

INSIDE WLJ

FARM BILL — Current farm bill programs in likely need of extension. Page 10

UP, UP AND AWAY — University of Nebraska-Lincoln site for first center for space agriculture? Page 23

A LOOK BACK IN HISTORY

Fall weaning is always a very busy time of year, and calculating shrink on sale calves can be your profit according to this Nov. 18, 2002, article: "The true weight of living, breathing cattle is seldom known. Periodically, we attempt to estimate the true weight at some point in time and commence to barter as to what the weight really is. If a steer shrinks six percent when you sell him, does he expand six percent when you buy him? Were the calves tanked up with water? Were the calves full of silage? Was the water turned off the night before shipping? Nobody really wants to pay 85 cents a pound for calf urine running out the back of the truck."

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Utah's Grand Staircase-Escalante plan could greatly affect grazing

— Loss of acreage likely

Following the restoration of its borders by President Joe Biden, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) released a draft resource management plan (RMP) for the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM) in Utah. The plan could markedly affect livestock grazing and recreation uses by restoring the monument to an unspoiled, natural landscape.

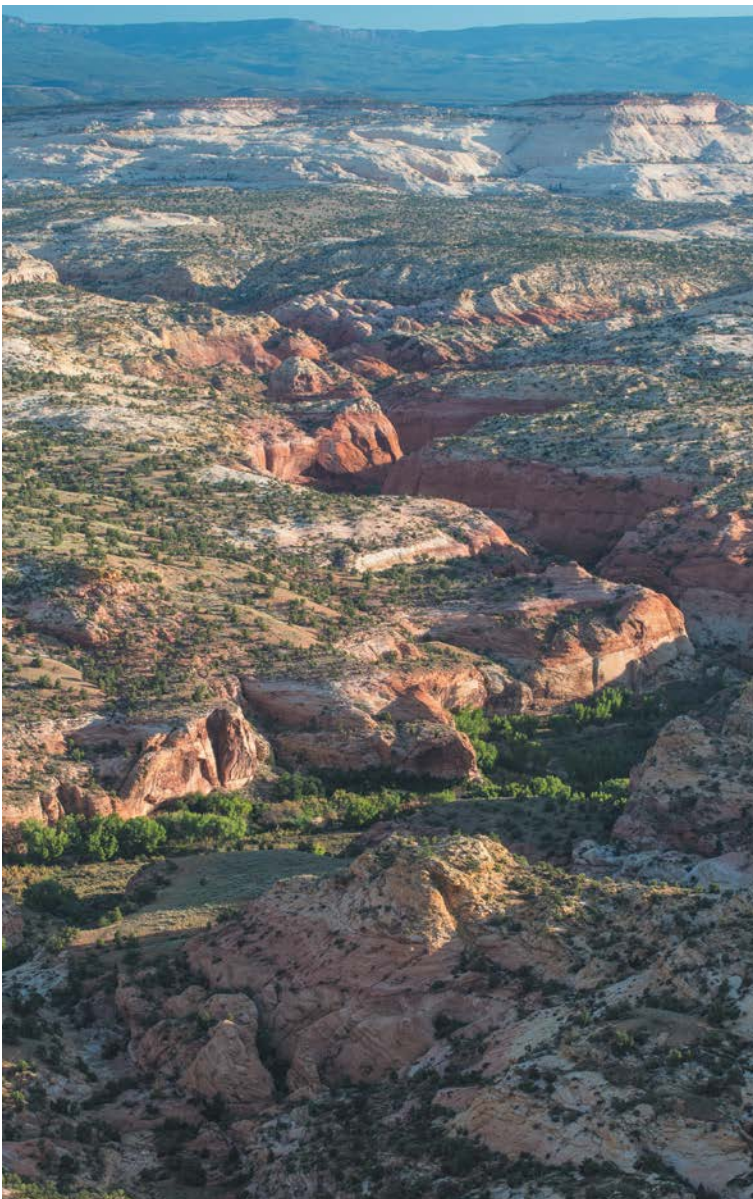
On Aug. 11, the draft RMP and associated environmental impact statement (EIS) were released. A 90-day comment period with public meetings occurred regarding four alternatives to guide the management consistent with the restoration and protection provided in the proclamation signed by Biden in 2021. The commenting period closed Nov. 9.

Proclamation 10286 restored the boundaries of former Presi-

dent Bill Clinton's original proclamation in 1996 establishing the monument, and included the 180,000 acres expanded by Congress for a total of 1.87 million acres. In 2017, former President Donald Trump issued a proclamation to reduce GSENM by 860,000 acres.

"Protection of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument will preserve its cultural, prehistoric, and historic legacy and maintain its diverse array of natural and scientific resources, ensuring that the prehistoric, historic, and scientific values of this area remain for the benefit of all Americans," the proclamation declared. "Reservation of these lands will preserve the living laboratory within the monument boundaries that will facilitate significant scientific discoveries for years to come."

See STAIRCASE on page 23



BLM

There may be implications for grazing in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah following the release of a new management plan. Pictured here, an aerial view of the monument.

CO experimental wolf plan finalized

— In effect Dec. 8

Just two months ahead of the deadline to introduce wolves into Colorado, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) finalized its designation of a nonessential experimental population of gray wolves in the state. The designation falls under Section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and will provide management flexibility.

"The best available data indicate that reintroduction of the gray wolf into Colorado is biologically fea-

sible and will promote the conservation of the species," USFWS said in the final rule.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) requested a nonessential experimental population designation from USFWS to assist with their wolf reintroduction plan. By designating the population as "nonessential experimental," it will allow for the allowable, legal, purposeful and incidental take of the wolf within the experimental population area—in this case, the entire state of Colorado.

"This final Service experimental population rule designates management flexibility to the state for reintroduced gray wolves in Colorado," USFWS said in a news release. "This management flexibility can help to address potential conflicts between wolves and humans, and wolves and domestic animals while contributing to the conservation of the species."

The Colorado Cattlemen's Association (CCA) applauded the

See WOLVES on page 17

Greens target grazing on AZ's Gila River

— Argue habitat destruction

A pair of environmental groups is suing the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) over cattle

grazing along Arizona's Gila River. The groups allege the cattle damage habitat for the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher and western yellow-billed cuckoo.

"Livestock grazing decimates the streams that strug-

gling species depend on and these federal agencies have repeatedly failed to protect endangered species habitat. This has to end before more wildlife slides into extinction," said Taylor McKinnon with Center for Biological

Diversity in a statement. The Center joins the Maricopa Audubon Society in a suit against the federal agencies.

Suit details

The suit, filed in the Dis-

trict Court of Arizona, argues the BLM and USFWS have violated the Endangered Species Act by authorizing grazing on seven public lands allotments along the Gila River.

"BLM and the Service

have determined that the effects of domestic livestock grazing are not likely to adversely impact these species or adversely modify their designated critical habitat if

See GILA on page 13

Cattle futures tank; cash cattle sell cheaper

The market ended Thursday in a free fall, with futures plummeting down, down, down on the board and cash trade lacking support. The most recent bearish Cattle on Feed report, along with larger-than-expected beef production numbers in Thursday's World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates report, contributed to the drop in the market.

Live cattle futures plummeted over the week. On Thursday, each contract lost \$5 apiece. Over the week, the December contract lost more than \$10 to close at \$174.35 and the February contract lost nearly \$12 to close at \$174.47.

"This monumental meltdown, inspired by bearish USDA Cattle on Feed estimates last Friday has snowballed and effectively crushed this market," Cassie Fish, market analyst, wrote on Thursday.

Cash trade was slow to develop over the week again. The bulk of trade took place Thursday morning, with about 30,000 head sold, although several dollars lower than a week earlier. Live steers sold from \$178-181.50, and dressed steers sold from \$280-287. Total trade through Thursday afternoon was about 40,000 head.

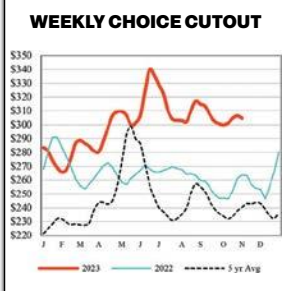
"The futures meltdown has made cattle feeders easier sell-

ers and packers have been able to cheapen their cattle costs substantially in one week, \$4 to \$5/cwt," Fish said. "Prices are weaker because of fear, not because of an increase in supply of choice, market-ready fed cattle."

Cash trade through Nov. 5 totaled 69,520 head. Live steers averaged \$184.82, and dressed steers averaged \$291.95.

Slaughter through Thursday is projected at 493,000 head, a few thousand head behind a week earlier. Estimated total slaughter for a week earlier is 632,000 head. Actual slaughter for the week ending Oct. 28 was 634,701 head. The average steer

See MARKETS on page 27



LIVE STEERS	DRESSED STEERS	CME FEEDER
\$180.81	\$286.65	\$237.01
WEEK ENDING: 11-9-23		

Time Sensitive
Priority Handling
PERIODICAL :

COMMENTS

Load the trucks!

It's a great time of year! We are in the heart of shipping season, and for most, it couldn't have come soon enough. It's been an awfully interesting year, and the markets are responding accordingly. At this point, why would we expect anything to be normal?



IPSEN

As the trucks are loaded and calves head to their new homes, it's a great opportunity to reflect on decisions made over the past couple of years and make those changes needed for improvement. Genetic selections, vaccination programs, value-added programs, pasture management and so on can all be reflected on. It's a great time to create your individual short- and long-term plans for your operation. As turbulent as the past couple of years have been, this year feels like it is affording us all the chance to level things out and prepare for future years.

Last winter's miseries are slowly becoming a memory, but it's affecting decisions on every ranch. Calf death loss in the western U.S. was astronomical. Some ranches reported as much as 40% death loss, while most maintained in the 20% range—still far greater than normal. Moving to this spring, everything dried out so drastically before late spring, and early summer's moisture rebounded and catapulted the rest of the summer. This year's calves have had everything thrown at them from Day 1, and a lot of guys are telling me their shipping weights are reflecting this. You'd think in a year like the West had with moisture that calves would be coming in fat and heavy, but they aren't. Whether the feed was too washy or there were a couple dry months this spring, calves are generally lighter compared to previous years.

There are several factors at work right now in all levels of the chain. Simple fundamentals of filling a contract are forcing some to be more creative than usual. We've beat the talking point about the small cow herd to death, but couple this with higher death loss and calves coming in lighter than expected, and there's simply less paid weight leaving the ranch. Also keep in mind that 44% of the nation was in drought conditions this year, so higher hay costs and low feed sources have also pushed more cattle on trucks.

Now factor in the paper. With interest rates nearing 10% and inputs at all-time highs, guys are simply forcing themselves to sell into the replacement pen. It makes sense, though, since they are worth so much more. With this, and a strong cull cow market, ranchers are finding ways to make it all work. Between added heifer sales and cull cows, it's the easiest way to offset potential losses this year.

In the September Cattle on Feed report, heifers made up 39.9% of feedlot placements. The prediction was for it to come down to the low 30% range going into the fall months as producers have historically held back replacements; however, the latest report showed otherwise. Heifer placements surpassed the 40% level, assisting in the report showing an increase in feedlot inventory over last year by a full percentage point. This level of heifer placement is a huge number compared to historical data. It's the highest percentage of heifers on feed in nearly two decades.

Cow slaughter continues to surprise us all. Even in the strong market, cow slaughter pace in October was one of the highest in the last 20 years! The incentive is there to sell them right now and the economic pressure at home far outweighs holding on to a cow longer than necessary.

The October Cattle on Feed report moved the markets fairly drastically and contracts took the biggest hit, as one would expect. Although the cash market has stayed strong, it puts additional pressure on the November report to see how 2023's calf crop has been handled.

The interesting thing to watch is how Texas and Oklahoma respond to recent moisture. During the last of October, some parts of Texas received over eight inches of rain! How this area responds could really drive the bred female market, which has somehow been the area that hasn't rallied with the rest of the market.

Each month of data like the aforementioned should extend the length of time we enjoy these calf markets. As mentioned in previous columns, though, it isn't so much joy as it is a sigh of relief. The November data that comes out in two weeks will carry a lot of weight as it will help us to determine cow numbers and feedlot/packer reactions to this summer's moves and how things are shaping up for 2024. — **LOGAN IPSEN**



DITTMER'S TAKE

With budget restraints in general and House Republicans' goal of cutting federal spending, there will likely be little or no increase in farm bill budgets. If there are cuts, the fight centers around farm programs or the human nutrition programs that are 84% of the bill. All the committees' Democrats are on record that nutrition programs need more money, not cuts, and there should be no cuts to the climate change provisions. They claim that since half of the Conservation Stewardship Program and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds since 2020 went to "climate smart" practices, that must mean those practices are in demand and need more funding. There was no suggestion that that trend was necessitated by the left's insistence on climate change components, rather than best use and farmers' and ranchers' preferences. Discussion of where cuts could be made in agriculture has involved slowing or eliminating some programs mainly meant to advance climate change goals of the Biden administration in the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). The list of \$50 billion in clawbacks from the IRA supposedly included unspent IRA climate change funds, limiting additions to nutrition plans and the Conservation Reserve Program. Nutrition programs have grown rapidly, before and during the pandemic. Chairman Glenn "G.T." Thompson (R-PA-15) said they need to find some "pay-fors" to offset dollars for commodity credit programs, crop safety net programs, research and expanded trade tools. The Environmental Defense Fund called for a "climate-smart" farm bill to help "stabilize the climate," that would "incentivize emission reductions, increase financial support" for "climate resilience" and invest in innovation to accelerate mitigation and adaption efforts. One of their greenhouse gas targets is "reducing methane emissions from livestock farming" and nitrous oxide emissions from "excess fertilizer."

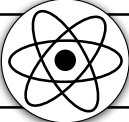
Former Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns covered the farm bill on a webinar for the Colorado Livestock Association. Johanns, also a former Nebraska U.S. senator and governor and now an alliantgroup consultant, set the key players. Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) is the Senate Ag Committee chairman, retiring in 2024, Johanns said. Arkansas Sen. John Boozman (R) is ranking member and protective of southern crops and prices. Thompson is chairman of the House Ag Committee and "knows what he's

doing." Rep. David Scott (D-GA-13) is former House Ag chairman, now ranking member and his "heart is in the SNAP program," Johanns said. Scott's mantra: Do not cut that program. His Senate ally: Stabenow. As for political pressures, the Freedom Caucus is 40-plus members conscious they got elected to cut spending. This will be the first trillion-dollar farm bill, with roughly \$1.2 trillion allocated for nutrition. Commodities will account for 4% (\$69 billion). Crop insurance will cost around \$101 billion, disaster assistance \$15 billion and IRA climate change spending \$17 billion. There are additional nutrition programs at \$60 billion and trade programs at \$25 billion. The IRA climate change money is still there. House Republicans want to repurpose it and the Senate wants to stay climate change.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will be a battleground. Republicans want to reimpose work requirements on able-bodied applicants, the Democrats oppose that and want more help for mothers and children. To get a bipartisan farm bill through Congress, there needs to be enough Senate support for 60 votes and spending cuts to pass the House. There will likely be two very different versions. A House version passed with no Democrat support will likely fail in the Senate. The odds are good that the Senate will pass a bipartisan version and the fight shifts to conference committee. There is not expected to be a standalone livestock title. There will be a disaster program including livestock and forage indemnity provisions, funding for EQIP, animal health programs and there is support from both chambers for more risk management opportunities. Boozman insists commodity reference prices rise. There will be some minor revisions in the climate change provisions so Democrats can claim a victory. The nutrition programs will be fully funded or very close.

Johanns was asked about reducing the cost of the nutrition programs. There are only two ways to cut costs: reduce the costs of the product or raise the eligibility requirements. Only a bipartisan compromise bill will pass. The last farm bill expired Sept. 30 and delays only become a problem on Dec. 31.

Johanns' parting reminder: The nutrition part of the farm bill does involve lots of spending. But it uses products American farmers and ranchers raise. Politically speaking, we would not likely have a farm bill with any agricultural parts without the support of urban legislators. — **Steve Dittmer, WLJ columnist**



RESOURCE SCIENCE

Wolves are constantly in the news. Especially because the state of Colorado plans to introduce wolves by the end of 2023, and wolves moving from Wyoming into Colorado have already killed cattle and dogs. Colorado now has an agreement with the state of Oregon to obtain up to 10 wolves to release in Colorado. Wolves are listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recently completed an environmental impact statement (EIS) regarding the introduction of wolves to Colorado.

There are many issues regarding the introduction of wolves, including considerable opposition to killing wolves as part of their management. The potential for wolves to move southward from Colorado and impact the Mexican gray wolf subspecies in Arizona and New Mexico is also discussed in the EIS:

"The loss of genetic integrity of Mexican wolves by hybridization with northern wolves would impede recovery efforts of the separately (ESA) listed Mexican wolf... if the ranges of gray wolves and Mexican wolves expanded and eventually overlapped, the Mexican wolf population could be adversely affected by inter-specific competition and hybridization ... If Mexican wolves disperse northward of their historical range, or if gray wolves disperse southward, competition or interbreeding could occur ... the Service will work with states to minimize impacts to Mexican wolf recovery."

The current policy as expressed in the EIS is to protect the Mexican wolf's genetics by preventing their mixing with northern wolves by removing wolves that move southward from Colorado. The EIS doesn't specify a time frame for this, so I assume it's planned to be permanent. But wolves have spread across western states (Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, California) from the introductions in the 1990s to Yellowstone National Park and Idaho. A few northern wolves have already been documented traveling into Arizona and New Mexico (see WLJ Aug. 21, 2023). I think it is likely they will continue to spread, and northern wolves will eventually mix with the Mexican wolves; it's hard for me to imagine a permanent program to prevent wolves from leaving Colorado.

Northern wolves from Colorado interbreeding with Mexican wolves is an issue because Mexican wolves are listed as an endangered species separately from other wolves and are considered a genetically and geographically unique "subspecies." The northern wolves to be brought to Colorado are considered a

different subspecies. The ESA allows listing of subspecies, which are comparable to livestock breeds. However, subspecies of wild animals are not as distinct as livestock breeds because wild animals move and interbreed between areas over time, and obviously no pedigrees are kept.

Because USFWS, environmental groups and many biologists have spent enormous effort and money to promote the Mexican wolf as genetically different from other wolves to justify an ESA listing, they now must protect its "genetic integrity," meaning the original genetics of wolves in Mexico and the American Southwest. At the same time, Mexican wolves have inbreeding problems because the population started with very few animals. There is a conflict in trying to conserve Mexican wolf genetics, while maintaining an inbred wild population.

There are two important scientific points to be considered. The first point, dismissed or ignored by ESA advocates, is that the subspecies category is not definite and largely based on opinion. Second, the Mexican wolf has inbreeding problems which can be corrected with crossbreeding and heterosis, as is done with livestock. Livestock breeders know that genetics affect the performance and fitness of animals. If there are inbreeding problems with reproduction or health, crossbreeding can correct them. USFWS biologists are probably aware that they could interbreed Mexican wolves with northern wolves and make a more fit population, but they are constrained by the insistence of maintaining the original Mexican wolf genetics, which is based on an indefinite subspecies designation.

Many stockmen justifiably oppose wolves because they kill livestock, dogs and big game. It is common sense that wolf predation on livestock and dogs should not be allowed and wolves preying on livestock should be removed. Wolves also need to be managed with hunting and trapping to maintain big game populations. Montana, Idaho and Wyoming now do this. But wolves are popular with the public, and their spread appears to be unstoppable with current policies. The point is that managing wolves is, and will continue to be, necessary.

Your expertise can help. The issues with Colorado and Mexican wolves provide an opportunity to show USFWS and the public the knowledge of biology and genetics that stockmen have. Professional managers can't prioritize one objective (wolves) to the detriment of others (big game and livestock). — **Dr. Matthew Cronin**

WOLVES IN CO AND MEXICAN WOLVES

WLJ

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

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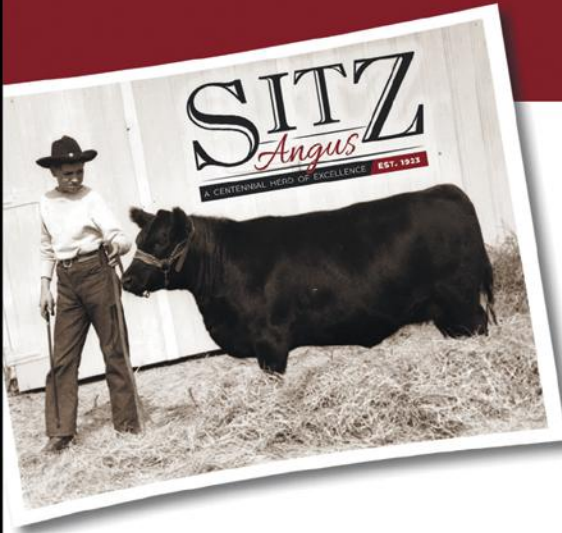
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Lot 100

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CED 4 BW 0.4 WW 83 YW 139 SC 0.48 HP 18.2 Milk 26
MARB 0.44 REA 0.84 \$M 90 \$C 285 PAP 39

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CED 7 BW 0.4 WW 78 YW 133 SC 1.57 HP 22.2
Milk 30 MARB 0.85 REA 0.88 \$M 112 \$C 312

SITZ Intuition 11942



Lot 23

Reg #20306689 S: SITZ Intuition
CED 6 BW 0.9 WW 80 YW 132 SC 0.31 HP
20.0 Milk 24 MARB 0.93 REA 0.71 \$M 104 \$C 313

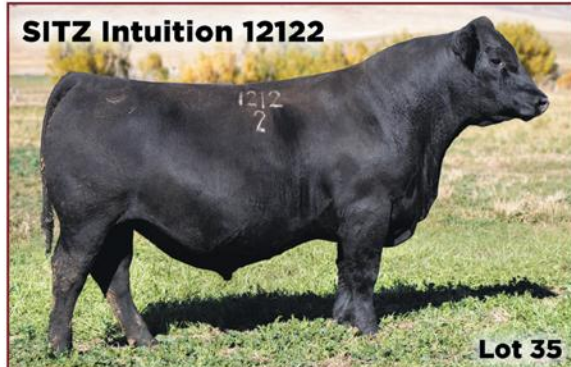
SITZ Continuity 10142



Lot 45

Reg #20306589 S: SITZ Continuity
CED 7 BW 0.3 WW 79 YW 139 SC 0.66 HP
17.8 Milk 29 MARB 0.52 REA 0.72 \$M 88 \$C 276

SITZ Intuition 12122



Lot 35

Reg #20306698 S: SITZ Intuition
CED 10 BW -0.1 WW 76 YW 128 SC 0.16 HP 17.4
Milk 35 MARB 1.15 REA 0.81 \$M 84 \$C 312

SITZ LT Resilient 10412



Lot 1

Reg #20307895 S: SITZ Resilient 10208
CED 12 BW -0.6 WW 79 YW 133 SC 1.09 HP 17.5
Milk 28 MARB 0.60 REA 0.95 \$M 92 \$C 268 PAP

SITZ Resilient 10202



Lot 53

Reg #20306594 S: SITZ Resilient 10208
CED 3 BW 2.7 WW 78 YW 129 SC 1.52 HP 14.0
Milk 20 MARB 0.66 REA 0.69 \$M 67 \$C 242

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OBITUARIES



J. David 'Dave' Nichols; 1938-2023

With the passing of J. David "Dave" Nichols of Nichols Farms in Bridgewater, IA, on Nov. 4, the industry lost a

unique legend, and his family, friends, the Nichols Farm crew and his community lost a pillar. In the beef industry, Dave was one of the very few remaining from the first generation of performance pioneers from the 1950s that blazed a path for a new type of beef industry that was based on science and objective selection. He also was the last living member of the very first Beef Improvement Federation Board from 1968. They were responsible for pulling all aspects of the industry together to standardize performance terminology, techniques and processes.

During his 70-year career breeding seedstock, Dave never took his eyes off the horizon, always looking for new technology and the chance to participate in research that would move both Nichols Farms and the beef industry forward. Dave was a devoted American patriot, who when giving his speech running for the board at the Angus Convention, made it clear that

the decisions he made if elected would be based first on what would be best for the country, second what was best for the industry, and third what was best for the Angus breed. He never wavered from this general hierarchy. If you extended his decision making to Nichols Farms, you would add in their commercial bull customers after the industry for priorities, as he knew that Nichols Farms could only be successful if their customers were successful.

The research Nichols Farms was involved with over the years started with progeny testing for genetic defects, with the first Angus bulls Nichols Farms sold guaranteed not to sire dwarf or red calves. After that, the list of projects gets long. Nichols Farms was involved in ultrasound research, genomic discovery and instrument grading. They flushed their open Angus cows in cooperation with a genomic company for discovery of genomic markers for early embryonic

death loss. They are currently working with feed efficiency, and at this coming year's bull sale, will be releasing the industry's first genetic prediction for cattle less susceptible to bovine respiratory disease. As the largest seedstock operation in the Midwest, Nichols Farms has sold industry-changing genetics throughout the country, as well as in 30 other countries. This included numerous national champions in Argentina, even though it is unlikely that a halter could be found on all of Nichols Farms.

The list of awards Dave has received is too long for this space, but a few highlights are the highest awards bestowed upon a breeder by the Beef Improvement Federation, Iowa State University (ISU), American Simmental Association, American Angus Association, Livestock Publications Council, and the Saddle and Siroin Portrait Award, which is the highest honor in the livestock industry. He also served

on about every board and council of substance in the beef industry. After winning the FFA National Public Speaking Contest in 1956, he rarely went long without a microphone in his hand speaking to some cattle producers' meeting.

Although Dave leaves behind him another lifetime of ideas and plans for a more efficient and profitable beef industry, it is comforting to know that he is reunited with his wife and soul-mate, Phyllis, and his beloved brother and partner, Lee, both of whom preceded him in death. Dave cherished his family, friends and loyal staff that he was so proud of. Born Nov. 24, 1938, in Lincoln, NE, Dave met his future wife, Phyllis, at the Adair County Fair while both were helping younger brothers and sisters get cattle ready to show. Both attended ISU, but dropped out to get married when Phyllis was a junior. The couple was married on May 15, 1965. Dave collected Oliver tractors, and enjoyed watching sports, particularly football, with his family. His favorite teams included the ISU Cyclones and the Kansas City Chiefs.

years, encouraging youth to share their music and various other talents at the Montana FFA State Convention.

Jack had a wonderful sense of humor and the gift of communication. Jack could always be counted on for a "corny" joke or story to lighten the mood; he could also be counted on for his abundant wisdom, genuine kindness and creativity. Jack had a way of waking up a room! He was not one to follow the crowd—and he was not afraid to upset the applecart or to say what needed to be said! Jack was civic-minded and cared deeply about his country, family, friends and community, whom he served with purpose. Even in his final few days, Jack spoke of our need to "serve the people."



Mary G. Meyer; 1983-2023

Mary G. Meyer was born as the skies cleared in God's Country of the Bitterroot Valley, Hamilton, MT, on July 26, 1983, immediately bringing new life, vibrance and love into the world. The skies darkened as we lost our effervescent Mary Sunshine on Nov. 1 at Providence, St. Patrick Hospital in Missoula, MT. Breast cancer never defined Mary. In her rare use of the term, she said, "Cancer does not own me, God owns me."

Mary was one with ranch life as soon as she could crawl. Mary joined 4-H at the earliest age possible and quickly outperformed her brothers and older kids in the beef show ring, first at the Ravalli County Fair and then on to the Montana State Fair, Northern International Livestock Exposition and national Simmental shows in Denver. Mary's ability to soak in knowledge and learn from mentors quickly translated into accomplishments in high school including top livestock judging honors at the state, regional and national levels, qualifying for the National 4-H Congress in Atlanta, GA, Citizenship Washington Focus in Washington, D.C., and numerous conferences and leadership events across the state.

Mary and her childhood friends teamed up to win competitive events in 4-H and FFA, ultimately leading to Mary attaining the American FFA Degree and being elected to serve as the Montana State FFA secretary in 2002. Serving as a state FFA officer added seven more lifelong friends to her circle and opened more doors as she entered college at Montana State University (MSU) in Bozeman that same fall. While in college, she worked for the Montana 4-H Foundation and the Agriculture Dean's office at MSU. Mary loved children and especially kids involved in agriculture. Early professionally, she served as the 4-H youth development program manager for the University of California system as the 4-H specialist for the city of San Francisco and San Mateo County. She later focused on youth as the event manager at the Kootenai County Fairgrounds in Coeur d'Alene and again as the 4-H youth agent for Lewis and Clark counties in Helena, MT. Mary worked for ORigen in Billings and Hogan's Ranchers Ag Supply in Deer Lodge, MT.

She earned certifications in Ranching for Profit, advanced in animal nutrition training, presented at national conferences on youth and volunteer management, and was an officer with the Blackfoot Cattlewomen and Rocky Mountain Stockgrowers Association. She especially enjoyed helping with event planning and fundraising for several Montana chapters of the Mule Deer Foundation, AIDS charities in California, and youth events everywhere she lived. Through all of her endeavors, efforts and professional engagements, Mary placed people above everything except her Lord.

Personal and professional opportunities aligned in 2020 for Mary to realize her longtime dream of owning her own business. She incorporated Diamond D Ranch Insurance and helped ranchers across Montana mitigate risk through precipitation insurance.

To know Mary was to be forever positively impacted by Mary. Mary had a radiance and love that lit up any interaction. She loved life and was a student of all that was around her. With 8 billion people in the world, you were either Mary's friend or someone she hadn't met yet. There was no in between.



Jack Larson; 1957-2023

Jack Raymond Larson—Mr. Larson, Dad and Papa—was called to his heavenly home the morning of Nov. 1 at his home in Miles City, MT, after a short, courageous battle with cancer.

Jack was born on March 14, 1957, in Billings, MT, the youngest of three boys born to Orville and Violet Larson. Jack grew up on the family's farm, where his passion for agriculture was born. Jack attended school in Huntley Project, graduating from high school in 1975. Jack's love of agriculture and his early involvement in FFA—and role as a state FFA officer—prompted him to attend Montana State University, graduating in 1979 with a bachelor's degree in agricultural education. It was during this time that his good friend, Verlin Miller, introduced Jack to Marian Milmine. Jack often shared with his children that God told him that she was the one—and that the courtship was a challenge, as she was so shy!

After college, Jack started his teaching career in Melstone, MT, a community and position that would forever hold a special place in his heart. Jack taught in Melstone for four years. On July 31, 1983, Jack married the love of his life, Marian. Jack and Marian Larson moved to Miles City from Melstone in 1983, a transition that placed Jack as the new agricultural education teacher at Custer County District High School (CCDHS). Building one of the largest programs in the state, his 1,000-plus high school graduates amassed many state and national awards and scholarships. In 2004, Jack started at Miles Community College as the agricultural instructor, a position he would hold until 2008. A true educator at heart, a phone call from a former student prompted Jack to enter new territory in 2010 as the vocational instructor and coordinator at Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility in Miles City, a position he would maintain until the fall of 2019.

Jack and Marian were blessed with 40 years of marriage and three children: Garrett (1988), Jordan (1990) and Inga (1992). Jack revealed in his role as "Papa" to his two grandsons, Jaxton and Walker, who adored him. Jack's Christian faith was essential to the life he built with Marian; Jack and Marian were members of Grace Bible Church for 40-plus years.

Over the course of 40-plus years working with youth and adults in agricultural and vocational education, Jack touched many lives, both in and out of the classroom, always instilling and living by the FFA motto: Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, Living to Serve. Jack served on several community and state boards and advisory committees during his lifetime. For several years, Jack was involved with the Ag Committee for the Chamber of Commerce and the Custer County Rural Volunteer Fire; he also helped facilitate the local Toast Masters International group and the local Republican committee. Jack was a director on the Montana FFA Foundation Board for the past two decades. A lifelong musician, Jack also ran the state FFA Talent Contest for many

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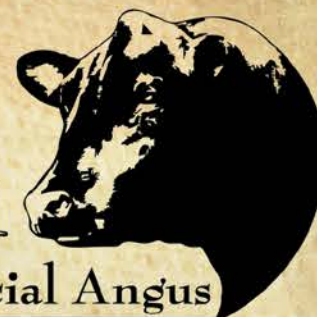


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Partnership helps landowner stave off feral hogs

If anything is worse than a pasture rooted up by feral hogs, it's a pasture that dries and hardens after hogs leave damaged areas the size of tractor tires. Freddie Leroux's damaged pastures need to be repaired and reseeded. He waits for soaking rains to soften the ground so he can smooth out ruts.

Leroux works with Univer-

sity of Missouri (MU) Extension feral hog outreach educator Kevin Crider and others to eradicate feral hogs through the Missouri Feral Hog Elimination Partnership.

The partnership is funded by the 2018 U.S. Farm Bill and managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation. More than 15 federal and state entities, including MU Extension,

the U.S. Forest Service and USDA, work together to eliminate feral hogs on public and private lands in 27 southern Missouri counties.

Leroux acquired the 1,600 acres of pristine rolling hills and forest that adjoin Missouri Department of Conservation property for conservation, recreation and hunting. The area is largely unpopulated, with

deep ravines in the drainage system of the Current River.

The land is also premium real estate for feral hog herds called sounders that damage land, trees, water sources and wildlife.

Relatively undisturbed for centuries, no humans live there. Trees provide safe cover and a place for hogs to scratch with their bristly bodies and

mark their territory. That's satisfying for the hogs, but it's usually deadly for saplings.

The woods are a buffet for feral hogs, with eggs of nesting turkeys and other ground nesting fowl, and vulnerable wildlife like deer and rabbits. Grubs and earthworms, their food of choice, grow in the warm-season grass ecosystem and beneath trees. Acorns are

a fall favorite. Ponds, streams and rivers provide drinking water and serve as wallowing holes. It's pig paradise.

Acres of land used for agriculture and forestry "bloomed and mushroomed" with feral hogs when recreational hog hunting became popular in southern Missouri, says Leroux. Escaped hogs bred until the woods filled with the beady-eyed beasts.

Five feral hogs can quickly turn into 30 because of their prolific breeding habits, says Leroux. They breed early and often. Sows can breed by 6 months of age and give birth to two litters of 6-12 piglets each.

Leroux says he has only seen one feral hog on his land, but cameras on his property tell a different tale. As many as 30 feral hogs roam his land in a sounder at night. They use their snouts to root up pastureland, wildlife plots and fences. Worn paths throughout the woods show where they go on their nocturnal rampages.

Leroux says he is glad to support the Missouri Feral Hog Elimination Partnership and appreciates the expertise of Crider and USDA wildlife specialists. "MU Extension and USDA have this down to a science. It's a great example of partnership," he says.

He gives them full access to his land and helps to promote the partnership to other landowners. He also is glad that local Soil and Water Conservation Districts received funding to buy equipment to lend to landowners to repair damaged land. The equipment includes no-till drills, cultipackers and harrows.

Leroux tries to be a good steward of the land so that the next generation of his family can enjoy its natural beauty. He uses practices recommended by MU Extension, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Missouri Department of Conservation. He plants native warm-season grasses and wildlife food plots, performs prescribed burns and thins timber.

The success of the Missouri Feral Hog Elimination Partnership depends on landowners like Leroux, Crider says. The group removed 6,289 hogs in 2022, worked with 709 landowners and scouted 3.7 million acres, mostly south of Interstate 44.

With the group's help, the total number of acres of watershed occupied by feral hogs in Missouri has fallen by nearly 65% since 2016. 2022 marked the second year that numbers declined, with efforts in Iron, Shannon, Wayne and Reynolds counties netting the best results.

To report feral hog damage or receive assistance, call the Missouri Department of Conservation at 573-522-4115 ext. 3296 or visit mdc.mo.gov/feralhog.

Funding for this project comes from the Feral Swine Control Program through the USDA as part of the 2018 Farm Bill. Missouri Department of Conservation is the lead agency on the project. — MU Extension

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- 56 head are bred AI July 2, 2023 to Sitz Essential 731J and cleaned up with SCR & TL calving ease sires. Majority due to the AI date.

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THE VIEWPOINT

with Blake Nuffer

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.

For nearly 15 years, Blake Nuffer has operated the Montana Livestock Auction (MLA) near Ramsay, MT. In addition to his time serving western Montana producers by establishing price discovery at MLA, Blake also has experience in the video marketing sector as a past Superior Livestock Auction representative.

“Coming out of the video portion of the industry I had the opportunity to buy MLA, and so I did,” Blake told WLJ. “I have a great team here that helps me, and I just couldn’t have it any better, that’s for sure.”

As a regional manager for Superior, Blake worked extensively with helping producers market their calves. Now, as a seasoned

auction market owner, Blake sees the value of a relationship between video auctions and auction markets, and the opportunity both lend producers.

“They go hand in hand,” Blake said. “We’re all in it together.”

Blake is a strong proponent of regional auction markets and says they play a role in not just the local community, but the region, helping to drive the market and true price discovery. Educating more people about true price discovery isn’t just better for

producers, but for the industry as a whole, he said.

“I think that something that everybody needs to remember is that we as livestock markets in Montana and in the United States are right there with the ranchers,” Blake said. “They make money, we make money. We’re all in the same boat.”

It’s not only a mutually beneficial relationship, but one that MLA loves to kindle and grow. “We love to support the local communities and the youth groups,” Blake said. “And I’m a big-time sup-

porter of scholarships to those youth in agriculture.”

MLA

MLA holds sales every week, and multiple sales a week during the fall. The feeder cattle sale season is kicked off in September by the Cream of the Crop I sale, followed by the Cream of the Crop II sale. From October through the rest of the year, MLA holds special feeder cattle sales on Fridays and regular and special stock cow sales on Tuesdays. In addition, the sale barn also hosts several seedstock sales throughout the year.

Blake emphasized MLA’s willingness to help their customers market their livestock in any way possible, even if it means adding a new sale. “We pretty well will bend over backwards to get it done,” he said.

Blake said the location of MLA is prime for buyers and sellers not just in Montana, but in neighboring states and Canada. The market draws cattle from the Canadian border all the way south to Utah and Idaho, thanks to

the centrally located Interstate 15, giving “a great value for players.”

With the new True West beefpacking plant being built in Twin Falls, ID, Blake projects even more buyers coming up to purchase genetics in western Montana.

Adding value

To add value to a calf crop, Blake stressed the importance of preparing calves as much as possible to be loaded onto a truck and shipped a thousand miles away. This includes administering vaccinations, implementing a good mineral program, deworming and having a proper weaning program in place.

“If you’re going to wean a calf, wean them for 45 days,” he said. “There’s no 30-day weans around the country—that is not a weaned calf. Forty to 45 days is a weaned calf.”

In addition, to reap the full benefits of consigning at an auction market, Blake recommends consigning cattle early and getting info to the barn two to three weeks in advance so the cattle can be promoted. At MLA, a consignment list is posted to the market’s website, which buyers appreciate and utilize, Blake said.

Market predictions

Blake said historically, the last couple of weeks in October tend to take a dip in the market. Markets already seem to have adjusted back though, with buyer demand fantastic at the most recent sale. He predicts the feeder cattle market is going to stay fairly steady throughout the rest of the year, along with the cull cow market, with some slight fluctuations. Blake projects that as cow numbers get shorter, the market may climb higher into December.

Coming up in late November, MLA will be hosting a stock cow sale, offering more than 1,000 bred cows. In October, demand was solid for females, with younger cows and pairs selling around the \$3,000 mark, and middle-aged and younger cows selling at \$2,500-2,700, he said.

Although Montana received a lot of moisture last year, he doesn’t see the drought being over quite yet and thinks producers are go-

ing to remain cautious as they move into spring and summer. However, with hay abundant and the price point decent, Blake does expect producers to step out and take a few more risks, perhaps beginning to rebuild the cow herd in 2024.

“We’re dealing with historic low numbers and I truly believe we have the opportunity to keep this market awfully good for the next two, three years,” he said. He noted, however, “I don’t think the rebuilding of this cow herd is going to go as fast as we all maybe thought it was going to.”

He continued that some producers may need a chance to play catch up for a year or 18 months, which will slow herd rebuilding a bit. “There’s nothing wrong with that,” he said. “Let those producers come back and be solid for their opportunity to grow that herd. Let’s come back so that we can continue for generations to come.”

Blake is optimistic about the future of the industry and expects the next few years to be positive. He stressed that a year from now, we could be living in a new America and enjoying some very good times for a while, and he is excited to see what happens, and hoping for the best.

“We’re all in this together and let’s stay in it together. No pointing of the fingers—go forward and enjoy the life that we have been blessed to have.”

— Blake Nuffer

“We’re all in this together and let’s stay in it together,” Blake finished. “No pointing of the fingers—go forward and enjoy the life that we have been blessed to have.” — Anna Miller, WLJ managing editor

The benefits of winter forage snow cover

While winter is still several weeks away, much of the Great Plains recently received the first snowfall of the season. This is a great time to remember the benefits of snow cover to winter forages, especially alfalfa.

The most significant roles snow cover has in protecting winter forages is to provide insulation to and prevent evaporation from the soil. By trapping heat energy, snow cover limits the depth of the frost layer which protects forages from the damaging freeze-thaw cycle and mitigates winter kill.

The effectiveness of this protection is dependent on how early in the season the snow cover is established. Late fall and early winter snowstorms collect and insulate the ground

before too much heat is lost from the soil.

Having some stubble at the end of the growing season is a great way to catch this much-needed snow. If a late season harvest is unavoidable, cut high to ensure snow trapping stubble can still function. In an ideal situation, this snow insulation, winter hardy variety selection, and giving forages the chance to properly winterize in the fall will keep winter kill to a minimum.

Snow is a great insulator and can help forages survive the winter. While snow may not always be a welcome sight, it can help to ensure your winter forage crop survives and thrives next season. — Samantha Daniel, Nebraska Extension



Blake Nuffer

Courtesy photo



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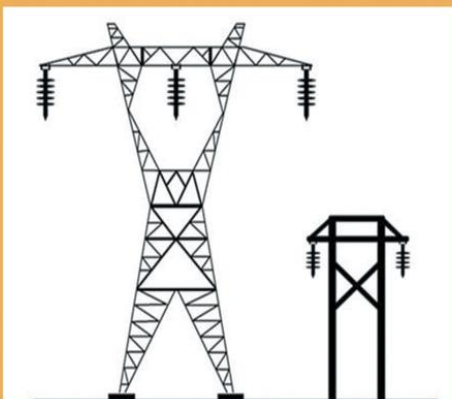
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Farm bill programs need an extension

The current farm bill programs will likely need an extension to the end of next September, the chairman of the House Agriculture Committee said recently at events with agricultural leaders around Oklahoma City, OK.

Rep. Glenn "GT" Thompson (R-PA-15) spoke on Nov. 6 to about 500 agricultural bankers from around the country then held a forum with Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture Blayne Arthur and Rep. Frank Lucas (R-OK-03), a fellow member of

the House Agriculture Committee.

Thompson's comments declare all "four corners" of the House and Senate Agriculture Committee agree an extension is needed.

Thompson said there have been mixed messages about a farm bill extension and what it means. Right now, Thompson said there isn't enough time left in the House calendar to get a farm bill completed. So far, neither the House nor the Senate have released any bill language.

"We were always going to have the need for some type of long-term extension," Thompson said at the bankers meeting, and reiterated later. "A lot of people think a long-term extension means, 'Oh, you're not going to do your job.' That's not the case."

Provides certainty

Lucas, a former chairman of the House Agriculture Committee as well, backed up Thompson at the forum with producers. "Here, an

extension provides certainty and certainty is one of those things we need badly," Lucas said.

While the process on a new farm bill is slow, Thompson emphasized he wants the bill to be "bi-partisan and bi-cameral."

On an extension, Rep. David Scott (D-GA-13), the House Agriculture Committee ranking member, also recently called on a one-year extension of the farm bill. Scott said the committee continues to work in a bipar-

tisan way, but "extremism" in the House GOP has hobbled work on legislation.

"A one-year extension is the responsible thing to do. It allows our farmers, ranchers and foresters to operate with an element of certainty while we continue working on a bipartisan five-year farm bill," Scott said.

Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and ranking member Sen. John Boozman (R-AR) also have called for an extension.

ity by commodity."

Thompson pointed to financial challenges facing farmers who grow peanuts and cotton, suggesting they could see some changes in reference prices. He also talked about allowing some adjustments for base acres. That's a critical issue, especially for young farmers. "To break in and not have that safety net, it's just harder," Thompson said.

The committee is looking to see if there is some flexibility to allow USDA to enroll new

"A one-year extension is the responsible thing to do. It allows our farmers, ranchers and foresters to operate with an element of certainty while we continue working on a bipartisan five-year farm bill."

— Rep. David Scott

Working on extension language

The House Agriculture Committee has been working on extension language that would protect key programs such as the commodity safety net and Dairy Margin Coverage. The extension would run until Sept. 30, the end of the current fiscal year.

"That's not to mean we're going to wait until September to do a farm bill," Thompson said. "My goal is to do a farm bill as quickly as we can out of the House. And I think we're prepared to do that."

Without an extension passed by Congress before the end of December, commodity programs risk reverting back to policies going back to the 1930s and the Dairy Margin Coverage would cease. Thompson called Dec. 31, "a critical deadline" to avoid consequences that would negatively impact the farm economy.

While Congress effectively gridlocked for a month over the GOP conflicts involving the House speaker, Thompson said another reason the farm bill process has slowed is the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) hasn't provided budget scores on certain farm bill proposals. Those budget scores are required by law. Thompson also said USDA has been slow responding to technical requests. "So those are the two drags on us at this point," Thompson said.

Some farm bill ideas

On reference prices, Thompson said the lack of new money for the farm bill means lawmakers are being forced to look at each commodity's financial circumstances individually rather than adjust every commodity. That comes after economists concluded increasing reference prices for every commodity by 10% would cost around \$20 billion over 10 years.

"Money's tight," Thompson said. "It's difficult so we are specifically looking commod-

base acres for new farmers, Thompson said.

Thompson also would like to see some sort of disaster aid added to the crop insurance title. USDA and Congress have been providing ad-hoc disaster aid. Thompson said that often is more expensive because Congress uses disaster programs for a "Christmas tree" to add all kinds of other spending. It would be cheaper, he said, to create a program for farmers rather than relying on ad-hoc programs. The problem is the CBO doesn't factor in possible savings in that way.

Pointing to the Supreme Court ruling on California's Proposition 12, Thompson said there needs to be language in the farm bill that allows agricultural products to continue being shipped across state lines and avoiding "trade wars." The main bill surrounding that issue is the Ending Agricultural Trade Suppression (EATS) Act, but Thompson said that bill "has been demonized a bit," and farm bill language wouldn't exactly include the EATS Act, but some similar provisions. The bankers were focused on the credit title of the farm bill. Thompson said a group of 27 lawmakers are looking at ways to increase access to credit. He expects there will be more provisions to help young and beginning farmers with greater access to credit. That would include increasing the limits on Farm Service Agency loans. He'd also like to see some reduction in the paperwork needed for loans as well.

"How do we make that administrative process easier and more efficient?" Thompson asked.

Thompson also wants to see language in the farm bill that would ensure solar projects are not competing with producers for farm ground. Thompson said he want to see less "green tape," describing "ESG"—environmental, social and governance—as "extra stupid government." — **Chris Clayton, DTN agpolicy editor**

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YW 141
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LOT 53 T K Steamboat K647



CED -2
BW 3.7
WW 84
YW 143
SC 1.13
MILK 32

T K Steamboat D307 x TEX Playbook 5437

LOT 1 T K Scale House K756



CED 7
BW 0.4
WW 83
YW 141
SC 1.03
MILK 33

S A V Scale House 0845 x Musgrave 316 Stunner

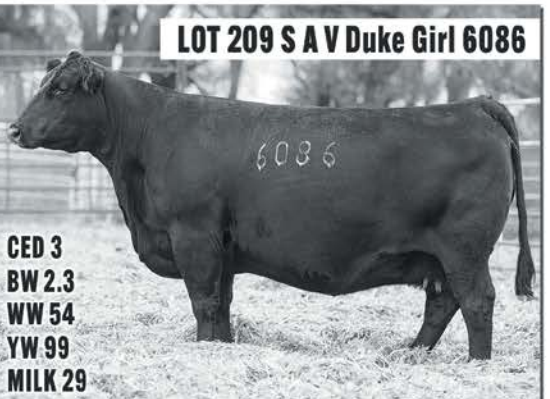
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Omega-6 fatty acids may be key to mitigate early embryonic loss

Utilizing omega-6 fatty acids as a management strategy to mitigate early embryonic loss, a major cause of reproductive and economic losses to the U.S. beef industry, is the focus of a new Texas A&M AgriLife Research-led project.

Omega-6 fatty acids have long been touted as essential fatty acids in human health and are typically derived from vegetable oils, seeds and nuts.

A team of researchers in the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Department of Animal Science has determined these same fatty acids could be a management tool in cattle pregnancies, particularly the first 28 days of gestation.

Reinaldo Cooke, Ph.D., the Burkhardt Endowed Professor for Beef Cattle Research in the Department of Animal Science, will lead the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture funded project, Unraveling the Benefits of Feeding a Lipid Source Rich in Omega-6 Fatty Acids to Pregnancy Establishment and Maintenance in Beef Females.

Joining Cooke from the Department of Animal Science will be Rodolfo Cardoso, DVM, Ph.D., associate professor and reproductive physiologist, and Ky Pohler, Ph.D., associate professor and chair of the Pregnancy and Developmental Programming Area of Excellence.

Others on the grant project are Vitor Mercadante, Ph.D., DVM, professor, Department of Large Animal Clinical Sci-

ences, College of Veterinary Medicine, Virginia Tech University; Pedro Fontes, Ph.D., assistant professor, beef cattle reproductive physiology, Department of Animal and Dairy Science, University of Georgia; Martha Ortega Obando, Ph.D., assistant professor of reproductive physiology, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Cooke said cow-calf systems represent 86% of beef operations and 84% of the beef cattle population in the country. However, reproductive failure is a key factor limiting cow-calf productivity, and pregnancy loss has been recognized as one of the main reproductive challenges in cattle.

Most pregnancy losses occur during the first 28 days of gestation, he said, and these losses are classified as early embryonic loss.

"Our group provided evidence that supplementing beef cows with a lipid source rich in omega-6 fatty acids during the early embryonic period increased pregnancy success by promoting conceptus development, establishment and maintenance of the pregnancy," Cooke said.

These results diverged from the traditional concept developed in the dairy industry that omega-6 fatty acids are detrimental to early pregnancy, so Cooke said the mechanisms by which omega-6 fatty acids improved pregnancy success warrant full clarification.

"We need to provide biological support to nutritional interventions that minimize

early embryonic loss," he said.

Cooke said they are searching for the optimal nutritional additives to provide beef cattle during the breeding season.

Omega-6 fatty acids act as an inflammatory and have been fed in beef cattle diets, but they need answers on how much is too much. And omega-3 fatty acids, which have the opposite effect as an anti-inflammatory, are not commonly fed to beef cattle, so there is no data.

"We want to answer questions of how much omega-6 is too much; that's the first project," he said.

"The second project is comparing the two, using the dose of omega-6 that we know works and then see if omega-3 has complementary effects."

He explained that the healing process in a body is mediated by inflammation—inflammation stimulates the growth of certain cells and body reactions. So, in their research, they are looking to determine how much is just enough to add fuel for embryo growth and positive pregnancy development.

Dairy cows inherently eat a lot of fat, so when fed high amounts of omega-6 there were negative effects on reproduction. But in beef cattle, it's unknown how much is too much.

"The omega-6 fuels the embryo to develop," he said. "But if we increase the omega-6 to a higher level, will the reproductive effects be negative as in the dairy industry? It may cause too much inflammation. And then, if we know how much omega-6 is good, how does that compare to omega-3 at

different rates."

The idea is to determine if there are complementary effects between the two, as omega-3 would be good in terms of preventing too much inflammation, but omega-6 fatty acids would provide fuel for embryo development.

"It's fine-tuning what is too much or too little," he said. "We want to find the balance between the two to find good nutritional strategies for beef cattle reproductive management." — **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension**

Easterday suit against Tyson dismissed with prejudice

A federal judge dismissed a suit against Tyson Fresh Meats with prejudice over an oral contract to sell beef to Japan under Easterday Ranches' "Cody's Beef" label and split profits from the sale.

U.S. District Judge Stanley Bastian in the Eastern District of Washington ruled that lawyers for Cody Easterday failed to demonstrate the oral contract contained the requirements of offer, acceptance and an objective manifestation. Bastian continued the terms of the contract asserted by Easterday were not plausible as he relied on previous business arrangements they would

share the profit in the venture.

Bastian asked if Easterday Ranches and Cody Easterday were to share in the venture's profits, what is Tyson entitled to? Bastian said it is plausible to split the profit three ways, not as Easterday asserts. Bastian said the oral agreement failed to show the facts that it was an enforceable joint venture between Easterday and Tyson.

According to previous court documents, in 2013, Tyson approached Easterday to use his name and likeness to sell beef to Japan's Nippon Ham Foods under the "Cody's Beef" label. Easterday and Tyson had an

agreement for a joint venture to share the risk and profits of supplying cattle to Tyson equally.

The documents also state there was no formal written contract, but a series of emails in 2020 provides written evidence of a venture.

Bastian further stated that, "A party with unclean hands cannot recover in equity." Easterday, in 2021, pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud and was sentenced by Bastian to 11 years in federal prison; therefore, Easterday's "unclean hands" prevented him from recovering any damages.

Bastian wrote Easterday's

claims for equitable relief were derived from the cattle feeding agreements subject to the fraud committed by Easterday, and the relationship between Easterday and Easterday Ranches is inseparable.

Charles R. Macedo, partner from Amster, Rothstein & Eisenstein LLP and counsel for Easterday, told *WLJ* in an email they are disappointed with the court's decision.

"We believe Mr. Easterday has a valid claim against Tyson for the use of his name and photograph as part of the Cody's Beef program," Macedo said. — **Charles Wallace, WLJ contributing editor**



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Panama Canal water source still shrinking, slowing ship traffic

The Panama Canal continues to experience serious challenges because of drought. The Panama Canal is not a sea-level canal and instead utilizes locks, which means the operation of the

canal functions via normal precipitation to fill Gatun Lake, the reservoir that feeds fresh water to the canal locks. According to the Panama Canal Authority (ACP), over the past five years, the aver-

age water level at Gatun Lake during November is 86.7 feet. The current depth is 79.8 feet.

“The drought caused by the El Niño phenomenon continues to impact the Panama Canal’s reservoir system and, as a result, water availability has been reduced,” said ACP in a press release. “Therefore, with less than two months left until the end of the rainy season, the canal and the country face the challenge of the upcoming dry season with a minimum water reserve that must guarantee supply for more than 50% of the population and, at the same time, maintain the operations of the interoceanic waterway.”

ACP notes on its website, “Since the beginning of the 2023 dry season, the Panama Canal adopted several water-

saving and conservation measures in the transit operation, including the use of water-saving basins in the Neopanamax Locks and cross-filling in the Panamax Locks.”

The group continued, “In addition, the late arrival of this year’s rainy season, and lack of precipitation in the canal watershed has obliged the Canal to reduce the transit capacity to approximately 32 vessels per day since July 30, 2023, while managing the available rainfall over the watershed to maintain Gatun Lake at a level that would offer a competitive draft for our clients. On Sept. 29, 2023, the Canal announced an additional reduction in capacity, effective Nov. 1, 2023.”

The ACP noted that, even with all the measures taken,

the level of Gatun Lake has continued to decline to unprecedented levels for this time of year.

“The recorded precipitation for October has been the lowest on record since 1950 (41% below), and so far, 2023 ranks as the second driest year for the same period. Based on the rainfall projections for the following weeks, which as of today is expected to be 38% less for the rest of the year, the ACP finds it necessary to further reduce the daily transit capacity to postpone the need for additional draft reductions below the current 13.41m (44 feet) TFW (Tropical Fresh Water of Gatun Lake.)”

On Oct. 20, the ACP said in a statement on its website that the extraordinary auc-

tions offered in the Panamax Locks (for supers and regulars) would be suspended for transit dates Oct. 23 until Oct. 31, 2023.

“Therefore, from Saturday, Oct. 21, until Sunday, Oct. 29, the abovementioned auctions will not be offered for these dates. The daily auction offered seven days prior to transit in the Neopanamax locks will remain unchanged. The ACP may announce additional measures as deemed necessary to guarantee operational efficiency.”

ACP continued, “Any slots that become available with less than four days due to cancellations, changes in date or other reasons in the Panamax locks, will continue to be offered through extraordinary auctions. Only the Panamax locks daily auctions are being suspended.”

TradeWinds, a global shipping news source, reported Nov. 1 on its website, “Owners and charterers desperate to get their ships through a drought-hit Panama Canal have driven transit slot auction prices to a new record. Fearnley Securities reported that on Oct. 30, bidding for a crossing was concluded at a whopping \$2.85 million. Avance Gas chief executive Oystein Kalleklev told TradeWinds that the new record holder was a VLGC (very large gas carrier) heading southbound. Ships had been paying up to \$2.4 million so far in 2023.” These auctions are usually won by vessels carrying LNG (liquefied natural gas) or LPG (liquefied petroleum gas).

Mike Steenhoek, executive director at Soy Transportation Coalition, told DTN via email, “The Panama Canal is a critical link in the supply chain for U.S. soybeans and grain—facilitating a significant volume of exports originating from the Gulf of Mexico to be shipped to customers in Asia.”

He continued, “In 2022, approximately 600 million bushels of U.S. soybeans transited the canal. Delays at the Panama Canal will continue to be costly and will cause exporters to explore alternatives. The recent low water conditions on the Mississippi River and the current conditions at the Panama Canal serve as a reminder that lack of precipitation can impede the ability to grow a crop but also impede the ability to transport that crop.”

According to the American Commercial Barge Line website, “Due to the lack of rainwater, there is significant delay to transit through the Panama Canal. Both north and southbound vessels are multiple days behind schedule, with smaller vessels averaging roughly a week’s worth of delay. In turn, expect a delay to berthing schedules in the Gulf (NOLA, Mobile, Houston).”

As of now, there is not much relief expected in the near term for the drought conditions in the Panama Canal, according to ACP, and expectations are that further reductions to transit through there could be put in place. — Mary Kennedy, DTN basis analyst



YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

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

Dec. 1 – Angus/Talon Youth Educational Learning Program student intern applications are due Dec. 1. Details: bit.ly/AngusFoundationTalonProgram or JBoester@Angus.org.

Dec. 1 – The American Angus Association has five internship positions for the summer of 2024 in the fields of marketing, publications, communications, events and junior activities, and Angus Genetics Inc. Details: angus.org/careers.

Jan. 10 – Applications for the Angus Foundation's spot at the Young Cattlemen's Conference (YCC) can be found at tinyurl.com/3etp6sdu. YCC is a program developed for up-and-coming cattle producers who are interested in seeing every part of the supply chain from production to marketing, to Capitol Hill.



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¹Pogge, D.J. et al. 2012. J. Anim. Sci. 90:2692-2698.
²Harvey, K.M. et al. 2021. Animals. 11(4): 1159.
³Palomares, R.A. et al. 2021. 102nd Conference of Research Workings in Animal Diseases. Chicago, IL. 433.
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You can't manage what you don't measure: Range records

The best businesses are the ones that are properly managed in ways that result in profit. However, if you're a livestock producer this is probably where you're thinking, "easier said than done." At the core, though, livestock production is no different than any other business out there—effective management requires good metrics, and metrics come from measurements. This sentiment is embodied by a quote by the late Peter Drucker, "The father of modern business management," who said, "You can't manage what you can't measure."

You probably have measurements—or metrics—of your operation with respect to livestock production records. Knowing which cows are most fertile, productive, and therefore profitable, can inform decisions about culling and perhaps replacements for the breeding herd. Likewise, there's abundant measurements that you use for bull selection, in the form of EPDs, and you likely keep track of how that bull (or semen) performed for your cowherd. Having this information allows you to evaluate past decisions and plan the genetic progress and performance of your herd.

But what records do you keep for your pastures? Having pasture records is just as valuable as those records you keep on your herd. Records help evaluate your rangeland management each year and guide plans for the next grazing season. Evaluating pasture production status is challenging

because landscape change is generally very slow; it can be nearly imperceptible to even the most careful observer. Knowing that grasslands are recovering or moving to a more productive condition requires a commitment to careful and repeated observation.

Fortunately, most of those observations are easily made; the challenge is making them on a regular basis and recording them. So, what records should you keep?

Since moisture is so critical to grazing land condition in arid and semi-arid regions, good records of precipitation are a necessity. Temperatures (daily high and low) are also useful in understanding plant growth and production. Late spring freezes delay and reduce growth; early fall frost ends growth and limits production; and cool summer temperatures can boost cool-season grass growth, but limit growth of warm-season grasses. Accessing historical records from a nearby weather station may provide guidance about "average" expectations for rainfall, but records taken on the ranch provide much better guidance about current year growing conditions and information to guide immediate grazing decisions. Precipitation and temperature can vary dramatically over very small distances; it is not at all unusual for a rainstorm that drenched your neighbor's pastures to totally miss yours. Rain gauges and thermometers are inexpensive; many require little maintenance and can record or store

information for several days.

When did you turn livestock onto each pasture? How long did they stay there? How many animals, which species (cattle, sheep), what class (cows, steers, ewes, etc.), and how much did they weigh? These records, especially when recorded over several years, can help explain changes in your pasture vegetation... and provide information to guide modifications. Without good, consistent records, you will find it difficult to remember exactly what happened in that pasture and it will be harder to make changes to your management strategies. Keeping these pasture records in a pocket notebook in the same manner as calving records can be a valuable habit.

Determining the current year's production and utilization doesn't require a college degree or a lot of training. A couple of inexpensive tools and a little time will yield lots of useful information. A small hoop,

a pair of clippers, a paper bag, and a small hanging scale are all you need to estimate production. Toss the hoop into the pasture, clip to the ground all the vegetation rooted in the hoop and put it in the bag, and then weigh the bag on the scale. Repeat a few more times in the pasture.

The idea here is to make sure you are getting a representative sample of what's in your pasture and while "A picture is worth a thousand words" is true, several pictures will provide you with more details. Thus, don't take just one sample... drive your ATV or ride your horse around and take several samples across your pasture.

We recommend a 0.96 ft² hoop and a scale that weighs in grams. Zero the scale for the empty bag weight. The weight of your clippings multiplied by 100 gives you pound/acre of wet forage if you use the 0.96 ft² hoop. You can record the wet

weight or translate it to dry weight; what is important is that you do it the same way every year at about the same time—if you end up doing it slightly different than your neighbor, that's okay—consistency is the name of the game here. Utilization records can be as simple as recording a comment about the level of use when stock are removed. More accurate estimates can be obtained by clipping inside and outside of grazing exclosures using your hoop.

"Monitoring" might sound like an academic, Ivory Tower word for an intimidating task that you "don't have time to do" or feel like "you don't have the degree" to do correctly. Wrong! You don't need to be a botanist, a range ecologist, or any of the "-ists" to conduct monitoring, especially with the advent of the smartphone. One of the most effective monitoring techniques uses a camera. Choose one or two spots in your pasture

that you think are representative of the condition of that pasture. Mark the spot (GPS, fencepost, etc.) so you can find it each year. Take landscape photos from that spot; be sure to either date stamp the photo, put a whiteboard or cardboard sign in the picture that tells where and when the photo was taken, or you can "annotate" the photo on your phone with the date and location. It's best if you can take your photos at about the same time each year.

You can also take photos of a plot on the ground, using the hoop described above; make sure you can find the same spot again for future photos. Print the photos out and bring them with you the next year so that you can get the same view each time. You can look at the photos taken of the same landscape or plot over a series of years and detect changes that you might miss without the photographic record. — **South Dakota State University Extension**

Groups call for review of grazing allotments

GILA (from page 1)

certain conservation measures are adhered to," the suit reads. However, the groups argue these determinations are based on commitments to remove cattle from grazing streamside habitat during the spring and summer.

The environmentalists claim they conducted their own surveys of the critical habitat areas in April and December 2022 and found cattle impacts that included grazing during the non-grazing season, disturbed and degraded soils, and utilization beyond authorized allowances.

The groups then submitted a letter in April 2023 documenting their findings, and conducted follow-up surveys to see if BLM had "remedied the unlawful grazing," finding they had not. The groups sent an additional notice in May.

"BLM and the Service were required to reinstate and complete consultation when presented with evidence documenting extensive cattle use and damage within the Middle Gila River allotments in violation of the 2012 and 2018 biological opinions," the lawsuit read.

The federal agencies did not respond to the notice letters, leading the groups to sue.

The Center and Maricopa Audubon Society claim their field surveys documented open gates, downed fences, unauthorized cattle and extensive

damage to the river's riparian areas. The groups also allege up to 92% of the critical habitat for the two species was damaged by cattle grazing.

The suit calls for the agencies to reinstate and complete consultation on the grazing allotments, prevent further impacts to the species and their habitat, and develop a program for the conservation of species impacted by BLM's cattle grazing.

This is not the first time the Center has sued regarding grazing in the Southwest—the group has also argued against cattle grazing along the Agua Fria, Verde, Gila, San Pedro, Black, Bill Williams, Big Sandy, San Francisco, Tularosa, Blue and Salt rivers, along with other rivers and tributaries in Arizona and New Mexico.

"Litigation and agreements resulting from those surveys require federal agencies to monitor and remove livestock from riparian critical habitat for endangered species," the Center said. "Agency compliance with those agreements has been mixed, with some areas seeing livestock removed from critical habitat, while in other areas unauthorized grazing persists."

The group alleged that livestock grazing is the primary driver of riparian ecosystem damage, and removing livestock from riparian areas is a "component of adaptation to human-caused climate change." — **Anna Miller, WLJ managing editor**

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CALVES	at birth at 3 months and/or weaning		
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50	0.5 mL	-	-
100	1 mL	-	-
150	1.5 mL	-	-
200	2 mL	-	-
300	3 mL	-	-
400	4 mL	-	-
500	5 mL	-	-
600	6 mL	-	-
700	7 mL	-	-
800	-	5.3 mL	-
900	-	6 mL	-
1000	-	6.6 mL	5 mL
1100	-	-	5.5 mL
1200	-	-	6 mL
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Bankers see choppy tides for farmers

Agricultural bankers are a little less concerned about inflation this year but are more uneasy about farmers' liquidity and income.

A primary concern for agricultural lenders this year is to

ensure their farmer customers have strong balance sheets and liquidity coming out of 2023, according to the Agricultural Lender Survey report produced jointly by the American Bankers Association (ABA)

and the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation (Farmer Mac).

The survey, in its eighth year, was released Nov. 6 at the ABA's Agricultural Bankers Conference in Oklahoma City, OK.

Inflation, the top concern for 2021 and 2022, fell to the third-biggest concern for ag bankers this year behind liquidity and farm income.

Interest rates

Ag bankers also are more nervous about the various impacts of higher interest rates on their loan customers. Since the ag bankers met a year ago, the Fed has raised the fund rate from 3.75% to 5.5%. The Fed rate has gone up 1% since the beginning of the year.

Jackson Takach, chief economist and head of Strategy, Research and Analysis for Farmer Mac, suggested the Federal Reserve also is at a crossroads. Inflation has come down, but not to the Fed's 2% target level, which Takach said might be an "unrealistic" goal. Recently, the Fed opted again not to change the short-term

interest rate, keeping it at 5.5%. The Fed also stated it isn't ready to start lowering interest rates.

"They're working with a very strong economy that's basically given them runway to keep rates elevated for longer," Takach said.

Takach said the Fed might settle at a 3-3.5% inflation rate, which realistically could translate into lower interest rates around the 4.5% range, he said.

Takach also stressed the combination of higher interest rates and inflation still does not put agriculture into the same scenario as in the late 1970s and early 1980s. A key difference now is, largely, producers still have stronger income and cash on their balance sheets compared to the late 1970s.

"We're coming from a place of strength, so there's still sufficient liquidity to suffer through high interest rates," Takach said.

Profitability

Ag lenders still estimated nearly three-quarters of their borrowers will remain profit-

able this year and two-thirds will remain profitable through 2024. At the same time, only 28% of lenders reported an increase in borrower profit margins, down from 66% last year.

Lenders expect farm income compression over the next 12 months, with 70% projecting a decline in farm profitability. More than half of agricultural bankers also expressed strong concern about the dairy sector and an increasing number of bankers expressed similar concerns about pork producers, according to the ABA survey.

"Is there a choppy tide out there? I think for some producers we would definitely say yes," said Pauline Van Nuden, an economist with the Center for Farm Financial Management (Finpack) at the University of Minnesota.

Finpack, which looks at financial data of 3,500 farms in 11 states, highlighted that crop farmers and cattle producers are more likely to finish 2023 in the black while dairy and hog producers are expected to report financial losses.

The median income for crop farmers that are part of Finpack

is projected to go from \$385,000 in 2022 to \$171,000 in 2023. The bottom 40% of crop farmers are projected to end up in the red with an average -\$12,000 net income.

Beef producers that are part of the Finpack farms are still projected to see strong income in 2023, with a median income of \$185,000 compared to \$217,000 in 2022.

Farmland values and sales

Bankers continue to see farmland values going up. Overall, lenders' perceptions of farmland values showed an average increase of 11% in 2023, with some variation across regions. Bankers expect farmland values will level off and remain stable over the next year as farm incomes decline and interest rates remain higher.

Takach noted the interest-rate environment has reduced the number of farm sales. Two years ago, the last quarter of 2021 saw more than 600 land sales in Iowa, but that has fallen to about 150 now. Illinois shows a similar pattern of decline. While the number of land sales is down, the percentage of cash sales has been rising as interest rates go up.

"People who are buying land use their cash rather than leverage with a loan," Takach said.

The low volume of land sales also has led to some of those eye-popping per-acre sales in several states.

Caution for bankers

David Kohl, a professor emeritus of agricultural finance at Virginia Tech, warned bankers about customers who repeatedly come to them to refinance in the next couple of years. The more times a farmer seeks to refinance, the more their options narrow, he said.

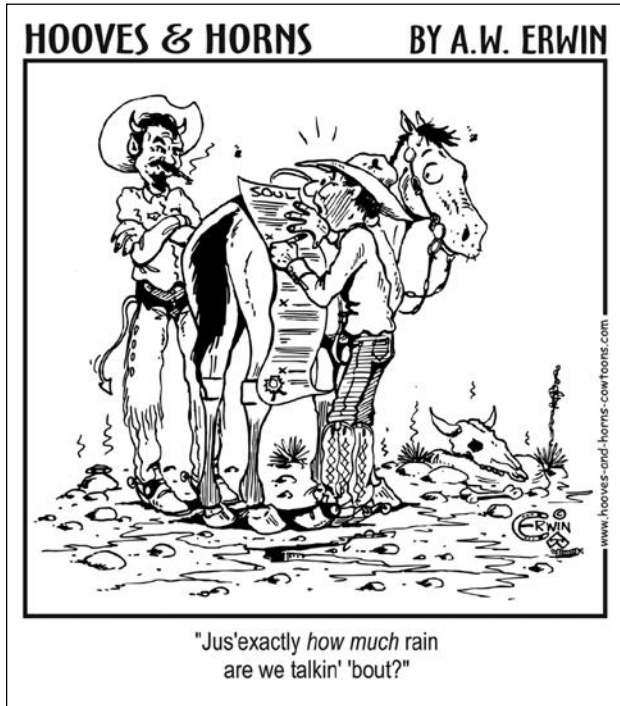
"You are basically throwing good money after bad money," Kohl said.

Ag lenders in their survey reported higher demand for both loans secured by farmland and agricultural production loans this year. Bankers also anticipate loan demand for both categories will increase over the next year.

Counter to what demographics might suggest, Kohl said baby boomers will continue to buy farm ground over the next decade. Once those boomers start hitting their 80s in age, however, they may start to liquidate as healthcare costs and potentially nursing home costs start to rise dramatically.

As Kohl often does, he warned bankers to watch out for farmers buying "killer toys," such as boats, campers, vacation homes and trips to Europe. Another risk is rising credit card debt as well. He cautioned against agricultural bankers getting complacent about monitoring producers' financial statements. A good banker, he said, will do that monitoring for producers to offer better value to them.

Ag bankers in the survey nationally reported lower ag loan delinquencies and charge-off rates in 2023. However, lenders expect credit quality to deteriorate in the coming 12 months, reverting to historic levels. More than 40% of bankers in the survey reported tightening underwriting standards and loan terms in 2023. — Chris Clayton, DTN ag policy editor



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LEGAL LEDGER

Misprint in Oct. 23 WLJ issue

The Oct. 23 issue of WLJ included a chart with the story "Research to enhance the value of beef." The chart was not intended to accompany the article and was included by mistake. We apologize for the error and any inconvenience it may have caused.

ESA protections reinstated for gray wolf

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) issued a final rule on Nov. 3 officially reinstating federal protections on the gray wolf. Following a district court order that vacated the agency's Nov. 3, 2020, rule to remove the wolf from the Endangered Species Act (ESA) list, there have been several appeals to the 9th Circuit Court. In the meantime, USFWS is still bound by the district court order and must reinstate protections to the wolf. The final rule reinstates threatened protections for the wolf in Minnesota, endangered status for the wolf in the 44 states the species was listed prior to the November 2020 delisting, critical habitat for gray wolf in Minnesota and Michigan, and the Section 4(d) rule for the wolf in Minnesota. Gray wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains area retain their delisted status and are not impacted by the final rule. The rule also does not have any impact on the Mexican gray wolf. The rule was effective Nov. 3, although the court order had legal effect upon its February 2022 filing.

More time for Snake River battle

A group of conservation groups has agreed with the Biden administration, Oregon, Washington and several Tribes to an additional pause in litigation over Snake River dam operations for an additional 45 days. The litigation challenges hydropower operations on the Snake River for not doing enough to save salmon from extinction. The litigation has been on hold for the past two years and was set to resume, but a pause has been extended until Dec. 15. By this date, the plaintiffs and federal defendants will either request a multi-year stay of the litigation while a proposed plan to restore salmon is implemented, or the court battle will continue. "On an issue this important, we need to take more time to see if we can move forward outside of the courtroom," said Earthjustice Senior Attorney Amanda Goodin.

States join DOJ in suit against Agri Stats

The states of Minnesota, California, North Carolina and Tennessee have joined a civil antitrust lawsuit filed by the Department of Justice against Agri Stats for anticompetitive behavior. The company is alleged to have organized and managed anticompetitive information with poultry, pork and turkey processors. "We are pleased that our state law enforcement partners in Minnesota, California, North Carolina and Tennessee are joining our efforts to address these serious allegations," said Assistant Attorney General Jonathan Kanter of the Justice Department's Antitrust Division. "We look forward to working closely with state attorneys general to litigate this important case, which affects food prices for consumers across the country." Those with information about collusion in the ag industry are urged to contact the Antitrust Division's Citizen Complaint Center at 1-888-647-3258 or antitrust.complaints@usdoj.gov.

Wolverines to receive ESA protections

North American wolverines are expected to receive protections under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in the coming weeks. Following a May 2022 federal court order, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was ordered to conduct a species status assessment for the wolverine after environmental groups brought suit. The District Court for the District of Montana Missoula Division ruled USFWS must determine by the end of November whether the species requires protections. A status assessment released in September for the wolverine found that "future wolverine populations in the contiguous U.S. may be less secure than we described in our 2018 (species status assessment)." The assessment hints at the possibility for ESA protections: "The best available information suggests that habitat loss as a result of climate change and other stressors are likely to impact the viability of wolverines in the contiguous U.S. through the remainder of this century."

LA board recommends banning rodeos

The Los Angeles Board of Animal Services Commissioners submitted a letter on Oct. 13 to the Los Angeles City Council recommending a total ban of rodeo events in the city of Los Angeles. "These events can be harmful to the health and well-being of the animals that are used in the rodeo competitions and shows, at times resulting in injuries such as sprains and broken limbs," the board decided at an Oct. 10 meeting. While the city council is considering adopting an amendment that would prohibit the use of "harmful implements" at rodeos, the commissioners recommend further action. "While this is a commendable proposal, the Department recommends that the City go further and completely prohibit rodeos in the City to protect the animals involved in these events," the board wrote in a report.

Strategies to implement for low-stress weaning

Weaning is a stressful time for calves. There are social stresses associated with removal from the dam and disrupting social hierarchy, physical stresses of transportation and the marketing system, and nutritional stresses of changing feed and water sources.

Preconditioning on the farm will take care of several of these stressors, but there is still considerable stress in normal weaning programs. There is a lot of interest in finding the best way to wean calves. Most commonly the options are:

- Abrupt weaning, which is stressful and completely changes the calf's environment, diet and social norms.
- Nursing prevention tools, which prevent suckling but maintain contact with the dam.
- Short term separation, which is removal from the dam to acclimate calves to weaning pens, feed and

water sources before complete weaning.

- Fenceline weaning, which is placing cows and calves in adjacent pastures for seven days, allowing contact but preventing suckling.

Researchers from the Oklahoma State University (OSU) College of Veterinary Medicine compared these methods and found that for the two weeks before weaning calves fitted with a nose flap had reduced gains and weaning weight.

During the 28-day preconditioning period, calves that had fenceline access to dams, and calves that had short term (24-hour separation) from dams gained the most, while abrupt weaned and calves fitted with a nose flap pre-weaning gained the least.

The performance of calves over the entire duration of the experiment,

from two weeks pre-weaning to 28 days post-weaning was only 0.85 lb./day for the abrupt weaned calves, 1.1 lb./day for the calves fitted with the nose flap, 1.3 lbs./day for short-term separation calves and 1.5 lbs./day for the fenceline weaned calves.

The reduced performance by the calves fitted with the nose flap can be explained by research that the nose flap decreased activities like grazing, walking, ruminating and playing, while sucking attempts and time spent near the dam increase. Additionally, blood cortisol levels (an indicator of stress) increase when the nose flap is present.

Calves in the fenceline weaning system only spent two days with the majority of time spent within 15 feet of the fence, and time spent near the fence reduced dramatically over the next three days. Fence-

line weaning was shown to reduce indicators of stress and increase grazing and feeding behaviors during the weaning process.

The apparent success of the short-term separation treatment shows the benefits of familiarization of calves to supplements and facilities prior to weaning.

Research from Louisiana showed little carryover of the benefit of fenceline weaning over the entirety of production, but calves preconditioned for only 21 days gained less during finishing and were 54 lbs. lighter at harvest than calves preconditioned for 42 days, regardless of if fenceline or abrupt weaning were used.

Low-stress weaning techniques can pay dividends to producers adding value through a preconditioning program. — **Paul Beck, OSU Cooperative Extension state beef nutrition specialist**



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Changing the beef narrative for consumers

“As income goes up, there is more meat consumption per capita. As populations get wealthier, they are going to want to eat more like we do,” said Dr. Mike Lohuis, Semex Alliance vice president of research and innovation. Lohuis gave his presentation titled “Changing the Narrative Using Innovative Genetic Selection” during the 2023 Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Symposium July 4, in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Lohuis described the current narrative of livestock as being a high-quality source of protein, an enjoyable food source, a large contributor to economies and essential for developing countries. However, there is another narrative. This narrative focuses on the consumer concerns of environmental impacts, animal welfare, antibiotic use, factory farms, depletion of resources and deforestation.

Environmental concerns

The livestock sector glob-

ally is responsible for 18% of greenhouse gas emissions measured in a CO2 equivalent—which some studies have shown is comparable to emissions from transportation. Thus, the environmental impact per unit of livestock production must be cut by half. This will avoid the increasing level of damage beyond the current level. Stock gases like CO2 will continue to accumulate over time but flow gases like methane could stay constant or decrease over time.

“What’s more important than the amount of methane is the rate of change,” Lohuis explained. “If animal agriculture can decrease the amount of methane emissions, there’s the potential to reduce its warming potential in our atmosphere.”

Animal health and welfare

The health and welfare of beef animals can be difficult to measure in various production systems due to the difficulties in obtaining reliable health and manage-

ment data, and the variation in management of animals contributes to low heritability. However, sensor data can be used to measure health and welfare as the data is abundant, affordable and longitudinal.

Immunity and health data has shown that immune response is more heritable than disease incidence. Thus, high immunity cows respond better to commercial vaccines. Beef producers will soon be able to breed for health and welfare traits due to the increase in innovative genetic technologies.

Beef x dairy

The use of beef semen is now a standard practice for about 90% of dairy herds, which is turning a byproduct into a core product. Changing the narrative begins with changing the mindset of dairy producers to produce beef calves with the same selection pressure that they place on their replacement dairy females.

Sire selection for beef-on-dairy production systems is

critical to address the deficiencies of dairy genetics including slower growth rates, lower feed conversion, ribeye shape, meat color and liver abscesses.

“Beef x dairy animals can lower the environmental footprint of our beef supply,” Lohuis said. “The beef x dairy animal starts its life with about 40 percent less emissions compared to its beef or dairy counterparts.”

A challenging narrative has formed around animal agriculture. However, beef producers possess the skills and tools to meet the expectations of the beef industry and society. The beef industry needs to tell the story of how innovative genetic selection can mitigate climate change, improve animal health and welfare, improve the environment and provide more sustainable beef.

To watch the presentation, visit youtu.be/iiaRA6p_S5U. For more information about this year’s symposium and BIF, including additional presentations and award winners, visit BIFSymposium.com. — BIF

How do grasslands respond to disturbance?

What does a retirement community of plants look like?

In a groundbreaking international study that spans 90 sites—including one near Lingle, WY—and 32 countries, scientists are searching for answers.

More specifically, they’re examining how the species composition of grassland plant communities changes over time when former agricultural fields are abandoned (no longer fertilized and tilled).

This grassroots project is known as the Disturbance and Resources Across Global Grasslands, DRAGNet for short.

Local data collection will offer clues as to how changing land use may affect forage quality and the prevalence of native Wyoming species versus invasive annual grasses, says Lauren Shoemaker, University of Wyoming (UW) assistant professor of botany and a DRAGNet project lead.

“Many people in the state

are invested in maintaining biodiversity and biomass production of grasslands for range systems,” she notes. “If we’re switching how a land is being used and the human impacts on it, can we make general predictions of what will happen, both in terms of the recovery of species diversity and the production of quality forage?”

While the study relies on a relatively simple experimental design, DRAGNet is unusual not only in its geographic reach, but also in its approach, which standardizes treatments and data collection procedures across all sites. This allows researchers to detect global patterns as well as local trends—without the frustration of trying to compare results from studies following similar, but slightly different, research protocols.

Scientists at each site have committed to three years of disturbance treatments and a minimum of five years of monitoring.

In 2022, Shoemaker and her team completed “year zero” at the James C. Hageman Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension Center. Pre-treatment results revealed substantial hidden diversity in the seedbank; approximately 67% of the species waiting patiently underground to germinate were not present aboveground. Surprisingly, the dominant species aboveground (needle and thread grass) is rare in the seedbank.

For the next three years, Shoemaker’s team will till, rake and add nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium) to the test plots, returning twice during the growing season to painstakingly identify plants by species in 1-meter by 1-meter squares, estimate percent coverage and collect biomass for lab analysis.

“Our plan is to collect data as long as possible because a lot of these changes are slow to emerge,” she explains. “Oftentimes it’s 10 to 20 years before you really see where the community settles.”

In addition to recording DRAGNet-specific measurements, Shoemaker is also collecting seed dispersal data and working with UW colleague Linda van Diepen to analyze changes in microbial communities.

It’s one of her favorite aspects of the project: only one-quarter of the area of each research plot is designated for specific tests. The rest is available for other projects dreamed up by students and faculty members.

“It’s really exciting because it means we can add new experiments in areas that have already received treatments and even propose new experiments across multiple sites,” she says.

To learn more, visit nutnet.org/dragnet or contact Shoemaker at lshoema1@uwyo.edu. — UW Extension

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AAA 20594115

BD: 8-19-2022
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Vermilion G077 Bomber K798



AAA 20594078

BD: 8-12-2022
Sired by Vermilion Bomber G077 out of a KR Joe Canada 5372 daughter. BEPD +4.5; WEPD +81; YEPD +145; BW 82; WW 776; YW 1310; Milk +17; \$B +186; \$C 290

Vermilion G017 Bomber K790



AAA 20594072

BD: 8-11-2022
Sired by Vermilion Bomber G017 out of a Vermilion Privilege D406 daughter. BEPD -3; WEPD +80; YEPD +133; BW 66; WW 766; YW 1254; Milk +28; \$B +147; \$C 267

Vermilion Growth Fund K353



AAA 20368329

BD: 2-22-2022
Sired by Deer Valley Growth Fund out of a Vermilion Ride daughter. BEPD +1.0; WEPD +85; YEPD +157; BW 84; WW 804; YW 1362; Milk +38; \$B +161; \$C 284

Vermilion Lass 6043



AAA 18482030

By Connealy Countdown out of a Connealy Dublin daughter. Progeny WR 107, YR 104. Safe in calf to Basin Jameson due March 4, 2024. Carrying a bull calf.

Vermilion Blackbird 2274



AAA 20368141

By Myers Fair-N-Square M39 out of a Sitz JLS Game Day 9630 daughter. Bred to Vermilion Growth Fund K353 due March 10, 2024



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FL auctioneer awarded top honors at WLAC qualifier

Oct. 25 was no ordinary sale day at the Tri-County Stockyards in Motley, MN. While cattle came through the ring and buyers placed their bids like any other Wednesday, the block was manned by 35 different auctioneers vying for top honors.

The competitors, from all over the U.S., battled it out for buckles, bragging rights and an opportunity to call bids at the annual World Livestock Auctioneer Championship (WLAC) next June at the Oklahoma National Stockyards in Oklahoma City, OK. At the end of the day, Marcus Kent, Dunnellon, FL, came out on top.

"My goal has always been to make the finals," Kent said. "Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think I would win one."

He said he competes because he enjoys meeting people, and because he knows it helps him improve his skills. But a bonus is getting to visit auction markets in different places.

"I love seeing everyone's setup," Kent said. "It's never exactly the same and it fascinates me."

Even on vacation—the auctioneer once traveled to Costa Rica with his family, and while there, found a market to visit.

"My goal has always been to make the finals. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think I would win one."

— Marcus Kent

The WLAC and its qualifying events don't just bring bid-callers together. The

events draw spectators in the bleachers and from all over the world via livestream.

Reserve Champion Joshua Garcia, Karnes City, TX, said he's not surprised the action-packed series is so popular.

"It's all about action," he said. "It's all about getting in the groove of things and just trying to figure out what's what, what calf's selling for what. And in that way, when they bring their calves in, they get to see, oh, that's my calf. As an auctioneer, you want to have adrenaline, excitement, keep the sale going, keep it motivated. It keeps the people interested."

Rounding out the top three was Runner-Up Champion

Dakota Davis from Waukomis, OK. Other competitors moving on to the semifinals are as follows: Lynn Langvardt, Chapman, KS; Chris Pinard, Swainsboro, GA; Troy Robinett, Decatur, TX; Barrett Simon, Rosalia, KS; Dustin Smith, Jay, OK; Marshall Tingle, Nicholasville, KY; and Zack Zumstein, Marsing, ID.

One more qualifying event, to be held in Paris, KY, Nov. 16, will decide the remainder of the championship semifinal field. — **Livestock Marketing Association**

Wolves to be introduced in Colorado by Jan. 1

WOLVES (from page 1)

designation. "Our industry is grateful the USFWS finalized the rule ahead of schedule, as the 10(j) rule needed to be in place before wolves are introduced into our state," said Robert Farnam, CCA president, in an email update.

Rule modifications

The final rule notes several changes made to the proposed rule after a public commenting period:

- Take of gray wolves attacking pets is not allowed except for in the instance of working or guarding dogs.
- Take of gray wolves that are significantly impacting ungulate populations on Tribal reservations lands is authorized.
- Take of gray wolves will not be excepted if there is any evidence of baiting, which includes unusual attractants, artificial feeding or intentional feeding.
- Several terms were changed: "shoot-on-sight" to "depredation," "problem

tivities for the wolf.

During the commenting period, USFWS received more than 20,000 comments. In comments from the U.S. Forest Service, the agency expressed concern with the potential for gray wolves to disperse south out of the nonessential experimental population (the state of Colorado). In its response, USFWS said any wolf dispersing beyond the Colorado borders may be managed by the wolf management regulations in the area, or returned to Colorado until the state achieves its recovery goals.

"To help minimize potential interactions and to help protect Mexican wolf genetic integrity, we have simultaneously issued a section 10(a)(1)(A) permit to be held by the Service, which will authorize our designated agents to assist in the capture and return of wolves originating from the Colorado (nonessential experimental population)," the agency said in response to similar com-

"Our industry is grateful the USFWS finalized the rule ahead of schedule, as the 10(j) rule needed to be in place before wolves are introduced into our state."

— Robert Farnam

wolves" to "depredating wolves" and "sport hunting" to "recreational harvest."

- The term "substantive income" was removed from the definition of "livestock producer."
- The term "relocate" was removed from the definition "remove."
- A designated agent is an employee of a federal, state or Tribal agency who is authorized by USFWS to conduct management ac-

ments.

CPW has until the end of the year to introduce wolves to the state. The agency has reached an agreement with Oregon to capture up to 10 wolves from the state and release them in Colorado but has yet to secure additional agreements with other states.

The final rule and record of decision will go into effect on Dec. 8. — **Anna Miller, WLJ managing editor**

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Angus // June



Lot 4 - Saras Dream 3516
[24 Karat x Style]
Angus // May



Lot 12 - Hattie 3208L ET
[Style x Maternal Made]
Maine Angus // February



Lot 11 - Hattie 3503L ET
[Style x Maternal Made]
Maine Angus // May



Lot 20 - Stylin Lady 3302L ET
[Style x Who Da Man]
High % Chi // March



Lot 23 - Who Dat 3440L ET
[Next Level x Primo]
% Simm / Low % Chi // March



Lot 22 - Whos Lookin 3180L ET
[Primo x Who Da Man]
High % Chi // January



Lot 25 - Ms Liberty 3645L
[In God We Trust x Firewater]
Char. Composite/Low % Chi // March



Lot 18 - Aria 231
[Black Hawk Down x American Classic]
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New support for farm and food businesses in local, regional markets

University of Missouri (MU) Extension is one of 14 partners to organize the new Heartland Regional Food Business Center serving Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma and northwestern Arkansas. The Heartland Regional Food Business Center will help farm and food entrepreneurs build the businesses and supply chain connections needed to meet growing demand for local and regionally produced food, said Patty Cantrell, communications lead for the Center. The Heartland Regional Food Business Center is one of 12 established across the nation in 2023, with funding from the USDA, to support development of a more resilient, diverse and competitive food system, Cantrell said. In addition to 14 key partners, more than a dozen collaborating partners are part of the Center's work.

Local leadership

"MU Extension will provide on-the-ground assistance to local food and farm businesses and support the dissemination of business builder sub-

awards to selected applicants across Missouri," said Bill McKelvey, MU Extension senior project coordinator. MU Extension will provide technical assistance to new and expanding businesses, share information via a newsletter and other communication channels and develop food safety resources for farmers with limited English proficiency. "The effort will complement related programs in Missouri focused on agricultural entrepreneurship and value-added production, along with new funding coming to the state for food systems equipment and infrastructure," he said. MU Extension's Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems (CARES) will support the new Heartland Regional Food Business Center by providing asset- and resource-mapping tools, evaluation systems and general website support. CARES will work with partners in the Heartland Regional Food Business Center to map existing assets, uncover gaps in

support services for food and farm businesses and develop an online resource that help Missouri farmers and business owners connect to information, funding, research and one-on-one support. CARES will also support the Center with an evaluation system that aims to capture the impact of its partners on the local economy and the overall food value chain in Missouri. Finally, CARES will support the initiative with the development of the Heartland Regional Food Business Center's official website at heartlandfoodbusiness.org. **About the center** The Heartland Regional Food Business Center connects and strengthens small, mid-size and diverse farm and food businesses, as well as local and regional food sector initiatives. It aims to grow the farm and food enterprises, markets and community connections needed to make local food an everyday, easy choice. The growing multistate resource network will provide

farm and food businesses with: Technical assistance, including business training and counseling, planning and mentorship, help with accessing financing, and other support. Business counselors at partner organizations will work together and with other resource providers to support underserved and underrepresented entrepreneurs, from small rural and urban farms to people of color and indigenous and immigrant communities. Coordination, including connection to other needed businesses, such as distributors, and to local, state and national resources. Partners will assist entrepreneurs locally while also working together regionally to identify and address challenges, such as gaps in local food storage capacity or distribution services. A region-wide asset mapping process will further this work. Capacity building, including grant funding to support farm and food entrepreneurs in making next-step investments and business assistance to local and regional food sector

initiatives. The Heartland Regional Food Center will dedicate \$11 million of its total four-year USDA funding of \$25 million to business builder sub-awards designed to help on-the-ground entrepreneurs.

Local economy and food security

Building local and regional food supply chains is critical for long-term growth and the sustainability not only of our region but the country, said Steve Schulz, associate professor in the Department of Management at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. His team will support the Heartland Regional Food Business Center's work to analyze and assist in developing local and regional food supply-chain logistics. "We've seen how vulnerable our supply chains can be since the pandemic," he said. "The school lunch program being shut down, restaurants closing, empty grocery shelves..." Adding more food and farm businesses and building shorter, local and regional supply-chain links will build resilience and strengthen communities, he added.

Ready access to healthy and affordable food is a major objective of USDA's \$400 million investment in establishing Regional Food Business Centers to serve the entire U.S. "USDA recognizes that local and regional food systems are essential to the overall food supply chain, and the new Regional Food Business Centers are the cornerstone of our efforts to support them," said Jenny Lester Moffitt, USDA under secretary for marketing and regulatory programs. The Heartland Regional Food Business Center will advance the region's ability to put local food on more tables and help smaller rural and urban

farm and food businesses thrive, said Katie Nixon, food systems director at the rural Missouri community development corporation New Growth. She is co-director of the Heartland Regional Food Business Center with Mary Emery, executive director of Rural Prosperity Nebraska at University of Nebraska Extension, which administers the Center. "The small- to medium-size farms and food entrepreneurs, who often embrace social, environmental and economic sustainability, face an increasingly challenging food system," Nixon said. This Center is for these businesses, to help them succeed and provide good food for their communities in a way that helps them sustain their operations."

Regional resource network

Emery said a large part of the effort is to support and advance work that is already underway and to connect more entrepreneurs to existing resources. "You have all these different entities working with local foods—producers, grocery stores, local distributors, nonprofits, business developers—and these are all puzzle pieces," she said. "What we want to do with this project is put the puzzle together and see the picture of how regional food systems work." The Heartland Regional Food Business Center invites collaboration with other organizations that work with small businesses and in agriculture and community and economic development. Outreach efforts will include learning about other resources and how to support them in working with food and farm businesses. — **MU Extension**



Annual Bull & Female Production Sale
December 5
100 Bulls 2023 40 Females
1 PM • At the Ranch • Lusk, Wyoming

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ZA Breeta K019 — 20380065



Sired By Poss Rawhide

CED	BW	WW	YW	MLK	MRB	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C
10	0.5	82	138	35	0.67	0.82	63	184	302

KA Kilton K337 — 20408188



Sired By Poss Deadwood

CED	BW	WW	YW	MLK	MRB	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C
8	1.5	73	126	30	1.42	0.94	75	215	354

ZA Patty K113 — 20381388



Sired By Baldridge Pappy

CED	BW	WW	YW	MLK	MRB	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C
-2	3.2	94	155	24	1.36	0.88	79	204	344

ZA Kingdom K351 — 20378833



Sired By Poss Rawhide

CED	BW	WW	YW	MLK	MRB	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C
8	2.0	78	132	34	1.03	1.01	51	205	317

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New water conservation agreements announced

— \$64M in funding

The Biden administration announced \$64 million in funding for a three-year water conservation agreement with Arizona irrigation districts and Tribes to keep water in Lake Mead and Lake Powell. On Nov. 3, Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton announced seven new agreements in Arizona to conserve 162,710 acre-feet of water (an acre-foot is 325,851 gallons) through funding from the Investing in America Agenda. "Thanks to President Biden's Investing in America agenda, the Lower Colorado River Basin System Conservation and Efficiency Program is helping address, improve and protect the long-term stability of the Colorado River System," said Interior Secretary Deb Haaland. "The Biden-Harris administration is using every tool and resource at our disposal to continue our sustained, collaborative progress in increasing water conservation across the West." President Joe Biden announced funding through the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in April to assist Western states in becoming more resilient to drought. The fund-

ing would assist in water conservation measures and other projects to keep water in the Colorado River, Lake Mead and Lake Powell. Irrigators from the Yuma Mesa Irrigation and Drainage District and Mohave Valley Irrigation and Drainage District announced the most extensive agreements through 2025 to conserve a combined 114,780 acre-feet. Agreements were also made with the San Carlos Apache Tribe, the Hopi Tribe, the Cibola Valley Irrigation District, Spanish Trails Water and Cathcart Farms. The new agreements build upon previous agreements made in the state to conserve up to 348,680 acre-feet of water in Lake Mead in 2023 and up to 984,429 acre-feet through 2026. In March, the Lower Basin states of Arizona, California and Nevada announced an agreement to conserve up to 3 million acre-feet through 2026, with 2.3 million acre-feet compensated through the Inflation Reduction Act to preserve levels in Lake Mead and Lake Powell. To date, the administration has announced over \$700 million in funding for water infrastructure projects in Colorado River Basin states. — **Charles Wallace, WLJ contributing editor**

STORY SHORTS

Tyson chicken nuggets recalled

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service announced Tyson Foods is recalling approximately 29,819 pounds of a chicken patty product that may be contaminated with metal pieces. The frozen chicken nuggets were produced on Sept. 5 in 29-ounce bags under the Tyson "Fully Cooked Fun Nuggets Breaded Shaped Chicken Patties" label. The bags have a "Best if Used By" date of Sept. 4, 2024, and lot codes 2483BRV0207, 2483BRV0208, 2483BRV0209 and 2483BRV0210. Consumers who have purchased these products are urged not to consume them. These products should be thrown away or returned to the place of purchase.

Athian, Elanco partner on carbon credits

Athian announced the establishment of a voluntary livestock carbon insetting marketplace aimed at reducing enteric methane emissions and improving feed utilization by using feed management products from Elanco Animal Health. The first-of-its-kind marketplace enables producers to generate revenue from reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. Athian is currently verifying its initial farms, certifying carbon credits and offering them for sale within the dairy value chain. Consequently, dairy farmers can engage in on-farm sustainability initiatives, measure their environmental impact, and undergo third-party verification for emission reductions, with the carbon credits available for sale in Athian's livestock carbon insetting marketplace. Jeff Simmons, president and CEO of Elanco Animal Health, said the company is focused on bringing enteric methane reduction solutions to producers through its investment into Athian. Simmons continued that if the dairy supply chain adopted the technology, it would reduce 4.7 million metric tons of CO2 emissions annually, signifying a transformative development in value creation throughout the food chain.

Beyond Meat cutting workforce, revenue

Beyond Meat is cutting its non-production workforce by about 65 employees and conducting a strategic review of its product line after a weaker-than-expected third quarter. The company revised its 2023 net revenue downward to the range of \$330-340 million from its prior outlook of \$360-380 million. "We anticipated a modest return to growth in the third quarter of 2023 that did not occur, reflecting further sector-specific and consumer headwinds," said Ethan Brown, president and CEO. According to Food Business News, Beyond is mulling discontinuing product lines, pricing changes, optimization of manufacturing capacity and potential restructuring of operations in China.

USDA tackling chronic wasting disease

Researchers at USDA's Agricultural Research Service are on a mission to combat chronic wasting disease (CWD) in livestock, economically significant wildlife, and potential wildlife reservoirs. To tackle CWD, scientists are developing new tests capable of detecting low CWD levels in easily accessible samples like saliva, feces and nasal swabs. They're also exploring biomarkers to identify specific proteins in the blood at ultra-low levels using a technique called single molecule array. CWD is a devastating and deadly disease affecting deer, elk and moose, manifesting in symptoms such as dramatic weight loss. CWD, a prion disease, is part of a group known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies, which include scrapie in sheep and goats, as well as bovine spongiform encephalopathy in cattle, with prions, malformed proteins, primarily concentrated in the brain.

BLM to gather horses in Nevada

The Bureau of Land Management announced it began on Nov. 7 a wild horse gathering on the Clan Alpine Herd Management Area (HMA) located approximately 60 miles east of Fallon, NV, in Churchill County. The HMA encompasses 304,763 acres of public and private lands and has an appropriate management level of 612-979 wild horses. The current population is estimated to be 1,993 horses. BLM will gather about 1,594 wild horses, remove approximately 1,381 excess wild horses, and treat up to 81 mares with GonaCon Equine, a population suppression fertility control vaccine, before being released back to the range. All animals identified for removal will be transported to the Palamino Valley Off-Range Corrals, located in Reno, NV.

ID hires contractors to hunt wolves

On Oct. 26, the Idaho Wolf Depredation Control Board approved hiring private contractors to hunt and trap wolves in Idaho. The Western Watersheds Project (WWP) alleges one of the contractors has a record of what the Nevada chief game warden labeled as "blatant illegal behavior." The board voted to remove the wolves in most game management units in the wolf's core area. Ranchers currently managing sheep in the Wood River Wolf Project located in Game Management Units 48 and 49 denounced the decision for its wasteful spending and the prospect of causing more wolf conflicts. In the 2023 field season, there were no depredations in the project area, and it regularly has the lowest rate due to working with ranchers in the area. Talasi Brooks, staff attorney at WWP, admonished using state money, stating it is "further evidence that the state will stop at nothing to get rid of the species."

Researching genetic switch to prevent 'sleeping sickness' in cattle

As parasites adapt to a warming world, an infectious disease expert at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) has his eye on the tsetse fly in sub-Saharan Africa. The biting fly transmits trypanosomiasis, or "sleeping sickness," to cattle there and could someday migrate to northern climates, including to the U.S.

RIT researcher Bolaji Thomas is leading a \$650,000 study funded by the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative. The aim of the research project is to compare the genetic response in cattle to the parasitic disease that attacks their blood and brain. Outbreaks decimate cattle herds in Nigeria and neighboring countries, resulting in food insecurity and economic hardship.

Global climate change makes the problem in sub-Saharan Africa a potential

threat elsewhere because the tsetse fly and Trypanosoma parasite can migrate and adapt to genetically similar flies and cattle breeds in other parts of the world, according to Thomas, an RIT professor of biomedical sciences.

"When we speak about adaptation of local vectors or their transport of them from endemic countries, it's just a plane ride or a ship ride away," Thomas said. "If we aren't careful, the vectors that we thought couldn't survive here will get introduced here and become a big problem. If we have learned anything from the spread of COVID-19, it is to be prepared. That's why this project has major significance."

Federal funding supporting the study underlies the need to protect the U.S. cattle industry from future scenarios in which Trypanosoma arrives and thrives here. The genetic similarities between cattle breeds in the U.S. and those

in the study make the research especially relevant, Thomas said.

The project centers around Thomas' collaboration with Emmanuel Obishakin, a veterinary parasitologist at the flagship veterinary center in Nigeria—the National Veterinary Research Institute, which is home to the National Center for Trypanosomiasis Research—and Olanrewaju "Lanre" Morenikeji, assistant professor at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford.

Thomas' team will conduct the RNA transcript sequencing and profiling at RIT using purified RNA from infected cattle at the National Veterinary Research Institute in Nigeria.

The researchers will characterize and analyze immune gene expression to identify genetic markers associated with disease tolerance and susceptibility among different cattle species. Their work will map genes of interest to

exploit the evolutionary adaptation that allows one cattle species (N'Dama) to survive the same disease that kills another one (White Fulani).

Prior research by Thomas and then-postdoctoral researcher Morenikeji showed that a specific gene (CD14) in both breeds evolved differently in response to the Trypanosome pathogen and that natural variants of this gene protect the N'Dama breed.

Thomas builds upon their findings in the current project by combining analytical tools and using messenger RNA and non-coding RNA to make separate genetic profiles on a cellular level for each of the animals in their study.

"We are asking if we can find biomarkers that could be used to breed new species of animals to tolerate disease or design new drugs to protect the animals," Thomas said. "That's the main goal." — RIT

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Turkey prices falling ahead of holiday season

Just in time for the 2023 holiday season, wholesale prices of whole frozen turkeys are declining. Prices for frozen whole hens—the birds typically served for holiday dinners—averaged \$1.27 per pound in August 2023. Prices

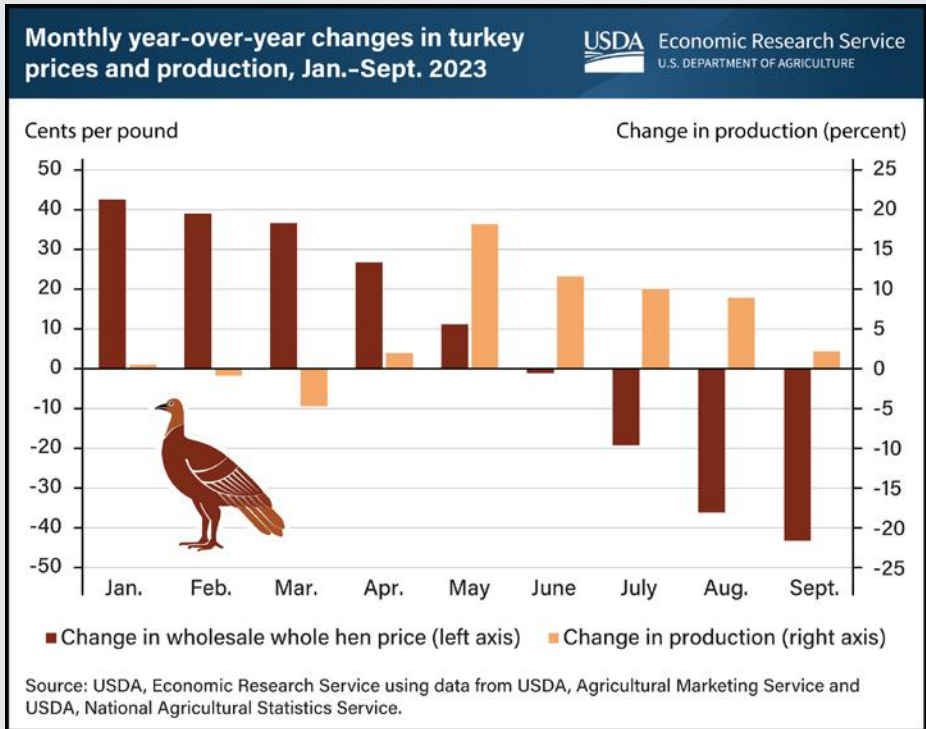
dropped further to \$1.25/lb. in September, down 43 cents from a year earlier, and the lowest monthly average price

since July of 2021.

The price reprieve comes after an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in 2022 resulted in major losses for the commercial turkey flock. Turkey production fell 6% to 5.222 billion lbs. in 2022, down from about 5.558 billion lbs. in 2021, and prices rose to historic highs. The outbreak persisted for more than a year, winding down in April 2023.

Even as the outbreak continued in the spring, turkey production had already begun to recover from the mid-2022 low point, when depopulation resulted in sharply lower turkey numbers. Since April 2023, production has been above the previous year's levels, partly because birds were being slaughtered at heavier weights.

Detections of HPAI in commercial turkey flocks in early October 2023 are not expected to have a major effect on the availability of turkeys in the 2023 holiday season. — **USDA Economic Research Service**



ACE graduates prepared to inspire involvement

Gaining skills to develop new programs in the local community and learning how to advocate for agriculture has been a one-year endeavor for the enthusiastic Montana Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) members who graduated from the ACE (Advocate. Communicate. Educate.) Leadership program Nov. 8 during the MFBF 104th Annual Convention in Billings, MT.

On the first day of the MFBF Convention, ACE class members each delivered presentations regarding their plans for invigorating their local communities and becoming more involved in their county Farm Bureaus.

ACE emphasizes leadership development, issue education and the engagement of local communities. The participants spent 2023 honing their skills at six seminars with outstanding presenters to make a difference in the public's impressions about agriculture and boost support for agriculture in their local communities.

During the graduation luncheon at the DoubleTree Hotel in downtown Billings, executive director of St. Vincent Healthcare and former sideline reporter for Montana State University Bobcat football Tyler Wiltgen shared his thoughts on developing communication skills to make a conversation more interesting and informational.

"Show people that you are interested in what they have to say. Pay attention when someone is talking," Wiltgen advised.

He added that by asking unique and open-ended questions, one will get a more

interesting response. "Instead of asking someone 'How are you?' asking, 'What surprised you today?' will inspire better conversation."

Graduating member Greg Gabel retired from the U.S. Army as a lieutenant colonel and came back to the family's farm in Huntley, MT, to raise sugar beets.

"I decided to apply for ACE because I wanted to be around a group of incredible people who are committed to the agriculture industry and wanted to have a positive impact," said Gabel. "Learning about others' advocacy experiences, the history of the Farm Bureau, the tour of the Montana legislature and visits with state government agencies were very impactful. During the seminars, the discussions between other classmates and their insights were meaningful and added to the experience."

The 2023 ACE graduates:

- Ben Meyer, Stevensville, MT.
- Beth Blevins, Ronan, MT.
- Bronya Willmore, Roy, MT.
- Greg Gabel, Huntley, MT.
- Janell Plummer, Kalispell, MT.
- Joe Lackman, Bozeman, MT.
- Margaret Hebel, Dillon, MT.
- Nick Courville, Charlo, MT.
- Tommy Flanagan, Absarokee, MT.
- Tyson Reese, Missoula, MT.

Applications for the 2024 ACE Program are due Dec. 1. For more information and the ACE application visit mfbf.org/programs/ACE-Program or contact Sue Ann Streufert, 406-587-3153, sueanns@mfbf.org. — **MFBF**

Young producers panel shares ideas

A panel discussion about on-farm innovation at the Young Producer Symposium was moderated by Sandy Russell, Canadian Beef Breeds Council CEO, during the 2023 Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Symposium July 3 in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Charlotte Wasylik, Chatsworth Farms, discussed how Chatsworth Farms focuses on farm-to-table programs. They have local and city deliveries, on-farm pickup and consignment shops. Besides just selling products they also have farm programs including on-farm events, community partnerships, restaurants, cooking classes, industry articles and virtual and in-person school tours.

"Just bringing people into the farm and getting them to ask questions, understand what we do on a farm and the process we go through with all of the animals to show them birth to plate," Wasylik said.

Ben Campbell, Tellichewan Ranch, started grazing cattle because he learned that it was good for the environment. Tellichewan Ranch focuses on being environmentally sustainable by raising grass fed beef. They want to reconnect

people to their food by explaining how the animals are raised and handled from start to finish. They give farm tours, outreach with different groups and school tours.

"I advocate to farmers because we are the stewards of the land and are making the decisions," Campbell said.

Rounding out the panel was Jordan Miller, Grandview Farms, a sixth-generation rancher raising the seventh generation. They live on Barrie Island where the closest Walmart is three hours away, making their customer base unique. Grandview mainly markets through Instagram and their Shopify website. Besides just selling to customers they work with four restaurants on the island and are training chefs to purchase whole animals.

"If they truly want to promote sustainable consumption of beef, then I am teaching them this is what we have to do," Miller explains.

To watch the presentation, visit youtu.be/5rGhn4xve28. For more information about this year's Symposium and BIF, including additional presentations and award winners, visit BIFSymposium.com. — **BIF**



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Including Live Animals, Heifer Pregnancies, Flushes, Embryo Packages

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CED	BW	WW	YW	MLK	PAP	MRB	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C
8	1.0	74	130	26	0.76	1.03	0.95	87	196	341

Sired by Haynes Papa, R1512 has genetic diversity with balance in a heavy muscled bull.

RRR MAVERICK R0622 #20350515



CED	BW	WW	YW	MLK	PAP	MRB	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C
9	0.2	68	120	33	0.30	1.58	0.54	62	229	359

Full brother to the \$900,000 Poss Deadwood.

RRR DEADWOOD R6082 #20713173



CED	BW	WW	YW	MLK	PAP	MRB	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C
14	-0.8	71	120	32	-0.39	1.57	0.52	57	203	320

Amazing what genetics can do as you look at this bull with his calving ease, PAP and muscle.

RRR ERICA DIANA R6002 #20713261



CED	BW	WW	YW	MLK	PAP	MRB	RE	\$M	\$B	\$C
10	1.2	90	153	23	0.91	1.68	0.84	84	241	397

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Sired by Poss Deadwood out of the dam of Diablo Deluxe.

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Helping your child feed their 4H or FFA market steer

Now that fall is here, and most spring-born calves are being weaned, 4-Hers and FFA students are looking over the calf crops and picking out market steer prospects for the 2024 county fair. Calves are carefully evaluated against a list of criteria, selected and brought home. Now what?

Nutrient needs

Commercially prepared complete feeds and supplements are definitely available and may be what works best for a given family. However, developing a diet out of bulk commodities may be more economical for others and certainly gives parents a chance to introduce their child to ruminant nutrition, basic animal husbandry and hopefully foster a love for the beef industry.

Assuming the weaned steer is 600 pounds in November and will be shown at a county fair in July, the calf would need to gain around 3 lbs. per day to weigh approximately 1,300 lbs. by fair.

The included figure is an example of how an energy source, a protein source and a roughage source could be increased as the animal grows to meet the nutrient requirements of a growing and finishing steer. Different commodities might be available but cannot necessarily be substituted in the same amounts due to different nutrient content.

The two things to keep in mind are that the steer's feed intake is going to increase as the animal grows to continue to support growth, and the goal is to increase the energy density of the diet so that the steer is finished by fair time. With that in mind, here are four diets using the same ingredients given approximate pounds of each

ingredient for the changes in steer weight and energy density.

Minimize digestive upsets

- Slow increases in feed. All feed increases should be done over a few days, especially increases in energy feeds, to avoid digestive upsets. While some families may be able to provide ground hay in total mixed ration, others may choose to provide some long stem hay separately to help maintain rumen function.

- Feeding twice a day. Feeding twice a day rather than once a day also helps prevent cattle from overloading on feed. This can also help care providers judge when the steers are ready for a feed increase. Cattle who are "rushing the bunk" may need an increase, while cattle who are leaving feed may need a slight decrease or new feed in the bunk.

- Consistently feeding at the same times every day. Consistent feeding times help reduce digestive upsets as well. This is especially true as cattle grow and are on a higher energy density diet.

- Water is critical. While a lot of emphasis is put on protein, energy, minerals and vitamins, the importance of water cannot be overlooked. Cattle need a consistent supply of fresh water at all times and this is just as important in the winter as it is in the summer.

Encouraging responsibility

Many students who are involved in 4-H or FFA are also involved in many other school activities as well. This

often means early mornings to meet the bus, or late nights coming home from out-of-town games. This can make getting the steers fed on a regular schedule difficult. This is often the time where parents have to step in and help cover some chores. Consider making it the student's responsibility to ask someone to cover for them, weigh up feed in advance, make preparations for their absence, check in to see how the feeding went, etc. This helps them develop more of a sense of ownership and responsibility rather

er than just assuming the parent will cover for them.

Discussing feedings when the student was gone and helping the student feed when they are home, can be good times to discuss bunk management, feeding changes, and steer progress.

Students who participate in livestock projects for 4-H and/or FFA can develop great work ethic and a passion for the beef industry. Additionally, it can be a great experience as a family to work and learn together. — **University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension**



COMING EVENTS

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

Nov. 29-Dec. 1 – Attendee registration and the hotel room block for the 2023 California Cattlemen's Association/California CattleWomen Convention in Sparks, NV, is now open. Details: calcattlemen.org/convention2023.
Nov. 29-Dec. 1 – The 53rd Annual American Gelbvieh Association Convention will take place at the Omaha Marriott Downtown at the Capitol District in Omaha, NE. Register today to reserve early bird pricing at gelbvieh.org. More info, call 303-465-2333 or email info@gelbvieh.org.
Dec. 13-14 – The 28th Range Beef Cow Symposium will take place at The Ranch in Loveland, CO. There also will be a pre-symposium Beef Quality Assurance training on Dec.

12. Early registration closes Nov. 25. To register, visit tinyurl.com/4ky7xp8m or contact Ryan D. Rhoades at 970-217-0239 or ryan.rhoades@colostate.edu.
Jan. 10-13 – Registration is now open for the 2024 American Sheep Industry Association Annual Convention at the Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel in Denver, CO. Early bird rates apply through Dec. 8 and all online registrations must be completed by Dec. 18. Details: tinyurl.com/33x26zdm.
Jan. 21-Feb. 2, 2024 – Mark your calendars for the 2024 Cattle Industry Convention & National Cattlemen's Beef Association Trade Show, which is heading to the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, FL. Additional information is available at convention.ncba.org.

600 pound steer	
Commodity	Pounds (as is basis)
corn	3
Dried distillers grains	4.5
Forage millet hay	9
Mineral*	0.25
700 pound steer	
Commodity	Pounds (as is basis)
corn	5
Dried distillers grains	4.5
Forage millet hay	8
Mineral*	0.25
800 pound steer	
Commodity	Pounds (as is basis)
corn	11
Dried distillers grains	6
Forage millet hay	4.5
Mineral*	0.25
1100 pound steer	
Commodity	Pounds (as is basis)
corn	14.5
Dried distillers grains	6
Forage millet hay	6
Mineral*	0.25
*mineral may be added in the feed mix or fed free choice depending on label directions	

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WEDNESDAY - 1:00 PM
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MATERNAL Research from Canada, Australia, Texas A&M, University of Florida, Montana State University - Dr. John Patterson, University of Missouri, University of Illinois... have all shown efficiency gains of 10-20% in females tested to be negative RFI or sired by negative RFI bulls with no impact on weaning weight, fertility or yearling weight.

"By stacking generations selected for RFI improvement, greater than 20% in production efficiency can be achieved." - Dr. Monty Kerley

That's over \$100/head savings in pasture and wintering costs.

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Establishing the first center for space agriculture

It's little wonder that so much of the early research into space exploration would focus on escaping orbit, or that the source of that escape, the rocket, would occupy so many minds with the cosmic ambition to match their intellect.

But that ambition fueled the race to space at least as much as liquid hydrogen did. And so, as the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's (UNL) Yufeng Ge and Santosh Pitla witnessed the astronomical advances of their own era—reusable rockets landing back on Earth, a

drone taking flight on Mars—the Husker engineers began thinking big about an aspect of space travel just obvious enough to often escape attention.

"We'll be on Mars and the moon, we'll have settlements—and people got to eat," said Pitla, associate professor of biological systems engineering.

Before long, the duo was applying for and earning a two-year Grand Challenges grant from Nebraska's Office of Research and Economic De-

velopment. Ge and Pitla's long-term goal is about as ambitious as it gets: finding ways to sustainably grow food on space stations, the moon, Mars and other celestial bodies that might eventually sustain legions of human ones. To do it, they formed the Consortium of Space, Policy, Agriculture, Climate and Extreme Environment—SPACE2, for short.

The consortium's short-term aim doesn't exactly lean modest, either. It may not rank with the near-vacuum of space, but Ge and Pitla would

come to learn of a sizable void: No U.S. university features a center dedicated specifically to the study of space agriculture. The researchers want Nebraska to house the first.

"If NASA or the big space companies—SpaceX, Virgin Galactic, Blue Origin—want to go out and work with a university, who would that be?" Pitla said. "We have been doing ag research for more than 100 years, and we're an ag state."

"Why reinvent the wheel somewhere else when we already have all this experience?"

It helps, Ge said, that Nebraska U "sits very, very nicely in that intersection" of multidisciplinary expertise and force-multiplier collaboration that the rigors and relentlessness of space will demand. The university-housed Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute, the recent recipient of a \$19 million grant to pursue sustainable irrigation and mechanization in developing countries, has long endeavored to grow more food with

less water.

Ge's own research into ag-relevant sensors is likewise informing more precise, efficient application of fertilizer and water, both of which will prove even more precious in space than on Earth. Pitla has spearheaded the engineering and testing of Flex-Ro, an autonomous planter that can already seed a 5-acre, untilled field on its own.

"Before humans go to Mars, we'll want some essential resources there—and for that, we will send robots," Pitla said. "Think about a greenhouse on a spaceship that's landed on Mars, and it's already started growing food. You need a fully automated, robotic farmer that is doing those things even before humans arrive."

The Department of Agronomy's work in plant genetics, meanwhile, gets applied at the Greenhouse Innovation Center, where a combination of infrared cameras and AI-powered imaging analysis has accelerated the breeding of crop varieties that endure amid

temperature extremes and drought.

"The only difference between that and what we'll be doing in space is, well, nothing," said David Jones, a member of the team and professor of biological systems engineering. "Space is just another one of those extreme environments."

In assembling their consortium, the engineers were careful not to overlook the value of related but less obvious expertise. They invited multiple colleagues from the Nebraska College of Law, which has emerged as an international leader in the thorny, unprecedented realm of legality and ownership in space. And they folded in faculty from the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts, whose ability to conceptualize the future has already given the engineers and scientists plenty to chew on.

"If it's not going to work here," Jones said of a space ag center, "it's not going to work." — UNL Extension

Preferred alternative allows discretionary uses

STAIRCASE (from page 1)

Alternative A, the no action alternative, continues the current management plan established in 2020 and makes modifications to comply with Proclamation 10286. This alternative allows for the maximum discretionary uses for livestock grazing in nearly all allotments and recreation use.

Alternative B emphasizes flexibility for an array of actions compatible with GSENM objects. Under this alternative, more areas would be set aside to protect intact ecosystems, landscape restoration projects would be started and discretionary actions would be limited around riparian areas. Grazing allotments that are not under permit would be unavailable and land use assessments would be conducted within eight watersheds. Any nonstructural improvements would not be allowed but existing ones could be maintained.

Alternative C, the preferred alternative, protects intact and resilient landscapes with an approach that allows discretionary uses. It would establish four management areas similar to those used in the 2000 GSENM Management Plan: the front country zone, passage zone, outback zone and primitive zone. The intensity and use would vary depending on the zone.

Grazing would be prohibited in the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Glen Canyon and GSENM. Allocated animal unit months (AUMs) would be the total permitted use of available allotments. Land use assessments would be required in two years for departed watersheds identified by BLM. Recreational use would transpire mainly in the front country and passage zones, with restrictions on off-road vehicle use and target shooting.

Alternative D would "maximize natural ecological processes by minimizing active management and limiting discretionary uses." This alternative would be the most restrictive on recreational activities and livestock grazing to maximize natural processes.

For grazing, the conditions in Alternative C would apply, plus all allotments in GSENM would be required to complete a land health assessment and a fully processed permit renewal within 10 years. No structural range improve-

ments would be permitted without the land use assessment.

Alternative A would make over 2 million acres available for grazing and would activate all inactive AUMs within suspended pastures. Grazing availability would decrease by 5% under Alternative B, 10% (207,800 acres) under Alternative C and 46% (984,800 acres) under Alternative D.

BLM said the greatest number of conflicts between recreation and livestock would occur under Alternative C.

At a virtual meeting conducted by BLM on Oct. 25, Ade Nelson, monument manager for GSENM, said AUMs across all alternatives could be activated over time with an analysis and decision. Nelson continued BLM worked with the National Park Service and identified allotments within Glen Canyon National Recreation Area conflict with the national recreation area resources and would be made unavailable for use.

Ranchers are concerned with the proposed change and expressed their concerns at a meeting held recently by Garfield County leaders in Tropic, UT.

According to KSL.com, Garfield County Commissioner Leland Pollock felt his concerns were not addressed at a recent BLM meeting in Escalante and that area residents have many concerns. Pollock told local news outlet KTVX that BLM is eliminating target shooting and several thousand AUMs "without due process."

County leaders presented the four alternatives to the crowd on Oct. 26 and the impacts on the local economy.

"It needs to go to local control. It needs local elected officials that we elect that are calling the shots," rancher Derrel Spencer said. "Instead, we are getting governed by people 2,000 miles away that have no idea and that don't understand this and probably don't really care to."

Members of the audience expressed concern about public lands issues and access, calling out environmental groups restricting access to those rights, and claiming it is "one of the greatest takings going on in America today," according to The Insider.

Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes was at the event on his tour of the southern portion of the state and took questions from the audience.

Reyes told the crowd his office plans to file suit against the federal government on any restricted access plan. — Charles Wallace, WLJ contributing editor

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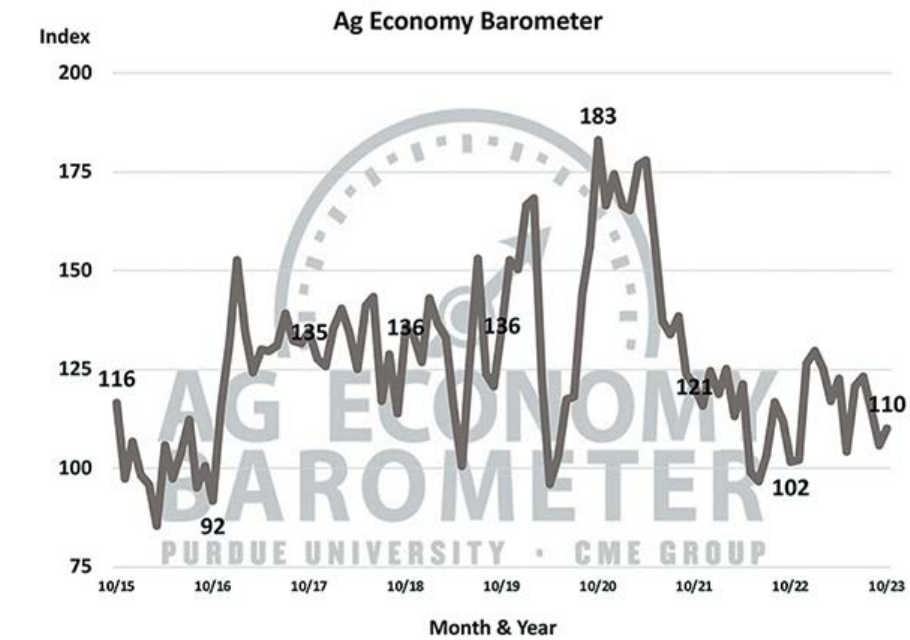
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Farmer sentiment rises as financial conditions improve



Source: Purdue University Center for Commercial Agriculture, Producer Survey, October 2023

There was a slight uptick in agricultural producers' sentiment in October, as the Purdue University/CME Group Ag Economy Barometer index rose 4 points to a reading of 110. The modest improve-

ment in farmer sentiment resulted from farmers' improved perspective on current conditions on their farms as well as their expectations for the future. The Index of Current Conditions rose 3

points to 101 while the Index of Future Expectations rose 5 points to 114. This month's Ag Economy Barometer survey was conducted Oct. 16-20. "Farmers in this month's survey were slightly less con-

cerned about the risk of lower prices for crops and livestock and felt somewhat better about their farms' financial situation than a month earlier," said James Mintert, the barometer's principal investigator and director of Purdue University's Center for Commercial Agriculture.

Farmers' more optimistic view of their farms' financial situation was reflected in the Farm Financial Performance Index, which rose 6 points in October compared to September. This month's index value of 92 was the highest farm financial performance reading since April and pushed the index 7% above its reading from a year ago. The index's rise stood in contrast to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's forecast for 2023 net farm income to fall below 2022's income level. "Reports of higher-than-expected corn and soybean yields in some Corn Belt locations, along with a modest rally in corn prices, likely con-

tributed to this month's rise in the financial conditions and the barometer indices," Mintert said.

Despite the perception that financial conditions were stronger than a month earlier, the Farm Capital Investment Index fell 4 points in October to a reading of 35. This was the lowest reading of the year for the investment index. In October, nearly 8 out of 10 (78%) respondents said it was a bad time to make large investments in their farm operation, while just 13% of farmers said it was a good time to make large investments. Among those who said it's a bad time to invest, the most commonly cited reason was rising interest rates, chosen by 41% of respondents, up one percentage point from September.

Of those who said it is a good time to make large investments in their farm operation, 24% stated "strong cash flows," down from 32% who felt that way in September and 20% pointed to "expansion opportunities" up from 6% in September.

Just over one-third (35%) of producers in this month's survey said they expect farmland values to rise in their area in the upcoming year, while nearly two-thirds (65%) of survey respondents expect farmland values to rise over the next 5 years. As a result, the Short-Term Farmland Value Index changed little, dropping just one point compared to a month earlier, while the Long-Term Farm-

land Value Expectations Index rose three points. Key reasons cited by producers for optimism about farmland values over the next five years continue to be non-farm investor demand, followed by inflation.

Dry weather this past spring and summer stimulated discussions among producers about shifts in long-term weather patterns. This month's survey asked corn and soybean producers if they have explicitly made any changes in their farming operation in response to changes in long-term weather patterns in their area. Nearly one out of four corn/soybean farmers (24%) in the October survey indicated they implemented changes in their farm operations to better deal with shifting weather patterns. A follow-up question posed only to farmers who said they've made changes asked them to identify the biggest operational changes they've made to date. Responses indicated farmers are choosing from among a broad mix of technologies and capital investments to adapt to changing weather patterns, including: increased use of no-till (25% of respondents); changed mix of crops planted (23% of respondents); planted more drought-resistant varieties (20% of respondents); installed tile drainage (9% of respondents); and installed irrigation (9% of respondents). — **Purdue University Extension**

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Consumer priorities for beef production

Two challenges in retail businesses are anticipating demand and understanding consumers' buying preferences. To help define customer preferences, many business owners turn to client surveys to guide their decision-making.

With respect to consumers' directives for beef producers, Kansas State (K-State) University agricultural economists recently surveyed people across the country to see what is of the greatest importance to them in making decisions about buying retail beef.

"The four factors that consumers consistently rank at the top are product freshness, price, flavor and safety," K-State ag economist Ted Schroeder said on a recent "Cattle Chat" podcast. "Consumers just expect that the beef they purchase will have these qualities."

Having a consistent demand for beef aligns with the industry's goal of economic sustainability, said Phillip Lancaster, K-State beef cattle nutritionist and sustainability expert for the university's Beef Cattle Institute.

"From a beef industry perspective, we categorize sustainability in three pillars—economic, social and environmental," Lancaster said. He defined economic sustainability as profitability at

the ranch level, while social sustainability relates to the public's perception of how beef producers care for the animals. Environmental sustainability encompasses soil health, water quality and greenhouse gas emissions.

"From a beef production standpoint, consumers rank animal welfare of greater importance when making purchasing decisions, over greenhouse gas concerns," Schroeder said.

He added that it is important to remember that not all consumers rank their priorities the same way.

"Consumers are heterogeneous, meaning niche markets are present for even low-rank product attributes," Schroeder said.

He also said that policymakers need to be cognizant of the costs associated with additional regulations relating to beef cattle production.

"We want to produce beef that is profitable, environmentally friendly, and socially acceptable, and those are all good things. But we have to be careful about imposing regulations on the industry to meet certain criteria because that will add cost, and we know that price is one of the biggest factors that drives consumer beef purchases," Schroeder said. — **K-State Research and Extension**

Get a head start on end-of-year income tax considerations

Halloween is behind us, but for many in production agriculture, catching up on end-of-year business transactions and attempting to do some enterprise analysis is the real spooky season. Whether it's simply from doing the task or from looking at the lump sums of line items like feed costs, the scare factor varies by individual. For people who prefer being out with the cows rather than in the office, it's rarely a relished experience.

Iowa Beef Center extension program specialist Beth Reynolds said this year's income and expense numbers will mean different things to different people.

"In 2023 the cattle market has been hot, and a higher-than-average income is expected," she said. "On the flip side, expense increases quickly balance the equation."

Farmers are accustomed to completing basic financial tasks at the end of the year such as an income statement, balance sheet, cash flow statement, updated inventory to reflect accurate livestock numbers, feed on hand, and grain in the bin. However, because 2023 has been so unique, here are a few year-end business tasks to benefit every operation.

- Make an appointment with a tax accountant. Even

if you haven't utilized an in-person meeting with your accountant in the past, unique years like 2023 make the meeting time well spent. Options such as strategies for best claiming depreciation, income averaging, prepaying expenses, and IRA contributions, can help farmers make sound financial decisions.

"Often, we hear stories where people opt to buy equipment, etc. 'for tax reasons,' but a discussion with an accountant can help identify if and when those decisions are in the operation's best interest long term," Reynolds said.

The Center for Agricultural Law and Taxation (www.calt.iastate.edu) has many Farm Tax Resources including an Interactive Schedule F and information on Iowa's new tax laws impacting retired farmers. Also, Chapters 9 and 10 of the Estate and Succession Planning for the Farm workbook contains farm tax resources.

- Incorporate enterprise analysis. An enterprise level look allows you to see which aspect of the operation is paying for your labor and which might be losing money.

The commercial herd, seedstock herd, feedlot, hay production, crop production, etc., can each be viewed as individual enterprises with their own fi-

"In 2023 the cattle market has been hot, and a higher-than-average income is expected. On the flip side, expense increases quickly balance the equation."

— Beth Reynolds

nancial reports. One Iowa Beef Center educational opportunity designed to help producers better un-

derstand methods to do this is Cattle in the Green, a multi-session, in-person course. Talk to your Extension office if interested in bringing the course to your area.

- Prioritize spending. Extra income often leads to increased spending. When making those decisions, be sure to identify needs and wants, and calculate a return on investment for each option. When comparing the returns, be sure to include potential bank CD rates and interest saving early debt payments. Finally, after all (or even

some) of the above actions are completed, be sure to back up your information. Although the technological world has many advantages in business management, things happen.

"Whether you work through your business plan on the computer or with pen and paper, get the information copied and saved in a secondary location," she said. "After completing dreaded paperwork tasks, the last thing you want is to go through the tedious process again." — **Iowa State University Extension**

Timely rainfall in TX helps cool-season crops

Recent rainfall and cooler temperatures allowed producers across the state to plant cool-season crops and get root systems established before winter, said a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service expert.

Outlook brighter

Throughout late October, different areas across the state other than the Far West and Panhandle regions received around 2 inches of rain on average, with some areas getting 3 to 5 inches of rain.

William Baule, Ph.D., Texas A&M University Department of Atmospheric Sciences regional climatologist at the Southern Regional Climate Center, said forecasts called for more rain and colder temperatures, which will continue to improve soil moisture conditions.

"Coming out of the second hottest summer for Texas, we have seen warmer-than-average temperatures until now," Baule said. "But we're seeing better weather trends for much of the state going into winter."

Entering the winter season, outlooks are showing an equal chance for above or below normal temperatures, with a higher probability for precipitation entering into the El Niño pattern.

Weather change benefits producers

An extremely dry and hot summer was followed by an abnormally dry fall, said Reagan Noland, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension agronomist.

"We usually have rain in late August and throughout September that helps finish our cotton crop and prepare for winter crops," he said.

This year, though, the lack of rainfall, coupled with heat stress through the late summer months and into the fall, resulted in much of the cotton acreage failing or with extremely low yields.

"Irrigated crop systems in this region usually maintain productivity in dry years," Noland said. "But coming out of a three-year drought, our irrigation water was depleted and couldn't keep up with demand."

The recent rainfall brought producers some relief and allowed them to plant winter crops like wheat. They hope the El Niño pattern will continue to deliver above-average moisture, Noland said.

"This rainfall is tremendous for our winter crops," Noland said. "It's too late for the cotton, and a bit late for fall and winter grazing, but will provide our producers the soil moisture needed to get winter wheat established and off to a good start." — **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension**

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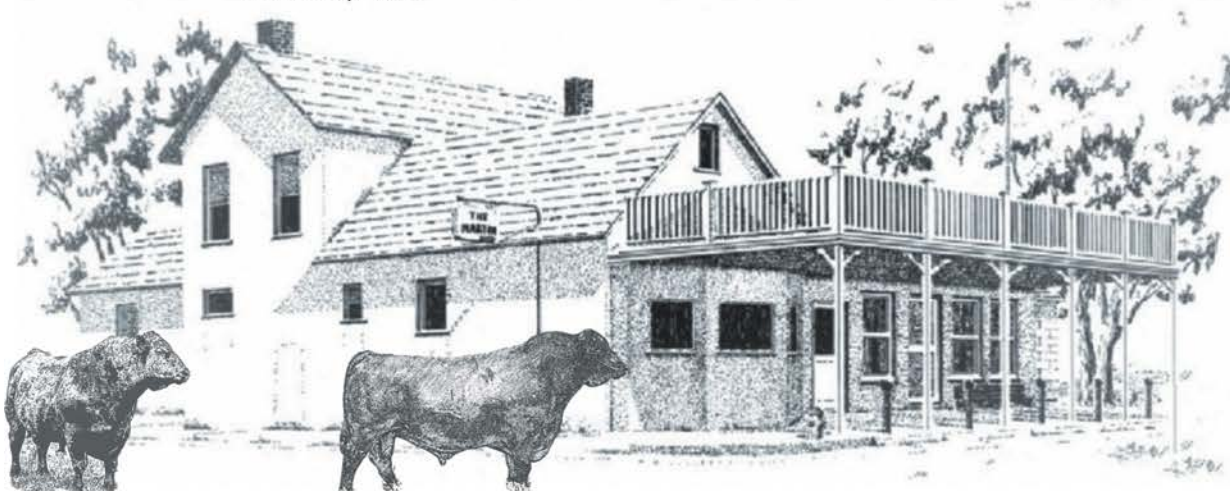
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MARKET NEWS

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

MARKET AT A GLANCE	This Week: 11/9/2023	Week Ago	Year Ago
Choice Fed Steers	180.81	▼184.66	151.86
CME Feeder Index	237.01	▼237.25	175.51
Boxed Beef Average	299.42	▼304.53	263.27
Average Dressed Steers	286.65	▲N/A	241.12
Live Slaughter Weight*	1,381	▲1,373	1,376
Weekly Slaughter**	632,000	▼636,000	667,000
Weekly Beef Production***	525.0	▼527.0	553.9
Hide/Offal Value	12.65	▼18.68	14.82
Corn Price	4.68	▼4.70	6.54
* 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
November 3	7,059	299.84	204	337.64	1,198	308.51	2,052	301.94	932	277.75	2,673 258.08
October 27	6,975	301.00	185	341.42	1,295	309.63	1,981	303.38	812	281.03	2,703 260.88
October 20	6,698	298.62	230	337.70	1,234	306.06	1,993	299.98	815	277.11	2,426 261.91
October 13	6,577	296.75	201	336.48	1,270	304.15	1,972	299.22	798	276.89	2,337 259.23
Cutouts			FED BOXED BEEF								
DATE	CHOICE		SELECT		COW BEEF CUTOUT		50% LEAN		90% LEAN		
Nov 9	299.42		269.42		#N/A		66.69		283.49		
Nov 8	298.75		271.03		230.06		71.14		288.88		
Nov 7	300.38		269.48		230.09		66.77		287.13		
Nov 6	301.72		270.36		230.16		N/A		285.62		
Nov 3	302.34		272.01		231.69		62.79		288.04		

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Live Cattle							
	11/3	11/6	11/7	11/8	11/9	High*	Low*
Dec.	18388	18133	17878	17940	17435	19183	15388
Feb.	18523	18198	17843	17948	17448	19633	15310
Apr.	18783	18460	18060	18163	17695	19975	16853
Jun.	18270	17968	17570	17660	17203	18270	17203

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Feeder Cattle							
	11/3	11/6	11/7	11/8	11/9	High*	Low*
Nov.	24060	23718	23223	23455	22900	26813	18755
Jan.	23975	23643	23083	23278	22493	26833	22750
Mar.	24235	23910	23325	23500	22725	25723	23858
Apr.	24613	24285	23710	23868	23080	24613	23080
*High and low figures are for the life of the contract.							

FED CATTLE TRADE	Head Count	Avg. Weight	Avg. Price
WEEKLY WEIGHTED AVERAGES			
Live FOB Steer	1,785	1,490	180.81
Live FOB Heifer	1,509	1,337	181.45
Dressed Del Steer	1,517	949	286.65
Dressed Del Heifer	942	848	287.58
SAME PERIOD LAST WEEK			
Live FOB Steer	693	1,357	184.66
Live FOB Heifer	240	1,295	183.97
Dressed Del Steer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dressed Del Heifer	N/A	N/A	N/A
SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR			
Live FOB Steer	20,687	1,487	151.86
Live FOB Heifer	8,435	1,315	151.53
Dressed Del Steer	8,549	968	241.12
Dressed Del Heifer	3,488	876	242.00

NATIONAL WEEKLY FED BEEF SLAUGHTER VOLUME: NOVEMBER 5		
	Domestic	Imported
Forward Contract	21,020	4,471
Formula	267,235	949
Negotiated Cash	84,393	366
Negotiated Grid	42,341	2,555
Packer Owned	10,608	N/A
Total	425,597	8,341

SLAUGHTER FORWARD CONTRACTS		FORWARD BEEF SALES	
Delivery Month		Neg. Sales 0-21 days	1,831
Nov. '23	145,226	Neg. Sales 21+ days	1,292
Dec. '23	121,274	Formula sales	3,842
Jan. '24	106,373	Forward contract sales	93
Feb. '24	84,847	Domestic sales	5,985
Mar. '24	110,715	NAFTA Exports	100

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	168.28	+0.81
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	N/A	N/A
Ontario Auctions		
Slaughter Steers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1300-1500 lbs	170.87	-1.19
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	N/A	N/A
Slaughter Cows, Cutter and Utility 1-3, 1100-1400 lbs	88.15	-3.23
*Price comparison from one week ago.		

Average feeder cattle prices (CND) for week ending Friday, October 27, 2023			
Steers:	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Ontario
501-600 lbs	276.12	279.68	271.54
601-700 lbs	255.04	258.13	260.40
701-800 lbs	243.35	247.18	234.68
801-900 lbs	225.03	226.88	226.80
Heifers:			
401-500 lbs	256.36	257.31	255.69
501-600 lbs	238.10	235.63	237.83
601-700 lbs	226.29	223.36	212.24
701-800 lbs	212.23	211.48	200.32

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
	10/30/23	10/23/23		
Feeders	33,356	31,413	996,596	659,976

USDA WEEKLY IMPORTED FEEDER CATTLE			
November 9, 2023			
Mexico to United States Feeder Cattle Import Summary			
Receipts EST: 9,750		Week Ago Act: 7,050	
Columbus, NM		Year Ago Act: 13,343	
		Santa Teresa, NM	
Not enough head sold on the current market to establish trend or quote prices. Supply consisted of mostly previously contracted steers and spayed heifers weighing 300-600 lbs.			
Feeder heifers: Medium and large 1&2		Feeder heifers: Medium and large 1&2	
300-400 lbs	225-235	300-400 lbs	225-235
400-500 lbs	215-225	400-500 lbs	215-225
500-600 lbs	205-215	500-600 lbs	205-215
Feeder steers: Medium and large 1&2		Feeder steers: Medium and large 1&2	
300-400 lbs	270-280	300-400 lbs	270-280
400-500 lbs	250-260	400-500 lbs	250-260
500-600 lbs	230-240	500-600 lbs	230-240
(slide 10 cents on steers and heifers basis 300 lbs. All sales fob port of entry.)			

Selected Auction Week Ending November 9, 2023								Feeder prices for steers & heifers reflect medium and large 1 cattle, unless otherwise noted; * Indicates medium and large 1-2		
DATE	MARKET	200-300 lb.	300-400 lb.	400-500 lb.	500-600 lb.	600-700 lb.	700-800 lb.	800 lb. -up	SLAUGHTER COWS SLAUGHTER BULLS	PAIRS REPLACEMENTS
November 3	Blackfoot, ID	N/A	275-380 250-289	245-328 220-279	205-305 200-253	200-265 190-236	190-242 190-223	190-221	78-01 99-130	
November 2	Burley, ID	1,358	381-394 312	319.50 274	281.50-309 256	243.50-265 241-250	232 213-234	155-224 196-209	84.50-110 98-106	
Noreport available Emmett, ID										
November 4	Eugene, OR	787	191-250 170-220	197-234 185-256	205-271 190-238	200-230 160-188			90-109 102-108	590-1,485
November 6	Madras, OR	1,126		350-387.50 300-340	267.50-313.50 240-276	235-266 225-249	225-235 200-210		75-116 100-115	
November 8	Vale, OR	925		270-321 237-266	236-262 215-240	225-246.50 210-226	202-220		81-99 102-127.50	
November 6	Davenport, WA	756	150	115-160 161-192.50	125-265 137.50-217.50	65-247 115-214	90-230 120-202.50	122.50-180.50 100-170	100-167.50 89-157.50	22-120 40-100
November 3	Toppenish, WA	1,968		320* 225*	265* 182.50-195*	241-246* 203*			97-120.50 115-124	1,650-1,700 1,275-2,450

November 3	Orland, CA	1,726		220-318 200-300	200-295 180-250	190-260 170-234	180-230 160-218	170-216	100-122 100-132	1,250-1,950
November 8	Escalon, CA	N/A							75-100 90-135	
October 30	Famoso, CA	605		250-300 180-262	250-300 185-255	220-260 180-212	190-210 175-180		100-140 110-136	
November 8	Galt, CA	1,916		200-280 200-265	200-250 200-230	200-240 190-230	180-230 170-200		85-130 100-144	2,850-3,550 1,600-2,800
November 7	Turlock, CA	2,127		260-317.50 210-250	255-319 205-250	245-289.50 200-243	225-246 197-236	200-230 190-215	180-203.50 103-133	
October 31	Salina, UT	2,665	255-415	280-407.50 185-352.50	275-335 175-287.50	200-271 170-246	182.50-239 160-217.50	162.50-227.50 140-220	75-129 101-122.50	

November 6	Iowa	10,649		295-352.50 240-299	272-339.50 240-283	251-323 225-271	234-285.50 208-258.50	218-260.10 216-244.75	215.25-254.50 205-231.75	80-128 80-134	
November 7	Miles City, MT	3,144		370-390 315-320	300-370 270-302	262-310.25 237-272	255-262 224	225	70-108.50 82-115		
November 8	Bassett, NE	3,250		340-370 362.50	328-357 278-296	280-344 231-275	264.50-285 215	260.50			
November 4	Ericson, NE	3,780		334-360 291-311	289-353 N/A	265-324.50 259-284	257.50-291 249-280	250-264.50	246-254		
November 7	Imperial, NE	830		315-321 250-281	290-303 254-266	260.50-280.50 247.50	242-254 227-230		220-243.75 219		
November 8	Kearney, NE	2,400		340-341	315-334	161.50-284 237-261	247-253 245-245.75	241-242		95-111.50 97-111.50	
November 3	Lexington, NE	3,170		311-357	285-339.50 271-291	273-326.25 245.75-288.50	248.50-288.50 240-254.50	258-279			
November 2	Ogallala, NE	4,558	400	377.50-400 302-322.50	329-395 265.50-318	272-334 251-288	252.50-276.50 227.50-243	241 232.50	215-237		
November 2	Valentine, NE	2,670		330-367.50 265-289	329-350 279-306	287-322.50 264.50-274	266-284.50 251-280.50				
November 3	Herreid, SD	7,108		338-346 277.50-285	312.50-346 257.50-282.50	273.50-308.25 235.50-292	268.50-289.25 231-245	241.50-272 229.50-241.50	229.50-264.50 218.25-243.75		
November 1	Torrington, WY	4,152		353-384 328-347	329-370 298-321	276-304 250-295	254-267 233-246	237 231-244	207-237		

November 2 Willcox, AZ	N/A	333-370 268-290	316-252 258-287	287-322.50 236-282.50	230-255 226-241.50	216-224 204-204			80-115 95-122	1,200-1,550	SOUTH CENTRAL
November 6 Colorado	13,385	300-312.50	322.50-385 281-337.50	275-345 255-311	250-308 232-273	185-265 192-243	216-246 177.50-230	163-230 161-226	71-132.50 71-127	925-2,450	
November 2 La Junta, CO	3,036		336-369 262.50-315	284-345 250-278	251-316 232-273	223-242 223-242	228-239 220-225	221-235	85-104 106-120		
November 6 Loma, CO	1,809		335-385 315-325	300-355 265-285	260-300 245-255	240-260 215-246	220-242 210-227.50	145-226 195-209	80-107 110-116		
November 8 Dodge City, KS	3,468	370 352.50	295-375 282-335	280-346 252-305	264.50-305 223-263	221-257 205-233.50	230.25-239.25 200-216.50	217.50-240.75 192-216	81-110 86-112	1,325-1,700	
November 9 Pratt, KS	4,000		271-302.50 220-267.50	221-281 190-250	249-285 206-232.50	232-255 196-210	216-237 192-216	205.75-231.10 190-206			
November 2 Salina, KS	2,308		335 267-275	285-328 250-285	265-312 238-269	240-273 217.50-242	225-249.50 219-236	222-243 183.50-230			
November 9 Clovis, NM	2,464	310-322 268	257-318 222-275	220-305 220-275	210-279 210-253	190-244 200-233	195-230 175-211.50	161-216 110-185	90		
November 8 El Reno, OK	8,152		320-345 255-320	285-360 245-292.50	255-315 220-277.50	230-270 200-239	220-241 204-227	216-232 198-213.50			
November 7 McAlester, OK	1,970		293-329 253-269	271-311 237-255	245-289 223-255	218-252 180-226	188-223 165-192	158-209 171-186	77-105 90-118	1,075-2,500 1,050-1,850	
November 7 Oklahoma City, OK	8,964	327	310-382 273-306	268-347 244-275	259-320 236-264	241-281 226-245	230-256.50 220-229	214-233 198			
November 3 Cuero, TX	1,541	166-310 185-320	245-308 220-320	236-310 221-305	230-265 211-253	219-254 206-228	208-224 186-219		81-100 98-116		
November 3 Dalhart, TX	2,748		315-343 269-288	286-312 250-283	240-298 210-244	224-241 216-228	220-237 200-228	201-229 208.50-227	70-111 112-116		
November 2 San Angelo, TX	685	286*	274* 260-262*	268-276* 228-242*	248* 204-218*	220-226* 200-212*	226*		84-107 100-129	1,050-1,725	
November 2 Tulia, TX	1,003	337 280	300-330 287	295-307 238-266	253-290 212-251	228.50-257 204-220	235 200	199	85-103 100-115	1,350-1,400	

Demand remains key to high cattle prices

With ever-tightening cattle and beef supplies pushing prices higher, all eyes are on beef demand going forward. Beef demand has been remarkably robust through many shocks in recent years and continues to surprise and impress despite the nervousness of the industry to the challenges facing consumers.

Post-pandemic beef demand has been exceptional since 2021. Per capita beef consumption in 2022 was 58.9 pounds, equal to 2021. Real (inflation-adjusted) retail All-Fresh Beef prices were record high in 2021 and just slightly lower in 2022. This compares

to 2015, when real retail All-Fresh prices reached the same level but with per capita beef consumption at 54 lbs., 8.3% less than the 2021-22 level.

So far in 2023, retail All-Fresh Beef prices have continued to increase, especially since July, with September at \$7.82/lb., a new record high monthly retail price. Retail All-Fresh prices have averaged 6.6% higher year over year (4% higher in real dollars) in the July-September period.

Since July 4, weekly Choice boxed beef prices have averaged \$307.16/cwt, ranging from a low of \$299.94/cwt to a high of \$321.97/cwt.

Choice boxed beef prices have averaged 18.4% higher year over year through the third quarter of the year. With beef production projected to be down more than 5.5% year over year, per capita beef consumption is expected to decrease to 57 lbs. this year.

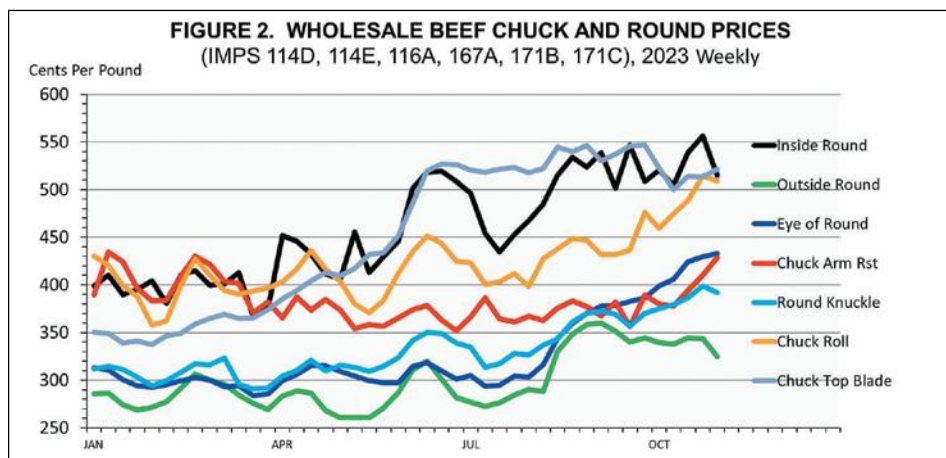
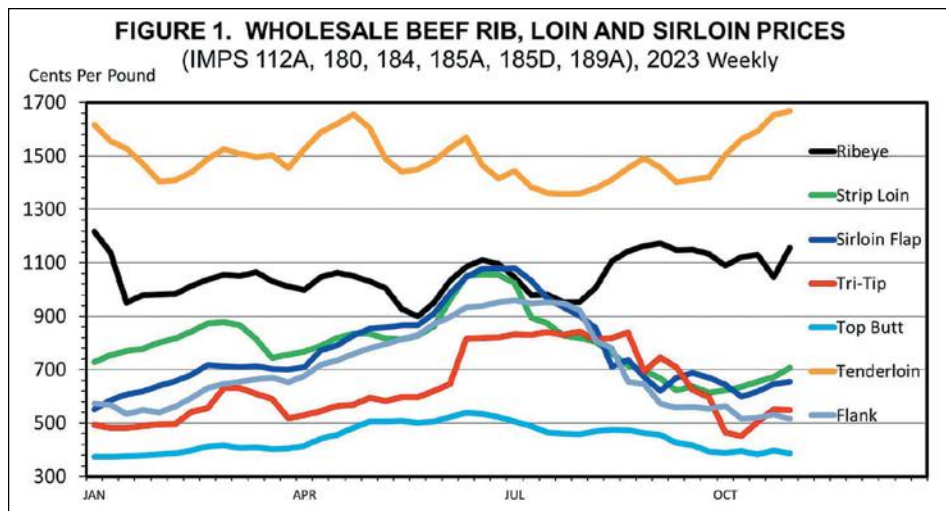
Figure 1 shows weekly prices for several Choice wholesale middle cuts in 2023. Tenderloin and ribeye, the two highest value cuts have held steady through the year and are beginning to increase seasonally into the fall. Other steak items that are seasonally highest for summer grilling, including strip loins, sirloin and tri-tip

have decreased from summer highs, but are generally following normal seasonal patterns.

Figure 2 shows weekly Choice wholesale chuck and round products. These items all generally held steady through the first half of the year and are increasing in the second half of the year. This likely reflects both seasonal tendencies and tightening beef supplies. It is common for roast items to increase seasonally when cooler weather brings out the crock pots.

There are certainly plenty of macroeconomic and geopolitical uncertainties to keep the industry nervous about beef demand. However, the increasingly high quality and

consumer preferences for beef continue to be reflected in strong beef demand. These factors, combined with tightening beef supplies, will keep wholesale and retail beef prices strongly supported in the coming months. — **Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension livestock marketing specialist**



Feeders drop double digits

MARKETS (from page 1)

dressed weight was 928 lbs., 1 lb. above the prior week.

Boxed beef prices closed lower over the week. The Choice cutout lost more than \$5 to close at \$299.42, and the Select cutout lost nearly \$5 to close at \$269.42.

Feeder cattle

Feeder cattle futures also failed to find any luck on the board. The November contract plummeted more than \$13 to close at \$229, and the January contract lost more than \$17 to close at \$224.92.

"Because of the wide daily price limits and margin call pressure and the inability of individual traders to 'play ball' with funds and algorithms, the market easily free falls," Fish explained. "Traders know that until the market has exhausted the selling, prices will continue to fall. Fear and self-preservation are strong deterrents from participating in a long in the tooth blood bath."

The CME Feeder Cattle Index lost 24 cents to close at \$237.01.

Corn futures traded sideways, with the December contract down two pennies to

\$4.68 and the March contract down 3 cents to \$4.82.

"Although establishing new contract lows in nearby feeder cattle contracts is not a significant worry given the prices in 2022, nearby contracts are trading at the lowest prices since May, creating longer-term concerns about the ability to show significant market rebounds in the near future," DTN wrote in its Thursday midday comments.

Kansas: Winter Livestock in Dodge City sold 3,032 head Wednesday. Compared to the last auction, feeder steers 700-950 lbs. sold steady to \$2 higher. Steers 600-700 lbs. sold steady to \$2 lower. Steer calves 400-600 lbs. sold \$10-15 higher. Feeder heifers 550-900 lbs. sold \$3-7 lower. Heifer calves 400-550 lbs. sold \$8-10 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 720 lbs. sold between \$234-239.25, averaging \$237.04.

Missouri: Joplin Regional Stockyards in Carthage sold 7,000 head on Monday. Compared to a week earlier, feeder steers and heifers sold steady to \$3-7 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 741 lbs. sold from \$237-254, averaging \$247.77.

Nebraska: Tri-State Livestock in McCook sold 2,671

head Monday. Compared to the last auction, steer calves 450-750 lbs. sold steady to \$5 higher and heifer calves 450-700 lbs. sold \$2-8 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 724 lbs. sold between \$240-241, averaging \$240.68.

Oklahoma: Oklahoma National Stockyards in Oklahoma City sold 9,250 head on Monday. Compared to the last comparable sale on Oct. 23, feeder steers and heifers sold mostly steady to \$3 higher. Steer and heifer calves sold \$3-9 higher. Demand was very strong for all classes. Benchmark steers averaging 775 lbs. sold from \$230-239, averaging \$234.63.

South Dakota: Sioux Falls Regional Cattle Auction in Worthing sold 4,613 head Monday. Compared to the last auction, there was too light a test of calves last week for a market comparison. Light offering last week in yearlings, although there were several strings of 950-lb. steers, which were steady to substantially higher today. Higher undertones in both steers and heifers today. Benchmark steers averaging 772 lbs. sold between \$239-244.50, averaging \$240.55. — **Anna Miller, WLJ managing editor**

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California dairy farmers generate renewable energy from waste

California ranks No. 1 in the nation for dairy production, with 1,100-1,200 dairy farms, each with an average of 1,436 cows, mostly concentrated in Tulare County in the San Joaquin Valley. A major dairy waste is cow manure, a byproduct that can require millions of dollars for each dairy to manage.

To help manage the manure, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) provides funds to California dairy farms to install dairy digesters, a technology that can break down manure and produce methane (a form of renewable energy). The digesters provide additional benefits such as capturing greenhouse gases while improving the nutrient value of manure and water quality.

Pramod Pandey, University of California (UC) Cooperative Extension specialist in the School of Veterinary Medicine Extension at UC Davis, has been studying dairy digesters for over 20 years to understand the conversion of manure into renewable energy. He also is trying to determine the effects of anaerobic processes (in low-oxygen conditions) on dairy manure quality, biogas production and the environment.

Between 2015 and 2022, CDFA supported approximately 133 dairy digester projects in California, with grants of more than \$200 million to various dairy farms.

“The California state government plays a big role in the success of this technology because the majority of dairy farmers are not financially able to invest in implementing the manure management technology, which assist both dairy farms and community,” said Pandey.

For dietary components that cannot be completely digested by a cow’s stomach, dairy digesters use a variety of bacteria to break

down the manure under anaerobic conditions. This provides an option for sustainable waste treatment. The process not only reduces greenhouse gas emissions by capturing the gases released from manure, but also produces renewable energy in the form of biogas, which can be used as an alternative fuel for cars to further bring down greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, the dairy digester helps reduce odor and pathogens that pose a risk to human health.

According to Pandey, one cow can theoretically produce roughly 100 pounds of wet manure daily, and this manure contains nitrogen and phosphorous, which are important for soil. About 40 cubic feet of biogas is produced from the manure of one cow under anaerobic conditions, and this biogas has a potential to produce around 24,000 British thermal units (btu) per cow. In California, a 1,000-square foot home uses 45,000-50,000 btu per day for heating and cooling. That means manure from two or three cows could meet the daily energy demand of a small home.

By using digesters, farmers can prevent greenhouse gas emissions and simultaneously generate

energy and soil amendments, which provide nutrients to cropland, lessening the amount of commercial fertilizer needed. By connecting technologies, the liquid from digesters can be improved to produce water that can be used for irrigation and for meeting the water demands of a dairy farm.

manure management.

Dairy farmers traditionally use anaerobic or manure lagoons to store their liquid manure waste until they are ready to apply it to farmland as fertilizer. The issue is that the lagoons emit greenhouse gases such as methane into the atmosphere.

“The main purpose of a dairy farm is to produce milk, and current low milk prices make it difficult for dairy farmers to focus on manure management without the support from government.”

— Pramod Pandey

digesters. In the late 1970s, Da Silva’s father, who immigrated from Portugal, started Da Silva Dairy Farm, which Da Silva currently runs.

“I spend a lot of money getting solids out of my lagoons every year,” Da Silva said.

Although he does not have digesters set up on his farm just yet, Da Silva agreed with Pandey that the government has made it much easier for farmers like himself to tackle waste.

“I used to be against the dairy digester idea, but there’s a lot more incentive to invest these days,” said Da Silva. “It’s also likely that, in the future, there’ll be regulations that will crack down on dairy farms if you don’t already have digesters,” he added.

Currently, he is in the permitting phase, waiting for approval to begin building the digester on his farm, which is expected to take about two years.

Pandey said that the process is slow and there is still a lot of room for improvement, but the intention is a step in the right direction. “The only thing that the digester doesn’t produce is milk,” Pandey said jokingly. — **UC Agriculture and Natural Resources**

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CFAP disbursed \$23.5B to farmers, ranchers in 2020

In 2020, two rounds of Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) payments provided \$23.5 billion to U.S. farmers and ranchers who faced sales losses, lower prices, or in-

creased production and marketing costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The CFAP was USDA’s primary pandemic assistance program. According to the USDA Economic Research Service’s (ERS) data product Farm Income and Wealth Statistics, producers in nine states received more

than a billion dollars each in estimated CFAP payments in 2020.

Those states were: Iowa (\$2.1 billion), California (\$1.8 billion), Nebraska (\$1.6 billion), Minnesota (\$1.4 billion), Texas (\$1.3 billion), Illinois (\$1.3 billion), Kansas (\$1.1 billion), Wisconsin (\$1.0 billion) and South Dakota (\$1.0 billion).

In calendar year 2020, direct federal payments to U.S. farmers and ranchers totaled \$45.6 billion. Therefore, the payments made by CFAP were more than half of all direct government payments made that year. CFAP continued to make payments to U.S. producers and ranchers in 2021. — **USDA ERS**

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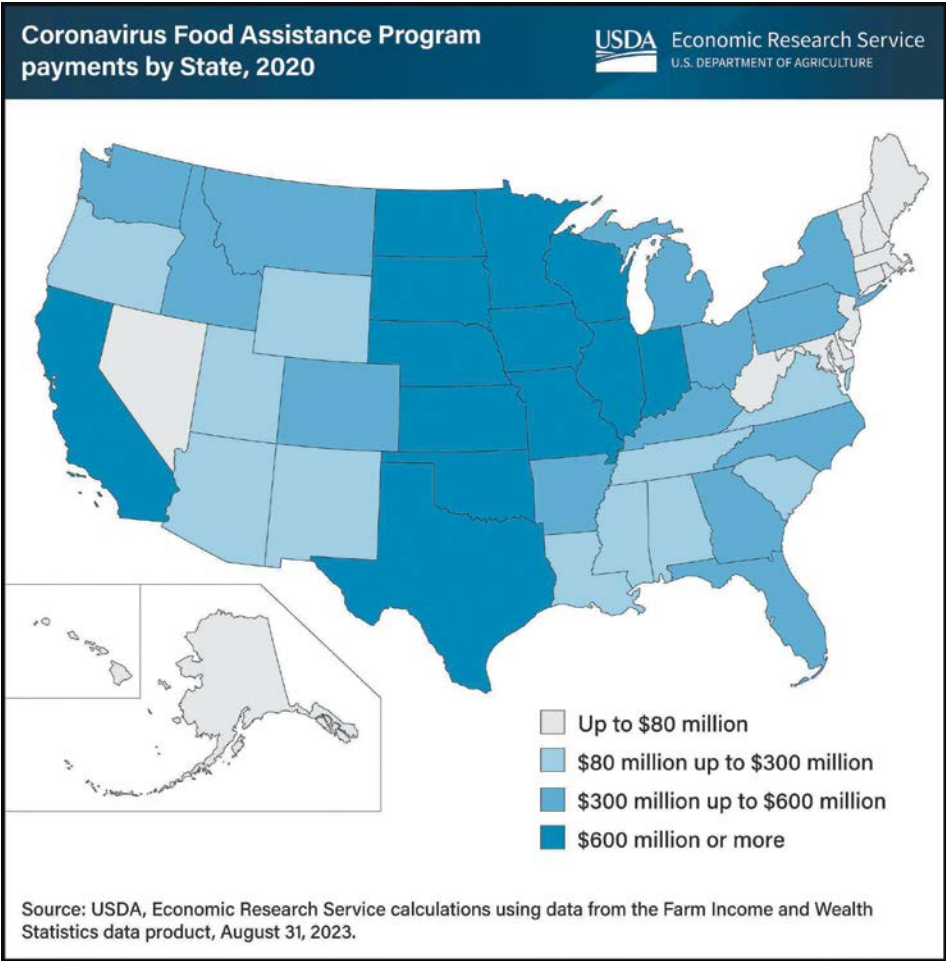
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Use of western irrigated acreage has declined

U.S. irrigated agriculture has seen regional changes in the past two decades, influenced by a variety of factors. From 1997 to 2017, total U.S. irrigated agricultural acreage increased by 1.7 million acres.

Irrigated acreage grew primarily in the eastern

U.S., where agriculture production is historically rain-fed, and declined in the West, where a generally arid climate necessitates irrigation for most crops.

In the East, increased frequency and severity of drought have driven farmers to move from rain-fed

to irrigated production. In the West, farmers have begun to take irrigated land out of production as surface water supplies dry up, and they face increasing competition for water from growing urban centers. — **USDA Economic Research Service**

Wildfire, soil emissions increasing air pollution in remote forests

Satellite data from across California's landscapes reveal an increase in nitrogen dioxide levels in remote forest areas, and wildfire and soil emissions are likely the reasons why, according to a paper from University of California (UC), Davis, published in the journal Environmental Research Letters.

Nitrogen dioxide is short-lived in the atmosphere but plays a central role in the formation of the pollutants ozone and particulate matter, which can lead to respiratory issues and asthma in humans, as well as harm plants and crop yields.

The researchers looked at summertime surface and satellite concentrations of nitrogen dioxide between 2009 and 2020 and found that levels decreased by 2-4.5% per year in urban areas across California, while rural concentrations remained relatively constant and remote forests experienced an increase of roughly 4.2% per year.

"Forested areas show a steady, rapid rate of increase in summer," said bio-micro-meteorologist Ian Faloona, who is senior author on the paper and a professor in the Department of Land, Air and Water Resources. "The trend is alarming."

To do the research, scientists examined surface nitrogen dioxide levels collected by the state and NASA's Aura satellite. They sorted areas of nitrogen dioxide in the atmosphere by surface temperature and soil moisture levels. A California database of fire incidents was also consulted to help place lands into one of five categories: urban, forests, croplands, scrublands and barren (little vegetation).

New sources to consider

Controls on internal combustion engines and other fossil fuel emitters have reduced levels of nitrogen dioxide in urban areas, where most air pollution monitors are placed. Continuous sat-

ellite data helped fill in the picture in less-monitored regions and found that effect is not mirrored in rural areas and remote forests. There, wildfires and emissions from soils, particularly agricultural soils with fertilizer use, correlate to an increase of nitrogen dioxide levels, Faloona said.

The findings could help inform future policy decisions as regulators seek additional decreases of the pollutant. As current emission management actions continue to reduce fossil fuel emissions, regulators will need to address other sources that have historically been overshadowed by traditional internal combustion sources.

Those will play an increasingly important role in future air quality policy. "Soils, and wildfires in particular, are really going to become steerers of the ship of our air pollution," Faloona said. "We have to put a lot of effort into curtailing the effects of wildfires and understanding better our emissions from agricultural soils."

Additional research needed

Areas of high fertilizer use can be a source of nitrogen dioxide emissions because microbes compete with crops for nitrogen, generating gaseous nitrogen compounds. But additional research will be necessary to further clarify the exact role wildfire and soil may play in the increase of ambient nitrogen dioxide.

"Our results point to opportunities for different sets of policies and technologies to assist in reducing nitrogen dioxide concentrations in rural and economically disadvantaged areas of California but will require a concerted effort to better understand the exact environmental dependence of soil and wildfire emissions," the authors wrote.

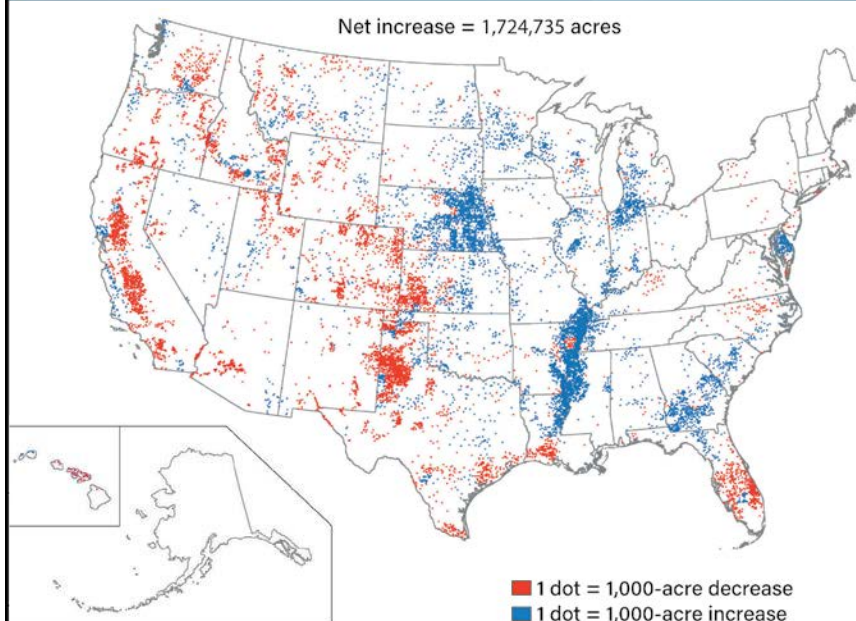
Yurun Wang in the Department of Land, Air and

Water Resources, who is now at Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and former UC Davis professor Benjamin Houlton, who is at Cornell University, contributed to the research.

The USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture funded the research. — **UC Agriculture and Natural Resources**

Distribution of change in U.S. irrigated acreage, 1997-2017

USDA Economic Research Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Note: Dots represent county-level changes in irrigated acreage between 1997 and 2017 presented in 1,000-acre increments. If a county experienced a change of more than 2,000 acres, multiple dots are randomly placed within the geographical extent of agricultural land in the county. For about 57 percent of counties, irrigated acreage did not change by more than 1,000 acres from 1997 to 2017. Between 1997 and 2017, total irrigated acreage in the U.S. increased by 1.7 million acres according to data reported by USDA-NASS. Between 1997 and 2002, USDA-NASS altered their weighting methodology to more accurately account for non-response. The calculated net increase of 1.7 million acres uses the adjusted 1997 total irrigated acreage reported by USDA-NASS in the 2002 Census of Agriculture. The net increase in total irrigated acreage between 1997 and 2017 increases to more than 2.9 million acres if the unadjusted 1997 total irrigated acreage is used for the calculation.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, 1997 and 2017 Censuses of Agriculture.

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SALE REPORTS

KREBS RANCH FEMALE SALE Oct. 30, Gordon, NE

305 Total registered lots **\$6,142**
44 Fall pairs **8,460**
17 Fall yearling heifers **5,705**
90 Bred heifers **3,855**
80 Spring pairs **8,621**
75 Spring cows **4,900**
183 Commercial bred heifers **2,690**
237 Commercial bred cows **2,955**
Auctioneers: Joe Goggins & Greg Goggins

TOPS—Open cow: KR Miss Alliance 8917F, 7/28/18 by Panther Cr Incredible; to Engelke Cattle & Grain, WI, \$25,000. **Bred cows:** KR Savannah 6259, 2/6/16 by Kramers Apollo 317; to Seldom Rest Farms, Niles, MI, \$42,500. KR Lass 6207, 1/14/16 by Kramers Apollo 317; to Camas Prairie Angus, Grangeville, ID, \$30,000. **Fall pairs:** KR Lucy Rose 6587, 2/3/16 by May-Way Equity; to King Farms, CA, \$35,000. KR Lady 8513, 1/21/18 by Panther Cr Incredible 6704; to Lemenager Cattle, Hudson, IL, \$21,000. — **TY GRO-SHANS**



VIDEO AUCTION

Nov. 2, Hudson Oaks, TX

Superior Livestock Auction hosted their video auction live on Nov. 2 from the Superior Livestock Auction Studio in Hudson Oaks, TX. Cattle producers offered 26,370 head of calves, yearlings and bred stock from 21 states for this auction. Cattle were sold on contract to deliver immediately through June 2024. A favorable bullish report from the stock market balanced with a price increase in commodities produced a steady market report. Region 3/4/5/6 feeder steers saw aggressive buyer demand at steady

to \$3 higher. Feeder heifers from the same regions also saw a good demand at steady to \$4 lower. Program feeder steers and heifers were well received with premiums of \$15-20 higher. Region 1 & 2 feeder steers and heifers were only lightly tested but saw good demand. Beef-dairy crosses were met with a very strong demand from a wide range of buyers. Region 3/4/5/6 weaned calves were in strong demand on lighter weights and calves on cows were especially evident in a strong Florida offering. There were still buyer reservations seen in the bred stock demand.

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ALL BREEDS

Nov. 18 — Baldridge/Tiedeman & Frank Cattle, Female Sale, Chappell, NE
Nov. 20 — Central Oregon Livestock Auction, Female Sale, Madras, OR
Dec. 5-6 — PAYS Blue Ribbon Female Sale, Billings, MT
Jan. 11, 2024 — Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, Online
Jan. 23-27 — Red Bluff Bull & Gelding Sale, Red Bluff, CA
Feb. 3 — Klamath Falls, Bull & Female Sale, Klamath Falls, OR
Feb. 17 — Great Basin Bull Sale, Fallon, NV

ANGUS

Nov. 13 — Hoffman Ranch, Bull Sale, Thedford, NE
Nov. 14 — Huwa Cattle, Female Sale, Roggen, CO
Nov. 14 — Skinner Ranch, Female Sale, Ramsay, MT
Nov. 16 — JR Ranch, Female Sale, Othello, WA
Nov. 17 — Green Mountain Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Ryegate, MT
Nov. 18 — TLC Ranch & Sugar Top Angus, Bull Sale, Jerome, ID
Nov. 18 — Redland Angus, Bull Sale, Buffalo, WY
Nov. 21 — Paint Rock Angus, Bull Sale, Hyattville, WY
Nov. 25 — Vermillion Ranch, Bull Sale, Billings, MT
Nov. 27 — Spring Cove Ranch, Female Sale, Bliss, ID
Nov. 27 — Stevenson's Diamond Dot, Production Sale, Hobson, MT
Nov. 28 — Jorgensen Land & Cattle, Bull Sale, Winnemucca, NV
Nov. 28 — Stevenson Angus, Bull Sale, Hobson, MT
Nov. 29 — Beef Country Breeders, Bull Sale, Columbus, MT
Dec. 2 — Hollow Top Angus, Bull Sale, Ramsay, MT
Dec. 2 — Currant Creek Angus, Bull Sale, Roundup, MT
Dec. 2 — Reverse Rocking R, Bull Sale, Maxwell, NM
Dec. 5 — Zumbrunnen Angus, Bull Sale, Lusk, WY
Dec. 7 — Sitz Angus, Bull Sale, Harrison, MT
Dec. 8 — KG Ranch, Bull Sale, Three Forks, MT
Dec. 9 — Gaugler Angus, Bull Sale, Judith Gap, MT
Dec. 13 — Shipwheel Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Chinook, MT
Dec. 15 — Bobcat Angus, Production Sale, Great Falls, MT
Jan. 11, 2024 — Foundation

Angus Sale at NWSS, Denver, CO
Jan. 27 — Ruggles Angus, Bull Sale, McCook, NE
Feb. 9 — Bar KD & Lambert Ranch, Bull Sale, Alturas, CA
Feb. 9 — Burgess Angus, Bull Sale, Homedale, ID
Feb. 9 — Dutch Flat Angus & CX Ranch, Bull & Female Sale, Lewiston, ID
Feb. 10 — EZ Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Madras, OR
Feb. 12 — BB Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Connell, WA
Feb. 13 — South Mountain Cattle, Bull Sale, Caldwell, ID
Feb. 14 — Meadow Acres, Bull Sale, Stanfield, OR
Feb. 16 — Rees Brothers, Bull Sale, Morgan, UT
Feb. 17 — Great Basin Bull Sale, Fallon, NV
Feb. 19 — Teixeira Cattle, Bull Sale, Terrebonne, OR
Feb. 19 — Weaver Ranch, Production Sale, Fort Collins, CO
Feb. 20 — Kessler Angus, Bull Sale, Milton-Freewater, OR
Feb. 21 — Shaw Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Caldwell, ID
Feb. 24 — Baker Angus, Bull Sale, Vale, OR
Feb. 24 — Ranchers Choice, Bull Sale, Othello, WA
Feb. 24 — RV Bar Angus, Bull Sale, Jensen, UT
Feb. 25 — Buchanan Angus, Bull Sale, Klamath Falls, OR
Feb. 26 — Colyer Angus & Hereford, Bull Sale, Bruneau, ID
Feb. 27 — Barker Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Burley, ID
Feb. 27 — Thomas Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Baker City, OR
Feb. 28 — Price Cattle, Bull Sale, Stanfield, OR

CHAROLAIS

Feb. 20, 2024 — V-A-L Charolais, Bull Sale, Vale, OR
Feb. 22 — Small Livestock, Bull Sale, Winnemucca, NV
Feb. 23 — Cowman's Kind, Bull Sale, Madras, OR
Feb. 24 — Ranchers Choice, Bull Sale, Othello, WA

HEREFORD

Nov. 13 — Hoffman Ranch, Bull Sale, Thedford, NE
Nov. 13 — Mohican West, Bull Sale, Laurel, MT
Dec. 1 — Western States Hereford Sale, Reno, NV
Jan. 15, 2024 — Van Newkirk Herefords, Bull & Female Sale, Oshkosh, NE
Feb. 2 — Elkington Polled Hereford Ranch, Bull Sale, Idaho Falls, ID
Feb. 9 — CX Ranch & Dutch Flat Angus, Bull & Female Sale, Lewiston, ID
Feb. 9 — Lambert Ranch & Bar KD, Bull Sale, Alturas, CA
Feb. 10 — BB Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Connell, WA
Feb. 13 — South Mountain Cattle, Bull Sale, Caldwell,

ID
Feb. 16 — Rees Brothers, Bull Sale, Morgan UT
Feb. 21 — Shaw Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Caldwell, ID
Feb. 26 — Colyer Hereford & Angus, Bull Sale, Bruneau, ID
Feb. 29 — Northwest Hereford Breeders, Bull Sale, Stanfield, OR

RED ANGUS

Nov. 13 — Ludvigson Stock Farms, Bred Heifer and Bull Sale, Billings, MT
Dec. 6 — Big Sky Elite, Female Sale, Logan, MT
Dec. 8 — 5L Red Angus, Bull Sale, Sheridan, MT
Dec. 11 — Cross Diamond, Bull Sale, Bertrand, NE
Dec. 15 — 5L Red Angus, Bull Sale, Sheridan, MT
Feb. 21, 2024 — Shaw Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Caldwell, ID

SALERS

Dec. 4 — Jacobsen Ranch, Bull Sale, Great Falls, MT

SIMANGUS

Nov. 18 — Yardley Cattle Co., Female Sale, Beaver, UT
Dec. 2 — T-Heart Ranch, Female Sale, La Garita, CO
Dec. 2 — Western Choice Simmental, Female Sale, Billings, MT
Feb. 22, 2024 — Small Livestock, Bull Sale,

Winnemucca, NV
Feb. 24 — Baker Angus, Bull Sale, Vale, OR
Feb. 27 — Barker Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Burley, ID
Feb. 28 — Price Cattle, Bull Sale, Stanfield, OR

STABILIZER

Nov. 18 — Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, Wytheville, VA
Nov. 18 — Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, Gering, NE
Dec. 2 — Leachman Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Loma, CO
Dec. 9 — Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, Alma, NE
Dec. 9 — Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, San Saba, TX

COMMERCIAL

Nov. 17 — Rollin' Rock Angus, Bred Heifer Sale, Pilot Rock, OR
Nov. 27 — Spring Cove Ranch, Female Sale, Bliss, ID
Jan. 25, 2024 — Red Bluff, Replacement Female Sale, Red Bluff, CA

HORSE

Jan. 23-27, 2024 — Red Bluff Bull & Gelding Sale, Red Bluff, CA

DOG

Jan. 23-27, 2024 — Red Bluff Bull & Gelding Sale, Red Bluff, CA

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Bull Calves

Lot 1



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CED	BW	WW	YW	HP	MILK	MARB	RE	\$W	\$B	\$C
+7	+1.1	+77	+124	+17.9	+28	+37	+73	+79	+113	+232

Lot 4



Diamond Bronc 02L3

CED	BW	WW	YW	HP	MILK	MARB	RE	\$W	\$B	\$C
+10	-0.5	+88	+143	+17.1	+30	+73	+67	+92	+150	+279

Lot 6



Diamond Hobson L991

CED	BW	WW	YW	HP	MILK	MARB	RE	\$W	\$B	\$C
+7	+0.7	+86	+154	+15.2	+26	+97	+48	+77	+163	+279

Lot 12



Diamond Iconic L892

CED	BW	WW	YW	HP	MILK	MARB	RE	\$W	\$B	\$C
+6	+1.5	+90	+155	+11.1	+30	+1.50	+87	+81	+220	+323

Lot 15



Diamond Marvel 95L5

CED	BW	WW	YW	HP	MILK	MARB	RE	\$W	\$B	\$C
+3	+3.4	+94	+152	+11.4	+27	+95	+53	+81	+177	+286

Lot 26



Diamond Redemption 756L

CED	BW	WW	YW	HP	MILK	MARB	RE	\$W	\$B	\$C
+3	+2.4	+81	+131	+11.0	+24	+55	+77	+72	+138	+240

Two-Year-Old Bulls

Lot 301



Diamond Logo K182

CED	BW	WW	YW	HP	MILK	MARB	RE	\$W	\$B	\$C
+1	+1.5	+85	+137	+10.3	+23	+50	+47	+83	+132	+240

Lot 312



Diamond Marvel 8K44

CED	BW	WW	YW	HP	MILK	MARB	RE	\$W	\$B	\$C
+8	+0.1	+70	+123	+6.2	+25	+52	+27	+69	+94	+217

Lot 315



Diamond GoalKeeper 4K36

CED	BW	WW	YW	HP	MILK	MARB	RE	\$W	\$B	\$C
+9	-0.3	+72	+135	+9.5	+28	+95	+80	+72	+167	+289

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