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INSIDE WLJ

STRIKE A DEAL — Grain dealer agrees to pay Nebraska farmers more than \$2 million to keep its dealer license. Page 6

CROSSING THE LINE — Wyoming Stock Growers Association opposes bill clarifying corner crossing on public land. Page 10

A LOOK BACK IN HISTORY

"We have been hearing the same rumors that you have to the effect that the government is seriously considering removal of price ceilings and other controls on livestock and meat. Despite the apparent fact that the price control program on meats is of benefit to no one and despite the fact that complex setup has badly messed up distribution, it is doubtful if there is any intention of dropping the programs," wrote Nelson Crow in his November 1951, "Observations by the Publisher."

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Rising lamb and beef imports were the topics of discussion at a recent Senate committee confirmation hearing. Pictured here, sheep and cattle at the Fremont-Winema National Forest. **USFS**

Industry scrutinizes rising lamb, beef imports

— USTR nominee addresses concerns

The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) formally petitioned the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to launch a global safeguard investigation into

U.S. imports of lamb meat under Sections 201-202 of the Trade Act of 1974.

The request, submitted on behalf of ASI's 42 state associations and more than 100,000 farms and ranches, seeks federal intervention to address what the group de-

scribes as "serious economic injury" caused by imported lamb products. According to ASI, imported lamb—often sold below domestic market prices—has displaced U.S. production, eroded profitability and jeopardized the long-term viability of the na-

tion's sheep industry.

"This investigation request is the culmination of months of ASI's independent research and advocacy," said ASI President Ben Lehfeldt. "Our members have made it clear that immediate federal action is necessary to restore

fair competition and protect America's sheep producers."

To support the petition, ASI submitted public and confidential reports to USTR detailing market data, import trends and financial injury

collected from U.S. lamb companies. The analysis found that U.S. lamb imports surged from 213.6 million pounds in 2020 to 309.3 million pounds in 2024, a nearly 45% increase.

See **LAMB IMPORTS** on page 16

Appeals court overturns USDA's GE labeling rule

A federal court of appeals recently overturned a USDA rule governing the use of labels for genetically modified ingredients in food. Now, USDA will be required to rewrite much of its 2018 genetically engineered (GE) foods labeling rule.

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals on Oct. 31 released its opinion reversing a California district court's judgment in part, but also affirming

in part, and remanded the matter back to USDA.

"Today's decision is a landmark victory for the public's right to know what they eat and feed their families," said George Kimbrell, Center for Food Safety legal director and lead counsel in the case.

"We are gratified that the Court

See **GE LABEL** on page 14

Global beef trade strengthens amid volatility, rising demand

— Asian demand fuels growth

According to a new RaboResearch Food & Agribusiness report, global beef trade is poised for continued expansion through the end of the decade, fueled primarily by surging demand in Asia and export growth from South America.

Despite this momentum, the report underscores that volatility—driven by disease outbreaks, shifting geopolitics and tightening supplies—will remain a defining feature of the market.

The report said that the past five years have marked one of the most dynamic periods in global beef history. Between 2019 and 2024, worldwide beef exports grew 14%, reaching nearly 13 million metric tons (mmt).

"Brazil and China have emerged as dominant forces, with Brazil leading exports and China becoming the top importer," said Angus Gidley-Baird, senior

See **GLOBAL BEEF** on page 11

Cattle markets struggle to find recovery

The cattle market failed to find stronger footing this past week, as rumors swirled surrounding the reopening of the southern border to Mexican cattle imports—a claim that USDA Secretary Brook Rollins refuted. Still, the markets headed lower another week.

"There is no logical or quantifiable reason for the market top since everyone in the cattle industry is fully aware the tightest fed cattle supplies lay ahead for many months," wrote Cassie Fish, market analyst, in The Beef on Wednesday. "But market confidence has been shredded and once that occurs, it's difficult if not impossible to repair—at least in the short-run."

Live cattle futures failed to find recovery over the week. The December contract lost about \$12 to close at \$218.77, and the February contract lost more than \$12 to close at \$216.75.

"Today, fear, disbelief and anger are just a few of the emotions in ample supply," Fish said. "But futures markets are immune and in this day and age, are ruthlessly quick to get where they are going. Right now the market appears to be on a mission to find a tradeable low. Just how low the market will go is up for debate by traders and chart technicians—

though no one really knows until the market has actually gotten there."

Cash trade for the week was about 70,000 head. Live steers sold from \$225-232, and dressed steers sold from \$355-365.

Cash trade for the week ending Nov. 2 totaled 55,948 head. Live steers averaged \$230.84, and dressed steers averaged \$358.66.

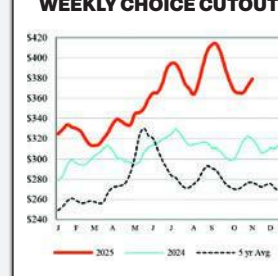
The national weekly direct beef type price distribution for the week of Oct. 27 to Nov. 3 was the following on a live basis:

• Negotiated purchases: \$230.90.

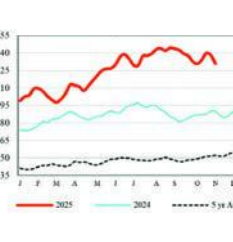
- Formula net purchases: \$241.67.
- Forward contract net

See **MARKETS** on page 19

WEEKLY CHOICE CUTOUT



5 AREA WEEKLY WTD AVERAGE STEER PRICE



LIVE STEERS	DRESSED STEERS	CME FEEDER
\$228.98	\$358.36	\$349.42
WEEK ENDING: 11-6-25		

Time Sensitive
Priority Handling
PERIODICAL:

COMMENTS

Someone vs. things

In 2014, at the age of 11, animal activist Zoe Rosenberg founded the Happy Hen Chicken Rescue (later renamed to Happy Hen Animal Sanctuary). From there, activism has been her story. In 2016, she was arrested at age 14 on live TV during a Los Angeles Dodgers game for pitch invasion for protesting the alleged maltreatment of farm animals by a meat supplier used for “Dodger Dog” hot dogs, which are a popular attraction at Dodger Stadium. In 2018, she then chained herself to a gate at the slaughterhouse on the campus of California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo in an attempt to rescue a cow. She and a 31-year-old co-conspirator were arrested and issued stay-away orders. Her veterinarian mother was also arrested for allegedly contributing to the delinquency of a minor, but those charges were later dropped. At this time, Rosenberg became an organizer of the San Luis Obispo chapter of Direct Action Everywhere (DxE), the animal activism group whose website states it “is a global network of activists working to achieve revolutionary social and political change for animals in one generation.”



IPSEN

In 2019, at 16 years old, she rushed onto the field at Levi Stadium at the College Football Playoff National Championship displaying a banner protesting stadium vendor and meat supplier Starbird and Petaluma Poultry. In 2022, now a student at University of California, Berkeley, she was arrested for chaining herself to a basketball hoop during an NBA playoff game between the Memphis Grizzlies and the Minnesota Timberwolves in protest to the Timberwolves team owner’s farm. In 2023, she was arrested for taking four chickens from a Perdue Farms Petaluma Poultry facility on behalf of DxE. They had claimed alleged animal abuse, but Rosenberg decided to take the chickens due to perceived inaction from law enforcement.

Her activism has earned her the Youth Activist of the Year by the Animal Rights National Conference. The above information was pulled from her Wikipedia page. Now, at 23 years old, Rosenberg faces a litany of legal challenges. On Oct. 29, she was found guilty of trespassing and conspiracy. She is facing more than five years in prison. Her representation, Animal Activist Legal Defense Project, plans to appeal all charges. The Animal Activist Legal Defense Project’s website quotes Professor Justin Marceau, a director of the project, “Today’s animal rights movement is hindered by an unmet need: While relying heavily on activists and insiders to uncover wrongdoing and urge systemic reform, there has historically been a dearth of available legal support.”

In June of 2023, Rosenberg and several members of DxE disguised themselves as workers, drove 40 miles to Petaluma Poultry, where they encountered a truck carrying “thousands of chickens.” The activists removed four chickens, put them in buckets, and drove away. The activists filmed the operation and later released the footage, which led investigators to the arrest of Rosenberg in November. Rosenberg’s attorney, Chris Carraway, said in a statement, “Sonoma County spent over six weeks and hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars to protect a multibillion-dollar corporation from the rescue of four chickens worth less than \$25.” According to an article published by The Guardian, her attorneys argued the case wasn’t about whether she took the chickens, but why she took them.

In an Instagram post by Rosenberg, she claims, “I was just convicted of a felony for rescuing four suffering chickens from Perdue’s horrific Petaluma Poultry slaughterhouse. Throughout my trial, it was clear that the Court does not view animals as individuals entitled to protection and safety. It was clear that our legal system views them as things that can be used and abused as humans please.”

This was a focal point in debate throughout the trial. Defining legal terms between “someone” and “things.” In an article by The Daily Californian, Rosenberg said, “In California, it doesn’t specify beyond the word ‘someone.’ Our argument was the ‘someone’ should apply to animals, because animals are different from inanimate objects and things.” The judge threw this argument out since animals are legally classified as “things.”

According to an article in The Press Democrat, jurors took three-and-a-half hours of deliberation to convict Rosenberg on all counts. Outside the courtroom, DxE members waited and approached at least one juror for comments while two other jurors were escorted around by security. Rosenberg is free on bail but wears an ankle monitor. She is due for sentencing on Dec 3. During the trial, at least two DxE members who were called as witnesses invoked their Fifth Amendment right to avoid self-incrimination, according to the same article.

Remember that DxE was largely behind Measure J last year. This would have significantly impacted agriculture in the country and put multi-generational meat, poultry and dairy products and producers at risk in Sonoma County.

Over the last few columns I’ve written, people have asked what I mean when I say agriculture is being attacked from the outside. This is one example. Anyone who aims to harm the livelihoods and businesses that deal with agricultural products through physical, vocal regulatory, or legislative action is attacking agriculture from the outside. Today, only 2% of the population are tasked with feeding the remaining 98%. Sticking together and working together is how we are going to endure, both in good markets and in bad. — **LOGAN IPSEN**

GUEST OPINION

Farming has always taken resilience. But it takes honesty, too. Honesty about the stress, worry and exhaustion, which so many farmers and ranchers carry quietly.

When I talk with farmers and ranchers across the country, I hear stories that are both familiar and deeply personal. Markets swing overnight. Weather doesn’t cooperate. The cost to raise a crop keeps rising. And even on the good days, there’s the constant weight of responsibility—to our families, to our land, and to the legacy we’re building for the next generation. That’s a lot for anyone to shoulder.

We don’t always talk about the impact these pressures have on our mental wellness, but we should. Because, sadly, the truth is farmer suicide rates are two to five times higher than the national average. Behind those numbers are people we know—neighbors, friends and family members—who have struggled in silence for too long.

At the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), we believe that strength is not measured in bushels or bales. It’s measured in our willingness to look out for one another. To admit, “I’m not okay,” and to say, “You’re not alone.” That belief has fueled our work to make mental health resources accessible and practical for farmers and our rural communities. And this year, we’re taking another big step forward.

I’m so proud that AFBF is joining forces with Farm Foundation’s Farm Family Wellness Alliance to create the new Farm State of Mind Alliance. This is the next phase of our ongoing commitment to rural mental wellness. This expanded coalition brings together agricultural organizations across the country with a shared goal: to make sure every farm family has the resources they need to take care of their mental health.

The Alliance builds on the progress we have made

A NEW CHAPTER IN TAKING CARE OF OUR OWN

through Farm State of Mind, advancing access to tools, training and support that meet people where they are. Our resources include programs like Togetherall, a 24/7 online peer-to-peer community moderated by licensed mental health professionals, and Personal Assistance Services, which provides confidential counseling, financial consultations, and stress management resources to anyone who needs them. These services are completely free to farm families nationwide.

What makes this effort powerful isn’t just the programs themselves. It’s the fact that agriculture is coming together to lead the charge. We are combining the trusted voices of organizations farmers already know, starting with our founding members—Farm Bureau, National Farmers Union, National 4-H Council and Farm Foundation—to reach further and respond faster. The Alliance will amplify the impact of Farm State of Mind, allowing for greater reach into rural communities.

Whether you’re looking for help, or just want to support the cause, there’s a place for you in the Farm State of Mind Alliance. Partners, advocates and neighbors can all play a part by sharing these resources, starting conversations, and helping to break down the stigma around mental health.

We’ve seen the difference it makes when one person reaches out. All it takes is asking a friend how they’re really doing, or sharing a resource that might just save a life. Those small steps are how we show each other: “It’s okay not to be okay, and it’s okay to ask for help.”

The health of our farms depends on the health of our farmers. Together, we can make sure that when the next generation takes over the fields and herds we have built, they inherit a culture that values mental wellness just as much as hard work. — **Zippy Duvall, AFBF president**

GUEST OPINION

China is buying American soybeans again, much to bean growers’ relief. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said China has agreed to buy 918 million bushels in each of the next three years. President Donald Trump crowed, “Our farmers will be very happy!”

With concessions from China on rare earths and fentanyl in addition to soybeans, Trump is declaring victory in the trade war. His meeting with China’s President Xi Jinping was, he said, a 12 on a scale of one to 10.

Some commentators, however, think it’s Xi who should be taking the victory lap. In their view, China’s strong retaliatory measures on soybeans and rare earths forced the U.S. to back down on 100% tariffs, on port fees and on stricter AI-chip export controls. Meanwhile, they contend, China gave up relatively little in return.

Among the unimpressed were the Wall Street Journal’s editorial writers, who said the Trump-Xi deal “mostly restores the status quo that prevailed in May.” A New York Times story suggested Xi had made the U.S. blink. It was headlined, “The Art of Letting Trump Claim a Win, While Walking Away Stronger.”

The truth, in my view, is more complicated than either Trump or the commentators let on. Neither side has won the trade war; the war hasn’t ended. What Trump and Xi agreed to was a truce, not a peace treaty.

Nor is either side clearly winning. Each has shown it can inflict great pain on the other. Neither is making much progress in achieving its war aims. In these two respects, the U.S.-China trade war increasingly resembles the Russia-Ukraine war.

Some have used the word stalemate to describe both wars. But in chess, where the word originated, a stalemate ends the conflict in a draw. These conflicts are far from over.

Though the 100% tariffs were lifted and the 20% fentanyl tariff halved, these reductions leave China’s exports subject to a 47% tariff. While the U.S. will be able to buy desperately needed rare earths from China, which has a near-monopoly on them, the Chinese only suspended their strict new export restrictions for a year.

For China, a victory in the trade war would drastically reduce the tariff rate. But high tariffs are one of Trump’s unshakeable beliefs. He’s been advocating them for four decades.

A BATTLEFIELD REPORT FROM THE US-CHINA TRADE WAR

Indeed, he’s counting on them to trigger an American manufacturing renaissance. For him, victory in the trade war would include Chinese accepting high tariffs. (A bigger victory would be an end to China’s attempts to put foreign manufacturers out of business, but that’s so unimaginable he’s stopped asking for it.)

Because their war aims directly conflict, a win-win peace treaty will be hard to reach. The Trump administration thinks hitting China’s economy with high tariffs will eventually force the Chinese to back down. It’s probably underestimating how much pain China’s rulers can make the country take.

For their part, Chinese officials may expect Trump to reverse himself or at least lose interest in the fight. They may be underestimating Trump’s love of tariffs.

Though the war isn’t over, the truce could last a while. Both Xi and Trump seem to want a somewhat calmer relationship. Still, the situation is volatile. Both countries are scrambling to reduce their dependence on the other. Hostilities could resume at any moment.

That’s a possibility soybean farmers would forget at their peril. They’re of course grateful to have China buying again even if, as the president of the American Soybean Association pointed out in an interview with DTN’s Senior Ag Policy Editor Chris Clayton, the purchases aren’t enough to make soybean growing profitable. But when the truce ends, so most likely will the purchases.

And while Chinese purchases help soybean growers in the short run, they leave them with the continuing problem of being overdependent on China. What they really need is more markets. Lots of them.

Viewed that way, the trade agreements Trump reached with Malaysia and Cambodia and the trade frameworks with Thailand and Vietnam might turn out to be more important for farmers than the China deal. There are still some questions about these agreements, but Bessent said these countries would buy 698 million bushels.

If that turns out to be true, it would be a godsend for soybean farmers. And if the administration can negotiate a few more of these agreements, it will have gone a long way toward ending the overdependence. With sufficient diversification, a rupture in the U.S.-China truce would be a lot less scary for soybean farmers. — **Urban Lehner, DTN editor emeritus**

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THE VIEWPOINT

with Joe Clarot

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

Feeding more than a thousand bulls a year, Joe Clarot has earned a reputation as a household name in California's bull industry.

Joe grew up as the third generation of dairymen on Clarot Farms in Modesto, CA. After returning home from college, Joe helped the farm transition from dairy cattle to backgrounding calves. That shift soon expanded to include program calves, and eventually, bull feeding. Now, Joe, his wife, Nikki, and their five-year-old son, Cade, feed about 1,200 head a year while maintaining a commercial cow herd, raising ranch and performance horses, and growing all their own feed.

California bull run

As one of the state's leading bull feeders, Joe has a front-row view of California's bull market. This year's strong bull season, he says, reflects the diversity and progressive approach of the state's breeders.

"The genetics are moving forward," he told WLJ. "Whether you're a guy that's heavy on the maternal side or if you want to push and make those high-yielding, high-val-

ue feeder steers, in California, we've got it.

"You can go get the bulls that you need," he continued. "And I'm glad to see these guys getting paid for what they've done, because there's a lot of breeders out here that really work at it."

In such a stellar market, when calves are selling high and there's more available income, producers are more willing to invest in genetics for their operations, he explained. In the past, buyers might have bought the bull they needed for their program—this year, they bought the bull they wanted.

On the home ranch, the Clarots are always striving for balance. While the goal is to raise those big steers that are going to yield and grade well, the priority will always be on the bigger picture.

"There needs to be balance across the board," Joe said. "I want cattle that are nice to look at, that are built right. I also have to raise the females that will work for me and that I can stand to go ride through and look at," he said, referring to cows without a "carcass" look.

He favors bulls out of pathfinder cows because they're typically easy to breed as yearlings, and though they can be tougher to breed as two-year-olds, they're built to stay in the herd for the long haul.

For other bull buyers, Joe has noticed more of a trend in recent years: buyers will view cattle in advance before going home to review pedigrees and



Courtesy photo
Joe Clarot with his wife, Nikki, and son, Cade.

numbers.

"These guys are looking at foot quality, they're looking at structure and they're making notes on every bull in the sale," he said. "I think people are putting more emphasis on what they're buying. They're not necessarily buying right off the numbers."

Longevity is top of mind for most bull buyers, and foot soundness is a key factor in ensuring stayability in the herd. Most cattle, he said, are going to yield if fed right, so buyers can look a little deeper into phenotypical traits.

The bottom line, Joe emphasized, is that when a pure-

bred breeder is selling someone a bull, that bull needs to be able to produce the female they need for their ranch to stay profitable. "Everybody wants to sell a high-priced steer, but you have to have the females that you need, otherwise you're not a sustainable ranch," he said.

Bull sellers also have to offer something for every type of buyer. "When I walk into a pen with a commercial producer, I might think the best bull that I've fed all year is in that pen, and there's commercial producers that can go through that whole pen and not find a bull they like," Joe said.

In a state as large and diverse as California, producers have different needs—some look for bulls that will work with 1,200-pound mature cows, while others, like Joe, prefer 1,500-lb. cows. He's learned to focus on helping buyers find bulls that fit their program rather than pushing his own preferences.

More recently, Joe noted, some commercial bull buyers are starting to back up from focusing solely on the top 1% or 10% and are broadening their search to include bulls in the top 25% that also appeal to them visually. "When did the top 25% of the breed become not good enough?" he asked. "Let's go with the bull that's in the top 25% of the breed in multiple traits and that you really like the phenotype and the feet on."

Ranch horse demand

On the ranch horse side, the market has been hot for several years, and Joe said this year was no exception. The Clarot family sold several ranch horses in mid-October at the "Horses with a History" Ranch and Performance Horse Production Sale, which Joe said was an outstanding sale.

"There's a lot more people that ride four-wheelers nowadays," he said. "If you've got a good, broke ranch horse, it doesn't matter where you market them—they're worth a lot of money."

At the family operation, everything is done on horseback, from checking water to

checking cows. "I'm horseback at the feedlot every day," he said. "When I leave the house, there's always one in the trailer."

At the recent horse sale, several buyers were familiar faces of people who have bought bulls from Joe or that he's backgrounded for in the past. "We sold horses that were really good rope horses," Joe said. "Like, you could go win on them, and they went to a ranch where they will never get roped on again, which I thought was pretty cool."

A season well-earned


Looking back on the California fall bull run, Joe said one of the greatest strengths of the state's market is the number of options available to buyers. "There's guys that will raise whatever you want, that have whatever you need," he said.

This year's sale season proved to be one of the best in recent years, a testament to the investments made in raising and growing market-ready bulls.


"It was really enjoyable to have conversations with customers after their sales this year," Joe said. "I couldn't be happier for the guys that we feed for."

For Joe, he expects the strong market to continue. "These genetics are just going to keep rolling," he said. "I'm glad that everybody is getting paid right now for what they've worked for." — Anna Miller Fortozo, WLJ managing editor


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Hansen-Mueller pays farmers \$2.1M to keep dealer license

Omaha-based Hansen-Mueller Co. has paid 38 Nebraska farmers about \$2.1 million, under an agreement reached with the Nebraska Public Service Commission (PSC).

As part of an agreement approved by the commission on Nov. 4, the PSC has withdrawn its complaint that included an order suspending the company's grain dealer license.

Terri Fritz, director of the Nebraska Grain Warehouse and Dealer Department at the PSC, told commissioners that Hansen-Mueller has agreed to several stipulations to main-

tain its dealer license.

Those stipulations require the company to provide documentation as payments are made to producers and elevators, including making sure checks clear the bank.

"We also are going to be requesting their balance sheets, their financial balance sheets on a monthly basis," Fritz told the commission. "So, this will continue clear through as per the stipulated agreement; they have until the end of February to make sure that all of our warehouses that were affected and grain dealers are also paid with-

in that time period. So, they'll need to report as those payments are made so that we can determine that they've met all conditions in the stipulated agreement."

In addition, Hansen-Mueller operates elevators and merchandising offices in Council Bluffs, IA; Duluth, MN; Houston, TX; Salina and Kansas City, KS; Kansas City, MO; Sioux City, IA; Superior, WI; Tallulah, LA; a merchandising office in Alabaster, AL; as well as a processing mill in Toledo, OH.

The Nebraska PSC's action has no bearing on

similar situations in other states.

"So, all the producers in Nebraska that were doing business, and I'm talking grain-dealer business, they have been paid," Fritz said. "So, as far as going forward with the stipulated agreement would be the payments to our warehouses and other grain dealers. It's not part of the grain dealer as such, but it's part of the stipulated agreement."

As DTN reported, farmers in Alabama, Texas and potentially other states had not been paid by Hansen-Mueller.

As part of the agreement

with the Nebraska PSC, Hansen-Mueller was required to provide the department evidence of a "valid and active" line of credit and to provide documentation on the first of each month for three consecutive months starting on Dec. 1, 2025, and ending on Feb. 1, 2026.

Hansen-Mueller submitted evidence to the commission on Oct. 30 that it has a valid line of credit. On Oct. 31, the company submitted a preliminary balance sheet dated Sept. 30.

"Respondent hereby stipulates that, in lieu of the assessment of civil penalties, it will pay all Nebraska-based entities for any outstanding grain purchase obligations upon demand," the agreement said, "and that all obligations shall be paid in full no later than Feb. 27, 2026."

The agreement would become void if Hansen-Mueller doesn't meet all the requirements.

The agreement does not apply to some producers and sellers, including

those who negotiated deferred payment or "price later" contracts with Hansen-Mueller, according to the Nebraska PSC.

According to a news release from the PSC, Hansen-Mueller began issuing some outstanding payments electronically and via mailed checks the week of Oct. 27.

"Our decision today balances the public interest with the opportunity for Hansen-Mueller to correct previous concerns," Nebraska PSC Chairman Tim Schram said in a statement.

"Our top priority was making sure these debts were paid during this crucial time in the harvest season, and we're pleased that the company has already begun issuing the outstanding funds."

Producers who have not received their expected payment from Hansen-Mueller within the next two weeks are asked to contact the grain department at 402-471-0222. — **Todd Neeley, DTN environmental editor**

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NM delegation opposes Argentine beef imports

President Donald Trump's plan to greatly increase the nation's importation of beef from Argentina will hurt New Mexico's cattle ranchers at an already difficult time, New Mexico's three U.S. House members said in a letter to the federal Agriculture Department secretary.

The Trump administration recently announced the administration's plan to quadruple the amount of Argentine beef it imports, an attempt to lower nationwide beef prices, according to Reuters. The news followed a \$20 billion currency swap deal with Argentina that Democrats have blasted as a "bailout" of the country's right-wing president.

U.S. Reps. Gabe Vasquez, Teresa Leger Fernández and Melanie Stansbury, all New Mexico Democrats, said Trump's reported plan to increase Argentine beef exports from 20,000 metric tons to 80,000 metric tons will undercut New Mexico cattle ranchers on the cusp of their first good year in a long time.

"From years of drought to soaring input costs, New Mexico's ranchers have barely turned a profit," the delegation wrote in the Nov. 3 letter to Secretary Brooke Rollins. "This plan to flood the market with foreign beef will take money out of the pockets of New Mexico's ranchers with questionable benefits to consumers."

The letter cites a USDA analysis from August showing that New Mexico ranchers' sale of about 1.3 million cattle and calves con-

tributed \$1.7 billion to the state economy in 2023, the most recent available data.

"Ranching is not just a job, it's a way of life in our rural communities," the lawmakers wrote. "New Mexico's ranchers deserve a federal government that looks out for them rather than one that gives a hand-out to foreign producers."

According to a USDA September price outlook, cattle prices reached record highs in August and September, with slaughter steers now selling for more than \$240/cwt, a \$54 increase over last year.

Another factor driving up beef prices is the halt of cattle imports from Mexico, roughly half of which come through New Mexico ports of entry. The border has been closed to Mexican cattle imports since July due to fears about the New World screwworm.

The lawmakers said Trump should halt any plans to increase Argentine beef imports and should instead go after "price gouging" in the meatpacking industry. They pointed to a recent \$87.5 million settlement two of the nation's largest meatpacking companies reached last month over accusations they inflated meat prices by restricting supply, Reuters reported.

The House members' letter is the second rebuke from New Mexico's congressional delegation. U.S. Sens. Martin Heinrich and Ben Ray Lujan, also Democrats, issued a similar statement Oct. 28. — **Patrick Lohmann, Source New Mexico**

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Deadline closing in for states hammering out a new water plan

Utah and six other states along the Colorado River are pushing up against a deadline to figure out as a group how to manage the river and its reservoirs. If they can't reach an agreement by Nov. 11, the federal government is set to intervene and make its own plan. The existing agreement expires at the end of next year.

"There's still hope," Marc Stilson, principal engineer for the Colorado River Authority of Utah, said. "They're working hard, and they're close."

The upstream Upper Basin states—Utah, Colorado, New

Mexico and Wyoming—and the Lower Basin states of Nevada, Arizona and California pitched competing plans to the federal government last year.

Now, in the home stretch of negotiations, the seven states are working through questions including which reservoirs would be managed under the new agreement, how they'll measure water use and whether the plan will include mandatory cuts to water allocations, Stilson said.

The Upper Basin states have resisted the idea of man-

datory cuts in dry years, saying they typically use much less than their yearly allocation.

Lower Basin states have said all seven should share water cuts during dry years under the new plan, warning if they don't, downstream states could face cuts that aren't feasible for them to absorb, the Nevada Current reported.

The river provides water to 40 million people across the U.S. and Mexico, and contributes 27% of Utah's water supply. Hotter temperatures tied to climate change have mixed

with drought and overuse to reduce its flow.

Utah isn't waiting to prepare for potentially significant changes to how it manages water, said Michael Drake, deputy state engineer with the Utah Division of Water rights.

It's been investing in expanding its use of tools to better measure and monitor water use since 2023, Drake told reporters.

That year, the legislature poured \$1 million into a Colorado River measurement infrastructure project and approved \$650,000 in annual

funding to monitor water use, according to the division.

Whether the state ends up facing cuts as part of the new plan or just working toward new targets, Drake said, it sees a need "to be able to manage water better, and you can't regulate what you can't measure."

"As we get close here, I think reality is starting to hit and so we want to put out the messaging, you know, we can do this," Drake told Utah News Dispatch.

He noted the possibility of forced cuts is troubling to

many of the state's farmers.

"What we're going to be asking people to do is to see water running in a stream, and to not take it, to leave it there," Drake said. "It's a hard pill to swallow."

Scott Thayn, who farms alfalfa and the grain sorghum in unincorporated Carbon County, agreed.

"If something happens with this new treaty and they drop it 10, 15, 20%," Thayn said, "most of the years we're going to be hurting." — **Annie Knox, Utah News Dispatch**

Does bale grazing make sense?

With rising input costs, many cow-calf producers are looking for ways to reduce expenses and improve profitability. Because feed often accounts for nearly two-thirds of annual cow costs, finding ways to lower feeding expenses presents a major opportunity for cost savings.

In Canada and across the Northern Great Plains, bale grazing has become a well-established winter-feeding strategy.

However, adoption in Nebraska remains limited. Producers who practice bale grazing often point to lower feed delivery costs, reduced labor needs and better nutrient distribution from manure and urine as key benefits.

Research examined the effects of bale grazing versus summer grazing on forage production, forage quality and soil health across four North Dakota ranches.

Sites included clay-pan, thin loamy, loamy and shallow gravel ecological zones, and all treatments were applied to smooth brome hayfields and pastures.

Key findings

- Forage production: Eighteen months after grazing, grass yield increased at 0, 5 and 10 feet from bale centers compared to summer grazing.

- Forage quality: Six months after treatments, forage crude protein was higher within 10 feet of bale centers. Forage phosphorus was also greater at 0 and 5 feet.

- Soil nutrient profile: Soil NO₃-N, phosphorus and potassium were elevated 6 and 18 months following bale grazing compared to summer grazing. However, soil organic matter did not differ between grazing treatments.

Practical considerations

- Site selection: Avoid bale grazing on native range or newly seeded hayfields and pastures. Additionally, bale grazing can create "hot spots" of nutrients, so utilization on riparian areas is not recommended. Bales can introduce weed seeds or invasive species—focus instead on existing hayfields or improved pastures.

- Bale type: Round bales

are preferred for bale grazing due to less surface area exposed to the elements compared to square bales. While using higher quality hay may allow cows to gain condition, low-medium quality hay for bale grazing is favored due to increased trampling, fouling, and bedding use compared to bunks or bale rings.

- Nutrient management: If soil fertility or productivity is already adequate, consider other winter-feeding options, such as windrow grazing for less concentrated nutrient deposition.

- Bale spacing: Adjust bale spacing based on your nutrient goals. Spacing bales roughly 40 feet apart tends to provide relatively uniform nutrient distribution.

- Weather management: In wetter climates, place bales on their sides to reduce nutrient leaching. In dryer climates, placing bales on end can reduce time required to unwrap bales prior to grazing.

- Feed allocation: Use temporary fencing to ration feed, allowing cattle access to 2-5 days' worth of feed at a time. This helps control waste and reduce labor.

- Cow condition: Monitor body condition scores throughout winter. Depending on bale nutrient content, weather conditions and stage of gestation, cows may require additional energy supplementation.

Applications and takeaways

Bale grazing can be an effective strategy to reduce feeding costs while improving soil fertility in low-productivity hayfields or improved pastures. Compared to feeding in drylots, bale grazing can be accomplished with less machinery and labor costs, while concentrating nutrients from manure and urine in the field.

When implemented on appropriate sites and under suitable winter conditions, bale grazing offers a practical, low-cost option for delivering feed to livestock and improving nutrient capture on soils where it can be utilized to grow additional forage for cow-calf operations. — **Brock Ortner and Aaron Berger, Nebraska Extension educators**

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Dam's Sire: Spring Cove Reno 4021

This full sister to the \$400,000 Spring Cove Grant 200K is due to calve April 2026. Her deceased dam had a WR of 3@110, YR of 3@106 and % IMF Ratio of 4@115.

CED	BW	WW	YW	MARB	RE	\$M	\$W	\$B	\$C
10	-1.2	76	133	.92	.63	103	79	166	318



SPRING COVE CAROL 4051 *21129239

8-18-24 • Sire: EZAR Step Up 9178 • Dam: Spring Cove Carol 418
Dam's Sire: Sitz Longevity 556Z

An own daughter of the deceased Spring Cove Carol 418 — that has made a profound impact on our program and the breed — is sired by the Select Sires' standout, EZAR Step Up.

CED	BW	WW	YW	MARB	RE	\$M	\$W	\$B	\$C
6	1.5	91	147	.63	.60	121	101	135	296



SPRING COVE JUANA 500 *21283626

1-3-25 • Sire: Spring Cove Grant 200K • Dam: Musgrave Juana Erica 278 • Dam's Sire: Musgrave 316 Stunner

Sired by the \$400,000 Spring Cove Grant 200K, Juana has a great blend of phenotype, quality and marketability from a donor dam with a WR of 4@103.

CED	BW	WW	YW	MARB	RE	\$M	\$W	\$B	\$C
3	2.3	80	136	.80	.94	102	79	172	325

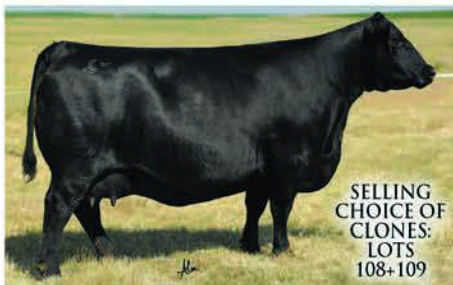


GUESS LADY 5003 *21200500

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Dam's Sire: Wilks 8'72 • Maternal Granddam: RB Lady Denver 167-453

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CED	BW	WW	YW	MARB	RE	\$M	\$W	\$B	\$C
9	2.3	90	165	1.76	1.03	58	75	258	393



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Dam's Sire: BUBS Southern Charm AA31

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CED	BW	WW	YW	MARB	RE	\$M	\$W	\$B	\$C
6	.5	82	141	.68	1.15	102	80	177	332



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Federal migrant worker program proves fickle

Blueberries unpicked and dropping from plants in New Jersey, crops left to dry up in North Carolina fields and understaffed rural Kansas cattle operations are becoming more and more common, and food in the U.S. is going to waste, according to farmers and agriculture professionals.

It is happening in large part because of a labor shortage crisis, they said during a press call hosted by a coalition called Grow It Here that brought together the topics immigration, government and farming.

"It is clear to me that we can either import our workers or import our food, and that's a key question, a key issue we need to answer," said Matt Teagarden, CEO of the Kansas Livestock Association, representing around 5,000 members involved in Kansas' multi-billion dollar cattle industry.

Farmers from North Carolina, Wisconsin, California and New Jersey also weighed in, expressing their frustrations with labor challenges and describing their reliance on a federal guest worker visa program that can act as a band-aid to larger issues. The program is often framed as a win-win for employers and workers, but that isn't always the case.

Brandon Batten of Triple B Farms in Four Oaks, NC, said his farm began using the federal government's H-2A visa program about a year ago. The program allows employers who meet certain requirements to hire foreign workers for temporary jobs while providing a mandated base wage and housing. Recent changes to the program increased application and processing fees and stripped worker protections.

Labor has been Batten's biggest challenge, he said, and while H2A provides a safety net, it isn't always efficient.

"As expensive and onerous as the program is, it's more expensive to plant a crop and not get it harvested," he said.

Cattle operations often cannot use the visa program. The jobs aren't seasonal, so Teagarden said rural Kansas employers are trying to take a holistic approach by recruiting locally, sometimes visiting high schools to encourage fulfilling careers in agriculture and trying to retain existing workers.

John Rosenow owns a 700-cow dairy farm in western Wisconsin that employs 18 people. Thirteen of them are from Mexico, he said. But he cannot use the H-2A program.

"The dairy industry has been asking Congress and asking the federal government for years to modernize the immigration system because dairy is specifically excluded from having H-2A employees," he said. "We rely on immigrants."

He said 90% of dairy har-

vested from Wisconsin cows is done so by immigrants.

Brandon Raso, a fourth-generation blueberry farmer in New Jersey, started using the H-2A program more than a decade ago.

"Aside from its challenges, logistically, and its costs, it's been a program that has helped us stay afloat," Raso said. "But I do have to admit, due to the rising costs and increasing challenges that the program has provided, we have dramatically decreased the number of workers we utilize through that program."

The farm used to have 250 workers through the H-2A program to help offset local labor shortages, Raso said. This season, the farm had 30 workers.

Historically, New Jersey farmers could produce about 60 million pounds of blueberries each season, or about \$140 million, Raso said. This year, it was around 36 million lbs. Raso attributes the primary cause of the decrease to labor shortages.

"I know, myself, we left about 2 million lbs. on our farm on our plants to fall off and hit the ground because there was just no one to get that fruit," he said.

About 70% of crop farm workers in the U.S. are foreign-born, said Zach Rutledge, a professor and economist at Michigan State University. Most of those workers are from Mexico, and about 41% are not authorized to work in the U.S.

About half of farmers say they don't have the labor they need, Rutledge said, and they gauge their shortage at lacking 21% of needed workers. He said that labor reductions result in production and revenue reductions for farmers. Current trends could lead to billions in lost revenue, an increase in food prices and a heavier reliance on imports, he said.

He added that if immigration enforcement targets agriculture, "there could be major problems."

"Including the direct effects of having arrests and deportations of workers on the farm and what we call chilling effects, which are when workers get scared because they hear about immigration enforcement and don't go to work because of fear of being deported," Rutledge said.

Employers face significant burdens under the federal H-2A program.

So do employees.

"On top of increased immigration enforcement, which is already exacerbating a chilling effect among workers facing abuse, from the start of the Trump administration, we've seen sustained efforts to roll back hard-earned worker protections," said Jimena de Haro of the Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, a binational workers' rights organization.

The Trump administration has reversed Biden-era

protections for workers under H-2A rules and proposed at least \$17.29 billion in wage cuts for H-2A workers over 10 years. The administration's deportations and efforts to strip people in the U.S. of their immigration and work authorization statuses exacerbate labor shortages, de Haro said.

"In response, we are seeing growers and lawmakers coming up with 'Band-Aid solutions' to increase the number of available workers—mainly focused on

expanding guest worker program—without taking into account workers' well-being or rights," de Haro said.

Recent proposals, also mentioned on the Grow It Here call, include pushes to make H-2A year-round and make it available to other industries, she said.

"But in a program rife with abuse, expanding it would just cause more abuse and exploitation of migrant farmworkers, especially when calls for expansion are accompanied

by the rollback of important worker protections," she said.

A report by Centro called "Ripe for Reform" and a September investigation by ProPublica showed the H-2A program as prone to worker abuse and exploitation.

Kristi Boswell, a former agriculture labor advisor during the first Trump administration and advisor to Grow It Here, said the campaign was created to educate policymakers and the public about labor short-

age struggles and the repercussions that come as a result.

The word "crisis" was used several times by the group.

"I've been working on this issue for 15 years," Boswell said. "The situations, the circumstances, have worsened. Labor costs have increased. We've seen a trade deficit in specialty crops and fruits and vegetables. I think it is going to continue to elevate." — **Anna Kaminski, Kansas Reflector**

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WSGA knocks bill recognizing corner crossing's legality

Stock growers won't support a bill that would clarify Wyoming law following a court decision allowing public access to public land by corner crossing, an industry representative says.

The draft bill, "Corner crossing clarification," is headed to the legislature early next year after the Joint Travel, Recreation, Wildlife and Cultural Resources Committee narrowly endorsed it in August. The measure is intended to encapsulate the 49-page decision of the U.S. 10th Circuit Court of

Appeals. The court ruled that landowners cannot block the public from accessing public land in the checkerboard landscape of public-private land ownership.

Corner crossers step from public land to public land, momentarily passing through the airspace above the adjacent private parcels but without setting foot on private land. Carbon County ranch owner Fred Eshelman sued four hunters in 2022 for trespassing after they corner crossed. He lost his case.

The bill provides "a clarify-

ing exception to the offenses of trespass," spelling out that a corner-crosser "does not commit criminal trespass." The measure also would immunize corner crossers who make "incidental contact" with private property, "without causing damage to any privately owned land."

That's one toe over the line drawn by the 10th Circuit, which decided against Eshelman based on the premise that four Missouri hunters made no physical contact with private property. The corner-crossing clarification bill appears to build on the de minimis doctrine, a legal concept a court uses when refusing to consider trifling matters.

The Wyoming Stock Growers Association (WSGA), which fought alongside Eshelman in his court battles by filing supportive briefs, won't support the corner-crossing clarification, said Jim Magagna, executive vice president of the association.

"I don't think that bill is anything we could accept because of the uncertainties," he said in an interview. Those uncertainties include incidental contact, the potential to bridge corners for motorized travel, an increased potential for trespassing, abuses of private property and other arguments, many of which were raised by Eshelman in court.

"What does it mean I can corner cross?" Magagna asked. "At what extent have I exceeded my ability to do so? I think that bill, other than making a statement, really is not a workable answer to anything," he said.

One of ranchers' concerns, Magagna said, is that people are now free to go to public land that's enmeshed in private ranches, traipsing near private property.

Eshelman, through attorneys, described what that would mean at his Elk Mountain Ranch, which has more than 20,000 private acres around another approximate 11,000 acres of public land, mostly managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

"Corner crossing ... imposes costs on landowners—including trespasses, poaching, littering, fires, predators—that accompany greater public presence near private property," Eshelman argued unsuccessfully in front of the 10th Circuit.

Although "there's no question about the legal decision," reached by the 10th Circuit, Magagna predicts conflicts.

"I foresee that this will lead, in some instances, to corner crossing that will result in some abuses," he said. "It's one thing if a few hunters go across the corner. It's another thing if all of a sudden 100 people want to have an event.

"I think those are the type of things we need to address," he said. "We need to come back home and say, okay, the court has made their decision, what can we do here in Wyoming to make sure that that decision is honored, but it's honored in a way that respects private property rights."

He proposed that a landowner might provide "a more viable" access to a corner-accessible public parcel than via a corner. A landowner might offer access along a road or trail that's farther away from stock, for example, than a corner. In such an instance, Magagna suggested, the public land would no longer be isolated, a necessary circumstance the 10th Circuit imposed in its access ruling.

In other words, if a ranch owner provided a path to isolated public land, would corner crossing no longer be a legal way to get to that public parcel?

The Wyoming Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (BHA), the group that backed the Missouri hunters through five courts to their favorable 10th Circuit ruling, doesn't like that idea.

"If you want to pick another spot, it's not going to be at the expense of the actual corner," said Buzz Hettick, co-chair of the Wyoming chapter. "You [stock growers] filed a brief [against us] and

now you want to come to the table and talk about it?"

"I'm not going to let them dictate how we move forward on this," Hettick said. "I think they've enjoyed use of our public lands exclusively for a long time."

BHA said the 10th Circuit ruling applies to 3.5 million acres in the court's jurisdiction, 2.4 million of which is in Wyoming. About 8.3 million acres across the West was considered "corner-locked"—accessible only to private neighboring landowners and their guests if corner crossing is prosecuted as a trespass—before the 10th Circuit decision.

The hunting group warned of continued efforts to exclude the public from land owned by all Americans.

"Today's win is historic, but it cannot be mistaken for a finish line," Jack Polentes, a senior manager for BHA said in a statement on the day the Supreme Court refused to hear Eshelman's appeal. "Powerful interests will continue to test the boundaries of public access in statehouses and courtrooms across the country."

Hettick added, "I think it's a win for the American public. These public lands, we're going to be able to access more than we did before. That's pretty awesome." — **Angus M. Thuermer Jr., WyoFile**

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Winter supplementation and body condition change affect cow performance

Nutritional management of beef cows during the winter months has lasting impacts on reproductive performance of the cow, calf health and overall herd productivity in spring-calving herds. Recent research evaluating minimal and flexible supplementation strategies using distillers grain-based protein supplements for May-calving cows grazing native range compared three programs.

They were: a low daily rate (0.5 pound per cow per day), a standard rate (1 lb./cow/day) and a flexible strategy where cows were supplemented only during periods of environ-

mental stress such as snow cover or cold rain. Supplementation began in January and ended about 30 days before calving.

Although cows receiving the lower supplementation rate were lighter at calving and tended to remain lighter at breeding, there were no differences among treatments in body condition score, pregnancy rate, calf birth weight, weaning weight or subsequent feedlot performance and carcass characteristics. These results indicate that flexible supplementation during stressful weather can maintain productivity while reducing

feed costs—a valuable option when winter feed prices are high.

Maintaining adequate cow body condition during late gestation, however, remains critical for both cow and calf success. Loss of body condition late in pregnancy can reduce colostrum quality and immunoglobulin content, weakening calf immunity and increasing disease susceptibility.

Severe nutritional restriction in late gestation also decreases birth weight, especially in young cows, and can compromise the calf's immune development. Additionally, nutrient restriction during

pregnancy has been shown to result in calves with lower weaning weights, reduced post-weaning and finishing performance, lighter carcasses and less marbling—clear evidence that maternal nutrition influences lifetime growth and carcass quality.

This phenomenon, known as fetal programming, describes how poor nutrition, heat stress or other challenges during gestation can permanently affect offspring performance and reproduction. Maternal undernutrition can delay puberty and lower fertility in replacement heifers while reducing feedlot performance and carcass quality in steers.

Collectively, these studies underscore the importance of managing cow nutrition strategically through the winter. Flexible supplementation programs can reduce costs without sacrificing reproductive success, but cows must maintain moderate body condition to support calf health, feedlot efficiency and long-term productivity. Well-planned winter nutrition programs enhance economic efficiency, animal resilience and the sustainability of beef production systems in variable environments.

Take-home message

Flexible supplementation

programs that target environmental stress periods can help reduce winter feed costs without compromising cow performance. However, maintaining adequate body condition through late gestation is essential to ensure optimal calf immunity, fertility, growth and carcass quality.

Investing in balanced winter nutrition not only supports this year's calf crop—it builds long-term productivity, fertility and resilience across the cow herd. — **Paul Beck, Oklahoma State University Extension beef cattle nutrition specialist**

Decline expected for global beef production

GLOBAL BEEF (from page 1)

analyst for RaboResearch.

According to the report, Brazilian beef exports have surged from 2.3 mmt in 2019 to an estimated 3.6 mmt in 2024—doubling Australia's export volume and representing roughly 50% of China's total beef imports. China, meanwhile, imported over 3.5 mmt of beef in 2024, up from just over 2 mmt in 2019, solidifying its role as the world's top buyer.

RaboResearch noted other South American nations have followed suit. Argentina and Paraguay have boosted exports by 11% and 40%, respectively, reflecting broader regional growth. Frozen beef products have led this expansion, increasing 20% to just under 7 mmt, while chilled beef exports rose 11% to 2.4 mmt.

Volatility

Even as volumes grow, volatility continues to define the global beef market. RaboResearch noted that “disease, geopolitics and economic conditions have created major disruptions,” contributing to what the report calls “persistent volatility.”

Economic uncertainty and geopolitical tension—especially tariffs, sanctions and shifting alliances—have further amplified market swings. Record-high cattle prices in both Australia and the U.S., combined with fluctuating consumer demand, have produced what RaboResearch calls “prices regularly reaching record highs and dropping to historic lows.”

The RaboResearch report identifies Asia as the engine of future trade expansion. “Highly populated regions with low per capita beef consumption and increasing wealth will drive the next wave of growth,” Gidley-Baird explained. Countries such as Vietnam, China, Malaysia and the Philippines are expected to continue increasing beef consumption through the decade.

Lacking sufficient domestic production, these nations will rely heavily on imports. South American exporters—particularly Brazil—are well-positioned to meet this demand through enhanced genetics, improved management practices and greater adoption of grain-feeding systems. Mean-

while, established exporters such as the U.S., Australia and New Zealand will focus on “value-driven growth,” leveraging premium product quality and established supply chains.

Beef production

While demand is set to rise, the report predicts a temporary decline in global beef production during the early 2030s, primarily driven by reductions in the U.S., Brazil and Europe.

“This lower volume of cattle and beef will support prices, shifting margins to the production end of the supply chain,” said Gidley-Baird.

However, RaboResearch noted the downturn is expected to be short-lived. Improved genetics, heavier carcass weights and expanded dairy-beef operations will bolster recovery.

“Even if livestock numbers do not return to previous levels, productivity gains will sustain higher output,” the report noted.

As production recovers, margins will likely shift again—this time toward buyers—reflecting the cyclical nature of the beef industry. Companies that build resilience through diversification and cross-protein strategies will be best equipped to weather these transitions.

A notable outcome of tightening supplies and robust export demand is the growing strain between domestic and international markets. RaboResearch highlighted how countries like Brazil have seen domestic consumption decline as high export prices redirect supply abroad. “Very strong demand from U.S. consumers has led to increased export volumes and higher prices in Australia, New Zealand, and Brazil,” the report noted.

This growing imbalance highlights a central theme of the RaboResearch report. While rising exports benefit producers and sustain the global supply chain, they can also strain local markets and consumers. The challenge ahead, the report noted, lies in balancing profitability with accessibility—ensuring that the gains of an expanding global beef trade do not come at the expense of domestic food security. — **Charles Wallace, WLJ contributing editor**

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LOT 11: Vermilion Riverside M798



AAA 21123499

Sire: Riverside Birth Date: 8/10/24
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LOT 501: Vermilion Blackcap 4174



AAA 20992066

Sire: Basin Jameson Bred to Vermilion Rise Above M459.
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Southern California a focus in screwworm preparedness

With detection of New World screwworm less than 70 miles from the U.S.-Mexico border, California animal health officials are urging ranchers, dairy farmers, feedlot operators and other livestock handlers to stay vigilant for signs of the parasitic fly, which can inflict great harm to animals—and economic damage to the livestock sector.

The fly larvae, or maggots, feed on living flesh. That means all warm-blooded animals, including humans, are susceptible, said Matthew Vahabi, California Depart-

ment of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) veterinarian at the Animal Health Branch. Left untreated, screwworm infestations can be fatal within seven to 10 days, he added.

Of “utmost importance” is for producers to regularly and thoroughly inspect all animals they receive, Vahabi said, whether it’s cattle or other livestock, to ensure they don’t have any visible wounds infested with maggots. Producers should try to look as deep into the wound as possible to see if larvae and eggs are present. If maggots are found, they should con-

tact CDFA for instructions on collecting and submitting a sample.

Because the maggots are small, Vahabi said it would be difficult to see the distinct features that differentiate New World screwworm larvae from other fly larvae, which is why samples are sent to the USDA National Veterinary Services Laboratories for confirmation.

CDFA has been doing screwworm outreach to inform producers and veterinarians in Southern California, with emphasis on San Diego and Imperial counties

because they both touch the U.S.-Mexico border. Vahabi said the department has also been working with producers and landowners adjacent to the border in both counties to set traps for the flies. The traps contain a synthetic bait that mimics a scent the flies are attracted to, he added, and CDFA has so far received approval to place traps on several properties.

In addition, CDFA is trying to hire more agricultural technicians in Southern California to work and manage the traps.

Since July, USDA has been

monitoring thousands of fly traps along the U.S.-Mexico border across Texas, Arizona and New Mexico.

Though the pest is found in many areas of South America and some Caribbean islands, it has been slowly spreading northward. In September, it was discovered in Sabinas Hidalgo in the Mexican state of Nuevo Leon, less than 70 miles from the U.S. border—the northernmost detection of the fly. Before that, the northernmost detection was reported in July, in Veracruz, about 370 miles farther south.

Because an adult screwworm fly can fly only up to 10 miles, Vahabi said spread of screwworm to a new area “is most likely going to be related to movement” of infested animals.

“Then you have introduction of the maggots, and the maggots eventually become flies,” he said, “so now you have all of that in a new area where it can further spread.”

He said CDFA is trying to increase awareness so that producers know what to look for, what to do should they find suspicious infestations and how to report potential cases. He stressed that producers should be on the lookout for infestations not just on their livestock but any animal around their property.

“If New World screwworm enters the U.S. sometime soon, it’s not guaranteed that it’s going to enter on a cow,” he said. “It might be on a wild bird, or it might be on some type of cat or a dog. It could be anything, really.”

Vahabi said that’s why CDFA has also been conducting outreach with small animal veterinarians and animal shelters.

“We want to make sure that we’re focusing on every potential source of introduction to the United States,” he said. He noted the San Diego Humane Society, for example, has so far submitted about 10 samples, all of which were negative for screwworm.

In cattle, wounds that might become infested include those caused by dehorning, castration, branding and injuries from their environment. A newborn’s umbilical area could potentially become infested until the navel closes. Screwworms could also infest body openings such as nose, eyes, mouth, ears and genitalia.

To reduce risk of infestation, Vahabi said management options include covering the wounds or keeping animals with fresh wounds indoors.

Screwworms infest only live animals. Therefore, maggots found on dead animals will not be screwworm, Vahabi said, because as soon as the host dies, the parasite

leaves.

If screwworm is detected in the U.S., Vahabi said USDA will implement control measures, including the use of sterile flies, which has proved effective in ending the screwworm’s life cycle in areas where sterile flies are released. USDA has already dispersed hundreds of millions of sterile flies per week in Mexico and is helping the southern neighbor produce more sterile flies.

An incursion of screwworm into the U.S. would have immediate and severe trade impacts. Due to detections in Mexico, U.S. ports remain closed to livestock imports from the North American trading partner. Similar disruptions are expected if the screwworm is found in the U.S.

In an economic impact analysis using a 1976 screwworm outbreak in Texas as a case study, USDA estimated the pest could cost Texas producers \$732 million a year and the Texas economy a loss of \$1.8 billion in 2024 after adjusting for inflation.

Bill Brandenburg, an Imperial County rancher who runs feeder cattle, said while he understands why CDFA has focused on his region for outreach, as it borders Mexico and is home to numerous feedlots, “I don’t think anybody is too super concerned” about the screwworm.

He said feedlots have “too many other problems on their plate,” including “the super-high price of feeder cattle” and California’s “ridiculous regulations.” Therefore, they view the screwworm as “a back-burner issue.”

“We’ve got too many other issues to deal with to worry about something that’s a fairly minor concern at this time,” Brandenburg added.

Rachel Magos, executive director of Imperial County Farm Bureau, said she has sent her members information she received from CDFA on the screwworm, but she has yet to receive any calls or feedback about it. She said she reached out to a local feedlot operator, who acknowledged that while the Mexican border remains closed to cattle, “risk from wildlife still exists.”

But with no detections of screwworm in the U.S., “it is a bit down the list of current issues,” her contact said in an email. “At this point it is thought that it can be reasonably treated/contained in a feedyard setting,” the operator wrote.

To report suspected cases of New World screwworm or concerns about sick animals, contact the CDFA hotline: 866-922-2473. — **Ching Lee, Ag Alert senior editor, California Farm Bureau**

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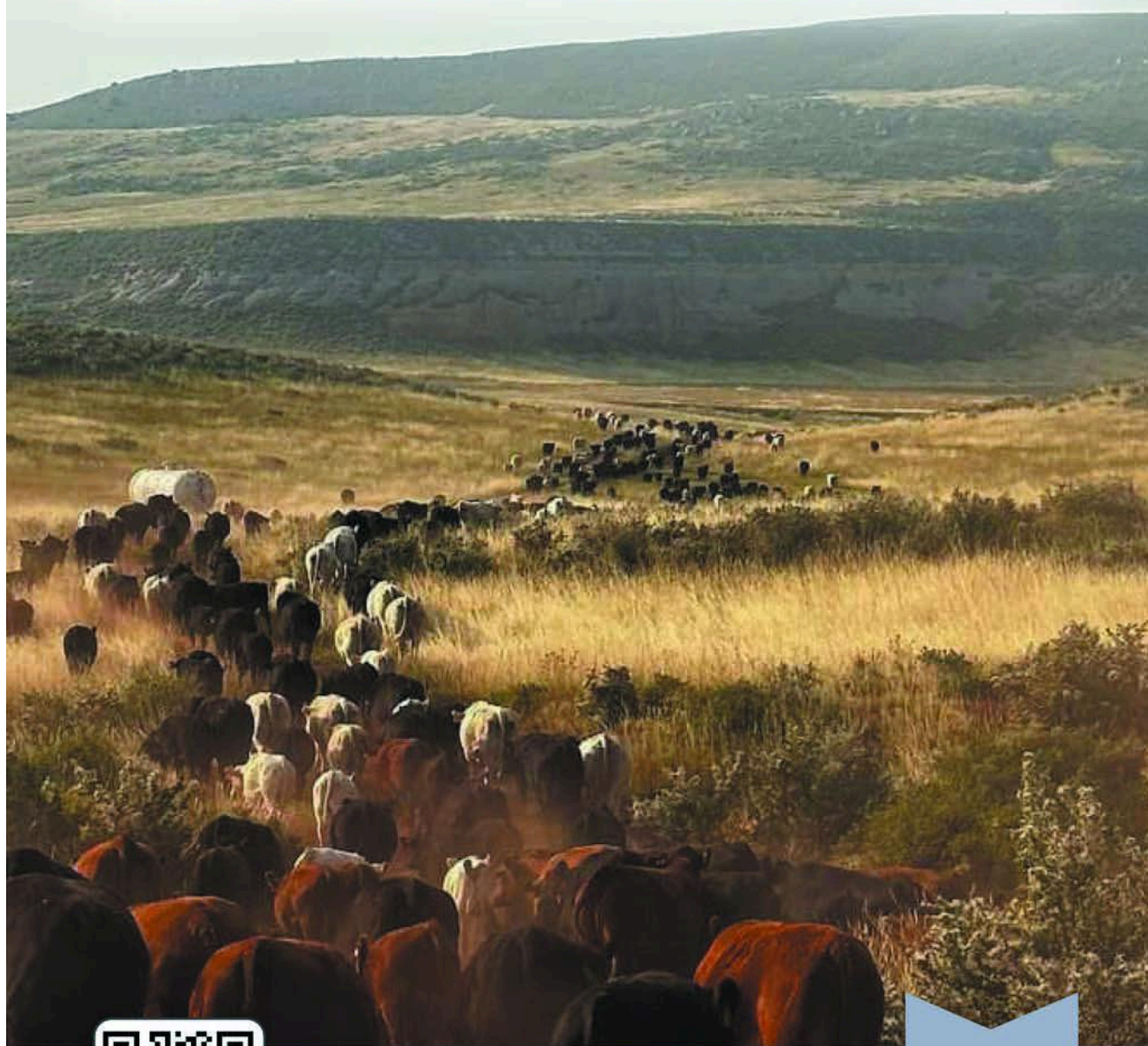
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COMING EVENTS

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

Nov. 12-14 – The Washington Cattlemen’s and Cattlewomen’s associations’ 100th Annual Convention and Tradeshow will be held at the Wenatchee Convention Center in Wenatchee, WA. Details: washingtoncattlemen.org/

convention.

Jan. 21-22 – The Montana Stockgrowers Association is proud to announce the Agriculture Labor Summit at the Northern Hotel in Billings. This event was created to address the ongoing labor shortage. Details: mtbeef.org/event/laborsummit.

LEGAL LEDGER

Voluntary grazing retirement bill reintroduced

In mid-October, Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA-09) reintroduced the Voluntary Grazing Permit Retirement Act to expand voluntary federal grazing permit retirement across the West. "This bill gives ranchers and conservation partners a fair, voluntary path to resolve long-standing conflicts and restore fragile ecosystems," Smith said. The legislation would authorize ranchers in 16 western states to voluntarily waive their permits or leases with the intent to permanently end grazing on an allotment. In return, ranchers would receive "equitable compensation from private parties." The bill would cap the number of retirements at 100 per year, or 25 per state. The bill is endorsed by a wide array of environmental groups. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association and Public Lands Council have previously shared their opposition to the legislation.

Sonoma County jury finds activist guilty

A Berkeley, CA, woman was convicted by a Sonoma County jury on Oct. 29 following a trial for unlawfully entering a Petaluma Poultry facility in 2023 and taking four chickens. Zoe Rosenberg, a 23-year-old member of the animal activist group Direct Action Everywhere, was found guilty on one felony count of conspiracy, two misdemeanor counts of trespass and one count of tampering with a vehicle for her actions. "While we respect everyone's right to free expression, it is unlawful to trespass, disrupt legitimate businesses, and endanger workers and animals in pursuit of a political or social agenda," said District Attorney Carla Rodriguez. "Unfortunately, some activist groups continue to show a deliberate disregard for the law, believing that their personal cause justifies criminal conduct." Rosenberg faces up to five years in jail and is set to be sentenced on Dec. 3.

Progress made on ag trade measures with China

Following a meeting between President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping, the White House announced China plans to suspend or remove all of the retaliatory non-tariff barriers imposed against the U.S. since March 4. China will also suspend retaliatory tariffs on a wide array of U.S. ag products, including beef. In addition, the country pledged to purchase at least 12 million metric tons (mmt) of U.S. soybeans during the last two months of 2025, and at least 25 mmt of U.S. soybeans in each of 2026, 2027 and 2028. In return, the U.S. will lower its tariff rate on Chinese imports and extend the expiration of certain Section 301 tariff exclusions. The U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) said it was pleased with the progress being made with China. "If the removal of non-tariff barriers means that China will promptly renew the U.S. beef plant and cold storage registrations it has allowed to expire over the past nine months, this will restore access to a critical beef export market," said USMEF President and CEO Dan Halstrom.

US not lifting southern border closure yet

Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins has indicated the USDA does not plan to re-open the Mexican border to cattle imports yet. Rollins met with Mexico President Claudia Sheinbaum in Mexico City recently, according to a Reuters report, and said she was impressed by Mexico's commitment to taking the New World screwworm threat seriously. However, "We're still not at the point where I am comfortable opening the ports, but I think every day that goes by we get a little bit closer," Rollins said.

Court rules CA can enforce SGMA

On Oct. 29, the 5th Appellate District Court of Appeal affirmed the state of California's authority under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The appellate court reversed a preliminary injunction that had halted the State Water Resources Control Board from imposing fees and monitoring and reporting in the Tulare Lake Subbasin. The Kings County Farm Bureau challenged the state board's plan to put the entire subbasin on "probation," arguing the subbasin's groundwater sustainability plan failed to show that it would achieve sustainability as required by the SGMA. However, the court found "the State Board shall exclude portions of a basin from its probationary designation when a groundwater agency requests exclusion and demonstrates compliance with the sustainability goal." Groundwater sustainability agencies were required to complete periodic evaluations of groundwater sustainability plans by 2025 for critically overdrafted subbasins. Evaluations for high- and medium-priority subbasins are due in 2017.

Greens sue USFWS over butterfly

A coalition of environmental groups sued the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) over the silverspot butterfly, claiming the species should be listed as threatened rather than endangered. "While we're glad that FWS listed silverspot butterflies under the Endangered Species Act, silverspots need the full protections afforded to endangered species," said Jennifer Best of Friends of Animals, a plaintiff in the suit. The butterfly is found in southwestern Colorado, eastern Utah and northern New Mexico. The suit plaintiffs argue that the species' threatened listing allows for "destructive activities" such as cattle and sheep grazing. "Without designated critical habitat and meaningful protection from the impacts of grazing, mowing, and groundwater alteration from the livestock industry, silverspots will continue to disappear across their range," said Delaney Rudy of the Western Watersheds Project, another suit plaintiff. WildEarth Guardians is also involved in the lawsuit.

UW researchers find wild horse diets are adaptable

A sweeping University of Wyoming (UW) study of wild horses on federal lands across seven western states has found that the animals have a high ability to gain nutrition from a variety of plants and, by so doing, maintain good body condition, even in winter.

The findings could have implications for federal management of those free-roaming horses in connection with both livestock grazing and wildlife, according to the study published in the journal *Rangeland Ecology & Management*.

"Although horses are considered grazers, our study provides evidence that they can maintain healthy body condition and potentially achieve higher condition while consuming a variety of plants," wrote the researchers, including Professor Jeff Beck, of UW's Department of Ecosystem Science and Management, and recent Ph.D. graduate Courtney Buchanan.

"This adaptability of horses to use different forage plants populations of free-roaming

horses are increasing across federal lands in the western United States."

Free-roaming horses on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service lands in the West are protected under the Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971. Local management occurs within 177 BLM herd management areas, each of which has an established maximum appropriate management level. Over 80% of the BLM's herd management areas had populations exceeding their appropriate management levels in 2023, and annual growth rates can reach 20% per year.

To get a broad look at the diet and body condition of free-roaming horses across the West, the scientists analyzed horse fecal samples and observed the animals in both summer and winter on 16 BLM herd management areas in Wyoming, California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon and Utah. The Wyoming sites were Adobe Town in southern Wyoming, Green Mountain in cen-

tral Wyoming and McCullough Peaks in northern Wyoming.

While grasses or grass-like plants were found to be the largest component of horse diets in most of the study areas, the scientists learned that other plants—including forbs and shrubs—also are consumed by the animals, at higher levels than previously understood. The researchers also found that free-roaming horses maintained good body condition across a variety of landscapes and different seasons.

"These animals appear highly adaptable and have demonstrated remarkable ability to maintain body condition throughout different ecoregions, seasons, herbaceous availability, and while consuming varied diets," the scientists wrote.

For cattle grazing, in particular, the new findings confirm previous research showing a high overlap in grass consumption by free-roaming horses and cattle on federal lands where grazing permits are granted.

"In herd management areas

where these herbivores overlap, more rangeland planning may be needed to account for increased demand and potential conflict in (grass or grass-like) forage use," the researchers wrote.

Likewise, the new study shows that free-roaming horses consume some shrubs from some of the same plant families that provide winter forage for wildlife, including sage grouse, mule deer, pronghorn, and elk.

"Additional reliance on these plants by free-roaming horses in the winter may create competition with wildlife species," the scientists concluded. "Understanding what free-roaming horses are eating and at what time of the year in specific herd management areas can help with locally specific rangeland management planning to help mitigate free-roaming horse conflict and balance multiple uses."

Other UW researchers who participated in the study were Jared Studyvin, Jonathan Lautenbach, Derek Scasta, and Greg Randolph. — **UW Extension**

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Building a productive cow herd for the future

As we all consider current cow herd dynamics and market trends, producers are evaluating options to rebuild or expand, making this a timely moment to revisit selection priorities. Thoughtful replacement heifer selection is essential to shaping the future of a cow herd. Heifers that fit the production environment, breed early, calve unassisted and remain productive for years contribute significantly to long-term profitability. This article outlines key traits and tools to consider when making those selections.

Growth rate

Heifers that reach puberty early are more likely to conceive during their first breeding season and calve by 24 months of age. Early puberty is moderately-to-highly heritable and positively correlated with lifetime reproductive success. To support this, heifers should demonstrate consistent growth and reach target weights that promote reproductive readiness. Ideally, they should weigh approximately 65% of

their projected mature weight at the start of the breeding season (typically between 13 and 15 months of age).

For example, a heifer expected to mature at 1,400 pounds should weigh around 910 lbs. at breeding. Reproductive tract scoring, conducted 4 to 6 weeks prior to the breeding season, is a valuable tool for assessing reproductive maturity. Selecting heifers that exhibit early reproductive development lays the foundation for a more fertile, efficient, and productive cow herd.

Fertility and longevity

Although fertility has low heritability, it is one of the most economically important traits in beef production. Aim for a 60% first-service pregnancy rate and 90% pregnancy rate within a 60-day breeding season. Early pregnancy diagnosis allows for timely culling of open heifers, which can be marketed as yearlings.

Over time, this strategy enhances herd fertility and longevity, as early-calving heifers tend to remain in the herd lon-

ger and wean more pounds of calf over their lifetime. Maintaining a buffer of 5-10% more heifers than needed allows producers to cull sub-fertile individuals without compromising replacement numbers.

Milking ability

Optimal milk production is closely tied to forage availability and overall nutritional management. While milking ability is low in heritability, selecting sires with appropriate Milk EPDs can help target the right level of production. Avoid selecting heifers that were overly fat at weaning, as excessive fat can impair mammary development and future milk yield. When possible, evaluate the udder and teat structure of the dam to anticipate future performance.

Body type

Phenotypic evaluation remains a cornerstone of replacement heifer selection. Avoid extremes in size, as both overly large and small heifers may present challenges in feed efficiency, calving ease and longevity. Body type and flesh-

ing ability are also important indicators of future productivity. Heifers with adequate rib shape, depth of body and muscling tend to maintain body condition more effectively, especially under variable nutritional conditions.

Disposition is moderately-to-highly heritable and plays a significant role in herd management. Calm, manageable heifers improve safety, reduce stress during handling and often show improved reproductive performance. Culling heifers with poor temperament enhances the working environment and herd efficiency.

Structural soundness, particularly in feet, legs and eyes, is vital for long-term productivity. Heifers should be evaluated for mobility, hoof integrity and leg structure to ensure they can thrive in various terrain and withstand the physical demands of breeding, calving and raising a calf.

Calving ease

Pelvic area (PA) measurements can help predict calving ease. A general rule of thumb

is dividing PA by 2.1 to estimate the maximum calf weight a heifer can deliver unassisted. For example, a PA of 175 cm² suggests a heifer can calve an 83-lb. calf. Additionally, consider Calving Ease Maternal (CEM) EPDs when selecting sires for virgin heifers. Bulls with higher CEM values produce daughters more likely to calve unassisted. Selecting bulls with low Birth Weight and high Calving Ease Direct EPDs is also critical.

Genomics in heifer selection

Advancements in DNA testing have added a powerful layer to heifer selection. Genomic-enhanced EPDs combine pedigree, performance and DNA data to improve prediction accuracy, especially for traits like fertility, longevity and maternal ability. Genomic tools are especially useful in commercial herds where data may be limited.

Several companies offer affordable DNA testing services

that help rank heifers based on genetic potential. These tests provide deep insight at a relatively low cost, helping producers increase confidence in selection decisions, identify heifers with superior genetics and avoid investing in underperforming animals. Incorporating genomics into your selection strategy supports long-term herd productivity and profitability.

Selecting the oldest heifers, those born early in the calving season, remains a reliable strategy for identifying replacements with strong maternal backgrounds. Heifers should reach 65% of their mature weight by breeding and be culled if open after the first season. Investing in sound selection practices, including genomic tools, sets the stage for a more productive and profitable cow herd. — **Parker A. Henley and Mark Z. Johnson, Oklahoma State University Extension beef cattle specialists**

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USDA must rewrite GE labeling rule

GE LABEL (from page 1)

has struck down USDA's loophole for ultra-processed GMO foods, the vast majority of which have been genetically engineered for increased pesticide tolerance," Kimbrell said.

In a 52-page opinion, the court ruled that the district court erred in rejecting the plaintiffs' claim that USDA unlawfully excluded highly refined foods from the definition of the phrase "bioengineered foods." The court also determined the regulations were arbitrary and capricious. However, the panel held that USDA's decision to use "bioengineered" as opposed to "genetically engineered" or "genetically modified" was reasonable.

The appeals court also found that the district court should have vacated USDA's usage of QR codes or text messaging to share disclosures rather than conventional on-package statements or symbols. As such, the panel determined that the QR code disclosure labeling should be made null and void.

"The district court squarely held that (1) the Act does not allow the (Agricultural Marketing Service) to add a fourth option (text messaging) to the three statutory options (text, symbol, or electronic or digital link); and (2) the Act requires the agency to 'fix the problem of inaccessible electronic disclosures' by adding 'additional and comparable options,' like the alternative text message instructions, to the electronic disclosure," Judge Daniel Collins wrote for the court panel.

The case was brought by Natural Grocers, Citizens for GMO Labeling, Label GMOs, Rural Vermont, Good Earth Natural Foods, Puget Consumers Co-op, Center for Food Safety and the National Organic Coalition.

While the suit was filed against USDA, several ag groups intervened, including

the American Farm Bureau Federation, United States Beet Sugar Association and American Sugarbeet Growers Association.

Background

The National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard was finalized on Dec. 20, 2018, after Congress passed the National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Law in 2016. The law directed USDA to establish a national mandatory standard for disclosing foods that are or may be bioengineered. The rule became effective Dec. 29, 2023, and mandatory compliance began June 23, 2025.

The law defined bioengineered foods as those that contain detectable genetic material that has been modified through certain lab techniques and cannot be created through conventional breeding or found in nature.

Food manufacturers, importers and certain retailers are required to disclose bioengineered foods through text, symbol, electronic or digital link, and/or text message. Small food manufacturers or manufacturers of small packages were also authorized to use a phone number or web address.

Lawsuit plaintiffs argued the law contained a "loophole" by exempting "highly refined" or ultra-processed GMO foods—such as corn and soy oils—from disclosure. If modified material was not "detectable," it was not "contained," and therefore did not to be disclosed.

The court found that "there is an obvious and important difference between whether a substance is actually present and whether, using a particular method, one is able to detect that the substance is present."

USDA was ordered to issue new rules, which may require more food products to include GE labels. — **Anna Miller Fortozo, WLJ managing editor**

UW's meat processing class promotes hands-on education

Have you ever wondered how a package of deli meat was made? In McKensie Phillips's meat processing class, students learn what ingredients make up your favorite processed meats and how they're cooked. Students even have the opportunity to make their own meat products.

"The meat processing class is one that gets students out of the traditional lecture classroom, allowing them to explore, create, and refine their skills as they attempt to make an outstanding meat product," said Phillips, associate lecturer in the University of Wyoming (UW) Department of Animal Science. "It asks students to blend science, creativity and critical thinking together."

Undergraduates Haley Rutsch, Sophie Fuhrmann and Cheyenne Schisler were students in the most recent session of the meat processing class.

During the class, students learn about the foundations of meat processing, including food safety, meat curing and

thermal processing.

The meat processing class gives students tools to make informed choices about what they are eating. Phillips teaches students about specific ingredients and how each ingredient impacts the final product. Beyond meat, many other food items use similar ingredients, making this information broadly useful.

Rutsch comments, "McKensie's just really good at getting you to use your own brain. It really makes you think about everything. I think it's a great class to teach you about not just processing meats, but the meat industry in general."

Phillips also examines common misconceptions and dives into the science behind popular beliefs about processed foods. For example, many people think that hot dogs are made of low-quality meat, but this isn't true. Hot dogs use small trimmings from the same cuts you might use for a roast or a pork chop.

"I think if the general public was a lot more informed as to

how food science works, the world would be a better place," said Fuhrmann. "I really love being able to help with that and just making people realize, 'Hey, this isn't nearly as bad as you think it is.'"

Trust the process(ing)

The UW Meat Lab is a teaching, research and Extension facility designed to enable students, instructors, and researchers to practice meat sciences, from harvesting an animal to making a slice of bacon. Several classes on campus use the meat lab for hands-on animal science education.

Schisler currently works as the meat lab manager at UW. Rutsch and Fuhrmann also worked in the meat lab as student employees before their graduation from UW.

Throughout the class, students developed new processed meat products in the lab. They also taste-tested the recipes created by their fellow

students.

Fuhrmann and Rutsch worked together for this capstone project. Initially, they wanted to make a maple blueberry lamb bratwurst. For their first attempt, they mixed whole blueberries, maple extract, spices and lamb meat into the grinder—creating an over-seasoned, bright-blue sausage that Schisler described as "appalling."

After two more iterations, though, Fuhrmann and Rutsch's product became Schisler's favorite. They added real maple syrup and used a blueberry compote rather than fresh blueberries, creating a tasty breakfast sausage.

"I think that's one of the glories of the class. You get a perspective that you really couldn't get without actually eating [these products]," reflects Fuhrmann. "I think for me, the biggest thing I learned was the process and the work that goes into developing a recipe and the amount of science behind it. It's got to be down to the most miniscule

thing to get everything to taste right. And if you're off by even a gram, then the whole thing can be completely off."

Another group of students worked on a rosemary bacon product. Schisler challenged herself with a salami. Each of the projects required more than one try, but at the end of the day, all the students found a way to get the balance right. They ended up creating unique new products that tasted as good as—or better than—processed meat for sale at the grocery store.

Rutsch didn't intend to earn a meat science degree when she entered UW. Another class taught by Phillips inspired her to add a second concentration within her animal science major. "It's definitely going to be a big part of my future plans," she said. "I still want to run a ranch, but I also want to do stuff with meat."

As an incoming UW student, Schisler already knew she wanted to open multiple butcher shops across Wyo-

ming, but the meat processing class impacted how she plans to run her future businesses. She explains that processing meat can add value to small cuts of meat that you might not otherwise be able to use. "I wouldn't say [the class] changed my trajectory, but it definitely gave me a higher respect for value-added products in general," she said.

Fuhrmann entered the class with experience in the raw side of meat processing—harvesting animals and creating different cuts of meat, rather than transforming that meat into processed products. "I think if I ever get to that point in my life where I decide to open my own shop, this class will play a huge role in what I know and being able to take that into my own business and being able to grow from there."

Meanwhile, Phillips will keep inspiring new animal science students—and keep working on her quest to make the perfect hot dog. — **UW Extension**

The value of hay as fertilizer

Have you ever stopped to think about what the dollar value of the nutrients in hay is worth as fertilizer once they have been processed by the cow?

Mature cows at maintenance should excrete 100% of the nutrients they consume in terms of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium.

For example, 100 cows are being fed 30 pounds per head per day on a dry matter basis of 17% protein alfalfa hay that is 0.3% phosphorus and 2.4% potassium. What is the value of the nutrients available to the pasture or field where the manure is being deposited?

- 3,000 lbs. of dry matter alfalfa hay X 0.17 crude protein = 510 lbs. of protein.

- Nitrogen X 6.25 = crude protein.

- By taking 510 lbs. of crude protein and dividing by 6.25 = 81.6 lbs. of nitrogen in the fed hay.

Only about 25-35% of the nitrogen in manure and urine is typically available to be used by the soil for plant growth on perennial pasture or hay land the first year. The balance is lost to volatilization as ammonia or is tied up with organic matter. If planning to apply additional fertilizer, soil test prior to doing so.

Using 81.6 lbs. of nitrogen X 0.25 = 24.48 lbs. of nitrogen into the ground from the fed alfalfa hay.

The availability of phosphorus and potassium in manure and urine from feed consumed is 100%. To find the value of phosphorus and potassium in the fed alfalfa take 3,000 lbs. X 0.003 = 9 lbs. of phosphorus and 3,000 lbs. X 0.024 = 72 lbs. of potassium.

There is approximately \$60 worth of nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and sulfur in the hay that is being fed to and excreted by those 100 cows

every day!

Here is the math that calculates the value per ton of these nutrients:

In one ton of alfalfa hay, there are approximately 16 lbs. of nitrogen (N), 6 lbs. of phosphorus (P), 48 lbs. of potassium (K) and 6 lbs. of sulfur (S) that are available to and absorbed by the soil in excreted manure and urine where the hay is fed.

The fertilizer nutrient value of these minerals at current market prices is \$0.70/lb of N (\$11.20), \$1.00/lb of P (\$6.00), \$0.40/lb of K (\$19.20) and \$0.75/lb of S (\$3.75), which would in total equal \$40.15 per ton!

This value doesn't include other micronutrients as well as the benefit of organic matter in manure and hay that isn't consumed and remains on the ground that benefits the soil.

It is common to see weed problems develop on rangeland where cattle are fed during the winter months. The nutrients from the hay are often concentrated in feed areas and the availability of nitrogen in rangeland situations often encourages weed growth. When hay is being fed, is there an opportunity to feed cattle on ground where the nutrients can be directly absorbed into the soil and utilized for growing planted perennials or annual forages that would respond to the fertilizer?

Fertilizer prices are up, and hay and other commodity feed prices are lower than they have been in recent years. Plan now to capture and effectively utilize the nutrients in feed that is fed this fall and winter by delivering it to livestock in places where it can benefit the soil and enhance future forage production. — **Aaron Berger, Nebraska Extension educator**

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Senators acknowledge trade challenges

LAMB IMPORTS (from page 1)

By 2024, imports captured roughly 70% of the domestic market, with imported square-cut lamb shoulders averaging 10.8% lower in price than U.S. product—and in some cases, nearly 20% lower.

Callahan pledges support

During her Oct. 29 Senate Finance Committee confirmation hearing, USTR Chief Agricultural Negotiator nominee Julie Callahan directly addressed concerns about rising imports of both lamb and beef, echoing ASI's warnings about the pressures facing U.S. ranchers. In testimony prompted by Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY), she acknowledged that "we have farmers—second- and third-generation farmers—that are at risk of losing their ranches," emphasizing that "they're being outcompeted by imports."

"The challenges faced by

U.S. sheep producers are top of mind," Callahan said. "If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that American lamb producers have a fair shake and can compete for the domestic market. They're being outcompeted by imports—we want to see that reversed."

The hearing also focused heavily on beef imports and trade barriers affecting U.S. cattle producers. Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) criticized the administration's recent negotiations with Argentina, saying expanded Argentine beef imports were "undermining confidence" among U.S. ranchers without meaningfully reducing consumer prices.

"The administration says this will lower beef prices for consumers, but Argentina accounts for just about 2% of our imported beef," Bennet said. "Even if that amount were quadrupled, it would be nowhere near enough to change grocery store prices—it did change confidence."

Callahan responded that the

ongoing negotiations with Argentina were designed to be reciprocal, not one-sided. "My intention is to signal to U.S. farmers and ranchers that my single-minded effort across our negotiations is to open market access to benefit U.S. producers," she said. "This will not be a one-way conversation about beef—we would like to see beef access into Argentina as well."

Barrasso pressed Callahan for assurances that imports would not undercut U.S. ranchers, noting that "in my home state of Wyoming, cattle outnumber people by more than two to one" and that ranchers are "the lifeblood of so many communities." Callahan affirmed that her mandate was to reverse the U.S. agricultural trade deficit—now a \$34 billion deficit, compared to a \$6 billion surplus four years earlier—and to "ensure that U.S. cattlemen have access to markets around the world."

Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT) underscored that U.S. beef ex-

ports to China, once buoyed by the 2017 market reopening, have fallen sharply since March due to "serious trade barriers." Callahan agreed, describing China's behavior as "retaliation" and pledging to "reverse that trend and rebuild access to the Chinese market." She added, "We don't want to over-rely on China as an export market, but we also don't want that market to be zero."

Sen. James Lankford (R-OK) echoed those concerns, warning that "American beef is the best in the world—by far—and more and more countries want access to that. They're blocking us out because they know we have better beef than theirs." He pressed Callahan to pursue new trade deals aggressively, saying producers are eager for expanded market access "for beef and everything else."

The testimony reinforced ASI's case for immediate federal relief as lamb and beef producers face mounting pressure from imports. Lehfeldt praised the senators' attention

stating, "We greatly appreciate Senator Barrasso for raising the issue of lamb imports during the hearing, and Dr. Callahan for her knowledge of the issue and her interest in supporting

U.S. sheep producers. This attention underscores the importance of fair trade and the need for federal action." — **Charles Wallace, WLJ contributing editor**

Successfully weaned calves are a hot commodity

Whether calves are being retained after weaning, or they are arriving by the truckloads, the weaned calf is at a critical juncture in development and currently is an expensive commodity whose health and growth should not be taken lightly.

Although there is much to focus on during weaning, a successful weaning is impacted by the nursing phase. In an ideal situation, the calf was born to a healthy cow on a good nutrition and vaccination program who provided high-quality colostrum to the calf at birth. In addition to receiving good nutrition as a nursing calf, the calf also received two rounds of vaccinations in a protocol developed by a local veterinarian.

Much like in humans, a series of vaccinations while the calf is young can prevent viral outbreaks throughout its life. Viral diseases are hard to treat and if a calf survives them, that calf is seldom a thrifty calf with a great rate of gain. Antibiotics are effective on bacterial infections, not viruses. Therefore, the idea of a vaccination program is to minimize the impact of viruses in the herd so that when an illness does occur, the likelihood it is a treatable bacterial infection is high.

Establishing a working relationship with a local veterinarian before weaning helps determine any booster vaccines that need to be given after weaning as well as developing an antibiotic use protocol before signs of an illness occur.

days old, the rumen is fully developed but is small compared to a yearling calf or a cow. Therefore, the diet must be highly palatable and highly digestible. A diet of poor-quality roughage will not have a high passage rate out of the rumen, making it unlikely the calf can eat enough to meet its nutrient requirements.

In addition to energy, the weaned calf needs metabolizable protein to meet both the needs of the microbes in the rumen and the needs for tissue growth such as muscle and skeleton. Feeds such as distiller's grains will contribute more to skeletal and muscle growth than feeds like alfalfa hay or soybean meal due to the type of protein they supply.

The importance of a good vitamin and mineral package should not be overlooked as several vitamins and trace minerals such as Vitamin A, copper and zinc play a crucial role in the functioning of the immune system.

Water is the most critical nutrient for life but is often overlooked for its importance in the weaning calf. Not only is water important in the prevention of dehydration and general metabolic function, but it is also important for digestion in the rumen. Therefore, a calf who cannot reach the water, cannot figure out the waterer, or will not drink the water due to contaminants, will also not eat.

Predator versus prey

One of the most frustrating things about caring for weaned calves is not realizing a calf has a need for medical attention. Because calves see humans as predators, they will often try to appear healthy when they sense they are being scrutinized. Sick calves will often hide in the middle of a group of calves to avoid drawing attention to themselves.

Moving the calves around to see who exhibits depressed posture or labored breathing, who moves back to the bunk and continues to eat, and observing a calf from a moderate distance when the calf is unaware of being watched, can help determine which calves need to be pulled in for treatment.

Managing weaned calves, especially at today's value, can be a little stressful. However, proper nutrition, vaccination schedules, treatment protocols and vigilance can increase the success rate tremendously.

Those wanting assistance with ration balancing for weaned calves can reach out to Extension educators and specialists. — **Karla Wilke, Nebraska Extension cow/calf systems and stocker management specialist**

Rumen development, nutrition and water

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STORY SHORTS

JBS settles for \$1.1M over greenwashing

New York Attorney General Letitia James announced a \$1.1 million settlement with JBS USA for misleading the public about its “net zero by 2040” claims. The 2024 lawsuit revealed JBS had no plan or data to achieve such reductions and was instead increasing production. Under the agreement, JBS will fund climate-smart agriculture programs that help New York farmers cut emissions and boost resilience. The company must also stop deceptive environmental marketing, reform its advertising practices, and submit annual compliance reports to the Attorney General’s Office for three years.

Meatpackers reach \$2.5M wage settlement

A federal judge in Colorado granted preliminary approval to class settlements with Agri Beef Co., Washington Beef LLC and Indiana Packers Corporation in a nationwide wage-suppression lawsuit, Meatingplace reported. Judge Philip A. Brimmer certified settlement classes for all beef and pork plant employees from Jan. 1, 2000, to Feb. 27, 2024. Agri Beef and Washington Beef will pay \$1.4 million, while Indiana Packers will contribute \$1.1 million. The agreements add to prior settlements with 12 other meat companies, including JBS, Tyson and Cargill, pushing total commitments above \$400 million. Proceedings are stayed pending a fairness hearing.

Farm Bureau expands rural mental health effort

The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) is expanding its Farm State of Mind initiative by partnering with the Farm Family Wellness Alliance to launch the Farm State of Mind Alliance. Managed by AFBF, the alliance will centralize resources and amplify messaging to strengthen mental health support across rural America. “This is a critical time for mental health in rural America,” said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. “Farmers and ranchers are facing economic uncertainty, the likes of which we haven’t seen in a generation.” Founding members include Farm Bureau, National Farmers Union, Farm Foundation and 4-H. Resources remain available at farmstateofmind.org, including the Togetherall peer-support program and a national directory for rural mental health services.

Judge denies injunction on wolf removal

A King County Superior Court judge denied on Oct. 31 a request to halt the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) from lethally removing one wolf from the Sherman Pack in Ferry County. Washington Wildlife First and other groups sought an injunction after WDFW approved the removal on Oct. 9. The authorization, however, expired on Oct. 15. Judge Suzanne Parisien ruled that the petitioners had not demonstrated a likelihood of prevailing on the merits, allowing WDFW’s decision to stand.

Groups announce Endless Prairie Buffalo Project

The Defenders of Wildlife announced a conservation program, the Endless Prairie Buffalo Project, that will enable industry leaders to help restore bison to Tribal lands and restore native grasslands. The first initiative of its kind in the U.S., it expands the Buffalo Program of the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of Fort Peck, MT. Managed by Defenders of Wildlife with guidance from the Environmental Policy Innovation Center and Kingfisher Parker, the project will issue biodiversity credits that fund grassland restoration and buffalo herd management. Each credit will represent measurable ecological gains on one acre of grassland, while strengthening Fort Peck’s cultural and spiritual ties to the buffalo. Over two years, partners will refine the crediting system and market it to conservation-minded supporters.

Newsom expands use of prescribed fire

California Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) signed an executive order on Oct. 29 to cut red tape and expand tools for safely deploying prescribed fire across the state. Building on his March emergency proclamation to fast-track forest management, the order accelerates funding, expands local participation and enhances Tribal collaboration. It directs state agencies to provide immediate support to local governments and fire practitioners, prioritizing cultural burning and engagement with resource conservation districts. The order also improves air quality coordination, data collection, and practitioner training through tools like the Prescribed Fire Information Reporting System. “I’m tasking state agencies to pull all the levers and gear up for using ‘good fire’ this year to help protect communities and restore healthy landscapes,” Newsom said.

Study reveals sheep dewormer ineffective

Eleanor L. Kharasch, a student research fellow at Tufts University’s Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, led a study revealing widespread parasite resistance to fenbendazole in sheep and goats across southern New England. Published in *Veterinary Parasitology: Regional Studies and Reports*, the research found that 12.7% of animals responded successfully to treatment, while 87% failed to meet efficacy standards and over one-third showed increased parasite counts after dosing. Conducted across 19 farms, the study also found that animal movement between farms had no effect on drug performance, and that early-summer fecal testing provides more accurate parasite detection than spring sampling. According to the Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research, the results can guide more effective parasite management, reduce unnecessary treatments and help farmers nationwide make better control decisions.

Judge halts MT forest logging project for grizzlies

A federal judge has halted a logging project in Montana’s Kootenai National Forest, saying the federal government failed to correctly analyze the impacts to grizzly bears.

The Knotty Pine Project, a 10-year project that would have authorized 7,465 acres of prescribed burning and 2,593 acres of commercial harvest in the Cabinet-Yaak Mountains, has been in litigation since 2022.

The Center for Biological Diversity led a coalition of environmental groups including WildEarth Guardians and the Yaak Valley Forest Council, in suing the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), saying it could devastate the small group of grizzly bears that lives in the region due to increased roadwork.

U.S. District Court Judge Dana Christensen granted a preliminary injunction the following year but recently issued his final ruling.

“The management of roads is one of the most powerful tools available to balance the needs of people with those of bears,” Christensen wrote. “High road densities in low elevation habitats may result in grizzly bear avoidance or displacement from important spring habitat and high mortality risks.”

Grizzly bears have a small presence in the Cabinet-Yaak

ecosystem, estimated between 45 and 50. The stated goal of the federal government’s recovery plan for grizzlies in the ecosystem is 100, according to court documents. The latest report of the Cabinet-Yaak grizzly population states a goal of “zero human caused mortality,” though acknowledges this might not be realized due to the likelihood of human-bear conflicts.

The Knotty Pine Project area consists of just more than 56,000 acres in Lincoln County, in the Three Rivers Ranger District. The industrial timber harvest and fuel treatments, which include “pre-commercial” thinning, would total just less than 10,000 acres, including authorization of prescribed burns totaling 7,465 acres.

The project would have also created 3.76 miles of “undetermined road,” 1.2 miles of temporary road construction, 4 miles of road storage and 35 miles of road maintenance.

The substantial amount of roadwork was at the heart of the environmental groups’ lawsuit, as studies show roads displace bears and can shrink what is considered viable habitat.

Christensen acknowledged the impact that roads have on grizzly bear habitat, citing documents from the USFWS.

“Such displacement can have multi-generational ef-

fects: “Females who have learned to avoid roads may also teach their cubs to avoid roads. In this way, learned avoidance behavior can persist for several generations of bears before they again utilize habitat associated with closed roads,” he wrote.

The plaintiffs had argued that the federal government did not adequately conduct its analysis, mandated by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and violated the Endangered Species Act when considering the impact of roads on grizzly habitat. They also argued that a number of roads that should be closed to the public are accessed anyways, and these illegal uses should be taken into consideration for the project area’s overall impact.

The Forest Service argued it had “noted that the use of closed roads is illegal,” was monitoring illegal use, and tracked when gates or barriers needed repairing, but Christensen said that such considerations didn’t go far enough.

“By excluding illegal roads, FWS makes an ‘unsupported assumption’ that illegal roads have no effect on grizzly bears. Such an assumption fails to ‘err on the side of the bear,’” Christensen said.

“For too long the Forest Service has ignored illegal off-road vehicle use, the presence of unauthorized roads and the harm they in-

flict on grizzly bears,” Adam Rissien, rewilding manager with WildEarth Guardians, said in a press release. “This ruling affirms that the Forest Service must account for illegal road use, including on ‘zombie roads,’ which the agency pretends don’t exist until they come back to life for logging projects.”

Christensen ruled in favor of the environmental groups in most of their claims that the federal government violated NEPA by not fully accounting for illegal road use and the effects on grizzly bears for the total scope of the project.

However, on a claim that the Forest Service did not analyze the impact of pre-commercial thinning activities on grizzlies, Christensen sided with the federal government, and said the impacts were “thoroughly considered.”

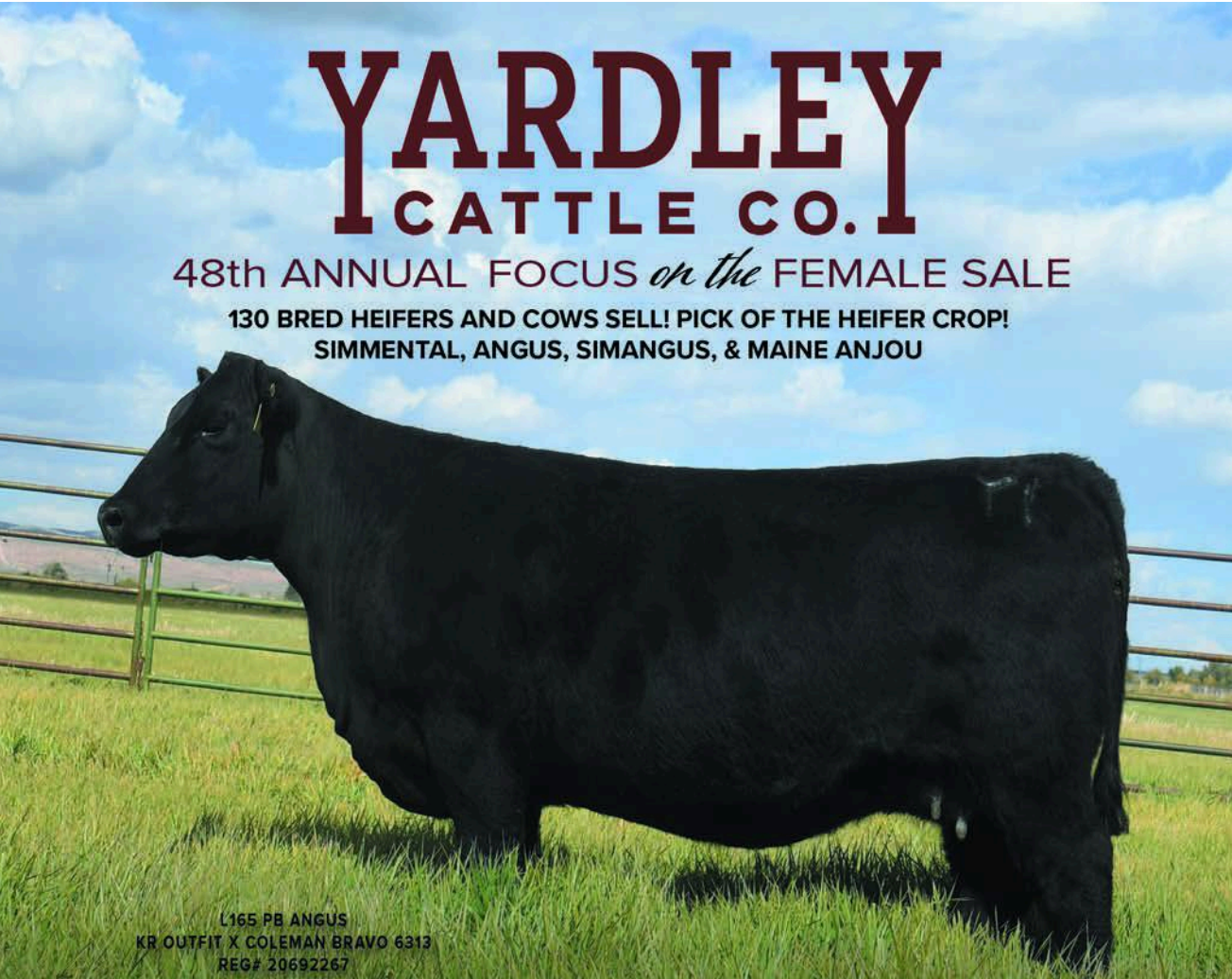
“This decision is a critical win for the Cabinet-Yaak’s struggling grizzly bears,” Kristine Akland, Northern Rockies director at the Center for Biological Diversity, said in a statement. “For decades federal agencies have turned a blind eye while roads carved up bear country, and grizzly bears have paid the price. The court’s ruling sends a clear message that the government can’t ignore facts or the law when it comes to protecting grizzlies.” — Micah Drew, Daily Montanan

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MARKET NEWS

MARKET SITUATION REPORT

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

MARKET AT A GLANCE	This Week: 11/6/2025	Week Ago	Year Ago
Choice Fed Steers	228.98 ▼	229.79	187.71
CME Feeder Index	349.42 ▼	356.62	249.92
Boxed Beef Average	377.97 ▼	378.27	309.46
Average Dressed Steers	358.36 ▼	358.48	N/A
Live Slaughter Weight*	N/A ▲	N/A	1,382
Weekly Slaughter**	N/A ▲	N/A	615,000
Weekly Beef Production***	N/A ▲	N/A	532.1
Hide/Offal Value	11.40 ▲	11.40	11.05
Corn Price	4.35 ▼	4.37	4.27

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

BEEF REPORT: Weekly Composite Boxed Beef												
WEEK ENDING	COMPREHENSIVE Loads/Price		PRIME Loads/Price		BRANDED Loads/Price		CHOICE Loads/Price		SELECT Loads/Price		UNGRADED Loads/Price	
October 31	6,327	376.26	258	421.13	1,156	380.64	1,939	371.89	639	356.08	2,334	336.55
October 24	6,783	370.86	244	420.67	1,279	374.50	1,937	368.11	695	351.45	2,628	329.63
October 17	6,557	366.52	232	419.13	1,174	370.48	2,112	362.98	622	346.06	2,417	324.87
October 10	6,423	367.21	203	423.16	1,137	372.14	1,999	364.53	650	347.03	2,434	327.27

CUTOUTS						FED BOXED BEEF					
DATE	CHOICE	SELECT	COW BEEF CUTOUT		50% LEAN	90% LEAN					
November 6	377.97	360.76	318.36		182.87	403.82					
November 5	378.26	360.25	320.01		176.29	407.43					
November 4	377.58	361.25	317.80		159.45	401.55					
November 3	379.25	359.93	320.40		157.04	405.68					
October 31	378.13	358.65	318.79		160.64	403.11					

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Live Cattle							
	10/31	11/3	11/4	11/5	11/6	High*	Low*
Oct.	23660	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	24678	16853
Dec.	22968	23220	23298	22850	22283	24830	16668
Feb.	22768	23040	23138	22583	22070	25018	17005
Apr.	22673	22935	23043	22538	22055	25093	18068

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Feeder Cattle							
	10/31	11/3	11/4	11/5	11/6	High*	Low*
Oct.	34725	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	38103	21920
Nov.	33888	34258	34605	33760	32715	38280	22268
Jan.	33190	33653	33998	33138	32158	38020	22460
Mar.	32713	33253	33585	32688	31673	37860	24118

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

FED CATTLE TRADE			
	Head Count	Avg. Weight	Avg. Price
WEEKLY WEIGHTED AVERAGES			
Live FOB Steer	16,288	1,573	228.98
Live FOB Heifer	8,444	1,381	228.96
Dressed Del Steer	11,383	1,032	358.36
Dressed Del Heifer	2,320	879	358.96

SAME PERIOD LAST WEEK			
Live FOB Steer	13,760	1,589	229.79
Live FOB Heifer	5,473	1,381	229.60
Dressed Del Steer	9,067	1,023	358.48
Dressed Del Heifer	3,447	890	359.00

SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR			
Live FOB Steer	346	1,448	187.71
Live FOB Heifer	340	1,264	187.90
Dressed Del Steer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dressed Del Heifer	N/A	N/A	N/A

NATIONAL WEEKLY FED BEEF SLAUGHTER VOLUME: NOVEMBER 2, 2025		
	Domestic	Imported
Forward Contract	34,830	5,818
Formula	230,280	2,235
Negotiated Cash	65,776	516
Negotiated Grid	29,305	2,235
Packer Owned	9,346	N/A
Total	369,537	10,804

SLAUGHTER FORWARD CONTRACTS			FORWARD BEEF SALES		
Delivery Month		Neg. Sales 0-21 days	1,756		
Nov. '25	179,826	Neg. Sales 21+ days	728		
Dec. '25	184,818	Formula sales	3,794		
Jan. '26	125,872	Forward contract sales	48		
Feb. '26	144,264	Domestic sales	5,634		
Mar. '26	123,060	NAFTA Exports	109		

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		214.37	-0.75
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs		212.43	-1.16

Ontario Auctions			
		Price	Weekly Change
Slaughter Steers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1300-1500 lbs		226.60	+4.94
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs		224.71	+5.02
Slaughter Cows, Cutter and Utility 1-3, 1100-1400 lbs		141.67	-0.25

*Price comparison from one week ago.

Average feeder cattle prices (CND) for week ending Tuesday, November 4, 2025			
Steers:	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Ontario
501-600 lbs	494.65	493.93	455.85
601-700 lbs	434.68	434.87	414.91
701-800 lbs	392.66	389.81	363.05
801-900 lbs	357.92	370.10	360.41
Heifers:			
401-500 lbs	515.62	496.54	438.06
501-600 lbs	440.24	343.68	415.15
601-700 lbs	406.49	390.35	364.72
701-800 lbs	354.00	355.41	332.80

USDA MEXICO TO U.S. WEEKLY LIVESTOCK IMPORTS				
Feeder cattle imports weekly and yearly volume.				
Species	Current Week	Previous Week	Current Year-to-date	Previous Year-to-date
Feeders	0	0	230,638	1,143,351

USDA WEEKLY IMPORTED FEEDER CATTLE			
November 6, 2025			
Mexico to United States Feeder Cattle Import Summary			
Receipts EST: N/A	Week Ago EST: N/A	Year Ago Act: 6,800	
THIS REPORT WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED AFTER MAY 12TH. THE BORDER WILL BE CLOSED FOR LIVESTOCK IMPORTS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.			

Feeder heifers: Medium and large 1&2		Feeder heifers: Medium and large 1&2	
500-600 lbs	N/A	500-600 lbs	N/A
600-700 lbs	N/A	600-700 lbs	N/A
700-800 lbs	N/A	700-800 lbs	N/A
Feeder steers: Medium and large 1&2		Feeder steers: Medium and large 1&2	
500-600 lbs	N/A	500-600 lbs	N/A
600-700 lbs	N/A	600-700 lbs	N/A
700-800 lbs	N/A	700-800 lbs	N/A

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

Selected Auctions Week Ending November 6, 2025

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
October 31	Blackfoot, ID	N/A	450-540	400-510	300-420	275-372	265-335	265-300	130-165	160-182	
October 30	Burley, ID	969		426-530	397-428	370-381	323	315	118-187.50		
No report available											
November 1	Emmett, ID										
November 1	Eugene, OR	1,044	320-480*	330-405*	289-387*	245-353*	275-310*		135-155	1,200-2,950	
November 3	Madras, OR	1,799	350-425*	305-400*	285-348*	260-320*	204-242*	216-247*	155-165	1,000-2,850	
November 3	Madras, OR	1,799	480-542	482-525	420-484	360-400	330-358	325-337	140-170		
November 5	Vale, OR	1,731	460-505	440-500	400-450				160-196		
November 5	Vale, OR	1,731	460-505	375-465					147-158		
November 5	Davenport, WA	940	275-280	300-490	300-470	255-437.50	245-384	270-336	165-188	2,475-4,000	
October 30	Toppenish, WA	1,550	220-250	325-370	310-427.50	205-395	200-339	117.50-315	104-215	1,600-2,300	
October 30	Toppenish, WA	1,550			442.50*	369-380*			145-165		
October 30	Toppenish, WA	1,550			350-375*	337-345*			155-188.50	2,250-2,550	
October 30	Orland, CA	2,974		350-561	300-488	275-430	250-348	230-329	140-175	2,500-3,700	
October 30	Orland, CA	2,974		330-470	280-435	255-379	230-334	210-295	140-190	2,000-2,900	
No report available											
November 3	Famoso, CA	618	380-497	380-465	375-421	350-400	300-314	285-314	85-220		
November 3	Famoso, CA	618	375-400	375-400	350-411	310-370		290-314	150-170		
No report available											
November 4	Turlock, CA	2,193	425-515	400-492.50	380-462.50	367-402	320-358.50	300-336	125-161.50		
November 4	Turlock, CA	2,193	395-450	385-437.50	360-398	340-369	280-325	275-311	147-185		
November 4	Salina, UT	2,684	370-630	335-577.50	305-505	290-460	285-405	270-365.50	127.50-176.25		
November 4	Salina, UT	2,684	330-580	310-540	290-460	270-415	265-380	255-341	158.85-197.50		
November 3	Iowa	6,531	527.50	437.50-455	437.50-527.50	382-477.50	338-410	308-383	310-358.75	130-227.50	
November 3	Iowa	6,531	437.50-455	375-470	375-470	330-410	317-365	298.50-351.25	293.25-319	130-207	
November 4	Miles City, MT	4,507	710-725	585-690	477.50-580	402.50-475	375-424		115-179		
November 4	Miles City, MT	4,507	590-650	487.50-590	415-488	381-423	351-391.50	311	163-187		
November 5	Bassett, NE	1,625	512.50-557.50	447.50-492.50	447.50-492.50	390-449	365-394	368			
November 5	Bassett, NE	1,625	440-464	392.50-445	402.50-440.50	405.50-435			261-318		
November 2	Ericson, NE	3,730	560-572.50	480-575	385-497	382.50-450	366	336-369.50			
November 2	Ericson, NE	3,730	490-535	425-450	370-442.50	363-370	353	301-354			
November 4	Imperial, NE	918	503	425-455	385-430	385.50-392	300	348-358.75			
November 4	Imperial, NE	918	485	408-441	370-394	340-351	348.25	343.25			
November 5	Kearney, NE	2,500	474	448-464	400-431	356-401	336-354	343-345	170-182		
November 5	Kearney, NE	2,500	459-480	372-449	347-386	324-346	317-320	257-308.50	170-206		
October 31	Lexington, NE	3,330	570-585	479-540	421-487	367-419	366-373.50				
October 31	Lexington, NE	3,330	460-540	423-464	35-408	340-382		325	2,450-3,725		
October 30	Ogallala, NE	4,404	545-645	482.50-605	426-505	379-410		300-351			
October 30	Ogallala, NE	4,404	532.50-577.50	435-511	390-418	370-372		274-339.50			
October 30	Valentine, NE	3,540	535-652.50	537-581	430-512.50	411-435					
October 30	Valentine, NE	3,540	477.50-510	447.50-505	435-475	437.50-452.50					
October 31	Her										

What's next for cattle and beef markets?

Cattle futures and cash markets were pummeled by a barrage of politics over the past two weeks. Negative market reactions piled up under a slew of political statements and proposals along with rumors about additional political actions that left market traders and producers running for the sidelines. Feeder cattle dropped \$200-300/head in value the last week of October in Oklahoma auctions.

It's important to remember that cattle market fundamentals have not changed ... it's the same

supply and demand conditions that existed three weeks earlier.

Political talk has included more beef imports from Argentina—largely irrelevant as an import source and with no expected impacts on U.S. beef prices, as well as a possible reduction in Brazil tariffs, which could impact processing beef supplies slightly.

Lack of data due to the government shutdown makes it hard to say how much the August tariffs on Brazil decreased beef imports and therefore how

much removing/reducing them might increase beef imports. In any event, it would be a return to market conditions that existed through July, including record-high lean trimmings prices. Beef imports from Argentina and Brazil will have no impact on steak prices in the U.S.

USDA has offered a wide range of proposals to "fortify the American beef industry," which included a laundry list of things including regulatory changes, access to federal grazing lands and packing infra-

structure. None of these will change the supply and demand conditions of cattle and beef production—or beef prices—in the short run, nor change the multi-year timeline for the industry to rebuild. Will the Mexican border reopen for cattle imports? Who knows? Even if it does, it will not change feeder cattle supplies much for several months.

Also, there is the rumor of a thaw in the trade war with China. It's not clear if this would include reopening the Chinese market to U.S. beef, which has been devastated recently. Record-high cattle and beef prices have largely masked the negative impacts of the loss of beef export markets to China. The latest available trade data for July showed that China accounted for 1.2% of beef exports compared to one year ago, when beef exports to China represented 15.3% of monthly exports. If beef exports to China resume, it will add additional support to U.S. cattle and beef prices.

All the political talk could ultimately have either positive or negative impacts on

cattle and beef markets; it's impossible to say what the net effect might be. The impacts will be marginal and do not change the underlying market fundamentals. With less agitation, cattle markets will bounce back quickly, and markets will guide production decisions. The trajectory and price expectations for the next 2-4 years have not changed.

demonstrated willingness to meddle in cattle and beef markets and interfere with markets doing what they do so well likely means that the industry will continue to deal with debilitating uncertainty and volatility.

The most likely outcome is that it will keep cattle producers and lenders cautious and further delay the lengthy process of herd

The federal government's demonstrated willingness to meddle in cattle and beef markets and interfere with markets doing what they do so well likely means that the industry will continue to deal with debilitating uncertainty and volatility.

What is clear is that uncertainty and volatility from political comments and rhetoric have a very real negative impact on producers and consumers. The federal government's

rebuilding, which already looks to extend nearly to the end of the decade. — **Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension livestock marketing specialist**

Feeder futures nosedive another week

MARKETS (from page 1)

purchases: \$206.47.

• Negotiated grid net purchases: \$245.86.

On a dressed basis:

• Negotiated purchases: \$358.82.

• Formula net purchases: \$380.39.

• Forward contract net purchases: \$330.87.

• Negotiated grid net purchases: \$371.40.

Boxed beef prices traded steady over the week. The Choice cutout lost less than a dollar to close at \$377.97, and the Select cutout also lost less than a dollar to close at \$360.76.

"Wholesale beef buyers don't want to get caught paying up too much with futures and cash fed cattle prices falling," Fish said on Thursday.

Slaughter through Thursday totaled about 456,000 head, compared to 457,000 head a week earlier. Total slaughter for a week earlier is projected at 559,000 head, compared to 573,000 head for the prior week. There was no actual slaughter report released for total slaughter two weeks earlier due to the government shutdown.

"Also operating in the background is worry over heavy job layoffs the past two months hurting demand and uncertainty regarding the Supreme Court's decision over the legality of the current imposed global tariffs," Fish said.

Feeder cattle

Feeder cattle futures saw another week of plummeting levels. The November contract lost about \$20 to close at \$322.05, and the January contract lost about \$19 to close at \$315.60.

The CME Feeder Cattle Index lost about \$7 to close at \$349.42.

Corn futures traded mostly sideways. The December contract lost 2 cents to close at \$4.28, and the March contract stayed unchanged at \$4.43.

"Unfortunately, feeder cattle sales could likely

soften a tick in the countryside as buyers react to the board," wrote ShayLe Stewart, DTN livestock analyst, in her Thursday midday comments.

Iowa: Russell Livestock in Russell sold 2,582 head on Monday. Compared to the last auction two weeks earlier, steers under 600 lbs. sold \$3-9 lower, while heavier steers sold sharply lower. Benchmark steers averaging 707 lbs. sold for \$335-355, averaging \$346.84.

Missouri: Joplin Regional Stockyards in Carthage sold 5,500 head on Monday. Compared to a week earlier, feeder steers sold \$10-30 higher and feeder heifers sold steady to \$15 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 715 lbs. sold from \$351-362, averaging \$353.51.

Oklahoma: Oklahoma National Stockyards in Oklahoma City sold 5,400 head on Monday. Compared to a week earlier, feeder steers sold \$15-25 higher and steer calves sold \$20-30 higher. Feeder heifers and heifer calves sold \$15-25 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 762 lbs. sold from \$331-351.50, averaging \$350.86.

South Dakota: Sioux Falls Regional in Worthing sold 1,378 head on Monday. Compared to a week earlier, there was a limited offering of steer and heifer calves and they were not well tested. Yearling steers and heifers sold \$20-40 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 773 lbs. sold for \$378.

Utah: Producers Livestock in Salina sold 2,043 head on Wednesday. Compared to the last auction, feeder cattle sold sharply higher on calves and yearlings. Benchmark steers averaging 714 lbs. sold for \$345-361, averaging \$352.63.

Wyoming: Winter Livestock in Riverton sold 3,388 head on Tuesday. Compared to the previous auction, yearlings sold \$11-15 higher, with instances of \$17-22 higher. Feeder steer calves under 600 lbs. trad-

ed sharply higher, with instances of \$35-65 higher, and over 600 lbs. sold up to \$30 higher. Heifer calves sold \$2-12 higher, with instances of \$15-22 higher. Heifer calves weighing 550 lbs. sold unevenly steady, with instances of \$10 lower. A group of steers averaging 674 lbs. sold for \$354.50-376.25, averaging \$367.28. — **Anna Miller Fortozo, WLJ managing editor**

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Farm groups seek new autonomous tractor regulation

California farm advocates feel they may be closer than ever to achieving regulatory changes that would clear the way for wider adoption of autonomous tractors in the state.

Despite entrepreneurs from the Golden State leading the way in developing cutting-edge technology used on farms around the world, the use of autonomous equipment is largely prohibited on California farms.

"In every other state, we operate freely," said Tim Bucher, co-founder and chief executive officer of the Bay Area-based company Agtonomy, which develops software for agricultural equipment manufacturers. Some states, added Bucher, who is a lifelong farmer from Sonoma County, have implemented policies to incentivize automation on farms.

In California, however, a

1977 regulation from the state's Division of Occupational Safety and Health, or Cal/OSHA, requires that all "self-propelled equipment shall, when under its own power and in motion, have an operator stationed at the vehicular controls."

Conceived long before the first driverless vehicle existed, the regulation has prevented California farmers from taking advantage of various types of autonomous equipment—from driverless tractors and blast sprayers to carts used to shuttle trays of grapes or berries—developed in the past several years.

"The regulation is obviously out of date," said Bryan Little, senior director of policy advocacy for the California Farm Bureau and chief operating officer of the affiliated Farm Employers Labor Service. "Something needs to change."

In recent months, following

years of advocacy from the Farm Bureau and other groups, industry leaders expressed optimism that change may be on the horizon.

In August 2024, Cal/OSHA issued a memorandum clarifying that driverless tractors and other agricultural vehicles may be used when no humans are present. When employees are absent, the memo stated, the location does not qualify as a worksite under the agency's jurisdiction.

The directive allowed farmers to use autonomous equipment in some contexts, though advocates said the regulation itself must be amended to eliminate barriers California farmers continue to face when it comes to integrating autonomous technology into their operations.

During the past year, Bucher and Little both played a direct role in educating regulators

about autonomous farm technology and pushing for regulatory change.

In November 2024, California's Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board, which has the authority to revise the regulation, impaneled an advisory committee comprising various stakeholders to examine the issue.

"We've been meeting regularly, and we've definitely shared our perspective on changes that could be made to the regulation," Bucher said. "I believe we need to work with regulators and not against them, because we want the same thing, which is worker safety."

Labor advocates have raised concerns that autonomous tractors could pose a danger to nearby workers, and that the widespread adoption of autonomous equipment could result in job losses, though the latter issue does not fall under Cal/OSHA's authority.

Agricultural technology leaders have emphasized that autonomous technology can improve occupational safety on farms.

Bucher said the issue is personal for him. After growing up on a dairy farm, then working in Silicon Valley with Steve Jobs and Bill Gates, he said farm safety was part of what motivated him to go into the field of agricultural robotics.

"I have personally rolled tractors. The last time I did, the

tractor flipped several times, and I got a severe concussion," Bucher said, adding that friends of his were killed in tractor accidents.

Government data show that tractor rollovers are the leading cause of fatal accidents on farms.

"If you can get the operator out of the seat, you're already saving lives," Bucher said.

While researchers are working to develop robots that can pick fruit and accomplish other labor-intensive tasks, such jobs are still largely done by hand.

For now, industry leaders said, the return on investment offered by autonomous farm technology often does not involve saving on labor costs. Rather, automation helps farmers maximize efficiency in the use of fuel, pesticides and other materials, as the technology can operate with greater precision than human operators.

"The machine is doing the work exactly how you tell it to," said Greg Christensen, go-to-market manager for high value crops at John Deere, which has begun trials for an autonomous tractor designed for use in tree crops. "That is where a lot of the savings will come from."

Industry leaders said persistent labor shortages and opportunities for upskilling reduce the risk of the current workforce being displaced

from jobs. In states where Agtonomy technology has been implemented, Bucher said, he has not seen a reduction in the amount of human labor required.

"There just isn't enough labor in general in high-value crops," he said. "We need everyone."


The farmer and tech entrepreneur met last month with members of the standards board at the FIRA USA agricultural robotics conference in Woodland, CA, where autonomous tractors showed off their capabilities in live demonstrations.

The standards board is expected to release a report summarizing the work of the autonomous tractor advisory committee.

"It will tell the public what the standards board staff believe the advisory committee developed in the course of these meetings," said Little. "At that point, the standards board will be free to take some action with respect to autonomous tractors."

Whether the regulatory body will amend the rule and allow wider use of autonomous equipment on California farms remains to be seen.

"I believe the regulations will change in the near future," Bucher said. "In the meantime, we work together and continue to educate." — **Caleb Hampton, Ag Alert editor, California Farm Bureau**



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Signs of stress you should watch for

When a rancher or ranch family needs help, signs of stress are often slow to appear, but at other times may be quickly apparent, said Karen Funkenbusch, University of Missouri (MU) Extension assistant professor.

Visible signs such as thinning hair, weight changes or skin breakouts are warning signs from the body that yell, "I need help." Other signs might be more subtle and not seen until the long-term results can no longer be ignored, said Funkenbusch.

Those closest to the farm-

er—friends, extended family members, neighbors and clergy—may be the last to notice signs of stress because they see the person regularly and the changes are gradual. Less frequent visitors to the farm may be in a better position to notice changes. People in this group may include seed and chemical salespersons, veterinarians and the local cooperative truck driver who fills the propane tank.

"Anyone connected to the farm is in a position to notice signs of stress and be of help to the farmer and farm family,"

said Funkenbusch. "Everyone connected in production agriculture or agribusiness can play an important role in helping farmers maintain strong mental health."

Funkenbusch pointed to a recent newsletter from Missouri Department of Agriculture listing signs of stress:

- Change in routines. The farmer or farm family stops attending church, drops out of activities or no longer stops in at the local coffee shop or feed store.

- Decline in the care of animals. When animals lose condition, appear gaunt or shows signs of neglect or physical abuse, the farmer may have lost interest in his work.

- Increase in illness. Farmers or farm family members may experience more upper respiratory illnesses (colds, flu) or other chronic conditions (aches, pains, persistent cough).

- Increase in farm accidents. The risk of farm accidents increases due to the fatigue or inability to concentrate. Children also may be at risk if there isn't adequate child care.

- Decline in appearance of the farm. The farm family no longer takes pride in the appearance of farm buildings and grounds or no longer has the time to do maintenance work.


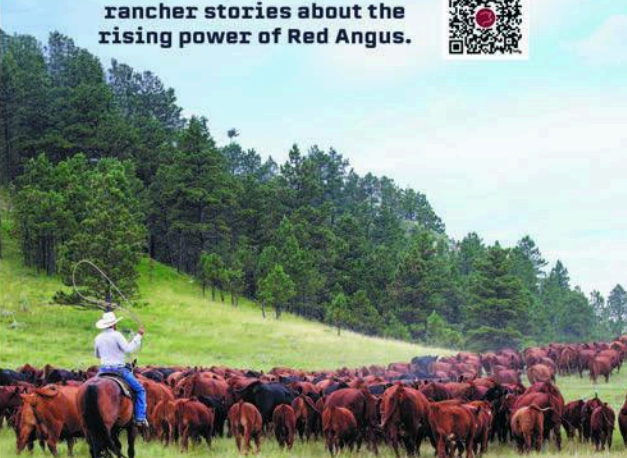
- Children show signs of stress. Children may act out, decline in academic performance or be increasingly absent from school. They may also show signs of physical abuse or neglect.

If you notice signs of stress in a farmer or a member of the family, reach out to them. Listen attentively and without judgment. Offer to connect them to resources and follow up. — **MU Extension**

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Rural development nominee focused on broadband, commodity value

Glen Smith, President Donald Trump's nominee to be Agriculture undersecretary for rural development, made commitments to both Republican and Democratic senators on Nov. 5 at his Senate Agriculture Committee confirmation hearing.

In his opening statement, Smith, a member of the

board and former chairman of the Farm Credit Administration, said his first priority is to add value to raw, bulk agricultural products, followed by improving rural Internet services and increasing the housing supply.

Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins has said she would consider transferring

some USDA divisions to other government agencies, but Smith told Sen. Tina Smith (D-MN) that he agrees with her that the rural Housing Service should stay at USDA.

Smith was also asked for his views on providing childcare, and he said it is important to take into consider-

ation the fact that most rural families today are two-income and that he supports providing childcare through community facilities that come under the USDA rural development mission area.

In responding to questions from Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA) and Sen. Peter Welch (D-VT), Smith emphasized his belief in the importance of high-speed, high-quality internet service in rural America. He noted that when he chaired the Farm Credit Administration during the pandemic, he had trouble accessing proper service to conduct meetings from his home near Atlantic, IA. At another point in the hearing, he said he hated to be "repetitive" on his commitment to high-speed, high-quality internet service, but that he realizes how important it is to rural hospitals.

When Welch told him that USDA has inadequate rural development staff in Vermont, Smith said he would need data to be able to answer that question.

Sen. Ben Ray Lujan (D-MN) pressed Smith to commit to "follow the law and court orders," and Smith said he would. Lujan noted that the Trump administration canceled the program that provided for farmers to provide food to schools and the current uncertainty over providing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits in November. He also told Smith he fears that cuts to the Medicaid program will result in the closure of rural health care facilities that come under the rural development mission area.

Smith promised Ernst and Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA)

that he would support ethanol, and promised Sen. John Hoeven (R-ND) that he would help connect rural electric power to oil shale production.

After the hearing, Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman John Boozman (R-AR), told The Hagstrom Report that he hopes that Smith can be considered for confirmation by the full Senate in the next tranche of Trump nominees.

Boozman also said he did not attend the breakfast that Trump held for Republican senators earlier that day because he was meeting with farmers and Farm Credit lenders from Arkansas. At that meeting, Trump pressured senators to end the filibuster to break the government shutdown. — **Jerry Hagstrom, DTN political correspondent**



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- Nov. 12** – Riverbend Ranch, Bull Sale, Idaho Falls, ID
- Nov. 13** – Hoffman Ranch & Stelpflug Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Thedford, NE
- Nov. 13** – JR Ranch & Sackmann Cattle, Production Sale, Othello, WA
- Nov. 15** – Keyes Angus, Complete Dispersal Sale, Valentine, NE
- Nov. 17** – J&L Livestock, Female Sale, Billings, MT
- Nov. 19** – TD Angus, Female Sale, North Platte, NE

- Nov. 21** – Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Bull & Female Sale, Meriden, WY
- Nov. 22** – Frank Cattle & Genetics and Baldrige-Tiedeman Angus, Female Sale, Lodgepole, NE
- Nov. 22** – Jorgensen Land & Cattle, Female Sale, Ideal, SD
- Nov. 22** – Queen Ann Cattle Co., Female Sale, Loma, CO
- Nov. 22** – Redland Angus, Bull Sale, Buffalo, WY
- Nov. 22** – Spring Cove Ranch, Female Sale, Bliss, ID
- Nov. 25** – Paint Rock Angus, Bull Sale, Hyattville, WY
- Nov. 28** – Vermillion Ranch, Bull Sale, Billings, MT
- Dec. 1** – Stevenson's Diamond Dot, Fall Sale, Hobson, MT
- Dec. 2** – Stevenson Angus, Fall Sale, Hobson, MT
- Dec. 2** – Zumbunnen Angus, Bull Sale, Lusk, WY
- Dec. 3** – McDonnell Angus, Bull Sale, Columbus, MT
- Dec. 4** – Sitz Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Harrison, MT

CHAROLAIS

- Nov. 21** – Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Bull & Female Sale, Meriden, WY

HEREFORD

- Nov. 13** – Hoffman Ranch & Stelpflug Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Thedford, NE
- Nov. 24** – Berry Herefords, Bull Sale, Cheyenne, WY

RED ANGUS

- Nov. 10** – Ludvigson Farms, Bull Sale, Park City, MT
- Nov. 21** – Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Bull & Female Sale, Meriden, WY
- Dec. 3** – Big Sky Elite, Female Sale, Three Forks, MT

STABILIZER

- Nov. 21** – Leachman Cattle of Colorado, Bull & Female Sale, Meriden, WY

COMMERCIAL

- Nov. 21** – Rollin' Rock Angus, Bred Heifer Sale, Pilot Rock, OR
- Dec. 2** – Western Video Market Sale, Reno, NV



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