

### INSIDE WLJ

**CANADA PULLS BACK** — Canada looking for opportunities to reduce reliance on U.S. trade. Page 7

**CRP ROLLIN OUT** — Be on the lookout for CRP payments hitting bank accounts. Page 12

**A LOOK BACK IN HISTORY**  
"Brucellosis, an infectious bacterial disease which commonly leads to abortion in livestock and wildlife, may be on the rise in northwest Wyoming. Animal health officials in that state confirmed infections in two separate herds in Park County in recent weeks and have identified a possible third outbreak in nearby Sublette County," read the Dec. 13, 2010, *WLJ* cover story.

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# Texas court clarifies livestock owner liability in highway motorcycle collision

## — Insufficient evidence of permitting

The Texas 11th Court of Appeals recently issued an opinion in *Mullins v. McWhirter*, a case that arose from a fatal accident in which a motorcyclist collided with a cow on a highway in Texas in 2020. Although the jury initially found the cattle owner liable, the appellate court reversed and rendered judgment, holding that the evidence was legally insufficient to show the owner knowingly permitted the animal to roam at large.

## Background

The case stems from a fatal nighttime collision between a motorcycle and a black cow on U.S. Highway 84 in rural Coleman County, TX. Shortly after 1:30 a.m. on July 19, 2020, Rowdy Roy Escobar was returning to Abilene, TX, after assisting with a nearby wildfire when his motorcycle struck a cow owned by Charlotte Mullins. Escobar suffered fatal injuries.

Court documents showed that Mullins and her late husband had long run cattle on leased pasture-

land adjacent to Highway 84. After her husband's death in 2016, Mullins assumed full responsibility for

the herd, including maintenance of

**See LIABILITY on page 12**



Lance Cheung/USDA

An appeals court ruled in favor of a Texas livestock owner, finding her not liable for the fatal motorcycle accident caused by an escaped cow on the highway.

## Greens seek to dismiss challenge to cattle removal

### — Suit sits before appeals court

The Center for Biological Diversity filed a court motion in early December to dismiss a lawsuit brought by the New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association (NMCGA) challenging the U.S. Forest Service's (USFS) removal of feral cattle from the Gila Wilderness in New Mexico in 2023.

"The Forest Service did right by the Gila Wilderness, its endangered animals and the public by finally ending decades of damage from feral cattle," said Taylor McKinnon of the Center. "Now that the job's finished, the industry's lawsuit has no leg to stand on. Our motion calls for the lawsuit to be thrown out."

The environmental group had intervened in the livestock group's suit to block the agency's 2023 estray cattle removal plan. That case is currently before the 10th

U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals after the District Court for the District of New Mexico earlier this year ruled to uphold the agency's plan.

The Center for Biological Diversity called on the court to dismiss the livestock industry's suit as moot, since USFS has not detected any feral cattle since operations concluded in 2023.

In addition, USFS withdrew its decision authorizing the plan in mid-November.

## Background

In early 2023, the USFS initiated aerial shooting operations to cull feral cattle in the Gila National Forest, citing environmental degradation and threats to wildlife habitats and public safety.

The NMCGA, along with private ranchers and the Humane Farming Association, had attempted to

**See GILA CATTLE on page 7**

## Study shows economic impact of meat and poultry industry

### — Adds \$57B to the economy

The Meat Institute released a new national economic study detailing the far-reaching impact of the meat and poultry industry on the U.S. economy.

According to the analysis conducted by Decision Innovation Solutions, meat and poultry processors are expected to contribute \$57.3 billion in value added to the U.S. economy in 2025, while directly supporting nearly 584,000 jobs and generating more than \$40.6 billion in labor income.

Meat Institute President and CEO Julie Anna Potts said the report underscores the industry's essential

role nationwide.

"The meat and poultry industry is a critical and growing part of the U.S. economy, and one that has outsized importance to rural economies," Potts said. "Our member companies are often the biggest employers in their rural communities, and their impact goes beyond jobs. They invest in their communities with generous donations of food and with financial and other irreplaceable contributions to local infrastructure like housing, community spaces, schools, and childcare."

The study also found the industry generates \$311 billion in total sales and pays \$12.5 billion in local, state

and federal taxes. When indirect and induced effects are included across supporting industries such as livestock production, animal feed manufacturing, grain and oilseed farming, transportation and equipment manufacturing, the study shows the industry's national footprint is even larger. In total, meat and poultry processing contribute \$347.7 billion in value added and support more than 3.2 million jobs across the U.S.

Labor income tied to the whole supply chain reaches \$205.3 billion, and total sales across all related sectors exceed \$911 billion. Tax revenue generated from these activities

**See MEAT IMPACT on page 5**

## Cattle futures find strong new footing

(Editor's note: This report compares the latest market information to Tuesday, Nov. 25 due to an earlier Thanksgiving press schedule.)

Cattle futures surged following the Thanksgiving week, pushing fed cattle higher and lifting optimism heading into December.

Live cattle futures saw tremendous gains over the week. The December contract gained about \$14 to close at \$221.45, and the February contract gained about \$17 to close at \$224.

"The live cattle complex enjoyed a day of mostly widespread support as, not only did the futures contracts continue to scale higher through Thursday's close, but the stronger presence of the futures market helped start some positive business in this week's fed cash cattle market too," wrote ShayLe Stewart, DTN livestock analyst, in her Thursday closing comments.

Cash trade totaled about 18,000 head. Live steers sold from \$217-220, and dressed steers sold from \$340-345.

Cash trade through Nov. 30 totaled 55,928 head. Live steers averaged \$211.38, and dressed steers averaged \$329.44.

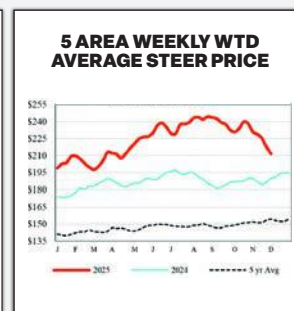
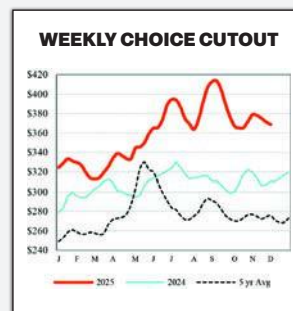
Slaughter through Thursday totaled about 475,000 head. Total slaughter for a week earlier was estimated at 501,000

head for the holiday-shortened week. Actual slaughter for the week ending Nov. 22 was 588,843 head. The average steer dressed weight was 988 lbs.

Boxed beef prices were lower over the week. The Choice cutout lost about \$8 to close at \$362.72, and the Select cutout lost about \$5 to close at \$350.32.

"No one expects the support that has held the Choice boxed beef market since May 2025 to sustain over the next three months," wrote Cassie Fish, market analyst, in *The Beef*

**See MARKETS on page 9**



Category	Price
LIVE STEERS	\$216.64
DRESSED STEERS	N/A
CME FEEDER	\$341.80

WEEK ENDING: 12-4-25

PERIODICAL: Time Sensitive Priority Handling

# COMMENTS

## Rising awareness

After a turbulent month in the markets, it seems like footing was rediscovered as the futures started rebounding and contracts started following the cash market as we distanced away from headlines and emotionally driven trading. A string of 200 steers in Bassett, NE, weighing 620 pounds brought \$5/cwt—\$3,100 per head! At the time of this writing, it was a new record for that weight class and crossed a threshold for the first time in history!



IPSEN

In a previous column, I addressed a few points about consumer statistics like mortgages, auto loans and credit card debt. There are some concerning points about the position of consumers. I have noticed a lot more media coverage and pushback through comments consumers are making on the *WLJ* social media pages. Additionally, while traveling to sales from Nevada to Montana recently, I had several conversations regarding consumer acceptance at the newer price levels. In one of the more interesting conversations with Jake Feddes, owner of Feddes Family Meats & Amsterdam Meat Shop in Manhattan, MT, he shared that his shelf price for high-end cuts hasn't changed drastically over the past couple years, but customers are making more comments regarding the current shortage of cattle. A consensus is that the consumer has been made more aware of the situation since the national cow herd has now made headlines across the country in mainstream media. It's not necessarily more pushback, but more cognizance of our position in the marketplace. This was the biggest frustration I felt during the recent correction—nothing changed in the fundamentals, but clearly the futures markets were tripped.

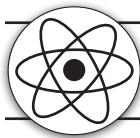
The world of artificial intelligence (AI) implementation is in full swing now. Believe it or not, AI is being more widely used than most people realize. Applications like ChatGPT and Google Gemini allow people to access information much quicker than ever before. These programs scrape articles and public information and compose answers to questions asked.

This past week, I used the AI program Google Gemini and asked it a series of questions about the beef industry. Sharing the general information available to the public illustrates the education available to consumers. Media personnel consistently use this information to generate stances in editorials. Websites like ChatGPT receive nearly 200 million visitors per day, making this technology a huge source of education for students from elementary school age all the way through college graduates. Regarding the beef industry, Gemini says: "The beef industry is currently defined by tight supplies and historically high prices. Herd inventories are at multi-decade lows due to factors like past droughts and low heifer retention, leading to a decline in U.S. beef production. Despite high retail costs, consumer demand remains strong, buoyed by a preference for quality beef. Producers are receiving record prices for cattle, though high input costs and processing capacity concerns (like recent plant closures) create volatility. The industry faces long-term challenges in herd rebuilding, labor, and sustainability pressures."

While this information is generally correct, I decided to take it deeper. I furthered the conversation about the consumer. Here is what Gemini had to say: "The decline in domestic production has led to a sharp increase in U.S. beef imports (particularly lean trimmings for ground beef from countries like Australia and Brazil) and a slight reduction in export volume, though export value remains high due to premium pricing. High input costs & volatility: Despite strong cattle prices, profitability is challenged by high and volatile input costs, including feed (hay and grains), fuel, interest rates and labor. This volatility, driven by low inventory and external factors, makes risk management crucial for producers."

Then, I started asking questions about the consumer and this is what was generated: "Consumers have a highly complex and resilient sentiment toward the historically high beef prices, demonstrating a willingness to pay more, though with clear adjustments. The prevailing trend is remarkably strong demand that has defied economic predictions of a significant drop due to high costs. The 'all-fresh retail beef demand index' has reached multi-decade highs, driven by two key factors: 1. Quality and value: Years of focus on genetics mean 95% of U.S. beef is now grading Choice or higher. Consumers see this as a high-quality product—a 'luxury good' accessible for at-home consumption that offers a superior experience compared to less expensive proteins or dining out. 2. Protein focus: Changing health perceptions and dietary trends (like keto and carnivore diets) emphasize protein, keeping beef positioned as the 'king' of animal proteins. To manage costs, many are trading down, shifting purchases from premium steaks (like ribeye) to more economical cuts, like ground beef and roasts. Despite purchasing fewer pounds overall, consumers are spending more in total dollars, confirming their loyalty."

This easily accessible information demonstrates how the general internet views the current state of the U.S. beef industry. To be honest, I expected a lot of misinformation and agenda-driven talk points, but the information was surprisingly accurate! I did see a few answers that mentioned buzzwords like environmental impact concerns, sustainability and husbandry practices, but they weren't overrun with tainted information. This was an interesting exercise to do, especially after the market feels like it is settling in a bullish position once again. — **LOGAN IPSEN**



# RESOURCE SCIENCE

There are many federal environmental laws and policies. Perhaps the best known is the Endangered Species Act (ESA) that allows listing of subspecies and populations (called distinct population segments, DPS) as endangered "species." I've written extensively about how subspecies and DPS are not definite scientific categories and I think their use is inappropriate for the ESA (see the References at [wlj.net](http://wlj.net)).

Regardless, grizzly bears in the lower 48 states are listed under the ESA as an endangered DPS, but there are efforts in Congress to delist them. The bears are thought to be numerous enough with adequate habitat to now be considered not endangered. It is important to note that the designation of a species, subspecies or DPS as endangered or not endangered is also not scientifically definite.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is planning to rescind the "Roadless Rule" that prevented building new roads on USFS land. Eight million acres of roadless areas have burned since 2001, which is more than double the acreage burning before the Roadless Rule was made. Lack of roads hinders efforts to fight forest fires, especially in the early stages of fires. Forest management with roads also provides access to timber, other resources and recreation.

There's a conflict between these two issues as described by Dave Willms (see the References). Roadless areas have been considered important grizzly bear habitat because there is less human conflict without roads. But rescinding the Roadless Rule could decrease the amount of roadless habitat which could undermine efforts to delist the bear from the ESA. Environmental policies get complicated with different management objectives.

Also, consider the big issue of climate change. Evidence of climate change includes decreasing Arctic sea ice that is thought to be caused by a warming climate. Climate change is hypothesized to be caused by emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) like carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). The extent and cause of climate change are not certain, but many scientists believe that GHG is the cause of climate change. There is significant government regulation of GHG emissions.

But there is a conflict between the Roadless Rule and efforts to reduce GHG and climate change. The Roadless Rule prevents efficient firefighting that would reduce GHG emissions, and also prevents timber harvest that reduces GHG emissions by locking up CO<sub>2</sub> in wood products.

Forest and range fires emit large amounts of GHG, so reducing the amounts of fires should be a primary management objective for dealing with climate change. I've written before about how

# ESA, FOREST MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

timber harvest followed by regeneration of forest trees locks up large amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> (see the References).

My calculations indicate that about 225 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per acre of forest can be locked up in harvested wood products. Another 123 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per acre can be locked up in new tree regeneration after about 60 years. Timber harvest followed by regenerating trees can lock up about 350 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per acre. The amount of CO<sub>2</sub> per acre will vary among locations, tree species and age, and other factors, but it's clear that lots of CO<sub>2</sub> can be locked up in harvested wood products and tree regeneration.

New data from trees I recently harvested in Montana show that 34 8-foot-long logs from 10 trees (9 lodgepole pine and 1 Douglas fir) 5-6 inches diameter at breast height weigh 1,531 pounds, which is equivalent to 1,690 lbs. of CO<sub>2</sub>. The green tops of nine of the trees weigh 118 lbs. and the CO<sub>2</sub> in such slash can be locked up in landfills. The logs and tops together weigh 1,649 lbs. which is equivalent to 1,820 lbs. (0.91 tons) of CO<sub>2</sub> in 10 small trees. Increasing the growth of non-harvested trees with decreased tree density following this thinning of young forest stands will lock up more CO<sub>2</sub>.

The conflicting policies of forest management, the ESA and climate change could be simplified by using just the Multiple Use Act for all management objectives. The Multiple Use Act of 1960 is a law which directs the secretary of Agriculture to develop renewable resources on national forests for multiple use and sustained yield. The Multiple Use Act includes five major uses (timber, range/grazing, water, recreation and wildlife) of national forests in one law, without prioritizing one use over another.

This indicates that other laws like the ESA should not allow wildlife to take priority over other land uses, and the Roadless Rule should not prevent timber harvest and management that reduces climate change by preventing forest fires. The Multiple Use Act should be extended to other federal lands, including Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands.

Environmental management is complicated, as reflected by the many laws and court cases in this field. Maybe it's time to reduce the number of conflicting laws and policies and simplify management objectives with a common-sense approach. The Multiple Use Act provides a sound starting point for this effort. — **Matt Cronin, WLJ columnist**

*(Matt Cronin is a biologist with Northwest Biology and Forestry Company LLC in Bozeman, MT, and a teaching professor at Montana State University. He may be contacted at [croninm@aol.com](mailto:croninm@aol.com).)*



## GUEST OPINION

It seems like I have seen a substantial number of Section 1031 exchanges with my farm clients this fall. Most have been attributed to solar and data center land sales; but there also seems to be an uptick in inherited land sales. For the most part, 1031s are straightforward. But you must be aware of some rules and nuances.

Let's start with an explanation of a 1031 exchange. Section 1031 of the Internal Revenue Code allows taxpayers to defer capital gains taxes when they exchange one qualifying property used in a business or held for investment for another "like-kind" property. The IRS defines like-kind as property of the same nature, character or class even if they are a different grade or quality. Real property is like-kind regardless of whether it is improved or unimproved.

Agricultural land is a bit tricky because it's usually not bare land. There might be buildings, irrigation/tiling, a personal residence and water/mineral rights associated with the land. Another issue commonly seen in agriculture is many exchanges are with related parties.

Agricultural land can be made up of several asset classes such as land, 1250 property and 1245 property. Land can be exchanged for other real property tax-free if the net proceeds and all cash is reinvested in the replacement property. Section 1250 property (buildings—other than livestock or storage) can be exchanged tax-free for equal or greater 1250 property. Section 1245 assets must be exchanged for equal or greater 1245 property for tax-free treatment. Keep in mind that 1245 property for 1031 exchange purposes no longer includes personal property like tractors or vehicles.

Debt also plays a role in 1031 exchanges. Often, the relinquished land is encumbered by debt. The newly acquired land must have an equal or greater amount of debt than the relin-

quished property. This may require a discussion with your bank prior to the 1031 exchange to remove debt from the land or to make sure you can acquire debt on the new land of an equal or greater amount.

Timing is critical in a 1031 exchange. The taxpayer must identify potential replacement properties within 45 days of selling the original property. The exchange must be completed within 180 days of the sale of the relinquished property. Funds from the sale must be held by a qualified intermediary and cannot be accessed by the taxpayer during the exchange process.

When you identify replacement property within 45 days of the sale, there are several rules to keep in mind. The two main rules to be aware of are the three-property and 200% rules. The three-property rule allows you to identify three properties regardless of the fair market value. The 200% rule allows you to identify any number of properties as long as the fair market value doesn't exceed 200% of the relinquished property.

Special rules apply when 1031 exchanges involve related parties. The related party definition not only includes family members but also entities with common ownership and certain trusts. These are often scrutinized by the IRS for potential tax evasion. If you do a 1031 with a related party, neither can dispose of the acquired property within two years, or deferred gain becomes taxable. You should also document that the exchange was at fair market value and at arm's length to avoid IRS scrutiny.

Section 1031 exchanges are more complex than most people believe. There are a lot of rules to follow, and one misstep can cause the 1031 transaction to be taxable. Before you jump into a 1031 exchange, talk through the details with your attorney and accountant to make sure it will be a tax-free transaction. — **Rod Mauszycki, DTN tax columnist**

## GET YOUR FARM 1031 EXCHANGE RIGHT

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## LEGAL LEDGER

### Greens to sue over halted gray wolf recovery plan

The Center for Biological Diversity announced its intent to sue the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) if the agency does not prepare a national gray wolf recovery plan. USFWS recently said it would not prepare a national plan because the wolves no longer meet the criteria for protection under the Endangered Species Act. The Center argued that courts have repeatedly ruled that the species qualifies for federal protections. "Because recovery efforts have been piecemeal, full nationwide recovery has not occurred," the group wrote.

### PETA calls for Tyson beef plant conversion

Animal activist group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) recently penned a letter to Tyson CEO Donnie King, suggesting the company's Lexington, NE, beef plant be converted into a mushroom farm instead of shutting down. "We'd like to urge you to rethink that closure and keep people employed by embracing the future of food, converting this plant into an indoor mushroom farm, and starting to produce zero-cholesterol, high-protein versatile mushroom products," the group wrote in its letter. The Lexington Tyson plant is set to close by the end of January, which will result in the loss of about 5,000 head per day. Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen (R) told the Nebraska Examiner in late November that Tyson officials are exploring other options for the plant, including repurposing it into a value-added operation.

### Study sees potential for Canada beef plant

An Impact and Insight Study released by Economic Development Regina (EDR) finds there is a strong case for greater beef processing in Saskatchewan, Canada, through a plant in the Greater Regina Area. The group said that even though Saskatchewan has Canada's second-largest beef cow herd, less than 1% of cattle are processed locally. "The study is a compelling case for establishing a federally inspected beef processing facility in Regina to keep more value here at home," said Colin Savage, EDR's director of economics & data analytics. The study estimated that a new facility would generate \$168 million in economic output, \$76 million in gross domestic product and create 723 full-time jobs.

### CPW Director Jeff Davis resigns from position

The Colorado Department of Natural Resources announced Nov. 25 that Jeff Davis stepped down as Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) director and will assume a role as a senior policy advisor for strategic priorities with the Department of Natural Resources Executive Director's Office. Major General Laura Clellan, retired adjutant general and executive director of the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, was named as CPW acting director until Davis' position is filled. "Jeff Davis came to Colorado Parks and Wildlife during a period of uncertainty and change with a number of significant wildlife and recreation issues landing at his feet almost immediately," said Dan Gibbs, Colorado Department of Natural Resources executive director. "He transitions leaving a Division which is in a much better place internally as well as a notable record of achievement and progress in areas of building a stronger culture, wildlife management, and stakeholder involvement and engagement."

### EU recalls Brazilian beef for banned hormones

The European Commission issued a recall notice for frozen beef imported from Brazil into the European Union (EU) after a shipment tested positive for the banned hormone oestradiol 17β. The products were distributed across the EU and the United Kingdom. "The EU has spent years and billions telling people to eat healthy food and ensuring consumers can trust the safety of what's on the shelf," Irish Cattle and Sheep Association President Seán McNamara told the Irish Examiner. "What's the point of all that if they now allow in beef that doesn't meet even the most basic EU rules?" The European Commission has launched an investigation into the products. Since 1981, the EU has prohibited the use of hormones for growth promotion in livestock.

### Interior speeds up water infrastructure projects

The Department of the Interior on Nov. 25 announced Secretary's Order 3446, which will streamline federally funded construction projects at Bureau of Reclamation facilities across the 17 western states. The department said the order reduces administrative burdens, cuts costs for water and power users and supports faster delivery of infrastructure across the West. "In addition to speeding up project timelines and cutting costs for our customers and taxpayers, the order directs the Bureau of Reclamation to review many of its processes, manuals and guidelines to identify further operational efficiencies," said Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Andrea Travnicek. Reclamation will also consult with water and power users, Tribes and other stakeholders to evaluate ways to shorten timelines and lower costs.

**Bobcat**  
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**B**

# THE VIEWPOINT

with Jennifer Zoller

*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.*

As an associate professor and Extension equine specialist for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Dr. Jennifer Zoller has built her career around equine education, leadership and hands-on outreach across Texas.

Recently, there have been concerns about equine herpesvirus (EHV) after an outbreak linked to an equine event in Texas resulted in horses exhibiting clinical neurologic signs of EHV. The virus can cause respiratory disease, reproductive issues and neurologic disease in horses.

EHV is widely present in horse populations, Zoller said, and outbreaks can occur at some points because it is so transmissible.

"The concern is that EHV can occasionally lead to a neurologic form of the disease, which is the outbreak that we are hearing about right now, equine herpesvirus myeloencephalopathy (EHM)," Zoller told WLJ.

The outbreak stems from the Women's Professional Rodeo Association (WPRA) World Finals and Elite Barrel Race held in Waco, TX, from Nov. 5-9. The Texas Depart-



Courtesy photo  
Dr. Jennifer Zoller

ment of Agriculture (TDA) issued an alert on Nov. 19 urging all WPRA event attendees or attendees from any recent large equine gathering in the area to monitor their animals and implement heightened biosecurity measures.

"While investigations are ongoing, the TDA believes the situation warrants immediate attention, given the rapid spread and severe outcomes in affected horses," the department said in a news release.

EHV is transmitted by touch, Zoller said. "Direct horse-to-horse contacts, aerosolized droplets from coughing or snorting, indirect contact from contaminated surfaces like stalls, trailers, tack, sharing water buckets, things like that," she said. "Those horses left that event and went back to their home bases. Some of those were out of state, and that's what the concern is, the transmission of the disease."

Horses are able to shed the

virus during the incubation period, which ranges from two to 10 days, even before showing clinical signs. It is recommended to quarantine any horse coming back from an event for at least 14 days to be able to monitor for symptoms.

Any time there is an event, there can be outbreaks, Zoller explained. The most critical thing that horse owners can do is practice good biosecurity. "This is not something new to the horse industry," she said.

On Nov. 18, the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo made the decision to cancel the Uvalde Rodeo Qualifier scheduled for Nov. 19-22 because of the outbreak. Just one day later, the Boot Barn Prairie Circuit Finals Rodeo to be held in Mulvane, KS, from Nov. 19-22 was canceled. The Cowtown Coliseum in Fort Worth, TX, also made the decision to postpone all equine events through early December. The 2025 National Finals Breakaway Roping was postponed to Dec. 22-23 in the Cowtown Coliseum.

A current list of the canceled or postponed WPRA divisional circuit jackpots can be found at [wpra.com](http://wpra.com).

The Wrangler National Finals Rodeo (NFR) was set to continue as scheduled but will require updated health and biosecurity protocols. All horses must have a seven-day certificate of veterinary inspection and a unique entry permit number from the Nevada Department of Agriculture, and competitors must

conduct daily temperature checks on their horses. There is also a no-travel advisory for all horses participating and competing in the NFR, and there will be enhanced verification and check-in procedures.

While event and horse facilities managers have protocols for biosecurity, Zoller recommends horse owners also follow their own strict biosecurity measures, ensuring horses are set up for the best-case scenario in the event of travel or competition.

"This is an emerging situation," she said. "So, things can change on a daily basis. The best thing we can do is monitor what's happening, make sure you're relying on reputable sources for your information and talk to your local veterinarian."

For up-to-date, reputable information, Zoller recommends following the Equine Disease Communication Center (EDCC), American Association of Equine Practitioners and local Extension specialists.

## EHV symptoms

EHV most often presents respiratory system symptoms. This includes runny nose, fever, coughing, lethargy and enlarged lymph nodes. EHV can also cause abortion in mares. Neurologic signs of EHM include hind limb weakness, incoordination, loss of tail tone, urine dribbling, leaning against walls, and, in severe cases, recumbency. While fever often occurs be-

fore neurologic symptoms, lack of fever does not rule out infection.

Most horses are exposed to EHV early in life and may carry the virus in a resting state, which can reactivate during stress events such as travel, illness or competition. EHM occurs when an EHV infection causes inflammation and damage to blood vessels in the brain and spinal cord. While only a small percentage of horses with EHV develop EHM, the condition can be fatal.

"The neurologic form of the disease can be a little bit scarier because of the symptoms those horses present," Zoller said. "But the neurologic form of the disease is less common. And most horses will recover from it with supportive care from the veterinarian." The recovery rate for horses with EHM is about 60-80% when it is caught and treated quickly, she added.

The EDCC is monitoring the EHM outbreak linked to the WPRA Waco event. As of Dec. 1, six states had officially confirmed EHM cases: Texas (18 cases), Oklahoma (seven cases), Louisiana (three cases), South Dakota (one case), Colorado (one case) and New Mexico (three cases).

In Texas, the neurologic form of EHV is a reportable disease and can be reported at [tahc.texas.gov](http://tahc.texas.gov). "It's important that if there is a suspected case, the horse owner or caretaker, the veterinarian or the lab where the test is run, reports it so that the EDCC and Texas Animal Health Com-

mission can keep track of this particular outbreak," Zoller said.

While there is not necessarily a cure for EHV, Zoller recommends horse owners contact their veterinarian for supportive care and quarantine practices based on the outbreak in their area.

"There is some conversation out there about vaccine availability and how that might impact horses that are traveling," she noted. "But work with your local veterinarian for any of those questions."

## Biosecurity measures

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension recommends the following biosecurity measures:

- Isolate horses returning from travel for at least 14-21 days, monitoring them twice a day for fever.
- Avoid nose-to-nose contact and sharing of tack and grooming tools, and disinfect all equipment.
- Clean trailers and stalls of manure, bedding and water before disinfection.
- Limit personnel contact with multiple horses, wear designated clothing when handling exposed animals, and wash hands thoroughly after contact.
- Work with a veterinarian for a vaccine protocol based on individual horse needs.
- Maintain accurate records of horse movements and exposure history. — **Anna Miller Fortozo, WLJ managing editor**



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# Nebraska leads nation in cattle slaughter

## MEAT IMPACT (from page 1)

amounts to \$77 billion. According to the study, rising global and domestic demand for protein will continue to fuel economic activity and strengthen the industry's long-term importance to U.S. communities.

## Top states

The U.S. slaughters approximately 129 million hogs, 30 million cattle, 9 billion broilers and 200 million turkeys per year. Nebraska ranks as the top cattle slaughter state, slaughtering 6.8 million commercial cattle, not including dairy or calves. Kansas and Texas round out the top three

cattle slaughter states, processing more than 6.3 million and 5.4 million head, respectively. Iowa ranks as the top hog slaughter state, slaughtering 40.5 million head. Georgia ranks as the top broiler slaughter state, slaughtering 1.3 billion broilers. Minnesota ranks as the top turkey slaughter state, slaughtering 36.8 million turkeys per year.

The report provides a state-by-state analysis that highlights where the industry has the most significant economic impact. Texas leads all states in output contributions from meat and poultry processing, at \$95.2 billion. Nebraska follows with \$70.3 billion, while Iowa ranks third with \$63.2 billion. Georgia and North Carolina round out the top five.

Value-added contributions mirror these rankings. Texas again leads with \$39.5 billion, followed by Nebraska at \$27.2 billion, Iowa at \$24.8 billion, Georgia at \$19.9 billion and

North Carolina at \$19.1 billion. The report notes that 37 states receive more than \$1 billion in value-added benefits from the processing sector alone.

## Livestock slaughter, processing

The study highlights the industry's contribution from livestock slaughter and found it generates \$149.7 billion in total value added in the U.S. Nebraska, Texas, Iowa, Kansas and Minnesota lead the nation in this category.

Livestock slaughter supports approximately 1.5 million U.S. jobs. Texas generates the most employment with more than 274,000 jobs, followed by Iowa with 148,416 jobs, Nebraska with 146,450 jobs, Kansas with 94,518 jobs and Missouri with 72,296 jobs.

Labor income tied to livestock slaughter totals \$88.5 billion nationally, with Iowa

contributing the most at \$12.1 billion. Nebraska follows at \$11.3 billion, then Texas at \$10.2 billion.

Overall output from livestock slaughter exceeds \$372.8 billion. Nebraska, Texas and Iowa together account for nearly 40% of that total.

The study also details the impact of meat processing, which adds \$86.3 billion in value nationwide. Texas, Illinois, California, Wisconsin and Ohio lead the country in value-added contributions.

Nationally, meat processing contributes \$53.1 billion in labor income and \$227.9 billion in total output. Texas again ranks first in total output with \$21.9 billion, followed by Illinois at \$19.6 billion, California at \$14.9 billion, Wisconsin at \$14.2 billion and Iowa at \$13.3 billion.

## Methodology

This study is an economic

contribution study that measures the meat and poultry processing industry's current role in local, state and national economies, rather than estimating the effects of a new or departing business, as an economic impact study would.

To conduct this analysis, researchers used a combination of Impact Analysis for Planning (IMPLAN) and Microsoft Excel. IMPLAN is an input-output modeling system that evaluates industry relationships and economic activity using datasets updated annually from sources such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Census Bureau and the USDA. The study relied on the 2023 IMPLAN data package, the most current dataset available, and applied IMPLAN's inflation factors to project all dollar-based values forward to 2025.

— Charles Wallace, WLJ contributing editor

## US backs Bayer SCOTUS Roundup petition

The U.S. solicitor general said the U.S. Supreme Court (SCOTUS) should grant review to Bayer on a petition filed by the company that could bring product-liability lawsuits to an end on the glyphosate-based weed killer Roundup, in an amicus brief filed with the court.

The Supreme Court held conference on the petition in June 2025 and emerged from that meeting asking for the solicitor general's input on the case.

Both sides in Monsanto Company v. John L. Durnell filed briefs with the court last summer, as Bayer argued the Supreme Court should hear the case to resolve a split among lower courts on whether federal labeling laws preempt state labeling laws.

Durnell, whose attorneys argued his non-Hodgkin's lymphoma was caused by his use of Roundup, contends in a brief that there is not a lower court split on the question.

The Missouri Court of Appeals joined the U.S. Court of Appeal for the 9th and 11th circuits and state appellate courts in California and Oregon in holding that federal law does not preempt state laws. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit ruled the opposite in another case, according to Bayer's filing.

The U.S. argued that when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) created specific labeling requirements when it determined glyphosate is "not likely to be carcinogenic to humans" consistently since 1991, it approved Roundup labels without cancer warnings and prohibited Bayer from adding warnings without agency approval.

The solicitor general said the appeals court in Missouri got it wrong when it held that state and federal requirements were essentially the same.

"Under Missouri law, a manufacturer is strictly liable for harms caused by an 'unreasonably dangerous' product if the manufacturer 'did not give adequate warning of the danger,'" the U.S. said in its brief.

"In determining whether a particular product is unreasonably dangerous, a Missouri jury need not consider the product's economic and social benefits, as the 'concept of unreasonable danger... is presented to the jury as an ultimate issue without further definition.'"

Under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, or FIFRA, however,

the U.S. said manufacturers are required to add such warnings as they are "necessary and adequate" to protect human health and the environment.

"And in determining whether a particular pesticide will pose an 'unreasonable risk to man or the environment,' EPA 'takes into account the economic, social and environmental costs and benefits of the use of the pesticide,'" the solicitor general said.

"Because the jury below was not instructed to account for such benefits, the jury did not apply the same substantive standard that FIFRA instructs EPA to apply in determining whether a pesticide is misbranded."

The U.S. acknowledged that its position on the Durnell case is a reversal of the previous administration's stand on the issue.

In Monsanto Co. v. Hardeman, another Roundup case in 2021, the solicitor general argued that FIFRA did not preempt state-law failure-to-warn claims.

"Since that time, a conflict has developed among the courts of appeals on the question whether FIFRA expressly preempts state-law tort claims premised on petitioner's failure to warn its customers about potential cancer risks created by use of Roundup," the U.S. told the court. "In light of the Third Circuit's intervening decision in Schaffner (v Monsanto, 2024) and the change in administration, the United States has reexamined the arguments it pressed before this court in Hardeman and has returned to its previous position as to the scope of FIFRA preemption."

Bayer said in a statement it believes the backing of the Trump administration will be important in the court's consideration of the case.

"The support of the U.S. government is an important step and good news for U.S. farmers, who need regulatory clarity," Bayer CEO Bill Anderson said in a statement.

"The stakes could not be higher as the misapplication of federal law jeopardizes the availability of innovative tools for farmers and investments in the broader U.S. economy."

Bayer said it was time for the U.S. legal system to "establish that companies cannot be punished under state laws" for complying with federal label requirements. — Todd Neeley, DTN environmental editor

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# Causes of reproductive failure in the herd

While several factors can play into a herd's reproductive success, management is usually the key. Nutrition, bull management, vaccination protocols and handling of early pregnant animals can greatly influence the herd pregnancy rate.

A change in management can have a ripple effect. For example, one management decision on calving could impact pregnancy rates. If you push back your calving date from March to May, the breeding season is pushed back to August. And this can result in more open cows.

## Why do I have so many open cows?

### Nutrition

Specialists, veterinarians and nutritionists all agree that nutrition is normally the biggest cause of reproductive failure.

"If you think of building a wall, nutrition is the bricks. If

the bricks are missing, the wall is going to fail," said Mary Drewnoski, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) beef and forage specialist. "Protein or energy are usually the big rocks that are missing, especially in young animals that may still be growing."

Heifers and cows should be on an increasing plane of nutrition during the breeding season, as established through years of research.

A March calving herd in the Sandhills would breed while grazing grass in June, which is increasing in protein and energy. However, if that herd's calving date is changed to May, that herd is now breeding in August on grass that has matured and dropping in the available protein and energy. In the Sandhills, this herd would be breeding on rangeland that is decreasing in forage value.

By supplementing, the plane of nutrition is increasing, even though the grass forage

value is dropping, which should boost the pregnancy rate.

Rick Funston, UNL beef reproductive specialist, believes the kind of protein you are feeding matters. Distillers grains products are higher in bypass protein, which the animal can use, and the young animals in the UNL research ranch May herd receive 0.3 pounds of protein per head per day. However, if feeding alfalfa hay, which is lower in bypass protein, Funston suggests feeding 0.5 lbs. of protein per head per day.

In wet years with higher-than-normal precipitation, producers are often surprised when they have more open cows than usual. Remember that mature grass is lower in protein and energy, because the rigid stem and seedhead are less digestible.

"But those cows were belly deep in grass!" is a common response. That "washy" grass was providing a declining

plane of nutrition during the breeding season, which could lower pregnancy rates.

On the flip side, producers are often surprised at good pregnancy rates during lower precipitation years. While grass production is lower, the grass may lack the rainfall to produce a seedhead, resulting in a higher forage value.

Research shows that cows that are thin, or have a body condition score (BCS) of 4 or less, are less likely to breed back. Thin cows are also milking during the breeding season and will need more protein and energy to gain weight. The environment is telling the cow she can't support herself, so why could she support the extra nutritional needs of a fetus? After calving and heading into the breeding season, cows should be in a good body condition score, or thinner cows (BCS 4) should be gaining body condition.

Young heifers and cows are growing and may need a high-

er diet of protein and energy. Often producers will sort off these young animals and manage them differently than the older cows. The young herd is often fed more protein or energy to compensate for growth.

If second- or third-calf heifers have lower pregnancy rates, consider the genetics you have been selecting for and the environment the herd is in. If you are selecting for higher weaning or yearling weights, cow size and milk production may also be increasing. More open young animals could indicate your environment and genetics no longer match. Energy and protein may not be meeting the needs of these young, growing and milking females.

Vitamin A and dietary phosphorus are important to reproduction success. Vitamin A does not store well in the animal, and levels differ drastically in feeds, so vitamin A should be a consideration. Dietary phosphorus drops in grasses as plants mature, so it may need supplemented in mineral if cattle are grazing dormant winter range. However, distillers grains are high in phosphorus, so if supplemented, phosphorus may not be needed in the mineral.

### Bulls

Females are just one part of the equation—don't forget about bull management. If running multiple bulls in a herd, ensure there are enough bulls. Recommendations for the cow-to-bull ratio depend on the age of the bulls, terrain and size of the pasture and other variables. For older bulls, 25 cows per 1 bull is suggested. For a yearling bull, the number of females is equal to the bull's age in months (for example, a 15-month-old bull could run with 15 females).

Bulls should be tested 4-6 weeks prior to turnout. Bulls may be subfertile or infertile. Dr. Lindsay Waechter-Mead, veterinarian and Beef Quality Assurance coordinator, says that sperm production is a 61-day process, so injuries that occur earlier in the spring may not show up during a breeding soundness exam, if the exam is done too early.

The exam is just a "snapshot" in time, so check bulls often during the breeding season to ensure bulls are "sound" all season. Bulls can injure feet, legs or hips. Check for swelling around the sheath and scrotal

areas. Remove injured bulls and replace with a healthy "spare" bull.

### Early embryonic death loss

When heifers or cows are first pregnant, the embryo is small, as well as fragile. If you are synchronizing and utilizing AI, either move animals immediately after breeding (within five days of breeding) or wait until 45 days to transport. By waiting to transport, this will reduce the embryonic loss, which will increase pregnancy rates.

"Preg checking should also wait until after 50 days of breeding to reduce the amount of embryonic loss in pregnant animals," suggests Funston, who worked with large sets of ranch data that studied the relationship of the timing of pregnancy checking herds.

### Infections

Keeping infections or diseases out of herds may be the first thing you think of when you have a lot of non-pregnant cows, but in Waechter-Mead's experience, "diseases are rarely found and it's usually a management issue." If management or nutrition deficiencies have been ruled out, work with your local veterinarian for diseases that could affect reproduction.

Based on risks and benefits, each herd will have their own vaccinations or health protocols, again working with your veterinarian. However, the American Association of Bovine Practitioners recommends core vaccines of IBR, BRSV, BVD, PI3 and Clostridial species. The rest should be based on risk/benefits specific to each vaccine.

During the semen testing of bulls, samples for trichomoniasis tests can be taken during the bulls' breeding soundness exams. Virgin bulls should not need a trichomoniasis, or trich, test.

According to established herds that Funston has worked with, these herds achieve 90% or greater pregnancy rates on cows and 80% or greater pregnancy rates on heifers. If your pregnancy rates are significantly lower, reach out to your local veterinarian, as each is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. By asking the right questions, a solution can be found faster and at less expense. —

**Bethany Johnston and Rick Funston, Nebraska Extension**

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# Wiltse family receives KS Leopold Conservation Award

The Kevin Wiltse family has been selected as the recipient of the 2025 Kansas Leopold Conservation Award.

The award honors farmers, ranchers and forestland owners who go above and beyond in the management of soil health, water quality and wildlife habitat on working land.

Kevin Wiltse and his wife, Amanda, and their three children farm with his mother. Wiltse Family Farms consists of native range and dryland cropland near Timken.

They were presented with the \$10,000 award at the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts' Annual Convention.

Sand County Foundation and national sponsor American Farmland Trust will present Leopold Conservation Awards to landowners in 28 states this year. In Kansas, the award is presented with the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts, Kansas Farm Bureau and the Ranchland Trust of Kansas.

Kevin Wiltse's conservation journey began on a bus. He traveled with his father to Dakota Lakes in 1996 to learn about soil health. The day after returning home, they sold their tillage equipment and bought a no-till drill. But soil health success didn't come overnight, nor was it achieved relying solely on not tilling the soil.

Ever since that fateful trip, Kevin's commitment to conservation has driven him to challenge conventional approaches and pursue untested methods of farming. The result has been a more profitable business, one less reliant on commercial inputs and subsidies, while balancing agricultural productivity with ecological integrity.

One of the most transformative aspects of his strategy has been successfully transitioning more than 500 acres of conventional cropland to native perennial grasses and forbs, without cost-share assistance. By fostering deep-rooted plants, he improves soil structure, enhances water retention, and mitigates the impact of drought.

Enhancing biodiversity while preventing erosion is why Kevin also began growing cover crops within his normal rotation of crops. The presence of continuous ground cover pro-

vided more options to graze beef cattle year-round.

Beyond individual farming techniques, Kevin's success lies in his mindset. He partners with nature rather than trying to control it. This philosophy drives experimentation with interseeding crops, biological amendments and perennial cool-season planting. Each practice reinforces his farm's ability to withstand unpredictable weather and market conditions.

Kevin made sweeping changes to the farm's business model after attending the Ranching for Profit School in 2013 amid a three-year drought. He decided to rely less on cash crops and more on grazing cattle.

The large, intact land base at Wiltse Family Farms has made grazing and moving livestock easier. The borders of farm fields, planted with diverse perennial vegetation, are fenced in to serve as travel lanes between pastures for cattle. These perennial borders attract beneficial pollinators and pheasants. About 30,000 feet of water lines were installed to distribute water to stock tanks.

The only cash crops grown now are milo, triticale and rye, all of which can double as forage for livestock and wildlife.

Kevin credits rotationally grazing livestock on cover crops and diverse perennial pastures with accelerated restoration of the soil. His pastures have remained green during recent periods of drought. More grass on the ground attracts more wildlife and insects, which Kevin considers a good indicator of success.

Kevin's impact extends beyond his own farm with speaking engagements and mentoring other landowners.

Leading experts in regenerative agriculture seek his insights. Yet, he admits that 30 years ago as a Kansas State graduate, he was more concerned with crop yields than soil health and bird habitat.

"You need to be at your place and time to do this," he said.

Much like the bus tour he took years ago, he encourages others to visit farms and ranches that utilize conservation practices, and to then experiment on a few acres at home.

Peers and visitors are consistently inspired by Kevin's quiet and humble stewardship. His willingness to test and refine methods is pushing conservation agriculture forward, while establishing a model for future generations. — Sand County Foundation

## Canada to cut reliance on US trade ties

The U.S. could see reduced imports of Canadian petroleum, steel and lumber in the coming years as the Canadian government looks for ways to reduce its dependence on U.S. trade.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney laid out multiple plans to diversify its oil trade while also propping up steel and softwood lumber industries, which have been hit hard by U.S. tariffs. Each of the moves could shift trade for each of those critical commodities away from the U.S. in the coming years, which could increase prices for those products in the U.S. as a result.

In a speech with business leaders in Alberta, Carney said U.S. tariffs and the uncertainty they have created "will wipe \$50 billion from our economy—the equivalent of \$1,300 for every Canadian," Carney said. "As the United States transforms all of its trading relationships, many of our strengths—based on those close ties to America—have become our vulnerabilities," Carney said.

Last year, more than three-quarters of Canadian exports went to the U.S. That includes more than 90% of the country's lumber, aluminum and steel exports. And over 95% of Canada's energy exports went to the U.S., Carney said.

"This tight interdependence, once a strength, is now a weakness," Carney said.

Declaring the need for a new strategy, Carney signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Alberta Premier Danielle Smith to build a new oil pipeline through western Canada to boost oil and natural gas that could ship as much as 400,000 barrels per day out of British Columbia "destined for Asian markets," the MOU stated.

Canada exports an average of 4.2 million barrels of oil daily to the U.S., which accounts for roughly 20% of total U.S. petroleum consumption. The plan would essentially reduce exports to the U.S. by about 10%.

"The U.S. has changed. That's their right. We must respond. That's our imperative," Carney said. Carney laid out a plan to also boost electrical transmission and develop nuclear power to help boost "Canada's burgeoning AI ecosystem" while also saying the country would build the world's largest carbon capture, utilization and storage project, which would lower the carbon intensity of the country's oil.

The Canadian government also pointed to a need to transform its economy because of U.S. tariffs. Carney announced plans to provide more aid to the country's steel and lumber industries, which continue facing tariffs from the U.S. Canada also moved to reduce quotas for its steel imports and impose its own 25% tariff on "steel-deriva-

tive" products. The plan essentially calls for both the steel and lumber industries to invest more in Canadian manufacturing and includes a \$700 million investment to build more Canadian homes.

Most products exported from Canada are exempt from tariffs because of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, but Trump has imposed 50% tariffs on steel while lumber products face a 45% tariff. Another 25% tariff has been imposed on automobiles built in Canada.

Tensions between Canada and the U.S. have been high all year. Trump became upset in October when the province of Ontario bought ads during the World Series using a speech from former President Ronald Reagan in 1987 denouncing tariffs. Trump declared trade talks with Canada were suspended over the ad. U.S. Ambassador to Canada Pete Hoekstra then got into a heated exchange with a representative from Ontario while saying Canadians should consider being called the 51st state a compliment.

Carney was expected to be in D.C. for events around the FIFA World Cup and could meet with Trump at that time, the BBC reported. Canada, the U.S. and Mexico will each host games as part of the soccer tournament in 2026. — Chris Clayton, DTN ag policy editor

## USFS withdrew feral cattle removal plan in November

### GILA CATTLE (from page 1)

stop the agency from shooting the stray cattle by filing suit in February 2023. The groups argued the agency violated federal regulations by not following proper procedures for removing unauthorized livestock.

NMCGA said it was concerned about the precedent the shootings would set, and the impacts on private property. In addition, the association said lethally removing the cattle was a waste of beef, and there would be consequences to the agency's improper carcass management.

The groups were denied their requests for a temporary restraining order and

preliminary injunction.

"The plaintiffs express concerns regarding the operation's impact on goodwill and the potential loss of customers, but these potential harms are not sufficient to justify the granting of injunctive relief here," the court wrote in its opinion.

Shortly after the livestock groups filed suit, the Center for Biological Diversity intervened in the lawsuit in support of USFS. Later that fall, the court granted the group the right to intervene.

A year after the aerial shooting operations took place, in February 2024, a four-hour-long hearing was held between the involved parties. Nearly another full

year later, in January 2025, the district judge maintained that USFS complied with all laws, and the livestock industry lawsuit against the agency was dismissed. The ruling gave the Gila National Forest full legal authority to remove feral livestock from federal lands. NMCGA then appealed the decision to the 10th Circuit.

In November 2025, the agency withdrew its decision authorizing the project, explaining "the desired outcomes of this project have been achieved" after there have been no signs of feral cattle since removal efforts concluded in 2023. — Anna Miller Fortozo, WLJ managing editor



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# MARKET NEWS

## MARKET SITUATION REPORT

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

MARKET AT A GLANCE	This Week: 12/4/2025	Week Ago	Year Ago
Choice Fed Steers	216.64 ▲	208.00	190.00
CME Feeder Index	341.80 ▲	336.38	260.47
Boxed Beef Average	362.72 ▲	N/A	307.84
Average Dressed Steers	N/A ▲	N/A	N/A
Live Slaughter Weight*	1,458 ▲	1,455	1,428
Weekly Slaughter**	501,000 ▼	585,000	528,000
Weekly Beef Production***	445.6 ▼	519.6	457.3
Hide/Offal Value	11.52 ▼	11.56	11.45
Corn Price	4.38 ▲	4.29	4.22

\*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 28	6,270	370.27	303	403.93	1,105	375.23	2,057	366.56	608	352.02	2,197 334.30
November 21	7,493	371.92	336	409.08	1,361	375.93	2,228	369.17	847	352.96	2,720 333.40
November 14	6,372	375.03	221	417.69	1,110	380.44	2,114	371.78	547	358.70	2,380 338.34
November 7	6,644	377.86	245	419.18	1,141	382.67	2,116	374.34	591	358.91	2,550 339.31

CUTOUTS						FED BOXED BEEF					
DATE	CHOICE	SELECT	COW BEEF CUTOUT		50% LEAN	90% LEAN					
December 4	362.72	350.32	310.78		168.71	396.76					
December 3	363.81	353.12	313.56		169.64	401.02					
December 2	364.72	350.78	312.93		158.60	397.93					
December 1	368.89	357.88	312.56		172.28	399.91					
November 28	366.82	351.05	315.36		164.54	402.57					

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Live Cattle							
	11/28	12/1	12/2	12/3	12/4	High*	Low*
Dec.	21558	21420	22000	22040	22213	24678	16853
Feb.	21785	21593	22260	22313	22470	24830	16668
Apr.	21955	21755	22428	22465	22578	25018	17005
Jun.	21440	21258	21945	21950	22000	25093	18068

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Feeder Cattle							
	11/28	12/1	12/2	12/3	12/4	High*	Low*
Jan.	32398	32108	33033	33495	33778	38103	21920
Mar.	31785	31553	32478	32878	33065	38280	22268
Apr.	31663	31485	32410	32800	32950	38020	22460
May	31458	31345	32270	32663	32808	37860	24118

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

FED CATTLE TRADE	Head Count	Avg. Weight	Avg. Price
<b>WEEKLY WEIGHTED AVERAGES</b>			
Live FOB Steer	876	1,716	216.64
Live FOB Heifer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dressed Del Steer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dressed Del Heifer	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>SAME PERIOD LAST WEEK</b>			
Live FOB Steer	571	1,570	208.00
Live FOB Heifer	372	1,426	207.32
Dressed Del Steer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dressed Del Heifer	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR</b>			
Live FOB Steer	1,024	1,545	190.00
Live FOB Heifer	778	1,340	190.13
Dressed Del Steer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dressed Del Heifer	N/A	N/A	N/A

NATIONAL WEEKLY FED BEEF SLAUGHTER VOLUME: NOVEMBER 30, 2025		
	Domestic	Imported
Forward Contract	39,914	4,391
Formula	210,713	1,740
Negotiated Cash	57,899	366
Negotiated Grid	28,185	1,746
Packer Owned	7,067	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>343,778</b>	<b>8,243</b>

SLAUGHTER FORWARD CONTRACTS		FORWARD BEEF SALES	
Delivery Month	Neg. Sales 0-21 days	Neg. Sales 21+ days	Formula sales
Dec. '25	186,452	724	3,849
Jan. '26	129,546	48	48
Feb. '26	146,495	5,608	5,608
Mar. '26	124,495	87	87
Apr. '26	153,078		

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	209.22	-2.02	
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	207.40	-2.60	
<b>Ontario Auctions</b>			
Slaughter Steers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1300-1500 lbs	215.64	-4.41	
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	N/A	N/A	
Slaughter Cows, Cutter and Utility 1-3, 1100-1400 lbs	130.56	-5.65	

\*Price comparison from one week ago.

Average feeder cattle prices (CND) for week ending Tuesday, December 2, 2025			
Steers:	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Ontario
501-600 lbs	446.15	448.59	384.36
601-700 lbs	391.80	392.35	352.75
701-800 lbs	351.72	352.01	332.58
801-900 lbs	318.99	318.87	345.61
<b>Heifers:</b>			
401-500 lbs	443.43	345.94	362.50
501-600 lbs	396.38	390.68	331.28
601-700 lbs	357.05	344.99	306.38
701-800 lbs	318.61	303.81	254.93

USDA MEXICO TO U.S. WEEKLY LIVESTOCK IMPORTS				
Species	Current Week	Previous Week	Current Year-to-date	Previous Year-to-date
Feeders	0	0	230,638	1,242,775

USDA WEEKLY IMPORTED FEEDER CATTLE			
December 4, 2025			
Mexico to United States Feeder Cattle Import Summary			
Receipts EST: N/A	Week Ago EST: N/A	Year Ago Act: N/A	
THIS REPORT WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED AFTER MAY 12TH. THE BORDER WILL BE CLOSED FOR LIVESTOCK IMPORTS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.			
<b>Feeder heifers: Medium and large 1&amp;2</b>		<b>Feeder heifers: Medium and large 1&amp;2</b>	
500-600 lbs	N/A	500-600 lbs	N/A
600-700 lbs	N/A	600-700 lbs	N/A
700-800 lbs	N/A	700-800 lbs	N/A
<b>Feeder steers: Medium and large 1&amp;2</b>		<b>Feeder steers: Medium and large 1&amp;2</b>	
500-600 lbs	N/A	500-600 lbs	N/A
600-700 lbs	N/A	600-700 lbs	N/A
700-800 lbs	N/A	700-800 lbs	N/A

CANADA			
November 28	Lethbridge, Alberta	Price	Weekly Change
1,487		720-870	620-740 525-610

### Selected Auctions Week Ending December 4, 2025

DATE MARKET	200-300 lb.	300-400 lb.	400-500 lb.	500-600 lb.	600-700 lb.	700-800 lb.	800 lb. -up	SLAUGHTER COWS	SLAUGHTER BULLS	PAIRS REPLACEMENTS
No report available Blackfoot, ID										
No report available Burley, ID										
No report available Emmett, ID										
No report available Eugene, OR										
December 1 Madras, OR	1,603	485-539 450-475	475-535 460-505	407-492.50 350-382	350-373 310-330	318-337 295-320	315-320 280-305	140-164 160-187		
November 26 Vale, OR	454			317-340				143-155 155-183		2,300-2,625
No report available Davenport, WA										
No report available Toppenish, WA										

Feeder prices for steers & heifers reflect medium and large 1 cattle, unless otherwise noted; * Indicates medium and large 1-2										
No report available Orland, CA										
No report available Escalon, CA										
December 1 Famoso, CA	441	380-475 350-410	400-475 365-410	380-430 350-380	275-325 270-300	275-300	275-300	70-200 125-178		
No report available Galt, CA										
December 2 Turlock, CA	647	400-504	420-474 370-430	370-400 354-392	345-371 325-347.50	290-310	265-290	125-164 149-172.50		
No report available Salina, UT										

November 28 Iowa	4,612	397	502.50-507.50 330-405	400-487.50 310-420	325-426 285-404	290-380.25 300-344	309-356 280-316.75	287.75-319.50 229-303.50	113-199 112-180	
December 2 Miles City, MT	1,384		560	480	398-480 362-419	350-408 344-362	350		112.50-189 123-183	
December 3 Bassett, NE	3,210			510-543 417.50-460	457.50-508 404-434	397.50-459 341-372	369.50-421	358-368.50		
November 29 Ericson, NE	4,370		545 477.50-525	475-530 405-461	434-507.50 366-441.50	391-438 345-387	362.50-397	334.50		
No report available Imperial, NE										
November 26 Kearney, NE	N/A									4,500-5,500 2,500-4,875
No report available Lexington, NE										
No report available Ogallala, NE										
No report available Valentine, NE										
No report available Herreid, SD										
December 3 Torrington, WY	2,985		590-685 480-485	540-569 393-485	435-480 380-400	375-419 340-372	346-380 345	310.25-337 280-295		

No report available Willcox, AZ										
December 1 Colorado	2,260		525-547.50 452.50-462.50	402.50-475 325-407.50	342.50-395 342.50-367.50	325-340 285-300	285-302.50 255-271	267.50-277.50 232.50-285.50	121-175 150-191.50	3,000-3,450 1,425-3,900
No report available La Junta, CO										
December 1 Loma, CO	1,039		450-475 390-460	425-450 350-450	360-400 300-375	325-380 300-350	290-325 280-325	230-300 230-310	130-155 155-175	3,700-4,400 2,325-3,450
December 3 Dodge City, KS	2,648		505-570 451-545	467.50-521 419-452.50	416-498 364-419	341-418.50 322-387.50	328.50-361 326.50-336.50	301-336 296-316	121-184 157.50-198	3,200-3,850 1,725-2,900
No report available Pratt, KS										
No report available Salina, KS										
December 4 Clovis, NM	2,136		460-520 435-450	420-600 405-465	406-537 335-435	340-419 325-379	320-387 275-355	290.75-325 265-315	185-320 190-283.50	
December 3 El Reno, OK	4,527		580 420-510	550-610 430-535	455-560 410-490	350-415 317.50-362.50	327.50-346 292.50-325	302-342 270-305		
December 2 McAlester, OK	800		435-545 301-495	423-485 365-425	348-423 333-371	333-385 303-351	311-345 285-315	283-298 230-315	140-169 162-190	3,300 1,400-3,350
December 2 Oklahoma City, OK	4,248		635 430-560	500-620 362.50-595	437.50-565 390-460	380-491 344-424	332-421 312-373	320-369.50 295-344	299-326	
No report available Cuero, TX										
No report available Dalhart, TX										
No report available San Angelo, TX										
December 4 Tulia, TX	698		445	445-470 390	382-440 335-380	310-372 277	315 300-307	240	135-145 150	

No report available Alabama										
December 1 Lexington, KY	925		417.50-472.50* 370-405*	381-400* 332.50-382.50*	350-407* 292.50-350*	295-354* 260-329*	293-335* 277.50-301*	279-317* 191-286.50*	151-182 160-222	2,550-3,250 1,650-2,900
December 1 Joplin, MO	6,774		440-495 375-445	410-470 357-405	387-425 327-372	337-400 322-359	327-355 300-356	285-333 286-		

# Returning back to the cattle market fundamentals

After a tremendous string of record cattle prices in the first three quarters of the year, the market was ripe for a significant correction. For the past six weeks, cattle futures and cash markets have been dominated by a near continuous stream of political rhetoric, speculation and fears mixed with a small amount of reality. Hopefully, the federal government is distracted now by other things and will spend less time meddling in cattle and beef markets.

The political uncertainty provided outside money in

cattle futures, with big long positions, an opportunity to take some profits, and aided by computer algorithms, having no doubt pulled live and feeder futures too low (and taken cash markets with them). Much of the outside money will likely reset positions going forward. After all, futures markets left several chart gaps in this correction that look to be filled going back up.

Maybe cattle markets can get back to the fundamentals, which have not changed through all of this. With some government data flowing

again, the fundamental picture has clearly not changed from the trajectory heading into the shutdown. The October and November Cattle on Feed reports show continued slow erosion of feedlot inventories with placements and marketings showing a more dramatic picture of tight cattle supplies.

October placements were the lowest in the data series back to 1996, and the 12-month moving average of placements shows that average feedlot placements the past year have been the lowest since July 2016, a bit over nine years ago.

October feedlot marketings were the lowest for the month since 2015, with average marketings for the past 12 months the lowest since October 2016.

Nov. 1 feedlot totals were down 2.2% year over year and average inventories the past year are the lowest since November 2018 after 12 consecutive months of declining feedlot inventories. Feedlot inventories are expected to continue decreasing with smaller feeder cattle supplies, no Mexican feeder imports and heifer retention still ahead. The October heifer on feed inventory

was 38.1%, unchanged from the July level.

So far this year, fed steer and heifer slaughter is down 5.2%, but since June has been down 7.6% from one year ago. Steer and heifer carcass weights are higher again this year but not enough to offset declining slaughter. Fed beef production is down 2.7% so far this year, and combined with an 8.2% year-over-year decrease in nonfed beef production, leads to a decrease in total beef production of 3.6% year over year. In the past 24 weeks, beef production has been down 5.8%.

Cattle markets are expected to recover from the correction, but the timing is unclear. With the year winding down and holidays approaching, cash and futures may mostly coast out the remainder of the year and reset in January. However, if the politicians will be quiet, significant recovery might happen in the next couple of weeks before December finally wraps up. Volatility is still a major factor in cattle markets. — **Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension livestock marketing specialist**

## Feeder futures shoot higher

### MARKETS (from page 1)

on Thursday. "When support is taken out, packer margins will be under pressure and slaughter schedules will be reduced."

### Feeder cattle

"Upon seeing continued support from the futures market and from the live cattle complex in the form of stronger fed cash cattle trade and a rallying futures complex, it was an easy decision for the feeder cattle complex to trade higher through Thursday's close," Stewart said.

Feeder cattle futures saw immense gains over the week. The January contract gained nearly \$30 to close at \$336.57, and the March contract gained about \$29 to close at \$329.72.

The CME Feeder Cattle Index lost about \$5 to close at \$341.80.

Corn futures were higher, up 14 cents on the December contract to \$4.37 and up 9 cents to \$4.47 on the March contract.

**Missouri:** Joplin Regional Stockyards in Carthage sold 6,000 head on Monday. Compared to a week earlier, feeder steers and heifers sold \$5-20 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 764 lbs. sold from \$330-338, averaging \$331.68.

**Oklahoma:** Oklahoma National Stockyards in Oklahoma City sold 4,500 head on Monday. Compared to the light test a week earlier, feeder steers sold \$8-15 higher and feeder heifers sold \$15-25 higher. Steer and heifer calves sold \$20-30 higher with instances of \$40 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 760 lbs. sold from \$310-335, averaging \$331.96.

**South Dakota:** Sioux Falls Regional in Worthing sold 1,581 head on Monday. Compared to the last sale, steer and heifer calves sold with much higher undertones. The only good comparisons of yearling steers were 900-950 lbs. sold \$40 higher and 1,050-1,100 lbs. sold \$7 higher. Yearling feeder heifers weighing 700 lbs. sold \$40 higher. — **Anna Miller Fortozo, WLJ managing editor**

## Drug approved for NWS; new case detected

The USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service recently confirmed a new case of New World screwworm (NWS) was found about 120 miles south of the Texas border in Montemorelos, Nuevo León, Mexico. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) also conditionally approved a topical medication for the prevention and treatment of NWS infestations.

A 22-month-old bovine was confirmed positive after being transported from Veracruz to a feedlot in Nuevo León. The detection is the northernmost active case currently in Mexico, and the second detection at the same feedlot since October.

"We will keep working shoulder to shoulder with USDA, Mexican animal health authorities, and our own state agency partners to defend our border and Texans from this dangerous threat," said Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller.

On Dec. 4, the FDA conditionally approved Exzolt Cat-

tle-CA1 (fluralaner), a topical solution for the prevention and treatment of NWS larval infestations and the treatment and control of cattle fever tick. The drug is authorized for beef cattle 2 months of age and older and replacement dairy heifers less than 20 months of age. The product should not be used on lactating dairy cattle, dairy calves, veal calves or bulls at least 1 year old that are intended for breeding.

The sponsor, Intervet, Inc. of Rahway, NJ, has up to five years to generate the additional effectiveness data needed to support a full FDA approval.

The topical is available by prescription only and dispensed in 250-milliliter, 1-liter and 5-liter bottles. The product is applied directly to the hair and skin in a narrow strip from the top of an animal's back from between the shoulder blades to the base of the tail. The slaughter withdrawal period is 98 days. — **Anna Miller Fortozo, WLJ managing editor**

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**66 Bulls .....\$7,792**  
**5 Bred heifers .... 5,850**  
**Auctioneer: Joe Goggins**

**TOPS:** B Sherman 2M, 3/28/2024 by Churchill W4 Sherman 2157K; to Charles Mahan, Malta, MT, \$16,000. B Sherman 24M, 4/2/2024 by Churchill W4 Sherman 2157K; to Farthing Ranch, Iron Mountain, WY, \$13,500. B Sherman 49M, 4/7/2024 by Churchill W4 Sherman 2157K; to Y Cross Ranch, Iron Mountain, WY, \$12,000. — **TY GROSHANS**

**ZUMBRUNNEN ANGUS PRODUCTION SALE**  
**Dec. 2, Lusk, WY**  
**109 Angus bulls ..... \$10,545**  
**81 Angus total registered females ..... 5,177**  
**Auctioneer: Wes Tiemann**

**Sale Manager: CK6 Consulting**  
**TOPS—Angus bulls:** HCC Congress 4102, 8/6/2024 by Crouch Congress; to Joe Netz, Lost Springs, WY, \$26,000. ZA NeoN229, 2/7/2025 by LAR Man In Black; to Scott Schaefer, Harrison, NE, \$24,999. ZA Meatball M603, 4/30/2024 by GB Fireball 672; to Tim Viton, Whitman, NE, \$22,000. **Open heifer:** ZA AllieN006, 3/5/2025 by Poss Ultra; to Capital Angus, White House, TX, \$15,000. — **TY GROSHANS**

**REDLAND ANGUS BULL & FEMALE SALE**  
**Nov. 22, Buffalo, WY**  
**1612-Year-old bulls ..... \$13,292**

**98 Commercial bred heifers ..... 4,817**  
**Auctioneer: Joe Goggins**

**TOPS:** Redland Exactly 1224, 4/8/2024 by Sinclair Exactly 4U2; to Alex Lawrence, SD, \$35,000. 26500, 3/21/2024 by Coleman Navigator 624; to A Mill Iron Angus, WY, \$26,500. Redland Do It All 804, 3/29/2024 by Mc Cumber Zodiac 9119; to Marty Lawrence, SD, \$25,998. Redland Do It All 124, 3/29/2024 by O C C Do It All 656D; to Eagle Ridge Cattle Company, SD, \$22,500. Redland Zodiac 824, 4/28/2024 by Mc Cumber Zodiac 9119; to Hancock Livestock, WY, \$22,000. Redland Chancellor 1304, 3/26/2024 by Redland Chancellor 410; to Lee Cattle, MT, \$22,000. Redland Traveler 984, 3/23/2024 by Redland Traveler 6008; to Tim Burch, MT, \$22,000. — **KEVIN MURNIN**

**VERMILION ANGUS RANCH PRODUCTION SALE**

**Nov. 29, Billings, MT**  
**166 Fall yearling bulls ..... \$18,307**  
**113 2-Year-old bulls ..... 14,044**  
**98 Bred cows ..... 6,237**  
**92 Bred heifers .... 6,154**  
**195 Commercial bred cows ..... 4,542**  
**674 Commercial AI bred heifers ..... 4,481**  
**628 Commercial bull bred heifers ..... 4,282**

**Auctioneers: Roger Jacobs, Joe Goggins, Greg Goggins, Ty Thompson, Bill Cook**  
**TOPS—2-Year-old bull:** Vermilion Growth Fund M236, 3/13/2025 by Vermilion Growth Fund M236; to JH

Minor Company, Hyannis, NE, \$30,000. **Bred cows:** Vermilion Evergreen 8080, 1/25/2018 by Connealy Countdown; to Half Dozen Ranch, Billings, MT, \$17,500. Vermilion Evergreen 8130, 2/10/2018 by SAV Sensation 5615 bred to Vermilion Evergreen 8130; to C Spear Angus, Huntley, MT, \$15,500. **Bred heifers:** Vermilion Blackbird 445, 2/17/2024 by Deer Valley Growth Fund; to Dustin Focht, Pratt, KS, \$9,000. Vermilion Mary 3714, 9/16/2023 by Vermilion Leo; to Dustin Focht, Pratt, KS, \$9,000. **Fall yearling bulls:** Vermilion Long Teton M820, 9/10/2024 by Vermilion Long Teton M820; to Grimmus Cattle, Hanford, CA, \$45,000. Vermilion Jameson M816, 8/19/2024 by Basin Jameson 1076; to Fintail Ranch, Twin Bridges, MT, \$37,500. Vermilion Rise Above M754, 7/31/2024 by Stellpflug Hoffman Rise Above; to MR Angus, Billings, MT, \$33,000. Vermilion Jameson M792, 8/15/2024 by Basin Jameson

1076; to Peckenpaugh Angus, Carthage, SD, \$32,500. Vermilion Jameson M799, 8/13/2024 by Basin Jameson 1076; to Bob Stoddard, Newcastle, WY, \$32,500. — **KEVIN MURNIN**

**STEVENSON'S DIAMOND DOT PRODUCTION SALE**  
**Dec. 1, Hobson, MT**

**235 Angus bull calves ..... \$9,733**  
**90 Angus 2-year-old bulls ..... 9,138**  
**39 Angus bred cows ..... 6,487**  
**43 Angus bred heifers ..... 6,453**  
**267 Commercial bred cows ..... 4,667**  
**679 Commercial bred heifers ..... 4,282**

**Auctioneers: Joe Goggins and Roger Jacobs**

**TOPS—Bred cow:** Diamond Clova Pride K126, 4/3/2022 by Square B True North 8052; to 4 SC Land and Cattle, Wildorado, TX, and H Bar B Ranch, Tatum,

NM, \$21,000. **Bull calves:** Diamond Galactic 1N84, 1/10/2025 by VAR Galactic 1469; to Conner Barnes, Cody, NE, \$35,000. Diamond Prolific 0215, 2/5/2025 by Ellingson Prolific; to Conner Barnes, Cody, NE, \$31,000. Diamond Bronc 3N94, 1/16/2025 by 2XL Bronc 8153; to John Latham, Camp Crook, SD, \$30,000. Diamond Galactic 2565, 1/6/2025 by VAR Galactic 1469; to Cross Ranch, Pine Bluffs, WY, \$21,000. Diamond Galactic 12N6, 1/13/2025 by VAR Galactic 1469; to Hooks Ranch, Big Timber, MT, \$20,000. Diamond Silver Bullett 397N, 1/14/2025 by Byergo Silver Bullett; to Larsen Ranch, Forsyth, MT, \$20,000. — **KEVIN MURNIN**

**STEVENSON ANGUS PRODUCTION SALE**  
**Dec. 2, Hobson, MT**

**103 2-Year-old bulls ..... \$12,947**  
**22 Fall yearling bulls ..... 10,568**

**129 Bull calves ..... 9,165**  
**Auctioneers: Joe Goggins and Roger Jacobs**

**TOPS—2-Year-old bulls:** Down T Keystone 4055, 3/31/2024 by Basin Keystone 2021; to Forder Land and Livestock, Cody, NE, \$33,000. Down T Prolific 4067, 4/2/2024 by Ellingson Prolific; to Barnes Ranch, Cody, NE, \$25,000. Stevenson Deadwood 41052, 1/10/2024 by Bar 7 Deadwood 82792423; to Forder Land and Livestock, Highwood, MT, \$22,000. Down T Armstrong 4172, 4/15/2024 by S Armstrong; to Frank Angus, Hobson, MT, \$21,000. Down T Incentive 4063, 4/2/2024 by Sitz Incentive 704H; to D Lazy M Livestock, Wellington, CO, \$21,000. Down T Prolific 4043, 3/30/2024 by Ellingson Prolific; to Barnes Ranch, Cody, NE, \$21,000. **Bull calf:** Stevenson Vigilante 50069, 1/16/2025 by Poss Vigilante 2506; to Mark and Arlene Wichman, Hobson, MT, \$20,000. — **KEVIN MURNIN**



# SALE CALENDAR

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

**ALL BREEDS**

**Jan. 17, 2026** – Western Elite Bull & Female Sale at NWSS, Denver, CO

**ANGUS**

**Dec. 8** – Hallow Top Angus, Bull Sale, Pony, MT  
**Dec. 8** – Shipwheel Cattle Company, Bull Sale, Chinook, MT  
**Dec. 13** – Gaugler Angus, Bull Sale, Judith Gap, MT  
**Dec. 15** – TK Angus, Bull & Female Sale, Valentine, NE  
**Dec. 18** – Bobcat Angus, Bull Sale, Great Falls, MT  
**Jan. 16, 2026** – Foundation Angus Sale, Denver, CO  
**Jan. 20** – Ken Haas Angus, Bull Sale, La Grange, WY

**HEREFORD**

**Jan. 19, 2026** – Van Newkirk Herefords, Bull Sale, Oshkosh, NE

**OPTIMIZER**

**Dec. 8** – Jacobsen Ranch, Bull Sale, Great Falls, MT

**RED ANGUS**

**Dec. 8** – Cross Diamond

Cattle Co., Production Sale, Bertrand, NE  
**Dec. 12** – 5L Red Angus, Bull Sale, Sheridan, MT  
**Dec. 18** – Leachman Cattle Bull Sale, San Saba, TX

**SALERS**

**Dec. 8** – Jacobsen Ranch, Bull Sale, Great Falls, MT

**SIMANGUS**

**Jan. 18, 2026** – The One & Only Simmental Sale at NWSS, Denver, CO  
**Jan. 20** – Powerline Genetics, Bull Sale, Arapahoe, NE

**SIMMENTAL**

**Jan. 18, 2026** – The One & Only Simmental Sale at NWSS, Denver, CO  
**Jan. 20** – Powerline Genetics, Bull Sale, Arapahoe, NE

**STABILIZER**

**Dec. 18** – Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, San Saba, TX  
**Jan. 9, 2026** – Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, Meriden, WY

**COMMERCIAL**

**Dec. 13** – Sitz Angus, Bred Female Sale, Dillon, MT  
**Dec. 18** – Bobcat Angus, Bull Sale, Great Falls, MT  
**Jan. 6, 2026** – Western Video Market Auction, North Platte, NE  
**Jan. 14** – Maternal Merit, Bred Heifer Sale, Denver, CO

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# Court: Temporary escape is not running at large

## LIABILITY (from page 1)

perimeter fencing. At the time of the accident, she kept 47 head on the west side of the highway. Mullins was in Bartonville, TX, roughly 200 miles away, on the night of the collision and testified that she had inspected the fences a week earlier and believed them to be suitable. She acknowledged being aware of a wild-fire in the area that evening and that fires can "spook" cattle, but said she was reassured by her sister-in-law, who reported seeing no cattle on the road.

Testimony at trial included observations from neighbors, law enforcement and an expert in livestock fencing. Coleman County Sheriff Les Cogdill recounted three incidents in which James Mullins' cattle escaped between 2008 and 2016, none of which were attributable to Charlotte. Expert witness Bob Kingsbery inspected the fence ten months after the accident and opined that its condition made an escape "inevitable." However, he acknowledged he did not know how or where the cow actually exited, nor whether Mullins knowingly allowed it.

The jury found Mullins liable and awarded damages to Escobar's minor child and estate. The appellate court was tasked with determining whether legally sufficient evidence supported the finding

that Mullins knowingly permitted the cow to roam at large. Mullins appealed the decision to the appeals court.

### Recent decision

The court began its analysis with Mullins' first issue, which challenged the legal sufficiency of the evidence supporting the jury's finding of liability under Section 143.102 of the Texas Agriculture Code. Attorneys for Mullins argued there was no evidence she "knowingly permitted" her cow to roam at large on Highway 84, emphasizing that the record contains no proof of how the cow escaped, how long it had been out or that Mullins knew it was on the roadway before the collision.

The court first outlined the governing law. Texas generally imposes no common-law duty on livestock owners to fence in their animals; the duty to restrain livestock is "purely statutory in nature," arising from specific provisions such as Section 143.102. Guided by the Texas Supreme Court's decision in Pruski v. Garcia and the First Court of Appeals' analysis in Arraby Properties LLC v. Brown, the court noted that Section 143.102 applies to collisions on state highways and provides the exclusive standard of civil liability in this context.

In Pruski v. Garcia, the Texas Supreme Court held that livestock owners may be lia-

ble for collisions on state or U.S. highways only if plaintiffs prove the "knowing" mental state required by Section 143.102—meaning the owner was aware their conduct was reasonably sure to allow the animal to roam at large. The court clarified that "permit" requires more than negligence and that a temporary escape does not constitute running at large. Applying this standard in Arraby Properties LLC v. Brown, the 1st Court of Appeals reversed a plaintiff's judgment, finding no evidence that the owners actually knew the cow was loose.

Section 143.102 prohibits livestock owners from "knowingly permitting" animals to roam unattended on a highway right-of-way. As outlined in Pruski, "knowingly" carries the meaning that the owner must be aware that their conduct is reasonably certain to allow the animal's escape. The term "permit" requires more than negligence and historically refers to livestock allowed "as a matter of course" to roam freely, not an isolated or temporary escape beyond the owner's knowledge or control.

Turning to the facts, the court found that Section 143.102 does not impose a greater duty on absentee livestock owners or require them to patrol highways during events like wildfires; the only duty is not to knowingly per-

mit animals to roam at large. A fire-spooked cow would amount only to a temporary escape.

Although an expert testified that Mullins' fence was inadequate, the court—applying Pruski and Arraby—held that poor fencing shows

mere negligence, not knowing permission. No evidence showed Mullins knew the cow was loose, and prior escapes were remote, caused by others or unexplained. At most, the court said, this was a scintilla of evidence.

Because there was no le-

gally sufficient evidence that Mullins knowingly permitted her cow to roam at large on Highway 84 as a matter of course, the court reversed the judgment from the trial court and ruled in favor of Mullins. — Charles Wallace, WLJ contributing editor

## Building better genotypes with selection and mating

The equation phenotype = genotype + environment represents how the level of performance of a trait (phenotype), is the result of genetic makeup of the animal and all environmental (non-genetic) influences.

Genotype can be thought of as the underlying genetic potential of animals to reach a level of performance for a given trait. Genotypes are established at conception, inherited from parents. Selection and mating decisions made by cattle producers impact genotypes. Thereby, wise selection and mating decisions, informed by analyzing the components of your production system, have the potential to create better genotypes.

Genotype has two components, these are:

- Breeding value (BV), which is based on the additive effect of individual genes. BV is the sum total of these additive effects of individual genes, across an animal's entire genome, which influence any specific trait of interest. BV is the best indicator of a bull or heifer's genetic value as a par-

ent.

EPDs are estimates of an animal's BV. Selection of breeding stock based on EPDs is a powerful tool to improve the additive genetic merit of cow herds and calves. EPDs are available for reproductive traits, growth traits and carcass traits. Since BV is based on the additive effect of individual genes, it is transmittable from generation to generation. Additive genetic change is cumulative and permanent in selected populations of cattle.

- Gene combination value (GCV), also commonly referred to as the non-additive component of genotype, is the effect of gene pairs at loci across the genome. Mating decisions, involving the choices we make to crossbreed or inbreed, determine GCV.

For example, if we make the mating decision to use an Angus bull on our Hereford cows, we are crossbreeding for the sake of creating hybrid vigor (heterosis). The resulting F1 generation of black baldy calves will have a maximum level of individual heterosis based on GCV, as an Angus

gene will be paired with a Hereford gene across all loci. Since GCV is based on the pair of alleles at a given locus, and since genes from a specific locus can't be transmitted in pairs, GCV can't be passed from parent to offspring.

### Tips for building better genotypes

- Each selection and mating decision should be intentional, deliberate and made for a purpose. Selection decisions impact BV. Mating decisions impact GCV.

- Choose breeds (and breeding stock within those breeds) with high breeding value for traits of economic importance to your operation.

- Crossbreeding (to increase GCV/hybrid vigor) does not replace additive genetic merit, it builds off of it.

- Purebred animals are an essential component for effective crossbreeding programs. — Mark Z. Johnson, Oklahoma State University Extension beef cattle breeding specialist



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ORLAND LIVESTOCK COMMISSION YARD INC.

## CRP payments should be going out

Farmers and landowners waiting for their annual Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) rental payments should start seeing those funds hit bank accounts.

CRP pays more than \$1.85 billion annually to more than 302,000 landowners who have 25.85 million acres enrolled in the program, according to USDA's last monthly report on the program.

Landowners began asking more questions about the status of payments after the government shutdown ended. State and county staff for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) said FSA just started process-

ing payments on Dec. 1. CRP payments are typically issued in mid-October.

USDA's press office did not respond to questions about CRP payments. The department has not provided any official accounting of how payments were expected to flow after the government shutdown ended.

Rental payments nationally for CRP range from a low of \$10.12 per acre in Nevada to \$258.49 in Maryland. Nationally, the average rental payment is \$71.95 an acre, though rental payments can vary widely because of different variations of CRP that have

been created throughout the years.

General CRP has 7.76 million acres with an average payment rate of \$57.30 an acre. Continuous CRP has 8.4 million acres with an average payment rate of \$150.31 an acre. Grassland CRP has 9.6 million acres with an average rental rate of \$15.73 an acre.

The top 12 states for CRP enrollment make up more than three-quarters of the program's acreage and 70% of rental payments:

- Colorado, 2.96 million acres, \$70.4 million.
- South Dakota, 2.63 million acres, \$145.5 million.
- Nebraska, 2.4 million acres, \$96 million.
- Texas, 2.2 million acres, \$73.6 million.
- Kansas, 2.03 million acres, \$78.8 million.
- Iowa, 1.67 million acres, \$404.28 million.
- New Mexico, 1.21 million acres, \$21.7 million.
- North Dakota, 1.19 million acres, \$53 million.
- Minnesota, 964,136 acres, \$159.6 million.
- Oregon, 953,514 acres, \$34 million.
- Montana, 943,597 acres, \$96 million.
- Washington, 926,213 acres, \$57.6 million. — Chris Clayton, DTN ag policy editor



### COMING EVENTS

(Send calendar of events information to [editorial@wlj.net](mailto:editorial@wlj.net))

**Jan. 21-22, 2026** – The Montana Stockgrowers Association is proud to announce the Agriculture Labor Summit at the Northern Hotel in Billings. This event was created to address the ongoing labor shortage. Details: [mtbeef.org/event/laborsummit](http://mtbeef.org/event/laborsummit).

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### YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

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

**March 15, 2026** – The Montana Stockgrowers Foundation is encouraging students to apply for scholarships through its Heritage Scholarship Program. Applications: [mtbeeffoundation.org](http://mtbeeffoundation.org).