto or Hurricane Beryl.

Another major impediment to agricultural production in the region has been the hesitancy of Mexican authorities to deliver on the amount of water owed by a 1944 treaty.

“At this time, Mexico still owes about 900,000-plus acre-feet of water as required by this 80-year-old treaty,” he said. “We have had irrigation water shortages in the region since the 1990s, and this has been exacerbated by Mexico undersupplying the average minimum annual amount of water into the Rio Grande as required by this treaty.”

## Agriculture’s economic impact

A report from CNAS earlier this year estimated that the economic impact of the complete lack of irrigation water for crop production in the Lower Rio Grande Valley in 2024 would be about \$495.8 million in direct revenue loss. It also showed a complete lack of irrigated crop production in 2024 would mean an estimated total loss in economic output of \$993.2 million as well as lead to a \$554.8 million loss in value-added contributions to the state’s gross domestic product.

“We did this report at the request of agricultural producers in the Lower Rio Grande Valley who wanted to make people aware of the dire situation they are facing now and the uncertainty of future agricultural production in the region due to a lack of stability in acquiring sufficient irrigation water,” Ribera said.

The crops in the Rio Grande Valley mostly affected by irrigation water shortages are row crops, mainly sorghum, cotton and corn, and specialty crops, which are primarily vegetables, citrus fruits and sugarcane. Row crops can be grown in either irrigated or dryland production systems; however, specialty crops can only be grown under irrigation.

Dante Galeazzi, president and CEO of Texas International Produce Association, said while agricultural producers in South Texas considered the recent rains a blessing, the situation for most vegetable and fruit growers has been lackluster so far. Galeazzi said the lack

of water—rain or irrigation—earlier in the year made it necessary for many corn producers to plow under dried-out fields. It also led to smaller-than-average produce from both vegetable and fruit crops.

“This lack of certainty about irrigation water also had an impact on the crop mix, with fewer acres being devoted to more water-intensive but high-value crops like celery, broccoli and cauliflower,” he said. “Producers have devoted more acres to crops like cabbage and onions because they may not require as much irrigation during the time they are in the ground.”

Dale Murden, president of Texas Citrus Mutual based in Harlingen, said continued uncertainty about irrigation water availability will also negatively impact the region’s specialty crop and citrus production. Many Rio Grande Valley producers are still replacing citrus damaged by Winter Storm Uri in 2021. But the questions around irrigation availability are putting future plantings in doubt.

“This and the unreliability

of Mexico to deliver on its water commitments makes it difficult to impossible to plan ahead for further plantings,” Murden said.

Russon Holbrook vice president of South Texas Organics, a certified organic grower of grapefruit, oranges and onions, said the operation intends to plant 5,000 citrus trees this year and another 5,000 next year. He is concerned over water availability, particularly for next year’s plantings.

“With the spring rains and good cloud cover to reduce temperatures, we’re in better shape than last year for our citrus,” Holbrook said. “But some water districts in the valley only have one remaining allocation, and we will need irrigation water for when we plant onions later this year. While we have been fortunate so far this year, we can’t say there will be sufficient irrigation water for later this year or in 2025. The lack of irrigation water is a consistent problem here.”

## Addressing the irrigation water issue

Ruben Saldana, Ed.D., district administrator for AgriLife Extension’s District 12 based at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Weslaco, said the drought situation and lack of irrigation water in South Texas has already led to the closure of the last sugar mill in Texas.

Additionally, many cities in the Rio Grande Valley

have remained under water restrictions even after the recent rains.

Saldana said Mexico, especially the state of Chihuahua, has expanded its reservoirs and dams to the point it now can provide sufficient water to meet its commitments, including for agricultural production and to allow any excesses to flow into Falcon and Amistad reservoirs.

He said both federal lawmakers and the U.S. Department of State have been engaged in efforts to compel Mexico to meet the requirements of the 1944 treaty.

Recently, the fiscal year 2025 Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs appropriations bill, which contains language about withholding funds from Mexico until it comes into treaty compliance, was passed in the U.S. House. Additionally, a new “minute order” from the International Boundary and Water Commission is seeking to assure that Mexico meets its delivery obligations in a five-year cycle.

“This is a complicated situation, but the longer it drags out, the worse things will be for the farmers and ranchers of the Rio Grande Valley and throughout South Texas,” Saldana said. “The sooner this can be resolved, the better the chances of our region’s agricultural producers being able to plan for the future so their operations can survive.” — **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension**

## Management’s impact on cattle’s carbon footprint

It is possible that farm and ranch operations may someday pay attention to the price of carbon in the same way they track market reports of commodities and input costs. At present we do not because the price of carbon is low.

That being said, in voluntary carbon markets, where buyers can choose to pay people to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, agriculture producers can earn money by participating. Even with currently low prices for carbon, the reality is that operations are playing a role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

How? Production practices such as no-till or reduced tillage, climate friendly grazing practices—such as rotational grazing or adaptive multi-paddock grazing (AMP)—as well as breeding programs utilizing cows with less mature size, are examples of effectively lowering the carbon footprint of beef production.

From 2011-18, researchers at Michigan State University utilized AMP while examining the weaning weight of calves relative to the mature weight of cows and determined:

- Cows of smaller mature weight were more efficient.

At equal body condition scores, smaller cows weaned off a higher percentage of their mature body weight.

- Smaller cows (closer to 950 pounds mature weight) had a higher net present value than larger cows (closer to 1450 lbs. mature weight).

- The smaller, more biologically efficient cows were responsible for producing less methane per unit of land.

They concluded that AMP led to grazing forages in the green, vegetative state and low in lignin, resulting in higher energy diets for the cattle, increased digestibility and reduced enteric methane production, all of which worked together to increase soil carbon sequestration.

Management does play a role in the carbon footprint of beef production. There is still much to “sort out” in terms of carbon markets for land stewards and beef producers. Long-term, the metrics, management and monitoring of pasture and rangeland soil health has the potential to add an additional revenue stream to cow-calf producer’s earnings. — **Mark Z. Johnson, Oklahoma State University Extension beef cattle breeding specialist**



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## STORY SHORTS

### USFS to increase use of prescribed fire

The U.S. is facing an increasingly intense wildfire season and to combat the threat, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) plans to expand its use of prescribed fires, targeting 21 priority areas across the country. The USFS aims to treat an additional 20 million acres within the National Forest System over the next decade, alongside up to 30 million acres of federal, state, Tribal and private lands. While the agency conducts about 4,500 prescribed fires annually, a small percentage escape control, leading to significant damage. In April 2022, two escaped prescribed fires in New Mexico merged into the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire, the state's largest and most destructive wildfire. In response, USFS reviewed its prescribed fire program and introduced reforms to enhance safety, including updating plans to reflect current forest conditions.

### FSIS to start H5N1 beef sampling

Starting Sept. 16, USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) will begin monitoring dairy cows for H5N1 influenza A at slaughter. This will be done through the existing National Residue Program, with H5N1 sampling added to muscle samples already collected from dairy cow carcasses. FSIS lab personnel will perform polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing, and carcasses will be held pending residue results. No additional holding time will be required. If H5N1 is detected, the USDA will collaborate with the industry to prevent carcasses from entering the food supply.

### CPW confirms birth of three wolf pups

After months of speculation, a new video confirms that at least three wolf pups were born to the Copper Creek Pack in Grand County, CO. Captured by Mike Usalavage and shared by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), the footage shows three healthy pups born to a reintroduced male and female last year. "We received this video and our wolf biologists have reviewed and confirmed the validity of the video," CPW said on social media. According to local news outlet 9News, CPW spokesperson Rachael Gonzales noted that the minimum number of pups is considered to be three, though more could exist. Typically, wolf litters consist of four to six pups. "We encourage anyone who believes they have seen a wolf to complete the Wolf Sighting Form," CPW wrote. "This information will help our biologists monitor wolves and their movement in Colorado."

### Lower Basin states in Level 1 status

The Bureau of Reclamation's (BOR) August 2024 24-Month Study of the Colorado River Basin reveals that the Lower Basin states of Arizona, Nevada and Mexico will continue to face reduced water allocations from the Colorado River in 2025. Lake Powell will operate under a Mid-Elevation Release Tier, while Lake Mead will remain in a Level 1 Shortage Condition, requiring Arizona and Nevada to contribute water savings under the Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan. Level 1 restrictions were first imposed on Lake Mead in 2021, cutting water allocations for Arizona by 18%, Nevada by 7% and Mexico by 5%. BOR noted that although the Colorado River System remains at low reservoir storage, with Lake Powell and Lake Mead at a combined 37% capacity, infrastructure improvements and system conservation efforts have helped stabilize the river system in the short term and bolster water security in the West.

### Minerva approved for plant purchase

Minerva S.A. received approval from the Brazilian Administrative Council for Economic Defense for an asset deal with Mafrig Global Foods S.A. Announced in August 2023, the agreement involves Minerva purchasing several cattle and lamb slaughter units from Marfrig in Argentina, Brazil and Chile for \$1.5 billion. Marfrig also reported a net profit of 75.4 million reais (\$13.78 million) in the second quarter, driven by strong operational improvements. The company's net revenue for the quarter rose 16.5% year over year to 34.7 billion reais (\$3.4 billion).

### Beyond reports Q2 revenue drop

Beyond Meat Inc. reported an 8.8% decline in net revenues to \$93.2 million in the second quarter of 2024, down from \$102.1 million in the same period last year. This drop was primarily due to a 14% decrease in product volume, partially offset by a 6.1% rise in net revenue per pound driven by reduced trade discounts, price increases and changes in product sales mix. U.S. retail channel net revenues fell by 7.5%, reflecting weak category demand. Despite the revenue decline, gross profit improved to \$13.7 million, supported by lower costs of goods sold and higher net revenue per pound. "We are pleased to report a strong quarter of progress against our 2024 plan, a pivotal year on our path to sustainable operations and profitability," said Beyond Meat President and CEO Ethan Brown.

# Shippers lose STB rate review option

Grain elevators and others with smaller shipping volumes likely won't get a more streamlined process to settle rate differences with railroads after a federal appeals court ruling.

The 8th Circuit Court of Appeals on Aug. 20 ruled the Surface Transportation Board (STB) overstepped its authority by trying to streamline rate dispute settlements between railroads and shippers.

The ruling favors the nation's largest railroads, which sued over the new rate rules. The ruling will limit the ability of shippers to challenge railroad freight rates in situations involving smaller shipping volumes.

Major agricultural groups and other industries that rely on railroads to move commodities lost their arguments defending the STB rule. The National Grain and Feed Association (NGFA), The Fertilizer Institute, the Corn Refiners Association, the American Chemistry Council and the National Industrial Transportation League all intervened in the case to support the STB's Final Offer Rate Review (FORR), which was finalized at the end of 2022.

Union Pacific Railroad filed the lawsuit, along with the American Association of Railroads, which lobbies

for the major railroad companies.

The three-judge panel in the 8th Circuit ruling cited the Supreme Court's Loper Bright decision in June as well as the Administrative Procedures Act to rule Congress did not grant the STB the right to streamline the way railroads and shippers settle disputes over shipping rates. The appeals court also stated the new rate review process requires the STB to choose either the rates proposed by the railroad or the shipper without the board conducting an analysis of its own.

Federal statutes require railroads to establish reasonable rates when they do not have effective competition. But shippers also have long complained about the length of the process, the "three benchmark test" and the extensive procedural costs that can outweigh what could be gained if the STB agrees and lowers the railroad rates.

The American Chemistry Council and The Fertilizer Institute in a joint brief made the case that the STB needs a way to review shipping rates for small cases, an issue the board has sought to address for 40 years. To provide "meaningful access" to rate reviews for small cases, the board adopted a new meth-

od, the FORR.

The chemistry and fertilizer groups stated FORR provides accessibility advantages which increases access for shippers with small cases. The two groups cited that the FORR process reduces non-litigation expenses that discourage shippers from bringing small rate cases.

"Specifically, the expense that shippers incur from paying the challenged rate, instead of an alternative contract rate, discourages claims," the fertilizer and chemistry associations stated in their brief. They added, "Consequently, while the case is pending, the shipper must pay a premium under the challenged rate or not ship at all and thus lose business due to the high costs."

NGFA also filed a motion to intervene in the case but did not file a brief. The association stated it is disappointed by the court's ruling. "NGFA appreciates the STB's efforts to streamline the rail rate dispute process. We strongly encourage the Board to revisit the rule and continue to find an avenue for agricultural shippers to challenge rail rates in a timely and cost-effective manner."

Supporting the railroads with an amicus brief was the Washington Legal

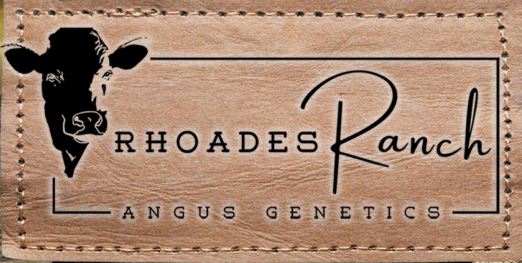
Foundation (WLF), which celebrated the ruling. The group stated the ruling limits the STB's authority by requiring railroads to arbitrate rate disputes.

"The 8th Circuit's decision correctly holds that the Surface Transportation Board lacked statutory authority to promulgate the Final Rule," said John Masslon, WLF's senior litigation counsel.

CSX and the U.S. subsidiaries of the Canadian National Railway (Grand Trunk Corporation and Illinois Central Railroad Company) also filed similar lawsuits against the STB in the 11th and 7th Circuit Courts of Appeal.

Just recently, Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), called on the STB to review exemptions on certain products that prevent shippers from seeking recourse at the STB. Those include products such as paper, forest products, manufactured goods and food products. Baldwin said businesses and farmers rely on fewer rail carriers and are seeing rates affected. Revoking the exemptions would allow shippers of those goods to "begin to address unreliable rail service and the high rail shipping costs."

— Chris Clayton, DTN ag policy editor




*Annual Production Sale*

# SEPTEMBER 9

# 2024

10:00 AM  
Horse  
Demos

2:00 PM  
Sale  
Starts



**Rhoades Swarovski 3007**  
*He sells!*



**Clyde** *He sells!*

**SELLING THESE ELITE HEIFERS**

**Rhoades Lady 453-3029** \$M 101, \$B 245, \$C 419

**Rhoades Lady 453-3013** \$M 78, \$B 238, \$C 387

**Rhoades Greater Lady 3025** \$M 77, \$B 210, \$C 349

**Rhoades Isabel 3040** \$M 84, \$B 199, \$C 342

**Rhoades Sunrise 3050** \$M 61, \$B 209, \$C 332

**110 Spring and Fall Born Angus Bulls**  
**DEVELOPED IN STEEP COUNTRY**

**20 Commercial October Calving Heifers**  
**BRED TO RHOADES RANCH BULLS**

**5 Elite Registered Angus Females**

**7 Performance Ranch Horses**



Each bull purchased and taken home the day of or day after the sale is entered to win a

## BRAND NEW

## HONDA RANCHER 4X4

**Justin Rhoades (805) 440-5664**  
PO Box 384, Cambria, CA 93428



Matthew 6/19/21

Chris Earl (630) 675-6599

Wes Tiemann (816) 244-4462

Kody Fleeman (573) 881-0117

Amanda Radke (605) 999-4300

MARKET NEWS

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

| MARKET AT A GLANCE                                                                                                                            | This Week: 8/22/2024 | Week Ago | Year Ago |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| Choice Fed Steers                                                                                                                             | 184.84               | ▼        | 187.63   |
| CME Feeder Index                                                                                                                              | 242.67               | ▼        | 246.34   |
| Boxed Beef Average                                                                                                                            | 315.99               | ▼        | 316.94   |
| Average Dressed Steers                                                                                                                        | 293.98               | ▼        | 297.82   |
| Live Slaughter Weight*                                                                                                                        | 1,383                | ▲        | 1,382    |
| Weekly Slaughter**                                                                                                                            | 602,000              | ▲        | 591,000  |
| Weekly Beef Production***                                                                                                                     | 506.9                | ▲        | 496.9    |
| Hide/Offal Value                                                                                                                              | 11.24                | ▼        | 11.28    |
| Corn Price                                                                                                                                    | 3.75                 | ▼        | 3.81     |
| *Average weight for previous week. **Total slaughter for previous week. ***Estimated year-to-date figure in million pounds for previous week. |                      |          |          |

| BEEF REPORT: Weekly Composite Boxed Beef |                           |        |                   |        |                     |        |                    |        |                    |        |                      |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------|-------------------|--------|---------------------|--------|--------------------|--------|--------------------|--------|----------------------|
| WEEK ENDING                              | COMPREHENSIVE Loads/Price |        | PRIME Loads/Price |        | BRANDED Loads/Price |        | CHOICE Loads/Price |        | SELECT Loads/Price |        | UNGRADED Loads/Price |
| August 16                                | 7,005                     | 315.34 | 199               | 351.11 | 1,251               | 320.39 | 2,044              | 314.01 | 756                | 300.14 | 2,755                |
| August 9                                 | 7,338                     | 314.44 | 255               | 349.22 | 1,331               | 320.92 | 2,117              | 312.81 | 653                | 298.21 | 2,982                |
| August 2                                 | 6,641                     | 314.40 | 217               | 346.74 | 1,232               | 320.87 | 2,057              | 314.77 | 779                | 299.19 | 2,357                |
| July 26                                  | 7,505                     | 315.37 | 259               | 347.39 | 1,427               | 322.17 | 2,214              | 314.67 | 878                | 298.23 | 2,727                |
| Cutouts                                  |                           |        |                   |        |                     |        |                    |        |                    |        |                      |
| DATE                                     | CHOICE                    |        | SELECT            |        | COW BEEF CUTOUT     |        | 50% LEAN           |        | 90% LEAN           |        |                      |
| August 22                                | 315.99                    |        | 302.03            |        | 292.92              |        | 169.17             |        | N/A                |        |                      |
| August 21                                | 315.21                    |        | 301.08            |        | 295.17              |        | 160.11             |        | 376.80             |        |                      |
| August 20                                | 315.08                    |        | 301.04            |        | 296.16              |        | 160.59             |        | 378.19             |        |                      |
| August 19                                | 315.55                    |        | 302.01            |        | 293.72              |        | 181.61             |        | 374.37             |        |                      |
| August 16                                | 317.45                    |        | 302.59            |        | 294.34              |        | 174.38             |        | 375.49             |        |                      |

| CATTLE FUTURES: CME Live Cattle |       |       |       |       |       |             |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
|                                 | 8/16  | 8/19  | 8/20  | 8/21  | 8/22  | High* Low*  |
| Aug.                            | 18280 | 18280 | 18103 | 18123 | 18103 | 19633 15310 |
| Oct.                            | 17830 | 17903 | 17560 | 17575 | 17683 | 19975 16853 |
| Dec.                            | 17813 | 17838 | 17510 | 17530 | 17658 | 18878 16668 |
| Feb.                            | 17913 | 17933 | 17593 | 17618 | 17760 | 19000 17005 |

| CATTLE FUTURES: CME Feeder Cattle |       |       |       |       |       |             |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
|                                   | 8/16  | 8/19  | 8/20  | 8/21  | 8/22  | High* Low*  |
| Aug.                              | 24278 | 24238 | 23820 | 24000 | 24328 | 26390 21608 |
| Sep.                              | 23950 | 23928 | 23450 | 23623 | 23963 | 26460 21920 |
| Oct.                              | 23595 | 23588 | 23133 | 23225 | 23558 | 27095 22268 |
| Nov.                              | 23468 | 23433 | 22985 | 23068 | 23313 | 26625 23793 |

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

| FED CATTLE TRADE         | Head Count | Avg. Weight | Avg. Price |
|--------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| WEEKLY WEIGHTED AVERAGES |            |             |            |
| Live FOB Steer           | 15,170     | 1,469       | 185.84     |
| Live FOB Heifer          | 3,972      | 1,932       | 184.49     |
| Dressed Del Steer        | 9,124      | 969         | 293.98     |
| Dressed Del Heifer       | 1,687      | 877         | 293.87     |
| SAME PERIOD LAST WEEK    |            |             |            |
| Live FOB Steer           | 643        | 1,503       | 187.63     |
| Live FOB Heifer          | 192        | 1,361       | 185.44     |
| Dressed Del Steer        | 1,098      | 1,021       | 297.82     |
| Dressed Del Heifer       | 25         | 880         | 298.00     |
| SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR    |            |             |            |
| Live FOB Steer           | 2,754      | 1,469       | 185.75     |
| Live FOB Heifer          | 250        | 1,278       | 186.28     |
| Dressed Del Steer        | 771        | 936         | 292.00     |
| Dressed Del Heifer       | 80         | 823         | 289.50     |

| NATIONAL WEEKLY FED BEEF SLAUGHTER VOLUME: AUGUST 18, 2024 |          |          |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|
|                                                            | Domestic | Imported |
| Forward Contract                                           | 19,747   | 2,711    |
| Formula                                                    | 278,442  | 3,220    |
| Negotiated Cash                                            | 76,680   | 156      |
| Negotiated Grid                                            | 45,798   | 1,543    |
| Packer Owned                                               | 10,162   | N/A      |
| Total                                                      | 430,829  | 7,630    |

| SLAUGHTER FORWARD CONTRACTS |         | FORWARD BEEF SALES     |       |
|-----------------------------|---------|------------------------|-------|
| Delivery Month              |         | Neg. Sales 0-21 days   | 1,889 |
| Aug. '24                    | 94,351  | Neg. Sales 21+ days    | 1,157 |
| Sep. '24                    | 106,057 | Formula sales          | 3,869 |
| Oct. '24                    | 111,549 | Forward contract sales | 90    |
| Nov. '24                    | 159,352 | Domestic sales         | 6,023 |
| Dec. '24                    | 117,097 | NAFTA Exports          | 129   |

| 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     |  | 185.50 +0.03        |
| Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs    |  | 186.59 +0.38        |
| Ontario Auctions                                                |  |                     |
| Slaughter Steers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1300-1500 lbs     |  | 184.36 +2.92        |
| Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs    |  | 182.96 +3.00        |
| Slaughter Cows, Cutter and Utility 1-3, 1100-1400 lbs           |  | 129.99 +0.08        |
| *Price comparison from one week ago.                            |  |                     |

| Average feeder cattle prices (CND) for week ending Friday, August 21, 2024 |         |              |         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------------|---------|
| Steers:                                                                    | Alberta | Saskatchewan | Ontario |
| 501-600 lbs                                                                | 317.08  | N/A          | 334.53  |
| 601-700 lbs                                                                | N/A     | N/A          | 317.50  |
| 701-800 lbs                                                                | 280.06  | N/A          | 286.40  |
| 801-900 lbs                                                                | 249.27  | N/A          | 266.40  |
| Heifers:                                                                   |         |              |         |
| 401-500 lbs                                                                | N/A     | N/A          | 288.25  |
| 501-600 lbs                                                                | 282.51  | N/A          | 296.03  |
| 601-700 lbs                                                                | 270.38  | N/A          | 266.84  |
| 701-800 lbs                                                                | 253.40  | N/A          | 248.85  |

| 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 |
|                                                 | 8/12/2024    | 8/5/2024      |                      |                       |
| Feeders                                         | 20,599       | 22,987        | 909,111              | 713,514               |

| USDA WEEKLY IMPORTED FEEDER CATTLE                                                                                                                                              |                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| August 14, 2024                                                                                                                                                                 |                                      |
| Mexico to United States Feeder Cattle Import Summary                                                                                                                            |                                      |
| Receipts EST: 6,300                                                                                                                                                             | Week Ago EST: 3,200                  |
| Year Ago Act: 5,400                                                                                                                                                             |                                      |
| Not enough head sold on the current market to establish trend or quote prices. Supply consisted of mostly previously contracted steers and spayed heifers weighing 300-600 lbs. |                                      |
| Feeder heifers: Medium and large 1&2                                                                                                                                            | Feeder heifers: Medium and large 1&2 |
| 300-400 lbs                                                                                                                                                                     | N/A                                  |
| 400-500 lbs                                                                                                                                                                     | N/A                                  |
| 500-600 lbs                                                                                                                                                                     | N/A                                  |
| Feeder steers: Medium and large 1&2                                                                                                                                             | Feeder steers: Medium and large 1&2  |
| 300-400 lbs                                                                                                                                                                     | N/A                                  |
| 400-500 lbs                                                                                                                                                                     | N/A                                  |
| 500-600 lbs                                                                                                                                                                     | N/A                                  |
| (slide 10 cents on steers and heifers basis 300 lbs. All sales fob port of entry.)                                                                                              |                                      |

| Selected Auctions Week Ending August 22, 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      |           |
| August 16 Blackfoot, ID                       | N/A         |             |                   |                       |                   |                   |                 | 121-137 135-165.50                                                                                                             |                         | NORTHWEST |
| No report available Burley, ID                |             |             |                   |                       |                   |                   |                 |                                                                                                                                |                         |           |
| No report available Emmett, ID                |             |             |                   |                       |                   |                   |                 |                                                                                                                                |                         |           |
| August 17 Eugene, OR                          | 834         | 206-276*    | 230-300* 190-268* | 200-269* 190-230*     | 214-248* 170-221* | 178-223* 160-210* | 150-195*        | 116-141 130-165                                                                                                                | 1,300-3,500 1,150-1,800 |           |
| August 19 Madras, OR                          | 199         |             |                   |                       |                   |                   |                 | 120-145 135-169                                                                                                                |                         |           |
| No report available Vale, OR                  |             |             |                   |                       |                   |                   |                 |                                                                                                                                |                         |           |
| August 19 Davenport, WA                       | 408         | 255 270-285 | 257.50-270 277.50 | 242.50-260 240-247.50 | 110-240 150-230   | 145-250 180-223   | 150-226 120-215 | 87-155 100-169                                                                                                                 |                         |           |
| August 15 Toppenish, WA                       | 1,340       | 285*        |                   | 257.50-260* 238-241*  | 237.50*           |                   | 192.50-199*     | 133-149 164-179                                                                                                                |                         |           |

|                                |       |            |                 |                 |                 |                 |                    |                    |  |         |
|--------------------------------|-------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--|---------|
| August 15 Orland, CA           | 883   |            | 210-280 190-260 | 200-275 180-260 | 200-251 180-234 | 200-235 180-215 | 185-217 170-210    | 130-154 115-168    |  | FARWEST |
| August 21 Escalon, CA          | N/A   |            |                 |                 |                 |                 |                    | 75-117 90-150      |  |         |
| No report available Famoso, CA |       |            |                 |                 |                 |                 |                    |                    |  |         |
| No report available Galt, CA   |       |            |                 |                 |                 |                 |                    |                    |  |         |
| August 20 Turlock, CA          | 1,578 | 270-307.50 | 268-300 252-292 | 265-291 245-269 | 245-286 242-269 | 225-245 225-247 | 210-230.25 195-207 | 119-152 127-165.50 |  |         |
| No report available Salina, UT |       |            |                 |                 |                 |                 |                    |                    |  |         |
|                                |       |            |                 |                 |                 |                 |                    |                    |  |         |

|                                    |       |  |             |                       |                   |                       |                       |                       |                    |  |               |
|------------------------------------|-------|--|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--|---------------|
| August 19 Iowa                     | 4,150 |  | 385 320-375 | 305-350 297-330       | 271-332 265-286   | 275-298.25 248-270    | 252-279.50 238-251    | 246-258.25 223-232.75 | 110-182.50 126-220 |  | NORTH CENTRAL |
| No report available Miles City, MT |       |  |             |                       |                   |                       |                       |                       |                    |  |               |
| August 21 Bassett, NE              | 3,180 |  | 322.50      | 295-325 285.50-303.50 | 268-300 251-278   | 259-264 240-260.50    | 221-256.50 213.50-240 |                       |                    |  |               |
| No report available Ericson, NE    |       |  |             |                       |                   |                       |                       |                       |                    |  |               |
| August 20 Imperial, NE             | 847   |  |             |                       | 271 250           | 264 230.50-237        | 234-245 213-232       |                       |                    |  |               |
| No report available Kearney, NE    |       |  |             |                       |                   |                       |                       |                       |                    |  |               |
| August 16 Lexington, NE            | 2,565 |  |             |                       | 280-286.50 253.50 | 255.50-270.50 239-246 | 227.75-259.50 219-247 |                       |                    |  |               |
| No report available Ogallala, NE   |       |  |             |                       |                   |                       |                       |                       |                    |  | SOUTH CENTRAL |
| No report available Valentine, NE  |       |  |             |                       |                   |                       |                       |                       |                    |  |               |
| August 16 Herreid, SD              | 1,009 |  |             |                       |                   |                       | 238.75-250.75 232-239 |                       |                    |  |               |
| No report available Torrington, WY |       |  |             |                       |                   |                       |                       |                       |                    |  |               |
|                                    |       |  |             |                       |                   |                       |                       |                       |                    |  |               |
|                                    |       |  |             |                       |                   |                       |                       |                       |                    |  |               |
|                                    |       |  |             |                       |                   |                       |                       |                       |                    |  |               |

|                                       |       |                             |                             |                       |                             |                             |                             |                             |                            |                            |               |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| August 16<br>Willcox, AZ              | 731   | 320.50-372.50<br>290.50-325 | 297.50-357.50<br>263.50-305 | 315-341<br>237-273    | 272.50-322.50<br>217.50-248 | 248.50-277.50<br>214.50-225 |                             |                             | 111-142.50<br>130-171      | 2,000-2,500                | SOUTH CENTRAL |
| August 19<br>Colorado                 | 767   |                             | 322.50                      | 295-310               |                             | 280<br>242                  | 231-236                     | 173-235<br>173-232          | 87.50-161.50<br>139-180.50 |                            |               |
| No report available<br>La Junta, CO   |       |                             |                             |                       |                             |                             |                             |                             |                            |                            |               |
| No report available<br>Loma, CO       |       |                             |                             |                       |                             |                             |                             |                             |                            |                            |               |
| August 21<br>Dodge City, KS           | 3,193 |                             | 373-404<br>330              | 391<br>367.50         | 285-296<br>256              | 261-293.50<br>225-249       | 237.50-260.50<br>220-231    | 218-251<br>202-225          | 121-165<br>140-177.50      | 2,610-3,485<br>1,825-2,125 |               |
| August 22<br>Pratt, KS                | 1,632 |                             | 331-392.50<br>327.50-345    | 325-377.50<br>281-297 | 290-318<br>269-272          | 264-277<br>235-244          | 239.50-267<br>223-229       | 221-248.50<br>205-220       | 121-148.50<br>139.50-165   | 1,975                      |               |
| August 15<br>Salina, KS               | 3,600 |                             | 355-400<br>330-339          | 318-380<br>295-314    | 290-340<br>273-298          | 262.50-307<br>258-279       | 253-279<br>237-257          | 225.25-257.50<br>225.25-240 |                            |                            |               |
| August 22<br>Clovis, NM               | 1,764 | 300-335<br>270-318          | 302-354<br>267-310          | 270-325<br>252-300    | 258.50-294<br>230-259       | 221-264.50<br>214-238       | 220-242.25<br>214-235       | 170-220<br>180-203          | 130-142.50<br>135-173      | 1,350-2,700<br>710-2,300   |               |
| August 21<br>El Reno, OK              | 5,879 |                             | 330-345                     | 310-335<br>280-319    | 263-312.50<br>247.50-287    | 243.50-287.50<br>233.50-251 | 231.50-251.75<br>221.50-237 | 204-241<br>209-220          |                            |                            |               |
| August 20<br>McAlester, OK            | 1,200 |                             | 305-371<br>278-336          | 293-313<br>252-298    | 257-293<br>237-273          | 239-258<br>228-252          | 199-250<br>210-244          | 200-216<br>178              | 131-148<br>152-168         | 1,800-2,650<br>1,300-2,200 |               |
| August 19<br>Oklahoma City, OK        | 4,174 |                             | 353-409<br>277-335          | 277-355<br>258-313.50 | 265-297<br>240-279          | 249-299<br>228-270          | 240-272<br>208-241.50       | 206-246.25<br>215-221       |                            |                            |               |
| August 16<br>Cuero, TX                | 1,336 | 306-405<br>280-370          | 313-385<br>288-365          | 270-335<br>250-316    | 241-272<br>234-290          | 230-272<br>218-264          | 215-243<br>199-226          |                             | 95-147<br>155-176          | 1,150-1,825                |               |
| August 15<br>Dalhart, TX              | 1,888 |                             | 282-310<br>226              | 268-301<br>277-286    | 244.50-258                  | 257-282<br>231-246          | 246-260<br>225-240.50       | 208-246.50<br>210-217       | 119-146<br>140-169         |                            |               |
| No report available<br>San Angelo, TX |       |                             |                             |                       |                             |                             |                             |                             |                            |                            |               |
| August 15<br>Tulia, TX                | 1,115 |                             | 352                         | 300-317<br>243-284    | 279-282<br>240-259          | 244-249<br>226-238          | 238-252<br>212-218          | 230-237                     | 125-135<br>145             | 3,100                      |               |

# ASI, NCBA release guidance for FMD outbreak

The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) worked with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) and other stakeholders to develop movement decision criteria guidance addressing unique scenarios that would arise for federal lands grazers in the event of a foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) outbreak.

A five-minute video describes the project and resources and can be viewed on the Secure Sheep and Wool Supply (SSWS) and Secure Beef Supply (SBS) websites under the Public Land Grazing pages at [securesheepwool.org](https://securesheepwool.org). This has resulted from a multi-year cooperative project funded by a grant from the USDA National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program.

"ASI appreciates the time and effort put in by the advisory group as well as Dr. Danelle Bickett-Weddle, consultant with Preventalytics, in the creation of materials. This effort had multiple groups contribute to unique resources for sheep and cattle producers to prepare for, respond to, and enhance their resiliency for an FMD event," said ASI Executive Director Peter Orwick. "This

collaboration across the sheep and cattle industries with state and federal partners demonstrates impactful results for business continuity and a secure food supply."

"An FMD outbreak on U.S. soil is expected it would cost the U.S. economy hundreds of millions of dollars. For years, the resources we have prepared have focused on mitigating losses on private land. Now, with the help of a wide spectrum of organizations including USDA, the Public Lands Council, State Animal Health Officials, and many more, we have comprehensive resources to help public lands ranchers whose livestock may be far from any infected herd have predictability for their operations in the event of an FMD outbreak," said NCBA Executive Director of Government Affairs Kaitlynn Glover. "Livestock producers in the West are now more prepared than ever to work with federal lands agencies and animal health officials to make movement decisions with the development of this collaborative guidance."

These resources are in addition to the enhanced biosecurity plans found on the SSWS

and SBS websites. Industry input and participation was critical to identifying gaps for federal lands grazers and establishing the need for these specialized documents. The sheep and beef industries continue to work together to provide educational resources to best prepare producers, veterinarians, and other industry stakeholders before an FMD outbreak occurs.

## Background

The U.S. is currently free of the FMD virus. The SSWS Plan and SBS Plan for continuity of business provides opportunities for industry partners to voluntarily prepare before an FMD outbreak. If FMD were found in U.S. livestock, regulatory officials will limit the movement of animals and animal products to try and control the spread of this very contagious animal disease. Control areas will be established around infected premises and movement restrictions will be implemented.

Given the nature of federal lands grazing, containment of livestock and mitigation of risk will require different strategies than private land containment measures. When the control

areas encompass part or all of a public land grazing allotment, in one or more states, there are unique challenges for sheep and cattle producers to mitigate disease exposure risks. FMD is not a threat to public health or food safety. — NCBA and ASI



## COMING EVENTS

(Send calendar of events information to [editorial@wlj.net](mailto: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/2car3wvv](https://tinyurl.com/2car3wvv).



## TURLOCK LIVESTOCK AUCTION YARD

# Annual Fall Female & California Breeders Bull Sale

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5

9 A.M. - TLAY Fall Female Sale

12 P.M. - Lunch

1 P.M. - Bull Sale

EXPECTING 500 PAIRS AND BRED FEMALES  
ON OUR IN-HOUSE VIDEO AND THROUGH THE RING

FEATURING THE BEST BULLS CALIFORNIA SEED STOCK PRODUCERS HAVE TO OFFER

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## TLAY FALL ROUNDUP FEEDER SALES

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## Feeders back to trading lower

### MARKETS (from page 1)

feed for July is expected to be 100% of last year. Place-ments are estimated to be 4% higher, and marketings are predicted at 108.2%.

### Feeder cattle

Feeder cattle futures lost several dollars. The August contract was down \$4.75 to \$241.97, and the September contract was down about \$5.45 to \$238.20.

The CME Feeder Cattle Index lost about \$4 to close at \$242.67.

"Unfortunately, it's likely

the market will remain dog-gish the rest of the week as fed cash cattle sales are cheaper and a Cattle on Feed report is set to be re-leased later this week as well," Stewart wrote on Wednesday.

Corn futures were down slightly, with the September and December contracts down 4 cents apiece to \$3.71 and \$3.93, respec-tively.

**Missouri:** Joplin Regional Stockyards in Carthage sold 4,500 head on Mon-day. Compared to a week earlier, feeder steers and heifers sold mostly steady at the mid-session. Bench-

mark steers averaging 726 lbs. sold from \$260-265, av-eraging \$262.14.

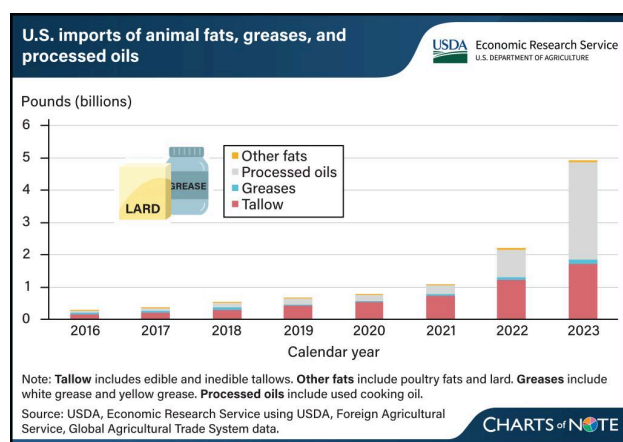
**Oklahoma:** Oklahoma National Stockyards in Oklahoma City sold 4,229 head on Monday. Compared to a week earlier, feeder cattle were lightly tested. Feeder steers sold mostly steady to \$2 lower with most of the decline over 800 lbs. Feeder heifers sold unevenly steady. Steer and heifer calves sold \$3-6 lower. Benchmark steers averaging 781 lbs. sold from \$240-255, averaging \$246.62. — Anna Miller, WLJ managing editor

## Animal fat imports surge to meet diesel production demand

U.S. imports of animal fats (edible tallow, inedible tallow, lard and poultry fats), greases, and processed oils—including used cooking oil—skyrocketed to nearly 5 billion pounds in 2023 from 2.2 billion lbs. in 2022.

This surge in imports has been driven by rising domestic production of biomass-based diesel (fuels derived from animal fats and vegetable oils) to meet U.S. federal and state policies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. These policies sparked new demand for animal fats, processed oils and grease and have boosted imports, especially processed oil imports commonly known as used cooking oil (UCO).

Processed oil imports doubled to 3 billion lbs. from 2022 to 2023 as China emerged as the top supplier. U.S. tallow imports also have increased,



largely on expanded sourcing from Australia, Canada, Brazil and Argentina.

With stronger tallow and processed oil imports, the share of animal fats, waste oils and greases as a portion of total oil and fat-related used in bio-mass-based diesel production has increased to 36% from 31% in 2021, while vegetable oil's

share has declined.

As biofuel use continues growing, this structural shift in biomass-based diesel production and import markets is expected to affect the domestic use and trade flows of animal fats and vegetable oils. — USDA Economic Research Service

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# Nilgai antelope are not carriers of bovine babesiosis

Nilgai, a non-native antelope species that freely ranges southern Texas and northeastern Mexico, do not appear to be susceptible to infection following experimental exposure to *Babesia bovis*, according to recent findings by Texas A&M AgriLife Research scientists.

The *Babesia bovis* strain is one of two species of parasitic protozoa responsible for the disease known as cattle fever or bovine babesiosis.

The research, published in *Parasites & Vectors*, significantly contributes to nationwide efforts to better

understand the role of wildlife in the epidemiology of bovine babesiosis. Nilgai are a particular wildlife species of concern because of their capacity to spread ticks over a large range.

Bovine babesiosis is a virulent tick-borne disease, with up to a 90% mortality rate in cattle without prior exposure to the parasite. It plagued the U.S. cattle industry in the 19th and early 20th centuries and remains a serious concern for the industry.

Tammi Johnson, Ph.D., AgriLife Research assistant professor of disease ecology

in the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Department of Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries Management, led the study funded by the USDA's Agricultural Research Service and National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

"These leading-edge discoveries illustrate AgriLife Research's ongoing commitment to the health and sustainability of our agricultural and natural resources," said G. Cliff Lamb, director of AgriLife Research. "Texas is the nationwide leader in beef cattle production, and our experts work on the

frontlines to ensure the security and economic strength of this critical food system."

### Ticks as a vector for the disease

In North America, two tick species, *Rhipicephalus annulatus* and *Rhipicephalus microplus*, transmit the parasitic protozoa that attack red blood cells causing anemia and fever, Johnson said. These species are commonly referred to as cattle fever ticks.

Thanks to the Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program—

a cooperative effort between the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and state animal health agencies—bovine babesiosis was eradicated from the U.S. in 1943. However, the disease remains endemic to Mexico, and infestations of cattle fever ticks are still documented along the Texas-Mexico border.

In Texas, the federal Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program is responsible for monitoring the Permanent Fever Tick Quarantine Zone that spans 580,000 acres from Brownsville to Del Rio, while the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) monitors all areas outside of the permanent quarantine zone. Together, these two entities surveil more than 1 million acres of Texas rangelands. Despite strict monitoring efforts by both organizations, infestations of cattle fever ticks are regularly found outside of the quarantine zone.

different life stages of *B. bovis*, one strain of parasitic protozoa responsible for bovine babesiosis. In a parallel study, beef cattle were also inoculated, and both groups were monitored through an array of blood tests over the study period.

No clinical signs of infection in either nilgai group were documented following inoculation. Further, blood samples from all nilgai were polymerase chain reaction (PCR) negative for the bovine babesiosis parasite, and the animals did not develop antibodies to the *B. bovis* strain.

"It appears from our research that the parasites are not able to infect the red blood cells of the nilgai," Johnson said. "If they can't infect the red blood cells, they can't reproduce and move to the next life stage to be picked up by a female tick and transmitted to another animal."

Additionally, nilgai tissue samples showed no signs of infection, and analysis of red blood cell cultures indicated no signs of colonization by the protozoan.

To test these results even further, Johnson said, researchers subinoculated cattle with blood from the challenged nilgai in the study. These cattle showed no signs of clinical infection and were PCR-negative for the bovine babesiosis parasite up to 45 days later.

### Wildlife as a complicating factor

Although cattle fever ticks' primary host animal is domestic cattle, they will feed on other hooved animals known as ungulates.

"Wildlife movement is one challenge we face in preventing the spread of cattle fever ticks," said John Picanso, director of APHIS' Veterinary Services Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program.

Treatment options do exist to reduce the number of cattle fever ticks on wildlife but detecting the arachnids on the more than 460,000 estimated free-ranging white-tailed deer and nilgai throughout South Texas is difficult.

While previous research ruled out white-tailed deer as carriers of bovine babesiosis, the role of nilgai in transmitting the disease was unknown prior to the new study.

"Nilgai are the most abundant free-ranging exotic species in Texas," Johnson said. "They have an incredibly large home range, and a lot of the cattle fever tick outbreaks we see may be a result of wildlife movement."

Johnson said both nilgai and the tick *R. microplus* are native to India, a continent that also struggles with bovine babesiosis. Additionally, nilgai are in the same scientific family as domestic cattle, making them a distant relative.

"We have all these related factors that exist in India now coexisting in the U.S.—I realized that we had to do something to better understand nilgai's potential role in harboring or spreading this disease," Johnson said.

### Next steps

While these findings do provide a sense of relief, Johnson said it doesn't change the fact that nilgai and white-tailed deer still move ticks with the potential to carry bovine babesiosis throughout their range.

"What we now know is nilgai will not move infected ticks around the landscape, which is good news," Johnson said. "But I think the main takeaway is that we still have to address the problem of these ticks being present, and we currently don't have an approved treatment protocol for nilgai."

Currently, Johnson and collaborating researchers are working to replicate this study using the second cattle tick species, *R. annulatus*, and a different species of *Babesia*, *B. bigemina*, that also causes bovine babesiosis.

"This second study will allow us to have the full picture of how nilgai respond to different species that cause bovine babesiosis," Johnson said.

Picanso, with APHIS' eradication program, said Johnson's research is an invaluable scientific resource that augments current knowledge and will guide future management actions to control cattle fever ticks.

— **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension**

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## About 5,000 horses set to be gathered in HMAs

## HORSE SUITS

(from page 1)

wrote in their May 2023 lawsuit.

The plan would change the status of the Salt Wells Creek and Great Divide Basin herd management areas (HMA) to allow zero horses, and reduce the number of horses in the White Mountain Herd and Adobe Town Herd.

BLM estimated a total of 4,876 horses would be removed over a three- to four-year-long period from the Great Divide Basin, Salt Wells Creek and Adobe Town HMAs. Roundups were set to occur between Oct. 1 and Sept. 30.

In July, the agency announced it would begin a gather in mid-August in the White Mountain HMA to prevent further deterioration of land health due to overpopulation.

## BLM's win

"The court concludes that this (record of decision) was neither arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, otherwise not in accordance with law, nor without observance of procedure required by law," Rankin wrote in her Aug. 14 decision.

She also ruled that the Rock Springs Grazing Association lacked standing to demand BLM immediately remove horses from the group's lands or immediately conduct an-

other amendment process.

“Neither BLM’s delay in removing wild horses nor amending the HMAs through another plan amendment process is unreasonable or unlawfully withheld,” Rankin wrote.

Two days after Rankin's decision, horse advocacy groups filed a notice of appeal with the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. Plaintiffs include the American Wild Horse Conservation, the Animal Welfare Institute, Western Watersheds Project, author Chad Hanson and wildlife photographers Carol Walker and Kimerlee Curyl.

"If allowed to stand, this flawed decision would give the BLM a new way to eradicate federally protected wild horses and burros from our public lands," said Suzanne Roy, executive director of American Wild Horse Conservation.

## Moving forward

BLM conducted a horse gather in the White Mountain HMA from Aug. 15-19. The HMA consists of 240,000 acres of BLM land and has an appropriate management level of 205-300 horses. The estimated population of the HMA was 791 horses before the gather. A total of 586 animals were gathered using the helicopter-assisted method and transported to the Wheatland Off-Range Corral or Rock Springs Wild

Horse Holding Facility.

“Because of the protracted legal battle that’s likely to be extended further yet, it’s unlikely that BLM will immediately remove the entire Salt

Wells and Great Divide Basin herds, said Brad Purdy, the agency's deputy state director for communications," WyoFile reported on Aug. 16.

"Although the agency com-

pleted a revision to its Resource Management Plan for wild horses—and Rankin upheld that plan—there's still a requirement to study the action of eliminating a herd under the

National Environmental Policy Act," the outlet reported.

BLM plans to remove about 20,000 head of horses from public lands in 2024. — **Anna Miller, WLJ managing editor**

## Larger farms received highest energy payments

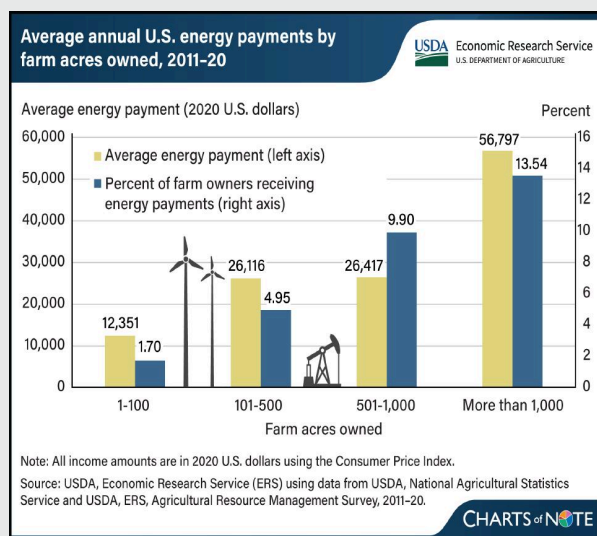
Energy payments to farm operations increased with the number of acres owned. These payments are compensation received by landowners for energy development such as from oil, natural gas, wind or solar that occurs on their farmland.

Researchers with USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) used USDA's Agricultural Resource Management Survey data to find the average annual payment made for energy development between 2011 and 2020 to farm operators based on acreage owned.

Those who owned more

than 1,000 acres received an average yearly payment of \$56,797. Those who owned fewer than 100 acres received an average of \$12,351, less than one-quarter of payments made to the largest farms. Higher payments to larger farms are associated with owners having large tracts of land preferred for energy development.

More than 13% of farm landowners with greater than 1,000 acres received energy payments between 2011 and 2020, compared with less than 2% of landowners with fewer than 100 acres. — **USDA ERS**



## CA cattle council launches campaign

The California Cattle Council recently launched a statewide media campaign to promote the industry's multiple economic, environmental and sustainability benefits.

Featuring local ranchers and dairy farmers, the TV and radio spots will air in several key markets across the state including Sacramento, Fresno, Monterey/Salinas, Chico/Redding, Santa Barbara/Santa Maria, the Imperial Valley and the Bay Area/Sonoma. Several of the ads are in Spanish. All will also be featured in social media as well, including YouTube.

"California's ranchers and dairy farmers are generating billions in economic activity in California while leading the fight against climate change, helping reduce wildfires, protecting endangered species and making record investments to reduce water use," said Council Executive Director Jason Oldfield. "This campaign is designed to highlight these actions and underscore the value of the ranching and dairy communities to our state."

Among the 30-second ads:

• “Way of Life” highlights the 300-450 cow Deniz farm in Petaluma, a third-generation dairy. The ad focuses on the dairy’s contribution to the community, land preservation and animal welfare.

- “Taking Care” was filmed at the Koopmann Ranch in Sunol, featuring fifth-generation farmer Clayton Koopman.

The spot features sustainability and land stewardship, citing the hundreds of acres set aside to protect wildlife species and efforts to combat wildfires.

• “Farmers Market” features several of Sonoma businesses and residents including Anchadinha Cheese Company of Petaluma co-owner Donna Pacheco, Straus Family Creamery of Petaluma farmers market assistant Elena (Ellie) Whiteley, and Petaluma City School ag teacher/California Agriculture Teachers Association President Kim Armtz.

- “Starts” focuses on dairy farmers that are utilizing food waste for feed, methane digesters and other techniques to combat climate change. It features Galt dairy farmer Peter Van Warmerdam, whose farms milk 3,800 cows in three different Central Valley dairies.

• “My Family” focuses on job creation and providing healthy food in Imperial Valley. It was filmed at the Mesquite Feedlot in Brawley with Juan and Jose Salazar. A Spanish-language version of this ad is also being released.

The ads will run through the summer and fall throughout the state. Radio versions also will be aired in select markets. The ads are the latest in the effort by the Council to raise the awareness of the contribution of California ranches and dairies. Previous ads highlighted sustainability, drought, and “farm to school” benefits to local communities. — **California Cattle Council**

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# Legislation could upend CA's water rights

Jul. 10, 2023 | Policy | 3 minute read

Recently introduced legislation in California could upend pre-1914 water rights, giving the State Water Resources Control Board more authority over water diversions.

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**WEEKLY MARKET WRAP-UP** 8/01/24

### Packers holding off on cash trade

Packers had yet to step up to the plate even though they were short bought due to the low volume of cattle purchased the previous week.

[Read This Week's Market Wrap-Up](#)

WESTERN LIVESTOCK JOURNAL  
**WEEKLY MARKET WRAP-UP**

Cash cattle continue sideways trading

Farm Credit debt rating downgraded

Production costs higher in 2022, especially for livestock

China remains the world's largest meat importer



# EPA releases final herbicide strategy

On Aug. 20, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its final Herbicide Strategy, the first step in the agency’s plan to meet its obligations under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The release comes 10 days ahead of a Aug. 30 deadline mandated by a court settlement, which had been previously extended by three months.

The strategy outlines how the agency intends to protect threatened and endangered species and their critical habitats from herbicide exposure through spray drift and/or runoff or soil erosion.

“Finalizing our first major strategy for endangered species is a historic step in EPA meeting its Endangered Species Act obligations,” said Jake Li, deputy assistant administrator for Pesticide Programs for the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, in an agency news release. “By identifying protections earlier in the pesticide review process,

we are far more efficiently protecting listed species from the millions of pounds of herbicides applied each year and reducing burdensome uncertainty for the farmers that use them,” Li said.

EPA released its first draft of the herbicide strategy in July 2023, receiving more than 18,000 comments during the public comment period. In response to comments, the agency said it made many improvements to the draft, with the primary changes falling into three categories:

- Making the strategy easier to understand and incorporating up-to-date data and refined analyses.
- Increasing flexibility for pesticide users to implement mitigation measures in the strategy.
- Reducing the amount of additional mitigation that may be needed when users either have already adopted accepted practices to reduce pesticide runoff or apply herbicides in an

area where runoff potential is lower.

According to EPA, the final strategy includes more options for mitigation measures compared to the July 2023 draft, while still protecting listed species. The strategy also reduces the level of mitigation needed for applicators who have already implemented measures identified in the strategy to reduce pesticide movement from treated fields into habitats through pesticide spray drift and runoff from a field. The measures include cover crops, conservation tillage, windbreaks and adjuvants.

Further, some measures, such as berms, are enough to fully address runoff concerns. Growers who already use those measures will not need any other runoff measures. EPA stated that it identified these options for growers through its collaborations with USDA under its February 2024 inter-agency memorandum of understanding and through more

than two dozen meetings and workshops with agricultural groups in 2024.

The agency said the final Herbicide Strategy also recognizes that applicators who work with a runoff/erosion specialist or participate in a conservation program are more likely to effectively implement mitigation measures. These conservation programs include the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service practices and state or private stewardship measures that are effective at reducing pesticide runoff.

“The strategy reduces the level of mitigation needed for applicators who employ a specialist or participate in a program,” EPA wrote. “Geographic characteristics may also reduce the level of mitigation needed, such as farming in an area with flat lands, or with minimal rain such as western U.S. counties that are in the driest climates. As a result, in many of those counties, a

grower may need to undertake few or no additional runoff mitigations for herbicides that are not very toxic to listed species.”

According to EPA, refinements in the final strategy will allow the agency to focus herbicide restrictions only in situations where they are needed.

“The final strategy itself does not impose any requirements or restrictions on pesticide use,” the agency wrote. “Rather, EPA will use the strategy to inform mitigations for new active ingredient registrations and registration review of conventional herbicides.”

## Industry reaction

News of the strategy’s release left the nation’s soybean growers worried about the feasibility of the plan and its overall effects on farming.

“While there are clear improvements to the final Herbicide Strategy over what was first proposed, we are disappointed EPA chose to leave so many opportunities on the table to make this strategy workable for U.S. agriculture,” said Josh Gackle, president of the American Soybean Association (ASA) and a soybean farmer from North Dakota, in a statement released by the commodity organization. “We remain concerned with the complexity of this framework and whether growers and applicators will be able to clearly understand how to implement

it. ASA said EPA has largely not addressed how the agency evaluates whether pesticides pose a genuine risk to endangered species, noting that the current process is “unduly conservative, greatly overestimates risks and demands farmers adopt far more restrictions than are truly necessary to protect species. Disappointingly, the final Herbicide Strategy does little to address these concerns.”

In a separate statement, the Agricultural Retailers Association (ARA) said the organization plans to review the final Herbicide Strategy to “gain a better understanding of the full impact it will have on America’s agricultural industry.”

“We appreciate the EPA’s efforts to make continuous improvements to earlier drafts that would have been unworkable for agricultural retailers, pesticide applicators and farmers,” said Richard Gupton, ARA senior vice president of public policy and counsel, in the statement. “ARA members support efforts to protect endangered species; an improved registration system that ensures the availability of essential pesticide products; and mitigation measures that are easy to understand, economical and achievable. The real test will be when new 2025 pesticide label registrations are implemented by EPA.” — **Jason Jenkins, DTN crops editor**



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- 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

- 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, 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** – Arellano 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. 29** – Traynham Ranches, Bull & Female Sale,

- Ft. Klamath, OR
- Oct. 4** – Elwood Ranch, Bull Sale, Red Bluff, CA
- Oct. 5** – Colyer Hereford & Angus, Female Sale, Bruneau, ID
- Oct. 5** – Topline/Leachman, Bull 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, 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** – Marcy Livestock, Cow Dispersal Sale, Gordon, NE
- Oct. 30** – Spring Lake Angus, Dispersal Sale, 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** – Baldrige/ 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
- Dec. 3** – ZumBrunnen Angus, Production Sale, Lusk, WY
- Dec. 16** – TK Angus, Bull Sale, Valentine, NE

### 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
- Dec. 6** – Western States Hereford Sale, Reno, NV

### 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
- Dec. 9** – Cross Diamond, Bull Sale, Bertrand, NE

### 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

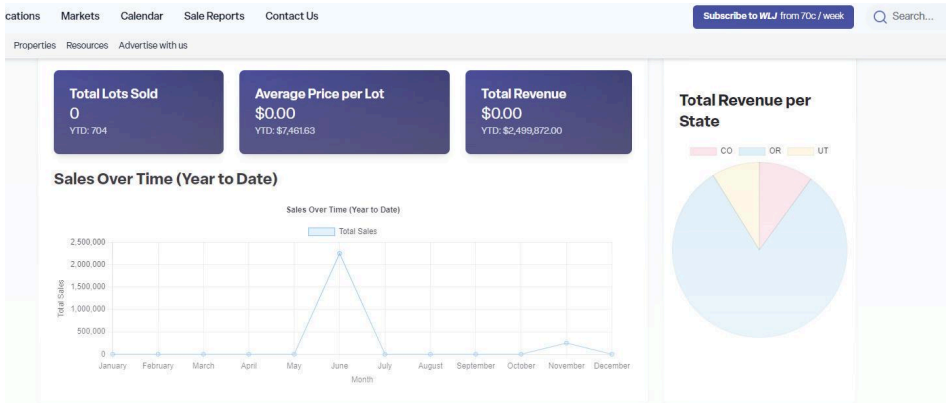
### STABILIZER

- Oct. 12** – Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, Ozark, AR
- Oct. 26** – Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, Dinuba, CA
- Nov. 9** – Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, Fort Collins, CO
- Nov. 16** – Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, Alma, NE
- Dec. 7** – Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, Loma, CO
- Dec. 14** – Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, Gering, NE
- Dec. 19** – Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, San Saba, TX

### COMMERCIAL

- 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, Female Sale, Bliss, ID
- Sep. 21** – Snaffle Bit Futurity Sale, Reno, NV



The new sale reports page... is awesome.

Coming this fall. A NEW WLJ.NET. (We are really raising the bar.)

# EZ ANGUS RANCH

# SELLING 210 BULLS SAT., SEPTEMBER 7

**EZ Angus' Tejas Ranch • 22950 Milton Road, Farmington, CA**  
**Lunch: 11:30 a.m. • Sale: 12:30 p.m. with Live Broadcast on Superior**

This year's offering includes 160 long-yearlings and 50 fall yearlings. Bulls sell performance-tested with complete DNA evaluation, vaccinated for anaplas and tested PI-negative for BVD. We offer FREE DELIVERY to California and surrounding states. *Every bull selling is backed by the EZ Angus Breeding Guarantee!*



**EZAR JAMESON 3075** 1/13/23  
SIRE: Basin Jameson 1076 MGS: Deer Valley Wall Street

| CED | BW   | WW | YW  | Milk | CW | MA   | RE   | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|------|----|-----|------|----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 13  | -1.2 | 83 | 147 | 27   | 75 | 1.17 | 0.97 | 92  | 203 | 355 |



**EZAR GURU 3149** 2/7/23  
SIRE: EXAR Guru 8719B MGS: Basin Paycheck 5249

| CED | BW  | WW | YW  | Milk | CW | MA   | RE   | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|-----|----|-----|------|----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 8   | 2.2 | 84 | 150 | 35   | 79 | 1.53 | 0.82 | 62  | 223 | 351 |



**EZAR CLARITY 3047** 1/7/23  
SIRE: Connealy Clarity MGS: WAR Cavalry B063 Z044

| CED | BW  | WW | YW  | Milk | CW | MA   | RE   | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|-----|----|-----|------|----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 11  | 1.6 | 71 | 130 | 18   | 59 | 1.25 | 0.78 | 87  | 194 | 339 |



**EZAR CONCLUSION 3052** 1/8/23  
SIRE: V A R Conclusion 0234 MGS: G A R Home Town

| CED | BW   | WW | YW  | Milk | CW | MA   | RE   | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|------|----|-----|------|----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 17  | -1.1 | 79 | 139 | 35   | 69 | 0.96 | 1.44 | 61  | 195 | 314 |



**EZAR ICONIC 3072** 1/12/23  
SIRE: DB Iconic G95 MGS: Summitcrest Complete 1P55

| CED | BW  | WW | YW  | Milk | CW | MA   | RE   | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|-----|----|-----|------|----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 6   | 2.1 | 88 | 153 | 40   | 79 | 1.08 | 1.07 | 59  | 201 | 320 |



**EZAR MAN IN BLACK 3042** 1/6/23  
SIRE: LAR Man In Black MGS: EXAR Monumental 6056B

| CED | BW  | WW | YW  | Milk | CW | MA   | RE   | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|-----|----|-----|------|----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 5   | 3.4 | 95 | 172 | 36   | 92 | 0.92 | 0.94 | 53  | 210 | 325 |



**EZAR JAMESON 3105** 1/24/23  
SIRE: Basin Jameson 1076 MGS: V A R Power Play 7018

| CED | BW  | WW  | YW  | Milk | CW | MA   | RE   | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 10  | 0.6 | 101 | 165 | 37   | 89 | 1.27 | 0.87 | 82  | 216 | 362 |



**EZAR STEP UP 3049** 1/7/23  
SIRE: EZAR Step Up 9178 MGS: FF Rito Righteous 6R41

| CED | BW  | WW | YW  | Milk | CW | MA   | RE   | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|-----|----|-----|------|----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 9   | 0.3 | 81 | 140 | 28   | 65 | 1.15 | 1.08 | 93  | 190 | 339 |



**EZAR DOC RYAN 3078** 1/15/23  
SIRE: T/D Doc Ryan 049 MGS: EXAR Denver 2002B

| CED | BW  | WW | YW  | Milk | CW | MA   | RE   | \$M | \$B | \$C |
|-----|-----|----|-----|------|----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 6   | 2.9 | 91 | 162 | 27   | 84 | 1.33 | 1.09 | 68  | 218 | 351 |

TEXT JOHN DICKINSON TO REQUEST A SALE BOOK: 916 806-1919



SALE BOOK AND BULL VIDEOS:  
[WWW.EZANGUSRANCH.COM](http://WWW.EZANGUSRANCH.COM)

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