

INSIDE WLJ

Honoring our nation's workers and their contributions.



HAPPY LABOR DAY!

PACK SHIFT — Colorado relocates first wolf pack to mitigate livestock conflicts. Page 8

WATER REFORM — Nevada lawmakers propose ending "use it or lose it" water law to promote conservation. Page 13

A LOOK BACK IN HISTORY

"In 1947 there were enough animals dead on arrival at markets in this country to fill a train nine miles long. Add to this the losses of crippled animals and from bruises, and the producer finds himself bearing the major share of an indirect total loss of \$25,000,000 in a single year!" read the September 1949 WLJ article.

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Tom Koerner/USFWS

The BLM has released its final management plan for the Rock Springs Field Office in Wyoming. Pictured here, sheep grazing on the Seedskaadee National Wildlife Refuge in southwest Wyoming.

Final Rock Springs BLM management plan released

— Balance of all alternatives

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has released the final impact statement on the proposed management plan for the Rock Springs area in southwest Wyoming. The plan balances conservation with resource development, the agency said.

The two-volume final environmental impact statement (FEIS) blends all four alternatives initially proposed last year by BLM to update the Rock Springs Resource Management Plan (RMP) on the agency's 3.6 million acres. The RMP had not been updated since 1997, and in August 2023, a draft impact statement was released proposing a range of either maintaining the status quo, emphasizing conservation with 1.6 million acres of areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC), or prioritizing energy and mineral development.

During the public comment period, BLM said it received over 35,000 comments, including those from a task force appointed by Wy-

oming Gov. Mark Gordon (R) with several recommendations. The FEIS and proposed RMP incorporated the received feedback and made revisions from the initial draft. These include:

- The preferred alternative in the draft RMP proposed 16 ACEC designations spanning over 1.6 million acres. The proposed RMP reduces this to 12 ACEC designations, covering 936,193 acres. It designates the Little Mountain ACEC and establishes a Little Mountain Special Recreation Management Area. It also maintains existing ACECs in the Red Desert, expands the Steamboat ACEC and designates the South Wind River ACEC. BLM did not include ACEC designations for Cedar Canyon or Monument Valley.

- The draft EIS proposed a seasonal grazing restriction in designated parturition areas for big game to protect birthing elk and mule deer. However, the proposed management plan removes this restriction, permitting grazing in all special management areas.

See ROCK SPRINGS on page 7

Appeals court rejects CA water challenge

— Greens argue contracts affect fish

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in early August it will not rehear a challenge by environmental groups on California's Central Vally Project water contracts. The groups have long argued the water contracts between the Bureau of Reclamation and senior water rights holders in the Sacramento River are detrimental to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and the delta smelt fish.

In a May 23 opinion, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a federal judge's finding that the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) did not violate the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) and Endangered Species

Act (ESA) by renewing government water supply contracts.

The Natural Resources Defense Council, San Francisco Baykeeper, Friends of the River, The Bay Institute, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations and the Winnemem Wintu Tribe (collectively, NRDC) filed a petition for rehearing on July 8.

A panel of three judges for the appeals court rejected the rehearing on Aug. 1, and no other court judges asked for a vote to bring the case before a full panel. The court's decision could potentially end the nearly two-decade-long argument over the project's water contracts.

History

Environmental groups have

See WATER CHALLENGE on page 13

Study highlights pre-slaughter cattle handling challenges

— Bruising, lameness remain concerns

A study conducted by Colorado State University (CSU) provides insights into the impact of pre-slaughter management practices on animal welfare and meat quality in the U.S. beef industry.

The research evaluated key management factors such as travel distance, truck wait time and space allowance in holding pens. It found that multiple variables, including plant conditions, breed and environmental factors, impact cattle welfare and meat quality.

The study analyzed 619 slaughter lots, representing 87,220 head, at five federally inspected processing facilities. The cattle were 88.8% Bos taurus, 7.6% Bos indicus and 3.6% Holsteins. Most cattle were steers (56.4%), nearly one-third were heifers (32%) and the rest were steers

and heifers in mixed lots.

A common finding in this study was the variation between plants and shifts in key outcome variables, such as mobility scores, bruising prevalence, dark cutting, quality grades and hot carcass weights (HCW).

The authors said the differences could be attributed to variations in company management practices and protocols and regional factors like environmental conditions, breed types and plant proximity to feedlots. Additionally, the study highlighted differences between shifts, with factors such as changes in employees and management, as well as truck arrival and wait times during shift transitions, potentially influencing these outcomes.

Mobility

Concern for cattle mobility

gained attention about a decade ago when elevated mobility impairment issues were reported in cattle arriving at packing plants. In response, industry experts implemented the use of the Meat Institute's Mobility Scoring System, a widely used tool to monitor cattle mobility.

The mobility scoring has been incorporated into industry benchmarking efforts. The 2016 National Beef Quality Audit (NBQA) and the CSU study each reported high percentages of cattle with normal mobility (96.8% and 91.8%, respectively).

Transportation

The CSU study authors noted the ongoing consolidation of feedlot operations and processing plants has led to longer animal transportation distances. The study found that

See BRUISING on page 11

Limited market movement ahead of Labor Day

Just ahead of Labor Day weekend, the cattle markets saw modest fluctuations over the week, with minimal cash trade and slower-than-expected slaughter volumes.

Live cattle futures found some small gains over the week, up about \$2 on the August contract to \$184.87 and up about \$1 to \$177.90 on the October contract.

"The live cattle complex is stuck tapping its toe, waiting for the cash cattle market to give it the fundamental support it needs... or not," wrote ShayLe Stewart, DTN livestock analyst, in her Thursday midday comments.

Cash trade through Thursday afternoon was about 25,000 head. Live steers sold from \$181-184, and dressed steers sold from \$288-292.

"Packers have purchased a lot of cattle with time and even though this week's slaughter is expected to increase a bit, packers are buying for next week's holiday-shortened work week," wrote Cassie Fish, market analyst, in The Beef on Tuesday.

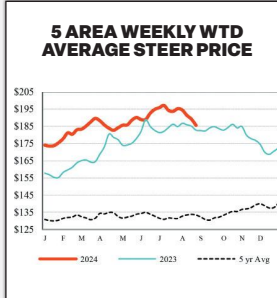
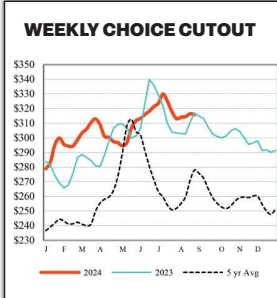
Cash trade through Aug. 25 totaled about 55,000 head. Live steers averaged \$185.69, and dressed steers averaged

\$294.21.

Slaughter through Thursday was 477,000 head, about 7,000 head less than the same time a week earlier. Projected total slaughter for a week earlier is 608,000 head. Actual slaughter for the week ending Aug. 17 was 605,086 head. The average dressed steer weight was 931 lbs., 6 lbs. above the prior week.

The Cattle Report wrote on Thursday: "Should increasing slaughter volumes be accompanied by stabilization in the box market by improving demand during the fall months, the entire industry will benefit."

See MARKETS on page 15



LIVE STEERS	DRESSED STEERS	CME FEEDER
\$183.75	\$291.43	\$242.64
WEEK ENDING: 08-29-24		

Time Sensitive
Priority Handling
PERIODICAL :

COMMENTS

Markets will strengthen

We hope everyone had a great Labor Day weekend, which is one of the big beef eating holidays of summer. Packers were trying to produce more product for the big weekend but will slow down through most of September; it's a seasonal thing that is predictable. Packers are making now, about \$40 per head, how value will find a seasonal low

**CROW**

Packers were buying cattle for a short week and there was no fed trade as of Wednesday last week. Most trade was expected to be late in the week. The August live cattle futures contract will more than likely converge when it goes off the board, then we turn to October, which doesn't look very good. It's currently trading at about \$178.62.

The latest Cattle on Feed report was deemed bearish. On-feed numbers were 100.3% of last year and marketings were 107.7% of a year ago, with two extra slaughter days. The big surprise was placements at 105.8% higher. Sometimes I think the government messes with the numbers to bring prices down, like the recent jobs report that was revised down 818,000 jobs, the largest revision since 2008.

Front-ended fed cattle supplies are still high but are expected to decline by November. But carcass weights are expected to get larger. USDA was expecting beef production to be down 8% in August. USDA pegged beef production for 2024 at 26.803 billion pounds, an 81 million-lb. increase from their July forecast, which was just nine-tenths lower than 2023 levels. Many more heifers are being fed out, higher carcass weights and an uptick in lean beef imports all contributed.

For the first half of this year, 3.313 million cows were slaughtered, down 546,000 head from last year. Carcass weights were also up on cows, about 10 lbs. Cow slaughter is also expected to be down even more through the balance of the year, and USDA is expecting to see cow slaughter down again next year. And they are already forecasting total beef production to be down 1.3 billion pounds in 2025. Maybe we will have some new folks doing the counting next year.

The boys at HedgersEdge.com said, “As the summer of 2024 nears an end, a seasonal cash flow is likely developing. Fed cattle price support at \$180-182 should begin to attract buyers. A correction to this level would comprise a 5% correction from the July high. A price retreat to \$180/cwt would still allow the major uptrend to remain intact. The front-end fed cattle supplies project to decline below the prior year by February, provided monthly harvest levels are achieved. Peak front-end fed cattle supply relative to last year is projected to occur by November. The seasonal decline in this category of cattle beginning during November will exceed the prior year and the previous five-year average.

“The feeder and calf supply outside feedyards on Aug. 1 is projected at 1.020 million head below year-ago levels. Declining monthly placements are likely to reduce that drop for the balance of this year. A hazard to this prospect is any expansion and/or more serious deepening of drought in the region. An area of light-to-moderate drought has spread to the south-central Plains and into the area west of the Rocky Mountains. Approximately 21% of the cattle inventory is in an area experiencing drought. On a positive note, the areas of extreme drought remain below year-ago levels per the Aug. 20 report from the NOAA.”

Cow herd rebuilding doesn't look like it's struggling and may not for a while, according to CoBank's recent report. They were saying the value of heifer calves is too high to consider making replacement heifers. It will take two years' investment to get them in production and after two years of high-priced hay and other costs, producers' financial situations may not be ready to do without the extra cash flow. The report suggests that it may take three to five years to rebuild the nation's cow herd. So, you western cow folk, keep praying for rain. — **PETE CROW**



KAY'S KORNER



The U.S. beef cattle industry is smaller than needed and signals for rebuilding will continue in the coming months. But herd rebuilding is likely to be slow to start and proceed quite slowly initially. So says Oklahoma State University's Derrell Peel in his latest analysis of the prospects for herd expansion. Meanwhile, a CoBank report says rebuilding the herd could take years as market conditions encourage ranchers to sell off rather than keep their young cattle. Although pasture conditions and feed costs are improving, there are still financial upsides for producers to send their beef calves and heifers to feedlots rather than raise them, it says.

Coming into 2024, the beef cow herd was at a 63-year low, the smallest beef cow inventory since 1961, Peel says. This has pushed cattle prices to record levels through 2023 and 2024. Yet there are no indications that any beef herd rebuilding is underway. The question of rebuilding the beef cow inventory is fundamental for cattle markets in the next few years, he says.

A review of historical herd expansions is instructive, Peel says. From 1990 to 1996, the beef cow herd increased by 2.864 million head. From 2014-2020, the herd increased less, by 2.734 million head, in one less year but faster. The herd increased by 1.2 million head in just two years from 2014-16. One of the keys to herd expansion is heifer retention, he says. Beef replacement inventories increased three of four years prior to the beginning of herd expansion in 1991 and for three years prior to herd expansion in 2015. Both expansions included one year of very large heifer retention (year three in 1993 and year two in 2015), with smaller increases before and after, he says.

The industry does not yet have a zero year (low inventory) from which herd rebuilding can begin, Peel says. Beef cow slaughter thus far in 2024 is sharply lower, down nearly 16% year over year. But this level of beef cow slaughter, combined with the low beef replacement heifer inventory in 2024, implies that the beef cow herd continues to liquidate by another 0.5-1% in 2024. Beef cow slaughter would have to drop by roughly 22% year over year to avoid additional liquidation this year. The current rate of beef cow slaughter indicates a herd culling rate in excess of 10% this year. The culling rate is expected to drop below 10% during herd expansion. Thus 2025 is the earliest zero year for the next expansion to begin. But there is no certainty that additional liquidation will not occur in 2025, he says.

Liquidation of beef replacement heifer inventories in recent



GUEST OPINION

The state of Utah sent shockwaves through the world of environmental policy recently when it announced a lawsuit challenging federal ownership of 18.5 million acres of land within its borders.

I've long argued in favor of state-led management and multiple use, but I worry the state is relying too heavily on a legal victory. Those of us aligned with the state should not lose sight of pushing public lands reform in Congress.

When it comes to public lands, things have changed dramatically since Utah became a state in 1896. At that time, the Department of the Treasury was disposing of federal lands through the General Land Office (GLO), developing as much land as possible. The Homestead Act was still in place, encouraging individuals to settle on and acquire public lands. The federal government had recently given away millions of acres to railroad companies, and Congress welcomed livestock grazing on all sorts of terrain.

Since then, the U.S. has shifted toward a program of conservation and transformed the GLO into the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The BLM does not usually sell land but instead has a mission to manage them indefinitely in the public interest under a policy of "multiple use." The objective isn't to "lock up" the land but to conserve its resources forever, so our great-great-grandchildren can hunt the same forests and run cattle in the same pastures.

Many environmental groups aren't satisfied with that mission, and their influence in the federal government is growing. Preservationism—the practice of permanently removing productive land from use—is trending.

Both preservationism and multiple-use management have their downsides, but preservationism is the more “nuclear option.” It excludes traditional land uses such as agriculture, and it hinders conservation activities such as forestry, hunting, and habitat restoration. It prevents energy projects, including clean energy. Left unchecked, it threatens our energy security, our rural farmers, our ability to prevent catastrophic wildfires—even our ability to address climate change.

Democratic presidents have allowed preservationist organizations to grow their influence through administrative rules and monument designations. This has resulted in national monu-

LOOK FOR A SLOW REBUILD

years means there is no pipeline or momentum for herd expansion compared to previous expansions, Peel says. Moreover, the level of heifer slaughter and heifers in feedlots in 2024 suggests that the replacement heifer inventory in 2025 is likely to show modest growth at best. Forecasts show a 2% year-over-year increase in beef replacement heifers in 2025. At that level, the beef cow herd is limited to stable numbers or a very minimal increase in 2025, he says. Beyond 2025, heifer retention could increase more and accelerate herd expansion beginning in 2026. But current conditions do not suggest a high likelihood of sharply accelerating heifer retention anytime soon.

The threat of continuing/redeveloping drought is one factor limiting the beginning of herd expansion at the current time, Peel says. Should developing drought conditions become a reality in the coming months with the return of La Niña, additional herd liquidation is likely. Any herd rebuilding could be pushed off further into the future, he says.

Some top analysts are expecting herd numbers to return to 2023 levels in the next three to four years if market conditions persist, while others believe cattle contraction will continue through 2027, says CoBank analyst Abbi Prins in a research brief. The duration of the latest beef cow decline has raised concerns for large companies and beef stakeholders, says the brief. The number of U.S. beef cows have retracted over the past five years to its lowest point since 1961 at 28.2 million head, according to USDA.

Widespread drought played a large role in the cattle squeeze, Prins says. The severely dry conditions damaged pastures and lowered hay supplies as market factors drove up prices for cows, feed and inputs. While more favorable weather has improved forage production this year and feed costs begin to come down, cattle prices remain strong, incentivizing ranchers to continue selling their animals, Prins says.

Right now, it is not worth the risk to hold on to heifers as the potential upside of selling the calf has an immediate pay off, Prins says, noting a \$300 upside to sell rather than raise calves. Should cattle prices stay strong, CoBank estimates it could be 2026 or 2027 before heifer retention rates and the beef cow population pick up. — **Steve Kay, WJL columnist**

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

WHAT UT'S PUBLIC LANDS SUIT MEANS FOR THE FUTURE

ments on over 3 million acres in southern Utah and another million along the Arizona strip. It has also resulted in the BLM's new Public Lands Rule, which allows environmental groups to restore land currently leased for agriculture and mineral extraction. The state's lawsuit is a counteroffensive in the ongoing effort to push back against these policies.

My concern is less about this lawsuit and more about the wider conflict. The state's proactivity preparing for the lawsuit to succeed is impressive. But are we prepared to lose?

If the Supreme Court refuses to hear this lawsuit or rules in favor of the federal government, the BLM will still control 34% of Utah's land, and environmentalists will push even harder to restrict recreation, grazing and mineral development. The president will continue to have unfettered authority to create national monuments, and—based on my conversations with friends working on policy in other states—very few people outside the West will care.

The most productive course of action would be for nongovernmental entities aligned with the state's values to lobby for reforms to public lands at a federal level. There needs to be a robust public relations effort as well. Congress is, by design, inefficient at making major changes, but it is the only way to ensure that reforms are not easily undone by an incoming president, as was the case in 2021 when President Joe Biden reinstated Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments.

We have the right players to move public land reform through Congress. The late Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) was successful both at securing resources for public lands and protecting them from federal overreach, and we will likely soon have Rep. John Curtis (R-UT-03) as Hatch's successor in the Senate. Curtis has shown an uncanny ability to build relationships with members of Congress from other states and from across the aisle. He is also no stranger to public lands issues, having worked out a deal on public lands in Emery County, among other projects.

Regardless of the outcome of this lawsuit, there are opportunities to protect multiple use and make public land management more collaborative. But we will need to look beyond the borders of our state and party, build relationships, and play the game at a new level. — **Andrew Sandstrom, consultant for environmental advocacy campaigns, Utah News Dispatch**



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

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Hearing process could boost Sites Reservoir project

The plan to build California's first new major reservoir in decades advances as the state considers whether to issue a water-right permit for the proposed Sites Reservoir, an off-stream water storage project that could store up to 1.5 million acre-feet annually.

The California State Water Resources Control Board recently began a public hearing process on the project's water-right permit application. Hearings will continue through October.

Representatives of agriculture, water districts and government agencies spoke at the first session Aug. 19 and urged the state water board to approve the water-right permit to advance the project.

"After a half-century of conceptual proposals and a quarter-century more of hard study, California is finally ready to build Sites, and not a moment too soon," said Alexandra Biering, senior policy advocate for the California Farm Bureau. Biering noted projections estimating climate change will cause the Sierra Nevada snowpack to erode by as much as 60% by the end of this century, resulting in a 10% reduction of water supplies.

An approved water-right

permit from the state water board would give the Sites Project Authority, a joint-powers authority of Sacramento Valley irrigation agencies, water districts, cities and counties legal permission to divert water under certain conditions.

Described as a critical component of the state's long-term water supply strategy, the proposed reservoir would divert and store water from the Sacramento River and two of its tributaries for future statewide uses, including for agriculture, municipal, and fish and wildlife protection.

The California Water Code says the state water board must determine that water is available after other needs are met, including those of senior water-rights holders and instream flows needed to protect water quality and fish and wildlife in the Sacramento River and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

The board must also consider whether the intended water use would be reasonable and beneficial and if approving the application is in the public interest.

As part of a water-availability analysis looking at a range of scenarios, the Sites Project Authority reported there is enough un-

appropriated water in the Sacramento River and the delta system to support Sites Reservoir. The amount of available water would vary from year to year, but scenarios show an annual average of 658,000 acre-feet.

The analysis also evaluates the delta watershed and assumes implementation of a 55% unimpaired flow requirement in the Sacramento Valley and delta, with the first 55% percent of water allocated to the environment and the remaining 45% allocated to water-right holders.

In last week's first day of hearings, Nicole Kuenzi, presiding hearing officer at the state water board's Administrative Hearings Office, said the purpose of the proceeding is to receive information that the board should consider in determining whether to approve the authority's water-right application and to identify any terms or conditions.

"My role here today and in the following months as this hearing progresses is to conduct the hearing in an efficient, orderly and fair manner, and through that process develop the evidentiary record that the board will rely on when making a final decision," Kuenzi said.

In her remarks during the session, Biering said the process to build new water storage in the state "has never been more difficult than it is today." She added, "Sites has always represented one of California's greatest water storage opportunities with the least potential impacts."

Also testifying was David Guy, president of the Northern California Water Association, which represents water suppliers and local governments in Northern California. "This is a time to get really excited about the future of California water," he said.

"Sites Reservoir is something that will benefit everybody who has an interest in water in the northern part of the state and in the southern part of the state," Guy testified.

He said Sites Reservoir would provide benefits in helping California adapt to climate change by storing water for use in dry years and helping with flood protection. He said the project would also integrate infrastructure with nature-based solutions, deliver flows with function and ensure mutual accounting by water agencies.

Joshua Rahm, California Walnut Commission global director of technical and

regulatory affairs, said the proposed reservoir would increase flexibility by capturing and storing water in wet years for use in dry years.

"Our support for this project is definitely focused on the mindfulness of the safety, health, sustainability and environmental stewardship of all areas of potential impact combined with the positive impacts," Rahm said.

Adam Borchard, director of government and public policy at the Fresno-based California Fresh Fruit Association, urged the state water board to approve the water right. He called Sites "the largest investment in water storage in California by federal, state or local authorities in nearly half a century."

"The Sites Reservoir project represents a strategic asset in California's water supply and management portfolio," Borchard said. "It will help provide resiliency to our state's water resources in response to the myriad effects of climate change."

Adam Nickels, deputy regional director for the California-Great Basin Region of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, said Sites "has the potential to serve as a powerful new tool for

water users throughout California." More than \$430 million in federal funds has been approved for the project, and more may yet be appropriated.

The Sites Reservoir project is estimated to cost \$4 billion. According to the authority, it is 100% funded by local, state and federal dollars. Through the 2014 Proposition 1 water bond, the state has committed \$875 million for public benefits such as environmental protection, flood control and recreation.

The state water board's evidentiary hearing took place at the California Environmental Protection Agency headquarters in Sacramento and virtually. During this opening phase of the multisession proceeding, environmental groups are expected to voice opposition to the proposed project, which some groups argue would affect water quality and temperature in the lower Sacramento River and delta.

The state water board is expected to consider approval of the water-right permit in 2025. Construction of Sites Reservoir could begin in 2026. —

Christine Souza, Ag Alert assistant editor, California Farm Bureau Federation

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2024 – GALT, CALIFORNIA



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

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THE VIEWPOINT

with Landon Gates

This exclusive column found only in WLJ features unique perspectives from some of the nation's top producers, marketers, animal health experts, economists and more.

Growing up in northeastern Colorado, Landon Gates dreamed of becoming a large animal veterinarian. Yet life has a way of steering people onto unexpected paths, and he would eventually find himself serving agriculture in a way he never imagined—through the world of politics and policy.

Landon's uncle, a small animal veterinarian, inspired him to spend time working with the veterinarians at a feedlot in Yuma, CO, with the aspirations of becoming a large animal veterinarian.

After high school, Landon enrolled at Northeastern Junior College and joined the livestock judging team. Later, he transferred to Colorado State University (CSU), where his focus remained on veterinary medicine and livestock judging. He realized that while being a veterinarian was a noble profession, there was much more to agriculture than tending to cattle.

"So, I began to look for something else to do," Landon told WLJ. "I considered graduate school in microbiology and contemplated a few other things, albeit briefly, and then I sort of fell into an internship opportunity with the Colorado Cattlemen's Association (CCA)."

During the 2002 legislative session, Landon worked closely with the association's lobbyist, gaining firsthand experience in how policy shapes the lives of farmers and ranchers. He quickly learned that agriculture wasn't just about tending to crops and livestock; it was also about navigating a complex web of laws and regulations impacting every industry facet.

After his internship at the association, Landon worked on a few ballot initiatives as a legislative aide for a Denver councilwoman and started lobbying for Colorado Farm Bureau. He worked four legislative sessions for the farm bureau, and in January 2010, he and a friend started Capitol Focus LLC, a firm specializing in political consulting and legislative lobbying.

Landon and his firm have built a reputation of skilled lobbyists with a large client base, including CCA, Colorado Corn Growers Association, Colorado Wheat Growers Association, Colorado Wool Growers Association and the Colorado Dairy Farmers, among others. He also became deeply involved in water is-

sues, representing the Republican River Water Conservation District, which ensures Colorado meets its compact obligations with neighboring states Nebraska and Kansas.

Policy issues

In this past legislative session in Colorado, Landon said the firm worked on issues related to the Colorado River Basin and water issues in the state. Additionally, they worked on whether pesticide regulation should remain in state control or governed by municipalities.

"It was the third or fourth attempt by the environmental community to implement a local control regulatory scheme, which the ag industry is united against and in opposition to, along with others that have an interest in pesticide use," Landon said. "Whether that be the greenhouse and nursery industry, the landscaping industry, the golf course folks, or the structural pest control industry. The environmental community is relentless on that issue, so we expect to see more pesticide legislation in the 2025 legislative session."

Landon said the firm also dealt with a bill introduced by Rep. Tammy Story (D-25-Jefferson County) that proposed changes to how agricultural producers are compensated for livestock losses due to depredation. The proposed legislation, sparked by the controversy over wolf reintroduction, would have required producers to implement non-lethal measures before receiving compensation for losses from wolf depredation, marking a significant shift in policy compared to how compensation has traditionally been handled.

Landon anticipates that the upcoming legislative session will address the issue of transporting wild horses in cases where they are not being sent to a sanctuary or shelter, as previous sessions have brought up measures.

Current ballot initiatives

Landon is working as a consultant on the "Hands Off My Hat" campaign to defeat the Denver ballot measure prohibiting the manufacture, distribution, display, sale or trade of animal fur products in the city. He also is consulting for the "Stop the Ban" campaign to stop a ballot initiative that would prohibit slaughterhouses within Denver city limits.

"The goal of the proponents is to end animal agriculture, and they've stated very clearly that they want livestock producers to transition away from animal agriculture to a plant-based production system and they think it can be done and



Landon Gates

Courtesy photo

not disruptive to the industry," Landon said.

Landon explained that many Denver voters are unaware that a slaughterhouse still operates in their city, Superior Farms, located near the National Western Stock Show grounds. This sheep-processing facility, with deep historical roots in the area, is the last re-

maining one of many that once existed.

The slaughterhouse ban ballot initiative targets the plant, which provides 160 jobs predominantly filled by minority workers, including Hispanic, Latino, African and Muslim employees. The facility is also significant for its halal processing, which requires specific

methods to meet religious dietary laws. Landon cited a study conducted by CSU, which found that should the facility close, the economic impact would be a loss of over \$861 million and 2,700 in jobs in the state and industries that support agriculture.

"We all like the thought of eating local and it doesn't get more local than your lamb being raised on the Western Slope, fed here on the Eastern Slope, and processed and harvested here right in our backyard," Landon said.

The other Denver measure Landon is working to defeat is the measure by animal rights groups to prohibit certain animal fur products in city limits. He said the broad definition of "fur" in the measure could have far-reaching impacts beyond expensive coats. The measure may prohibit the sale of cowboy hats, many of which are made with beaver or rabbit fur, as well as fly fishing lures that use real fur.

This raises concerns about how the measure could damage Denver's Western heritage, which is deeply tied to traditions like the National Western Stock Show, a cornerstone of

the city's identity. Additionally, the Native American exemption in the measure is viewed by critics as discriminatory, as it only applies to official members of recognized Tribes, potentially excluding other indigenous groups.

Landon said he remains cautious but optimistic that these measures will be defeated. He encourages producers to become involved in campaigns to defeat these measures and issues such as pesticide regulations, water issues and horse transportation.

"As the population grows and urban centers grow, rural representation decreases over time, and so it means agriculture producers and those that live in rural Colorado have to double our efforts to get our message across," Landon said.

Landon's path has been anything but straightforward, but it led him to a place where he could make a real difference. Whether advocating for the agricultural community in the state legislature or working to defeat harmful ballot measures, Landon Gates knows he is exactly where he was meant to be. — Charles Wallace, WLJ contributing editor

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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.)

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

Sept. 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.

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

SD high court sides with landowners in pipeline challenge

Lower courts in South Dakota erred in ruling Summit Carbon Solutions (SCS) is a common carrier able to exercise eminent domain to acquire and inspect land for a planned 2,000-mile carbon pipeline, the South Dakota Supreme Court ruled recently.

In a 42-page ruling handed down in an ongoing legal fight mounted by more than 50 landowners in the state, the state's highest court said the company had not presented enough evidence to show it was a common carrier.

Under state law, a common carrier holds itself out to the general public as transporting a commodity for hire. The South Dakota Supreme Court said it was unclear whether the carbon dioxide that would be transported from ethanol plants to a sequestration site would be a commodity.

South Dakota landowners along the proposed route in the eastern part of the state along with SCS, filed six lawsuits dating back to 2022.

The company sued for access to survey various tracts of land, while landowners challenged the company's status as a common carrier. SCS was granted summary judgment on all the issues in the cases filed and the landowners filed an appeal.

The state's supreme court sent the cases back to the lower courts for further proceedings on the common car-

rier question.

"We reverse the circuit courts' grants of summary judgment on the common carrier issues," the South Dakota Supreme Court said.

"SCS's ability to conduct pre-condemnation surveys depends on whether it is a common carrier vested with the power of eminent domain. However, in this early phase of the litigation, the record does not demonstrate that SCS is holding itself out to the general public as transporting a commodity for hire."

Brian E. Jorde, an attorney with Domina Law Group in Omaha representing landowners in the case, told DTN the landowners want the pipeline to avoid South Dakota.

"South Dakotans are thankful for the supreme court's thoughtful analysis and siding with landowners and it is gratifying for landowner to be vindicated by the supreme court after three years of fighting these issues," he said. "The ball is in Summit's court, but we suggest routing around South Dakota."

SCS response

SCS told DTN it was evaluating the ruling and "looks forward to providing the information requested to the district court that reaffirms our role as a common carrier, and that CO2 is a commodity."

The company said the eco-

nomic effect of carbon capture, utilization and storage on rural America is "significant" and will "greatly benefit agriculture and farmers."

The pipeline is expected to capture carbon from 57 ethanol plants in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota.

Summit was initially created to capture the 45Q tax credit for carbon capture and sequestration. The Inflation Reduction Act, signed into law two years ago expanded and extended the value of the 45Q credit. At the same time, ethanol plants are trying to qualify for the 45Z Clean Fuels Tax Credit and the sustainable aviation fuels market.

Summit has faced orga-

nized opposition in multiple states and saw initial permit requests denied. The company still plans to launch construction in 2025 and begin operations in 2026.

Court's opinion

A legal question presented to the court was whether land inspections conducted by pipeline companies are unconstitutional takings of property without just compensation.

In its ruling, the court held that state law authorizes "only minimally invasive superficial inspections" of land by SCS.

"Based on this interpretation, we conclude that the limited pre-condemnation surveys authorized by SDCL

21-35-31, as strictly interpreted herein, do not violate the federal or state constitutions," the court said.

The pipeline project is expected to disturb about 6,550 acres in South Dakota, consisting of mostly crop production and pastureland acres in Beadle, Brown, Clark, Codington, Edmunds, Hamlin, Hand, Hyde, Kingsbury, Lake, Lincoln, McCook, McPherson, Miner, Minnehaha, Spink, Sully and Turner counties.

Road ahead

Litigation ahead will focus on whether SCS is considered a common carrier under eminent domain law. The court said landowners have the right to discovery in the

case to answer that question.

"Based on the record before us, SCS has also failed to establish that the CO2 featured in this case is a commodity," the state supreme court said. "SCS notes that the federal government and several states including Louisiana, Oklahoma, Mississippi, North Dakota and Nebraska, classify CO2 as a commodity."

The company argued that CO2-based products including fertilizers could be worth up to \$1 trillion by 2030, making CO2 a commodity. Even CO2 stored underground would have value in carbon-offset markets and in federal subsidies. — **Todd Neeley, DTN environmental editor**

Public invited to see 'good fire' at CA fair

At the Central Coast Good Fire Fair in Santa Cruz County, CA, fire professionals will demonstrate how prescribed burning is used to manage natural ecosystems.

Learn the how, where and why fire is used to manage the natural landscape at the fair on Oct. 5. The fair is free and open to the public from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park in Felton in Santa Cruz County. The event is sponsored by the University of California (UC) Agriculture and Natural Resources Fire

Network and California State Parks.

"You can witness a live prescribed fire in the redwood grove and learn about using fire in our coastal ecosystems," said Barb Satink Wolfson, UC Cooperative Extension fire advisor for San Benito, Santa Clara, Monterey and Santa Cruz counties.

Representatives of California State Parks, CALFIRE, indigenous groups and the Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association are scheduled to talk about how they work with

fire.

The Good Fire Fair will offer educational activities for children and adults:

- Learn how to safely build, tend and extinguish a campfire.
- Watch live burns of piles and redwood understory growth (likely between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., depending on the weather).
- Savor sandwiches, burgers and Venezuelan food from local food trucks.
- Observe demonstrations and visit informative booths.

- Learn how to make your home more resilient to wildfire.
- Test your fire knowledge and win prizes

"Kids will get to see a wildland fire engine up close, try fire science experiments and play educational games. Bring a camera," said Satink Wolfson. "Knowledge feeds the soul, but two of Santa Cruz's best food trucks will feed your hunger!"

The event is free, but parking at the park is \$10. No registration required. — **UC Agriculture and Natural Resources**



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10	1.1	84	152	26	1.33	1.05	53	220	338										

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CED	BW	WW	YW	Mk	MA	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C	CED	BW	WW	YW	Mk	MA	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C
7	2.9	101	164	14	1.05	0.87	55	184	294										

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SIRE: Poss Rawhide										MGS: GB Fireball 672									
CED	BW	WW	YW	Mk	MA	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C	CED	BW	WW	YW	Mk	MA	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C
9	1.3	86	151	25	1.42	0.98	34	219	318										



SIRE: DB Iconic G95										MGS: Monumental 6056B									
CED	BW	WW	YW	Mk	MA	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C	CED	BW	WW	YW	Mk	MA	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C
5	1.6	91	144	29	1.44	0.43	59	177	289										



SIRE: G A R Freedom										MGS: EXAR Jet Fuel 9706B									
CED	BW	WW	YW	Mk	MA	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C	CED	BW	WW	YW	Mk	MA	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C
9	1.5	89	151	20	1.13	0.97	56	221	343										



SIRE: G A R Freedom										MGS: Quaker Hill Rampage 0A36									
CED	BW	WW	YW	Mk	MA	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C	CED	BW	WW	YW	Mk	MA	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C
14	0.1	81	145	9	1.15	0.86	34	202	296										

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Plan finalized to kill thousands of barred owls around Northwest

The federal government will move ahead with plans to kill tens of thousands of barred owls in Washington, Oregon and California to protect threatened spotted owls.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced to adopt a controversial barred owl management strategy that calls for lethal removal of the birds by shooting them with shotguns and, in some cases, capturing and euthanizing them.

Barred owls are native to the eastern U.S. but began expanding their range in the

early 1900s and arrived in the Pacific Northwest around the 1970s. The invasive birds prefer the same habitat as spotted owls and compete with them for the same foods.

They are blamed as a primary cause for declines in northern spotted owl populations—along with habitat loss from logging on non-federal lands and wildfires.

“As wildlife professionals, we approached this issue carefully and did not come to this decision lightly,” said Kessina Lee, USFWS Oregon office state supervisor.

“Spotted owls are at a crossroads, and we need to manage both barred owls and habitat to save them. This isn’t about choosing one owl over the other,” Lee added. “If we act now, future generations will be able to see both owls in our Western forests.”

Animal welfare groups deride the plan as costly, unworkable and inhumane.

“The Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing the largest-ever plan to slaughter raptors anywhere in the world, and by a country mile,” Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal

Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy, said in a statement.

“The agency is stepping onto a killing treadmill that it can never dismount. The two outcomes likely to result from the plan are a massive body count of barred owls and no long-term improvement in the survival prospects of spotted owls,” Pacelle added.

It would not be open season on the birds.

No public hunting of barred owls is allowed under the strategy and it is illegal for anyone to kill a barred owl without authorization under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. And, under the plan, no removals of the birds will be permitted outside approved areas in the Northwest and California.

The killing would be done by “professional removal specialists” who meet certain training and competency requirements, including an ability to differentiate barred owls from spotted owls, which are known for a distinctive, four-note “hoot, hoot-hoot

hooooooot” territorial defense song.

USFWS estimates a maximum of about 15,600 invasive barred owls per year could be removed over 30 years, which adds up to between 400,000 and 500,000 of the birds if the strategy is maintained over three decades.

At most, the federal agency says the strategy would result in the annual removal of less than one-half of 1% of the current North American barred owl population.

In the near term, plans call for a maximum of 2,450 of the owls to be killed in year one of the project, 11,309 in year two, and around 15,600 in year three.

The northern spotted owl was designated as “threatened” under the federal Endangered Species Act nearly 25 years ago.

In the Pacific Northwest, it is known for its central role in the “timber wars” of the 1980s and 1990s, which pitted environmentalists concerned about saving old-growth trees against loggers. This conflict

eventually led to the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan, which put new protections in place for forests where the spotted owl lives.

USFWS says that the rate of spotted owl population declines showed signs of improvement until about 2008 but accelerated soon after and that the downturn coincided with the expansion of barred owls into spotted owls’ territory.

Washington’s departments of Fish and Wildlife and Natural Resources are listed by USFWS as cooperating agencies in the barred owl removal plan.

Neither state agency immediately responded to requests for comment about how they might participate.

Washington Public Lands Commissioner Hilary Franz, who leads the Department of Natural Resources, has previously voiced skepticism about the plan, suggesting it could have “unintended consequences” and that it might be “unworkable.” — **Bill Lucia, Washington State Standard**

WY leaders disappointed with BLM Rock Springs plan

ROCK SPRINGS (from page 1)

As a result, 2,515 acres out of approximately 3.6 million acres remain closed to grazing.

• Regarding energy and mineral development, the draft plan proposed to close 61% of acres to oil and gas development, but the proposed RMP reduces it to 30%. Coal leasing closures in the proposed management plan primarily focus on resource concerns, targeting areas such as the Sweetwater County Growth Management Area, the Little Mountain ACEC and the Superior and McKinnon groundwater recharge areas.

• In the draft EIS, the BLM suggested establishing and protecting a 10-mile-wide corridor for all National Historic and Scenic Trails, including those eligible for designation but not yet recognized. However, the proposed RMP now limits these corridor protections to only congressionally designated trails and permits certain developments within the corridors, provided that mitigation efforts can minimize impacts on the trails.

Mixed reactions

Lawmakers criticized the proposed plan, calling it a land grab and failing to meet the goal of multiple uses on public land. Environmentalists said it’s a step in the right direction but doesn’t go far enough.

“The BLM’s recently announced Rock Springs Resource Management Plan is only the latest in a series of land grabs that punishes Wyoming and the entire West,” Sen. Cynthia Lummis (R-WY) said. “Locking up lands in southwestern Wyoming will deliver a seismic blow to Wyoming’s economy, devastating our communities and further emboldening unelected bureaucrats in Washington to prioritize political pandering over the economic and environmental stability of the region.”

Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY) criticized the RMP, saying that it hinders responsible natural resource development and threatens Wyoming’s economy and way of life. He acknowledged the efforts of

those in Wyoming who worked to improve the original proposal but argued that the final plan still imposes significant challenges to the state’s natural resource management.

“The Biden-Harris administration is pushing Wyoming off an economic cliff with nothing more than a tattered parachute,” Barrasso said.

In a statement, Gordon expressed disappointment that the FEIS fails to meet Wyoming’s expectations for multiple-use public land management.

“Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, the FEIS for the proposed Rock Springs RMP does not meet Wyoming’s expectations of durable, multiple use of public lands,” Gordon said. “Much work is left to ensure the BLM is staying within the bounds of state and county policies, as well as federal law. Additionally, we await further information to see how this RMP overlaps with the announcement of the sage-grouse management plan amendment and BLM implementation of their recent Public Lands Rule.”

Gordon said his office would thoroughly review the proposed management plan, file a protest where the task force’s comments were ignored, and highlight decisions inconsistent with Wyoming law.

Julia Stubble, Wyoming state director for The Wilderness Society, said the plan balances meeting local infrastructure and energy needs while fulfilling the responsibility to preserve lands for future generations and safeguard Wyoming’s way of life. However, she noted there are still some concerns with the plan.

“The Rock Springs RMP doesn’t adequately protect stopover and highly used portions of big game migration corridors and we believe the Red Desert to Hoback corridor deserves greater recognition,” Stubble said. “While the plan would largely disallow oil and gas and mining in the Northern Red Desert and Big Sandy Foothills, the entirety of these landscapes should be off-limits. But overall, the plan represents a step toward more holistic and thoughtful management of these public lands.”

A 30-day protest period and the concurrent 60-day governor’s consistency review began on Aug. 23. — **Charles Wallace, WLJ contributing editor**

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CO wolf pack to be relocated after depredations

Following months of attacks on livestock in and around Grand County, state wildlife officials said they “have begun an operation” to relocate the first wolf pack to be established as part of efforts that began last winter to reintroduce gray wolves to Colorado.

The animals being relocated include two mated adults and the three pups they had this spring. By reproducing in the wild, the wolves, which were captured in Oregon and released by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) officials late last year, became the first established wolf pack to result from the state’s reintroduction program, and were named the Copper Creek Pack.

“The decision to capture and relocate the Copper Creek Pack was made with the careful consideration of multiple factors and feedback from many different stakeholders,” CPW Director Jeff Davis said in a press release. “Our options in this unique case were very limited, and this action is by no means a precedent for how

CPW will resolve wolf-livestock conflict moving forward.”

The state’s wolf reintroduction program fulfills a voter-approved 2020 ballot initiative to reintroduce the animals in Colorado in the name of restoring ecological balance. The measure, Proposition 114, was passed by a narrow 51% to 49% margin, and though it includes provisions to compensate livestock producers for depredations, it has been bitterly opposed by Colorado’s ranching industry.

At least 15 cattle and nine sheep are confirmed to have been killed by wolves in Grand and Routt counties following last year’s reintroductions, according to CPW data. The agency and local livestock producers say that many of the depredations were caused by the Copper Creek Pack. In July, CPW denied a request submitted in May by the Middle Park Stockgrowers Association for a permit to kill wolves deemed to be chronic depredators.

In an Aug. 14 letter to CPW and Gov. Jared Polis, the Colorado Cattlemen’s Association and local livestock organizations criticized that decision and wrote of their “deep concerns regarding the current direction and implementation of Colorado’s wolf reintroduction and management program.”

“Since the inception of the wolf reintroduction program, we have actively engaged and cooperated in good faith while also expressing our concerns throughout the process,” the letter read. “However, our concerns have been consistently overlooked. If the current trajectory of wolf management persists, it will become increasingly difficult for us to continue our cooperation.”

The advocacy group Defenders of Wildlife sharply criticized the state’s decision to relocate the pack, calling it a “risky, short-term solution” and accusing livestock producers and CPW officials of not pursuing more effective means of nonlethal control and deterrence.

“This decision is being driven by politics, is not rooted in science-based management and stands to significantly delay the progress of the reintroduction program,” Mike Senatore, Defenders of Wildlife’s senior vice president of conservation programs. “All parties involved in the events that led to this deeply flawed decision should be held accountable for failure to effectively utilize proven coexistence tools.”

A total of 10 reintroduced wolves were released in Grand and Summit counties in December 2023 and have ranged widely in the mountains north of the Interstate 70 corridor since then. CPW said it would not disclose additional details of the Copper Creek Pack’s relocation “for the safety of these animals and staff.”

“The ultimate goal of the operation is to relocate the pack to another location while we assess our best options for them to continue to contribute to the successful restoration of wolves in Colorado,” Davis said. — **Chase Woodruff, Colorado Newsline**

LEGAL LEDGER

Bill prohibits Chinese land ownership

The No American Land for Communist China Act, introduced by Sens. Mike Crapo (R-ID) and Cynthia Lummis (R-WY), would prevent China from purchasing land adjacent to federal lands. The senators said the legislation would protect western states from China buying lands next to federal lands, which could harm critical mineral and energy production on those lands. “Allowing foreign adversaries to purchase our land is like welcoming a fox into the hen house, and I am introducing this legislation to preserve our national security and prevent the CCP from acquiring American land to spy on our government,” Lummis said. Sens. John Barrasso (R-WY) and Tom Cotton (R-AR) also co-sponsored the legislation.

Deal secured to retain CA meat plant workers

California Attorney General Rob Bonta entered into a settlement with Western Valley Meat Company, an affiliate of Central Valley Meat, to resolve concerns with the company’s plan to purchase Cargill’s processing plant in Fresno, CA. Under the settlement, Western Valley Meat must keep the plant operating for at least one year and retain at least 700 workers during that time period. “The Central Valley has fed California and the U.S. for decades, and today I am proud to have secured the continued operation of an important processing plant and protection of 700 jobs for at least 12 months,” Bonta said in a statement. Western Valley Meat announced in spring 2024 that it would acquire the plant, raising competition concerns and the risk that the plant would be completely shut down.

Suit against Corporate Transparency Act

Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund (R-CALF) USA joined a lawsuit challenging the Corporate Transparency Act. The suit alleges the act is an unconstitutional imposition on private information. “This law was intended to identify those who already don’t follow the law when it comes to money laundering, terrorism funding and other illicit financial activities,” said R-CALF USA CEO Bill Bullard in a statement. “Rather than put money or time into law enforcement or detective work to find these alleged criminals, the government chose instead to place a significant burden on law-abiding small business owners.” The legislation went into effect this January and requires certain businesses to submit a beneficial ownership information report to the government.

Idaho AG will appeal Lava Ridge decision

Idaho Attorney General Raúl Labrador announced his office will appeal a decision to approve the proposed Lava Ridge Project near Twin Falls, ID. “I think it’s good that the counties, and even some local members of the community, are going to be filing lawsuits,” Labrador said during the Idaho Legislature’s Committee on Federalism meeting held recently. “I’ve never discouraged them to do that.” Magic Valley Energy originally proposed to build up to 400 wind turbines on Bureau of Land Management public lands in southern Idaho, but the latest approved plan reduced the number to 241.

Feds to appeal grizzly plan decision

The U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced their intent to appeal a court decision that found their management plan in Montana’s Flathead National Forest illegal. In March, a district court found the agencies did not examine the plan’s impact on grizzly bears and bull trout, and in June the court found additional impacts to grizzlies from existing plans. Earthjustice challenged the Flathead National Forest Plan on behalf of Friends of the Wild Swan and Swan View Coalition. “The Court was correct finding the Flathead and Fish and Wildlife Service at fault, they should be prioritizing removing roads, not building new ones,” said Arlene Montgomery of Friends of the Wild Swan.

Bill requires wildlife connectivity plans

The California Senate passed the Room to Roam Act, which would require cities and counties to protect wildlife connectivity in their land use plans. Assembly Bill (AB) 1889 directs officials to minimize harm to wildlife movement as part of their long-term planning efforts by using practices such as “wildlife-friendly fencing” and lighting. “California has more threatened and endangered species than any other state,” said Mari Galloway, California director at the Wildlands Network. “AB 1889 is a critical tool to help our biodiversity through bridging the gap between local land-use and wildlife habitat needs.” The bill awaits the governor’s approval.

Second person charged in cattle theft

A federal jury returned a criminal indictment charging Clint Clifford Sicking of Muenster, TX, for his role in a \$780,000 livestock theft scheme. From April 2018 to October 2022, Sicking allegedly conspired with William Dalton Edwards of Mount Airy, NC, to defraud livestock markets in North Carolina, Texas, Oklahoma and Virginia. The pair purchased cattle from North Carolina sale barns, wrote non-sufficient funds checks, and then resold the cattle in Texas and Oklahoma. Allegedly, more than 900 head of cattle worth more than \$780,000 were stolen. Sicking is charged with conspiracy, which carries a maximum prison term of five years. He is also charged with bank fraud, a maximum sentence of 30 years in prison; one count of theft of livestock, two counts of interstate transportation of stolen livestock and two counts of sale and receipt of stolen livestock, which each carry a maximum of five years in prison.

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Computer model could mitigate cattle fever tick outbreaks

Since the early 1900s, eradicating cattle fever ticks has challenged surveillance and quarantine programs designed to protect the U.S. and Texas cattle industry.

Over the decades, scientists and specialists in state and federal regulatory programs overseeing the U.S. Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program have developed datasets that track a detailed history of detecting and eliminating cattle fever ticks.

Now, a team of Texas A&M AgriLife researchers is assimilating this information into an interactive, computer-based tool to identify ever-changing risks to prevent or mitigate cattle fever tick infestations.

The three-year project, Agricultural Biosecurity: Harnessing Data Fusion to Meet Emerging Challenges to Cattle Fever Tick Eradication in a Changing World, has received a \$600,000 grant from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Agricultural Biosecurity Program and is funded by the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, the nation's leading competitive grants program for agricultural sciences.

Texas A&M AgriLife Research project investigators are Pete Teel, Ph.D. and Taylor Donaldson, Ph.D., both in the Department of Entomology; and Rose Wang, Ph.D. and William Grant, Ph.D., professor, both in the Department of Ecology and Conservation Biology.

"The cattle fever tick issue is a constant challenge for Texas," Teel said. "It has a considerable history related to the development, security and sustainability of the cattle industry, and not just in the U.S. because of our international boundary with Mexico."

The advisory group includes representatives from the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinary Services, the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) and the regulatory agencies in charge of the U.S. Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program.

A long history of challenges

Only two species of cattle fever ticks, *Rhipicephalus annulatus* and *Rhipicephalus microplus*, can transmit

the pathogens that cause the highly fatal cattle disease, bovine babesiosis, or Texas cattle fever, Teel said.

"There are no drugs or vaccines to protect cattle from this disease, so we rely upon eliminating the vectors to prevent this problem," Teel said. "The best disease control is to prevent the tick vectors from reestablishing in the U.S. from Mexico, where both the ticks and disease pathogens remain endemic. At risk are U.S. cattle that are immunologically susceptible to infection through the bite of cattle fever ticks."

Teel said these ticks and the pathogens they transmit were once distributed throughout 13 southern states and Southern California. In 1906, the U.S. Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program was developed to eradicate them. By 1943, the USDA declared the ticks were eradicated in the U.S., except for a zone on the Texas-Mexico border. A per-

manent quarantine zone inside Texas along the Rio Grande was established to intercept infested animals and ticks that might come across from Mexico.

In Texas, APHIS operates the eradication program within the permanent quarantine zone, collaborating with the TAHC and other state and federal agencies outside the permanent zone for inspection, quarantine and other eradication efforts. APHIS estimates the annual economic benefit of the eradication program to the U.S. cattle industry is more than \$1 billion.

Harnessing data fusion

Both tick species and pathogens are still endemic in Mexico. Teel said the problem remains and has become more complicated in Texas because of several challenges. There have been land use and population

changes, and increased resistance to acaricides, the pesticides used to control ticks. Also, wildlife hosts such as white-tailed deer and nilgai antelope can spread ticks to a more extensive range because they are not confined within fence lines like cattle.

The research project uses these challenges as scenarios for risk analysis with data fusion, which integrates multiple data sources to produce information relevant to cattle fever tick eradication.

Teel said the research project's goal is to combine disparate datasets from the U.S. Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program to create a computer-based platform that better analyzes and identifies factors conducive for the spread of cattle fever ticks.

Some of these factors are changes in climate and weather patterns, vegetation, land use and fragmentation, and the risk of evolving strains of cattle fever ticks resistant to acaricides.

Some datasets have analytical models going back 65 years; others include real-time weather data, GPS mapping and outbreak investigations.

Another project goal is to develop an interactive tool that regulatory agencies' staff can use in the field on devices such as a tablet, phone or computer to access the new computer platform.

"Texas has developed different technologies and databases that track the history of these infestations and the interactions of how incidents occurred," Teel said. "There's a lot to be learned from the relationship of these datasets if they can be evaluated in conjunction with each other. Then we can develop risk assessments to be proactive about stopping tick incursions as quickly as possible."

— Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

USMEF sees potential for US red meat in Indonesia

U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) Chair Randy Spronk joined a team of representatives from the Indiana Soybean Alliance (ISA) to meet with prospective buyers and study market opportunities for U.S. soybeans and red meat in Indonesia.

USMEF member ISA, which has developed strong trade relationships providing soy protein in Indonesia, coordinated with USMEF staff on the day-long event.

USMEF ASEAN Director Sabrina Yin and Indonesia Representative Arrofi Satrio Alam set up a meet-and-greet for the ISA group with Indonesian meat importers and presented a market overview about opportunities and challenges for U.S. red meat in the region. USMEF then led the ISA group to Food and Hotel Indonesia, one of the ASEAN region's largest food trade shows.

"Indonesia has a young and growing population of 279 million and 13% of the population is not Muslim. That's about 36 million people, which for U.S. pork is an export market about the size of Canada," said Spronk. "There are opportunities to develop markets in regions of Indonesia where a high percentage of the population is non-Muslim."

U.S. pork market share in Indonesia grew from 11.5% in 2023 to 38.5% in 2024, largely due to reduced supply from the European Union. In the first half of 2024, U.S. pork exports to Indonesia increased 21% to 380 metric tons and 14% in

value to \$1.5 million. USMEF has been conducting promotions at upscale retail outlets in targeted markets to grow awareness and differentiate U.S. pork as high-quality.

"Indonesia is a long-term growth market and pork consumption is very low, even among the non-Muslim populations," Spronk added, "It reminds me of Colombia, where we helped double the consumption of pork over a 10-year period."

For U.S. beef, Spronk sees opportunities for middle meats in high-end foodservice and modern retail while underutilized cuts and variety meats have potential in foodservice and wet markets. Per capita beef consumption is also low, as much of the population has not experienced high-quality, grain-fed beef.

The main challenge for U.S. beef in Indonesia is the plant approval process, which is the most extensive of any country that requires establishment registration.

"With USMEF staff on the ground in Indonesia and USDA's support for the development of new markets through the Regional Agricultural Promotion Program, we have resources available to address trade barriers and develop market opportunities for U.S. red meat," Spronk added.

Spronk's inclusion on the ISA team was funded by the National Pork Board. Funding support for the activity was provided by Indiana Soybean Alliance, the Beef Checkoff, the National Pork Board and USDA's Market Access Program. — USMEF

Mohican West Complete Dispersal

SUNDAY, SEPT. 22, 2024 • 12:30 PM MT

140 Lots sell at Mohican West, Laurel, Montana

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The full picture of cow efficiency

“Improving production or output is important, but in most publications, controlling costs trumps increasing output,” said Dave Lalman, Oklahoma State University (OSU), during the 2024 Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Symposium June 11 in Knoxville, TN.

In commercial cow-calf operations, cow cost accounts for about 60-65% of the variation in profitability whereas increasing production (number of calves and calf weaning weight) accounts for about 35-40% of the variation in profitability.

Lalman’s presentation emphasized that efficiency in cow-calf operations goes beyond just boosting production; it’s about maximizing the return on every dollar invested and ensuring that resources are used as effectively as possible.

Economical forage production combined with efficient and timely forage

harvest (grazing) generally represents the lowest hanging fruit to improve whole-ranch profitability and efficiency. “Building a better cow might be viewed as getting better at something beef cattle do well already,” he explained. “Harvesting sunlight, carbon dioxide, and water to produce a delicious, nutritious human food source.”

The industry has applied aggressive selection pressure to increase post-weaning growth and carcass weight. This selection pressure has led to an increase in mature cow weight.

“In fact, over a 30-year career, assuming a ranch manager used herd sires representing only industry average growth and carcass weight, the operation’s cows would weigh about 230 pounds more today,” he said. “That increase in mature cow body weight relates to about a 13% reduction in

stocking capacity to apply the same grazing pressure on a given land base.”

Today, several breed associations produce and publish mature cow weight EPDs. This selection tool can be used to control mature cow size and indirectly, stocking capacity on the ranch.

Lalman provided data indicating a moderate, positive phenotypic correlation between forage diet intake and a concentrate-based diet intake over several experiments. Surprisingly, in these same studies, there was no relationship between forage diet weight gain and concentrate diet weight gain.

He summarized these studies by suggesting that feed intake EPDs provided by breed associations may work reasonably well to control feed intake in the cow herd. Secondly, he suggested that weight gain based on high-quality concentrate di-

ets may not reflect the ability of cattle to thrive in a forage environment, especially a low-quality forage environment.

Lalman shared data from 353 proven Angus sires (above 0.5 accuracy for feed intake and mature cow weight EPD). From this data he demonstrated that there are numerous proven Angus sires that are expected to produce females with above-average mature cow weight but below average feed intake. He also pointed out a few sires with below-breed average mature cow weight and above breed average feed intake.

“Mature cow weight is a good place to start to control feed intake in the cow herd, but mature weight is an indicator trait. It is a proxy used to produce an estimate of feed intake and it isn’t always an accurate estimate of an animal’s genetic capacity,” he said. “Similarly, we have

demonstrated that the feed intake EPD should work reasonably well for a cow consuming forage. Perhaps we should be using these two traits in combination to identify cows that have modest appetite but are highly productive.”

Lalman also shared data generated over the past few years in their research program at OSU related to the influence of milk yield on feed intake. In general, their group has found that beef cows’ forage intake is more sensitive to milk yield than previously thought and previously published by the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s Nutrient Requirements of Beef Cattle.

“Our data suggests that each 1-lb. increase in milk yield is associated with about 0.4 lbs. increase in feed intake,” he said. “The previously published coefficient was half that at 0.2.”

Lalman’s presentation provided a comprehensive overview of cow efficiency, emphasizing that building better cows isn’t just about boosting production—it’s about creating a balanced, cost-effective and sustainable operation. By focusing on cost control, thoughtful genetic selection, and efficient feed use, cattle producers can improve the overall efficiency of their operations, ultimately leading to greater profitability and long-term success. — **Laurén Gatz, BIF intern**

Cattle producers advised on how to manage risk

The question on the minds of many beef producers is, “How soon will the herd rebuild?” In the opinion of economists like Dan Basse, that won’t happen yet.

Basse, an economist for AgResource Company, recently discussed his thoughts during the Feeding Quality Forum in Dodge City, KS. He said it’s important to look at what is happening worldwide in agriculture to better understand what is happening locally. While those in the U.S. beef industry have been doing relatively well, there are some big struggles elsewhere.

“U.S. farm income is down 39% the last couple of years,” he said. “Brazilian bankruptcies are up more than 500%, Russian farmers are struggling because of the war, as are Ukrainian farmers. No matter where we look, we are seeing issues with the world economic landscape for the agricultural sector.”

Basse said that while it looks bad worldwide, the U.S. has some major struggles too, especially surrounding the government debt.

“We believe that there’s a bullish market ahead. We still don’t have herd rebuilding. We still see supplies tightening,” he said. “When you think about what’s forthcoming, it is something that I think you can be bullish about.”

Grain production increasing

On the feed side of the ledger, Basse said it’s important to look at the building blocks of agriculture in the three primary grains: wheat, corn and soybeans. The price trends on all have been going down. Even with some drought areas around the world, global grain production is still rising.

“It doesn’t matter if you’re a U.S. grain farmer, Brazilian grain farmer or a European grain farmer—they are all losing money,” he added. Net farm revenue is down \$69 billion, or 37%, which is the largest decline ever in a

two-year period. He added that losing China as the No. 1 importer of American agricultural goods has had a major effect on the bottom line.

Basse recommends cattle producers take advantage of cheaper feed while it’s available. U.S. corn yields are expected to be record high. Making this purchase will help manage risk on the feed side.

Meat prices stay high

U.S. meat prices are expected to hold steady at the current high price levels. When looking at the January U.S. cattle inventory, numbers were at their lowest levels since the 1960s.

“We need to hold back cows and heifers. When that happens, we take beef off the market, which gives us another two years of goodness,” Basse added. “I really wonder if, longer term, if we can build the cow herd back to numbers that we need going forward.”

He pointed out that the increase in breeding dairy cows to beef bulls to get dairy beef could help improve the amount of beef available. Cow slaughter numbers seem to be going down, which could help with the rebuilding, but it won’t happen overnight.

“For those of you in the cow-calf business, the times have never been better. The average estimate from universities and our calculations in terms of margins are now close to \$600 per head,” he said.

Retail beef prices continue to be high, and demand for the high-quality end is even better. The choice-select spread has narrowed significantly, but it seems that a lot of beef is being fed longer and thus increasing the quality grade.

Basse said that down the road, he is concerned with the overall volatility of the markets, and he suggested having good risk management in place to protect the investment. — **Jennifer Carrico, DTN senior livestock editor**



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Considerations for building cow inventories at current prices

Calf prices are encouraging cow-calf producers to increase cow inventories to have more calves to sell. Consider the following points when evaluating growing the cow herd.

Contribution margin
Is the operation fully stocked on owned land or on land leased by the acre? What are the current overhead costs including labor and equipment associated with owned and leased acres? If more cows can be added to the ranch to make it “fully stocked,” what is the additional “contribution to margin” that comes from adding a cow?

For example, if the ranch land is owned and could run 500 cows, but is currently stocked at 450 cows, adding 50 cows will not be expected to result in a significant increase in overhead costs for labor, equipment and land.

Adding 50 cows will, however, result in additional direct costs. Direct costs are those that increase whenever a cow is added to the herd. Examples of direct costs include vaccine, ear tags, salt and mineral, protein supplement, etc.

The revenue projected to be left after direct costs and cow depreciation are subtracted from the value of calves sold provides an estimate of added revenue. If this revenue is positive, the operation can then use it to help cover over-

head costs and increase net returns. If it is negative, it indicates added expense to the operation.

Marketing large groups or load lots

Selling calves in large groups or load lots, either off the ranch or through the auction market, can add significantly to market prices. Would the purchase of additional cows push the number of calves produced to a threshold level that would result in marketing opportunities that would command a higher total market price for all calves produced? What is the projected value of this?

Say we use a 90% calving rate, selling 550-pound calves at \$2.25/lb. with a \$0.05/lb. premium for the additional numbers where 20% of calves are retained as replacement heifers. The 450 cows would wean 405 calves, of which 315 would be sold and 90 heifers retained.

If 50 cows are added to the herd, then 500 cows would wean 450 calves. Of these calves, 100 heifers would be retained and 350 calves sold. If the increased size of the marketing group resulted in the suggested \$0.05/lb. premium, this would result in \$9,625 of added income above the \$43,312 of revenue from the additional 35 calves sold by increasing the herd by 50

cows.

Cow depreciation

What is the expected depreciation on the bred female that is purchased or retained in the herd at current market prices? Weigh-up cow prices are high now but will likely begin to fall once cattle inventories climb. Young cows purchased or retained now will likely be sold in the future as weigh-up cows at lower market prices. Will expected calf prices and cow productivity cover other cow costs plus this depreciation?

Taxes

Cows are classified as a “capital asset” and therefore they can be depreciated just like a piece of equipment or a building. The purchase of breeding stock can be used as a tool to manage tax liability. Would the purchase of cows provide tax benefits to the operation in 2024 and 2025? Visit with your tax professional when evaluating the costs and benefits of purchasing cows and using the depreciation to offset tax liability

Cash or borrowed money

The opportunity interest on working capital or the actual interest on borrowed money is significantly higher than it was just two years ago. If using working capital or borrowed money for cow herd expansion, what will the interest cost be? Assuming a lending rate of 6% interest two years ago

and the current rate of 10% for a three-year note, the annual payment on a \$1,000 note grew from \$374.69 to \$403.10.

Total interest paid over the life of the loan swelled from \$124 to \$209! That is \$85 more in total interest per \$1,000 borrowed! The market price for bred cows has appreciated by approximately \$1,000 per head since the spring of 2022 as well. Higher cow prices and higher interest rates have significantly increased the total amount of interest in the cost to produce a calf.

Business stage and plans

What is the position of the business currently? What are your plans and goals for the future? Is the operation in a growth mode or in a place of maturity and maintenance? Are there plans to exit the cow-calf enterprise in the next three to five years? Prices for all classes of cattle look to be strong for the next couple of years barring a “black swan” event.

For producers who are considering getting out of the cow-calf business in the near future, now may not be the time to retain bred heifers or buy breeding stock to expand but to begin the exiting process. This may include strategically selling breeding stock. — **Aaron Berger and Matt Stockton, Nebraska Extension**

STORY SHORTS

ICA announces wildfire relief fund

The Idaho Cattle Association (ICA) is now accepting donations for their Wildfire Relief Fund, which supports beef cattle producers affected by this year’s fires in Idaho. Established in 2022, the fund is entirely funded by private contributions and has been supported by AgWest Farm Credit, ICA fundraising and general donations. Applications for relief funding will be accepted until Oct. 15 for local associations, Idaho cattle producers, volunteer fire departments or any entities that assisted in combating the 2024 wildfires. Eligible expenses for relief might include emergency feed, transport, pasturing or fencing losses. Those wishing to donate to the fund or receive an application can contact the ICA’s office at 208-343-1615 or visit idahocattle.org. In related news, the Bureau of Land Management will conduct an emergency gather of wild horses from the Sands Basin and Four Mile herd management areas (HMAs) due to extensive fire damage. The Jump and Paddock fires, which burned 25,720 and 187,185 acres, respectively, have left insufficient vegetation to sustain the horses through winter, though no horses have been reported lost. The Sands Basin HMA near Marsing will see about 40 horses gathered, while the Four Mile HMA north of Emmett will see around 52 horses gathered.

MSF accepting wildfire relief donations

The Montana Stockgrowers Foundation (MSF) is accepting donations for its Wildfire Relief Fund, which aims to support Montana livestock producers affected by fires. Currently, donations are focused on the Remington Fire in southeastern Montana, which has burned over 196,000 acres as of Aug. 28. Financial contributions are needed most, but in-kind donations such as hay, feed and fencing supplies are also accepted. MSF is working with local coordinators to distribute funds and supplies and urges affected producers to report losses to emergency coordinators. Donations can be made online at tinyurl.com/47hzj7e8 or mailed to MT Stockgrowers Foundation, Attn: Wildfire Relief Fund, 420 N. California Helena, MT 59601.

Rodeo horses dead from tainted feed

Rodeo stock company Beutler & Son Rodeo Company in Canute, OK, recently suffered a tragic loss, with more than 70 horses dead due to suspected monensin poisoning from feed. Monensin, commonly used in cattle, sheep, goat and poultry feed, is lethal to horses, causing heart failure and death. There is no cure for monensin poisoning, and surviving horses often suffer permanent heart damage. According to Sports Illustrated, Beutler & Sons is known for producing top rodeo stock and has received numerous accolades, including the 1997 Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association’s (PRCA) Stock Contractor of the Year Award and a 2010 induction into the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame. Their stock regularly features in National Finals Rodeo events. According to the PRCA, Bennie and Rhett Beutler’s stock contracting firm is the primary livestock supplier for the Elk City Rodeo of Champions, which was set for Aug. 30-Sept. 1 at Beutler Bros. Arena in Elk City, OK. The rodeo community has come together to support the Beutlers in response to their recent losses.

Wolf removed in OR due to depredation

On Aug. 23, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) authorized the lethal removal of one wolf from the Logan Valley Pack in Grant County following four depredations that injured four cattle and killed two calves. Despite efforts by producers to reduce conflicts, including increased patrolling and moving cattle, lethal action was deemed necessary. On Aug. 24, ODFW removed a 63-pound juvenile wolf. Lethal removal actions have paused as the department assesses the impacts of removal on future conflicts.

CARB releases fact sheet on truck regulations

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has released a fact sheet detailing requirements for agricultural vehicles under CARB’s Clean Truck Check regulation. This regulation applies to most non-gasoline vehicles, including diesel, with a gross vehicle weight rating over 14,000 pounds operating in California. An “agricultural vehicle” is defined as one owned or operated by a farming business, used exclusively in agricultural operations, and transporting products to the first point of processing. Emissions compliance testing starts on Oct. 1, with deadlines beginning Jan. 1, 2025, to require passing a Clean Truck Check test from a credentialed tester. For additional information, visit tinyurl.com/2ptx3p85.

Famed NM ranch for sale

The family behind home-building giant D.R. Horton is selling one of America’s largest ranches, the Great Western Ranch in New Mexico, for \$142 million. The sale follows the recent death of D.R. Horton’s founder, Donald Ray Horton. According to the real estate firm Hall and Hall, the property spans approximately 504,801 acres and includes 225,582 deeded acres, along with state and Bureau of Land Management leases. Located near Quemado, NM, 150 miles west of Albuquerque, this operational cattle ranch supports 1,900 cow-calf pairs and includes eight homes, barns, wells and more. The area is famous for its abundant wildlife populations, with the ranch benefiting from a lease arrangement with Black Mountain Outfitters.



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NV lawmakers seek bills to end ‘use it or lose it’ water law

Nevada’s limited water resources and wide-open public lands will continue to be the source of legal and political battles for state lawmakers next year—whatever the outcome of November’s election.

When state lawmakers meet in Carson City next February, they will be asked to consider several—likely contentious—bills related to groundwater, agriculture, and public land use during their four-month legislative session.

The Joint Interim Standing Committee on Natural Resources recently voted to advance a number of bill draft requests that could deeply affect the state’s water use, including a bill that would essentially overturn Nevada’s “use it or lose it” water law.

Bill draft requests (BDRs) are not official bills, they are requests by lawmakers for a draft of the proposed bill they can further amend and discuss during the legislative session.

The most substantial BDR coming out of the committee would revise water law to encourage water conservation by allowing a water right holder to conserve their water under a water conservation plan without losing their water right. Under

der the proposal, water conserved under a conservation plan would be considered appropriated water, or water that is already being put to beneficial use.

The bill would substantially change Nevada water law, which states that water users can’t hold on to water rights if they do not intend to use it productively in a timely manner.

During the interim meeting, several members of the committee were reluctant to advance the bill draft request.

“We all know we have to address water and water conservation, but this particular bill is so encompassing,” said Republican Sen. Pete Goicoechea, who represents rural Senate District 19. “I really want to see some language before I vote to bring a bill like that forward and some of the ramifications that could come out of a bill like that.”

Washoe Republican Assemblyman Rich DeLong said he did not think next year’s legislative session was the right place to debate such a massive change in Nevada water law.

“I just don’t think the discussions have matured far enough to be able to put together a

BDR,” DeLong said. “I just think it’s too soon to do this.”

Democratic Assemblywoman Natha Anderson of Sparks, vice-chair of the Assembly on Natural Resources, said the bill was an important first step in putting language on the table and starting a conversation about reworking Nevada water law.

“It’s important that we start here, so that we can have that conversation and work on it throughout the next session. I don’t think our state is getting in any better position, water-wise, if we wait,” added Reno Democratic Assemblywoman Selena LaRue Hatch during the hearing. “We need to get started as soon as possible.”

Three-fourths of Nevada is currently experiencing abnormally dry conditions, with parts of the northwest corner of the state hitting moderate drought this summer, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

In several parts of the state, significantly more groundwater is extracted than is returned to aquifers each year, leading to declining water levels. About 56

of the state’s water basins are currently over-pumped, according to data compiled by the Legislative Counsel Bureau’s Research Division.

The Joint Interim Standing Committee on Natural Resources also voted to advance two bill draft requests for bills that would create and expand state programs to buy water rights from over-appropriated groundwater basins.

One of the bills would establish a dedicated account for the Voluntary Water Rights Retirement Program, which was allocated \$25 million in funding last year to address groundwater conflicts by purchasing groundwater rights from private landowners in over-pumped and over-appropriated basins. The bill draft request was recommended by the Las Vegas Valley Water District and Jeff Fontaine, the executive director of the Humboldt River Basin Water Authority.

The program has proved more successful than anticipated. While the program is only available to landowners in about half of Nevada’s counties,

water rights sellers offered to sell a total of \$65.5 million in water rights in a matter of months—about \$40 million more than available funding.

The other water purchasing bill—recommended by Goicoechea—would create the Nevada Water Buy-Back Initiative for the purpose of purchasing and retiring water rights in over-appropriated groundwater basins over the long term.

Another water conservation bill draft request advanced by the committee would extend the state’s time limit on temporary conversion of agricultural water rights for wildlife purposes from three to 10 years.

The Walker Basin Conservancy, a conservation group focused on Walker Lake, spoke in support of extending the time limit.

“The future of Walker Lake and the Walker River depends on Nevada statute supporting in-stream flow enhancement. Extending the time limit for temporary conversions of water rights to in-stream flows would provide more flexible management tools for our re-

gion while mitigating the administrative burdens of the change application process,” said Peter Stanton, the executive director of the Walker Basin Conservancy.

Part of protecting and managing Nevada’s groundwater is collecting better data on Nevada’s intricate network of groundwater aquifers, said lawmakers. The committee voted to advance a bill draft request for a bill that would appropriate \$1 million to the Division of Water Resources to update baseline science to improve the understanding of groundwater availability across the state.

Water managers in Nevada currently rely on water budget estimates developed 50-70 years ago, raising major concerns about the accuracy of groundwater availability, according to the Nevada Division of Water Resources. That uncertainty has become an even larger issue, as Nevada faces escalating economic growth and development pressures, including lithium mining and solar development. — **Jennifer Solis, Nevada Current**

Water contracts in place through 2045

WATER CHALLENGE (from page 1)

alleged for nearly 20 years that Central Valley Water Project contracts with agricultural, municipal and industrial water users endanger the delta smelt fish and Chinook salmon.

The Central Valley Water Project, operated by Reclamation, is the largest federal water management project in the country. Reclamation entered into settlement contracts in the 1960s with Sacramento River contractors, as well as contracts to supply water from the Delta-Mendota Canal. Upon the contracts’ expiration in the 2000s, Reclamation began consultation to renew the contracts, along with reviewing the potential environmental effects.

Since then, there has been extensive litigation.

“This case is of exceptional importance because the majority opinion effectively immunizes many long-term water contracts from further ESA review and compliance, despite their profound impact on species on the brink of extinction,” NRDC wrote in its July request for rehearing.

“The majority’s holding regarding discretion is inconsistent with multiple circuit cases applying the ESA consultation requirement to Reclamation contracts throughout the West.”

A rehearing was therefore requested to “restore uniformity in the court’s decisions,” the groups wrote in the petition.

Additional background

Reclamation’s settlement contracts in the 1960s provided Sacramento River and Delta-Mendota Canal water users

nearly 2.5 million acre-feet of water annually for 40 years. The renewed contracts in 2005 extended the contracts an additional 40 years.

During Reclamation’s reviews ahead of the 40-year extension, environmental groups alleged the agency and USFWS failed to properly perform an ESA consultation to see how renewals would affect delta smelt fish. In addition, the groups contented the agencies failed to consider the effects of renewing the contracts through 2045. NRDC also added a claim that Reclamation must redo its consultation on fish effects, as new information showed contracts also negatively affected Chinook salmon.

In its May opinion, the court rejected the petitioners’ argument that agencies failed to evaluate the effects of renewing the contracts through 2045.

“Given that Reclamation has continuously supplied water to the Sacramento River contractors since the 1960s under contracts with substantially identical terms and amounts, FWS properly considered the settlement contracts as part of this ongoing agency action rather than analyzing the settlement contracts in 40-year increments,” Judge Sandra Ikuta wrote for the majority.

In addition, the court ruled Reclamation and USFWS did not violate the APA or ESA when evaluating effects on fish.

“The ESA does not require the action agency (here, Reclamation) to consider a no-action alternative or any other alternative to its proposed action,” Ikuta said. “The only question is whether the action agency’s proposed action is likely to have an adverse effect on listed species or critical habitats.” — **Anna Miller, WLJ managing editor**



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MARKET NEWS

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

MARKET AT A GLANCE	This Week: 8/29/2024	Week Ago	Year Ago
Choice Fed Steers	183.75	▼	184.84
CME Feeder Index	242.64	▼	242.67
Boxed Beef Average	308.66	▼	315.99
Average Dressed Steers	291.43	▼	293.98
Live Slaughter Weight*	1,385	▲	1,383
Weekly Slaughter**	608,000	▲	602,000
Weekly Beef Production***	513.9	▲	506.9
Hide/Offal Value	11.19	▼	11.24
Corn Price	3.65	▼	3.75
*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 23	7,005	317.63	235	351.91	1,231	322.58	2,126	314.89	766	301.40	2,647	290.61
August 16	7,005	315.34	199	351.11	1,251	320.39	2,044	314.01	756	300.14	2,755	289.56
August 9	7,338	314.44	255	349.22	1,331	320.92	2,117	312.81	653	298.21	2,982	299.02
August 2	6,641	314.40	217	346.74	1,232	320.87	2,057	314.77	779	299.19	2,357	286.46
Cutouts												
FED BOXED BEEF												
DATE	CHOICE		SELECT		COW BEEF CUTOUT		50% LEAN		90% LEAN			
August 29	308.66		296.19		295.77		144.66		N/A			
August 28	307.29		297.63		295.77		123.28		376.18			
August 27	311.97		300.25		295.20		155.61		N/A			
August 26	315.90		300.19		294.95		147.60		375.94			
August 23	317.34		300.46		294.84		145.66		375.88			

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Live Cattle						
	8/23	8/26	8/27	8/28	8/29	High* Low*
Aug.	18258	18360	18518	18550	18493	19633 15310
Oct.	17570	17698	17940	18018	17850	19975 16853
Dec.	17520	17638	17850	17903	17750	18878 16668
Feb.	17648	17733	17950	17960	17858	19000 17005
CATTLE FUTURES: CME Feeder Cattle						
	8/23	8/26	8/27	8/28	8/29	High* Low*
Aug.	24258	24450	24420	24403	24343	26390 21608
Sep.	23858	24135	24193	24255	24075	26460 21920
Oct.	23438	23748	23838	23950	23793	27095 22268
Nov.	23160	23473	23628	23720	23573	26625 23160
*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		1,897	1,518	183.75		
Live FOB Heifer		672	1,358	183.05		
Dressed Del Steer		2,373	961	291.43		
Dressed Del Heifer		410	864	291.60		
SAME PERIOD LAST WEEK						
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 YEAR						
Live FOB Steer		3,989	1,506	184.77		
Live FOB Heifer		1,038	1,284	183.83		
Dressed Del Steer		4,246	945	290.82		
Dressed Del Heifer		780	839	291.51		
NATIONAL WEEKLY FED BEEF SLAUGHTER VOLUME: AUGUST 25, 2024						
		Domestic		Imported		
Forward Contract		16,680		2,629		
Formula		289,785		2,871		
Negotiated Cash		75,518		164		
Negotiated Grid		42,814		1,684		
Packer Owned		10,690		N/A		
Total		435,487		7,348		
SLAUGHTER FORWARD CONTRACTS				FORWARD BEEF SALES		
Delivery Month				Neg. Sales 0-21 days		1,951
Aug. '24		94,351		Neg. Sales 21+ days		939
Sep. '24		106,057		Formula sales		4,025
Oct. '24		112,599		Forward contract sales		90
Nov. '24		159,557		Domestic sales		6,027
Dec. '24		117,518		NAFTA Exports		141
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				184.71	-0.79	
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs				184.31	-2.28	
Ontario Auctions						
Slaughter Steers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1300-1500 lbs				185.24	+0.88	
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs				N/A	N/A	
Slaughter Cows, Cutter and Utility 1-3, 1100-1400 lbs				131.93	+1.94	
*Price comparison from one week ago.						
Average feeder cattle prices (CND) for week ending Friday, August 27, 2024						
Steers:		Alberta	Saskatchewan	Ontario		
501-600 lbs		316.81	N/A	327.82		
601-700 lbs		290.14	286.99	317.92		
701-800 lbs		273.88	268.21	278.49		
801-900 lbs		252.42	245.47	260.20		
Heifers:						
401-500 lbs		N/A	N/A	278.46		
501-600 lbs		277.39	N/A	275.50		
601-700 lbs		264.81	253.82	260.27		
701-800 lbs		254.18	242.06	249.20		
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		
	8/19/2024	8/12/2024				
Feeders	19,142	20,599	928,253	729,993		
USDA WEEKLY IMPORTED FEEDER CATTLE						
August 28, 2024						
Mexico to United States Feeder Cattle Import Summary						
Receipts EST: 5,050		Week Ago EST: 6,300		Year Ago Act: 3,200		
Santa Teresa, NM -			Presidio, TX -			
Compared to Tuesday, steer calves and yearlings sold 2.00 higher. Heifers 2.00-4.00 higher. Trade active, demand good. Supply consisted of steers and spayed heifers weighing 300-700 lbs.			No recent sales to compare to. Trade active, demand good. Supply consisted of steers and spayed heifers weighing 300-700 lbs.			
Feeder heifers: Medium and large 1&2			Feeder heifers: Medium and large 1&2			
300-400 lbs		269-279	300-400 lbs		265-275	
400-500 lbs		249-259	400-500 lbs		245-255	
500-600 lbs		229-239	500-600 lbs		225-235	
Feeder steers: Medium and large 1&2			Feeder steers: Medium and large 1&2			
300-400 lbs		317-327	300-400 lbs		315-325	
400-500 lbs		287-297	400-500 lbs		285-295	
500-600 lbs		257-267	500-600 lbs		255-265	
(slide 10 cents on steers and heifers basis 300 lbs. All sales fob port of entry.)						

Selected Auctions									
Week Ending August 29, 2024									
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
August 23	Blackfoot, ID	N/A							117-139 126-165.50
August 22	Burley, ID	307	347-353 307.50-308	298.50-344.50 309		251	237	218-230 224	95-146 145-158
Noreport available									
August 24	Emmett, ID								
August 24	Eugene, OR	1,309	220-295*	260-296* 200-268*	230-281* 190-240*	190-223* 180-248*	160-199*		115-133 135-165
August 26	Madras, OR	257	280-290	257-277.50 255-280	250-267 225-250	240-265 220-235	228-244 210-230	210-230 200-215	118-142 140-165
August 21	Vale, OR	784		290-312 269-282	265-301 245-265	253-277 231-265	239-256 228-249	224-239 214-225	102-128 140-169
August 26	Davenport, WA	238	245-250 225-247.50	185-260 207.50-237.50	205-242.50 150-237.50	204-239 101-200	112-228 177-210	97-228 112-223	71-200 101-150
Noreport available									
August 22	Orland, CA	1,309		220-300 200-295	210-270 190-250	200-269 180-242	190-251 170-237	175-230 170-221	90-151 130-179
Noreport available									
August 26	Famoso, CA	353	250-275 230-250	250-275 230-250	250-265 220-250	230-250 185-200	200-220	195-210 185-200	100-160 130-140
Noreport available									
August 27	Turlock, CA	666		270-615 250-279	250-289 246-265	242-263 225-240	220-239.50 210-230	200-218 200-215	109-135 125-162.50
August 27	Salina, UT	424	315-445 367.50-385	300-380 240-369	255-347.50 235-312.50	190-292.50 220.50-278	187.50-259.50 218-242.50	210-234.75 221-235	155-188.75 140-156.25
August 26	Iowa	5,878	342.50	290-340 270-283	277-289 247-276	250-286 232-256.50	243-263.75 226-241.25	206-250.50 214.50-234	12

Feedlot inventories unchanged from last year

The latest USDA Cattle on Feed report pegged Aug. 1 feedlot inventories at 11.1 million head, unchanged from one year ago. Because of the strong seasonal variation in feedlot inventories, a 12-month moving average of feedlot inventories is the best means to see the actual trend in feedlot production.

The moving average total of feedlot inventories peaked cyclically in September 2022 at 11.887 million head before declining to 11.548 million head in September 2023. Total feedlot placements have decreased by 1.3% in the last 12 months compared to the previous 12-month period.

However, in the last year, average feedlot inventories have increased to 11.636 million head. Feedlot inventories have risen countercyclically due to continued feeding of heifers and increased days on feed. Feedlots have slowed the feedlot turnover rate enough to keep average monthly inventories higher despite fewer cattle entering feedlots.

Feedlot placements in July were 105.8% of last year. The placement total was slightly

higher than the average trade estimate. July marketings were 107.7% of one year ago, close to expectations. July 2024 was unusual with two extra business days in the month, meaning that daily average feedlot marketings were actually down by 2.1% year over year.

Current feedlot inventories mask the continued decline in feeder cattle in the U.S. Figure 1 shows the U.S. calf crop from 2008 to 2023 with a projected 2024 calf crop of 33.1 million head. At that level, the total calf crop is down 3.22 million head from the 2018 cyclical peak.

The projected 2024 calf crop is the smallest total U.S. calf crop since about 1941 (based on estimated calf crop prior to 1960). This calf

crop figure includes beef and dairy so straight-bred dairy as well as beef-on-dairy crossbred calves are included in this total calf crop.

In the first 32 weeks of the year, total steer and heifer slaughter was down 1.3% year over year, with steer slaughter down 0.9% and heifer slaughter down 1.9% compared to last year. With yearling carcass weights up sharply year over year (steers up 23.1 pounds and heifers up 18.6 lbs.), fed beef production for the year to date is up 1.1% over last year. By contrast, nonfed beef production is down 13% thus far in 2024 led by a total cow slaughter decrease of 15.3% year over year.

Beef cow slaughter is down 15.9% and dairy cow

slaughter is down 14.6% year over year, along with a 7.4% year-over-year decrease in bull slaughter. Cow carcass weights are up 10.7 lbs. year over year and bull carcass weights are up 28.8 lbs. year

over year.

Total beef production is down 1.4% thus far in 2024 compared to last year. At the current rate, total beef production for the year may be down 2% or less from last

year, substantially less than earlier expectations of a 4-5% year-over-year decrease in beef production. — **Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension livestock marketing specialist**

Figure 1. U.S. Calf Crop



Lower trend noted on feeder sales

MARKETS (from page 1)

Boxed beef prices fell ahead of the Labor Day holiday weekend. The Choice cutout lost about \$7 to close at \$308.66, and the Select cutout lost about \$6 to close at \$296.19.

"Next week begins September and it is seasonally a weak month for all of the markets mentioned above," Fish wrote on Thursday.

"Certainly the consumer has seen retail prices increase all of 2024," she continued. "The gains in packer margins will not increase thanks to lower boxed beef values, even with lower cattle costs. And this week's harvest could be sub-610k." Slaughter was expected to be 610,000-615,000 head over the week, but processing plant issues over the week may keep numbers lower.

Feeder cattle

Feeder cattle futures traded slightly higher, with the August contract up about \$1 to \$243.17 and the September contract also up about \$1 to \$239.50.

"Traders seem to be stuck waiting to see what develops in the fed cash cattle market—which hasn't seen any trade develop just yet," Stewart wrote on Thursday.

The CME Feeder Cattle Index lost 3 cents to close at \$242.64.

Corn futures traded mostly sideways, unchanged on the September contract at \$3.71 and up 3 cents on the December contract at \$3.96.

Iowa: Russell Livestock in Russell, IA, sold 3,165 on Monday. There was no recent sale to compare to. Benchmark steers averaging 775 lbs. sold from \$255-259.85, averaging \$258.99.

Missouri: Joplin Regional Stockyards in Carthage sold 6,602 head on Monday. Compared to a week earlier, feeder steers under 675 lbs. sold \$9-18 lower with heavier weights selling \$2-8 lower. Feeder heifers under 650 lbs. sold \$8-12 lower with heavier weights selling \$2-6 lower. Benchmark steers averaging 774 lbs. sold from \$244-247.50, averaging \$245.73.

Oklahoma: Oklahoma National Stockyards sold 6,000 head on Monday. Compared to a week earlier, at the mid-session, steers sold steady to \$2

lower and heifers sold unevenly steady. Benchmark steers averaging 780 lbs. sold from \$237-248, averaging \$243.24.

South Dakota: Sioux Falls Regional Cattle in Worthing sold 3,752 head on Monday. Compared to the last auction two weeks ago, yearling steers 950 lbs. sold \$2 lower. Heifers 700 lbs. sold \$10 lower; 800 lbs. traded \$1-2 higher; 850-900 lbs. were \$4-7 lower and 950 lbs. sold \$1 lower. Benchmark steers averaging 726 lbs. sold between \$253-254, averaging \$253.59. — **Anna Miller, WLJ managing editor**



COMING EVENTS

(Send calendar of events information to editorial@wlj.net.)
Sept. 17-19 – Registration is now open for the Public Lands

Council's 56th Annual Meeting that will be held in Grand Junction, CO. Details: tinyurl.com/2car3www.

HOOVES & HORNS

BY A.W. ERWIN



"Sumbdy must've ordered a Catfish Basket,... He usually comes back mad if they ordered the Mountain Oysters."

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Texas hunting season outlook positive based on timely rains

Timely rainfall benefited Texas wildlife and set the stage for a positive fall hunting season outlook, according to a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service expert. Although more than half of the state is experiencing some form of drought, some eastern portions have seen above-normal precipitation since January.

“Many times, it’s not even how much rain an area receives, but when they receive it,” said Jacob Dykes, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension wildlife specialist and assistant professor in the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. “Late winter and spring rains greatly facilitate the growth of vegetation that provides both nutrition and habitat cover needed for a wide range of species.”

White-tailed deer

With a statewide population of roughly 5 million, Texas is home to more white-tailed deer than any other U.S. state.

Thanks to mostly positive environmental conditions leading up to the summer fawning season, Dykes said much of the state should see an abundance of new, healthy additions to the population.

“Gestation and lactation are especially stressful

times for does, but thankfully, we have groceries on the ground in the form of vegetation to fulfill those nutritional requirements,” he said.

Following birth, this vegetation also provides critical cover to protect fawns from predators. But Dykes said does and fawns aren’t the only ones who benefit from abundant browse.

“Many bucks will experience an increase in body mass as well as antler size,” Dykes said. “The late summer months are when we see those final touches on antler growth, and bucks with access to abundant nutrition will do very well.”

Quail

While annual quail populations naturally fluctuate, Texas has seen a steady decline in both bobwhite and scaled quail over the past three decades, Dykes said.

While caused by several factors, loss of quality habitat is a leading component.

Although current bobwhite and scaled quail populations are lower than biologists would like to see, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department surveys indicate both populations are stronger than they have been since 2018.

“Right now, quail are in full reproductive mode,”

Dykes said. “Here in South Texas, we have chicks on the ground, and males still call to attract mates. Populations seem to be in pretty good shape right now.”

However, Dykes emphasized these potentially short-term rebounds can vary by county and even by property depending on land-use practices.

“There are a lot of different reasons why we are having a tough situation with sustaining abundant quail and turkey populations, especially in the southeast portion of the state,” Dykes said. “Much of it comes down to land-use practices and management activities—many areas just don’t have adequate brooding cover to support the birds once they are hatched.”

Turkey

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department reported increased turkey nesting success and recruitment in 2023 thanks to abundant acorn production and warm, late winter conditions across much of the Rio Grande wild turkey range.

Dykes said the young turkeys, known as jakes, from the 2023 hatch should provide ample spring season hunting opportunities, although hunters may want to wait until the birds

are a bit older.

“Two years and older are what most turkey hunters are after because they have the beard length and spurs that hunters appreciate,” Dykes said.

Dove

The 2023 dove season was a good one and based on the latest Texas Parks and Wildlife dove surveys, the 2024 season shows great promise.

Texas Parks and Wildlife biologists estimate statewide populations of roughly 34 million mourning doves and a record-high 13 million white-wing doves.

Owen Fitzsimmons, Texas Parks and Wildlife web-less migratory game bird program leader, said abundant precipitation across much of the state significantly contributed to these positive numbers.

“Conditions have been

great overall, with the exception of some very dry areas in the Hill Country and Trans-Pecos, but some July rain may have helped there,” Fitzsimmons said. “I think we’re in for a good-to-excellent dove season in most areas.”

Fitzsimmons said areas that received summer rains should also see late-summer herbaceous growth that will serve as a food source for doves later in the season as well.

Changes to rules, regulations

Before taking to the field, Dykes said it is imperative that hunters familiarize themselves with the latest hunting rules and regulations.

This spring, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission approved more

than a dozen modifications and clarifications to the 2024 and 2025 State-wide Hunting and Migratory Game Bird Regulations.

Among these changes are expanded days for white-tailed doe harvest in 43 counties in the Post Oak Savannah and Pineywoods ecoregions and reduced turkey bag limits or total turkey season closure within other counties.

“Wildlife is an important resource that contributes to the ecology, culture and economy of the state,” Dykes said. “It is critically important that we do our part to conserve and manage these diverse species with science-based data so we can continue to appreciate them for years to come.” — **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension**

North American cattle leaders meet to discuss challenges

The Canadian Cattle Association (CCA) hosted the third 2024 triannual trilateral meeting with its North American counterparts, the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) and Confederación Nacional de

Organizaciones Ganaderas (CNOG) on the sidelines of the Canadian Beef Industry Conference recently.

The trilateral meeting gives an opportunity for leadership to discuss the challenges and opportuni-

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“The beef industry is highly integrated across North America and with the upcoming review of CUSMA in 2026, it is crucial for us to have these trilateral meetings with our friends to the south.”

— Nathan Phinney

ties facing beef producers across Canada, U.S. and Mexico. Topics at this year’s trilateral focused on trade policy, the upcoming review of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA/USMCA/T-MEC) in 2026 and international engagement on antimicrobial resistance.

“The beef industry is highly integrated across North America and with the upcoming review of CUSMA in 2026, it is crucial for us to have these trilateral meetings with our friends to the south,” said Nathan Phinney, CCA president. “With the challenges that our sector is facing globally, we are stronger working together, to push back against non-tariff barriers and other unscientific international policies that impact beef producers.”

“In addition to discussing international trade and animal health concerns, I am also encouraged that CCA, CNOG, and NCBA continue standing together to push back against lab-grown proteins,” said NCBA President Mark Eisele. “These lab-grown protein companies are trying to capitalize from the incredible reputation of real beef in their efforts to

proach the 2026 review, the combined leadership of CCA, NCBA and CNOG are emphasizing the success that it continues to bring to our industry.

At the same time, they are looking at opportunities to work together against global challenges including non-tariff barriers they’re facing in other jurisdictions and international commitments that impact the cattle sector.

Despite recognizing antimicrobial resistance as an urgent global one-health threat, the North American beef sector is aligned and pushing back against unfounded antimicrobial reduction targets without considering sector specific needs. Responsible antimicrobial stewardship is essential to supporting the health and welfare of cattle, which includes increased access to veterinary products.

CCA, NCBA and CNOG leadership determined a unified approach to address international challenges facing the countries’ producers and will continue to work on these files together, in lead up to the next trilateral meeting in San Antonio, TX, in 2025. — **NCBA**

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One-quarter of farms participated in USDA aid programs

One-quarter of all U.S. farm operations participated in USDA direct payment programs in 2022, meaning that they received at least some payment directly from USDA (no intermediaries involved).

Data from the 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture show the share of operations that received some federal payments (at a county level) were concentrated in the central U.S. Conducted every five

years by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, the most recent census occurred during a year of historically high net farm income so commodity safety net programs—in place to make payments when prices or revenues are low—were not triggered for many commodities.

Comparison with 2017 Census of Agriculture shows participation rates in south-

western and southern Plains counties, while not especially higher in 2022, were higher than those recorded in previous censuses. Meanwhile, participation in many Midwestern counties was lower than in previous censuses.

Participation rates are based on receipt of direct payments and do not include crop insurance or loan program participation. Based on data from USDA's Economic

Research Service's (ERS) Farm Income and Wealth Statistics data product, total payments in 2022 were \$16.47 billion, more than 14% higher

after adjusting for inflation than the \$14.4 billion recorded in 2017.

More than 70% of all USDA direct payments disbursed in

2022 were from supplemental and ad hoc relief for wildfires, droughts, hurricanes, winter storms and other eligible disasters. — **USDA ERS**

Fall bird migration is the time for biosecurity protocols

Fall bird migration has begun, and now is the time to review and reimplement biosecurity protocols to reduce disease transmission from wild to domestic birds.

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is a disease carried by wild birds that can affect domestic birds. Avian influenza is caused by the influenza Type A virus (influenza A). The virus is shed in the feces and respiratory secretions of infected birds and is able to survive for weeks in cool, damp environments.

Migration can be followed via BirdCast, birdcast.info, an online real-time migration prediction tool.

North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension specialists have prepared a list of guidelines and resources for reducing transmission of HPAI from wildlife to domestic birds:

- If possible, keep poultry housed until the risk for transmission has decreased. Non-lethal methods to deter wildlife are available on the USDA Wildlife Service's nonlethal initiative webpage: tinyurl.com/25cm6tmc.
- Reduce the attractiveness for wildlife to stop at your place by cleaning up litter and spilled feed around your domestic flock housing.
- If you come in contact with or handle wildlife, change into clean clothes, wash your hands and disinfect your footwear prior to contact with domestic flocks.
- Report sick or deceased wildlife to the North Dakota Game and Fish Department at bit.ly/mortality-report.
- In the event you need to handle or dispose of carcasses to reduce potential interactions, be sure to follow the appropriate procedures: ndsu.ag/hpai.

"The best defense against

HPAI is having a biosecurity plan in place," said Mary Keena, NDSU Extension livestock environmental management specialist. "It is your job as a flock owner to create a line of separation between your clean flock and the potential unclean issues that wildlife or visitors may bring."

To reduce transmission between domestic flocks:

- Keep your distance. Restrict access to your property and your flock. Allow contact from people who care for your birds but minimize visitors.
- Do not haul disease home. If you have been near other poultry or bird owners, such as at feed stores, clean and disinfect car and truck tires. New birds should be kept separate from your flock for at least 30 days.
- Do not borrow disease from your neighbor. Do not share lawn and garden equipment, tools or bird supplies with your neighbor or other flock owners.

With birds on the move, fall hunting season is just around the corner.

"If you hunt and have poultry, do not wear hunting clothes in with your poultry," said Miranda Meehan, NDSU Extension livestock environmental stewardship specialist. "Infected birds shed bird flu viruses in their saliva, mucous and feces."

The North Dakota Department of Game and Fish suggests the following steps be taken to reduce the risk of infection:

- Do not handle game that is found dead or appears to be sick.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke while cleaning game, and avoid contamination of your eyes, mouth, nose, or any open cuts or sores with blood or other fluids from game that you are cleaning.

• Wash hands, cleaning utensils and other surfaces with soap and hot water immediately after cleaning game.

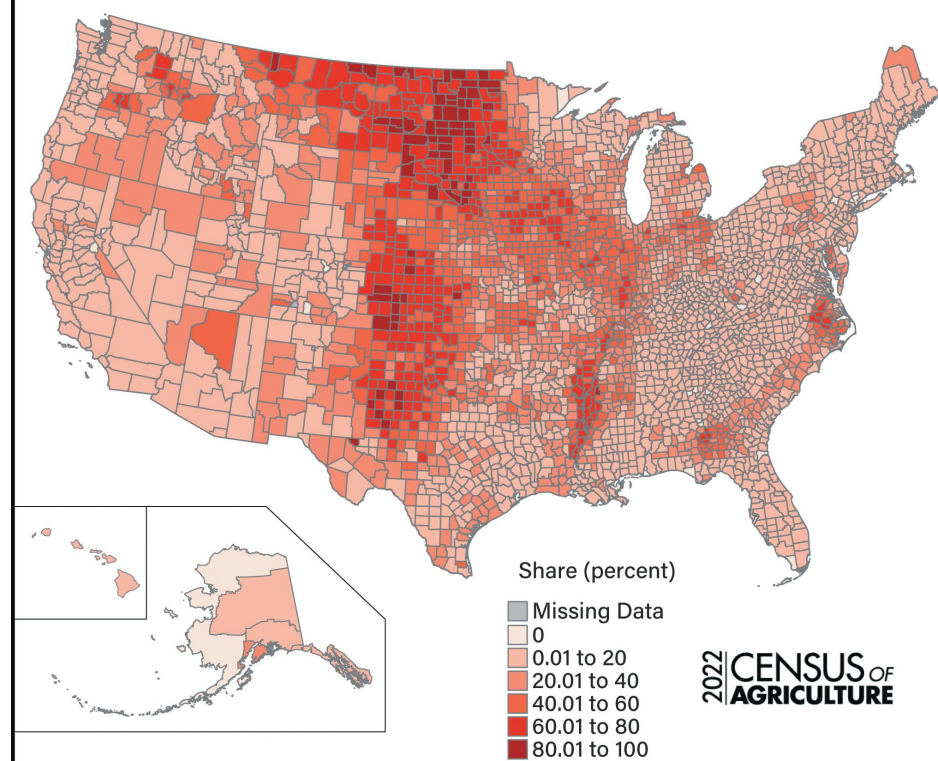
Strains of HPAI have been detected in both wild and domestic mammals across the US. Most often, these cases occur in predatory mammals known to consume wild birds. While the transmission rate from animals to humans is low, it is a zoonotic disease. To date, cases have been restricted to individuals working in close contact with infected poultry or livestock.

"Poultry testing positive for HPAI are prohibited by law from entering the marketplace," said Miranda Meehan, NDSU Extension livestock environmental stewardship specialist. "Poultry and poultry products are safe to eat, and proper handling and cooking is always advised."

To date, there have been no positive HPAI cases in domestic poultry or birds in North Dakota in 2024. Report sick birds to your local veterinarian. If you do not have a local veterinarian for your flock, contact the North Dakota State Veterinarian's office at 701-328-2655. — **NDSU Extension**

Share of farms receiving Federal payments, by county, 2022

USDA Economic Research Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Note: Direct Government farm program payments are those made by the Federal Government directly to farmers and ranchers with no intermediaries.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using 2022 Census of Agriculture data from the USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service.

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Cow-calf cover crop use varies by region

Researchers with USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) examined cover crop use by cow-calf operations and found that more than half of producers who planted cover crops reported harvesting at least some of them.

Harvesting cover crops on cow-calf operations is more likely in the Mississippi Portal and Northern Crescent regions and less likely in the

Heartland region. Cow-calf operations might plant cover crops to improve soil quality on their cropland and then use the growing crop to provide feed for their cattle either by grazing the growing cover crop or harvesting the cover crop as haylage or silage to feed cattle later.

In 2018-20, USDA's Agricultural Resource Management Survey asked producers how many acres of cover

crops they harvested for forage or other on-farm use and how many acres of cover crops were not harvested.

Data from the 2017 Census of Agriculture showed that about 11% of cow-calf operations reported using cover crops, with the highest rates of cover crop use occurring in the Northern Crescent and Heartland regions (18% of operations in both regions). — **USDA ERS**



SALE CALENDAR

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

ALL BREEDS

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

ANGUS

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 – Spring Lake Angus, Dispersal Sale, Lynch, NE
Oct. 31 – Marcy Livestock, Cow Dispersal Sale, Gordon, 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

CHAROLAIS

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

HEREFORD

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

RED ANGUS

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

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

COMMERCIAL

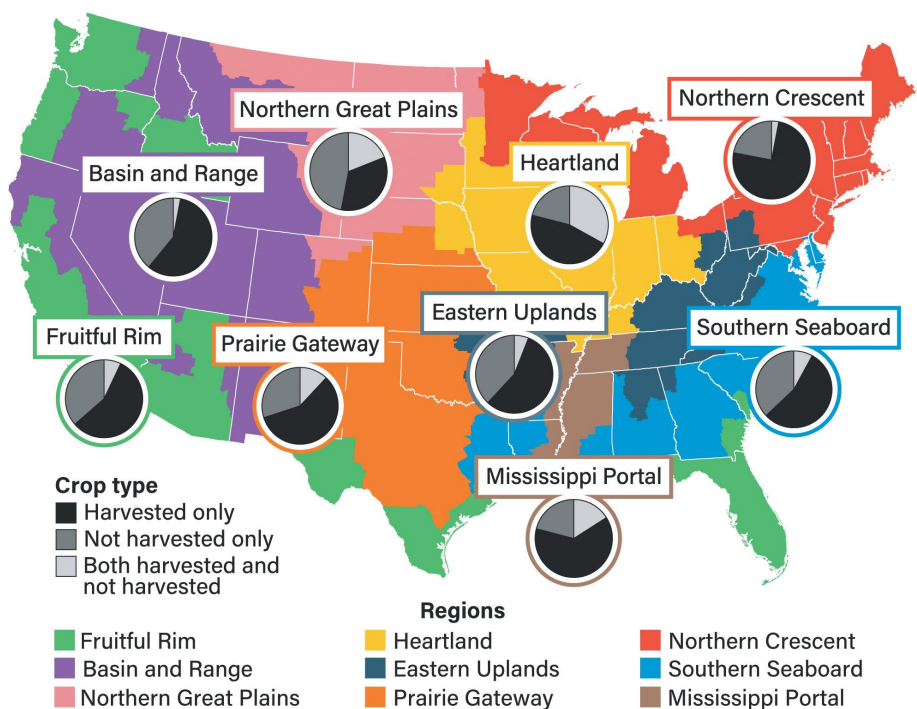
Sep. 16 – NLVA Fall Premier Special, Billings, MT
Nov. 15 – Rollin' Rock Angus, Bred Heifer Sale, Pilot Rock, OR

HORSE

Sep. 21 – Snaffle Bit Futurity Sale, Reno, NV

Cover crop use on cow-calf operations with cover crops by region, 2018–20

USDA Economic Research Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Note: Cow-calf operations include all operations with at least 20 beef cows that calved in the survey year and do not meet the criteria for a dairy operation. Responses in survey years 2018–20 were limited to harvested and unharvested, so uses such as grazing were not analyzed. Alaska and Hawaii are not included in the Agricultural Resource Management Survey or ERS resource regions.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service and USDA, Agricultural Resource Management Surveys 2018, 2019, and 2020.

CHARTS of NOTE

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