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A LOOK BACK IN HISTORY

"USDA officials were in Tokyo last week in an effort to show the Japanese government that the U.S. can accurately determine the age of cattle without specific birth records, and that U.S. beef destined for Japan will originate from younger cattle," read the Dec. 20, 2004, *WLJ* article.

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Jessica Weinberg McClosky/NPS

The Nature Conservancy is opening an application period for short-term cattle grazing contracts at Point Reyes National Seashore in California. Pictured here, a sunset at the Point Reyes Headlands on the Point Reyes Peninsula in Marin County, CA.

The Nature Conservancy opens Point Reyes grazing contracts

— Short-term grazing open

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) announced in early December that the nonprofit is opening short-term contract applications for targeted cattle grazing at California's Point Reyes National Seashore.

The contracts are intended to address specific concerns, such as high levels of invasive grasses impacting native plant species. A separate, long-term targeted cattle grazing plan will be developed in 2026 in collaboration with the National Park Service (NPS) and others.

Additional resource management plans will be created and shared for public review in mid-to-late 2026. Public input will be solicited through at least two other public meetings and collaboration with other local partners, TNC said.

"The Conservancy intends to establish contract arrangements that are mutually beneficial and feature shared stewardship values for the Seashore," the group said.

For the short-term contracts, the nonprofit is inviting written proposals for targeted cattle grazing on a little more than 2,000 acres in the Point Reyes National Seashore located in Marin County, CA. The contracts will begin no earlier than March 1, 2026, and will conclude when forage utilization goals are met, no later than Oct. 15, 2026. There will be no opportunity for extension.

TNC will allow interested contractors to tour the area open for cattle grazing from Dec. 8 through Dec. 19.

Interested contractors are asked to contact Sasha Gennet at sgennet@tnc.org with their interest to be notified of updates to the process. Proposals must be submitted to Gennet by Jan. 9, 2026. Selections are expected to be made

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Trump signs EO on price fixing, anticompetition

— Investigating the food sector

In early December, President Donald Trump signed an executive order directing his administration to investigate price fixing and anticompetition that could result in higher grocery prices or threaten the U.S. food supply.

The order instructs the attorney general and chairman of the Federal Trade Commission to each create a Food Supply Chain Security Task Force within their agencies to investigate the food sector.

"An affordable and secure food supply is vital to America's national and economic security," the executive order reads. "However,

See COMP. ORDER on page 7

Plan allocates more water for CA ag

— Sharp reactions to decision

The Bureau of Reclamation on Dec. 4 issued a new Record of Decision that updates the long-term operation plan for the Central Valley Project (CVP) and its coordinated operations with the State Water Project (SWP). The decision, intended to increase water deliveries statewide while remaining compliant with federal environmental laws, immediately drew both praise and sharp criticism.

Stretching from Mount Shasta, through the tidal Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and into Southern California, the CVP and SWP supply water to more than 30 million people, irrigate over 4 million acres of farmland and generate over 4 million megawatt-hours of energy every year. The decision, developed under the National Environmental Policy Act, updates the Long-Term Operation Plan governing these essential systems.

The federal action was a result of President Donald Trump's Executive Order 14181, issued Jan. 24, directing federal agencies to "take all available measures" to increase CVP water deliveries and hydropower production. A related presidential memorandum—Putting People Over Fish—framed water reliability as a top federal priority.

See WATER DELIVERY on page 12

Futures rally another week on cash momentum

A wave of sharply higher cash trade over the past week reignited momentum in the cattle futures.

Live cattle futures were several dollars higher over the week. The December contract gained about $9 to close at $230.37, and the February contract gained about $6 to close at $230.95.

The live cattle complex has grown closer to pushing the market's resistance at its 100-day moving average.

"Until this point, traders haven't been convinced that the market possesses enough support to break above that threshold," wrote ShayLe Stewart, DTN livestock analyst, in her Thursday midday comments. "Upon seeing some sharply higher sales develop in the fed cash cattle market, traders have grown braver."

Cash trade through Thursday totaled about 72,000 head. Live steers sold from $222-228, and dressed steers sold from $345-355.

"Yesterday's cattle market action turned out to be just a pause as the negotiated fed cattle market came to life yesterday afternoon only to accelerate higher and is now at least $6-8/cwt higher than last week's average and $3-4/cwt higher than last week's high," wrote Cassie Fish, market analyst, in The Beef on Thursday.

Cash trade for the week ending Dec. 7 totaled 78,833 head. Live steers averaged $221.50, and dressed steers averaged $342.39.

"Rarely does the cash side of the market see such tremendous price swings in three weeks' time," Fish said. "This erratic price movement makes margin management and thoughtful decision making extremely challenging. What has been magnified the past three weeks is fear and greed."

Slaughter through Thursday totaled about

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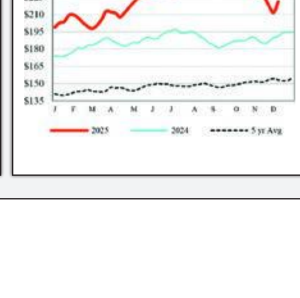

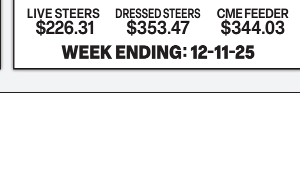

PERIODICAL : Time Sensitive Priority Handling

COMMENTS

Working on the ranch

GROSHANS

While attending Colorado State University in the spring of what now feels like a lifetime ago, I was fortunate to enroll in Tom Field's AN 300E Family Ranching course. At the time, I was a college senior, more focused on graduation and the next step in life than on the depth of the lessons being offered. I sat through many lectures, took notes and completed assignments, never realizing how instrumental those ideas would become later in my personal and professional journey.

Dr. Field has a unique way of connecting the world of family-owned ranches and farms to the broader landscape of business management. He showed us that ranching is not isolated from the business world; in fact, it faces many of the same structural, financial and interpersonal challenges seen in any multigenerational family business. Throughout the course, he often compared agricultural family enterprises to non-ag businesses, highlighting both the similarities and the unique pressures faced by ranch families.

One lecture in particular still stands out. Dr. Field introduced us to the work of William Sahlman, a professor of business administration at Harvard Business School, who wrote "How to Write a Great Business Plan." Its simplicity struck me then and resonates even more now. According to Sahlman, there are four critical components.

1. Who: the people involved day-to-day, outside participants providing goods, services or resources, and those providing financing.
2. Opportunity: a brief sketch of the business. This includes products, services, target markets, anticipated growth and SWOT analysis.
3. Context: macro conditions that influence the business, such as regulatory challenges or interest rates.
4. Risk and reward: assessing the best- and worst-case scenarios and how the management team would respond to each.

Simple, right? At least, that's the idea. But how many ranches actually have a plan—one that's written down, discussed and revisited? With the constant pull of day-to-day responsibilities, it's easy to get caught up in the immediate work: feeding and working cattle, ongoing equipment maintenance or dealing with weather that seems to never cooperate. Yet, as I've learned, it is just as important to work "on the ranch" as it is to work "for the ranch."

Working on the ranch means deliberately stepping back to look at the bigger picture. It means scheduling time to sit down with family members and employees to talk about goals, expectations and concerns. It involves addressing small problems early, creating space for honest dialogue, and fostering an environment where multiple viewpoints are welcomed. Most importantly, it means building trust—trust in the process, trust in the people involved and trust in the future of the operation.

But strategic planning is not just about communication. It also involves proactively shaping the ranch's financial future. Dr. Field emphasized that ranch families must think beyond tradition and consider how to market their products more effectively and pursue new opportunities. Today's successful operations are often those willing to diversify or add value through:

- Direct marketed products.
- Non-traditional livestock or crops.
- Value-added products.
- Consulting or educational services that share expertise.
- Contract services like custom grazing, baling or equipment work.
- Exploring new markets: local, regional, digital or international.

These ventures don't replace heritage; they expand opportunity. They help ensure the ranch remains resilient in the face of market volatility, drought cycles or shifting consumer preferences. In many cases, diversification also engages younger generations who bring new ideas, technologies, and skill sets to the operation.

Still, even with innovation and opportunity, the greatest threats to a family business rarely come from the outside. More often, they arise internally through:

1. Lack of clear goals.
2. Conflict between family and business roles.
3. Life stages that are out of sync.
4. Lack of commitment from key participants.
5. Power struggles.
6. Financial stress.
7. Failure to recognize the impact of key employees.

This is why Dr. Field devoted significant time to estate planning and succession planning, two of the toughest but most vital conversations a ranch family will ever face. Avoiding them doesn't preserve family harmony; it simply invites uncertainty.

Looking back, I didn't fully grasp how valuable these lessons were. But today, whether working with ranch families or reflecting on my own experience, I see clearly how Dr. Field's teachings continue to shape what I believe makes a ranch thrive: communication, clarity, innovation, trust and the willingness to work on the ranch, not just for it. And in the spirit of Dale Carnegie's timeless reminder, "In uncertain times, get the facts, analyze the facts, make a decision and act!" Ranch families who lead with intention and courage are the ones best positioned to build a lasting legacy. **— TY GROSHANS**

DITTMER'S TAKE

SO HOW IS THE ECONOMY DOING?

Growth—which is good for business and the economy—is going well, with the last couple quarters at 3.8% or better. How much the shutdown damaged GDP, no one knows yet. The Atlanta Fed GDP tracker has backed off to 3.5%, but government data hasn't caught up. Two P-words are key here: progress and patience.

The media makes it sound like the economy is in terrible shape, because President Donald Trump promised to fix things and he hasn't fixed everything yet. Patience is in short supply. People have been hammered by President Joe Biden and Democrats' worst inflation since the 1980s. Most benefits from the One Big Beautiful Bill Act won't kick in until 2026. The estimates of people's federal tax refunds vary between $150-170 billion. That will perk some folks up, maybe trigger a steak dinner celebration.

In Biden's four years, the average household lost $3,000 in buying power. In 9 months' time during Trump's second term, households have gained $1,200 back so far. By May 2026, we will have a new Fed chairman, new Federal Open Market Committee members and better chances of further rate cuts. Critically, it is very certain whomever Trump picks will overhaul the Federal Reserve. That means a new governing philosophy—growth in the economy is a good thing—Ph.D. economist deadwood removal, radically changed economic models (no more Keynesian theory) and maybe new authorizing legislation that reflects supply-side economic approaches, focusing on price stability and growth to fight inflation instead of throttling demand.

As mentioned above, GDP for the second quarter, Trump's first full quarter, was 3.8%. The third quarter was at the same clip until the Schumer shutdown. Capital expenditures for September—last data—was 0.7%, totaling nearly 10% for 8 months; retail spending over Black Friday and Cyber Monday set all-time records; inflation has remained at about 2.8%; and import prices were up 0.3%. Key: wages for the year are up 5%, inflation 2.8%. That compares to 5.5% annually under Biden, cumulatively 20%. In fact, the increase in prices people are complaining about happened nearly 90% under Biden, according to economist Steve Moore.

The Democrats' Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards made pickups proportionately more expensive for farmers, ranchers and construction companies. But when the Democrats' Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) usurped Congress and increased standards to nearly impossible standards, it became obvious that the goal was to eliminate gasoline-powered vehicles.

Trump's EPA has removed that impediment, rolling back the CAFE standards, in addition to having already gotten rid of the electric vehicle subsidies and mandates. The labor market is in transition. A couple million illegals have self-deported, and many criminal illegals were deported. The jobs statistics have shown increased hiring of native-born Americans and decreasing numbers of foreign-born workers. There are fewer government jobs and more full-time jobs, as opposed to more government jobs and lots of part-time jobs under Biden. The new factories being built now haven't hired yet. Jobless claims have averaged lowest since 2022.

Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins is concentrating more on input costs for producers presently. Retail beef prices are up now and grain exports are really up to U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer. Greer reminded the recent cabinet meeting that Trump's team is changing 70 years of America's totally open system for countries exporting into our market. Trump's tariffs have gotten countries to lower their tariffs and increased access. China is still the tough nut. Now we have had reciprocal, more balanced trade where everyone is treated more fairly, a good thing for the long run, Greer said.

There is one Mexican feedlot near Nuevo León, Mexico, that needs to tighten up procurement. A case of New World screwworm (NWS) was discovered on Dec. 3 at the same feedlot of an October discovery. That's 120 miles south of the Texas border. It was a 22-month-old animal brought in from the very south of Mexico, Veracruz, about 740 miles south of the border. There has been little from USDA about opening the border. No president or Ag secretary wants to be blamed for letting the NSW get into the country. There will have to be evidence that Mexico is getting a handle on the problem before cattlemen on this side of the border get more feeder cattle.

One of the things that drove inflation during the Biden years was high fuel costs, because that affects manufacturing, transportation, crop and livestock production, home heating and cooling and the cost of filling up the car. Trump's drilling encouragement, deregulation and the oil patch's efficiency at putting out record amounts of oil are paying off already. I just paid $2.17 a gallon for regular 85 octane fuel in Colorado. **— Steve Dittmer, *WLJ* columnist**

(Steve Dittmer is the author of the Agribusiness Freedom Foundation newsletter. Views in the column do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of* WLJ *or its editorial staff.)

GUEST OPINION

THE PROMISE AND PERIL OF FAMILY FINANCIAL HELP

Agriculture is a capital-intensive business. Land, with any significant debt against it, is challenging to cash-flow. Equipment is expensive, and parts are not cheap. Labor rates and family living expenses are high. Inputs or feed need to be purchased well ahead of any revenue from crop or livestock sales. And, the markets and weather conspire to make some years difficult to generate much, if any, revenue and net income.

It's no surprise that young people considering a career in farming or ranching are intimidated by the financial investment. It's also no surprise that older family members, or those with revenue from other sources, want to provide financial assistance to family members.

Financial help by family members takes several forms. It may be an outright gift of cash or a transfer of land, or payment of crops or livestock in exchange for work. More often, it comes through reduced land rent or the use of equipment.

While such financial assistance is a blessing for many in agriculture, mixing money and family members in business can be a source of severe conflict. As a partner in a CPA firm, I see firsthand how conflicts over financial matters can tear a family apart. When contemplating how to help a family member financially, consider the following tips.

• Be transparent. I often say, "To be a good family business, don't act like one." What I mean is that any financial assistance should be discussed by those participating in the enterprise, much like it would be in a business where people are not related. Loans or gifts should be clearly understood to all, so the contribution is not taken for granted and does not foster a sense of entitlement by the recipient. Everyone knows exactly what form of assistance has been provided and how it was delivered.

• Write it down. Another phrase I often use: "In the absence of a good story, people make one up." If the various methods of financial assistance and the amounts are not documented, over time, people develop differing recollections, or "stories," about what exactly was done and when it happened. Putting the arrangement on paper today and making sure the affected participants have copies of the same document help to keep the record straight about how family members offered, and benefited, from financial assistance.

• Clarify the terms. One of the benefits of being family members in business together is the desire to help without necessarily expecting something in return. This happens financially in the form of outright gifts, loans with favorable terms, debts forgiven or reduced rents. But should it last forever? How much assistance is needed, and how long is it expected? To prevent misunderstandings, discuss and document the terms of any financial assistance between family business members.

• Educate the family. Some of the most gut-wrenching family conflicts happen over inheritance expectations and decisions, and they often have roots in how different siblings benefited from their parents' financial help earlier in life. Consider having family meetings or sharing the documents around financial assistance so everyone in the family, and not just those in the business, understand what transpired.

One reason such information is not shared earlier is fear of conflict, but keeping the information hidden does not prevent the conflict—it only delays it, leaving time for assumptions to flourish.

If you anticipate difficulty, enlist the help of your accountant, attorney, financial adviser or a facilitator to help guide the discussion.

Family financial assistance can be a blessing. By discussing and documenting the assistance and its terms, then educating the broader family, you can prevent such financial help from also becoming a family curse. **— Lance Woodbury, DTN farm business adviser**

WLJ

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Tyson beef packing plant closure raises concerns

The upcoming closure of the Tyson beef packing plant in Lexington, NE, will have an immediate effect on the city, but also a longer-term effect on the cattle industry in the region and beyond.

"We've always known there was a potential for shutdown with the smaller cattle supply," said Cozad cattleman Craig Uden during a webinar hosted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL). Uden, the president-elect of Nebraska Cattlemen and past president of National Cattlemen's Beef Association, is part owner of Darr Feedlot, which is just 20 minutes from Lexington.

They have sent cattle to this plant since it began operation in 1990. He said the biggest challenge he and other cattle feeders in the region will face is the added cost of transportation to get cattle to other packing plants for processing. This will mean Uden has to make up for that cost through selling these cattle to packing plants with a more focused market on a grid for quality and yield. He also hopes to work with many of the other large regional and national packers to fill their needs.

Elliott Dennis, livestock and meat economist for the UNL Center for Agricultural Profitability, said the closure of the Lexington plant as well as the reduction to one shift at Tyson's Amarillo, TX, plant will reduce processing capacity nationwide by 7-9%.

Dennis said the capacity reduction by packers is due to the reduction of profits caused by lower cattle numbers.

"In 2015 and 2016, packer profits were high. We saw that continue through COVID, but now with few cattle numbers, their profits have decreased," he added.

Cattle feeders have learned to raise these animals more efficiently, which has helped increase beef yields. Cattle are getting fed to heavier weights as well, which Dennis said is helping provide more tonnage to the beef supply.

"All the contributing factors mean fewer profits for packers and led to the need for a cut back for plants by these packers," he said. "The closure of the Mexican border has also led to fewer cattle on feed in Texas, which likely contributed to the cut back to one shift at Tyson's Amarillo plant."

Dennis said Tyson is still showing they are committed to that region, which is why the plant just cut back due to lower numbers.

While there have been temporary beef plant closures due to fire or during the COVID-19 pandemic, the last permanent closure dates back to Plainview, TX, in 2013. Other incidents including weather or health events have affected the markets through the years, with some taking longer than others to recover.

"The news of the plant closure led to a steady decrease in fed cattle prices. We have seen a slight rebuild in those prices as feedlots are finding ways to redistribute cattle to other plants," Dennis added.

Price risk management will help cattle producers protect their investment. If they rely on selling on the cash market, Dennis said there will be more of an impact.

Uden voiced his concern for smaller farmer-feeders in Nebraska.

"These are the ones who will be impacted more because they don't have the numbers to take to a big plant," he said. "We hope we can help them market their cattle and keep them in business."

Laura Field, executive vice president of the Nebraska Cattlemen, said the news was surprising and disappointing.

"This affects cattlemen all around Nebraska and the surrounding states. This takes 15% of Nebraska's slaughter offline," she said.

Nebraska Cattlemen leadership has been in contact with the state and national government officials to discuss the impact on the state and regional cattlemen as well as the local area's impact. The Lexington plant employs 3,200 people in the city with a population of 11,000.

Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen (R) announced a collaboration between several agencies and community organizations to help the families impacted by the upcoming closure. The state departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Economic Development, and Agriculture are partnering with local Lexington organizations to connect these residents with various assistance programs and support. Resources will be provided for unemployment insurance benefits, job searching and economic support.

Uden added that the 60-day lead time for the closure has helped all involved.

"This closure comes at the time of the year where the cattle numbers are typically lower," he said. "However, if we don't see the herd start to rebuild, we may see more plants cutting back or closing to meet the cattle capacity." — **Jennifer Carrico, DTN senior livestock editor**

Cattle Feeders Hall of Fame inductees revealed

Kent Bamford with Bamford Feedyard in Haxtun, CO, and Bob Foote with Foote Cattle Company in Bucyrus, KS, are the 2026 inductees in the Cattle Feeders Hall of Fame. Honorees will be recognized at the 17th annual banquet on Feb. 4, 2026, during CattleCon 2026 in Nashville, TN.

"The cattle-feeding industry has been built by leaders such as Bob Foote and Kent Bamford," said Dustin Johansen, senior vice president at Farm Journal and Cattle Feeders Hall of Fame board member. "Their legacy is the ongoing success of our industry."

Bamford Feedyard started as a small yard, growing to 15,000 head capacity and further diversifying into a farming and trucking operation as well as a feed additive company. Foote, who is being inducted posthumously, developed a multi-location family-owned cattle operation with 285,000 head feeding capacity among other businesses across Kansas and Nebraska.

Additional honorees include Greg Henderson of Kansas, who will be recognized posthumously with the Industry Leadership Award for his award-winning journalism and being a revered voice of the beef industry. Rick Hibler with Irsik & Doll Beefland Feedyard in Garden City, KS, will receive the Arturo Armendariz Distinguished Service Award for his contributions to improving the cattle-feeding industry.

Cattle Feeders Hall of Fame banquet attendees are invited to participate in CattleCon 2026, the largest cattle and beef industry event of the year. The annual convention features industry meetings, inspirational speakers, valuable education, entertainment, a massive trade show, producer recognition and much more.

Established in 2009, the Cattle Feeders Hall of Fame honors the exceptional visionary men and women who have made lasting contributions to the cattle-feeding industry. For more information about the Cattle Feeders Hall of Fame and 2026 inductees, visit cattlefeeders.org. For more information about CattleCon 2026 and to register, visit convention.ncba.org. — **National Cattlemen's Beef Association**

Analyzing your system to determine breeding objectives

How do you develop breeding objectives and identify economically important traits on which to apply selection pressure in your cow-calf operation? The answer lies in understanding that your cattle (and their underlying genotype) are just one component of a much larger system. Your production system is a group of interdependent components. Animal-related systems vary from large, extremely complex systems such as the beef industry as a whole, to smaller (but still complex) systems like an individual farm or ranch.

To analyze your own unique cow-calf production system, consider the following:

- Your cattle. Specifically, their genotypes.
- Your production environment.
- Your fixed resources and management.
- Economics.

Your cow inventory and bulls used are the means to produce the calves marketed. How would you describe the genetic potential and phenotype of your cow herd, bull battery and calves produced? Is this description a good fit with the other components of your system?

Your production environment refers to all the elements involved in your cow-calf operation over which you have little influence. Examples would include altitude, soils, climate conditions like rainfall, wind and temperature, as well as the quantity and quality of your forage base. Cow-calf production takes place in an extremely wide variety of production environments. A cow herd of the correct genotype to fit their production environment will more efficiently convert grazed forage into pounds of calf raised.

Fixed resources include factors such as the amount of pasture you have for grazing, your ability to grow (or have access to) supplemental feeds, and available labor. Management involves all the practices implemented by you. Examples include vaccination protocols, supplemental feeding, how long mature cows will remain in production and (very importantly), how and when will calves be marketed. Management also involves the selection and mating decisions you make to optimize genotypes in your production system in order to create profit potential.

Economics encompasses all the financial factors unique to your operation. The cost of inputs and value of outputs. Feed, fuel, fertilizer, equipment and labor are input costs. Input expenses are significantly influenced by the cost of maintaining your breeding herd. Furthermore, interest rates on debt and the equity you have in your land and cattle are very important economic factors which often influence marketing plans.

Considering all the components of your production system and how they interact with each other should determine breeding objectives and where selection pressure should be applied. This can result in genotypes that are an environmental fit, are aligned with marketing plans and optimize the use of your resources. — **Mark Z. Johnson, Oklahoma State University Extension beef cattle breeding specialist**

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.)

March 15, 2026 – The Montana Stockgrowers Foundation is encouraging students to apply for scholarships through its Heritage Scholarship Program. Applications: mtbeeffoundation.org.

Legal Ledger

Animal rights activist sentenced to jail

On Dec. 3, the animal rights activist who removed chickens from a Petaluma Poultry facility was sentenced to 90 days in jail. Twenty-three-year-old Zoe Rosenberg of Berkeley, CA, was sentenced by Sonoma County Superior Court Judge Kenneth J. Gnoss after a Sonoma County jury convicted her in November of felony conspiracy and three misdemeanors. Rosenberg was found to have conspired with animal activist group Direct Action Everywhere to enter the Petaluma Poultry plant in June 2023 to steal business records, remove live chickens and interfere with commercial operations. Of her 90-day sentence, 60 days can be served on jail alternatives such as electronic home confinement. "Simply stated, breaking into a heavily regulated, biosecure food processing facility that supplies food to consumers in this county and across the country is dangerous and illegal," said District Attorney Carla Rodriguez in a news release.

Klamath Drainage District plans finalized

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) released on Dec. 5 a Final Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment and a Finding of No Significant Impact for the Klamath Drainage District (KDD) Infrastructure Modernization Project. NRCS Oregon determined the project will not cause significant effects to the environment. The plan is now eligible for federal funding and may move forward into final design and construction. The project will install a fish screen at the North Canal Diversion on the Klamath River, extend the North Canal and connect it to the P-1 Lateral, modify the North Canal to increase flow capacity, upgrade two pump stations and install flow monitoring and automated gates throughout the project area to improve water management.

Chinook salmon ESUs do not warrant listing

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on Dec. 9 released its 12-month finding that found the Oregon Coast and Southern Oregon and Northern California Coastal Chinook salmon evolutionarily significant units (ESUs) did not warrant listing under the Endangered Species Act. "Based on our review of the best available scientific and commercial information and the findings of the status review report, we determined that the (Oregon Coast) and (Southern Oregon and Northern California Coastal) Chinook salmon ESUs are not currently in danger of extinction, nor are they likely to become so within the foreseeable future," NOAA said. The ESUs have high overall abundance, the agency said, and are able to maintain abundance even with relatively high exploitation rates.

CPW Commissioner Robinson resigns

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) Commissioner Murphy Robinson announced his resignation from the CPW Commission on Dec. 3. Robinson said he stepped down to focus on private sector commitments, according to a Colorado Politics report. "Murphy's experience made him a great addition to the commission and a strong advocate for Coloradans, sportsmen and women, and our public lands and wildlife," said Colorado Gov. Jared Polis (D) in a statement. "He will be missed, and I wish him the best in his next chapter." Robinson's resignation follows shortly after CPW Director Jeff Davis announced he would be leaving his position to assume a role as a senior policy advisor for strategic priorities with the Department of Natural Resources Executive Director's Office.

Believer Meats sued over unpaid bills

Cultivated meat startup company Believer Meats was sued by a construction firm over an alleged $34 million in unpaid bills for the construction of its North Carolina production plant. The construction of the company's 200,000-square-foot cultivated meat production facility in Wilson, NC, was completed in July. Gray Construction filed suit against the startup in December, alleging the company failed to pay amounts owed for design and construction, according to a Meatingplace report. Court documents show the companies entered into a forbearance and release agreement in October, in which Believer Meats agreed to pay $22 million by Dec. 5 with the remaining $12 million to be paid in 2026. Gray Construction claims the startup failed to make payment by the Dec. 5 deadline.

Canadian ag groups express USMCA support

A coalition of dozens of Canadian agriculture industry groups penned an open letter to its government, expressing strong support for the full 16-year renewal of the U.S.-Canada-Mexico Agreement (USMCA), known as CUSMA in Canada. "CUSMA has been instrumental in fostering a stable, integrated North American agricultural market," the groups wrote. "Trade between all three countries under CUSMA has led to the tripling of the value of North American agriculture and agrifood trade between 2005 and 2023, totaling approximately $400 billion CAD ($285 billion USD)." The groups said the success of North America's economy depends on the predictability and stability afforded by a full renewal, without weakening its provisions or introducing any changes that negatively affect the agriculture sector.

Texas A&M AgriLife, Ranchbot to advance ag technology

Texas A&M AgriLife Research and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Ranchbot Monitoring Solutions of Fort Worth, TX, to promote and develop innovative satellite-connected agricultural monitoring systems.

The collaboration aims to develop technologies that improve water, livestock and land management outcomes for producers in Texas and beyond.

The agreement outlines shared goals of research, teaching and extension activities that show the benefits of using remote infrastructure monitoring and data-driven insights in modern ranching and agricultural production systems.

"Our collaboration with Ranchbot will bring together research and extension expertise with technology that may open new doors to enhance ranch management decisions and the efficiency of resource use," said Clay Mathis, Ph.D., professor and head of the Texas A&M Department of Animal Science.

Collaborators expect initial projects to focus on water data and remote sensing in efforts to enhance ranch management decision-making.

"This MOU is a prime example of Texas A&M AgriLife linking science and industry to help deliver practical solutions that improve livestock productivity and sustainability," said Andy Herring, Ph.D., associate department head and AgriLife Extension program leader for animal science in the Department of Animal Science.

The broad agreement paves the way for the organizations to collaborate on specific initiatives under separate agreements in the future.

Ranchbot will make selected monitoring technologies available for AgriLife Research and AgriLife Extension activities, including field demonstrations, outreach and student engagement.

"We're proud to partner with Texas A&M AgriLife, one of the most respected agricultural research and education institutions in the world," said Andrew Coppin, co-founder and CEO of Ranchbot Monitoring Solutions. "This MOU builds a bridge between technology innovation and applied research, helping ranchers measure what matters most—water, livestock and land—so they can make faster, smarter decisions." — **Texas A&M AgriLife**

Former CDFW director joins TNC

POINT REYES

(from page 1)

within three weeks of the proposal deadline.

"This is an open, competitive process that provides equal opportunity for all applicants," TNC said.

Regarding payment for the contracts, TNC said, "The operations bidding on this contract can elect what they are willing to pay, and this will be one of many considerations that TNC takes into account when selecting a contractor."

To view more details about the request for proposals process, visit tinyurl.com/bds52umv.

TNC, Point Reyes background

Earlier this year, TNC reached an agreement with a dozen livestock producers at the Point Reyes National Seashore to end their operations. Under the settlement terms, six beef ranches and six dairies agreed to stop business within 15 months in exchange for compensation from the nonprofit.

Beef and dairy operations have operated at the seashore for generations, with the tradition stretching back to the 1850s. Environmentalists have long shared their ire about agricultural activity on the lands, claiming the needs of ranchers have been prioritized over the environment, tule elk population and public land use.

In 2022, the Center for Biological Diversity, Western Watersheds Project and Resource Renewal Institute filed suit against the NPS, challenging its management plan that reauthorized long-term grazing leases at Point Reyes. The January 2025 settlement came in response to the lawsuit, with TNC joining at the request of all litigation parties and "seeing this as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to enhance the conservation of the unique habitats and species found in California's vanishing coastal landscapes."

As part of the settlement, TNC planned to work with NPS to "mutually support and share resources to promote conservation activities on the vacated lease areas."

On TNC's website, the group answers the question, "If cattle ranchers are leaving, why is TNC bringing cattle back?" by explaining that "future grazing will focus exclusively on ecological health." The group says that in the absence of fires and wildlife grazing, livestock are currently the "most practical option for emulating these historic dynamics, at scale."

On Dec. 8, The Nature Conservancy announced California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Director Charlton "Chuck" Bonham was stepping down from his role and joining the nonprofit as executive director of the group's California business unit.

"From his leadership restoring the Klamath to bringing salmon back to long-lost habitats, his belief that nature can rebound has shaped our state," said California Gov. Gavin Newsom (D). "I'm grateful for his service and counsel, and I look forward to continuing to work with him at The Nature Conservancy."

Bonham was appointed by former California Gov. Jerry Brown (D) in 2011 and reappointed by Newsom in 2019 and is the longest-serving director in the department's history. Before his role at CDFW, Bonham was the California director and a senior attorney at Trout Unlimited.

Bonham begins his role with The Nature Conservancy on Jan. 26, 2026. — **Anna Miller Fortozo, *WLJ* managing editor**

CALENDAR COMING EVENTS

(Send calendar of events information to 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.

Stemple Creek Ranch receives CA Leopold Conservation Award

Stemple Creek Ranch of Tomales, CA, is the 2025 California Leopold Conservation Award recipient.

The $10,000 award honors farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners who go above and beyond in their management of soil health, water quality and wildlife habitat on working land.

Loren and Lisa Poncia, owners of Stemple Creek Ranch, were presented with the award during the California Farm Bureau Federation's Annual Meeting on Dec. 8.

Loren Poncia summarizes his story this way: Ranch kid gets bit by the agriculture bug. Kid works in corporate America. Kid comes back to the ranch to build something sustainable and profitable.

When Loren and his wife, Lisa, moved back to Marin County 20 years ago, their goal was to reinvent the family business by raising high quality grass-fed and finished meats. That would require a new spin on how to raise and market sheep and beef cattle.

During their first few years they both kept their day jobs while leasing 400 acres of his family's land. They bought beef cattle and focused on the infrastructure needed for rotational grazing. That meant investing in miles of movable fencing, dozens of permanent water troughs, and solar pumps that move water to holding tanks.

Today, the organic, grass-finished beef and lamb and pastured pork they raise are sold direct to consumers, grocery stores, restaurants and butcher shops. However, establishing a niche product with its own brand happened one step at a time.

Seventeen years ago, Loren and Lisa designed a logo, put up a simple website, and began selling beef and lamb directly to consumers. As a vendor at one of the largest farmers markets in the country (7 miles away from their home, and only 35 miles from the ranch) their product caught the eye of well-known chefs. Over the course of a decade, they went from selling 10 head of beef to more than 1,500 annually.

After purchasing a neighboring ranch, they rehabbed its buildings as ranch stays and turned an old hay barn into an event venue to host weddings, corporate events, and farm-to-table dinners. Loren's experience in ag business, and Lisa's as a practicing attorney, paid dividends as they built their business, which now encompasses a team of 20 employees and thousands of acres managed for grazing.

The 650 acres they own and much of what they lease has Marin Agricultural Land Trust agricultural conservation easements on them. This ensures that the land will be conserved as open space and in productive agricultural use in perpetuity. Their daughters, Avery and Julianna, and their nieces and nephews will be the fifth generation to steward the coastal hills of Marin County.

"We're trying to dance with Mother Nature within our fencelines," Loren says of his family's approach to conservation.

Loren's father, Al, began fencing off the creeks and riparian areas and planting trees to prevent erosion in the 1980s. Loren and Lisa continued what he started by adding over five miles of fencing and planting 10,000 trees. This restoration effort has created a habitat that attracts beavers, badgers, bobcats, black-tailed deer, jack rabbits, and grey and red foxes. Stemple Creek Ranch is also home to endangered species, including the California red-legged frog and the California freshwater shrimp.

The ranch was certified as bird-friendly by the Audubon Society in 2021 for its sustainable grazing practices. Several species of hawks, owls, and migrating birds seasonally call the ranch home. The Poncias partner with Sola Bee Farms to host pollinating bee hives on the property.

As one of the first demonstration sites for the Marin Carbon Project, a groundbreaking 10-year study, it was one of the first ranches with an active carbon farm plan. They have hosted hundreds of tours to educate others about carbon positive practices, soil health, and rotational grazing.

Just as Loren strives to stimulate the soil and grassland at Stemple Creek Ranch, he's equally excited about helping others see what is possible when bridging the environmental and economic benefits of conservation. — **Sand County Foundation**

Determining the parent stock in cow-calf operations

Selection of cattle is the process by which we determine which animals become parents, how many offspring they will produce and how long they will remain in our breeding herd. When we select replacement heifers or herd bulls we are practicing selection. When we cull old, open cows or ornery herd bulls, we are practicing selection. The focus of this article is on replacement selection. Specifically, the best way to determine which animals will become the parent stock in our commercial cow-calf operation.

After we have analyzed our production system, identified our breeding objectives and determined the traits on which to apply selection pressure, the goal is to identify the animals with the best genes and let them reproduce.

The animals with the best genes are said to have the best breeding value (BV). BV, based on the additive genetic effect of individual genes (across the genome), serves as the best indicator of an animal's genetic value as a parent. BVs are trait specific. Since BVs are based on the effects of individual genes, they represent the part of genotypes which can be passed from parent to offspring.

Successful selection is based on identifying the animals with the best BVs (for traits of primary economic importance) to become our next generation of parents. Using EPDs in sire selection or genetic merit scorecards on groups of commercial heifers are examples of modern tools available to assist us in determining the BV of potential parent stock in cow-calf operations.

Heritability is important to define relative to selection. Heritability is the relationship between phenotypic values and breeding values for a trait in a population. More precisely, heritability is the proportion of phenotypic variation that can be explained by additive genetic variation for a given trait. Quantitative, polygenic traits in beef production can be lumped into three categories. These include:

• Reproductive traits. For example, heifer pregnancy percentage or rebreeding intervals in the cow herd. Reproductive traits are low in heritability. Scientific literature indicates the heritabilities of reproductive traits fall into a range between 0 to 20%.

• Growth traits. For example, weaning weights or yearling weights. These are moderate in heritability, typically falling into a range between 20 to 40%. Carcass traits (such as marbling, fat thickness or ribeye size) are highly heritable (40% or higher).

For example, the Sire Summary of the American Angus Association currently estimates the heritability of carcass marbling to be 48%. This can be interpreted to mean that the additive genetic variation of marbling accounts for 48% of all the variation we observe in marbling phenotypes.

•Gene combination value. Since it is the result of genes paired at loci across the genome, and only one gene from each locus is transmitted by parents, it represents the part of genotype which can't be passed from parents to offspring. Selection should be based on identifying animals with the best BV for traits of primary economic importance.

Effective selection decisions lead to building additive genetic potential. Additive genetic change is cumulative and permanent. While genotypic value represents the overall effect on an individual animal's genes, BV represents the only part of genotypic value that can be transmitted from parent to offspring.

Heritability estimates for a given trait serve as an index of how easily the trait can be changed through selection. — **Mark Z. Johnson, Oklahoma State University Extension beef cattle breeding specialist**

Paul Andrews honored as 2026 Friend of the National Western

The National Western Stock Show (NWSS) and the Red Meat Club of Denver are proud to honor longtime leader and former President and CEO Paul Andrews with the distinguished Friend of the National Western award. Across 14 years of dedicated leadership, vision and service, Andrews has left an enduring mark on the NWSS, its year-round operations and its legacy for generations to come.

Andrews assumed the role of president and CEO of the NWSS on Nov. 1, 2010, taking the helm of one of the nation's most historic and influential agricultural institutions. In this role, he managed all day-to-day operations, programming and administration for the NWSS, as well as the nearly 200 events held annually at the National Western Complex, including the nation's premier livestock show.

Andrews' steady leadership has helped steer the organization into its next chapter. He played a central role in the design, planning and development of the National Western Center, serving on the National Western Center Authority Board since its inception. His efforts were instrumental in bringing the Legacy building to life, now the permanent home of the Western Stock Show Association.

Before joining NWSS, Andrews served as executive vice president of Kroenke Sports Enterprises (KSE), overseeing business operations for multiple KSE properties. He began his career with the Denver Nuggets in 1990, after earning a degree in marketing from the University of Wyoming.

A Colorado native and Alameda High School graduate, Andrews spent his summers on his grandfather's ranch in Golden, where the family raised polled Hereford cattle. These experiences shaped his lifelong dedication to Western heritage and the agricultural community.

The Red Meat Club dinner is Jan. 15, 2026, at The National Western Club at the Legacy building. The evening begins with a social hour at 5:30 p.m., followed by a prime rib dinner and program. For tickets and more information, please call 303-299-5590. Space is limited, and reservations are available on a first-come, first-served basis. — **NWSS**

STORY SHORTS

FSIS sets deadline for beef processing waivers

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) announced it will end the period for accepting waivers regarding beef slaughter inspection regulations on Jan. 31, 2026. These waivers are designed to support experimentation with new procedures, equipment and processing techniques, provided food safety and compliance with the Federal Meat Inspection Act are maintained. Establishments can submit applications through askFSIS at tinyurl.com/9v23z2zn by selecting the "New Technology" Inquiry Type on or before the deadline. Moving forward, establishments that receive similar waivers must implement the approved alternative procedures within six months or risk termination.

Ultra-processed plant foods fail heart health

A French study published in The Lancet Regional Health—Europe found that ultra-processed plant-based foods offer no measurable protection against heart disease, even when they contain nutritionally sound ingredients. Researchers followed more than 63,000 adults in the cohort for a median of nine years, tracking diets and cardiovascular outcomes. Participants who consumed large amounts of unhealthy, ultra-processed plant-based foods faced a 46% higher risk of coronary heart disease and a 38% higher risk of overall heart disease. In contrast, those who ate mostly minimally processed, healthy plant-based foods had a 44% lower risk of coronary heart disease.

Autopsies pending after ND cattle deaths

Autopsies remain pending at North Dakota State University's (NDSU) Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory following the unexplained deaths of 19 cattle near Keene, ND, in late November, the McKenzie County Farmer reported. The cattle, owned by Lance Sorenson, were found about 1.5 miles north of Keene along a creek line, prompting an investigation. Sorenson submitted the animals to NDSU for full diagnostic testing to determine the cause of death. McKenzie County Emergency Services Manager Karolin Jappe said results are expected soon and emphasized that investigators have not identified a cause and that there is currently no factual evidence linking the deaths to any specific company, operation or pipeline in the area.

FDA authorizes screwworm treatment for cats

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued an Emergency Use Authorization for Credelio CAT, marking the first FDA-authorized drug to treat New World screwworm (NWS) infestations in cats and kittens. The FDA determined that available scientific evidence shows the product may be effective and that its benefits outweigh potential risks. Most U.S. cats face low NWS risk due to geography, but outdoor cats near the U.S.-Mexico border or those that have traveled to affected countries face higher exposure. Credelio CAT is available only by prescription because veterinary oversight is required. Its active ingredient, lotilaner, is generally safe but has been linked to rare neurologic reactions, underscoring the need for veterinary consultation.

WDFW updates wolf management activities

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) released an overview of gray wolf conservation and management activities for November, highlighting legislative funding and coordination efforts. Notably, no wolf depredations on livestock were documented in November. WDFW reported the legislature appropriated $390,000 for each fiscal year 2026 and 2027 to address wolf recovery and livestock conflicts, including $200,000 for a southeast Washington conflict mitigation pilot program. Lawmakers also directed WDFW to limit the use of contract range riders in northeast Washington and instead focus on coordinating with existing deterrence providers. Additionally, WDFW and the Washington State Department of Agriculture were tasked with exploring a "Pay for Presence" concept, with a reporting deadline extended to June 30, 2026.

Energy revenue disbursed to states, Tribes

The Department of the Interior's Office of Natural Resources Revenue announced $14.61 billion in fiscal year 2025 disbursements from energy production on federal and Tribal lands and offshore areas. The funding supports infrastructure, education, emergency services, conservation, reclamation and historic preservation nationwide. This marks the fifth-largest disbursement since 1982, though totals declined from last year due to lower commodity prices. Disbursements included $4.07 billion to 34 states, $2.98 billion to the Reclamation Fund, $1.05 billion to the Land and Water Conservation Fund, $1 billion to Tribes and individual Indian mineral owners, and $150 million to the Historic Preservation Fund.

Kaweah subbasin exits groundwater probation

The California State Water Resources Control Board voted Dec. 2 to return oversight of the Kaweah Groundwater Subbasin to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) after progress under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The decision removes the Kaweah subbasin from SGMA probation, eliminating potential state fees and additional reporting requirements for groundwater pumpers. Like the Kern County and Chowchilla subbasins, the Kaweah subbasin will now implement its groundwater plan under DWR oversight while demonstrating progress toward sustainability. Since the referral, the Kaweah agency has addressed declining groundwater levels, impacts on domestic wells, land subsidence, groundwater quality concerns and surface water connections.

USDA announces $12B in aid for farmers

COMP. ORDER

(from page 1)

anti-competitive behavior, especially when carried out by foreign-controlled corporations, threatens the stability and affordability of America's food supply."

Trump's order directs the task forces to bring forth enforcement actions and propose new rules to restore competition. The task forces will meet with Congress in six months' time and will then provide progress updates within one year of the order's implementation.

The attorney general is also directed to pursue criminal proceedings if there is evidence of criminal collusion.

"Sectors including meat processing, seed, fertilizer, and farm equipment may be vulnerable to anti-competitive manipulation that result in higher prices for farmers and consumers," a White House fact sheet read. However, although ag sectors were cited, the USDA was not mentioned as being part of the task forces in the executive order.

The order also noted the increasing involvement of foreign-controlled companies in the food sector, potentially creating national security risks and driving up food costs, "issues the Task Forces are specifically directed to investigate."

A month earlier, Trump called on the Department of Justice to investigate the country's largest meatpackers, specifically those owned by foreign entities.

"For too long, a handful of giant meat packers have squeezed America's cattle producers, shrunk herds, and jacked up prices at the grocery store," a White House correspondence read.

Aid announced

In other recent news, USDA announced $12 billion in farmer "bridge payments" for temporary trade market disruptions and increased production costs. The payments are intended to aid farmers until provisions kick in from the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. Reference prices are set to increase between 10-21% for major covered commodities such as soybeans, corn and wheat and will reach eligible farmers on Oct. 1, 2026.

"The plan we are announcing today ensures American farmers can continue to plan for the next crop year," said USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins in a statement. "It will allow farmers to leverage strengthened price protection risk management tools and the reliability of fair trade deals so they do not have to depend on large ad hoc assistance packages from the government."

Up to $11 billion will be used for the Farmer Bridge Assistance (FBA) Program to provide relief for row crop farmers who produce barley, chickpeas, corn, cotton, lentils, oats, peanuts, peas, rice, sorghum, soybeans, wheat, canola, crambe, flax, mustard, rapeseed, safflower, sesame, and sunflower.

The remaining $1 billion of the $12 billion in bridge payments will be reserved for commodities not covered in the FBA Program, including specialty crops, though details are still under development.

The payments are authorized under the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act and will be administered by the Farm Service Agency.

Ag groups had mixed reactions to the bridge payments, calling them helpful, but urging for more work to be done.

"Farmers have weathered billions in economic losses that have only been partially offset by this bridge support and other Congressional packages," said American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall. "There is more work to do, and Farm Bureau is committed to working with Congress and the administration to provide additional assistance where it is needed."

The National Young Farmers Coalition and the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) called the payments "fleeting relief," and that the FBA Program is insufficient on its own.

"It effectively excludes most specialty crop growers and does little to prevent the loss of farms or farmland due to acute financial hardship," said Mike Lavender, NSAC policy director. **— Anna Miller Fortozo, *WLJ* managing editor**

MARKET NEWS

MARKET SITUATION REPORT

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

MARKET AT A GLANCE

MARKET AT A GLANCE	This Week: 12/11/2025		Week Ago	Year Ago
Choice Fed Steers	226.31	▲	216.64	193.39
CME Feeder Index	344.03	▲	341.80	263.07
Boxed Beef Average	358.11	▼	362.72	315.24
Average Dressed Steers	353.47	▲	N/A	301.48
Live Slaughter Weight*	1,460	▲	1,458	1,428
Weekly Slaughter**	600,000	▲	501,000	614,000
Weekly Beef Production***	534.6	▲	445.6	531.5
Hide/Offal Value	11.75	▲	11.52	11.42
Corn Price	4.40	▲	4.38	4.38

*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	
December 5	6,615	366.40	285	396.09	1,216	369.76	2,074	364.19	627	351.19	2,413	329.00
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

Cutouts — FED BOXED BEEF

DATE	CHOICE	SELECT	COW BEEF CUTOUT	50% LEAN	90% LEAN
December 11	358.11	343.46	308.14	145.33	393.87
December 10	359.36	344.88	309.15	152.64	396.35
December 9	361.04	348.03	308.61	156.80	395.84
December 8	360.90	348.60	309.53	163.47	393.60
December 5	361.20	347.39	308.62	N/A	393.96

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Live Cattle

	12/5	12/8	12/9	12/10	12/11	High*	Low*
Dec.	22715	22733	22815	22720	23135	24678	16853
Feb.	22715	22668	22860	22870	23178	24830	16668
Apr.	22768	22670	22848	22850	23118	25018	17005
Jun.	22158	22040	22190	22218	22455	25093	18068

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Feeder Cattle

	12/5	12/8	12/9	12/10	12/11	High*	Low*
Jan.	33905	33565	33868	33888	34525	38103	21920
Mar.	33330	33043	33318	33320	33883	38280	22268
Apr.	33223	32973	33260	33228	33753	38020	22460
May	33048	32793	33093	33028	33513	37860	24118

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

FED CATTLE TRADE

FED CATTLE TRADE	Head Count	Avg. Weight	Avg. Price
WEEKLY WEIGHTED AVERAGES			
Live FOB Steer	16,728	1,585	226.31
Live FOB Heifer	10,166	1,388	226.41
Dressed Del Steer	4,676	1,030	353.47
Dressed Del Heifer	736	897	353.44
SAME PERIOD LAST WEEK			
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
SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR			
Live FOB Steer	14,810	1,515	193.39
Live FOB Heifer	5,769	1,353	192.80
Dressed Del Steer	3,180	991	301.48
Dressed Del Heifer	806	894	300.62

NATIONAL WEEKLY FED BEEF SLAUGHTER VOLUME: DECEMBER 7, 2025

	Domestic	Imported
Forward Contract	40,049	3,991
Formula	250,502	2,695
Negotiated Cash	80,147	259
Negotiated Grid	40,896	1,912
Packer Owned	8,255	N/A
Total	**419,849**	**8,857**

SLAUGHTER FORWARD CONTRACTS / FORWARD BEEF SALES

Delivery Month			
Dec. '25	186,522	Neg. Sales 0-21 days	2,126
Jan. '26	131,210	Neg. Sales 21+ days	660
Feb. '26	148,223	Formula sales	3,748
Mar. '26	126,703	Forward contract sales	81
Apr. '26	156,610	Domestic sales	5,930
		NAFTA Exports	107

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	203.60	-5.62
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	201.52	-5.88
Ontario Auctions		
Slaughter Steers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1300-1500 lbs	N/A	N/A
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	N/A	N/A
Slaughter Cows, Cutter and Utility 1-3, 1100-1400 lbs	126.38	-4.18

*Price comparison from one week ago.

Average feeder cattle prices (CND) for week ending Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Steers:	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Ontario
501-600 lbs	445.31	436.69	379.52
601-700 lbs	389.63	383.26	359.12
701-800 lbs	346.29	339.47	326.99
801-900 lbs	312.19	311.75	301.58
Heifers:			
401-500 lbs	444.70	422.19	350.67
501-600 lbs	390.62	376.09	344.18
601-700 lbs	350.69	340.33	326.85
701-800 lbs	311.55	300.71	278.43

USDA MEXICO TO U.S. WEEKLY LIVESTOCK IMPORTS

Feeder cattle imports weekly and yearly volume.

Species	Current Week	Previous Week	Current Year-to-date	Previous Year-to-date
	12/1/2025	11/24/2025		
Feeders	0	0	230,638	1,240,203

USDA WEEKLY IMPORTED FEEDER CATTLE

December 11, 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.

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

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

Selected Auctions Week Ending December 11, 2025

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

NORTHWEST

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
December 5 Blackfoot, ID	N/A		450-560 430-498	410-495 390-480	350-450 330-410	310-410 290-353	290-355 280-337	275-337 260-311	130-162 155-182	
December 4 Burley, ID	842	505	508-617.50 485	450-492 410-474	395-440 342-376	322.50-381 311	310-330		121-198 164-170	
No report available Emmett, ID										
December 6 Eugene, OR	1,138		340-465* 340-482*	330-428* 325-430*	300-405* 280-365*	290-357* 230-288*	217-272*	216-290*	140-155 158-174	1,000-3,225 875-2,500
December 8 Madras, OR	684								140-170 155-182	3,800-4,500 2,400-3,900
No report available Vale, OR										
December 8 Davenport, WA	384	390	175-450 350-395	180-400 240-337.50	135-400 135-321	112.50-360 110-292.50	220-307.50 155-240	142-258 170-239	50-210 129-205	1,100-3,300
December 9 Toppenish, WA	1,350									3,075-3,800 2,700-4,400

FARWEST

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
December 4 Orland, CA	4,497		400-595 380-520	350-583 330-490	350-483 330-434	300-425 280-380	300-365 280-321	285-329 265-315	135-168 135-193	2,500-4,700 2,000-3,300
No report available Escalon, CA										
December 8 Famoso, CA	302		440-500 375-440	400-500 375-440	380-475 350-425	300-365 270-320	275-300	275-300 270-300	70-185 125-170	
December 10 Galt, CA	1,566			420-480 380-465	375-468 350-435	340-416 300-370	300-360 285-320	270-330	100-155 140-180	
December 9 Turlock, CA	625		475-535	435-510 400-470	400-447.50 360-423	377-394 325-360	300-314 295-314	295-318 230-260	130-162 141-166	
No report available Salina, UT										

NORTH CENTRAL

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
December 8 Iowa	17,489		460-560 365-522	440-547 352.50-472.50	382-485 325-432.50	349-430 310-385	320-382 272.50-358	289-358.50 256-325	122.50-210 147.50-221	
December 9 Miles City, MT	1,671			482.50-535 419-486	407.50-478 374.50-423	361-412 319-365	361-381	315	105-169 155-185	1,950-2,375
December 10 Bassett, NE	5,270		595	517.50-540 450-472.50	452.50-507 392.50-437	395-455 370-396	362.50-421 363.50	316.50-344.50 303.50-329.50		
December 6 Ericson, NE	4,615		502.50-520	505-555 423-485	452.50-508 366-441	401-472 331-410	355-407 313-359	336.50-354.75 280-332.50		
No report available Imperial, NE										
December 3 Kearney, NE	2,600		580-596	490-532 422-482	412-482 376-425	378-418 343-382	334-377 316-337.50	304-347 280-334	168-189 156-188.50	
December 5 Lexington, NE	3,594		554 460-465	515-550 421-461	400-503 371-419	369-422 350-386.50	320-388 316-361.50	315.50-353.50 280-290.50		
December 4 Ogallala, NE	3,310		587.50-707.50 528-550	495-540 444-501	422-499 384-429	370-411 343-376	345-390.50 330-365	281-320 286-337		
December 4 Valentine, NE	2,600		530	508-553 430-502.50	460-516 415-445	396-450 390-427.50	376-397 319-370	317 259		
December 5 Herreid, SD	5,335		480-505	460-510 433-480	409-467.50 371-425	362-421 338-377.50	354-361	327.50-343.75 297.60		
December 10 Torrington, WY	2,199		600-697 550	499-595 460-520	430-477 387-434	375-420 360-387	363-364 334-346	296-329		

SOUTH CENTRAL

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
December 4 Willcox, AZ	1,452	500-630 490-580	320-635 250-552.50	115-550 260-490	135-446 220-415	170-382.50 135-330			110-148 121-166	2,650-3,200 2,350-2,700
December 8 Colorado	7,506	445-540	495-600 405-520	425-530 355-465	371-472 331-400	325-410 290-352.50	292.50-374 232.50-341	230-334 230-284	132-171 153-189	2,550-3,800 1,650-3,300
December 3 La Junta, CO	2,203		520-600 405-475	410-530 365-440	390-440 332-402.50	339-385 339-385	292.50-330 257.50-282.50	285-312.50 250-278	142-165 174-197	
December 8 Loma, CO	2,102		525-615 465-550	445-545 400-485	425-500 355-405	340-400 320-350	320-350 300-330	265-325 255-315	145-170 165-180	
December 10 Dodge City, KS	3,621		537.50-630 432-525	472.50-557 425-447.50	434-505 380-490	365-418 349-377	335-401 308-332.75	297.50-343 294.25-317	118-172 149-205	2,500-2,700 1,825-3,125
December 4 Pratt, KS	2,206		480-542.50 405-457	492.50-542.50 412.50-457.50	412.50-499 362-420	335-417.50 321-375	322.50-380 313.50-322	326-336 292-315	150-184 157-197	2,250-3,650 2,250-3,600
December 4 Salina, KS	2,500		550 465	487-525 405-455	407.50-496 369-414	370-425 351-384	336-379.50 310-340	315-345 284-315		
December 11 Clovis, NM	1,620	580 500-560	460-617 455-553	405-554 410-500	397-465 345-425	320-406 296-362	285-334.50 230-315	107-310 275-310		2,250-3,575 1,300-3,400
December 10 El Reno, OK	9,911	600-610 500-570	510-630 450-510	450-620 400-540	390-490 350-452.50	307.50-430 320-395	336-377.50 285-335.35	296-343 265-345		
December 9 McAlester, OK	1,275		486-635 448-510	341-500 378-470	363-491 337-381	358-393 325-373	263-350 245-280	243 235-267	146-168 183-201	2,950 2,150-3,325
December 9 Oklahoma City, OK	7,419	525-625 600	570-615 497.50-610	470-590 427.50-500	419-495 358-440	364-415 305-380	321-367 309-335	307-342.50 292-314.50		
December 5 Cuero, TX	950	489-610 413-600	463-610 389-525	441-520 366-475	344-460 324-404	336-410 309-390	302-335 283-307		135-166 180-184	3,150-4,250 1,500-3,950
December 4 Dalhart, TX	1,511		450 400	395-485 422.50	426-445 387.50-412.50	372.50-421 335	335-361.50 312-316	240-320 221-297	120-170 170	
December 11 San Angelo, TX	849	555-585	490-565 330-525	445-525 425-485	395-440 355-420	325-392.50 312.50-360	320-345 297.50-332.50	296-307 240-297	120-191 147.50-188	
December 4 Tulia, TX	698		445	445-470 390	382-440 335-380	310-372 277	315 300-307	240	135-145 150	

EAST

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
December 5 Alabama	9,710	530-595 420-575	446-600 375-470	400-470 347.50-440	365-425 325-400	332.50-362 290-345	320-340 260-314	292.50-305 240-319	131-177 160-202	1,900-3,700 1,400-3,700
December 8 Lexington, KY	2,747	447.50-490* 410-435*	475-533* 382.50-437.50*	427.50-485* 351-417.50*	370-435* 330-379*	320-409.50* 302.50-368*	315-368* 281-333.25*	264-345.25* 197-301.50*	157-186 172-205	1,850-2,500
December 8 Joplin, MO	13,166		540-670 410-460	450-530 380-490	395-490 335-445	352-435 337-365	335-378 312-345	293-350 290-321		
December 8 Tennessee	8,232	400-490 369-485	385-545 347-450	380-445 315-390	320-417 285-355	280-370 240-348	255-363.75 230-316	235-347.75 201-290	120-188 151.50-229	2,500-3,850 1,425-3,000
December 8 Virginia	2,943		330-417.50 305-362.50	315-450 265-333	305-410 275-365	300-375 250-325	245-342 220-325	145-333 220-270		

CANADA

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 Lethbridge, Alberta										

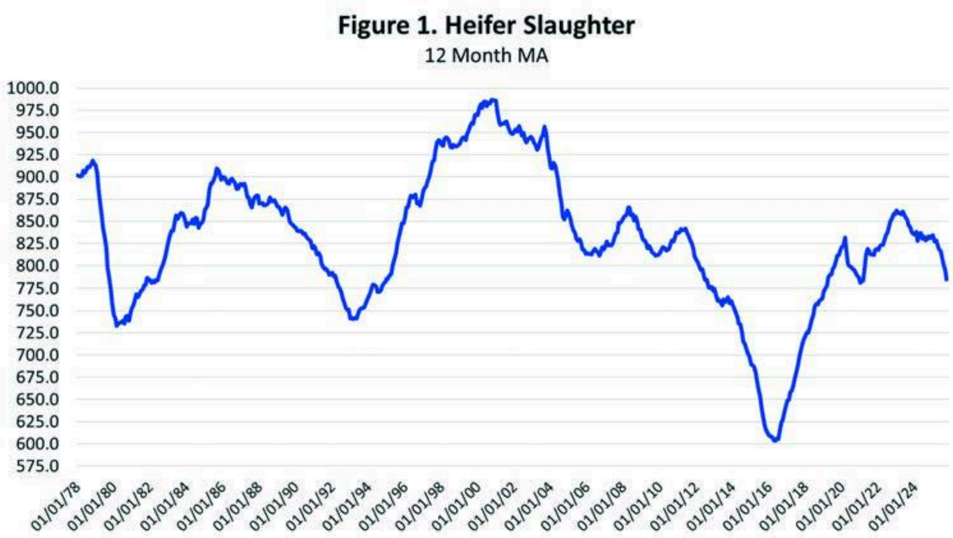
Little indication of heifer retention in 2025

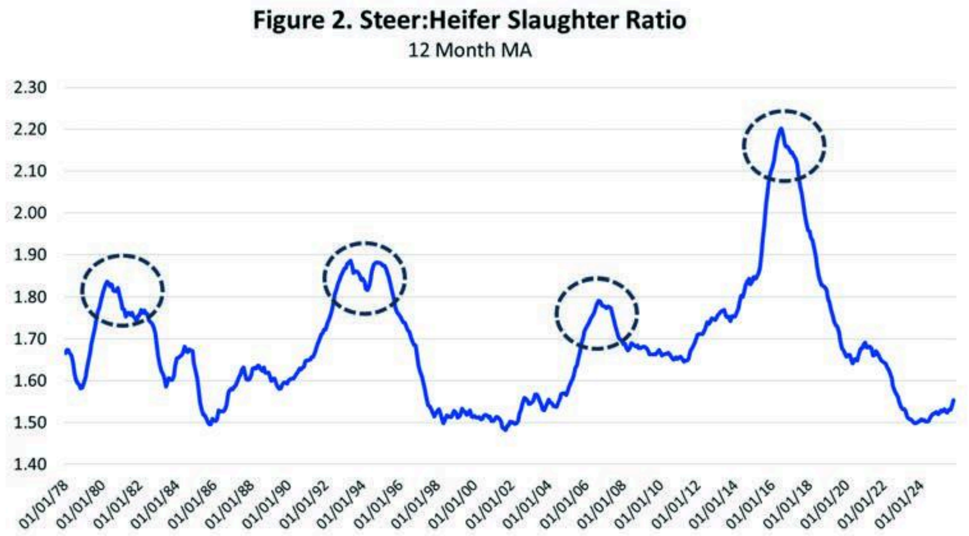
As 2025 wraps up, there is still little indication of significant heifer retention for herd rebuilding though some retention may be beginning slowly. The July Cattle inventory report showed the smallest beef replacement heifer inventory in the history of the report back to 1973, although no comparison to last year was possible (the report was not available last year). The October Cattle on Feed report showed that the percentage of heifers in feedlots was unchanged from July and still above average as it has been since late 2018.

It is true that heifer slaughter is down 6.6% so far this year and is falling faster than steer slaughter, which is down 4.4% for the year to date.

Figure 1 shows average monthly heifer slaughter since January 1978. Average heifer slaughter peaked most recently in January 2023 and has declined 9% percent as of October 2025. Heifer slaughter is quite variable and does decrease during periods of herd expansion. However, at this point the decrease in heifer slaughter is not enough to indicate significant heifer retention.

Figure 2 shows the ratio of steer to heifer slaughter over the same 49-year period. The obvious spikes in the ratio (dotted circles) correspond to herd expansions in the years 1979-1982, 1990-1996, 2004-2006 and 2014-2019. The ratio increases when heifer slaughter drops relative to steer slaughter during herd rebuilding. The current steer to heifer ratio has begun to increase but appears to indicate only the slightest beginning of heifer retention. Additional heifer retention may build in 2026 but the pace appears to be slow. **— Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension livestock marketing specialist**





Boxed beef prices close lower

MARKETS
(from page 1)

484,000 head, compared to 475,000 head a week earlier. Total slaughter for a week earlier is projected at 600,000 head. Actual slaughter for the week ending Nov. 29 was 496,077 head. The average steer dressed weight was 983 lbs., down 5 lbs. from the prior week.

"Before packer margins turn red—as wholesale beef prices make new lows for the move—packers appear desperate to run another big production schedule this week while they still have some profit and obviously needed to secure more inventory this week to pull that off," Fish said.

Boxed beef prices were several dollars lower over the week. The Choice cutout lost about $4 to close at $358.11, and the Select cutout lost about $7 to close at $343.46.

Feeder cattle

"The feeder cattle complex has taken the brave leap of faith as it's currently seeing its spot January contract trade above its 100-day moving average," Stewart said.

Feeder cattle futures were higher over the week. The January contract gained about $7 to close at $343.40, and the March contract gained about $8 to close at $337.67.

The CME Feeder Cattle Index gained $2.23 to close at $344.03.

Corn futures traded sideways, up about 2 cents on the December contract to $4.35 and down a penny on the March contract to $4.46.

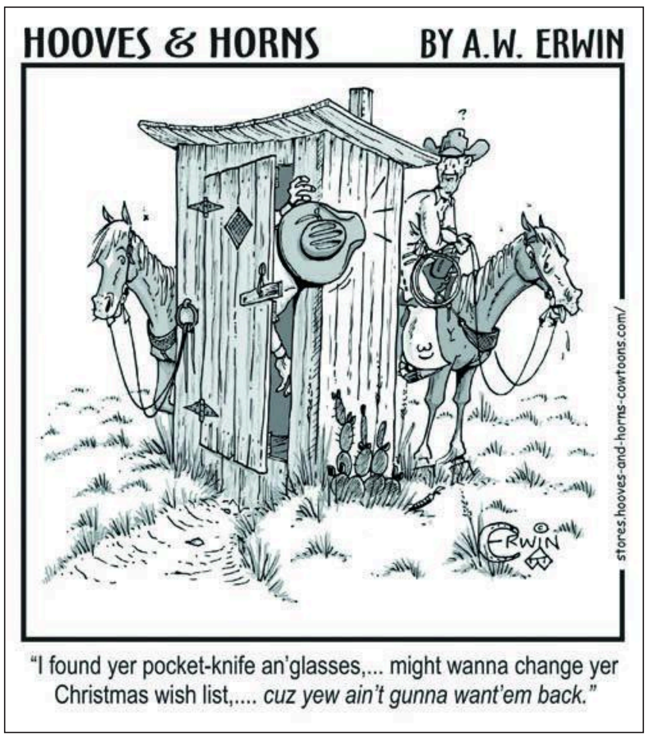
Iowa: Russell Livestock in Russell sold 2,217 head on Monday. Compared to the previous auction two weeks earlier, steers sold mostly $12-34 higher, while five-weight cattle were sharply higher. Heifers 600 lbs. and heavier sold $4-10 higher, while lighter heifers were sharply higher. Benchmark steers averaging 705 lbs. sold from $353-382.50 and averaged $375.50.

Missouri: Joplin Regional Stockyards in Carthage sold 12,000 head on Monday. Compared to a week earlier, at the mid-session, feeder steers under 525 lbs. sold from $35-60 higher. Heavier weights sold $5-15 higher. Feeder heifers under 600 lbs. sold $10-30 higher, and heavier weights sold $5-10 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 772 lbs. sold from $335-359, averaging $342.79.

Oklahoma: Oklahoma National Stockyards in Oklahoma City sold 7,200 head on Monday. Compared to the previous sale, at the mid-session, feeder steers over 800 lbs. sold from $6-10 higher and under 800 lbs. sold $15-30 higher. Feeder heifers were lightly tested at $6-10 higher. Steer and heifer calves were $15-30 higher with spots up to $40 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 778 lbs. sold from $340-350.50, averaging $346.23.

Texas: Lonestar Stockyards in Wildorado sold 1,171 head on Tuesday. Compared to the last auction, feeder steers traded mostly $5-7 higher. Feeder heifers traded up to $20 higher on limited comparable sales. Steer and heifer calves traded sharply higher on a light test.

Utah: Producers Livestock in Salina sold 1,320 head on Tuesday. Compared to the last auction, feeder cattle sold sharply higher on calves and yearlings. Benchmark steers averaging 758 lbs. sold for $326-353.25, averaging $346.86. **— Anna Miller Fortozo, *WLJ* managing editor**



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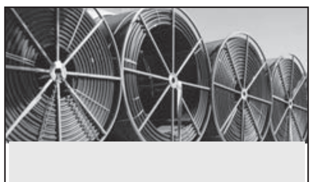

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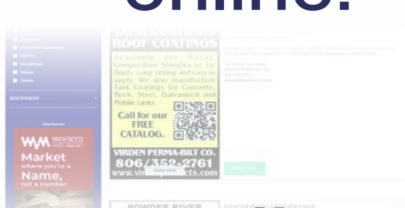

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SALE REPORTS

BEEF COUNTRY GENETICS SALE
Dec. 3, Columbus, MT
29 Angus 2-year-old bulls $10,725
113 Angus fall yearling bulls 9,917
29 Commercial bred heifers 4,000
Auctioneers: Joe Goggins and Greg Goggins

TOPS: McD Congress 4208, 8/15/2024 by Crouch Congress; to Fintail Ranch, Twin Bridges, MT, $90,000. McD Effective 4201, 8/7/2024 by McD Effective 789; to Fintail Ranch, Twin Bridges, MT, $29,000. McD Great Lakes 4234, 10/3/2024 by Marda Great Lakes 370; to Six-Ess Ranch, Ekalaka, MT, $26,000. Marda Congress 4205, 8/14/2024 by Crouch Congress; to Sunny Okanogan Angus, Omak, WA, $25,000. McD Tiger 4250, 7/20/2024 by JVC Tiger 21417; to Six-Ess Ranch, Ekalaka, MT, $21,000. — **KEVIN MURNIN**

MONTANA SIMMENTAL ASSOC. FEMALE SALE
Dec. 6, Billings, MT
44 Simmental total registered live lots $6,262
31 Simmental embryos 796
Auctioneer: Ty Thompson
Sale Manager: Allied Genetic Resources

TOPS—SimAngus bred heifers: GW Miss Jailbreak 667M, 2/21/2024 by GW Jailbreak 559J; to Paul Guenzler, Ronan, MT, $11,999. Rymo Trascendent High A86M, 1/3/2024 by G A R Transcendent; to Gateway Simmental, Lewistown, MT, $9,249. GW Miss Boomer 570M, 2/18/2024 by IR/JLN Boomer J425; to Fink Cattle Company, Berthold, ND, $9,000. **Simmental bred heifer:** Z34M, 1/13/24 by HA Justice 30J, bred to FHCC Honor Code 3165L; to Megan Uriarte, Stevensville, MT, $9,000. **Spring pair:** GW Miss Marl Man 728E, 2/10/2017 by TJ Marlboro Man 360A with a GW Miss High Ball 296N heifer calf by side; to Jed Polk, Raynesford, MT, Boothill Ranch, Ronan, MT, and Fauth Ranch Simmentals, Lavina, MT, $29,000. — **KEVIN MURNIN**

HOLLOW TOP ANGUS PRODUCTION SALE
Dec. 8, Pony, MT
100 2-Year-old bulls $9,043
Auctioneer: Kyle Shobe

TOPS: HT Preeminent 4160, 4/1/2024 by Ellingson Preeminent; to Arapahoe Ranch, Coalmont, CO, $15,498. HT Bosco 4155, 4/1/2024 by Cherry Crk Blue Collar G275; to Mystic Hill Farm, Culpepper, VA, $15,000. HT Preeminet 4175, 4/2/2024 by Ellingson Preeminent; to Split Diamond Ranch, Whitehall, MT, $15,000. HT Preeminent 4093, 3/27/2025 by Ellingson Preeminent; to Split Diamond Ranch, Whitehall, MT, $15,000. HT Blue Collar 4014, 3/3/2024 by Cherry Crk Blue Collar G275; to Teixeira Farms, Santa Maria, CA, $13,500. — **KEVIN MURNIN**

JACOBSEN RANCH PRODUCTION SALE
Dec. 8, Great Falls, MT
98 Salers bull calves........... $7,988
123 Commercial bull bred heifers 3,949
234 Commercial AI bred heifers 3,945
Auctioneer: Ty Thompson

TOPS—Angus bull calves: JR Versatility 5688N, 3/17/2025 by Granger Versatile 235; to Barrett Land and Livestock, Augusta, MT, $115,000. JR True Legend 5632N, 2/27/2025 by WMR Legend 337; to Rusty Nail Ranch, Choteau, MT, $11,000. **Salers bull calves:** JSR Jumbo 5295N, 3/30/2025 by ECR Jumbo 388L OF 117E; to Jasperson Cattle Company, Goshen, UT, $18,000. JSR Hunter 597N, 3/1/2025 by ECR 238K of 43A; to GTW Inc., Lodge Grass, MT, $15,500. JSR Jumbo 515N, 2/17/2025 by ECR Jumbo 388L OF 117E; to MacDonald Ranches, Bismarck, ND, $12,000. — **KEVIN MURNIN**

SHIPWHEEL CATTLE CO. PRODUCTION SALE
Dec. 10, Chinook, MT
121 Angus 2-year-old bulls $15,354
38 Commercial bred heifers 4,174
Auctioneer: Kyle Shobe

TOPS: Shipwheel Right Time 4717, 5/2/2024 by S Right Time 7861; to Hollow Top Angus, Pony, MT, $87,500. Shipwheel Justified 4606, 5/20/2024 by Shipwheel Justified 1677; to Polk Cattle Company, Raynesford, MT, $41,000. Shipwheel Dreamer 4723, 4/26/2024 by Shipwheel Dreamer 8522; to Webo Angus, Lusk, WY, $35,000. Shipwheel Dreamer 4725, 4/26/2024 by Shipwheel Dreamer 8522; to Scott Knutson, Helena, MT, $32,500. Shipwheel Right Time 4587, 4/13/2024 by S Right Time 4587; to Kraye Angus Ranch, Mullen, NE, $30,000. — **KEVIN MURNIN**

SPRING COVE RANCH FEMALE SALE
Nov. 22, Bliss, ID
1 Angus bull $40,000
2 Angus fall pairs 23,500
28 Angus open heifers 15,160
2 Angus pregnancies 15,000
1 Angus flush 12,500
9 Angus bred cows 7,777
65 Angus bred heifers 6,615
164 Commercial bred heifers 4,026
66 Commercial bred cows 3,763
53 Angus embryos 958
34 Angus semen lots 617
Auctioneer: Rick Machado
Sale Manager: M3 Marketing

TOPS—Bull: PEV Prolific 2M2, 3/8/2024 by Ellingson Prolific; to Small Livestock, Winnemucca, NV, and Dunipace Angus, Galt, CA, $40,000. **Bred heifer:** Spring Cove Carol 442, 1/27/2024 by Sitz Feat 729H bred to Multiple Sire Group; to RC Cattle, Winchester, KY, $25,000. **Fall pairs:** Sterling Blackcap 3185, 10/8/2023 by Poss Deadwood with a 112A Beal Breakthrough bull calf by side; to Cannon Ranch, Hiko, NV, $25,000. Sterling Isabel Y69-1, 8/15/2023 by Styles Upgrade J59 with a 109A By EXAR Jameson 3762B heifer calf by side; to Packard Point Ranch, Muldrow, OK, $22,000. **Open heifers:** Spring Cove Juana 500, 1/3/2025 by Spring Cove Grant 200K; to Guess Cattle Co., Tulare, CA, and Rhoades Ranch, Cambria, CA, $80,000. Guess Lady 5003, 1/4/2025 by FF Rito Ambitious; to Parker Cattle Co., Malad, ID, $45,000. Sterling Isabel 442, 7/29/2024 by Basin Jameson 1076; to Rumor Has It Farms, Paris, KY, $30,000. Sterling Blackcap 504, 2/18/2025 by BH Paramount; to Poss Angus, Scotia, NE, $30,000. Guess Rita 5026, 2/10/2025 by Mason Landmark 2313; to Galaxy Beef, Macon, MO, and Byrd Cattle Co., Los Molinos, CA, $28,000. — **JARED PATTERSON**

YARDLEY CATTLE CO. FEMALE SALE
Dec. 5, Beaver, UT
14 Angus bred females $6,786
111 Simmental bred females 5,184
5 Maine-Anjou bred females 4,680
Auctioneer: Steve Bonham

LEACHMAN CATTLE BULL SALE
Dec. 6, Loma, CO
242 Stabilizer bulls $8,982
35 Stabilizer Composite bred heifers 3,929
Auctioneer: Eric Duarte

REVERSE ROCKING R RANCH SALE
Dec. 6, Maxwell, NM
131 Bulls $10,185
43 Total registered females 7,267
14 Pregnancies ... 18,678
Auctioneer: Wes Tiemann
Sale Manager: CK6 Consulting

TOPS—Bulls: RRR GMC Red State R8154, 4/18/2024 by Pine View Red State; to MAS Inc., Pratt, KS, $30,000. RRR GMC Fireball R8004, 2/9/2024 by GB Fireball 672; to ZumBrunnen Angus, Lusk, WY, $20,000. **Bred heifer:** Linz Lady 3125, 8/9/2023 by MG Magnitude bred to Linz Prohibition 2004; to Radke Land & Cattle Co., Mitchell, SD, and Fanning Angus, Vetal, SD, $65,000, 1/4 interest. **Flushes:** DBA Rita 3609, by a bull of buyer's choice; to GMC Genetics, Fraziers Bottom, WV, $40,000. BAR Miss Belle M74, by a bull of buyer's choice; to Triple H Cattle Co., Frankfort, KY, $40,000. **Pregnancy:** Embryo by E&B Everett; to Rhoades Ranch, Cambria, CA, $25,000. — **TY GROSHANS**

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
Jan. 28 – Red Bluff Bull & Gelding Sale, Red Bluff, CA

ANGUS

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. 17 – Redland Angus, Bull Sale, Buffalo, WY
Jan. 20 – Ken Haas Angus, Bull Sale, La Grange, WY
Jan. 23 – Flesch Angus, Production Sale, Shelby, MT
Jan. 23 – McConnell Angus, Production Sale, Dix, NE
Jan. 23 – Ruggles Angus, Production Sale, McCook, NE
Jan. 24 – Little Goose Ranch, Production Sale, Buffalo, WY
Jan. 26 – APEX Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Dannebrog, NE
Jan. 30 – Kovarik Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Ord, NE
Jan. 31 – 21 Angus, Bull Sale, New England, ND
Jan. 31 – Baldridge Performance Angus, Bull Sale, North Platte, NE
Jan. 31 – Schaff Angus Valley, Production Sale, St. Anthony, ND

HEREFORD

Jan. 4, 2026 – Durbin Creek Ranch, Bull Sale, Worland, WY
Jan. 19 – Van Newkirk Herefords, Bull Sale, Oshkosh, NE
Jan. 20 – Mrnak Hereford Ranch, Production Sale, Bowman, ND
Jan. 27 – Churchill Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Manhattan, MT
Jan. 29 – Ridder Herefords, Bull Sale, Callaway, NE

RED ANGUS

Dec. 18 – Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, San Saba, TX

SIMANGUS

Jan. 18, 2026 – The One & Only Simmental Sale at NWSS, Denver, CO
Jan. 20 – Powerline Genetics, Bull Sale, Arapahoe, NE
Jan. 26 – APEX Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Dannebrog, NE

SIMMENTAL

Jan. 18, 2026 – The One & Only Simmental Sale at NWSS, Denver, CO
Jan. 20 – Powerline Genetics, Bull Sale, Arapahoe, NE
Jan. 26 – APEX Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Dannebrog, NE

STABILIZER

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

COMMERCIAL

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
Jan. 29 – Western Video Market Auction, Red Bluff, CA

HORSE

Jan. 28, 2026 – Red Bluff Bull & Gelding Sale, Red Bluff, CA

DOG

Jan. 28 – Red Bluff Stock Dog Sale, Red Bluff, CA

Ag groups applaud California water plan

WATER DELIVERY
(from page 1)

The order instructs the secretary of the Interior to operate the CVP to deliver more water "notwithstanding any contrary State or local laws." It directs Reclamation to ensure that state agencies, including the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), do not interfere with maximizing federal water exports.

"With the signing of this Record of Decision, we are delivering on the promise of Executive Order 14181 to strengthen California's water resilience," said Interior Secretary Doug Burgum. "This updated operations plan reflects our commitment to using the best available science to increase water deliveries while safeguarding the environment and honoring the legacy of the Central Valley Project's 90 years of service."

Elements of the plan

Under the plan, the CVP may increase annual deliveries by 130,000-180,000 acre-feet (an acre-foot is 325,851 gallons), and the SWP by 120,000-220,000 acre-feet, depending on hydrology and contingent upon California adopting Action 5.

The decision implements several targeted operational adjustments, including removing the Delta Summer and Fall Habitat Action (Fall X2) after the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined it was unlikely to significantly improve Delta smelt survival. Early export-reduction measures in the state's Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program were also removed because necessary data and processes were not yet available.

Additional changes—including updates to Old and Middle River flow criteria and storm-flex operations—aim to improve export efficiency while relying on predictive, real-time science to ensure environmental protections remain effective.

Reclamation emphasized that many existing regulations were developed before modern advances in habitat modeling, species science and forecasting, and the agency may pursue further operational updates—potentially requiring new environmental review—for water year 2027 and beyond.

The announcement also contrasted sharply with a Dec. 1 forecast from the DWR, which set the initial SWP allocation at just 10% of requested supplies for 2026. That forecast, which is typically conservative this early in the water year, reflects current reservoir storage, hydrological conditions and an assumption of continued dry weather. Yet the new water year has begun with encouraging precipitation in both Northern and Southern California.

Sharp divisions in response

Gov. Gavin Newsom's (D) office blasted the decision, calling it another example of the Trump administration "putting politics over people."

"As per usual, the emperor is left with no clothes, pushing for an outcome that disregards science and undermines our ability to protect the water supply for people, farms, and the environment," spokesperson Tara Gallegos said in a statement reported by the Associated Press (AP).

California Attorney General Rob Bonta is also reviewing potential legal and administrative responses. His office said it is "looking at all available options to respond" to Reclamation's updated plan.

"This politically motivated decision creates new risks for water availability, especially for Southern California cities, and the health of California's waterways, fish, and wildlife," a spokesperson told The Sacramento Bee.

DWR Director Karla Nemeth warned that increasing federal exports could force the state to dedicate additional water to species protection, thereby reducing supplies for urban and agricultural users. "It is important for the two systems to work together," she told AP.

Agricultural groups, by contrast, welcomed the decision.

Westlands Water District General Manager Allison Febbo said, "These changes will help ensure that our growers have the water they need to support local communities and the nation's food supply, while also protecting California's wildlife … Action 5 is a testament to what can be accomplished with a data-driven, results-focused adaptation to water supply operations."

For CVP South-of-Delta contractors such as Westlands, Action 5 is expected to yield about 85,000 acre-feet of additional supply annually, which could reduce groundwater reliance, support farmland and bolster regional economic stability.

Western Growers echoed that view. "Right on cue, those committed to throttling back water for farms and cities are apoplectic," said President and CEO Dave Puglia, noting that CVP growers have received only 45% of their contracted supplies over the past 20 years. "This modest potential rebalancing represents a welcome return of common sense." — **Charles Wallace, *WLJ* contributing editor**

Researching ways to find value in wastewater

Kansas State (K-State) University researchers are leading an innovative effort to turn livestock wastewater into a reusable resource in a project that helps to conserve the Ogallala Aquifer and strengthen sustainability across the High Plains.

The four-year, $6 million project, led by Prathap Parameswaran, an associate professor in K-State's Carl R. Ice College of Engineering, brings together engineering, agricultural economics and social science experts from K-State, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Oklahoma State University and Seward County Community College.

At the center of the work is an anaerobic membrane bioreactor that treats wastewater from livestock operations so that it can be reused, while also recovering nutrients and generating biogas for on-farm energy.

"The crux of what we're doing is about water access," said Joe Parcell, professor of agricultural economics at K-State. "We're creating a process to polish and clean water up enough so that it can be reused in the livestock system. At the same time, we're also pulling in those carbon and nutrient elements to try and add value so it becomes more widely adopted."

On a recent episode of "Agriculture Today," a podcast produced by K-State Extension, Parcell explained that adding value to wastewater is key to making the technology feasible for producers.

"We're working on the ability to add value to wastewater," he said. "When producers see the economic and environmental benefits, they're more likely to adopt and integrate it into their operations."

The project aims to reduce freshwater use, manage waste more efficiently, and create new incentives for livestock producers to invest in sustainable technology.

"Part of the adoption equation is where you are at, and how far do you have to pump water now? What are the policies and incentives going to be?" Parcell said. "We've seen incentives to install these types of facilities in the past. What will they look like in the future?"

By capturing nutrients and reusing treated water, livestock operations could improve efficiency, reduce costs, and contribute to long-term aquifer protection. Parcell said that collaboration between researchers, producers, and policymakers will be critical to ensure that conservation practices are practical and economically sound. — **K-State Research and Extension**