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INSIDE WLJ

FALL PROPERTIES — The fall Properties Ranch and Farm real estate magazine is inside this issue! If your copy is missing, please call 720-370-8275 for a replacement.

PLAN TO REWILD THE WEST — Conservationists and academics have revealed a plan to "rewild" the American West by reintroducing endangered plants and animals to public lands. Page 12

A LOOK BACK IN HISTORY

On top of all the standard challenges that have plagued the cattle industry for years, producers and meatpackers in September 1999 faced another concern: planning for Y2K. One *WLJ* article reported, "Some of the country's leading meat processors became acutely aware of possible fallout from Y2K-related problems years ago and responded by spending millions of dollars on convening special task forces, executing a battery of production equipment and computer tests and developing contingency plans. Because machinery, technology and products vary from one plant to another, it is difficult to pinpoint a specific issue that would affect packers across the board."

INDEX

CO solar project gets approval after allowing sheep to graze land

— 1,000 head to graze

A large-scale solar project on Colorado's Western Slope received the green light from Delta County commissioners after developers agreed to allow 1,000 head of sheep to graze the land.

Commissioners unanimously approved the 80-megawatt Garnet Mesa Solar Project on 383 acres in southern Delta County after earlier rejecting it in March, citing concerns over the loss of farmland.

When complete, the project by Denver-based Guzman Energy will produce more than 194,000 megawatt hours of electricity each year, enough energy for 18,000 homes.

"We are thrilled with the Delta County commissioners' unanimous decision to approve the limited-use permit to install and operate the Garnet Mesa Solar Project. We are grateful for the time and attention the community and county officials gave to the process," said Robin Lunt, chief strategy officer at Guzman Energy.

The project met opposition from neighbors since it was first proposed last year. They expressed concerns over water use, changing the land use code, being visually unappealing, impacting a local airstrip, recycling and creating a heat island.

Proponents of the project said it will add additional tax revenue to the county and help to stabilize electricity rates.

See SOLAR on page 12

GabeIglesia, Wikimedia

Colorado has approved a solar farm on 383 acres with the stipulation that 1,000 head of sheep must be allowed to graze the land. Pictured here, sheep graze by a solar array near Antioch College in Yellow Springs, OH.

Beef holds strong globally, but demand is changing

— Inflation impacts to continue

While beef markets continue to hold their strength both domestically and globally, slipping consumer confidence in the face of economic difficulties is likely going to impact beef demand and preferences.

A recent report from Rabobank, "Beef Quarterly Q3 2022: Leaning Into the Trimmings Trade," details the projected changes in the upcoming beef market as consumers continue to battle rising inflation costs and slowing economies.

Consumers are not alone in their battles, as drought and rising input costs are leading U.S. producers to make herd liquidations and earlier movements to feedyards. However, firm prices are still expected for the third quarter, with steady supplies and adequate demand.

Global outlook

The report notes the global beef market remains strong, and most beef retail prices continued their upward trend in the second quarter or remained steady. Although second-quarter prices were not much higher than the first quarter, prices still remain 5-11% higher than a year earlier.

"In general, beef markets are resilient to changes in economic conditions," according to the report. "However, we see movement within supply channels and price points that tend to favor cheaper options, such as ground beef and quick-service restaurants, over more expensive cuts and consumption channels."

While cattle markets remain favorable in the U.S. due to strong demand, markets in other countries are seeing favorable influence due to seasonal conditions, as is the case in Australia

See RABOBANK on page 16

Water wars continue in Shasta, Klamath watersheds

— Forced to cut supplies

Water authorities have clamped down on farmers and ranchers in the Shasta River and Klamath River watersheds after they defied orders to reduce water usage.

For the Shasta River watershed, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) issued a draft cease-and-desist order to the Shasta River Water Association (SRWA), informing the group they needed to stop diverting water.

The Klamath Irrigation District in southern Oregon reversed its earlier decision to continue diverting water after the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) threatened to withhold money for drought assistance.

Shasta River

SRWA—a tax-exempt irrigation group based in Grenada, CA, that represents about 80 ranchers in central Siskiyou County—began diverting up to 30 cubic feet per second (cfs) on Aug. 17, dropping Shasta River flows to approximately 18 cfs, 32 cfs below the minimum flow requirement of 50 cfs, according to SWRCB.

On Aug. 17, SRWA sent a letter to the water board, stating due to weather conditions, they are diverting water for irrigation, livestock watering, watering trees and fire suppression. SRWA noted that exemptions to diverting water are permitted after submission of the forms and receiving approval. According to SWRCB, the group began diverting water in violation of the curtailment order.

The next day, inspectors from SWRCB spoke with three members of the board of directors for SRWA, who stated they turned on their diversion the previous night. They estimated they were diverting 30 cfs and would try to keep water flows in the Shasta River between 20-25 cfs—less than half of the minimum flow requirement for the river.

Jim Scala, a third-generation rancher and president of SRWA, told CalMatters he grew frustrated with seeing a pond where his cattle used to drink dry up.

See WATER WARS on page 20

Sideways market continues ahead of Labor Day

The market traded into the holiday weekend mostly uneventfully. Cash trade was limited on light demand, and futures were sluggish. Slaughter levels remained steady ahead of Labor Day, but boxed beef prices lost some momentum.

"More than anything, the market lacks interest and momentum at this point as everyone is anxiously awaiting Friday's last bell to run into the weekend before summer is officially over," wrote ShayLe Stewart, DTN livestock analyst, in her Thursday midday comments.

"After the three-day weekend passes, the market will likely become more focused and, at that point, the cash cattle and live cattle market stand a chance at heading higher once again to prices that we reached two weeks ago."

Live cattle futures were mixed. The October contract closed $1.70 higher at $142.80, and the December contract lost $1.33 to close at $148.57.

Cash trade was slow to develop for the second week in a row. Through Thursday, fewer than 30,000 head sold. Live steers sold from $141-145, and dressed steers sold from $226-228.

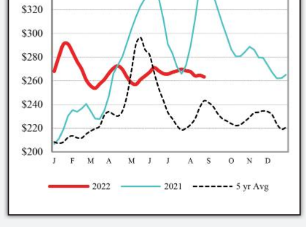
Through the week ending Aug. 28, only 70,637 head sold on the cash market. Live steers averaged $145.14, and dressed steers averaged $232.94.

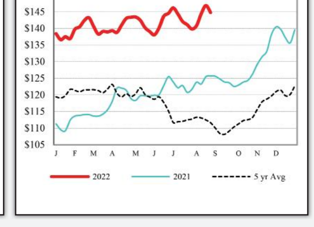
The national weekly direct beef type price distribution for the week of Aug. 22-29 was the following on a live basis:

- Negotiated purchases: $144.81.
- Formula net purchases: $146.22.
- Forward contract net purchases: $145.32.
- Negotiated grid net purchases: $143.92.

On a dressed basis:

- Negotiated purchases: $232.81.
- Formula net purchases: $230.63.
- Forward contract net purchases: $217.79.
- Negotiated grid net purchases: $229.76.





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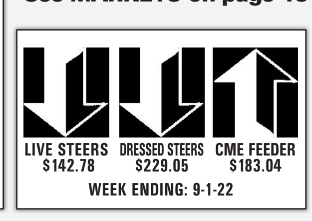

COMMENTS

New players

CROW

It's looking like a couple new beef processing proposals are getting a lot of attention. This fall, we will start seeing a declining calf crop. Next fall will more than likely be more dramatic. Beef packers have been maintaining good margins, but it appears that will change soon. The beef cutout has fallen while fed cattle have been selling for more. The run-up to Labor Day rallied fed beef prices, but now that big beef holiday is fulfilled, and prices are starting to be under pressure.

Holidays produce a lot of beef sales, and packers know when they need the inventory and when they need fewer fed cattle. Fed cattle are contracted accordingly, and then they fill in their needs on the cash market. This helps set the price for many formula-traded cattle.

Tyson already has a plant in Amarillo, TX, and recently announced a $200 million upgrade to the plant. They process 3,000 head per day and have a customer base. Now there is going to be a new kid on the block called Producer Owned Beef, which intends to process 3,000 head per day.

Texas was left with a void in packing capacity when Cargill closed the Plainview, TX, plant, which processed 4,000 head per day. At the time, Cargill decided they had too much capacity for the fed cattle numbers available after the last major drought. This literally had cattle feeders running to secure shackle space.

In the run-up to Labor Day beef demand, the packing industry collectively processed 678,000 head about two weeks ago, one of the largest slaughter volumes of the year. This is after the COVID pandemic had pretty much run its course and caused labor problems. Packers were back up to 125,000 head a day and processing on Saturdays to fill in the gap. Remember, these packers have a really good idea when their customers want which type of product.

For instance, this week at Denver Safeway stores, T-bone steaks were featured at $4.89 a pound. Kroger stores had ribeyes priced at $5.79/lb. Labor Day always produces good beef demand. Then the Christmas and New Year holidays will produce lots of demand for the middle meats. Packers and wholesalers will start hoarding those cuts in early November.

The big news last week was that Walmart announced they would invest in a minority stake in Sustainable Beef in North Platte, NE. The press release says, "Walmart's equity investment is part of a broader strategic partnership to source top quality Angus beef from Sustainable Beef's new processing facility. This partnership helps supplement the current beef industry and provides additional opportunities for ranchers to increase their business."

What I'm reading here is Walmart wants products that are sustainable, have as many natural attributes as possible and are high quality and environmentally friendly. "Sustainability" is becoming such a social buzzword that it is getting hard to define. And I guess I'd say not to fight the consumer, roll with them, because things will change.

The meatcase is the heart of any grocery chain, and retailers have been enjoying fantastic margins. I found skirt steak at Safeway stores last week priced at $13.99/lb.; it may have been marinated. Did retailers figure out how to sell beef over the last three years, or have consumers discovered there is more than middle meats and hamburger? Beef demand has been fantastic, but the price distribution is still lopsided.

Walmart and 44 Farms teamed up several years ago and now sell high-quality beef in the southeast part of the U.S. under the Prime Pursuits program, labeled as McClaren Farms. It would be very easy for Walmart to set up a similar situation with Sustainable Beef and Angus breeders in Nebraska. It will be an interesting situation over the next two years. It appears that a lot of new packing capacity will come online, and packers will have to compete for fed cattle and Choice or better fed cattle. With corn prices where they are at, feeding many of these cattle over 200 days is an expensive proposition.

We know now that quality sells, which took this industry 25 years to learn. Walmart knows it and is methodically building a better beef program. But remember Walmart's old mantra: "We sell for less." We don't want to go down that road. — **PETE CROW**

KAY'S KORNER

HIGH QUALITY SELLS BEEF

It has taken decades to reach this point, but the U.S. beef industry is now producing the highest quality beef in its history. This comes from improved genetics in the beef cow herd, innovations and advances in all aspects of cattle feeding, encouragement of packer premiums through grid pricing and growing consumer demand for high-quality beef.

Cattle are now grading at a percentage of Prime and Choice that would have been unheard of 20 years ago. Cattle graded an average 10.08% Prime, 72.48% Choice, 14.36% Select and 3.08% other in 2021. The weekly record for Prime and Choice is 86.07%, set the week of Feb. 20 last year. Grading this summer has been lower because of the heat. But cattle on the week ending Aug. 20 still graded 79.64% Prime and Choice.

The increased production of Choice beef has had some interesting price consequences. For example, the price spread between the Choice and Select cutouts narrowed early this year, and the Choice cutout was discounted to Select on Feb. 22 by $2/cwt. The last time this occurred was on Sept. 12, 2017. The spread though has been much wider this summer, generally well in excess of $20/cwt. It was $22.82/cwt the week before last.

Another fascinating consequence is that the price spread between Prime and Choice beef is historically high. That's because the percentage of Prime being produced is lower this summer, as noted above. But both retail and food service demand have remained remarkably strong. Wholesale Prime beef prices the week before last averaged $333.45/cwt, while Choice prices averaged $261.07/cwt. This means the price spread was $72.38/cwt.

The high quality of U.S. beef is valued by consumers both at home and abroad. Retail beef sales for the Labor Day holiday and over the prior week were expected to be strong because retailers gave their customers ample beef features to choose from. Another reason is that beef prices are slowly but surely becoming more competitive with the prices of other meats.

Beef prices recorded all-time record highs in October 2021 but were well below that peak a year later, analysts say. The prices of competing meats have gone in the other direction, which is positive for beef's competitiveness in the retail meatcase. Media reports in the past several weeks, including an extensive report in the Wall Street Journal, have detailed how retail beef prices, especially those of the more expensive middle cuts, have fallen sharply. This bodes well for encouraging consumers to buy those cuts as well as ground beef, the price of which has continued to be stronger each month.

USDA reported that its July all-beef retail price averaged $7.34 per pound. This was down a penny from June and was up 3.4% from July last year. Choice beef prices averaged $7.62/lb., down four cents from June and up 1.2% from July last year. Pork prices averaged $4.94/lb., up a penny from June and up 7.4% from June last year. Chicken prices averaged $2.45/lb., the same as in June and up 17.8% from June last year.

Average Choice beef prices in July were $0.28/lb. below their October 2021 peak, says Andrew Gottschalk of HedgersEdge.com. By the end of August, average prices were likely below the prior year's levels, enhancing beef's competitiveness versus the competing meats. By October, average Choice retail beef prices could trend as much as 4% below the prior year. In sharp contrast, monthly average prices for the competing meats are trending sharply above prior-year levels, he says.

Retailers continue to enjoy large margins on their beef sales for two reasons. They are lowering their beef prices only slowly but are buying beef at much lower wholesale prices than a year ago. The comprehensive cutout (cuts, grinds and trim) the week before last averaged $263.78/cwt. This was down 21% from the same week last year, so retailers have a lot of latitude to lower their everyday beef prices this month and feature beef even more aggressively.

The high quality of U.S. beef is increasingly recognized around the globe. That is why U.S. exports smashed volume and value records last year, surpassing $10 billion for the first time. This means they almost doubled in value in 10 years. Exports remained on a red-hot pace in the first half of this year, topping $1 billion for five of the six months. For six months, exports increased 6% from a year ago to 743,904 metric tons and were valued at $6.19 billion, up 33%. This indicates that beef lovers everywhere are paying more for the finest beef in the world. — **Steve Kay**

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

RESOURCE SCIENCE

MARINE CORPS BISON

Bison, also known as buffalo, are often in the news. People have been attacked by bison in Yellowstone National Park this year, bison grazing on Bureau of Land Management allotments in Montana is controversial (see Anna Miller's article in the Aug. 8 *WLJ* issue), and environmentalists keep trying to get bison designated as an endangered species. Bison can be up to 6 feet tall, can weigh 2,000 pounds and can run 35 miles per hour.

There are approximately half a million bison in the U.S. and Canada; most are in private herds, and about 20,500 are in public, free-ranging herds. One of these public herds is on a U.S. military base, the Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, which is 40 miles north of San Diego, CA. Camp Pendleton was established in 1942 during World War II and was named after Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Joseph H. Pendleton.

The Marines were given 14 bison from the San Diego Zoo between 1973 and 1979, and the herd has increased to about 90 head, with 15-20 calves born per year, and is balanced by natural deaths. The bison are free to range around the 125,000-acre base, and they are managed according to a management plan by the base game wardens. The bison are allowed to live natural lives, and they are not bothered as long as they don't interfere with the Marines' training. They occasionally drift into artillery impact areas, where their safety is prioritized. Deer and bird hunting and several endangered species are also managed by the wardens on the base.

Lance Cpl. Andrew Cortez

Bison on Camp Pendleton.

I visited Camp Pendleton in 2015 when my son, Jack, was stationed there. Chief Game Warden Michael Tucker generously took me around the base and showed me the bison and other wildlife. The bison are healthy, and they calmly grazed and wandered around the base. Additional pictures and videos of bison on Camp Pendleton are available online at dvidshub.net.

Tucker really knows wildlife, as well as how to operate around active military training—he's also a colonel in the Army Reserve. Tanks, amphibious landing craft, artillery, jets, helicopters and, of course, infantry Marines train continuously, and Tucker has to manage wildlife around them. It's very impressive how Tucker and his crew manage wildlife on a facility with intense Marine combat training.

Managing bison on Camp Pendleton is different from managing wildlife around crops and livestock. For example, bison are incompatible with cattle because they can have diseases such as brucellosis and compete with cattle for forage. But a key concept is the same: The primary objective, training Marines or producing crops and livestock, comes first. Good planning and management allows wildlife to thrive as a secondary objective.

Camp Pendleton is recognized as a great conservation success, managing wildlife along with training Marines in the beautiful natural environment in the middle of crowded and intensively-developed southern California. Although known as tough warriors, leathernecks and devil dogs, the Marines also take care of others, such as with their well-known Toys for Tots Christmas program and caring for wildlife on Camp Pendleton. — **Dr. Matt Cronin**

(Matt Cronin is a scientist with Northwest Biology Company LLC in Bozeman, MT, and can be contacted at croninm@aol.com.)

Letters to the Editor: Letters for publication should be no longer than 675 words, must refer to an article that has appeared within the month, and must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Addresses and phone numbers will not be published. Letters may be shortened for space requirements. Send a letter to the editor by emailing editorial@wlj.net or mailing it to Western Livestock Journal Editorial, 7355 E. Orchard Road #300, Greenwood Village, CO 80111.

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OBITUARIES

Duane Franklin Martin; 1940-2022

Duane Franklin Martin passed away Aug. 17 in Ione, CA, at the age of 82. He was born in Hayward, CA, on March 6, 1940, the son of the late Inez (Perry) and Frank Martin.

Duane was raised on his father's dairy in San Jose, CA, where he learned the value of hard work and perseverance. Growing up, he had a love of cool cars and regularly talked about his '57 Chevy two-door hardtop. When Duane attended California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo for an entire quarter as a dairy science major, he decided that he "knew more than the teachers did," so that was short-lived. Returning home, he joined the Army for a brief period of time.

Duane discovered his real passion when he got his start in the cattle business at the age of 24. He was driving a ready-mix truck when he purchased his first 20 cows from his father. Through years of hard work and determination, he grew his operation with the help of his son to become one of the top 25 largest cow-calf producers in the U.S. while running a large stocker operation and feeding cattle.

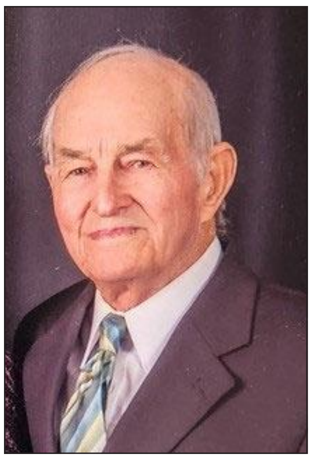
He always said "buy dirt," and that he did, accumulating numerous ranches along the way and leasing many others. He also had several red cattle trucks to keep the cattle moving from ranch to ranch. Any "vacation" always had to involve cattle, or it wasn't really a vacation for him.

Duane took great pride in his cattle, his business and his family. He was very proud to bring the third generation into the industry and sharing his knowledge was also a passion; he was never short on encouragement. Duane always said that the cattle business "isn't an exact science." When things got tough, he would insist that you "stay with it; don't weaken!" He lived those words until his final days.

Duane is survived by his wife, Penny Martin of Ione, CA; son, Duane Franklin Jr. (Lynette) Martin of Elk Grove, CA; daughter, Lisa (Tom) Hopley of El Dorado Hills, CA; stepdaughter, Whitney (Nic) Evans of Kaysville, UT; and stepson, Dallas (Laura) Welch of Plymouth, CA. He is also survived by his grandchildren, Brooke and Brittany Martin; Thomas Hopley; Nixon, Greyson and Crew Evans; and Harper, Ensley and Taytum Welch. Duane is preceded in death by his parents and first wife, Marlene Martin.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made in his honor to the Stanford University School of Medicine Cardiology Department or the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom. Condolences may be sent to the family by emailing amadorshillcfs@volcano.net.

Thomas W. Conover; 1924-2022



Thomas W. Conover, age 98, of Holstein, IA, passed away on Aug. 25. He lived his whole life on the farm where he was born, Bonnie Acres Farm, 5 miles south of Holstein. Tom attended Logan Township Country School and Holstein Community High School, where he graduated in 1942. He went into the military right out of high school, as World War II had begun.

Tom fought in five major battles in World War II. He was part of the third outfit to arrive at Normandy beach. He fought in Normandy, France; northern France; Ardennes, Belgium; Rhineland, Germany; central Europe; and in the Battle of the Bulge. Tom was a unique veteran in that he received the European Theater ribbon with five bronze stars and a bronze star for his heroism in World War II.

Tom arrived back home after the war in September 1945. On Jan. 22, 1947, he married Phyllis Irene Grell at the Little Brown Church in Nashua, IA. They made their home at Bonnie Acres and commenced to raise their family: Craig, Linda, Bruce, Allen and Grant.

Purebred Berkshire hogs were introduced at Bonnie Acres in 1931 by Tom's father. After Tom returned home from the war, he had been in 26 states and 10 countries and had seen a lot of Berkshires. He exhibited Bonnie Acres Berkshires at nine state fairs, including Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, Kansas, South Dakota, North Dakota, Missouri, Illinois and Colorado. He also exhibited at the national type conferences every year. Yearly production sales were held in the early spring and fall from 1968 through 1983.

Tom's leadership led to the success of Bonnie Acres and also the Berkshire breed. Tom was elected to the American Berkshire Association board of directors in 1953 and served for 23 years. He was president of the board for many years. He and his wife, Phyllis, were honored by the American Berkshire Association with the Distinguished Service Award. Phyllis passed away in 1992 after a long battle with cancer.

Tom judged swine shows all over the U.S. Some include Cow Palace and the Orange County Fair in California; Pennsylvania Farm Show; Southwest Winter Type Conference in Kansas and Texas; Red River Valley Fair in North Dakota; Sioux Empire Farm Show in South Dakota; and at least 11 different state fairs. He also judged in at least 19 county fairs multiple times.

Tom was a 4-H leader for over 25 years and served as the swine superintendent at the Ida County Fair. He influenced more than 1,000 Ida County 4-H'ers by helping with 4-H demonstrations, livestock judging and the 4-H swine show. He was inducted into the Iowa 4-H Hall of Fame in 2015.

Tom served his community through the First Methodist Church in Holstein, where he was a member of the board and served as its president for several terms. He was a member of the American Legion Post 225 in Holstein.

In August 1993, Tom married Shirley Bartolozzi. Shirley brought three children to the family, including Christopher, Nicole and Maggie. Shirley embraced the Conover family and their traditions.

Tom is survived by his wife, Shirley; son, Craig (Jean) of Mapleton, IA; daughter, Christine (David), and great-grandsons, Franklin and Graham of Cedar Rapids, IA; daughter, Catherine (Eldon) of Wrenshall, MN; daughter, Linda Weldon (Stephen) of Slater, IA, and son, Bart (Amy), and great-grandson, Brayden of Maxwell, IA; son, Bruce of Craryville, NY, and son, Justin; son, Allen (Jeanne) of Baxter, IA, and son, Adam (Julie), great-granddaughters, Lillie and Lidia of Holden, MO, and sons, Scott and Steve Johnston of Baxter, IA; son, Grant of Baxter, IA; son, Brice (Markie) of Baxter, IA, and great-grandchildren, Maverick, Brynlee, Aiden and Liam; son, Chase of Cet, MO; stepson, Chris Bartolozzi (Kathy) of West Des Moines, IA, and grandchildren, Caleb and Saya; stepdaughter, Nicole Bartolozzi of Ames, IA; and stepdaughter, Maggie Renze of Ida Grove, IA, and grandchildren, Kimberley, Nicholas, Jayden, Ashlynn and Weston. Other survivors include his sister-in-law, JoAnn Friedrichsen of Holstein, IA; Jean Jensen of Kingsley, IA; many nieces and nephews on all sides of the family; and many past employees of Bonnie Acres.

How to optimally feed cows postweaning

Veterinarians and beef producers are able to measure the well-being of the cow herd by assigning a body condition score to each animal, according to the experts at Kansas State (K-State) University's Beef Cattle Institute, speaking on a recent "Cattle Chat" podcast.

"Cows are ranked on a scale of 1 to 9, with 1s being very thin and 9s being extremely obese," veterinarian Brad White said. "Cows postweaning will typically score in the 4-6 range."

Veterinarian Bob Larson recommends evaluating the cows' body condition at three points in the yearly cycle—at weaning, a few weeks prior to calving and right ahead of breeding.

"The main reason for body condition scoring is to identify the cows that need additional supplementation and feed them separately from the rest of the herd," Larson said.

Beef cattle nutritionist Phillip Lancaster said late summer/early fall is an optimum time to evaluate the spring-calving cows because of the ability to adjust their supplement needs at a time in the pregnancy when there is a low nutritional demand.

"During the next two months, the spring-calving cow will have the lowest energy requirements that she will have in the year because she is in mid-gestation," Lancaster said.

He added that during this time of year, a cow with a good body condition score can maintain her weight with poor-quality forage, and those that need to add body weight can be separated and turned out on the best available forage to economically add condition.

"With a spring-calving herd, the goal would be to have the cows at a body condition score of 5 in December," Lancaster said.

While turning cows that need to gain body condition score out on fall pastures is one strategy, Lancaster said that may not be possible in areas where there has been drought.

"Producers may need to look at building the cheapest ration, and that is not always a diet that is high in forage," Lancaster said.

He encouraged producers to look at other potential feed sources, such as silage, or even allowing them to graze fields where the crops have failed.

"If a crop isn't going to produce like it should, it may be best to use it as a feed source for the herd rather than attempting to harvest it," Lancaster said.

White cautioned that producers following that option need to make sure there are no toxins in the field and think through how they transition the cows to a grain-based diet.

"Turning out cows into a corn field is going to require different management than turning them out on corn stalks after the harvest," White said. "Just make sure you have a plan on how you are going to handle the cows moving forward." — **K-State Research and Extension**

Test forages for nitrates prior to haying or grazing

Although much of North Dakota has received adequate moisture this summer, it is important to remember there is still potential for nitrate toxicity in many forage crops, including small grains, brassicas, millet, sorghum/Sudan grass and corn harvested for hay.

"Nitrate is a common form of nitrogen found in the soil, which is taken up by plants and converted to protein through the process of photosynthesis," says Janna Block, North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension livestock systems specialist at the Hettinger Research Extension Center. "Under normal growing conditions, nitrate does not accumulate in the plant. However, when plants encounter stressful growing conditions, photosynthesis is inhibited, and the potential for accumulation of nitrates is increased.

"Many producers only associate nitrate toxicity issues with drought," Block says. "However, drought is not the only environmental factor that can lead to nitrate accumulation. For example, high temperatures combined with adequate moisture can impact plant metabolism and cause nitrate to build up in plants."

Frost, hail and disease can cause nitrates to accumulate due to reduced leaf area, which limits the rate of photosynthesis. The risk of nitrate toxicity also increases when high levels of nitrogen fertilizer have been applied.

Although nitrates typically are not an issue on rangelands, pastures with nitrate-accumulating weeds such as kochia, lambsquarter, pigweed, quackgrass and thistle also may be a problem. Controlling these weeds in grazing situations is one way to reduce risks, Block says. Nitrate toxicity is most commonly a problem in ruminants, with cattle being more susceptible than sheep.

When beef cattle consume increased quantities of nitrates, it overwhelms the ability of rumen microbes to convert nitrate to protein. This results in a buildup of nitrite in the rumen, which is 10 times more toxic than nitrate.

Excess nitrite is absorbed into the bloodstream, which removes the blood's ability to carry oxygen and causes the animal to suffocate. Cases of lower-level, chronic toxicity also can occur. In those cases, producers may observe weight loss, night blindness and abortions in their cattle.

"Producers should test nitrate-accumulating forages every year prior to haying or grazing," Block says.

Many NDSU Extension offices have access to a Nitrate QuikTest, which is a screening tool to assess whether nitrates are present in standing forage. Extension agents who have been certified can conduct the test in a field or office setting. Producers should provide a representative sample of at least 20 stems by clipping them to ground level while traveling in a zigzag pattern across the field.

"If nitrates are present in the sample, producers should delay grazing or harvesting for several days and then retest," Block says. "Samples also can be submitted to a laboratory for quantitative analysis to further assist with management decisions."

If planning to graze, it is a good idea to provide a full feeding of hay before turnout and observe cattle frequently for the first several days. Avoid turnout in the morning, when nitrate levels are highest. Sick or thin animals are more susceptible to nitrate issues and should not graze high-risk forages. In addition, pastures should be stocked lightly enough that animals are not forced to eat the lower portions of stems, where nitrate accumulation is greatest. Providing several pounds of an energy supplement can help rumen bacteria convert nitrate to protein more efficiently.

"When harvesting forages for hay, one suggestion is to raise the cutter bar because the majority of nitrates accumulate in the lower one-third of the stem," Block says. "Nitrate levels are typically greatest in early growth stages, so delaying harvest and allowing plants to mature can help reduce nitrate levels. However, this strategy must be balanced with obtaining desired forage quality and yield. In addition, species such as oats may maintain high nitrate levels up to and through maturity."

The Nitrate QuikTest is not designed to evaluate nitrate content in harvested forages. The best testing strategy for forages that have already been cut and baled is to use a bale probe to collect core samples and submit them to a laboratory for analysis. Ideally, 10% of bales or at least 20 core samples per lot of forage should be collected. A lot is defined as hay harvested within 48 hours from the same field.

Nitrate concentrations do not decrease over time in stored forages because photosynthesis is required for conversion of nitrates in the plant. Ensiling can decrease nitrate content through fermentation, but samples still should be submitted for analysis after the fermentation process has taken place to determine accurate levels.

"Producers need to understand the potential risks of nitrate toxicity and the factors leading to nitrate accumulation in plants," Block says. "Determining actual levels of nitrate present in grazed and harvested forages is critical to be able to utilize these feedstuffs in a safe manner." **— NDSU Extension**

Ranchers recognized for exemplary stewardship

On Aug. 25, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recognized the outstanding contributions of two ranches with federal grazing permits for their work to manage, maintain and restore the health of public rangelands across the West.

For many years, BLM has announced the recipients of the Rangeland Stewardship Award and the Sagebrush-Steppe Stewardship Award at the Public Lands Council's (PLC) annual meeting in recognition of the BLM's partnership with ranchers whose grazing permits provide critical management of millions of acres of western rangelands.

The 2022 Rangeland Stewardship and Sagebrush-Steppe Stewardship awards were presented to Charles Hibner of New Mexico and the Cedar Creek Grazing Association (CCGA) of Montana, respectively.

BLM touted Hibner's long-standing work as a soil conservationist at the Natural Resources Conservation Service and his 50-year status as a grazing permittee as part of his work to improve native vegetation and promote biodiversity near Cebolla, NM.

Similarly, the CCGA's work includes the dedication of 20 members who have worked collectively to improve sage grouse habitat through their grazing activities and have outlined wildlife habitat improvements, riparian protection and noxious weed mitigation as high priorities during their 55-year history.

"These awards recognize outstanding investments and the people who continue to demonstrate that livestock operations are critical to sustainability and resilience of western landscapes," said PLC President Niels Hansen. "PLC is proud to continue to work with the BLM to support the work these ranchers do to protect sage grouse habitat, encourage retention of native grass stands and improve diverse wildlife habitat. Congratulations to these recipients for this well-deserved recognition of their work that supports food and fiber production while making western public lands healthier for us all."

> *"These awards recognize outstanding investments and the people who continue to demonstrate that livestock operations are critical to sustainability and resilience of western landscapes."*

"The BLM has worked for over 80 years with generations of American ranchers whose livestock graze public rangelands to provide food and fiber for the nation and who are the backbone of many rural communities," said BLM Director Tracy Stone-Manning. "The exemplary stewardship demonstrated by these awardees create new benchmarks for locally led and locally designed conservation."

PLC represents more than 22,000 cattle and sheep producers who hold public lands grazing permits. Federal grazing permit holders provide essential food and fiber resources to the nation, as well as important land management services, such as the eradication of invasive species, mitigation of wildfire risk and conservation of vital wildlife habitat. PLC works in active partnership with the BLM, the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and local land management offices. **— PLC**

Former House Ag chair builds the new Midwest Council on Ag

A group of agricultural leaders from the upper Midwest gathered recently to dive into the weeds of farm policy to see how producer groups and agribusinesses in the upper Midwest could have more influence on the farm bill.

The policy talks marked the inaugural meeting of the Midwest Council on Agriculture, a group including more than 90 members representing farm and agribusiness groups in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin.

The Midwest Council on Ag is the brainchild of former House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson, a veteran Democratic lawmaker who lost his Minnesota congressional seat in 2020. Peterson served in Congress for two decades and spent nearly all of that time working on agricultural issues, serving as the Democratic leader on multiple farm bills.

Peterson's influence in agricultural policy was evident from the people who spoke at the meeting, including USDA Undersecretary for Rural Development Xochitl Torres Small and Farm Service Agency Administrator Zach Ducheneaux.

The former congressman said he modeled the Midwest Council on Ag after similar groups in Texas.

Peterson, seeing the influence that southern agriculture has on policy debate involving commodity prices and programs, wants more policy focus on agriculture in the upper Midwest and northern Plains states.

"We're going to try to emulate what they do in the South," Peterson said. Pointing to the extent of agriculture in the northern Midwest, he added, "We haven't really leveraged all of this power the way we should."

Stemming from the Midwest Council on Ag, Peterson wants a land-grant university center in the upper Midwest to lead an agricultural economics program similar to what economist Joe Outlaw oversees at Texas A&M University. Nearly 40 years ago, Texas A&M got a federal funding earmark to create the Agricultural and Food Policy Center (AFPC) in the Texas A&M Department of Agricultural Economics. The group continues to receive federal funds to analyze farm and agricultural policies.

Over the decades, AFPC has evolved into the go-to group for policy and its impacts on farmers. Outlaw and AFPC's team of economists are frequently asked by the House and Senate agriculture committees to examine policy implications of certain scenarios by running models based on 94 representative commodity farms in 30 states. The group's reports are cited to reflect the positive or negative impacts of those policies, such as last year when AFPC's report showed 98% of its representative farms would be negatively affected by proposed changes to the estate tax, capital gains and stepped-up basis.

Outlaw also is frequently called to Capitol Hill to testify on AFPC's analysis.

Peterson said, "I want to have somebody from here people know and Congress calls that guy to let them know what is happening here."

He doesn't want to directly replicate what Texas A&M does, Peterson added, but he wants to see a university economist's voice similar to what Outlaw provides.

Texas A&M's work helps guide an agricultural council made up of producer groups, as well as a separate agribusiness council made up of equipment and chemical dealers whose businesses are heavily impacted by farm policy. Outlaw explained one reason why it's important to have organized local and regional voices for policy debates such as the farm bill.

"Sometimes the lobbyists on the national level don't represent the producers in this room very well," he said.

Outlaw noted it's important for producer groups to make their case for their needs. "Southern agriculture is very good at organizing and complaining and trying to get our way," Outlaw added, "If you don't ask for something in Washington, you get nothing.

"Agriculture is insignificant in Washington if everyone is fighting against each other in the room," Outlaw said, emphasizing a cohesive voice.

As far as creating an academic center similar to AFPC, Peterson and others met with economists from some of the universities in the seven Midwest states. He wants to avoid duplication with AFPC but added that he thinks a Midwest-oriented center could focus more policy analysis on areas such as crop insurance, livestock production (including dairy) and biofuels. Peterson added that the council members also could look to expand into states such as Missouri, Kansas and Indiana.

Talking about farm payments, Outlaw said agriculture overall is in better shape to handle a price decline, partially due to tens of billions of dollars pumped into the sector by both the Trump and Biden administrations. As farm payments have come to farmers in recent years for trade assistance or disasters, Outlaw said farmers have increasingly questioned the payments.

"Yes, it was nice, but I didn't deserve it," Outlaw said he hears from producers.

But production agriculture is in better financial condition because of all of those various aid programs. Still, there are farmers who have borrowed extensively to continue farming.

"We do need the input prices to moderate and the (commodity) prices not to fall," Outlaw said.

Outlaw pointed to projections by the Congressional Budget Office forecasting corn prices coming back to $4 a bushel. "We've got some real adjustments coming to this country, for sure," he said.

While finding more funds for the farm bill could be difficult, commodity groups have been vocal that the Agricultural Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage safety net reference prices are too low to protect farmers from a major price collapse.

"Reference prices need to go up," Peterson said. He added, "One of the things I'm worried about is where this latest price spike is going to take us." Farm prices tend to come crashing down while input prices often remain high. "I'm not sure they are going to come down," he said.

Peterson and Outlaw delved into the weeds of farm bill policy, pointing out that the billions of dollars pumped into commodity payments, disaster payments and now conservation programs will not increase the "baseline" money that goes into the farm bill.

"This whole farm bill process is going to be very complicated," Peterson said, adding that the bill is unlikely to be done by October 2023, when the current bill expires.

If Republicans take the House, as forecast, that will lead to a swing in committee staff, new hires and new members on the Agriculture Committee. Rep. Glenn "GT" Thompson (R-PA-15), the current committee ranking member, would then have to guide a farm bill through a GOP caucus that has repeatedly tried to cut food aid programs. Farm bill votes failed on the floor in 2013 and 2018 over attempts to do that. If Republicans passed such a bill, "I'll guarantee you Joe Biden will veto that bill," he said.

Peterson said he expects the current farm bill will be extended in law through 2024 and possibly into 2025 after the presidential election.

"I'm very skeptical they will be able to get this thing done," he said. "At the end of the day, they'll end up extending it."

Peterson also pointed to the Republican Study Committee budget plan released earlier this summer. Roughly 160 GOP members are part of that group. The GOP plan for agriculture proposes cuts to nearly every major program in the farm bill, including commodity programs and crop insurance.

"All the new GOP members, that's their official position," he said. — **Chris Clayton, DTN ag policy editor**

Applications open for MT FWP's habitat lease program

— Deadline is Sept. 30

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) is accepting applications for its new Habitat Conservation Lease Program.

The program is a voluntary, incentive-based agreement between FWP and private landowners for a 30- or 40-year term to preserve at-risk landscapes and to pay landowners a one-time fee for conservation efforts.

FWP hopes to enroll 500,000 acres in the first five years, and they will prioritize prairie habitats, with an emphasis on sage grouse core areas, to restore the grouse population and keep the bird off the endangered species list. In addition to sage grouse habitat, FWP aspires to enlist lands that contain Montana's "species of concern," including mixed grass (lowland) prairies, wetland grasslands, intermountain shrubs and grasslands, and riparian flood plain habitats.

"Beyond protecting important habitat, this program will also be another tool to help keep family farms and ranches on the landscape, which will ensure our vital open spaces stay that way well into the future," said FWP Director Hank Worsech.

Except for tillage, farmers and ranchers will be able to maintain their current operation, including noxious weed control. Activities not allowed include herbicide treatment on native vegetation, wetland filling or draining, building construction or energy development.

Landowners can enroll all or a portion of their land and cancel the habitat lease program before the end of the term. However, the landowner would be subject to paying FWP a prorated value of the original lease payment and an additional cost for liquidated damages equal to 25% of the initial payment.

Landowners are paid a fixed rate per acre, ranging from 7.5% to 10% of the fee simple value. According to the program's FAQs, FWP will offer lease payments for prairie grassland and sagebrush habitats in eastern and southwest Montana using the following formulas:

- 30-year lease — 7.5% of average fee title value.
- 40-year lease — 10% of average fee title value + 5% as an incentive for the longer term.

Based on these formulas and fee title estimates for 2022, the lease value would be:

- East — A grazing fee title of $567/acre. With a 30-year term, $42.50/acre. With a 40-year term, $56.70/acre + 5%.
- Southwest — A grazing fee title of $1,560/acre. With a 30-year term, $117/acre. With a 40-year term, $156/acre + 5%.

Public access for hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing for a minimum number of days based on enrollment size will also be part of the lease, but the details would be specific to each agreement.

To expedite the process of enrolling conservation acres, Ken McDonald, wildlife administrator for FWP, told *WLJ* in an email he is hoping the Fish and Wildlife Commission would give programmatic approval for the projects rather than approving individual projects.

"That just adds time to the process, and since most agreements should be pretty 'cookie cutter,' we figured the programmatic approach would save everyone time," McDonald said.

The commission was initially set to decide on the matter at their hearing on Aug. 25, but according to McDonald, they postponed the agenda item to become familiar with the program.

The application deadline is Sept. 30, and McDonald hopes to have projects to approve when the committee reconsiders the lease program.

More information and applications for the program are available on the FWP website at fwp.mt.gov by clicking on the tabs "conservation" and then "habitat." — **Charles Wallace, *WLJ* editor**

Beef Bits

Walmart stake in Sustainable Beef

Walmart announced it has acquired a minority stake in the rancher-owned Sustainable Beef LLC, which plans to build a beef processing plant in North Platte, NE. "Walmart's equity investment is part of a broader strategic partnership to source top-quality Angus beef from Sustainable Beef LLC's new beef processing facility," the company said in a press release. "This partnership helps supplement the current beef industry and provides additional opportunities for ranchers to increase their business." Walmart will also have representation on Sustainable Beef's board. The investment will help the processor break ground and open by late 2024. Animal care will follow the "Five Freedoms" and will follow Walmart's position on antibiotics in animals, which asks suppliers to adopt and implement the American Veterinary Medical Association's judicious use principles of antimicrobials. "During this journey, we found that Sustainable Beef and Walmart aligned on continuing to improve how we care for our animals and crops and provide consumers the positive experience of enjoying quality beef," said David Briggs, CEO of Sustainable Beef LLC.

Meat processor to open in MT

A new value-added cooperative meat processing facility plans to open its doors this fall in Havre, MT. The Montana Premium Processing Cooperative was created out of the Montana Farmers Union's work to create a service-style processing plant, according to the company's website. The facility will provide USDA-inspected processing for cattle, hogs, sheep and bison. The plant will have the capability to process 3,000-3,500 head annually, according to a report by local news outlet Prairie Star. "In Montana right now, in order to get into a processing facility, where it is a USDA federally-inspected or state-inspected facility, it is a one to two year wait," Matt Rains, chief of staff for Montana Farmers Union, told the Prairie Star. "That is why we have been trapped and have to sell to large packing plants." In September 2021, the Montana Farmers Union and Farmers Union Enterprises purchased a former Schwan's facility in Havre. The location was chosen so the co-op can work with Montana State University-Northern to train students in meat processing. Co-op board of directors members include Paul Neubauer, Brett DeBruycker, Ben Peterson, Jess Alger, Eric Bergman, Jenny Kahrl and Walter Schweitzer. To become a member of the co-op, individuals must prove they are a producer. For more information, visit www.mtpremiumprocessing.com.

Whole Foods sued over antibiotic claims

A trio of consumers and an animal activist group are suing Whole Foods, claiming the company falsely advertised beef with its slogan of "No Antibiotics, Ever." Nonprofit organization Farm Forward said it began testing meat products at Whole Foods for antibiotic residues, and they found drug residues in meat products marketed as "antibiotic-free," Animal Welfare Approved and USDA organic. In a post asking for signatures on its website, the group wrote, "For decades, the meat industry, aided by companies like Whole Foods, has used humanewashing tactics to trick consumers into paying premiums for factory-farmed meat." Farm Forward calls on Whole Foods to end its "humanewashing," and "if it's factory farmed, label it factory farmed." The group says if the retail chain "can't live up to its promises to consumers, it should take factory-farmed products off its shelves."

Walmart Canada's beef sustainability

Walmart Canada plans to purchase an additional 1 million pounds of beef from certified sustainable Canadian farms and ranches. Last October, the company committed to purchase 1.5 million lbs. In May 2021, Walmart Canada became the first retailer in the country to offer an on-pack Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef claim in a line of beef products, the company said in a press release. "As we continue on our journey to becoming a regenerative company, we're always looking for opportunities to provide our customers with options that are better for the planet," said Rob Pereira, senior director of merchandising for meat and seafood at Walmart Canada. "Increasing our commitment to sourcing beef from certified sustainable Canadian farms and ranches along with adopting fully recyclable packaging for our ground beef are changes we're really proud of."

South Africa pauses label removals

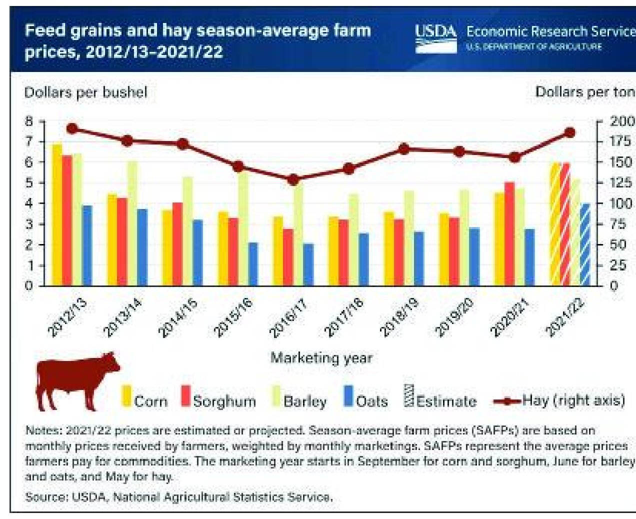
South Africa was set to remove plant-based foods labeled using meat terminology such as "vegan burger," but a court order stopped the process. A 2019 order by the South African Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development outlawed the use of meat product names on packaging. The department announced it would begin to seize products that were not properly labeled beginning on Aug. 22. The Consumer Goods Council of South Africa obtained a temporary interdict against the seizures a few days before the ban was set to go into effect, which halted the forcible removal of products. The South African Vegan Society said the government's ban "will have catastrophic consequences on many stakeholders, namely, producers of plant-based food products, retailers, and consumers."

Beef cattle producers face higher input costs in 2022

Annual U.S. retail prices for beef and veal are projected to rise 6-7% in 2022 relative to 2021. In May 2022, farmers' share of the retail value of beef also increased year over year, but rising input costs, especially for cattle feed, may limit farmers' ability to benefit from higher cattle prices.

in 2021. Prices for beef cattle feed were up 16% in May 2022 relative to May 2021. High fertilizer prices have contributed to increased feed costs, while drought conditions have squeezed feed grain and hay supplies.

The 2021-22 season-average farm price (SAFP) for



Annual U.S. retail prices for beef and veal are projected to rise 6-7% in 2022 relative to 2021.

Based on the USDA's Economic Research Service's (ERS) commodity costs and returns estimates, feed expenses are the largest operating cost for cow-calf producers, constituting 75% of these costs

corn—the primary grain fed to cattle—is currently projected at $5.95 per bushel, the highest SAFP since the 2012-13 marketing year. Like corn, the SAFPs for other feed grains, including sorghum, oats and barley, are projected to increase in 2021-22 relative to 2020-21. The SAFP for hay, an important supplement to cattle grazing, is estimated to be 16% higher in 2021-22 compared to the average price over the preceding nine years.

As of Aug. 9, it was estimated that 46% of hay is growing in areas experiencing drought. In addition to rising feed costs, elevated diesel fuel and farm labor costs have also put pressure on farmers' margins. — **USDA ERS**

USDA expects ag exports to set record in 2022

Agricultural exports will set a record in 2022—$196 billion—but are expected to decline in 2023, according to USDA.

The agency revised its export forecast upward for fiscal year (FY) 2022 by $5 billion from its May projection, largely due to increases in livestock, poultry and dairy exports.

Next year, exports are projected at $193.5 billion, down $2.5 billion from 2022.

"This decrease is primarily driven by lower exports of cotton, beef and sorghum that are partially offset by higher exports of soybeans and horticultural products," USDA's Economic Research Service stated in its quarterly Outlook for U.S. Agricultural Trade.

Imports of ag products are also expected to increase in both years, with the value of imports exceeding exports by $1 billion in 2023. In FY 2023, USDA sees imports growing by $5 billion to $197 billion on higher imports of grains, feed products, horticultural goods, sugar and tropical products.

Imports in 2022 are expected to jump 18%, the largest one-year percentage increase since 2011.

"The historically large increase from FY 2021 to FY 2022 is a product of the unwavering upward trend of import volumes in the face of increasing unit values for nearly every agricultural import product group," the report stated.

A breakdown of feed grain, livestock and ethanol exports follows.

Feed grains

USDA sees grain and feed exports falling by $1.3 billion to $46.5 billion in FY 2023 on lower sorghum, wheat and corn exports.

"Even with expectations of larger world market supplies as a result of the Ukraine grain corridor, prices are expected to remain historically high and global demand is forecast to remain strong," the report states. "If South America's production and exports are realized as currently forecast for next year's crop, competition with U.S. corn will be strong again."

USDA increased its forecast for 2022 feed grain exports to $47.8 billion, with corn and feed and fodder exports more than offsetting lower wheat volumes.

Corn export projections increased for 2022 to $19.2 billion, as higher prices more than offset lower volumes, resulting from increased South American competition in the final quarter of the year. Estimates for 2023 are $100 million lower due to a smaller volume of exports.

Sorghum's export value is expected to increase for 2022 before declining in 2023. At $2.7 billion, the 2022 projections are $100 million higher than in May, as higher prices offset lower volumes. But in 2023, exportable supplies are expected to be short due to drought, and USDA's forecast falls to $2 billion.

Wheat exports for 2022 are forecast at $8.1 billion, $300 million less than the previous quarter's estimates, as more tons are sent abroad at a lower price. "Global wheat prices have fallen over the last quarter, reflecting the ongoing winter wheat harvests as the new-crop wheat supply situation becomes more favorable," the report states. With more supplies available next year, the total value of exports is expected to fall to $7.8 billion.

Livestock

USDA's forecast calls for higher export values in 2022 that will fall back in 2023.

For the current year, exports of livestock, poultry and dairy products are forecast at $42.6 billion, up $2.2 billion from USDA's May projection. Volumes are generally expected to fall in 2023, contributing to a $1.5 billion decline in exports to $41.1 billion.

Beef exports are expected to increase $700 million in value to $10.9 billion on higher prices and volumes, but with drought squeezing producers, USDA sees exports dropping to $9.8 billion in 2023, "as higher prices fail to offset lower volumes driven by tight U.S. supplies."

Pork prices are expected to lift the value of exports in FY 2022 by $100 million to $6.3 billion. In 2023, higher volumes are expected to drive a continued increase in exports as prices drop. Exports are forecast at $6.5 billion in 2023.

Ethanol

U.S. ethanol exports are expected to total $4.2 billion in 2022 and 2023, a new record. The current year's forecast is $1.8 billion higher than 2021.

"Near-record export volume and export unit value combine to propel export value to $1.4 billion above (the) 2012 record," the report stated. "Average export unit value jumps to $2.60 per gallon, or 30% above the previous year's elevated level."

Canada is expected to buy one-third of total exports.

For 2023, USDA sees prices moderating somewhat while export volumes climb. "Although U.S. corn feedstock cost is expected to remain elevated, lower cost of natural gas helps maintain ethanol plant profitability if ethanol prices retreat in line with expected softening in oil prices." — **Katie Micik Dehlinger, DTN farm business editor**

How does a beef pricing grid work?

The vast majority of fed cattle are sold with the price determined on a carcass value basis. Your pen of live finished cattle are harvested, carcasses are weighed and USDA yield and quality grades are assigned. Optimum combinations of quality and yield grades result in more dollar value per pound of carcass weights sold. Price docks occur if carcasses are too light or too heavy.

An example grid is shown in Figure 1. Down the first column are the quality grades, which indicate the tenderness, juiciness and flavor of cooked beef. Prime is the highest quality grade, and therefore it is worth more dollars per pound than the lower quality grades listed below it. Across the top row are the yield grades, which indicate cutability, or the percentage of closely trimmed red meat yield from the beef carcass. A yield grade of 1 indicates the highest level of cutability and is worth more dollars per pound than the lower yield grades following it in that row.

Beef, like nearly all other ag-produced commodities, is sold according to standard assumptions about the product. This includes acceptable hot carcass weight (HCW), which typically falls somewhere in the range of 600-1,000 lbs. In addition, the typical carcass combines a yield grade of 3 with a quality grade of lower-thirds Choice. Historically, the biggest value difference occurred between Choice and Select carcasses. Likewise, quality grades have been the bigger driver of carcass value compared to yield grades.

It's worth noting the breakout of the Choice quality grade into thirds. Most quality-based, premium branded beef products require the upper two-thirds of Choice (or Prime) quality grade status to meet their specifications. For example, Certified Angus Beef, a premium branded program, has 10 specifications, one of which is a quality grade of upper two-thirds Choice or Prime.

	YG 1	YG 2	YG 3	YG 4	YG 5
Prime	+ + + + +	+ + + +	+ + +	- -	- - -
Choice + o	+ + +	+ +	+ +	- - -	- - - -
Choice -	+ +	+	Avg. commodity price	- - - -	- - - - -
Select	- -	- -	- - -	- - - - -	- - - - -
Standard	- -	- - -	- - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -

Figure 1.

Characteristics of beef pricing grids include:

- Better-than-average combinations of quality and yield grades receive premiums over the commodity price. Poorer-than-average combinations receive discounts.
- Value of the carcass = HCW x price per pound (as determined by the grid).
- There are many types of grids designed by packers to stratify and incentivize different types of carcasses; however, there is typically more economic incentive for quality.
- Prices (premiums, discounts, acceptable HCW) can and do change weekly relative to the supply of fed cattle and consumer demand.

Knowing the history and genetic potential of your cattle is critical when deciding if retaining ownership and selling on a grid is best for your operation. — **Mark Z. Johnson, Oklahoma State University Extension beef cattle breeding specialist**

LEGAL LEDGER

USDA grant funding for meat projects

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) announced that $21.9 million was awarded to 111 grant projects in 37 states through the Meat and Poultry Inspection Readiness Grant program. The funding will help strengthen and develop new market opportunities for meat and poultry processors throughout the U.S., according to AMS. "The Meat and Poultry Inspection Readiness Grants will help meat and poultry processors make necessary facility improvements, expand their businesses and strengthen the nation's food supply chain," said Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. "These grants are one part of USDA's Meat and Poultry Supply Chain initiatives and will contribute to our efforts to transform our food system." AMS is also encouraging awardees and eligible participants in those initiatives to request assistance through the Meat and Poultry Processing Capacity Technical Assistance (MPPTA) Program, which connects participants to a nationwide network of resources and expertise. For more information about MPPTA and the organizations involved or to initiate a request for assistance, visit AMS' MPPTA webpage at www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/mppta.

MT adopts wolf hunting regs

The Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted new wolf hunting and trapping regulations for the upcoming season. After heated comments from the public both for and against wolf hunting and trapping, the commission decided the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) will manage wolf hunting through a smaller management unit near Yellowstone. FWP will close Unit 313, just north of the park, to further wolf hunting and trapping once hunters and trappers have killed six wolves. Commissioner Patrick Tabor introduced an amendment to reduce the number to six from the recommendation of 10 after weighing input from Yellowstone National Park Superintendent Cameron Sholly and Yellowstone National Park wolf biologist Douglas Smith. The commission also established quotas for other management units in the state's seven wolf hunting and trapping regions, ranging from a high of 195 wolves in Region 1, which is in northwestern Montana, to a low of three wolves in Region 6, which spans the northeastern corner of the state.

Ag census survey is on its way

USDA will begin to mail the 2022 Census of Agriculture survey to producers this fall. It will be mailed in phases, starting with an invitation to respond online in November, followed by paper questionnaires in December. Changes to the 2022 questionnaire include new questions about the use of precision agriculture, hemp production and hair sheep, along with updates to internet access questions. "By responding to the Census of Agriculture—by being represented in these important data—producers are literally helping to shape their futures," USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service Administrator Hubert Hamer said. The census began in 1840 and is conducted every five years, highlighting land use and ownership, producer characteristics, production practices and income and expenditures, among other topics.

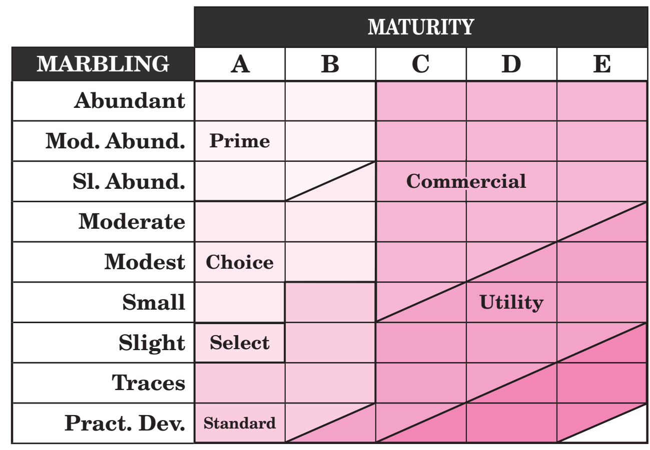
CA's AB5 injunction dissolved

An injunction related to California's Assembly Bill 5 (AB5), which classified independent contractors as employees, ended when a federal judge formally dissolved the three-year injunction filed by the California Trucking Association (CTA). Judge Roger Benitez of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California ended the injunction on the 2019 law, which trucking organizations said would force the end of the owner-operator model in the state. The California Trucking Association v. Bonta case received a preliminary injunction from the district court shortly after AB5 was law. The trucking group contended that AB5 was preempted by the Federal Aviation Administration Authorization Act, which prevents states from enforcing a law related to the price, route or service of motor carriers. The district court agreed, and in 2021, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals disagreed, calling AB5 a "generally applicable labor law." The U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the appeal and sent the matter back to the district court. CTA has until Oct. 11 to file a renewed motion for a preliminary injunction.

Two convicted in Ponzi scheme

A federal jury convicted two individuals of wire fraud and conspiracy to commit money laundering in a cattle Ponzi scheme. Reva Joyce Stachniw of Galesburg, IL, and Ron Throgmartin of Buford, GA, ran a Ponzi scheme from late 2017 until early 2019. Based on false promises, the two told investors that investment money would be used for legitimate business activities related to cattle or marijuana without having the investment money linked to specific investment opportunities. Stachniw and Throgmartin were convicted on one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, five counts of wire fraud and one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering. They are scheduled to be sentenced on Jan. 6, 2023, and face a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison on each of the wire fraud counts and the conspiracy to commit wire fraud count, as well as 10 years in prison on the conspiracy to commit money laundering count.

Assigning beef quality grades to carcasses



USDA beef quality grades assigned to beef carcasses indicate the tenderness, juiciness and flavor of cooked beef. Beef quality grades are based on the degree of marbling a USDA grader finds in the rib-eye muscle of a ribbed carcass between the 12th and 13th ribs and the maturity of the carcass.

The "A" maturity designation means that a hanging beef carcass shows a degree of maturity between 9-30 months of age. Accordingly, if you send lighter calves or long yearlings to the feedyard, after the typical finishing phase of at least 150 days of a high-energy, corn-based ration fed ad-lib, they should yield an "A" maturity carcass. Because of this, marbling score is the primary factor that determines quality grades in "A" maturity beef carcasses.

In conventional beef production, cattle are fed for an amount of time to reach a compositional endpoint with the objective of tapping their full genetic potential to grow and develop marbling. Marbling is one type of fat we find in the carcass (external fat, seam fat, and kidney, heart and pelvic fat).

Marbling is commonly referred to as intramuscular fat because of where it is found within the rib-eye muscle. As such, marbling can't be seen in live animals. Therefore, the compositional endpoint to which cattle are fed is based on external finish. Because of its location in the beef carcass, marbling has more influence on the tenderness, juiciness and flavor of cooked beef than the other types of fat.

As a result, marbling and beef quality grades are typically the biggest drivers of beef carcass value. From highest to lowest, the four quality grades that exist for "A" maturity beef carcasses are Prime, Choice, Select and Standard.

The chart shows how marbling scores down the left-hand column relate to beef quality grades. Three marbling scores are shown beside the Prime and Choice quality grades, permitting the grades to be split into thirds. For example, moderate and modest marbling scores are connected to the upper two-thirds of the Choice grade, which is a specification threshold for carcasses to be certified for quality-based premium branded programs like Certified Angus Beef.

When beef carcasses fall into the "B," "C," "D" and "E" maturity groups, lower quality grades are assigned, and there is no longer potential for the best quality grades.

Beyond marbling and maturity, the amount of time on feed, the genetic potential and the breed type of beef cattle play a big role in the quality grades achieved. Marbling is one of the later-maturing fat types to develop. A wide range of genetic propensity to grow and develop marbling relative to other types of fat exists within and between different beef breeds. —**Mark Z. Johnson, Oklahoma State University Extension beef cattle breeding specialist**

Direct-to-consumer farm sales reached $10.7B in 2020

In 2020, U.S. farms sold almost $10.7 billion of edible food commodities directly to consumer outlets and intermediary supply chains such as restaurants/grocery stores, regional distributors and local institutions—a nearly $2.8 billion (35%) increase from 2019.

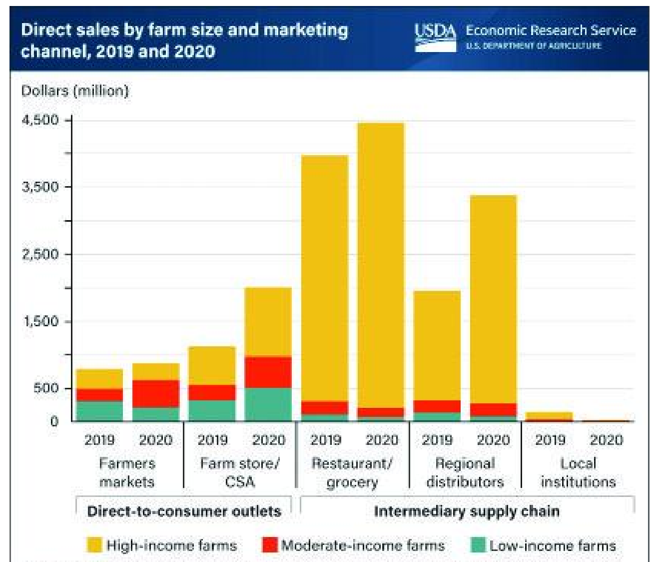
The overall increase in direct sales in 2020 occurred across most direct sales marketing channels, such as farmers markets, farm store/community supported agriculture (CSA), restaurants/grocery stores and regional distributors.

From 2019 to 2020, sales at farmers markets and restaurants/grocery stores increased by 11% and 13%, respectively, whereas sales at farm stores, CSAs and other direct-to-consumer channels increased by 79%, and sales to regional distributors increased by 73%.

However, sales to local institutions declined by 86% in 2020 relative to 2019, likely because of closures or restricted operations related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, in 2020, 73% of total direct sales occurred through intermediary supply chains, while the remaining 27% were through direct-to-consumer outlets.

High-income direct sales farms, defined here as those with a gross cash farm income (GCFI) of $350,000 or more, increased their direct sales by $2.4 billion (38%) from 2019 to 2020, which accounted for 81% of all direct sales. Among low-income direct sales farms, defined as those with a GCFI of less than $75,000, 85% of their direct sales were through direct-to-consumer outlets in 2020.

About 7% of America's 2 million farms sold commodities through direct-to-consumer outlets, and almost 1% sold through intermediary supply chains. The other 93% of U.S. farms sell their commodities via other marketing channels, such as slaughterhouses, ethanol processors, grain mills, etc. — **USDA Economic Research Service**



Notes: **CSA** = Community Supported Agriculture. The "Farm store/CSA" category also includes sales from roadside stands, u-pick, and other direct-to-consumer sales. Regional distributors include food hubs and internet aggregators that then sell directly to consumers. Institutions include schools, hospitals, and other businesses providing dining services to consumers. **High-income farms** are those with a gross cash farm income (GCFI) of $350,000 or more. **Moderate-income farms** are those with GCFI between $75,000 and $349,999. **Low-income farms** are those with a GCFI less than $75,000. Christmas trees and flowers; nursery products; craft items; and processed products, such as jellies, sausages, and hams, are excluded from the analysis of direct sales of commodities. Also, commodities produced under production contracts are excluded from this analysis because the farmer does not own the commodity.

Source: USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service and USDA, Economic Research Service, 2019 and 2020 Agricultural Resource Management Survey.

100 YEARS 1922 2022 Western Livestock Journal

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MPI sues meat packers; charges price manipulation

The Meat Price Investigators, a private group that represents 450 cattle producers in Iowa and 13 other states, has filed suit against four meat packers for manipulation of cattle prices.

Glenn Freie, chairman of the Latimer, Iowa, based group, said the suit was filed Aug. 10 at the U.S. District Court of Des Moines against Iowa Beef Processors, Dakota City, Neb.; Flavorland Industries, Inc., Omaha; MBPXL Corp., Wichita, Kan., and Spencer Food, Inc., Spencer, Iowa.

Freie said the suit was based on many factors that have been going on for some time and feels the group can prove illegal price fixing dating back to 1963. Freie expects a hearing date to be set soon.

The suit alleges that the packers:

- Manipulate the carcass, primal and subprimal prices of the beef reported on the National Provisioner (The Yellow Sheet).
- Agree to quote substantially identical bids for live cattle.
- Divide territory among themselves to restrict the market for live cattle.
- Purchase businesses of potential competitors.
- Feed large amounts of live cattle to prevent any price increases.
- Purchase carcass, primal and subprimal beef from each other for the purpose of fixing the price reported.
- Use warehouse storage facilities to depress the price of live cattle.
- Boycott and agree to boycott cattlemen in a given area to artificially lower the price of live cattle.
- Agree to purchase a large quantity of cattle on certain days of the week knowing that the live cattle prices are fixed at artificially low prices on these days. — ***WLJ***

Growth-promoting techs are more important now

— Higher input costs

We have all noticed that input prices have increased substantially over the last year. Fertilizer, feed and fuel have given us sticker shock, but in reality, prices for all necessities have increased, with prices for herbicides, seed, parts, tires, equipment and trailers all going up.

Based on current feeder cattle futures prices in October (currently trading at $180/cwt), 550 pound steers could be selling at $200/cwt (based on a $10/cwt slide) this fall. Now is not the time to stop spending money on inputs, but we need to be ready to spend our money on inputs wisely.

Growth-promoting technologies provide an even higher impact on net returns when costs are high. As I stated in a previous article, implants administered when the calves are between 2 months and 4 months of age will increase preweaning average daily gain of calves by approximately 0.1-0.2 lbs. per day. This will result in a 20-30 lb. heavier weaning weight, worth $40-50 per calf.

If an operation is currently using creep feeding to increase weaning weights, alternatives should be considered this year. With typical free-choice creep feeding programs, we expect creep intake to be 6-7 lbs. per day. Free-choice creep feeding normally requires 8-10 lbs. of creep for each additional pound of gain. Also, if these creep feeds are fed for more than 60 days, calves may be discounted for excessive fleshiness at market. Limit-fed creep feeding programs targeting a creep intake of 1% of the calve's body weight should be considered. The limited creep supplements should be designed to match forage conditions. We use a moderate protein supplement (20-25%) when calves are on Bermuda grass pastures with adequate protein but low energy. On native pastures with inadequate protein and energy, we use a high protein supplement (35-40%) to match the forage deficiencies. The supplements contain 8-10% salt to help limit intake, and the targeted amounts can be fed in creep feeders two to three times per week.

Limited creep supplements will increase gains by around 0.5 lbs. per day, requiring 4.5-5 lbs. of supplemental creep per pound of added gain. Including an ionophore, such as monensin or lasalocid, in creep supplements will improve gains by 0.1 lbs. per day on top of the creep feed, further improving supplemental efficiency to 3.5-4 lbs. of supplemental creep per pound of added weaning weight. Providing a limit-fed creep supplement during the late summer with an ionophore will result in a 50-60 lb. heavier calf at weaning worth $100-120 more. Depending on the cost of the creep supplement, this should boost net returns by $50-60 per calf (using $500 per ton of supplement in this example).

Now is not the time to completely pull back from spending money on inputs for our cow herd, but we do need to carefully consider the costs and impacts on net returns for all management decisions. — **Paul Beck, Oklahoma State University Extension beef nutrition specialist**

Aiding producers in selling meat directly to the consumer

McLean Beef, a small Nebraska meat locker, found itself expanding and opening a new retail store just when the pandemic was hitting.

Steel prices and other construction costs were a challenge, but the small direct marketer also had to consider how to sell meat to consumers during a pandemic. Brian Kurth, McLean Beef's general manager, said his wife saw a novel idea from a meat retailer in the Northeast. They used vending machines to sell meat cuts.

After finding a machine supplier, McLean Beef installed two machines just inside the entrance to the store, much like an ATM at an entryway in the bank. "I was just trying to figure out how to sell when everything was locked down," he said.

Kurth said he was surprised at just how well the vending machines took off, even after COVID-19 restrictions eased. Sales from the machines haven't slowed. He noted young people really like using the machines and don't even come into the full store. People also buy meat 24 hours a day.

"It's been a great thing for us to sell 24/7. They have paid for themselves," Kurth said. He added, "We cannot keep them filled. It has become its own tourist trap."

Kurth spoke at the Nebraska governor's Ag and Economic Development Summit recently as part of a panel of small meat producers, all of whom have expanded or seen sales spike since the beginning of COVID-19.

"For about two years, we worked seven days a week," said Mary Baumert, who works with her husband, Ryan, who owns Faltin Meat Market in Howells, NE. "There were actually people who would come to the store and want to buy everything in the store."

Small meat processors saw the need to expand and have tried their best to tap into USDA and state grant and loan programs. Those efforts, though, can often be thwarted by the cumbersome process of grant applications or requirements that they get USDA inspection to qualify for aid.

Consumers want to know where and how their food is raised, so this trend has increased the popularity of livestock producers selling meat directly to consumers. While positive for producers, this trend has also caused some headaches for small meat lockers faced with increasing demand for their business.

In a recent webinar from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's (UNL) Center for Agricultural Profitability, a panel discussed how livestock producers can directly market meat to consumers. Panelists shared their thoughts on how producers can negotiate this business model, how to work with meat processors and even how to market your brand.

Gary Sullivan, UNL assistant professor of meat processing, said there are a lot of considerations livestock producers need to think about before selling meat directly to consumers. It is more complex than you would think, he said.

There are two main ways to sell meat directly to the consumer. To sell individual cuts of meat, the meat must be USDA inspected. This process would involve more paperwork and more work with a meat processor to ensure all regulations are followed, he said.

Meat can also be sold custom exempt, in which consumers could buy a quarter, half or whole carcass. This is a service for the owner of the animal, and as the owner, you can sell the meat from the carcass.

"The whole process has evolved in recent years," Sullivan said. "There have been changes in demand, and some people want special value-added products like jerky."

Mariel Barreras' family farm near Blair, NE, sells both beef and pork directly to consumers, and she also has a background in marketing. She said there are several aspects livestock producers should consider when deciding to enter this business.

Producers should identify their target customers and develop their message. In addition, a logo should be developed, as should a website and a marketing strategy.

"You just can't get the exposure on Facebook; you really need a website," Barreras said.

"It's been a great thing for us to sell 24/7. They have paid for themselves."

Producers should be prepared to communicate well with everyone in this world, she said. Good communication should exist between consumers and processors.

Small packer pains

Charlie Emswiler is the owner of the Wahoo Meat Locker located in Wahoo, NE. Small meat lockers have experienced growing pains in recent years with the increased demand for local meat.

The industry has seen massive shifts in many different trends. In the past, small lockers focused on basic cuts, such as steaks, roasts and hamburger. Now, with USDA-inspected facilities, the cuts are more complex.

"Each private label has its own specifications," Emswiler said. "I could have 150 producers want it 150 different ways."

While it has made his operation more difficult, it is not impossible, he said. He has gone toward a tier system, in which USDA private label customers pay more to process their animals than his custom exempt customers.

The other issue continuing to plague small meat processors is scheduling, he said.

Emswiler said before the COVID-19 pandemic, he was scheduling out two to four months. Then, at the beginning of the pandemic, it went from six months to 10 months to a year or even two years out, he said.

It is becoming more difficult to keep his customers happy when he has to schedule this far out, he said. More small processors are expanding their facilities, and he hopes this will allow for shorter scheduling times. — **Russ Quinn, DTN staff reporter, and Chris Clayton, DTN ag policy editor**

FSA chief: Livestock producers need more disaster aid support

Zach Ducheneaux, administrator for USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), said on Aug. 23 that the disparity between disaster aid for livestock and crops indicates livestock producers need more ad hoc support following a disaster.

Congress last year approved $10 billion for agricultural disaster aid from 2020 to 2021, of which $750 million was specifically set aside for livestock aid. Ducheneaux, speaking at the inaugural Midwest Council on Agriculture meeting in Detroit Lakes, MN, said the funding disparity doesn't reflect the balance of cash receipts that livestock provides.

"$750 million isn't enough for the need, clearly," said Ducheneaux, who was raised as a rancher in a South Dakota Tribe. "It does highlight the need for livestock producers to be more vocal about their losses. We have got to bring more parity to that."

The Emergency Livestock Relief Program has spent about $600 million under phase one of the program, which focuses on paying producers for forage losses to help offset higher feed costs. USDA is looking at how to distribute the remaining $150 million still available. Ducheneaux indicated USDA could look at supplementing the remaining money with funds from the Commodity Credit Corporation.

Overall, the Emergency Relief Program has paid out about $6.48 billion to 263,708 producers of commodity crops and specialty crops nationally.

Conservation

Discussing the $19.5 billion in the Inflation Reduction Act for USDA's conservation programs, Ducheneaux emphasized there is nothing mandatory about the push for climate-smart agriculture in those programs.

"It's all voluntary, and it's all incentive-based," he said, adding, "If you are emitting carbon and it's not going into your soil, that's inhibiting your productivity."

"It does highlight the need for livestock producers to be more vocal about their losses. We have got to bring more parity to that."

Ducheneaux also said the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) should have more flexibility built into it when it comes to situations such as grazing livestock. Right now, unless there is a D2 (severe) drought, landowner payments are discounted 25% for nonemergency haying or grazing. Ducheneaux said there should be options for CRP owners to work with young producers who might need some grazing acres, for instance.

"There isn't an acre of CRP that (shouldn't) be used somehow," he said.

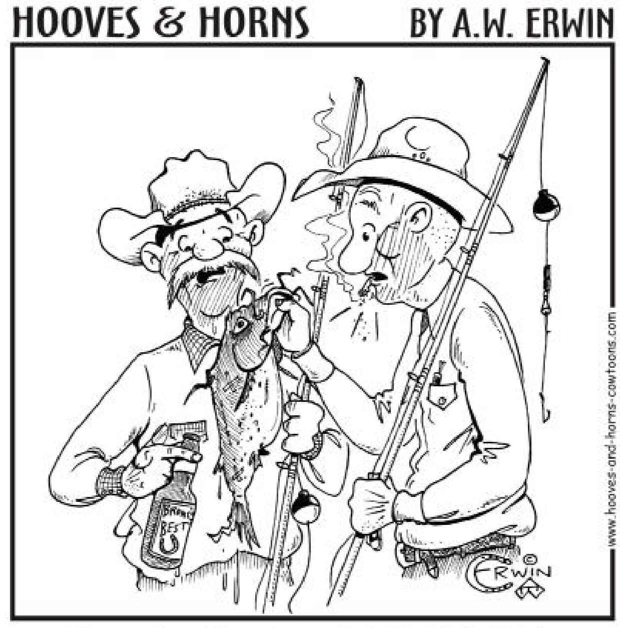
Staffing, software

Asked about staffing at local offices, Ducheneaux said part of the challenge now is starting pay. "We're no longer competitive," he said.

FSA's computer systems also are becoming antiquated, with Ducheneaux saying some systems still function on COBOL, an older software language. Right now, though, there is a hesitancy to elevate some of FSA's staffing and computer problems.

"We need the help of the population we serve to advocate for us," Ducheneaux said. — **Chris Clayton, DTN ag policy editor**

HOOVES & HORNS BY A.W. ERWIN



"I was using a Grasshopper fer bait,... He jus'about beat this poor catfish to death!"

Conservationists push plan to 'rewild the West'

— Propose retiring livestock grazing

A proposal to introduce threatened and endangered species onto federal lands in the West could have severe consequences for livestock grazing, with plan proposers calling for reduced livestock grazing in large portions of the West.

A group of academics and conservationists has released a study called "Rewilding the American West," which details a framework to "rewild" public lands by introducing animals such as wolves, beavers and other threatened and endangered plant and animal species to protected areas on western public lands.

"Beyond concerns for human survival and flourishing, a principled commitment to the natural world and a sense of moral urgency underpins the motivation for our proposal," the study says. The research was influenced by President Joe Biden's "30x30 plan," and the researchers say they take a major step in advancing the president's vision by envisioning "a bold and science-based rewilding of publicly owned federal lands."

The researchers claim the benefits of the proposal would contribute to stream restoration and help mitigate drought, wildfires and climate change. The study identifies 11 large-scale reserves to disperse species in the western U.S., coining the area as the "Western Rewilding Network."

"In general, rewilding aims to reestablish vital ecological processes that can involve removing troublesome nonnative species and restoring key native species," the study read. "Our rewilding call is grounded in ecological science and is necessary regardless of changing political winds."

Wolves and beavers are noted as the centerpiece of restoration. The network would also include 92 threatened and endangered species: five amphibians, five birds, two crustaceans, 22 fish, 39 flowering plants, five insects, 11 mammals, one reptile and two snail species. The researchers claim that in seven out of the 11 potential reserves, more than half of the listed species are threatened by livestock grazing.

"Federal lands with managed livestock allotments often have various ecological impacts because of the multiple direct and indirect effects of these introduced large herbivores," the study alleges. "For example, in many areas, livestock grazing causes stream and wetland degradation, affects fire regimes, and inhibits the regeneration of woody species, especially willow."

The researchers also point to livestock grazing as a source of greenhouse gas emissions and say the impacts of methane can shift landscapes from carbon sinks to carbon sources.

The rewilding plan for the proposed network includes three major steps:

- Retiring livestock grazing allotments on federal land within the proposed reserve network.
- Protecting, reestablishing or recovering gray wolves, especially within the network.
- Reintroducing beavers in suitable habitats within the network.

The study claims these three steps would greatly improve ecosystem structure and function. In addition to limiting livestock grazing, the study calls for limiting resource extraction and off-road vehicles.

The plan would reduce livestock grazing allotments on federal lands by 29%, which equates to more than 17,000 square miles. The proposal notes that an "economically and socially just federal compensation program" could be established for those who relinquish their grazing permits for permanent retirement.

"Although our proposal may at first blush appear controversial or even quixotic, we believe that ultra ambitious action is required," the researchers wrote. "We are in an unprecedented period of converging crises in the American West, including extended drought and water scarcity, extreme heat waves, massive fires triggered at least partly by climate change, and biodiversity loss with many threatened and endangered species."

The researchers also note that lands in the proposed network are already owned by the public, and they additionally claim meat produced from the forage on all federal lands accounts for only 2% of national meat production, citing a 2008 study.

"Our plan represents a historic opportunity to rewild significant portions of the American West that could serve as an inspiring model for other regions and would ensure our natural heritage remains intact for future generations," the study concludes.

Conservationist groups expressed their support for the network. "With logging, mining, oil and gas drilling, and livestock grazing remaining a significant threat to federal public lands, we must stop this endless resource exploitation and start conserving, reconnecting and restoring at a landscape scale," said Sarah McMillan, conservation director at WildEarth Guardians.

"The ecological and economic benefits of the rewilding plan presented in this paper would be significant and would accumulate over time as riparian areas, clean water and biodiversity are restored and climate change is mitigated through increased carbon storage." — **Anna Miller, *WLJ* managing editor**

Solar project preserves land for agricultural use

SOLAR
(from page 1)

At a hearing earlier in August, Carl Holm, Delta County community development and natural resources director, told the commissioners the developers had met all the county land use code requirements.

Commissioner Wendell Koontz concurred, stating Guzman Energy has met the land use permit conditions, but he continued his argument from an earlier hearing in March that it was "a good project in a bad area."

Commissioner Don Suppes said while they sympathize with neighbors, they can't make decisions because people "just don't want it in their backyard," adding, "That is not the way to decide land use."

In total, the developers had a list of 15 items to address for the solar installation to be accepted. One of those was the land use change, as the land was zoned "agriculture (20-acre)," which requires a minimum of 20 acres per parcel of land. Delta County policy is to limit the impact on agricultural lands.

Joe Sperry, owner of Sperry Livestock Corp., noted how lands are being changed from livestock and agricultural use to other uses. According to Delta County Planning and Community Development records, "Sperry expressed support for this project as an alternative to how agricultural land is used, and the need to be open to different ideas to help keep farming here."

Sperry noted in an email to county officials the decision to allow grazing on the parcel will allow his operation to be viable in Delta County, and he cited the use of solar grazing in other parts of the U.S. Sperry urged the county to consider the option and to be a leader in solar grazing in Colorado.

Ed Ullrey, one commenter on the project, said in a letter to the county commissioners that Sperry and Guzman Energy have not been forthcoming about the plan to allow grazing on the parcel. Ullrey noted the sheep would use the property only in the winter months, as the area is too hot, and ranchers move their sheep to higher elevations.

"The economic value of five months of winter grazing for one to two thousand head of sheep is minuscule compared to the extravagant and expensive irrigation system, interior fencing and livestock watering system," Ullrey wrote. "This is an enormous amount of work, expense and maintenance for 20 to 30 years to maintain ground cover under the panels just so they can call it 'agrivoltaic.'"

Agrivoltaics, sometimes called solar grazing, is the practice of using livestock in solar arrays for vegetation control. At the same time, the panels offer shade for livestock, and the vegetation helps to cool solar panels.

According to the American Solar Grazing Association, a nonprofit group of sheep ranchers, landowners and solar developers, there are currently an estimated 12,000-15,000 acres of solar arrays being grazed in the U.S.

In addition to meeting the conditions for approval, Guzman Energy will post a $4.4 million bond for the decommissioning of the project and a $100,000 road bond. Delta-Montrose Electric Association—the local electricity cooperative—has agreed to purchase 20 percent of the energy produced by the solar farm, and Guzman Energy will off-take the rest as a power supply to serve additional wholesale customers.

Construction costs are anticipated to fall between $75-80 million, and construction will require 350-400 temporary jobs, with preference given to local individuals and businesses. **— Charles Wallace, *WLJ* editor**

Capturing more of your calves' value with preconditioning

Why should buyers at cattle auctions pay $10-15/cwt premiums for the best cattle that have received the best management if they can get the same thing at commodity prices?

The results from 2021 showed calves in the Oklahoma Quality Beef Network (OQBN), a certified preconditioning program supported by the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service and Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association, had average premiums of $14.70/cwt for steers and $15.19/cwt for heifers.

Premiums were as high as $24.53/cwt for four-weight steers, but even seven-weight steers received average premiums of $13.42/cwt. Often, calves in these certified preconditioning programs bring substantial premiums ($5-15/cwt) over calves that are preconditioned without certification. This is because cattle announced to "have all their shots" are an unknown commodity unless the seller's reputation is known by buyers.

Our customers (stocker operators and feedlots) want matched sets of calves that are weaned, castrated, dehorned, familiar with water and feed sources and able to resist disease challenges. Calves need to have a sound, balanced nutritional program and be free from internal parasites in order to have an immune system fit enough to withstand the marketing and transportation channels of our beef production system.

Preconditioning calves before marketing reduces shrink because the stress of separation from the dam has already occurred, and calves are familiarized with handling and feed and water sources. Weaning is stressful, and calves are often unfamiliar with water and feed locations, so they may refuse to eat or drink even when feed and water are offered.

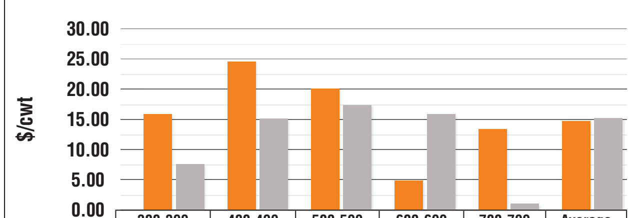
Unweaned bawling calves transported directly to the auction market will have massive weight losses through the marketing channels, with shrink often reaching 10-15%, leading to an increased risk of succumbing to disease. Preconditioned calves shrink much less when handled properly; we have commonly seen shrinkage of only 2-5% in preconditioned calves.

Buyers are seeing the benefits of preconditioning. Research comparing receiving performance and health of preconditioned calves versus commodity calves purchased from an auction market showed preconditioned calves gained more and were heavier than auction market calves at the end of the receiving period. Preconditioning decreased bovine respiratory disease by 90%, and the antibiotic costs of a non-preconditioned auction market calf increased eightfold.

The OQBN Vac-45 program is one example. The OQBN Vac-45 program requires:

- Calves must be weaned for 45 days or longer.
- Calves must be ranch raised (not purchased and put together).
- Bull calves must be castrated and healed.
- Calves must be dehorned and healed.
- Calves must be identified with an OQBN ear tag.
- Calves must be vaccinated in accordance with preset protocols. — **Paul Beck, Oklahoma State University beef cattle nutrition specialist**

2021 OQBN PREMIUMS BY WEIGHT CLASS AND GENDER



	300-399	400-499	500-599	600-699	700-799	Average
Steers	15.85	24.53	20.11	4.86	13.42	14.70
Heifers	10.59	15.10	17.34	15.90	1.10	15.19

*OQBN lots and average premium represents sales where data was collected. Premium is weighted average premium of preconditioned calves relative to non-preconditioned calves at same sale.
Source: K.C. Raper and D.S. Peel, OQBN data, 2021

2022 cow nutrition impacts 2023 calves

It's well established that the nutritional requirements of cattle fluctuate throughout the year and depend on the production cycle of the cow. Although the nutritional cost for maintenance remains somewhat constant, there are many factors that influence these added nutritional "taxes." Growing heifers have elevated needs to support their development, yet the lactating cow has extra milk production that's further competing for nutrients.

Producers tend to focus on nutritional management of the cow and her own needs, but they fail to think about the requirements of the developing fetus. Considering the time from conception to consumption or first service, it's important to realize that a calf obtains a huge portion of its nutrition from its mother. Dam nutrition has a huge impact on the future success of her calf.

Maintaining optimum nutrition is important for the cow during late gestation. Cows in a proper body condition score of 5-6 have less problems with dystocia because their energy reserves are built up for the intensity of parturition, even though they tend to have heavier, more vigorous calves.

Throw in the fact that properly conditioned cows produce higher quality colostrum, and it's easy to see how gestational nutrition impacts calf immunity and health. Cow condition is a great way to assess the nutritional status of your herd, and it has more implications than just the benefits to the cow and her calf at parturition.

A pregnancy is the result of a genetic investment in the dam and sire, and reproductive failure is the first observed outcome when nutritional demands aren't met. Therefore, it's important to give that developing fetus every tool to be successful for its production purpose. Gestation is typically divided into trimesters based on time. However, producers should look at gestation from a nutritional sense in the form of early-, mid- and late-gestation.

The development of the placenta and vital organs occurs during the early stages, so inadequate nutrition can lead to intrauterine growth restriction and early embryonic loss. Mid-gestation is associated with the lowest nutritional demands for the cow, yet this isn't the time to cut corners. From month two to seven, the development of muscle fibers occurs in the calf, and energy/protein-deficient dams can inhibit the calf's ability to reach their muscular genetic potential.

Exponential fetal growth and adipogenesis occur in the fetus during the last three months of gestation. Research has proven that dams that can't meet their nutritional demands deliver smaller calves that have more health problems and finish with reduced marbling scores at harvest. Considering the correlation between birth weight and weaning weight, along with a loss in quality grade potential, improper nutrition leading up to calving can severely limit calf value.

> ***Dam nutrition has a huge impact on the future success of her calf.***

The widespread drought has made it challenging for producers to keep their cows in the proper nutritional status, subjecting them to these potential concerns. Feed additives can help improve the digestibility of drought-stressed forages, helping producers unlock more energy and protein from their available forage.

Keeping these cows in the right condition during this tough time is important, not just in the upcoming calving season, but when it's time to breed or market their offspring in the future.

Whatever you feed, remember that the mineral you deliver to your bred cow now will have a significant impact on your calf once it is delivered and even as you take it to market. Skimping on nutrition will impact future generations and your bottom line. — **Chris Cassady, Ph.D., BioZyme Inc.**

MARKET NEWS

MARKET SITUATION REPORT

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

MARKET AT A GLANCE

MARKET AT A GLANCE	This Week: 9/1/2022		Week Ago	Year Ago
Choice Fed Steers	142.78	▼	144.45	125.93
CME Feeder Index	183.04	▲	181.00	157.94
Boxed Beef Average	258.07	▼	263.54	337.92
Average Dressed Steers	229.05	▼	232.89	202.23
Live Slaughter Weight*	1,346	▲	1,343	1,358
Weekly Slaughter**	678,000	▲	661,000	653,000
Weekly Beef Production***	551.3	▲	535.8	534.9
Hide/Offal Value	13.80	▲	13.68	15.46
Corn Price	6.74	▲	6.58	5.16

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

EEF 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 26	6,797	263.78	227	333.43	1,248	268.26	2,036	261.07	751	238.25	2,535	227.97
August 19	6,767	263.09	191	331.99	1,167	268.47	2,072	261.56	813	238.90	2,524	225.16
August 12	6,726	263.28	177	326.63	1,284	269.19	1,882	262.60	826	238.53	2,557	227.13
August 5	6,920	264.95	191	323.97	1,294	270.67	1,983	265.20	883	242.77	2,570	229.73

Cutouts — FED BOXED BEEF

DATE	CHOICE	SELECT	COW BEEF CUTOUT	50% LEAN	90% LEAN
Sep 1	258.07	236.59	211.55	111.33	266.16
Aug 31	258.34	237.74	214.84	106.82	278.50
Aug 30	259.79	239.68	211.77	108.88	266.73
Aug 29	263.04	242.75	212.75	109.45	266.06
Aug 26	262.76	238.76	211.79	104.11	266.30

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Live Cattle

	8/26	8/29	8/30	8/31	9/1	High*	Low*
Aug.	14080	14155	14250	14155	N/A	14783	10920
Oct.	14305	14290	14383	14258	14280	14585	12525
Dec.	14910	14893	14980	14848	14858	15150	13055
Feb.	15390	15365	15435	15333	15315	15575	14003

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Feeder Cattle

	8/26	8/29	8/30	8/31	9/1	High*	Low*
Aug.	18220	17993	18218	18245	N/A	18325	15328
Sep.	18340	18108	18328	18348	18315	18713	15425
Oct.	18518	18290	18470	18453	18435	18955	16373
Nov.	18615	18400	18550	18513	18570	19103	16958

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

FED CATTLE TRADE

FED CATTLE TRADE	Head Count	Avg. Weight	Avg. Price
WEEKLY WEIGHTED AVERAGES			
Live FOB Steer	16,437	1,450	142.78
Live FOB Heifer	8,562	1,326	142.55
Dressed Del Steer	12,467	955	229.05
Dressed Del Heifer	2,467	862	229.52
SAME PERIOD LAST WEEK			
Live FOB Steer	20,715	1,446	144.45
Live FOB Heifer	9,213	1,294	143.80
Dressed Del Steer	12,780	957	232.89
Dressed Del Heifer	2,325	845	232.59
SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR			
Live FOB Steer	14,638	1,474	125.93
Live FOB Heifer	4,157	1,303	124.93
Dressed Del Steer	8,676	956	202.23
Dressed Del Heifer	1,772	871	202.55

NATIONAL WEEKLY FED BEEF SLAUGHTER VOLUME: AUGUST 28

	Domestic	Imported
Forward Contract	19,269	5,610
Formula	282,419	0
Negotiated Cash	103,895	135
Negotiated Grid	50,108	0
Packer Owned	12,231	0
Total	**467,922**	**5,745**

SLAUGHTER FORWARD CONTRACTS / FORWARD BEEF SALES

Delivery Month			
Aug. '22	111,914	Neg. Sales 0-21 days	1,763
Sep. '22	162,294	Neg. Sales 21+ days	1,201
Oct. '22	134,288	Formula sales	3,540
Nov. '22	138,111	Forward contract sales	292
Dec. '22	95,526	Domestic sales	5,940
		NAFTA Exports	80

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	138.56	-0.39
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	137.40	-0.56
Ontario Auctions		
Slaughter Steers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1300-1500 lbs	N/A	N/A
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	N/A	N/A
Slaughter Cows, Cutter and Utility 1-3, 1100-1400 lbs	86.86	+1.06

*Price comparison from one week ago.

Average feeder cattle prices (CND) for week ending Friday, August 19, 2022

Steers:	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Ontario
501-600 lbs	197.92	190.89	195.20
601-700 lbs	183.74	184.51	179.78
701-800 lbs	181.49	180.18	176.99
801-900 lbs	174.73	172.83	170.16
Heifers:			
401-500 lbs	178.00	N/A	174.63
501-600 lbs	166.95	N/A	158.89
601-700 lbs	164.16	162.33	160.30
701-800 lbs	163.39	160.40	130.00

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
	8/27/2022	**8/20/2022**		
Feeders	12,847	8,953	531,347	731,581

USDA WEEKLY IMPORTED FEEDER CATTLE

Friday, August 26, 2022
Mexico to TX. & NM. Weekly Feeder Cattle Import Summary
Receipts EST: 11,000 Week Ago Act: 7,555 Year Ago Act: 8,530

Compared to last week, steer calves and yearlings sold 1.00 higher. Heifers steady. Trade active, demand good. The bulk of the supply consisted of steers and spayed heifers weighing 300-700 lbs.

Feeder steers: Medium and large 1&2, 300-400 lbs 200.00-210.00; 400-500 lbs 185.00-195.00; 500-600 lbs 170.00-180.00; 600-700 lbs 155.00-165.00. Medium and large 2&3, 300-400 lbs 185.00-195.00; 400-500 lbs 170.00-180.00; 500-600 lbs 155.00-165.00.

Feeder heifers: Medium and large 1&2, 300-400 lbs 173.00-183.00; 400-500 lbs 163.00-173.00; 500-600 lbs 153.00-163.00; 600-700 lbs 143.00-153.00.

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

Selected Auction Week Ending September 1, 2022

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

STEERS / HEIFERS

DATE MARKET		200-300 lb.	300-400 lb.	400-500 lb.	500-600 lb.	600-700 lb.	700-800 lb.	800 lb. -up	SLAUGHTER COWS SLAUGHTER BULLS	PAIRS REPLACEMENTS	
August 26 Blackfoot, ID	N/A		185-230	180-219 165-197	175-207 160-187	170-190 155-188	150-178	150-174	81-98 95-121		NORTHWEST
August 25 Burley, ID	307		226.50 199.50-209.50	218-229 184		167-188	171-181 168-175	168-172 159	82-97.50 109.50-115.50		NORTHWEST
August 30 Emmett, ID	220			214-220 180-185	180-190.50 160-174		115-121	137	86-100.50 116-119		NORTHWEST
August 20 Eugene, OR	1,366		140-176* 130-141*	145-168.50* 130-149.50*	150-165* 132-149.50*	142-160* 129-148.50*	139-150* 120-143*	135-148.75* 112-136*	90-103.50 107-127	580-820 580-830	NORTHWEST
August 29 Madras, OR	N/A			175-200	175-197 165-180	188-209.50 170-183	185-198 170-179	170-177 150-160	88-104 95-115		NORTHWEST
August 24 Vale, OR	662			165-196	182-212 163-192	167-205 150-186	157-184 157-175	135-177 148-167	89-105.50 99-126		NORTHWEST
August 31 Davenport, WA	216			159	100-175 103-160	154-162 59	144 92-141	88-156 63-156	50-105 66-118	1,200-1,550	NORTHWEST
August 25 Toppenish, WA	2,450				188-199*	200-205.50 175-188*		142*	90-108 110-128.50		NORTHWEST
August 25 Orland, CA	1,746			160-222 203	150-200 180	140-189 176	130-175 165	120-164 152	90-107 90-130	1,400-2,100	FARWEST
No report available Escalon, CA											FARWEST
August 29 Famoso, CA	504		150-200 150-160	160-200 150-160	170-196 150-159	155-175 140-150	140-160	120-140 130-148	80-120 85-122.50		FARWEST
No report available Galt, CA											FARWEST
August 30 Turlock, CA	1,072		155-175	180-200 155-180	170-190 152-175	165-189 148-165	140-159	135-151	87-106.50 105-137		FARWEST
August 23 Salina, UT	660	210-241 177.50-214	171-238 140-188	160-199 139-179	159-196 128.50-168	149-189 126-169	147-170 115-160	130-165 98-152.75	79.25-94 92.50-120		FARWEST
August 29 Iowa	9,644		218-230 178-194	200-236 160-206	189-211 162-195.50	177-213.60 172.50-189.25	178-196.75 146-187	155-190.75 132-176.50	77-111 80-134		NORTH CENTRAL
August 30 Miles City, MT	489				190 182	205-211 179.50	194 176.50-178.75	181-185 154-178.50	70-93 91-110		NORTH CENTRAL
No report available Bassett, NE											NORTH CENTRAL
August 27 Ericson, NE	3,860		266-284 210-224	228-256 202-227	209 180-195	188-212 174-185.50	168-205 167-184.50	178-181 148.75-176.50			NORTH CENTRAL
August 30 Imperial, NE	275	258	240-244 224-242.50	227.50-251 207	208 188		189.50 167.50	166			NORTH CENTRAL
No report available Kearney, NE											NORTH CENTRAL
August 19 Lexington, NE	2,685	300	252-300 275	229-237 200-222			193-193.50	178.75-190 162-183			NORTH CENTRAL
No report available Ogallala, NE											NORTH CENTRAL
August 25 Valentine, NE	4,890				226-233 218.50	215-222.50 206-208.25	194-215.50 182-197	176.25-200 144-181.75			NORTH CENTRAL
August 26 Herreid, SD	2,644					211.50-213	193-215 183-189.25	174-195.75 165.50-179.25			NORTH CENTRAL
August 26 Torrington, WY	311								84-103 104-120		NORTH CENTRAL
August 25 Willcox, AZ	N/A	213 165-176	192-207 174-200	164-191 120-162	144-186 116-147	135-171 102-127			82-97.50 90-111	1,525-1,700 900-1,310	SOUTH CENTRAL
August 29 Colorado	900				181*		170*	159-160* 137.50-160*	40-106 85-125	1,585 1,375	SOUTH CENTRAL
August 24 La Junta, CO	738		231-251 191-209	200-221	191-200	181-191	171-176.75 158-171.25	161-171	80-92.50 96-108	1,110-1,250	SOUTH CENTRAL
August 22 Loma, CO	201			181	188-195	181-187 163-167	175 161	171 148-166	92 103-106	1,435 1,340-1,530	SOUTH CENTRAL
August 31 Dodge City, KS	3,726		186-223 193-209	179-206 180-197	185-210 169-195	171-186 160-179.75	171-186.85 164-174.50	164-185.60 150-162.50	72-91 93-114.50	1,010	SOUTH CENTRAL
September 1 Pratt, KS	3,000			175	177	182-183.50 169-178	166-179.50 161.50-177.25	161-187.10 147-160.50			SOUTH CENTRAL
August 25 Salina, KS	3,485		222-231	200-220 189-194	201.50-216 179.50-192	193-211.25 173-194	184-193 171-184.50	171.50-187.50 152-174			SOUTH CENTRAL
No report available Clovis, NM											SOUTH CENTRAL
August 30 El Reno, OK	2,500		200-255 191-200	191-218 172-185	182-199 172-184	181-197 168					SOUTH CENTRAL
August 31 McAlester, OK	2,540		203-238 169-184	192-221 163-181	181-203 156-177	173-194 141-160	159-177 140-142	147-161 130	75-92 98-111	975-1,285 725-1,250	SOUTH CENTRAL
August 29 Oklahoma City, OK	7,500	216-229 190-192	215-231 170-183	199-228 175-189	191-208 169.50-180	178-201 160-179	168-184 160-174	150-183.50 156-158			SOUTH CENTRAL
August 26 Cuero, TX	783	138-170 158-216	164-232 159-190	166-222 155-179	162-186 149-182	155-184 141-169	150-164 119-150		65-87 80-119	900-1,200	SOUTH CENTRAL
No report available Dalhart, TX											SOUTH CENTRAL
August 25 San Angelo, TX	867		175-232 152-216	178-214 146-190	175-198 148-176	172-182 130-156.50	163-167 123-134		52-98 95-121		SOUTH CENTRAL
August 25 Tulia, TX	1,139	199	220-237 195	204-220 170-193	182-195 164-175	188 165	170-176.50 160.50		79-85 80-95		SOUTH CENTRAL
August 26 Alabama	13,830	168-170	192-240 155-180	175-217 141-181	163-190 137-160.50	150-180.50 125-157	135-171.25 120-141.50	110	64-101 82-120	775-2,050 600-1,650	EAST
August 29 Lexington, KY	855	225* 167.50-195*	200-240* 155-187.50*	177-213* 152-175*	183-210.50* 156-171*	157-200.50* 134-162*	146-180* 135-147.75*	160-170* 115.50-128*	76-102 100-125	1,285-1,550 1,350	EAST
August 29 Joplin, MO	5,000		225-247.50 192-208	210-227.50 181-195	197-215 175-186.50	192-204 171-180	191 167-176	173.50-178 162			EAST
August 29 Tennessee	6,661	180-222.50* 155-190*	179-230* 151-193*	171-206* 152.50-183*	161-208* 130-178*	158-195* 127-172.50*	133-179.50* 125-160.50*	129-167* 114-144*	65-111 81-144.50	1,140-1,650 600-1,470	EAST
August 29 Virginia	2,683	172	177.50-192 153-177.50	150-202 150.50-176	150-196.50 124-168	110-215.50 135-166	119-169.25 139.50-145.25	132-162 134-149			EAST
CANADA											
August 31 Lethbridge, Alberta	943					238-263 228-246	238-257 226-243	224-256 210-235	100-121 124-136		

Barney Creek Livestock selected for MT Leopold Conservation Award

Barney Creek Livestock of Livingston in Park County, MT, is the 2022 recipient of the Montana Leopold Conservation Award.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the prestigious award recognizes farmers, ranchers and forestland owners who inspire others with their dedication to land, water and wildlife habitat management on private, working lands.

Sand County Foundation and American Farmland Trust present the award in Montana with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation and the Rangeland Resources Committee.

As owners of Barney Creek Livestock, Pete and Meagan Lannan are cattle ranchers and land managers who are showing others how conservation practices can heal landscapes. The Lannans will receive $10,000 and a crystal award for being selected.

"These award recipients are examples of how Aldo Leopold's land ethic is alive and well today. Their dedication to conservation shows how individuals can improve the health of the land while producing food and fiber," said Kevin McAleese, Sand County Foundation president and CEO.

Barney Creek Livestock

Pete and Meagan are innovative ranchers who found a way to raise beef cattle amid exorbitant land values in Montana's Paradise Valley. As owners of Barney Creek Livestock, they became land managers who now show others how conservation can heal landscapes.

Pete studied the environmental and economic benefits of rotational grazing when his parents, Larry and Cathy Lannan, offered to lease Jordan Ranch to him. Pete and his wife, Meagan, were passionate about making improvements to the soil at the 200-acre ranch that has been in his family since 1900. They embraced conservation practices to build its resiliency for future generations, including their children, Maloi and Liam.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program helped with that conservation. With its financial and technical assistance, the Lannans mapped out grazing plans and upgraded their fencing and water infrastructure. Water and energy efficiencies were gained when a flood irrigation system was replaced

Courtesy photo
Pete and Meagan Lannan with their children, Maloi and Liam.

with a pipeline that delivers water to livestock tanks and a sprinkler irrigation system.

Their cattle and grass both thrived with a rotational grazing system, allowing the Lannans to increase stocking densities on their pastures. Pete and Meagan realized the more grass they could grow, the less hay they would need to harvest or buy. Since grazing year-round and stopping hay production in 2016, they only purchase the hay needed to feed during harsh winter storms. This change has saved them $120,000 in equipment depreciation, in addition to lower fuel and labor costs.

Barney Creek bisects the family ranch. Its riparian area was fenced off to only allow short-duration grazing, which promotes sapling growth and improves riparian function. Windbreaks were established to protect cattle and provide habitat for deer and elk. Wildlife-friendly fencing was installed on the ranch's perimeter.

Each conservation success at the ranch inspired the Lannans to do more. They saw their cattle as a tool to help other landowners in Paradise Valley achieve soil health. They built relationships with owners of ungrazed and degraded properties by explaining how their stewardship could conserve and enhance natural resources.

Landowners have noted an influx of birds in pastures grazed by Barney Creek Livestock, lending credence to the adage that "What's good for the herd is good for the bird."

The Lannans lease more than 800 acres from five landowners, but it's about more than grazing their cattle. Their lessors learn about the photosynthesis process, carbon sequestration, the benefits of hoof action on the land and that livestock are nutrient cycling machines. They are coached on how soil amendments enhance soil microbiology, and they receive results from annual soil and plant tissue tests.

Early on, the Lannans recognized that raising cattle is about much more than just marketing beef. The path to success led them off of their home ranch in more ways than one. They frequently move their cattle to greener pastures in Paradise Valley, and they are members of a variety of peer, consumer, neighbor and apprenticeship networks.

Of all their notable successes on the land, their greatest conservation achievement might be their willingness to share their land ethic with others. — **Sand County Foundation**

Boxed beef prices see first decline in weeks

MARKETS
(from page 1)

Slaughter through Thursday, just ahead of Labor Day weekend, was estimated at 498,000 head—24,000 head more than a year ago. Slaughter through a week earlier is projected at 678,000 head. Actual slaughter for the week ending Aug. 20 was 664,411 head.

Boxed beef prices saw their largest decrease in several weeks. The Choice cutout lost nearly $5.50 over the week to close at $258.07, and the Select cutout lost 95 cents to close at $236.59. The Choice/Select spread was $21.48.

"The rib primal decline is the primary contributor to this value loss," said Cassie Fish, market analyst, in The Beef. "Seasonal weakness in wholesale beef prices in September is normal."

Feeder cattle

Feeder cattle futures closed lower over the week. The September contract lost $1.10 to close at $183.15, and the October contract lost $1.17 to close at $184.35.

The CME Feeder Cattle Index gained $2.36 to close at $182.36.

Corn futures traded mostly sideways, with the September contract up a penny to $6.58 and the December contract up 8 cents, also to $6.58.

"The live cattle complex is following in the feeder cattle market's upward blaze, but the cash cattle market's inability to trade cattle for steady to better money doesn't help propel the feeder cattle market at this point in time," Stewart said. "After the Labor Day holiday passes, the market should be able to demand more interest and support."

Kansas: Winter Livestock in Dodge City sold 3,726 head Wednesday. Compared to the last auction, steers 500-925 lbs. sold steady to $4 lower; however, five loads of thin-fleshed steers weighing 800-900 lbs. sold $3-4 higher. Heifers 500-900 lbs. sold unevenly steady. Benchmark steers averaging 729 lbs. sold between $175-183.85, averaging $178.61.

Missouri: Joplin Regional Stockyards in Carthage sold 5,092 head Monday. Compared to the last auction, feeder steers under 525 lbs. traded $5-12 higher, with heavier weights trading steady to $3 higher. Feeder heifers under 550 lbs. traded steady to $4 higher, with heavier weights trading steady. Benchmark steers averaging 722 lbs. sold between $184-196, averaging $191.20.

Nebraska: Tri-State Livestock in McCook sold 3,520 head Monday. Compared to the previous auction, steers were steady to $6 higher. Heifers were $10-20 lower, except 500 lbs., which were $7 higher. A group of steers averaging 846 lbs. sold for $180.50.

Oklahoma: Oklahoma National Stockyards in Oklahoma City sold 7,500 head on Monday. Compared to a week earlier, feeder steers sold unevenly steady with a light test on most classes. Feeder heifers sold steady to $3 lower with a light test. Steer calves sold steady, and heifer calves sold steady to $4 lower. Benchmark steers averaging 776 lbs. sold from $173-179, averaging $174.43.

South Dakota: Sioux Falls Regional Cattle Auction in Worthing sold 1,753 head on Monday. Compared to a week earlier, feeder steers under 1,000 lbs. sold with lower undertones, while steers over 1,000 lbs. sold with steady to higher undertones. Feeder heifers sold with steady to lower undertones. Benchmark steers averaging 740 lbs. sold between $187-190.50, averaging $189.03.

Wyoming: Torrington Livestock in Torrington sold 1,832 head Wednesday. Compared to the last auction, there was no trend on feeder steers, and there were not enough receipts for an accurate trend. Feeder heifers traded mostly steady, with a few instances of $2 lower. Benchmark steers averaging 738 lbs. sold for $185. — **Anna Miller, *WLJ* managing editor**

CALENDAR

COMING EVENTS

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

Nov. 30-Dec. 1 – The 2022 California Cattlemen's Association/California CattleWomen Convention is headed back to the Nugget Casino Resort in Sparks, NV, and will be held in conjunction with the Nevada Cattlemen's Association's Annual Convention. Attendee and exhibitor registration for the event are now open! Register and get more information at calcattlemen.org/convention2022.

Controlling pasture flies through late summer, fall

Late August and September usually signal that pasture fly season should be ending. However, over the last few years, our fall seasons have remained warm sometimes well into early November, and flies persist at problematic levels longer than typical. This upcoming fall season may be no different based on several meteorology forecasts.

If these predictions hold true, pasture fly control efforts may be required through late fall. To reduce late-season fly stress on pastured cattle, a review of the common fly pests of pastured cattle, control methods and available products can be helpful.

Horn fly

Nebraska livestock producers normally see two horn fly population spikes, one in early June and the second in late August through mid-September. The second peak is due to the buildup of the continuous and overlapping fly generations that develop throughout the season. Depending on weather patterns, these fly populations may be reduced by a fall cold front that sometimes occurs in September. However, if temperatures remain warm, horn fly numbers will remain high.

Diapause, a biological event triggered by cool fall temperatures, naturally lowers horn fly numbers. Development from egg to adult is interrupted, and instead, development stops at the pupal stage that overwinters beneath manure pats. Diapause for horn flies in Nebraska begins when temperatures within the manure pat drop below 60 F.

Existing adult flies will persist through September and October or until a killing frost occurs (below 25 F). However, if adult flies continue to emerge, a rescue fly treatment may be necessary if numbers exceed the economic injury level of 200 horn flies per animal. Insecticidal sprays, used with either a low-pressure sprayer or a mist blower sprayer, are an effective option. These applications should provide seven to 10 days of control. A pour-on treatment is another option and provides control for 21-28 days.

Face fly

Face fly numbers have been high this season, especially in areas of the state where rainfall was abundant. Face flies experience a version of diapause, called reproductive diapause. Reproductive diapause occurs when the day length shortens to 12.5 hours or less, beginning in Nebraska around the middle of September. During this process, both sexes seek protected places to spend the winter. A killing frost (25 F or below) can impact face fly numbers.

However, until diapause is completed or a killing frost occurs, additional fly control measures may be required. Face fly control is extremely difficult to accomplish due to the feeding habits of the females, which seek protein from the eyes, nasal area and other orifices of livestock.

Treatment products directed to the face or head area of animals will provide the best control. In Nebraska, face flies seeking shelter for overwintering often move to buildings and homes. They usually cluster in attics or wall cavities of structures located closest to pastures. The first step in keeping insects from entering structures is exclusion.

To prevent home and structure infestations, inspect for points of entry such as around doors, windows, soffits and vents, and use caulk to seal up holes in those areas. Residual sprays containing bifenthrin, deltamethrin or permethrin can also be applied as perimeter barriers.

Stable fly

High numbers of stable flies may still be present in areas of Nebraska after September, especially in areas of the state where rainfall was abundant. Stable flies will continue their feeding activity on livestock until we receive a hard freeze. Spray applications provide the best means of reducing their numbers and should be made every 10 days.

The sides of buildings or tree windbreaks where large numbers of stable flies are observed resting can also be treated. Applications to resting sites should be made on a warm, sunny day, usually near midafternoon. Applications to either animals or fly resting sites can be made with a low-pressure or mist blower sprayer. — **Dave Boxler, Nebraska Extension educator**

Beef price trends show resilience during summer

RABOBANK
(from page 1)

and Brazil. Retail beef prices in Brazil have also grown more than 50 percent in the past two years, driven by strong export volumes, the report noted. Cattle prices did decrease in some countries, such as Australia, Brazil, Argentina and New Zealand.

Production volumes across major exporting countries are expected to remain steady over the next year, with expected volume increases in Australia and Brazil offsetting a forecast decline for the U.S. Trimmings exports will then likely increase in Australia and Brazil.

Domestic trimmings production has been increasing due to cow herd liquidation. Cold storage in the U.S. is also at record volumes, which Rabobank believes is a result of trim buyers stockpiling in anticipation of cow culling slowing.

"Tight global beef supplies and strong consumer demand pushed global beef prices to record (highs) over the past year," the report read. "However, the spillover effects from the easing of Covid restrictions—rampant inflation and slowing economic growth—are starting to impact consumers' spending habits."

Trimmings demand is expected to lift further in the second half of 2022. Major trimmings importers—the U.S., China, Japan and South Korea—are facing slower economic conditions, which will likely lead consumers to favor trimmings consumption. If U.S. cow slaughter slows, there is a pricing upside potential for lean trimmings, the report read. New Zealand and Australia would be most likely to take advantage of increasing exports to the U.S., with Brazil having filled the 2022 quota.

Domestic outlook

While the U.S. has experienced ample production and adequate demand so far, a downshift is expected for the second half of the year, according to Rabobank.

Poor pasture conditions and less forage availability sent cattle to feedyards sooner, and as a result, a shortfall of market-ready cattle by winter is expected. Beef production through the second quarter ranged from steady to larger than a year ago, which will continue into year-end. A 1.5% increase in 2022 slaughter will offset a 2 pound decline in carcass weights, resulting in a 1.2% production increase for the year, the report read.

Cow herd liquidation has been record high over the year, with beef cow slaughter up 12.7% the first six months of the year. A total of 54% of the cow herd was in at least a moderate level of drought in July. Over the past 20 years, only 2006 and 2012 saw more of the July herd in drought-affected areas. With La Niña forecast into the winter, decreased cattle numbers, feeder cattle supplies and beef production could mirror the 2014 lows by 2024 or 2025, Rabobank said.

However, fewer pandemic-related disruptions have led to less volatility in supply, demand and price, the report read. Recent price trends show more resilience during what is typically a seasonal downtrend in the late summer months. — **Anna Miller, *WLJ* managing editor**

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

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

Sept. 30 – Lallemand Animal Nutrition will offer five Lallemand Forward Scholarships for students pursuing degrees in agriculture. The 2022 program offers two $2,500 undergraduate scholarships, one $3,000 doctor of veterinary medicine scholarship, one $3,000 master's program scholarship and one $3,000 doctoral scholarship. Complete guidelines can be found at lallemandanimalnutrition.com.

Sept. 30 – The National Cattlemen's Foundation is accepting applications for the annual W.D. Farr Scholarship program. Two $15,000 grants are awarded to graduate students who demonstrate superior achievement in academics and leadership and are committed to the advancement of the beef industry. For more information, visit www.nationalcattlemensfoundation.org.

Oct. 1 – Applications for the 2022 California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) scholarships are now being accepted. Current CCA members that are currently enrolled at a university or college are eligible to apply. For a complete list of awards and to download the application, visit calcattlemen.org/scholarship. Contact Maureen in the CCA office at maureen@calcattlemen.org with any questions.

Oct. 10 – Internship applications are open for the 2022 California Cattlemen's Association (CCA)/California CattleWomen Convention happening Nov. 30-Dec. 1 at the Nugget Casino Resort in Sparks, NV. Applicants must be a young, regular or feeder member of CCA. High school students are not eligible. Learn more at calcattlemen.org/convention2022.

Superior Video Auction

Superior Livestock Auction
Big Horn Classic
Sheridan, WY, Aug. 22-26

Superior Livestock Auction hosted their 18th annual Big Horn Classic video auction Aug. 22-26 at the Ramada Plaza by Wyndham Sheridan Hotel and Convention Center in Sheridan, WY. Cattle producers offered over 235,000 head of calves, yearlings and bred stock from 34 states for this auction. Cattle were sold on contract to deliver immediately through November 2023. Rain and cooler temperatures in the southern regions in the first part of the week set the undertone for an upwardly trending to steady market report when compared to the stout market seen in Winnemucca, NV.

Region 3/4/5/6 weaned calves and calves on cows were steady when compared to Superior Livestock's last offering. Some calves from these regions were $5-10 higher on weights less than 450 lbs. Region 3/4/5/6 feeder steers were steady, and feeder heifers saw a decrease of $3-6. Region 1 and 2 feeders saw fully steady prices. Program cattle were the highlight, with premiums $20-25 higher than conventionally raised cattle. Region 1 and 2 weaned calves and calves on cows were fully steady to as much as $15 higher on lighter weights from Superior Livestock's last stout offering.

TOPS—Feeder steers: Hill-Toomey Farms LLC, Fairfield, TX, sold 80 feeder steers @ 600 lbs. VAC 60, Superior Verified, NHTC, Verified Natural Beef, Veg. Fed Approved, BQA Certified. Out of Angus Plus cows & Charolais Angus cross cows by 44 Farms Angus bulls & Cavenders Ultrablack Angus bulls. Black & a few BWF or motley. $203, Sept. 1-9 delivery. Express UU Bar Ranch, Yukon, OK, sold 560 feeder steers @ 800 lbs. VAC 60, Superior Verified, Superior Progressive Genetics. Out of Express Ranch cows by Express Ranch Angus high growth & high carcass bulls. $182, Dec. 1-16 delivery. Tim Morrow, Folsom, NM, sold 320 feeder steers @ 900 lbs. Superior Verified, NHTC, Verified Natural Beef, Veg. Fed Approved, Owner Certified Natural Plus. Out of Angus & Angus cross BWF cows by Black & Red Angus bulls with Bieber genetics. $187, Sept. 1-23 delivery. Rio Bravo Cattle Co., Colorado Springs, CO, sold 75 feeder steers @ 775 lbs. Out of English cross cows by Lasater Foundation Beefmaster bulls. Approx. 50% black & red hided (light or dark) with 4-6 roan neck & 4 or 5 spotted. $175, Sept. 12-15 delivery. **Feeder heifers:** Express UU Bar Ranch, Yukon, OK, sold 285 feeder heifers @ 700 lbs. VAC 60, Superior Verified, Superior Progressive Genetics. Out of Express Ranch cows by Express Ranch Angus high growth & high carcass bulls. $171.50, Dec. 1-16 delivery. Double Bars Livestock, Grenville, NM, sold 61 feeder heifers @ 800 lbs. VAC 60, Superior Verified, NHTC, Verified Natural Beef, Veg. Fed Approved, Owner Certified Natural Plus, Superior Progressive Genetics, Beef CARE Certified. Out of English cross cows by reg. Diamond 7 Black Angus bulls. 100% black hided. $181, Sept. 15-30 delivery. Crimson Cattle Co., Enterprise, AL, sold 240 feeder heifers @ 625 lbs. VAC PRECON. Angus, Angus cross, Charolais cross & a few red & RWF. $168, Sept. 26-Oct. 6 delivery. Spence & Cindy Butler, Leamington, UT, sold 70 feeder heifers @ 700 lbs. VAC 60, AngusLink, NHTC, Verified Natural Beef, Veg. Fed Approved, Owner Certified Natural Plus, Superior Progressive Genetics, BQA Certified. Angus. Sired by Bear Mountain Angus bulls. $192, Nov. 15-Dec. 1 delivery. **Weaned calves and calves on cows:** AB Ranch, Stephenville, TX, sold 70 weaned steer calves @ 350 lbs./70 weaned heifer calves $12/cwt back @ 350 lbs. VAC PRECON. English, Angus, Angus cross, Charolais, Charolais cross, Red Angus, Red Angus cross & may be some Hereford, depending on sort. 1/4-1/2 or less ear. $239, Sept. 1-Oct. 1 delivery. Wes Kimble, Douglas, AZ, sold 114 weaned steer calves @ 425 lbs. VAC 45, Owner Certified Natural. Out of Angus, English cross, Exotic cross & Brahman cross cows by Angus bulls. Approx. 80% black & BWF, 20% red, RWF or Charolais cross. $219, Dec. 1-20 delivery. Wes Kimble, Douglas, AZ, sold 117 weaned heifer calves @ 410 lbs. VAC 45, Owner Certified Natural. Out of Angus, English cross, Exotic cross & Brahman cross cows by Angus bulls. Approx. 80% black & BWF, 20% red, RWF or Charolais cross. $192, Dec. 1-20 delivery. Farwell Ranch Inc., Greencastle, MO, sold 455 weaned steer calves @ 525 lbs. Out of Black Angus, few BWF, Red Angus & Charolais deep-bodied cows by reg. Brinkley Angus bulls. Approx 95% black & BWF, balance red, RWF & Charolais cross. All weaned by Nov. 1. $236, Dec. 5-9 delivery. Nation Inc., Hutchinson, KS, sold 80 weaned steer calves @ 550 lbs. VAC 60, BQA Certified. Out of Angus & Angus cross cows by reg. Angus (Emblazon & Substantial bloodlines) bulls. $217, Oct. 24-Nov. 7 delivery. Adam & Brian Glienke, Washta, IA, sold 75 weaned steer calves @ 775 lbs. VAC 45+, Red Angus FCCP. Out of Red Angus & Red Angus cross cows by 100% Red Angus bulls. Approx. 79% AI-sired by Leland Full House, Ludvigson, Call of Duty, Dawson & Grindstone. Cleaned up w/Ludvigson, Schuler, Leland & Butcher. $201, Nov. 1-10 delivery. 5L Cattle LLC, Okeechobee, FL, sold 135 steer calves @ 350 lbs. VAC 34+, Superior Progressive Genetics. Out of English cross & Brahman cross cows by Brangus, Beefmaster & Charolais bulls. $207, Oct. 10-24 delivery. Maple YL Ranch, Beaver, OK, sold 315 steer calves @ 450 lbs. VAC 34+, Superior Verified, NHTC, Verified Natural Beef, Veg. Fed Approved, Owner Certified Natural Plus, Superior Progressive Genetics, BQA Certified. Out of Angus base cows by Bradley 3 Ranch & Gardiner Angus, Messner & Moss Hereford bulls. Can be 100% black hided @ buyers' option. $246, Sept. 28-Oct. 15 delivery. David Brass, Wilmore, KS, sold 90 steer calves @ 475 lbs. VAC 34+. Out of black & BWF cows by SimAngus & a few Hereford bulls. Approx. 90% black & BWF, balance red & RWF. $238, Sept. 20-Oct. 10 delivery. T.L. Roach Ranch, Clarendon, TX, sold 177 heifer calves @ 550 lbs. VAC 24, Owner Certified Natural Plus, Superior Progressive Genetics. Out of Black Angus & Black Angus cross cows by reg. Bradley 3 & Nipp Charolais bulls. 100% Charolais cross. $180, Sept. 6 delivery. **Beef-dairy crosses:** Hall's Calf Ranch, Kewaunee, WI, sold 75 beef-dairy cross steers @ 300 lbs./75 beef-dairy cross heifers $0/cwt back @ 300 lbs. VAC PRECON. Out of straight Holstein cows by Angus bulls. Up to 10% Charolais sired & up to 10% with Jersey influence. $189, Oct. 1-11 delivery. Hi Noon Dairy LLC, Hereford, TX, sold 112 beef-dairy cross steers @ 450 lbs. VAC 60, Superior Verified, NHTC, Superior Progressive Genetics. Out of Holstein-Jersey cross cows AI'ed to ST Genetics Campfire & Cowboy Up SimAngus bulls. $166, Sept. 1-Oct. 1 delivery. London Farms, Cleveland, GA, sold 28 beef-dairy cross steers @ 840 lbs./32 beef-dairy cross heifers $8/cwt back @ 800 lbs. VAC PRECON, Owner Certified Natural Plus. 22 Angus-Holstein cross and 6 Angus steers, 30 Angus-Holstein cross and 2 Angus heifers. $153.50, Sept. 12-23 delivery. **Bred stock:** Badger Creek Red Angus, Poplar, MT, sold 45 bred heifers @ 950 lbs. Full blood eastern MT Red Angus heifers (Westphal Except, 5L Tradesman & Bieber House) bred to Ludvigson Sure Shot, Fritz Hotshot, Bieber Rollin Deep & Westphal Bourne bulls. Preg checked 10/20/22. Start calving approx. 3/1/23 for approx. 60 days. $1,775, Nov. 10-20 delivery. Tony & Susan Sanderson, Chambers, NE, sold 25 bred cows @ 1,050 lbs. Low percentage SimAngus cross cows bred to Connealy Angus (Rainfall, Centerfire & Foremost) bulls turned in 5/28/22 for approx. 58 days. 3-year-olds coming with second calf. Cows all sired by Triangle J Ranch bulls, bloodlines include Cowboy Cut, Frosty, Exceed, Bismarck, Shear Force & Diplomat. $2,000, Oct. 17-22 delivery. DLS Farms Inc., Hoxie, KS, sold 43 first-calf heifer pairs @ 1,540 lbs. Superior Progressive Genetics, BQA Certified. Home-raised Angus & Angus cross cows w/calves by reg. Fink Angus bulls turned in 4/15/22. 100% black hided. Cows weigh approx. 1,150 lbs. & calves 390 lbs. (calves will range from 325-500 lbs.). $2,635, Sept. 5-16 delivery. **Sheep:** Taylor Ranch, Roswell, NM, sold 650 rams @ 65 lbs. Dorper & a little bit of Royal White influence. $280, Aug. 29-Sept. 3 delivery. Happy Sheep Ranch, Burlington, CO, sold 750 weaned lambs @ 50 lbs. Katahdin-Dorper cross lambs. Intact rams & ewe lambs w/tails. $280, Aug. 31-Sept. 9 delivery. Ball Brothers Sheep Company, Soda Springs, ID, sold 440 feeder lambs @ 112 lbs. Out of Targhee-Rambouillet ewes. $104, Sept. 5-8 delivery. Ron & Elizabeth Moss, Dubois, ID, sold 950 feeder lambs @ 95 lbs. Out of Rambouillet-Targhee cross (w/a little bit of Polypay influence) ewes. $100, Sept. 3-6 delivery.

Transparency drives consumer support of the beef industry

"A significant portion of the public has been convinced that ruminants are a major cause of climate change," said Ruaraidh Petre, Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) executive director. "This message has become ubiquitous; many believe in it, and we need to be able to present data that shows ruminant agriculture is one of the few ways to produce food that sequesters more carbon and is more carbon neutral than any other form of agriculture. We need transparency."

Petre was a featured speaker during the 2022 Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Symposium June 2 in Las Cruces, NM.

Petre explained the rhetoric many beef consumers have heard, the reality of how producers can improve their trust in the industry and the impact the GRSB network will have on the global support for beef.

Rhetoric vs. reality

Climate change is a major issue facing the beef industry, as many consumers are convinced ruminants are the leading cause. This rhetoric and other negative messages about beef production have reduced trust in the industry. However, the facts are in favor of the beef industry; producers need to provide the data through the supply chain to create the transparency the consumer demands. The demand for beef and prices remain high, but we must continue to share the message of the beef industry.

"Consumers of late are tired of being told what to eat. They want to eat beef, but they want to be reassured it's a responsible thing to do," Petre added.

The GRSB network

The GRSB is a network of roundtables spanning more than 24 countries to develop the role of beef in a thriving and sustainable food system. Producers are the driving force of the roundtables because without them, there would be no action on the ground. The GRSB has three global goals focusing on climate impact, animal health and welfare and nature positive production. They plan to achieve a 30% reduction in the intensity of carbon emissions and for the beef industry to be a net positive contributor to nature by 2030. They also focus on providing animals with an environment in which they can thrive.

"Good animal health contributes to human health through a reduction in zoonoses, as well as reducing the need for pharmaceuticals that are critical to human health, the overuse of which can lead to resistance," Petre explained.

BIF

Ruaraidh Petre

To watch Petre's full presentation, visit youtu.be/tc0zLeSxxL8. For more information about this year's symposium and BIF, including additional presentations and award winners, visit BIFSymposium.com. — **BIF**

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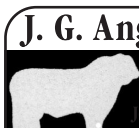
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Sep. 28 — Eagle Pass Ranch, Bull Sale, Dos Palos, CA
Oct. 1 — CA Breeders, Bull Sale, Turlock, CA
Oct. 2 — CAL Poly PT, Bull Sale, San Luis Obispo, CA
Oct. 2 — Traynham Ranches, Bull & Female Sale, Fort Klamath, OR
Oct. 15 — Western Stockmen's Market, Bull Sale, Famoso, CA
Oct. 15 — Western Stockmen's Market, Bull & Female Sale, McFarland, CA
Nov. 5 — Cattlemen's Livestock Market, Bull Sale, Galt, CA
Nov. 12 — Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Bull Sale, Fort Collins, CO
Nov. 30 — Utah Cattlemen's Association, Bull Sale, Salt Lake City, UT
Dec. 6-7 — PAYS Blue Ribbon, Female Sale, Billings, MT
Dec. 12 — Northland, Female Sale, Billings, MT
Jan. 24-28, 2023 — Red Bluff, Bull Sale, Red Bluff, CA

ANGUS

Sep. 6 — O'Neal Ranch, Bull Sale, O'Neals, CA
Sep. 7 — Silveira Bros., Female Sale, Firebaugh, CA
Sep. 7 — Teixeira Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Pismo Beach, CA
Sep. 8 — Donati Ranch, Bull Sale, Oroville, CA
Sep. 9 — Tehama Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Gerber, CA
Sep. 10 — Arellano Bravo Angus, Bull Sale, Galt, CA
Sep. 14 — Bullseye Breeders, Bull Sale, Modesto, CA
Sep. 15 — Rancho Casino/Dal Porto Livestock, Bull Sale, Denair, CA
Sep. 17 — Jorgensen Farms, Female Sale, Ideal, SD
Sep. 19 — Ken Haas Angus, Female Sale, LaGrange, WY
Sep. 20 — Thomas Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Galt, CA
Sep. 20 — Montana Angus Tour, Sidney, MT
Sep. 22 — Beef Solutions, Bull Sale, Ione, CA
Sep. 24 — Nextgen Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Paxico, KS
Oct. 1 — Colyer Herefords, Female Sale, Bruneau, ID
Oct. 1 — Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Bull Sale, Aromas, CA
Oct. 6 — VDAR, Female Sale, Manhattan, MT
Oct. 8 — EZ Ranch, Female Sale, Porterville, CA
Oct. 8 — Silveira Bros., Female Sale, Firebaugh, CA
Oct. 8 — Trinity Farms, Female Sale, Ellensburg, WA
Oct. 9 — Vintage Angus Ranch, Female Sale, Modesto, CA
Oct. 10 — Ox Bow Angus, Female Sale, Wolf Creek, MT
Oct. 11 — 9 Peaks Ranch, Bull Sale, Fort Rock, OR
Oct. 11 — Coleman Angus, Female Sale, Charlo, MT
Oct. 11-12 — R.A. Brown Ranch, Bull & Female Sale, Throckmorton, TX
Oct. 12 — Montana Ranch, Female Sale, Big Fork, MT
Oct. 14 — Wooden Shoe Farms, Female Sale, Blackfoot, ID
Oct. 15 — Fink Beef Genetics, Bull Sale, Randolph, KS
Oct. 20 — Thomas Angus Ranch, Production Sale, Baker City, OR
Oct. 22 — 44 Farms, Bull Sale, Cameron, TX
Oct. 22 — NILE, Female Sale, Billings, MT
Oct. 24 — Montana Angus, Female Sale, Billings, MT
Oct. 30 — Nansel's Flying N Angus Ranch, Dispersion Sale, Miles City, MT
Nov. 2 — Huwa Cattle, Female Sale, Roggen, CO
Nov. 3 — Stokrose Land & Livestock, Bull Sale, Moses Lake, WA
Nov. 8 — Wilkes Ranch, Bull Sale, Eastland, TX
Nov. 12 — HD Dunn and Son, Bull Sale, Tetonia, ID
Nov. 12 — Montana Ranch, Bull Sale, Big Fork, MT
Nov. 12 — Rocky Mtn. Angus, Bull Sale, Tremonton, UT
Nov. 14 — GDAR, Female Sale, Sidney, MT
Nov. 14 — Hoffman Ranch, Bull Sale, Thedford, NE
Nov. 16 — TC Angus, Female Sale, Franklin, NE
Nov. 17 — JR Ranch/Sackmann Cattle, Bull Sale, Othello, WA
Nov. 18 — Green Mountain Angus Ranch, Bull & Female Sale, Ryegate, MT
Nov. 18 — Rollin' Rock Partners, Production Sale, Pilot Rock, OR
Nov. 19 — Diamond Peak Cattle Co., Female Sale, Loma, CO
Nov. 19 — Redland Angus, Bull & Female Sale, Buffalo, WY
Nov. 19 — Sydenstricker Genetics, Bull & Female Sale, Mexico, MO
Nov. 19 — Yardley Cattle Co., Female Sale, Beaver, UT
Nov. 20 — Bear Mtn. Angus, Female Sale, Palisades, NE
Nov. 21 — Connealy Angus, Bull Sale, Whitman, NE
Nov. 22 — Paint Rock Angus, Bull Sale, Hyattville, WY
Nov. 26 — Vermilion Ranch, Bull & Female Sale, Billings, MT
Nov. 28 — Stevenson Diamond Dot, Bull & Female Sale, Hobson, MT
Nov. 29 — Stevenson Angus Ranch, Bull & Female Sale, Hobson, MT
Nov. 30 — Beef Country Breeders, Bull Sale, Columbus, MT
Dec. 1 — Sitz Angus, Bull Sale, Harrison, MT
Dec. 2 — KG Ranch, Bull & Female Sale, Three Forks, MT
Dec. 2 — Schurrtop Ranch, Bull Sale, McCook, NE
Dec. 3 — Currant Creek Angus, Bull Sale, Roundup, MT
Dec. 3 — Reverse Rocking R, Bull & Female Sale, Maxwell, NM
Dec. 5 — Jacobsen Ranch, Bull Sale, Great Falls, MT
Dec. 5 — TK Angus, Bull & Female Sale, Valentine, NE
Dec. 5 — ZumBrunnen Angus, Bull & Female Sale, Lusk, WY
Dec. 9 — WMR Livestock, Bull Sale, Three Forks, MT
Dec. 14 — Shipwheel Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Chinook, MT
Dec. 16 — Bobcat Angus, Production Sale, Great Falls, MT
Jan. 30, 2023 — APEX Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Whitman, NE
Feb. 8 — Meadow Acres Angus Ranch, Production Sale, Echo, OR
Feb. 15 — Shaw Cattle Company, Bull Sale, Caldwell, ID
Feb. 20 — Weaver Ranch, Production Sale, Fort Collins, CO
Feb. 26 — Colyer Herefords, Production Sale, Bruneau, ID
Mar. 9 — Sunny Okanogan Angus Ranch, Production Sale, Okanogan, WA
Mar. 25 — Connealy Angus, Bull Sale, Whitman, NE
Mar. 30 — Silver Bit Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, May, ID
Apr. 8 — Fink Beef Genetics, Bull Sale, Randolph, KS

BEEFMASTER

Sep. 24 — Nextgen Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Paxico, KS
Oct. 1 — ISA Beefmasters, Bull Sale, San Angelo, TX

BRANGUS

Nov. 4-5 — GENEPLUS Brangus at Chimney Rock Cattle Co., Bull & Female Sale, Concord, AR

CHAROLAIS

Sep. 24 — Nextgen Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Paxico, KS
Oct. 15 — Fink Beef Genetics, Bull Sale, Randolph, KS
Nov. 1 — Cobb Charolais, Bull Sale, Great Falls, MT
Dec. 2 — Schurrtop Ranch, Bull Sale, McCook, NE
Mar. 14, 2023 — Romans Ranches, Production Sale, Westfall, OR
Apr. 8 — Fink Beef Genetics, Bull Sale, Randolph, KS

HEREFORD

Sep. 5 — Genoa Livestock, Bull & Female Sale, Minden, NV
Sep. 15 — Holden Herefords, Female Sale, Valier, MT
Sep. 16 — Churchill Cattle Co., Female Sale, Manhattan, MT
Sep. 16 — Sierra Ranches, Production Sale, Modesto, CA
Sep. 17 — Ehlke Herefords, Female Sale, Townsend, MT
Sep. 18 — Mohican West, Female Sale, Laurel, MT
Oct. 1 — Colyer Herefords, Female Sale, Bruneau, ID
Oct. 14 — Wooden Shoe Farms, Female Sale, Blackfoot, ID
Oct. 15 — Lambert Ranch, Bull Sale, Oroville, CA
Nov. 14 — Hoffman Ranch, Bull Sale, Thedford, NE
Nov. 14 — Mohican West, Bull Sale, Laurel, MT
Nov. 30 — Beef Country Breeders, Bull Sale, Columbus, MT
Dec. 8 — Berry Herefords, Bull Sale, Cheyenne, WY
Feb. 15, 2023 — Shaw Cattle Company, Bull Sale, Caldwell, ID
Feb. 26 — Colyer Herefords, Production Sale, Bruneau, ID
Mar. 13 — Holden Herefords, Production Sale, Valier, MT

MAINE ANJOU

Nov. 19 — Yardley Cattle Co., Female Sale, Beaver, UT

RED ANGUS

Sep. 18 — Stegall Cattle, Bull Sale, Colusa, CA
Sep. 24 — McPhee Red Angus, Production Sale, Lodi, CA
Oct. 4 — Pieper Red Angus, Bull & Female Sale, Buffalo, TX
Oct. 11-12 — R.A. Brown Ranch, Bull & Female Sale, Throckmorton, TX
Oct. 21 — NILE, Female Sale, Billings, MT
Oct. 22 — Pieper Red Angus, Bull & Female Sale, Hay Springs, NE
Oct. 29 — Ludvigson Stock Farms, Bull Sale, Shepherd, MT
Nov. 21 — Lautenschlager and Sons, Bull & Female Sale, Othello, WA
Dec. 7 — Big Sky Elite, Female Sale, Logan, MT
Dec. 12 — Cross Diamond Cattle Co., Bull & Female Sale, Bertrand, NE
Dec. 16 — 5L Red Angus, Bull Sale, Sheridan, MT
Dec. 20 — Calvo Red Angus, Bull Sale, Bassett, NE
Feb. 15, 2023 — Shaw Cattle Company, Bull Sale, Caldwell, ID

SALERS

Dec. 5 — Jacobsen Ranch, Bull Sale, Great Falls, MT

SIMANGUS

Sep. 7 — Teixeira Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Pismo Beach, CA
Sep. 14 — Bullseye Breeders, Bull Sale, Modesto, CA
Sep. 22 — Beef Solutions, Bull Sale, Ione, CA
Oct. 7 — Red River Farms, Production Sale, Grand Saline, TX
Oct. 8 — Trinity Farms, Female Sale, Ellensburg, WA
Oct. 11-12 — R.A. Brown Ranch, Bull & Female Sale, Throckmorton, TX
Nov. 14 — Hoffman Ranch, Bull Sale, Thedford, NE
Nov. 19 — Diamond Peak Cattle Co., Female Sale, Loma, CO
Nov. 19 — Yardley Cattle Co., Female Sale, Beaver, UT
Dec. 3 — Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Bull Sale, Loma, CO
Dec. 3 — T-Heart Ranch, Female Sale, La Garita, CO
Jan. 30, 2023 — APEX Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Whitman, NE

SIMMENTAL

Oct. 7 — Red River Farms, Production Sale, Grand Saline, TX

SOUTH DEVON

Nov. 30 — Beef Country Breeders, Bull Sale, Columbus, MT

STABILIZER

Oct. 8 — Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Bull Sale, Ozark, AR
Oct. 29 — Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Bull Sale, Dinuba, CA
Nov. 19 — Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Bull Sale, Wytheville, VA
Dec. 3 — Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Bull Sale, Loma, CO
Dec. 15 — Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Bull Sale, San Saba, TX
Jan. 12, 2023 — Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Bull Sale, Fort Collins, CO

COMMERCIAL

Sep. 7-8 — Superior Livestock Auction, Labor Day Video Sale, Hudson Oaks, TX
Sep. 9 — Montana Livestock Auction, Cream of the Crop I Sale, Ramsay, MT
Sep. 15 — Cattle Country Video, Cheyenne Roundup, Cheyenne, WY
Sep. 19 — Northern Video Sale, Fall Premier Video Auction, Billings, MT
Sep. 23 — Montana Livestock Auction, Cream of the Crop II Sale, Ramsay, MT
Oct. 22 — Pieper Red Angus, Bull & Female Sale, Hay Springs, NE
Nov. 4-5 — GENEPLUS Brangus at Chimney Rock Cattle Co., Bull & Female Sale, Concord, AR
Nov. 5 — Cattlemen's Livestock Market, Female Sale, Galt, CA
Nov. 18 — Rollin' Rock, Commercial Bred Heifer Sale, Pilot Rock, OR
Nov. 21 — Central Oregon Livestock Auction, 21st Century Female Sale, Madras, OR
Dec. 7-9 — Montana Stockgrowers Convention, Billings, MT

HORSE

Sep. 10 — Open Box Rafter Ranch, Quarter Horse Sale, Rapid City, SD
Sep. 16-17 — Van Norman & Friends, Production Sale, Elko, NV
Sep. 17 — Reno Snaffle Bit, Futurity Sale, Reno, NV
Oct. 6 — Jamison Quarter Horses, Performance Horse Sale, Quinter, KS
Oct. 14 — Western Stockman's Market, Showcase Horse Sale, McFarland, CA
Jan. 24-28, 2023 — Red Bluff, Gelding Sale, Red Bluff, CA

DOG

Jan. 24-28, 2023 — Red Bluff, Stock Dog Sale, Red Bluff, CA

THE VIEWPOINT

with Greg Arendt

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

Trends in the cattle industry are cyclical, and this year has seen a repeat from the past decade, with drought and a lack of forage forcing producers to reduce their herd size. But, ranchers can have a sigh of relief, as beef demand has never been higher, and the feeder market is selling at record high levels.

Currently, the climate conditions in Nebraska and southern South Dakota are similar to most of the West and southern U.S., according to Greg Arendt, manager of Valentine Livestock in Valentine, NE. Greg references 2012 as the last severe drought, but he thinks 2022 will top the 2012 drought.

Greg has managed Valentine Livestock and lived in Valentine since 1993. Through the last 20 years, the region has experienced excessive moisture, and records were actually set for annual rainfall in 2019, Greg said. He added this makes ranching in the region extremely difficult to operate. The Sandhills are somewhat drought resistant because of wet meadows, Greg said, yet three years ago, they were too wet to make quality hay, and this year they will produce less than 50% of a hay crop. This could be the driest year in over 100 years, Greg noted.

Current feedstuff supplies are at record price levels, forcing ranchers to make decisions about whether to buy $200/ton hay or sell cows. "I anticipate a big increase in bred cows numbers by December," Greg told *WLJ*. "Older cows and either heifer calves or fall cows will sell as well."

Greg said they will adjust their sale schedule to accommodate the increase in bred cow numbers, and the timeline for selling spring calves is moved up two to three weeks earlier. "A footnote to a lack of hay: Many ranchers will either take cows to cornstalks or put calves in a backgrounding yard," Greg said, adding that the normal marketing behavior for their customers will change.

Even with feed costs higher than 2021 and ranch expenses up 20-30%, the feeder market on yearlings is up $200/head over a year ago, he said. The calf market is expected to be up about the same per head.

Beef demand has been at levels not seen for some time. Fats trading near $1.50/cwt keeps the feeder market at high levels, Greg said. However, with high feed costs versus high fat prices, you would think the feeder market would back up, Greg noted, yet in his area, it has not. At the auction market's Aug. 25 sale, over 500 steers averaging 931 pounds brought $189.42, and 457 steers averaging 829 lbs. brought $196.80.

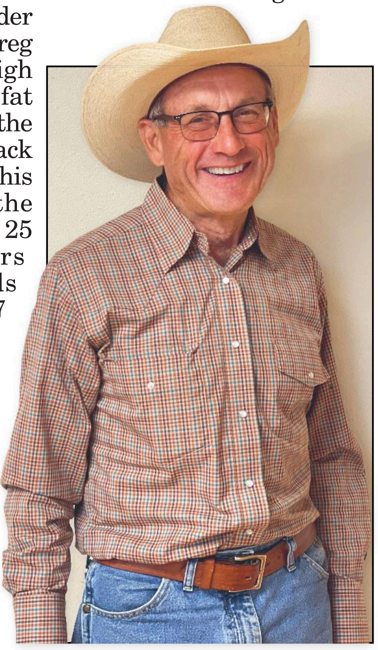
With such good prices paid for replacements, someone thinks this market is on course to be good into 2023, Greg said. USDA reports cow kill up 14-16% this year, and the drift of this information has many thinking replacements will be scarce in 2023, he said. Time will tell, Greg added. If "normal" comes back into place in 2023, bred females will certainly cost more.

He is hopeful the cow-calf sector will have three years of sustained price improvements. The last upward trend fizzled because of the repeal of mandatory country-of-origin labeling (MCOOL), Greg said. "Maybe MCOOL could get reinstated and make this calf market stay at $2/lb. or better. MCOOL would provide leverage back to the U.S. cow-calf individual," he said.

"We are hopeful the Cattle Price Discovery and Transparency Act—also known as the Grassley/Fischer bill—brings about a more level playing field. Auction markets play a vital role in our industry," Greg continued.

"They are the price trendsetters. Video has surfaced to be a big player in selling feeders and replacements, yet people look at auction markets for price trends."

As Greg prepares for the fall run, he is hopeful that rain will start before October and the winter won't be too long, keeping the burden of cow herd reduction to a minimum. — ***WLJ***



Courtesy photo

Greg Arendt, manager of Valentine Livestock.

Producers frustrated with no access to water

WATER WARS

(from page 1)

Scala and other ranchers decided, "To hell with it; we're starting the pumps."

SWRCB issued a notice of violation to SRWA, notifying the agency to stop diverting water immediately, or they would be subject to a potential fine of up to $500 per day per water right for each day a violation occurs.

Flow measurements taken by the U.S. Geological Survey in Yreka, CA, on Aug. 24 showed a return to normal flows.

"We accomplished what we set out to do," Rick Lemos, a fifth-generation rancher and SRWA board member, told CalMatters. "We got relief for the cattle that were out of water and wading out in the mud and getting stuck."

The diversion drew the ire of Klamath Tribes and state water regulators, who experienced a setback weeks earlier when a flash flood sent mud and debris from the McKinney Fire into the Klamath River, killing thousands of fish. The Shasta River is a tributary of the Klamath River and harbors the Chinook salmon, in addition to the coho salmon, which is federally listed under the Endangered Species Act.

"What we're doing here will be a barometer for the rest of the state," Craig Tucker, natural resources policy advocate for the Karuk Tribe, told The Associated Press. "If the state can't enforce its own regulations when it comes to river flows, California fisheries don't stand a chance."

SRWA has 20 days to request a hearing, or the order becomes final and could subject the organization to fines of up to $10,000 daily, according to SWRCB.

Klamath River

The Klamath Irrigation District initially said on Aug. 23 that it would defy an order from BOR calling for farmers to halt water diversions from the Klamath Project.

The Klamath Project is managed by BOR and includes the Klamath Irrigation District, which services approximately 170,000 acres of farmland along the Oregon-California border.

On Aug. 19, BOR stated Upper Klamath Lake was out of water and ordered a halt to diversions to save endangered salmon and suckerfish. Water levels are maintained in Upper Klamath Lake to protect several species of endangered suckerfish. Water is also released from the lake to flow downriver to preserve the habitat for endangered coho salmon.

The irrigation board met on Aug. 22 and authorized continued operations, asserting BOR did not provide a legal justification for shutting down the water.

Gene Souza, executive director of the Klamath Irrigation District, told Oregon Public Broadcasting's show, "Think Out Loud," he doesn't believe that an allocation of water is within legal documents and that water in Upper Klamath Lake went through the adjudication process, with some water belonging to irrigators and some to Tribes, with a balance for wildlife.

Souza stated the interim operations plan BOR has been using for the last couple of years has been a "colossal failure," and the agency has been allocating more water to the ocean than what had been available to the area. Souza said BOR continually changed the lake elevation levels needed as a buffer for spawning suckerfish.

Souza said the irrigation district agreed to maintain the buffer through conservation and by making farmers wait 45 days before delivering water. The district maintained lake levels through most of the summer until BOR stated they were no longer operating under lake levels. Souza asserted BOR was "moving the goal post from left to right" after the decision.

Souza called the move unfair to farmers, but the irrigation district quickly reversed course after BOR threatened to withhold $20 million for drought relief from not only the Klamath Irrigation District, but all irrigation districts served by the district.

Oregon Sens. Jeff Merkley (D) and Ron Wyden (D) announced funding for the first restoration projects in the Klamath Basin as part of $162 million in funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

"The Klamath Basin has fought to survive back-to-back summers of the worst drought in memory," Merkley said in a statement. "From businesses and families to fish and wildlife, the impact of the drought throughout the basin is deep."

Souza said, "Farmers that have a crop in the ground right now, they are not going to be able to get a majority of that crop to market."

Souza hopes they can come to an agreement with BOR on an understanding to get to a different position than working under the interim operating agreement, which allocates water downstream "that has nothing to do with a threatened or endangered species." — **Charles Wallace, *WLJ* editor**