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## INSIDE WLJ



**WATER WAR** – Arizona sues Saudi dairy for excessive groundwater pumping. **Page 4**

### A LOOK BACK IN HISTORY

"Winter is a critical time for the brood cow and heifer. Next spring's calf crop is being made now. It isn't good enough just to feed a ration that will keep a cow living and calving. There can be and often are many borderline deficiencies in the rations deficiencies that keep cows from producing and dropping the sturdy, healthy calves that make the biggest profit," wrote Otis McIntosh in the December 1953 WLJ issue.

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## 9th Circuit considers OR horse removals

### — Advocates call for halt

In early December, horse advocates testified before the 9th Circuit

Court to stop the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) from removing feral horses from a central Oregon forest. The Central Oregon Wild Horse

Coalition contends the agency's herd management plan to remove 78 of the estimated 135 horses from a territory in the Ochoco National

Forest violates the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act and National Environmental Policy Act.

The USFS said it is necessary to maintain adequate winter forage for the horses.

In a hearing on Dec. 2 set before the 9th Circuit Court in San Francisco, CA, USFS said in addition to maintaining adequate forage, one of the primary goals with removing horses was to restore riparian management areas.

"There are a lot of riparian areas in this territory that are unsatisfactory and in poor condition," said Robert Stockman on behalf of the government.

When determining a new herd management plan for horses in the Big Summit Territory, USFS found that forage availability in the forest during above-average winters was the most limiting factor for horses. Because of high snowfall covering much of the available forage, the small area that is still accessible can be overused. Therefore, USFS set an appropriate management level (AML) at a max of 57 horses.

The Central Oregon Wild Horse Coalition said the agency failed to



U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region

Oregon horse advocates claim the U.S. Forest Service set too low of management levels for horses in a national forest. Pictured here, horses from the Lookout Mountain Herd on the Ochoco National Forest in Oregon.

See OR HORSES on page 12

## Cheatgrass found to cost WY ag \$32M

### — Threatens ecosystem

A recent study from the University of Wyoming (UW) highlights the economic and ecological impact of invasive weeds on the state's agriculture.

Researchers Amy Nagler, John Ritten and Brian Mealor spearheaded the pilot study, quantifying the current and potential future damages caused by 10 key invasive weed species. Cheatgrass emerged as the most concerning species.

"This report represents an important step to better understanding the impacts of invasive weeds on Wyoming's agricultural economy and gives some insight into how bad it could be if such weeds were left unchecked," said Mealor, director of UW's Sheridan Research and Extension Center and the Institute for Managing Annual Grasses Invading Natural Ecosystems.

Cheatgrass has established itself as a pervasive threat across Wyoming's rangelands, covering over 15 million acres statewide. In 2021, the study found direct economic losses from cheatgrass are estimated at a 40% reduction in annual cash rent for rangeland with reported presence, increasing to 80% in areas with heavy canopy cover and posing a statewide annual loss of \$32.1 million.

Counties such as Campbell, Lincoln and Big Horn bear the highest losses, collectively exceeding \$11 million. Platte County has the most significant proportional loss, at 41% of its non-impacted agricultural value. The study warned that potential losses across suitable habitats could reach \$110 million annually, with Fremont County alone at risk of losing \$10.9 million.

"If considered in the broader

See CHEATGRASS on page 6

## CoBank report forecasts volatility for rural economy

### — Uncertainty ahead in 2025

The U.S. economy remains resilient, benefiting from solid growth, low unemployment and controlled inflation. However, according to an outlook report from CoBank's Knowledge Exchange, rural America faces greater uncertainty due to its vulnerability to federal policies on trade, immigration, climate and economic development.

"The environment we enter in 2025 hasn't fully defined itself yet, but many of the policies proposed by the incoming administration would likely have a negative impact on U.S. agriculture," said Rob Fox, director of CoBank's Knowledge Exchange. "Open access to export markets and labor availability are critically important for agricultural producers and processors. Depending on how policy plays out,

those two areas could be big challenges in 2025 and beyond."

CoBank said challenges such as high input costs and low commodity prices strain rural industries. While the outcomes of the 2024 elections create policy ambiguity, key risks for rural sectors include potential trade wars, labor shortages and uncertainty surrounding the farm bill renewal, which are critical for agriculture and rural community welfare.

### Economy

The report said most economists are projecting 2025 U.S. growth domestic product growth at around 2.5-3%, similar to current levels. These forecasts rely on assumptions rather than concrete policy details, including tariffs of 10-20% on China (and 10% on other countries), a modest but delayed fiscal

stimulus from tax cuts, and a slower rate of immigration rather than large-scale deportations proposed during the campaign.

However, the report noted that President-elect Donald Trump's supporters are not expecting "more of the same." A second Trump administration is likely to wield executive power more assertively, with higher tariffs and a crackdown on undocumented immigrants, the report continued. This would particularly impact industries like construction and agriculture that rely heavily on immigrant labor.

The report noted labor shortages caused by deportation efforts could severely impact agriculture's reliance on immigrant labor, especially in the dairy, meatpacking and produce sectors. While U.S. exporters have shifted focus to Mexico,

See BANK REPORT on page 7

## Market sees mixed signals ahead of year-end

The market ended the week on a mixed note, with futures slipping from technical pressures and steady cash prices.

Live cattle futures saw losses over the week, down about \$2 on the December contract to \$190.35 and down about \$4 to \$186.55 on the February contract.

"(Traders) won't likely find secure and stable confidence in the market's fundamentals this week as the week's lower dive is being technically driven," wrote ShayLe Stewart, DTN livestock analyst, in her midday Thursday comments.

The Cattle Report said Thursday that the Federal Reserve's recent decision to lower the fed funds rate by 0.25 points, along with signals of fewer cut rates next year, pressured futures lower despite continued strength in cash prices.

Cash trade through Thursday totaled about 32,000 head. Live steers sold from \$191-196, and dressed steers sold from \$303-307.

"This week, after four consecutive weeks of higher cash fed cattle prices and prices the highest in over four months, the momentum has slowed," wrote Cassie Fish, market analyst, in The Beef on Wednesday. "Cash prices this week

look to be about steady with last week, though most are still pricing cattle higher and less than 4k have traded."

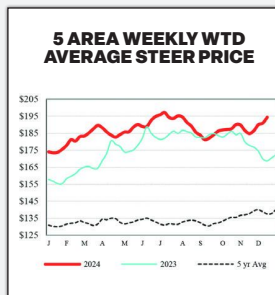
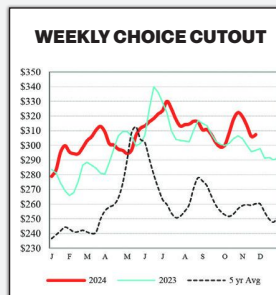
Cash trade through Dec. 15 totaled 77,128 head. Live steers averaged \$194.21, and dressed steers averaged \$303.94.

Slaughter through Thursday totaled about 485,000 head, about 4,000 head short of a week earlier. Total slaughter for a week earlier is projected at 609,000 head. Actual slaughter for the week ending Dec. 7 was 614,183 head. The average steer dressed weight was 952 lbs., 2 lbs. below the prior week.

Boxed beef prices traded mostly steady over the week and closed mixed.

See MARKETS on page 9

PERIODICAL: Time Sensitive Priority Handling



↑	↑	↓
LIVE STEERS	DRESSED STEERS	CME FEEDER
\$195.06	\$305.00	\$262.23
WEEK ENDING: 12-19-24		

## COMMENTS

### Joe, you forgot about Dixon

In late 2011, a clerk in the city of Dixon, IL, discovered a bank account controlled solely by the city's comptroller and treasurer that looked suspicious. After some investigation, the fraud was discovered, and the scheme was exposed.



IPSEN

Rather than confronting the controller of the account, then-Mayor James Burke notified the FBI, and an investigation quietly and quickly began. At that point, the house of cards immediately began to crumble. Dixon, known early on by most Americans as the childhood residence of Ronald Reagan, later became the victim of the nation's largest municipality fraud scheme in history, reaching nearly \$54 million.

Hired in 1983 as a comptroller and assuming duties as treasurer, Rita Crundwell began her tenure with the city of nearly 15,000 residents. For the first seven years, everything stayed above board until control of many of the city's finances became under her guidance.

Crundwell also had a passion for showing horses on a national scale. She built a breeding program that established her as one of the nation's best and most astute breeders in the country. As her program developed, so did her scheme with the city's finances, which helped fund her lavish lifestyle at the nation's largest horse shows.

When Crundwell began her scheme, the city had built a \$10 million dollar balance, but by the time the FBI had her in cuffs in the spring of 2012, the city was in debt nearly \$22 million.

RC Quarter Horses, the name of Crundwell's ranch, included 52 world champions that had garnered over 1,000 trophies, award saddles and memorabilia for her winnings. The assets of her operation were sold off in a complete dispersal sale in September of 2012 in which 29 of the world champions were listed in the sale catalog. With over 400 head of horses in a fully integrated breeding facility, the auction brought attention from across the globe. The year prior to her arrest, at the World Championships in Oklahoma City, she entered 19 horses and captured nine world titles.

At the time of the sale, her most famous stud, Good I Will Be, brought \$775,000 and two months later tied to win the senior western riding at the national Congress show and was third in the AQHA World Show at the same time. Unfortunately, he was later euthanized due to surgery complications the following fall.

Crundwell's actions have been highly documented, dissected and reported on. Her scheme wasn't lavish in terms of sophistication but was most definitely in terms of amount for a small city. Creating a bank account that appeared to be city-maintained, she hid funds through false invoices and wrote checks to "Treasurer," depositing the checks of various amounts. Starting small at first, Crundwell then began depositing larger amounts. In a single year, she defrauded the city over \$5 million dollars. The city's budget ranges from \$8-9 million per year at the time of the crimes.

Since her arrest, the city was able to recoup some of the value stolen, mostly through a settlement against the city's auditors and bank. The dispersal sale garnered \$9 million. She was sentenced to 19.5 years in prison. After serving eight and a half years, she petitioned to be released due to concerns for COVID-19 and was eventually moved to a halfway house, which is alleged at her brother's residence near where her horse operation functioned.

In what has become a trend of outgoing presidents, the Biden administration included Crundwell in the nation's largest sweeping act of clemency where her sentence was commuted. Now, residents of Dixon are outraged over the move, saying she hasn't paid her price while the city is still reeling from her actions. President Joe Biden pardoned 39 individuals and commuted nearly 1,500 individuals, the largest amount by any president in history. This is also on the heels of granting his own son of a full pardon, which gives off a terrible smell of deflection. Independent Sen. Bernie Sanders (VT) said of the pardon of Hunter Biden, "I think the precedent being set is kind of a dangerous one. It was a very wide open pardon which could, under different circumstances, lead to problems in terms of future presidents."

Residents of Dixon have signaled their frustration, including City Administrator Danny Langloss, who claimed, "We're the victims of this crime and there was no consideration of that by the federal government or the president."

The issue we run into is there was a unanimous gasp when the list of individuals was released. High-profile crimes with several multimillion-dollar fraud schemes and heavy sentences were among this group. It seems hypocritical to not want someone to have a second chance at a lawful life, but when individuals have served fractions of their sentences, and there are victims in these situations including an entire rural city, the uproar seems unified in this circumstance. — **LOGAN IPSEN**

## GUEST OPINION

Every cattle producer knows that pests are a challenge to our operation, but some pests are far more dangerous than others. One of the new threats to our herd comes from the New World screwworm, which is currently advancing through Central America into southern Mexico and could soon be at our border.

The New World screwworm is a fly that has a particularly gory way of harming our cattle. Female screwworm flies lay their eggs in open wounds or body orifices and when the larvae hatch, they burrow deep into the skin like a screw driving into wood. These maggots feed on cattle's tissue, causing larger wounds as they go.

Flies and their burrowing larvae cause extensive damage to cattle and infestations can spread rapidly. In 1966, we eradicated screwworms in the U.S. through sterile insect technique. The USDA bred sterile male NWS flies that mated with wild female screwworms and failed to produce offspring. Eventually, these flies died out in the U.S. and now they only exist in a handful of South American countries.

Unfortunately, these flesh-eating flies are now on the march north.

Since 2022, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has confirmed the presence of New World screwworms in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala. Just last month, screwworms were discovered in southern Mexico.

Once in Mexico, it is easy for screwworms to travel north and appear on our southern border. These flies can hitch a ride on people, livestock, or wild animals, not to mention the thousands of vehicles and cargo containers traveling through Mexico to the U.S.

## PROTECTING THE HERD FROM NEW WORLD SCREWWORM

We know how devastating it would be if New World screwworm returned to the U.S., which is why the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) is raising the alarm now. First, we are communicating with Mexico's cattle industry leaders so they can begin the process of screening for these flies and push for eradication efforts in their country. We are also supporting USDA's APHIS to bolster the use of sterile flies. Recently, we have been concerned that our existing sterile flies might not be getting the job done, and NCBA is pushing for more flies and better flies that will help us beat back these pests.

Although we haven't confirmed any New World screwworms in the U.S., we need you to be on high alert. New World screwworms have orange eyes, a metallic blue or green body, and three dark stripes across their backs. If you see any suspicious flies, please alert your local veterinarian, extension agent, or contact APHIS Veterinary Services.

Please also pay close attention to your cattle and watch for any open wounds or sores. If cattle exhibit irritated behavior, head shaking, you notice the smell of decaying flesh, or spot maggots in a wound, seek treatment from a veterinarian immediately. Proper wound treatment and prevention is the best way to protect your farm or ranch from a screwworm infestation. NCBA is also sharing the latest updates through our website. I encourage you to visit [www.ncba.org/NWS](http://www.ncba.org/NWS) for all the latest information on how to protect your operation.

NCBA is always on the clock to protect the U.S. cattle industry from threats like New World screwworm. Through your vigilance and NCBA's advocacy, we can protect the U.S. cattle herd. — **Kim Brackett, NCBA policy division chair**

## GUEST OPINION

## CHOOSE FARMERS OVER POLITICS

As a farmer and rancher, I've learned to count on the seasons. They don't wait. The crops don't hold off until it's convenient, and the livestock don't adjust their needs to fit my schedule. Yet here we are again, caught in a political freeze, waiting on Congress to pass a farm bill while our livelihoods hang in the balance.

Farm and ranch families operate in a unique business with obstacles beyond our control requiring a lot of faith. We have faith the weather will cooperate to let us plant, grow and harvest good crops. We have faith the commodity and livestock markets will stay strong. We have faith that when we experience catastrophic storms destroying our crops or an economic downturn, the next year will be better, and we can continue farming.

As farmers, we're eternal optimists. The reality, however, is we are in a dire situation as we navigate the most severe downturn in the farm economy since the 1980s.

This is due to skyrocketing inflation, high input prices, low commodity prices, uncontrollable weather, global unrest and other challenges. Three consecutive years facing hardship makes it difficult to secure financing, stay in business, and frankly, which is also most concerning, maintain mental health.

A December 2024 USDA report shows a 23% drop in net farm income since 2022. The most recent Census of Agriculture shows America lost 141,733 farms and 20 million acres in a five-year period. We are also experiencing the second consecutive year of a record agricultural trade deficit, which alone should be alarming.

While farmers face the most treacherous time in recent history, Congress has failed to prioritize passing a farm bill with additional investments in the farm safety net.

In a letter dated Sept. 20, from all 50 state farm bureaus and Puerto Rico Farm Bureau to U.S. House and Senate leadership, we clearly stated, "Another extension of the 2018 Farm Bill is insufficient and unacceptable as outdated farm safety net programs create uncertainty for agricultural producers." I am extremely disheartened to say it seems our letter was ignored, and Congress is punting on the farm bill a second time, once again failing the American farmer and rancher.

The farm bill isn't just a piece of legislation. It provides stability for rural communities, funding for conservation programs, research opportunities and ensures access to nutrition for millions of families.

For some, it's easy to see the farm bill as just another political debate. But for us in agriculture, it's personal. It's

the difference between keeping the family farm afloat or being forced to sell out. It's the resources we need to care for the land, to feed our neighbors and to survive the storms—both literal and figurative—that we know will come.

The fact is our nation's farmers are at the end of their rope, and we are fed up with Congress' excuses and inaction. But there is opportunity to change the dangerous path we are on as a country when it comes to national food security.

We continue to press for a new farm bill with critically needed investments in the farm safety net. But most importantly, at this juncture, is for Congress to pass the Farmer Assistance and Revenue Mitigation (FARM) Act of 2024, by Rep. Trent Kelly (R-MS-01), or a similar economic aid package, to provide desperately needed assistance to farmers as we continue waiting on Congress to act on a new farm bill.

If Congress fails to deliver economic assistance to farm families this year, the results for our country will be disastrous. It's not just farmers who lose when Congress fails to fulfill the needs of agriculture. Our entire economy suffers, and our nation's secure food supply is jeopardized. The impacts ripple out to every plate in America.

I hope consumers across the country realize what is at stake if Congress fails to act. An unprecedented number of farmers will not survive unless they have some assurance to take to their lenders to secure financing for the upcoming crop year.

Texas Farm Bureau appreciates the true agricultural champions in Texas' Congressional delegation who have co-sponsored the FARM Act and expressed the need for economic assistance to U.S. House and Senate leadership. The teamwork demonstrated by these leaders and other members of Congress is exactly what farm and ranch families need and deserve as agriculture suffers the consequences of inaction.

Anyone who views delivering economic assistance to farmers as a cost to our nation is severely misguided. This must be regarded as a necessary investment in the future of our food security. Failing to invest in agriculture is a threat to the backbone of our country and the nation's food and national security.

Let's choose farmers over politics and pass the FARM Act this year and prioritize passing a new farm bill in the new year. Because the seasons won't wait, and neither can we. — **Russell Boening, Texas Farm Bureau president**

<p><b>Letters to the editor:</b> Letters for publication must be no longer than 675 words, must refer to an article that has appeared within the month, and must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Addresses and phone numbers will not be published. Letters may be shortened for space requirements. Send a letter to the editor by emailing <a href="mailto:editorial@wlj.net">editorial@wlj.net</a> or mailing it to Western Livestock Journal, Attn: Editorial Dept., 6021 S Syracuse Way, Ste #103, Greenwood Village, CO 80111.</p>			
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<p><b>PRESIDENT</b></p> <p><b>LOGAN IPSEN</b> New Plymouth, ID 916-947-2392 <a href="mailto:logan@wlj.net">logan@wlj.net</a></p>	<p><b>ADVERTISING@WLJ.NET</b></p> <p><b>KIRBY BRINCEFIELD</b> Operations Manager 720-716-3363 <a href="mailto:kirby@wlj.net">kirby@wlj.net</a></p> <p><b>MIKE OLDCORN</b> Advertising Coordinator &amp; Graphic Design 720-370-9095 <a href="mailto:mike@wlj.net">mike@wlj.net</a></p> <p><b>TRISTAN MARTIN</b> Advertising Coordinator &amp; Graphic Design 720-372-1763 <a href="mailto:tristan@wlj.net">tristan@wlj.net</a></p>	<p><b>FIELD REPS</b></p> <p><b>DEVIN MURNIN</b> Director of Field Services Billings, MT • 406-696-1502 <a href="mailto:devin@wlj.net">devin@wlj.net</a></p> <p><b>JARED PATTERSON</b> Caldwell, ID 208-312-2386 <a href="mailto:jared@wlj.net">jared@wlj.net</a></p> <p><b>TY GROSHANS</b> Akron, CO 970-818-6016 <a href="mailto:ty@wlj.net">ty@wlj.net</a></p>	<p><b>CIRCULATION@WLJ.NET</b></p> <p><b>HANNAH JACKSON</b> Circulation Manager &amp; Copy Editor 720-370-8275 • <a href="mailto:hannah@wlj.net">hannah@wlj.net</a></p> <p><b>CLASSIFIED@WLJ.NET</b></p> <p><b>TOM WHITE</b> Classifieds Manager 720-370-7977 • <a href="mailto:tom@wlj.net">tom@wlj.net</a></p> <p><b>PUBLISHER EMERITUS</b></p> <p><b>PETE CROW</b> Publisher Emeritus • <a href="mailto:pete@wlj.net">pete@wlj.net</a></p>
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## THE VIEWPOINT

with Kirk Wilbur

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

Kirk Wilbur's path to becoming vice president of government affairs at the California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) was anything but conventional.

Kirk entered the agricultural policy field not through agriculture or ranching experience, but with a background in history and political science from Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA, and a law degree specializing in intellectual property from the McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento, CA. Kirk told *WLJ* that working for CCA was initially out of necessity.

"I graduated law school in 2012, which was a challenging job market," Kirk recalled. "At our commencement, the chief justice of the California Supreme Court (Tani Gorre Cantil-Sakauye) delivered a keynote that essentially told us many of us might not find jobs.

"I remember my dad texting me during the speech, asking, 'Am I misunderstanding her, or is she saying you're not going to have enough opportunities?'" Kirk joked.

After passing the bar exam, Kirk spent six months looking for a job and applied for the administrative assistant position at CCA.

"That decision set me on a path I hadn't anticipated," Kirk said.

Within nine months, Kirk transitioned into government affairs, eventually taking on his current role in 2019.

### Building relationships

Kirk's non-agricultural background initially seemed like a disadvantage. However, he quickly discovered that his perspective resonated with lawmakers and regulators, many of whom also lacked agricultural roots.

"Colleagues have pointed out that it might actually be a strength," Kirk said. "I bring a fresh perspective, looking at things differently than those who have spent their entire lives in agriculture. It also helps me connect with lawmakers and regulators who share my non-ag background, making agricultural issues more relatable and tangible for them."

Kirk's relationships also extend to lobbyists, where collaboration is key. Jason Bryant is the contract lobbyist for CCA, and Kirk said his under-

standing of legislators and their priorities plays a key role in shaping strategic lobbying efforts. Together, they collaborate with other agricultural groups, like the California Farm Bureau and the dairy industry, to present a united front on diverse issues.

Kirk expressed gratitude for the warm reception he's received from ranchers over the years.

"I'm pleased by the extent to which ranchers have embraced me," he shared.

Kirk has worked with California cattle producers for 11 years and said they have come to know him well during that time.

"At our conventions and elsewhere, they treat me like a friend, like family," he said.

### Challenges

Kirk said the issues facing California ranchers could be summed up by the organization's past president, Dr. Dave Daley: "fire, water and predators." However, Kirk added there is an emerging fourth issue, animal rights groups.

Fire resilience efforts, including grazing as a fire fuel reduction strategy, have gained traction thanks to research funded by the California Cattle Council—an organization created by a referendum of cattle producers occasioned by a bill CCA successfully sponsored in 2018.

Water rights remain a perennial concern, with legislative proposals threatening to upend established systems. "We (CCA) successfully mitigated several harmful bills last session, but these challenges resurface every year," Kirk said.

Meanwhile, predator management—primarily related to wolves and mountain lions—continues to strain ranchers. "Securing funding for wolf-livestock compensation programs has been one of the hardest fights of my career," he added.

Kirk also highlighted growing threats from animal rights groups. "Their tactics are becoming more sophisticated," he warned. "We've seen attempts to redefine animal handling as mistreatment through legislation and litigation. Staying vigilant is crucial."

Kirk emphasized that ranchers themselves are vital advocates for the industry. "Lawmakers hear from opponents of animal agriculture constantly," Kirk said. "Ranchers need to counterbalance that by sharing their stories and inviting legislators to see their operations firsthand."

Kirk reiterated the importance of ranchers educating policymakers through initiatives like ranch tours and targeted outreach, which have proven effective in shifting perspectives. "Seeing the ded-

ication and stewardship of ranchers in person leaves a lasting impression," he said. He also encourages ranchers to stay informed through resources like CCA's California Cattlemen Weekly e-newsletter and to actively engage with organizations such as CCA and the Farm Bureau, noting, "Every phone call or email to a legislator matters."

### Looking ahead

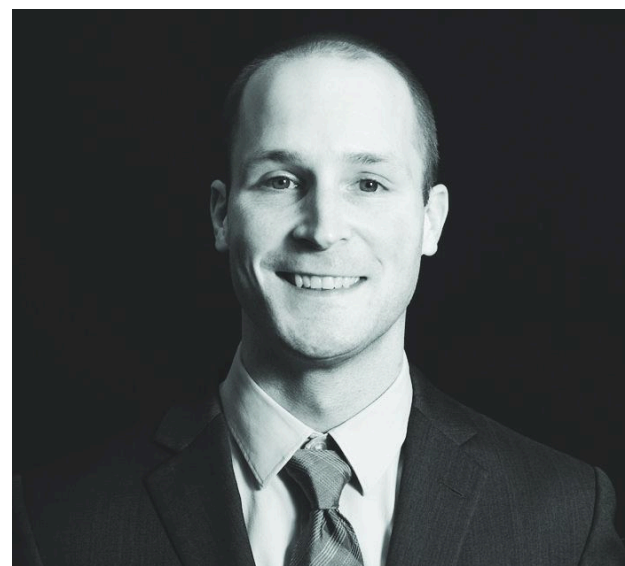
Reflecting on his nearly 12 years with CCA, Kirk noted the cyclical nature of policy battles.

"Whether it's antibiotics in the 1980s or wolf management today, these issues don't go away. They evolve," Kirk said.

As for the future, he anticipates ongoing debates around methane emissions, water rights and anti-agriculture legislation. But he remains optimistic. "Ranchers are resilient. By staying united and proactive, we can navigate these challenges and ensure a vibrant future for the industry," he said.

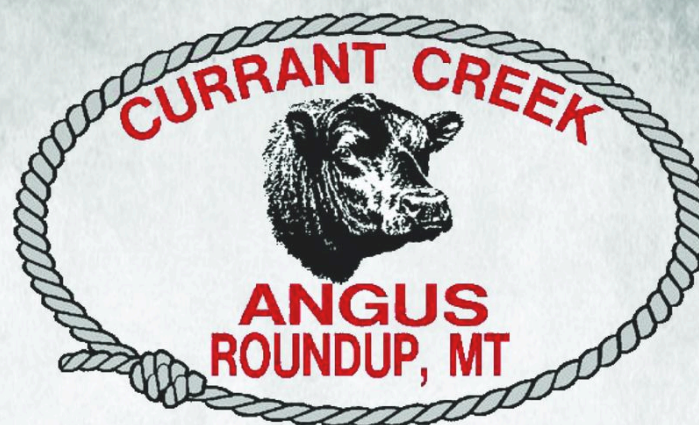
Kirk believes the key to effective advocacy lies in collaboration, education and persistence. "The work we do today will shape the landscape for generations of ranchers to come," he says.

With leaders like Kirk at the helm, the industry is well-positioned to face whatever comes next. — **Charles Wallace, WLJ contributing editor**



Kirk Wilbur

Courtesy photo



**Monday,  
JANUARY 20, 2025**

**New Location\***

**Musselshell County Fairgrounds**

**35 4-H Rd, Roundup, MT**

**Lunch at Noon • Sale at 1pm {MST}**

**Selling 50 Bulls**

**25 Bred Heifers • 25 Heifer Calves**

### HERD SIRES:



**WCF Payweight 5228**



**CAR Yeti 805**



**VAR Sure Cold 9475**



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Woodhill Blueprint E289-G595)**

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### YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

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

**Dec. 31** – Applications are now open for the 2025 Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association Convention & Expo internship program held April 8-13, 2025, in Fort Worth, TX. Details:

tskra.org/students.

**Jan. 15** – The 2025 Sandhills Ranch Internship Program is now accepting applications for hands-on experiences in ranching, livestock production and rangeland management. Details: www.sandhillstaskforce.org/ranch-internship.

**Rolling** – Upper Iowa Beef is now accepting applications for its 2025 summer internships across various fields. Details: JaceyBina@jibina@upperiowabeef.com or 563-566-2202.

# AZ sues Saudi dairy over groundwater

The state of Arizona sued a Saudi-owned company, alleging Fondomonte Arizona LLC violated state nuisance laws by “excessive” groundwater pumping at its dairy operation in western Arizona.

The dairy owned by Almarai Company reportedly has stopped pumping groundwater and has moved out of the state, according to the state’s Gov. Katie Hobbs (D).

Hobbs announced on March 7 that the state terminated the company’s leases and stopped the groundwater pumping in the Butler Valley. Hobbs said the company was no longer irrigating. The company caused a controversy when it came to light that it was allegedly growing forage and shipping it to back to Saudi Arabia to feed cows.

The lawsuit filed by Arizona Attorney General Kristin K. Mayes in Maricopa County Superior Court said the company’s groundwater pumping has caused a “significant decline” in groundwater levels in the Ranegras Plain Basin.

“Since 2014, Fondomonte has pumped massive amounts of groundwater to support its operations which consist primarily of growing alfalfa,” the lawsuit said.

“Fondomonte’s groundwater pumping has substantially accelerated the dewatering of the Ranegras Basin. As groundwater levels have declined, the land has subsided, threatening the water supply of residents and contributing to the decline in water quality. Fondomonte’s actions constitute a public nuisance and must be enjoined.”

Fondomonte’s parent company, Almarai Company, did not respond to DTN’s request for comment.

“Fondomonte’s unsustainable groundwater pumping has caused devastating consequences for the Ranegras Plain Basin, putting the health and future of the residents of La Paz County at risk,” Mayes said in a statement. “Arizona law is clear: no company has the right to endanger an entire community’s health and safety for its own gain.”

Although the company lost its leases from the state, Fondomonte applied for and received approval for a new well on its dairy last summer.

Currently, about 80% of the state does not regulate groundwater. Since 2014, the lawsuit alleges, Fondomonte pumped “extraordinary amounts” of groundwater including about 31,196 acre-feet in 2023 alone.

“This case is the result of a legislative failure to address a water crisis with catastrophic effects on the groundwater level in the Ranegras Basin,” the lawsuit said.

“The decline in the groundwater level has negatively impacted and will continue to negatively impact the Ranegras Basin’s water supply, water quality and land, leading to substantial adverse effects on the community’s health and safety. These catastrophic effects will be felt by the entire community within the Ranegras Basin for generations.”

The lawsuit said that without water in the basin residents would be “forced to abandon

their land and homes” and would be “placed in grave danger.”

The state said Fondomonte was equipped with pumps capable of pumping up to 4,000 gallons per minute. As a result, since 2014 a well less than a mile to the east of the operation went dry about five years ago, as did another well in 2017.

“Already-observed instances of land subsidence, water quality degradation and a rapidly dropping water table are only the beginning,” the lawsuit said.

“As Fondomonte continues to extract enormous amounts of groundwater the very survival of the Ranegras Basin and the community relying on the Ranegras Basin for groundwater is at risk. Without intervention, the Ranegras Basin’s community is vulnerable to continued and worsening groundwater shortages, water quality decline, subsiding land, damage to infrastructure and degraded equipment.” — **Todd Neeley, DTN environmental editor**

## LEGAL LEDGER

### USDA, Mexico working to resume imports

USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Mexico are working to resume live cattle imports from the country following the detection of New World screwworm in Mexico. The agency originally said it planned to allow imports back in ahead of the holidays, but reversed course and said it was unlikely to occur. APHIS suspended live cattle imports from Mexico on Nov. 22 following detection of the screwworm on the country’s southern border. The agency announced \$165 million in emergency funding to protect U.S. livestock from the screwworm and boost efforts to curb its spread. The funding will increase surveillance and animal health checkpoints, establish a barrier on the isthmus between the Gulf of Mexico and Pacific Ocean, eradicate the screwworm from affected areas and reestablish the biological barrier in Panama.

### Suckley’s bumblebee up for protection

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is proposing to list the Suckley’s cuckoo bumblebee under the Endangered Species Act. The species has a historical distribution across the West and into Canada. The last confirmed sighting in the U.S. was in Oregon in 2016, the agency said. “The viability of this bee is highly dependent on its host bumble bee species, many of which have declined historically, and are expected to continue to do so in the near term,” USFWS said. A public comment period is open until Feb. 18. To submit a comment, visit [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) and search for docket ID FWS-R7-ES-2024-0117.

### USDA to supply more EID tags

USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced they will order an additional 3 million electronic identification (EID) tags for ranchers. A federal mandate went into effect on Nov. 5, requiring certain classes of cattle and bison to have both visually and electronically readable tags when crossing state lines. “NCBA pushed for more EID tag funding for the implementation of the Animal Disease Traceability rule, and this one-time purchase will help alleviate the cost of these tags while enabling the fastest possible response to a foreign animal disease outbreak,” the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) said in its Beef Bulletin. Shortly before the rule’s implementation, a group of ranchers and cattle industry associations sued the USDA in federal court to block the rule, which is still pending.

### Enviros push to proceed with wolf releases

Environmental groups are pushing back against a petition filed by ranching groups in Colorado seeking to pause reintroduction efforts in the state. “Industry bullies are trying to undermine the will of voters who want a thriving wolf population in Colorado’s wild areas,” said Alli Henderson of the Center for Biological Diversity. In September, the Middle Park Stockgrowers Association and 20 other industry groups penned a letter to Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), asking the agency to refrain from releasing wolves in Middle Park and to not release the remaining wolves in the Copper Creek Pack in Colorado. In a 284-page petition dated Dec. 18, environmental groups urge the CPW Commission to reject the ranchers’ petition.

### Boar’s Head settles first wrongful death suit

Boar’s Head settled the first wrongful death lawsuit that resulted from a listeria outbreak linked to the company’s products, which resulted in at least 10 deaths and more than 60 illnesses nationwide. The case was brought on behalf of Gunter Morgenstein, who died from complications associated with listeria infection. Ron Simon & Associates, who represented the family, noted Morgenstein was a Holocaust survivor. The settlement details are confidential. “As a result of this terrible tragedy, and the efforts of Ron Simon and his team, Boar’s Head has committed itself to making their food processes safer for everyone,” said Peggy Morgenstein, wife of Gunter Morgenstein. “This is something Gunter would have wanted.”

### Input sought on public lands access

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is seeking public input on federal lands people would like to see new or improved public recreation access. “By enhancing and increasing public access on national wildlife refuges and national fish hatcheries, people can visit and enjoy quality outdoor recreation experiences in these remarkable places,” said Cynthia Martinez, chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The comment period is open until Jan. 16 and suggestions can be emailed to [PriorityList@fws.gov](mailto:PriorityList@fws.gov). For more details, visit [tinyurl.com/yc6yae4](https://tinyurl.com/yc6yae4).

### AR foreign ownership law halted

Arkansas officials have been temporarily halted from enforcing two laws that target businesses and property owned by Chinese nationals. A cryptocurrency mining company, Jones Eagle LLC, filed suit against the laws in November, claiming they violate the Fourteenth and Fifth Amendments to the Constitution by denying due process, discriminating based on national origin and depriving a person of just compensation for taking property. “The (temporary restraining order) and preliminary injunction will prevent further harm to our client while we prepare for a trial on the merits where we will get to fully present our case as to why the laws are unconstitutional and reflect legislative overreach,” the company’s attorney said.



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## STORY SHORTS

### CDC confirms severe H5N1 case

A patient in Louisiana has been hospitalized with a severe case of avian influenza A (H5N1), marking the first such illness in the U.S. Confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Dec. 13, the patient was exposed to sick and dead birds in backyard flocks. Genetic analysis revealed the virus belongs to the D1.1 genotype, linked to recent cases in wild birds, poultry and humans in North America. This differs from the B3.13 genotype found in dairy cows and some poultry outbreaks. According to MedPage Today, the patient, a person over 65 with underlying health conditions, remains in critical condition.

### CPW adopts mountain lion plan

The Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) Commission adopted the East Slope Mountain Lion Management Plan, which will guide efforts to maintain a stable mountain lion population east of the Continental Divide, excluding North Park. Unlike past smaller, localized management strategies, the plan adopts a broader landscape-scale approach informed by recent scientific research. CPW biologists reviewed studies from western states to evaluate populations and establish science-based harvest limits. The plan also outlines future research priorities and will inform license-setting, strategies and techniques to achieve population and harvest goals for Colorado's mountain lions.

### BLM advances Lava Ridge project

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approved a scaled-down version of the Lava Ridge Wind Project northeast of Twin Falls, ID. The approved plan reduces the project's scope, cutting the number of turbines from 400 to 241 and limiting their height to 660 feet. The project will span 992 acres within 38,535 acres of BLM-managed lands. The agency said it incorporated extensive public input to protect natural, cultural and socioeconomic resources. "The BLM spent hundreds of hours in the field and in conference rooms talking with Native American leaders, Japanese American community members, cooperating agencies, ranchers, and a broad range of people with deep ties to the Magic Valley, who all helped shape the proposal," said BLM Director Tracy Stone-Manning. The decision mitigates impacts on sage grouse, wildlife migration and the Minidoka National Historic Site, balancing renewable energy development with resource conservation.

### California Rangeland Trust celebrates milestone

The California Rangeland Trust celebrated a milestone in its mission to protect California's natural resources and working landscapes—permanently conserving over 400,000 acres of rangeland through partnerships with 95 ranching families across the state. This achievement was bolstered by the recent conservation of 1,500 acres on Willow Creek Ranch in Lassen County. "These rangeland stewards are the heart and soul of California's rural communities," said Michael Delbar, Rangeland Trust CEO. "But as the state and nation face ongoing threats of losing hundreds of thousands of acres of farm and ranch land to development, our work is far from over. We must continue to seek collaborative solutions to safeguard these lands and the livelihoods they support." The Willow Creek project was completed in collaboration with the California Wildlife Conservation Board and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

### Improving beef quality on ID reservation

The University of Idaho (UI) Fort Hall Extension, supported by USDA's Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program, is transforming beef cattle herds on the Fort Hall Reservation in Idaho. By introducing an annual bull grading program, Extension agent Danielle Gunn helps ranchers improve cattle genetics, reduce calving difficulties and boost herd profitability. Evaluations focus on bull health, fertility and genetic traits, such as calving ease, which has significantly decreased dystocia rates and calf losses. Gunn said years after implementation, bull quality has improved calf crops, increasing the animals' marketability and benefiting ranchers' bottom line. UI Extension will continue to provide guidelines to improve the overall herd genetics.

### Meat packers leaving NYC's historic district

New York City Mayor Eric Adams unveiled plans to transform 66,000 square feet in the Meatpacking District into Gansevoort Square, a 24/7 community and cultural hub. Located on Little West 12th Street, the site—formerly home to the Gansevoort Meat Market—will feature mixed-income housing, public spaces and opportunities to expand the Whitney Museum of American Art and the High Line. In August, the last remaining meat market in the district agreed to leave early so the city could redevelop the property. "The Meatpacking District is an iconic neighborhood, steeped with the city's social, economic, and cultural history," said New York City Executive Director for Housing Leila Bozorg. "Reimagining Gansevoort Square provides an exciting opportunity to build on that history, while introducing critical new housing, public open space, and expansion opportunities for important cultural institutions."

### BLM sets aside land for solar

The Bureau of Land Management is temporarily withdrawing 4,037 acres near Redmond, OR, from public land laws for two years to review the environmental impacts of the proposed Expedition Solar Project. Details of the withdrawn area can be found at [tinyurl.com/y49mkhbx](https://tinyurl.com/y49mkhbx). As of September 2024, the Biden administration has approved 41 renewable energy projects, surpassing its 2025 goal by permitting 29 gigawatts of clean energy to power over 12 million homes on public lands, including solar, geothermal and gen-tie projects.

## Should livestock farmers buy a surplus of hay?

Most of North Dakota received good moisture over the growing season, producing ample hay availability. As a result, the hay market has slowed and prices have dropped, indicating a buyer's market. This has some livestock growers speculating whether they should purchase hay now to create a carry-over surplus as a forage insurance policy if forage supplies are tight in 2025.

Considering moisture conditions across the state since July have been low and spring moisture conditions are unknown, North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension forage crops specialist James Rogers says they should buy, provided some caveats be met.

First, Rogers advises producers to determine whether the price is good by looking at their own cost per bale of production. Per bale production costs are determined by yield, input costs, machinery and labor. The higher the yield, the lower the cost per bale.

It is difficult to produce a typical 1,500-pound bale of hay at a cost less than \$40/bale, and depending on crop input costs and yield, per bale cost can go over \$100/bale. If the cost of a bale is equal to or less

than the cost of production, does that imply it's a good buy? Maybe, says Rogers, but bale weights and dry matter content are other key factors. It is best to purchase hay on a per ton dry matter basis. Assuming 100% dry matter, a 1,200-lb. bale at \$40/bale is \$0.033/lb. (\$66/ton) compared to a 1,500-lb. bale at \$40/bale is \$0.027/lb. (\$54/ton).

The nutrient content of the hay should be the number one consideration when purchasing hay.

"Ask for forage test results prior to purchasing hay," Rogers said. "Then you can compare one hay to another based on price per pound of crude protein and energy content reported as total digestible nutrient."

This year, due to good spring moisture, hay harvest was often delayed, increasing plant maturity and lowering nutrient content.

Reviewing the results from several hay forage tests submitted from the 2024 crop, Rogers sees that a portion of the 2024 hay crop has crude protein levels that dipped down into the 5-6% level and total digestible nutrients level below 55%. Hay of this type requires both crude protein

and energy supplementation which is a cost that should be added back to the cost of the hay. On the other hand, forage test results also reveal there is plenty of hay from the 2024 crop that is high in nutrient content and therefore requires no supplementation depending on the class of livestock it will be fed to. There is no other way to know this without having it tested.

The final consideration is storage and feeding waste. If hay is purchased now, what condition will it be in six months to a year from now when it is fed? Round bale dry matter loss increases linearly with spoilage depth. A round bale that is 6 feet in diameter with a 2-inch spoilage loss around the bale has lost 10% dry matter. At 4 inches this increases to 20% and at 6 inches 30%.

Loss due to spoilage is often unaccounted for. If a 1,500-lb. bale priced at \$0.027/lb. loses 20%, or 300 lbs., the financial loss is \$8.10 a bale. Round bales wick moisture from the ground leading to dry matter loss when stored outside; this is simply unavoidable.

The longer outside storage goes on, the higher the loss, which can reach 50% levels at

a year or longer. For long-term storage considerations, bales should have a good round shape and are dense with a good wrapping. Storage areas should be well-drained with minimal ground contact if possible. The ultimate long-term storage would be in a barn. If bales are maintained in good condition during storage, little change in nutrient content will occur.

Is it a good idea to purchase hay during a down hay market? Rogers says it very well can be if the following is true:

- A comparison can be made between on farm cost of hay production and purchase hay cost.

- The bale weights and dry matter are known and can be purchased by the ton rather than by the bale.

- It has a forage test so that it can be purchased based on cost per pound of crude protein and energy content.

- The forage test shows no anti-quality issues such as nitrates or heat bound protein.

- It can be stored long-term to minimize storage loss. It is always a good idea to have a surplus on hand as long as it is taken care of during storage.

- Feeding losses can be minimized. — NDSU Extension

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# Using sexed semen to navigate the genetic fork in the road

Some cattle are excelling at rapidly producing a high-quality end product; however, they are usually not the low-maintenance females that producers want to have in their cow herd. Similarly, the ideal bull for producing replacement females may not produce high-value feeder or carcass cattle. Rather than focusing our breeding goals on being heavily terminal or primarily maternal, sexed semen allows commercial herds of all sizes to “take both roads.”

Intentionally making quality replacement females while maximizing terminal value from non-replacement animals. Kenny Wells from ABS Global detailed innovations in this space during the Advancements in Producer Education breakout session. The session part of the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Symposium June 11, 2024, in Knoxville, TN.

Wells emphasized that competing industries have already capitalized on creating breeding programs which allow them to achieve maximum profitability. Pork producers leverage optimized genetic lines along with maternal and terminal heterosis to increase the product value of offspring. Dairy farmers have refined their maternal unit for milk production with female sexed semen while also making use of their former byproduct, dairy steers, by utilizing terminal beef genetics.

Sexed semen is not just a tool for dairy producers; beef operations can use it to meet maternal and terminal goals within the same calf crop. During his presentation, Wells discussed ways that ABS has deployed sexed semen in beef settings. One example is the 60/40 Sync Program, which builds on the idea of segmenting your cow herd so that your most fertile cows are bred to produce your replacement heifers, while the rest will produce a more terminal animal.

The 60/40 Sync Program works by synchronizing and fitting all females with an estrus detection aid, just as recommended for fixed-time AI protocols. Females that display estrus with fully activated patches, usually around 60%, are then timed-AI bred with female sexed semen from maternally designed bulls. The remaining females that have not displayed estrus, around 40%, are timed-AI bred with conventional semen from terminally focused bulls and all cows are exposed to a terminally oriented sire for clean-up. This program aims for the resulting calf crop to be made up of 35% maternally designed heifer calves to retain in the herd and 65% terminally focused animals, the majority of which are steers, to market.

Wells discussed how the strategic use of sexed semen could allow even very small producers to implement a structured crossbreeding pro-

gram by using different breeds of bull as maternal and terminal sires. Programs like the 60/40 Sync Program also have long-term reproduction benefits within herds. It allows the most fertile cows to have heifer calves born early in a calving season. This “head start” results in older replacement females that conceive earlier and have heavier calves throughout their productive lives. Wells was clear that even though this program may not maximize pregnancy rate to AI, it does create the opportunity to generate the “right” calf from every mating.

Wells’ presentation discussed a multi-year demonstration of the 60/40 program between ABS and the Bair Ranch in central Montana. The study assigned 250 cows to either a control group,

which followed a fixed-time AI protocol using conventional semen, or a test group, which implemented the 60/40 Program.

Over four years of data collection, the Bair Ranch averaged 25-30% of the calf crop being maternally designed heifers resulting from sexed semen—exceeding the ranch’s target of 23-24% to keep as replacements every year. Key takeaways included that female sexed semen resulted in an average of 91% heifer calves and that female sexed and overall pregnancy rates in the 60/40 test group were lower than those of conventional semen.

Their work also indicated that the 60/40 Program reduced the relative proportion of calves being born in the first interval when compared to

the control. However, more 60/40 calves were born in the second calving interval, suggesting that 60/40 sync likely doesn’t significantly impact the length of the calving season.

Wells was clear: For the 60/40 program to work, producers must choose the right genetic inputs for their respective programs. With sexed semen, producers can adjust areas of their herd that previously they could not. More selection pressure can be applied to terminal traits without throwing maternal quality out of balance, and maternal traits can be selected for without reducing terminal profitability. The implementation of crossbreeding also allows for significant increases in efficiency through heterosis, particularly for lowly heritable

maternal traits such as fertility and health.

Taken together, the 60/40 Sync Program provides a framework for a more efficient, sustainable and resilient breeding system. The concept laid out by Wells represents a flexible and adaptable strategy for producers to focus on making fertile, feed efficient and moderate replacement females while enhancing growth and carcass quality on their terminal calves.

To watch Well’s presentation, visit [youtu.be/mfLZqMThS4s](https://youtu.be/mfLZqMThS4s). For more information about this year’s Symposium and BIF, including additional presentations and award winners, visit [BIFSymposium.com](https://BIFSymposium.com). — **Garrett Ulmer, University of Tennessee beef cattle genomics graduate**

## Invasive weeds’ impact likely underestimated

### CHEATGRASS (from page 1)

context of Wyoming’s economy, these numbers are likely a very conservative estimate of impacts because we only accounted for losses due to grazing reductions,” the authors wrote.

The study assessed nine additional invasive species: hoary cress, leafy spurge, medusahead, Palmer amaranth, perennial pepperweed, Rus-

sian knapweed, Russian olive, ventenata and yellow starthistle. Each species poses distinct threats, ranging from reduced forage to direct crop competition.

The study found that ventenata had the second-highest impact on Wyoming rangelands, causing an estimated \$1 million in direct agricultural losses from reduced rangeland cash rents in 2021. Potential losses on suitable habitats—an average of present and impacted percentages—are highest for Russian knapweed and hoary cress, with projected statewide impacts of \$90 million and \$83 million, respectively, accounting for 35% and 32% of non-impacted agricultural value. Although other species show statewide losses below \$1 million annually, local effects, such as hoary cress’ \$323,000 impact in Big Horn County and leafy spurge’s \$199,000 impact in Crook County, are significant.

The highest economic losses in areas where the 10 weeds studied were Palmer amaranth and medusahead, with

reductions of 70% and 65% in agricultural value, respectively, followed by cheatgrass, Russian knapweed and ventenata at 40%. In heavily infested areas, where canopy cover exceeds 20%, the study found that Palmer amaranth and medusahead led with estimated losses of 100% and 95%, respectively, while cheatgrass, Russian knapweed, ventenata, hoary cress and perennial pepperweed each resulted in an 80% loss.

“Each year, invasive plants reduce the value of both forage and crop values across Wyoming. Beyond this, part of every dollar lost by an agricultural producer to weeds would otherwise be spent at the local feed store, restaurant or doctor’s office,” said Nagler, a research scientist in the UW Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics. “Estimating these economic losses due to weed infestation is an important tool for prioritizing limited funds for control.”

Beyond immediate economic losses, the authors said these infestations threaten

Wyoming’s broader ecosystem services. Cheatgrass, for example, diminishes biodiversity and accelerates wildfire cycles, impacting wildlife and native plant species. Similarly, leafy spurge and yellow starthistle encroach on grazing lands, diminishing their utility for livestock production.

While these figures primarily reflect reductions in grazing cash rent, a relatively small component of the overall economy, the authors noted they highlight the broader potential for unmeasured impacts on ecosystem goods and services such as recreation, wildfire mitigation and wildlife habitat.

The authors said the pilot study offers a foundational framework for future research and management strategies, highlighting the urgent need for statewide and localized action against invasive weeds. As Wyoming grapples with these ecological invaders, the findings provide a roadmap to mitigate their growing economic and environmental impacts. — **Charles Wallace, WLJ contributing editor**

## ASEAN customers study US red meat in Korea

Characterized by the growth of single-person households and growing demand for quality and convenience, the Korean food industry has invested heavily in new product development and has become an innovator in its uses of U.S. pork and beef. The U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) recently brought teams of retail and foodservice customers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region to Korea to study new products and processing techniques that may be applicable to their markets.

“These buyers already had interest in food trends such as Korean barbecue. Korea’s food culture has been popularized in the ASEAN region for the last decade through television, movies, social media and tourist travel,” said Sabrina Yin,

USMEF regional director of the ASEAN.

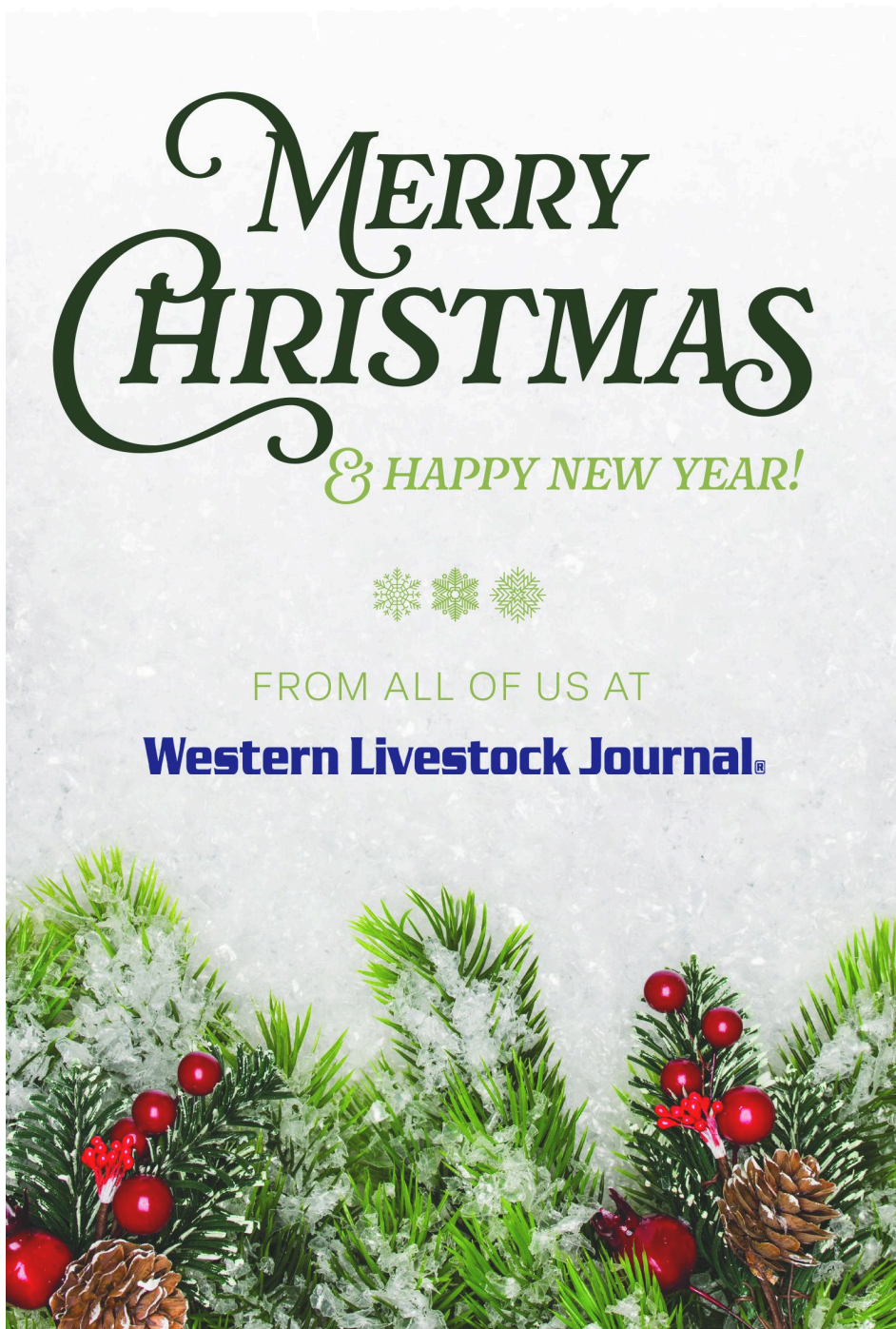
Through market briefings, a barbecue seminar, tours of a meal replacement manufacturer, a meat processing plant and visits to retail and foodservice outlets, USMEF provided an overview of recent market developments with a focus on how U.S. pork and beef is utilized in Korea.

“These buyers are current customers of U.S. red meat. But they need fresh product ideas for the cuts they purchase now and new product ideas using different cuts,” said Yin. “For example, for the U.S. beef cuts that are most common in the ASEAN such as short plate, top blade, short ribs and ribeye, the USMEF Korea office demonstrated new portioning ideas from Korea’s retail and foodservice sectors.”

For U.S. pork, Yin explained that thicker cuts of spareribs (inclusive of the brisket bone portion) and collar butt were demonstrated as a table-top grilling option.

“The teams also studied home meal and restaurant meal replacement products which are very popular in Korea. This market visit was an opportunity for our ASEAN customers to see how these sectors are developing in Korea so they could come up with new plans to meet convenience trends, add value to their product offerings and grow their businesses with U.S. pork and beef,” added Yin.

Funding support was provided by the Beef Checkoff Program, the National Pork Board and USDA’s Regional Agricultural Promotion Program. — **USMEF**





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# California Farm Bureau delegates approve policies

California Farm Bureau approved changes to the organization's policies recently during a House of Delegates session at the organization's 106th Annual Meeting in Monterey, CA.

"We are proud of the history of advocating for you, the farmers and ranchers, and that legacy is the foundation upon which we build," California Farm Bureau Chief Operating Officer Dan Durham said during the session.

"To remain relevant and effective," Durham said, "we must also have new ideas and embrace innovation. This balance between honoring our past and welcoming the future is crucial to our continued success."

Farm Bureau develops policy recommendations each year through its Commodity Advisory Committees, which are groups of

members that meet regularly throughout the year.

This year, delegates voted to approve proposed updates to policies related to wolf management, crop insurance, eminent domain and agricultural zoning.

"These proposals come directly from our members," said Chris Reardon, California Farm Bureau vice president of policy advocacy.

Farm Bureau updated some policies in response to new challenges faced this year by farmers and ranchers, and revised others to clarify its position or align it with new policies of the American Farm Bureau Federation.

With growing wolf populations in California impacting livestock operations, Farm Bureau updated its policy on wolf management.

Prior Farm Bureau policy advocated for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to develop a wolf management plan "that balances the needs of public safety, private property and the environment."

Farm Bureau's revised policy on wolf management contains more specific directives, including that CDFW fully fund a compensation program for ranchers that covers direct impacts as well as deterrence costs and "pay for presence" of wolves. In addition to direct attacks, the presence of wolves can cause weight loss, decreased fertility and other impacts on livestock.

In 2022, CDFW rolled out a wolf compensation pilot program with \$3 million in funding from the state legislature, but the funding ran out by the end of last

year.

Meanwhile, ranchers reported an increase in wolf conflicts as the number of wolves, which are protected by state and federal endangered species acts, increased throughout the past year.

State wildlife officials estimated last month there were at least 70 wolves in the Golden State, up from an estimated 44 last year. The reported numbers are "probably still lower" than the true number, Reardon said.

Farm Bureau's new policy also advocates for wolf tracking and "real-time communication with affected producers and local landowners."

"We need to go back to funding a full program that deals with the whole issue of wolves and the impacts on our members," Reardon said. "That's what this rec-

ommendation is about."

The new policy includes language stating that "local ordinances that affect agriculture should be designed to support the uses allowed on agricultural-zoned land."

The policy also urges local governments to "actively enforce against activities that are not compliant with allowable uses on agricultural-zoned land."

Delegates also approved updates to Farm Bureau's policy on eminent domain. Prior Farm Bureau policy opposed government agencies and utilities purchasing "excess lands with the intent of reselling them."

The updated policy maintains that stance while adding that in cases when excess land is purchased by the government and ends up being "in excess of stated need or purpose," the original landowner should have a "right of first refusal" to buy the land back for the price it was acquired for or its appraised value, whichever is less.

Should the original owner decline to buy it back, Farm Bureau's new policy states, the land "should be offered to any private entity or individual."

Farm Bureau also updated its crop insurance policy to align with new language from AFBE, which asserts that certain pest and disease impacts that affect California winegrapes should be included in federal crop insurance

coverage.

The Grape Advisory Committee noted that the updated policy recommends better insurance coverage for circumstances unique to California grape growers, "including losses due to pests and diseases that are not currently covered by crop insurance."

Farm Bureau delegates officially approved the addition of San Francisco Farm Bureau, which was established last year, to District 10, which also includes the Santa Cruz, Santa Clara and San Mateo county farm bureaus.

During the Annual Meeting, California Farm Bureau President Shannon Douglass announced plans for the Commodity Advisory Committees to travel "up and down the state" next year, instead of meeting in Sacramento, to facilitate more participation from members in the policy development process.

"Grassroots movements are the backbone of our advocacy work," Durham said during the House of Delegates session. "They ensure that our policies and initiatives are grounded in the real-world experiences and needs of our members."

Durheim added, "As we look to the future, let us remember that our strength lies in our unity and honoring our legacy and the power of new ideas." — **Caleb Hampton, Ag Alert assistant editor, California Farm Bureau Federation**

## Consumer demand for protein remains strong

### BANK REPORT (from page 1)

Trump's threat of 25% tariffs on Mexico and Canada—America's largest agricultural trade partners—adds further uncertainty. CoBank warns that a global trade war could devastate U.S. agriculture, as competitors like Brazil, Russia and Argentina are poised to meet growing global demand for food products.

"So hopefully, the economic consensus is right for a change," the report said. "Maybe Trump's campaign proposals were mostly for show and a negotiating tactic. If not, there's a good chance that we could see both rising prices and weaker employment in 2025."

### Animal proteins

According to CoBank, the livestock sector is experiencing a boom as feed costs, roughly half of livestock expenses, have dropped significantly from record highs over the past two years. This decline has spurred renewed interest in expanding animal protein production. However, the report said elevated labor, construction, equipment, land and financing costs continue to pose challenges, tempering growth expectations for the sector.

"As a result of a volatile market and poor pasture conditions, U.S. beef cow herd expansion is not expected to start until 2026 or 2027," CoBank said. "The shrinking herd will further

support higher feeder and fed cattle values, and it would not be surprising to see fed cattle values eclipse \$200/cwt in the coming year."

CoBank noted tight feeder supplies, low feed costs and strong beef demand have led to heavier carcass weights, rising nearly 30 pounds in 2024—well above the 5-lb. trendline of the past two decades. Low corn prices and limited cattle supplies mean longer feeding periods, while packer margins will face pressure in 2025 as retail and food service struggle to pass on higher costs.

Despite inflation, the report noted consumer demand for beef, chicken, pork and turkey remains strong, with USDA projecting stable or 2% growth in per capita consumption. Mexico remains vital for U.S. agriculture, serving as a top destination for pork and poultry and a source of cattle for U.S. feedlots.

### Grains, biofuels

CoBank said the grain and oilseed market faces challenges from a strong dollar, potential trade disruptions and increased competition from record South American crops. Economic challenges in key U.S. grain and oilseed export markets, like Mexico and China, raise concerns as their weakening currencies limit purchasing power.

Domestically, the report noted that biofuel demand

for corn and soybeans remains strong, with low prices supporting ethanol and soybean processing margins. However, weaker energy prices could slow the growth of ethanol, biodiesel and renewable diesel demand. Meanwhile, CoBank said livestock demand for feed grains remains robust, as profitable feeding margins encourage continued consumption.

USDA's Agricultural Projections report released in November anticipates shifts in planted acreage, with corn gaining ground over soybeans due to better market prospects.

### Farm supply

The CoBank report highlights the challenges farmers face amid a depressed commodity cycle. Tight margins prompt input reductions and careful evaluation of return on investment, primarily driven by yield output. Without new demand or significant weather events, commodity prices may struggle to cover input costs, adding stress to the agricultural economy.

The report noted that farmers are cutting machinery purchases and seeking savings on chemicals by shifting to generics, especially as key agrichemical patents expire.

The report had a bright spot, with CoBank stating real estate values remain firm, and the debt-to-asset ratio remains elevated.



"Farm real estate values

remain firm, although increases have moderated or turned slightly lower in certain regions," CoBank said. "Farmland collateral has helped soften the blow of higher operating lines needed to offset the continued high input cost environment. Farmers' debt-to-asset ratio remains strong, but is likely to continue slowly deteriorating heading into 2025." — **Charles Wallace, WLJ contributing editor**

# REDS RISING

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# MARKET NEWS

## MARKET SITUATION REPORT

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

MARKET AT A GLANCE	This Week: 12/19/2024	Week Ago	Year Ago
Choice Fed Steers	195.06 ▲	193.39	170.07
CME Feeder Index	262.23 ▼	263.07	219.80
Boxed Beef Average	320.69 ▲	315.24	291.13
Average Dressed Steers	305.00 ▲	301.48	270.09
Live Slaughter Weight*	1,429 ▲	1,428	1,386
Weekly Slaughter**	609,000 ▼	614,000	649,000
Weekly Beef Production***	527.2 ▼	531.5	546.6
Hide/Offal Value	11.37 ▼	11.42	11.77
Corn Price	4.41 ▲	4.38	4.73

\*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 13	6,930	308.40	256	361.79	1,310	317.57	2,227	309.53	828	277.13	2,309	262.53
December 6	7,575	308.71	259	360.97	1,237	316.94	2,147	308.62	694	276.49	3,238	261.60
November 29	6,621	302.00	230	359.19	1,202	314.70	2,068	300.57	726	275.28	2,394	260.53
November 22	7,253	302.58	253	356.13	1,347	312.88	2,165	304.23	889	275.18	2,599	261.42

Cutouts						FED BOXED BEEF					
DATE	CHOICE	SELECT	COW BEEF CUTOUT		50% LEAN	90% LEAN					
Dec 19	320.69	284.11	255.15		81.98	318.86					
Dec 18	314.84	285.55	253.52		73.34	315.99					
Dec 17	315.63	288.50	254.53		77.26	316.19					
Dec 16	317.37	289.57	255.84		83.38	320.45					
Dec 13	316.39	283.86	256.61		N/A	322.04					

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Live Cattle							
	12/13	12/16	12/17	12/18	12/19	High*	Low*
Dec.	19365	19203	19285	19253	19200	19975	16853
Feb.	19203	18998	19063	19028	18840	19270	16668
Apr.	19300	19175	19223	19205	19075	19353	17005
Jun.	18733	18680	18725	18700	18565	19490	18068

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Feeder Cattle							
	12/13	12/16	12/17	12/18	12/19	High*	Low*
Jan.	25765	25555	25765	25835	25633	26460	21920
Mar.	25768	25638	25843	25900	25650	27095	22268
Apr.	25853	25743	25953	26000	25740	26625	22460
May	25855	25758	25975	26000	25508	26105	24118

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

Selected Auctions										Feeder prices for steers & heifers reflect medium and large 1 cattle, unless otherwise noted; * Indicates medium and large 1-2	
DATE	MARKET	200-300 lb.	300-400 lb.	400-500 lb.	500-600 lb.	600-700 lb.	700-800 lb.	800 lb. -up	SLAUGHTER COWS	PAIRS	
NORTHWEST											
No report available Blackfoot, ID											
December 12	Burley, ID	722	371-385	351-412.50	346-368 317-329	287-309 289-309	264	249-251 221	219	100-127 126-135	
No report available Emmett, ID											
December 14	Eugene, OR	672		250-367* 278-307*	240-332* 240-350*	240-307* 220-264*	230-271* 200-240*			110-125 125-139 105-133 140-151	900-1,625 660-1,610
December 16	Madras, OR	1,921		365-405 325-355	370-420 300-352.50	319-359 270-316	280-318 246-265	235-281 209-245			
No report available Vale, OR											
December 18	Davenport, WA	363	305 225	290-380 225-312.50	225-344 235-344	267-295 207.50-277	190-250 155-266	220-243 143-221	185-224 125-200	82-157 103-123	1,300-2,300
December 12	Toppenish, WA	1,280		350* 315*	355* 315*	252.50-263* 245*	256.50-262.50*			119-125.50 141.50-147.50	
FARWEST											
December 12	Orland, CA	4,710			275-451 255-351	260-355 240-298	240-315 220-281	220-270 200-261	200-259 180-219	110-139 110-144	2,000-3,600 1,700-2,550
No report available Escalon, CA											
December 16	Famoso, CA	450		275-330 250-300	275-320 240-300	275-300 230-270	220-273 200-280	200-210	190-210 190-210	100-160 110-135	
No report available Galt, CA											
December 17	Turlock, CA	2,175		300-375 290-358	295-371 284-343	292-362.50 278-291	277-316.50 240-285	240-260.50 220-255	220-254 200-256.50	109-145 126-154	
No report available Salina, UT											
NORTH CENTRAL											
December 16	Iowa	16,521	310 300-410	355-465 305-405	327-417.50 275-378	271-365 262-327.50	260-322.50 239-287	231-286.25 229-265.75	210-267.75 172-238.25	100-170 107-172	
December 17	Miles City, MT	2,018		445-453 370-415	357-450 322-367.50	314-361 292-327	256-317.75 262-283	245-265 245.50	227-250.50	82-128.50 110-154	2,775 1,750-2,200
No report available Bassett, NE											
December 14	Ericson, NE	2,640									2,900 1,550-3,400
December 17	Imperial, NE	1,680		391-400	321-375 314-348	300-338 284-302	289-311 251-270	262.50-274.75 244.50	240 214-248		
No report available Kearney, NE											
December 13	Lexington, NE	3,886		369-375	340-377 320-347	318-360 291-325	294.25-313 270-288.50	271-277.50 252.75-254	245-261 232-253		
December 12	Ogallala, NE	6,123		431-480 380-402.50	390-425 351-391	330-390 290-331	285-354.50 266.50-292.50	273-287 240-258.50	238.50-258.50 222-231		
December 12	Valentine, NE	2,177									1,500-3,500
December 13	Herreid, SD	2,966		427.50-455 360-405	375-413 316-363	319.25-356 290-336.50	293-321 259-290	271-275.50 245-252.50	258-271.25		
December 18	Torrington, WY	3,268	425	450-475 400-430	385-445 345-380	328-366 307-334	292-497 277-289	270-280	232-255 229-232		
SOUTH CENTRAL											
December 12	Willcox, AZ	1,214	370.50-390 294-310	372-400 333.50-370	317.50-362.50 276-330	296-340 242.50-296	258.50-275 211.50-230			77-121 100-136	1,525-2,025 1,850-2,025
December 16	Colorado	18,143	425-462.50 375-415	402.50-470 332.50-405	340-425 295-367.50	290-367 250-320	261-340 237-280.50	230-294 229-258.50	226-264.50 195-228	37.50-165.50 103-167	1,510-3,550 750-3,125
No report available La Junta, CO											
December 16	Loma, CO	979		375-425 340-385	355-427 290-380	300-370 280-328	285-311 255-275	240-290 210-255	190-240 180-225	112-125 155-170	
December 18	Dodge City, KS	2,583	345-429	401-430 322.50-402.50	352.50-405 300-322	320-342.50 247-316	265-320 245-280	241-272 224-262.25	222-252.50 212.50-224	92-128 134-151	2,250-2,850 1,475-2,710
December 12	Pratt, KS	2,448	390 380-390	375-402.50 262.50-388	296-430 282.50-342	290-365 263-315	280-305 247-272	246.50-265 235-242	239-268.50 206-239	111-132 122-159.50	1,500-2,525
December 12	Salina, KS	4,317		370-402 340-385	340-412.50 313-355	314-372 269-316	277-310 247-279	264-288.50 236-256	233-267.50 230-243.50		
December 19	Clovis, NM	1,460	424-442 318	387-426 317-400	338-442 280-345	292-352 259-305	240-305 232-260	224-257 219-237	215-232		
December 18	El Reno, OK	7,621		400-435 310-360	335-405 290-370	312.50-362.50 264-320	267.50-330 237.50-275	258-290 230-253.50	229-264 233		
December 18	McAlester, OK	1,160		340-443 355-383	334-379 305-328	330-351 242-288	260-313 250-273	241-268 186-251	223-238 172-209	105-128 138-155	1,060-2,525 925-2,375
December 17	Oklahoma City, OK	7,342	475 381	389-471 334-403	343-407 278-338	292-400 262-305	250-338 246-287	247-286 234-253	239-269 216-239		
December 13	Cuero, TX	1,902	324-430 301-375	313-420 289-380	286-390 259-355	261-317 236-330	235-272 219-274	213-249 213-239		114-127 135-147	2,100 1,700-2,000
December 12	Dalhart, TX	3,092	411	397.50-454 342.50-385	332.50-427.50 278-337.50	271-360 270-310	260-324 234-263	251-260.50 225-238.50	252-262 207-218	84-122 140-158	
December 12	San Angelo, TX	1,245	405 345-370	374-424 352	340-355 292.50-327.50	298-332 260-290	257-312 240-242	242-260 231-260	251	95-124 136-153	2,000-2,450 2,050-2,100
December 12	Tulia, TX	1,330	365	335-370 335-347	335-370 280-313	280-305 240-290	249.50-282 210-254	230-249 210-217	246.50 210	95-115 110	1,850
EAST											
December 13	Alabama	11,017	395-450 315-380	352-410 295-345	315-370 270-330	282-340 238-287.50	240-291 223-252	230-270 198-228	235-242.50	100-130 115-165	1,400-3,050 1,000-2,950
December 16	Lexington, KY	1,283	335-355* 285-355*	337-409* 267.50-350*	287.50-402.50* 249-328*	283-328* 246-290*	251-295* 223-257.50*	240-263* 211-225*	196-237* 143-219*	106-128 116-160	1,950 1,300-2,025
December 16	Joplin, MO	7,325		395-410 337.50-395	355-405 290-331	297-370 264-295	272-313 251-279	250-280 238-246	235-261.50 207.50-231		
December 16	Tennessee	7,099	350-460 290-355	311-420 260-337.50	290-365 247.50-317	260-330 201-282	243-287 209-255	227-270 185-230	178-257 146-212	91.50-142 105-160	1,525-3,650 925-2,500
December 9	Virginia	3,404	293 270-290	290-372.50 235-295	235-355 225-276	240-317 205-267	237.50-287 209-239	230-253 180-236	154-246 180-223		

FED CATTLE TRADE			
	Head Count	Avg. Weight	Avg. Price
<b>WEEKLY WEIGHTED AVERAGES</b>			
Live FOB Steer	9,366	1,538	195.06
Live FOB Heifer	2,226	1,344	194.46
Dressed Del Steer	3,458	981	305.00
Dressed Del Heifer	553	850	305.00
<b>SAME PERIOD LAST WEEK</b>			
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
<b>SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR</b>			
Live FOB Steer	7,821	1,527	170.07
Live FOB Heifer	2,470	1,367	169.98
Dressed Del Steer	3,476	980	270.09
Dressed Del Heifer	1,169	889	268.76

NATIONAL WEEKLY FED BEEF SLAUGHTER VOLUME: DECEMBER 15, 2024		
	Domestic	Imported
Forward Contract	29,487	4,245
Formula	252,324	4,739
Negotiated Cash	80,448	206
Negotiated Grid	50,690	1,562
Packer Owned	11,615	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>424,564</b>	<b>10,752</b>

SLAUGHTER FORWARD CONTRACTS				FORWARD BEEF SALES			
Delivery Month		Neg. Sales 0					

# Strong feeder markets encouraging more selling

Oklahoma combined feeder auction prices spiked to record levels the week after Thanksgiving, especially for the lightweight calves and stockers.

The price of 500-pound, Med/Large, No. 1 steers was \$360.99/cwt, a new record price. Lightweight feeder prices dropped back the second week of December with the 500-lb. steers posting the third highest weekly price of the year of \$342.57/cwt, just slightly below the spring price peak of \$349.43/cwt in March. The bigger feeder cattle prices have continued to grind higher. The price of 800-lb. Med/Large, No. 1 steers in Oklahoma was \$260.58/cwt in mid-December, pennies higher than the previous record weekly price at the end of June.

The red-hot feeder cattle market in December has

prompted strong feeder cattle sales to end the year. At the end of August, year-to-date Oklahoma feeder cattle auction volumes were down over 102,000 head from last year, a decrease of 12.5% year over year. However, dry conditions prompted more feeder sales with year-over-year larger weekly volumes for nine consecutive weeks in September and October. By the beginning of November, year to date feeder auctions totals were down just over 50,000 head year over year, 5% less than one year earlier.

Auction volumes dropped ahead of Thanksgiving, dropping the year-to-date decrease back over 74,000 head in two weeks. However, large volumes in the last two weeks of November and the first half of December have brought the

year-to-date decrease down to just over 36,000 head, a scant 3.1% down from last year. The Oklahoma weekly feeder volume for the second week of December was 47,448 head, the largest weekly volume in several years. With just one week of auction sales remaining for the year, the Oklahoma combined feeder auction total for 2024 is 1.14 million head compared to 1.18 million head last year.

Although the total feeder auction volume has decreased relatively little this year compared to last, there is one change that could be significant. Figure 1 shows the reported heifer percentage of Oklahoma weekly feeder auction volume from 2022-24.

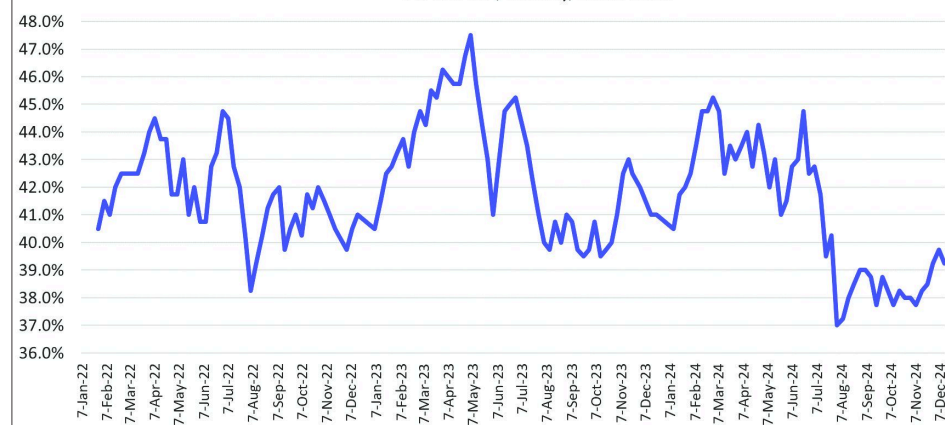
Since the middle of the year, the percentage of heifers in the weekly volume has decreased

significantly compared to the past two years. The average weekly heifer percentage since July has been 38.7% compared to 43.1% in the first half of the year. The average for the entire

year in 2023 was 42.6% and in 2022 was 41.7%. This may be an indication that Oklahoma producers are holding back a few heifers in late 2024. The data is not definitive but could

be an early indication of some heifer retention, at least in Oklahoma. — **Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension livestock marketing specialist**

Figure 1. Heifer Percent in Oklahoma Feeder Auctions  
4 week MA, Weekly, 2022-2024



## Feeders find losses on the board

### MARKETS (from page 1)

The Choice cutout lost less than a dollar to close at \$314.84, and the Select cutout gained about \$5 to close at \$285.55.

Cattle on Feed estimates for the report due Dec. 20 were on pace with last year for total numbers on feed. Placements were projected to be about 3% lower, and marketings were expected to be down 2%.

### Feeder cattle

Feeder cattle futures were lower, down about \$4 apiece to \$254.47 on the January contract and \$254.57 on the March contract.

The CME Feeder Cattle Index lost 84 cents to close at \$262.23.

Corn futures traded mostly steady, with the March contract down 3 cents to \$4.40 and the May contract down 8 cents to \$4.46.

"The implications to re-establishing normal flows

from Mexico is not a huge number but is enough to impact prices in a time of dwindling inventories," said the Cattle Report of the halted cattle imports from Mexico. "Mexico crosses around 100,000 head a month to the U.S., and we are at the tail end of the largest volume seasonally."

**Colorado:** Winter Livestock in La Junta sold 5,742 head on Tuesday. Compared to the previous auction, feeder steers under 600 lbs. sold \$4-9 higher, with instances of sharply higher. Feeder steers over 600 lbs. sold \$2-5 lower. Feeder heifers sold unevenly steady across all weight classes. Benchmark steers averaging 730 lbs. sold for \$254-273.50, averaging \$265.82.

**Missouri:** Joplin Regional Stockyards in Carthage sold 7,500 head on Monday. Compared to the previous sale, feeder steers sold from \$2 lower to \$8 higher. Feeder heifers sold steady to \$5 lower. Benchmark steers averaging 720 lbs. sold from \$258-280,

averaging \$272.05.

**Oklahoma:** Oklahoma National Stockyards in Oklahoma City sold 7,500 head on Monday. Compared to the last sale, feeder steers sold \$5-10 higher, and feeder heifers sold fully steady. Steer calves sold \$8-10 higher, and heifer calves sold steady. Benchmark steers averaging 776 lbs. sold from \$263-270, averaging \$268.59.

**South Dakota:** Sioux Falls Regional in Worthing sold 5,565 head on Monday. Compared to the previous auction, steer calves under 700 lbs. sold \$6-10 higher, 500-550 lbs. were \$15-20 higher and over 700 lbs. were steady to \$3 higher. Heifer calves sold steady to \$5 higher, with instances of \$10 higher on 450-500 lbs. Yearling feeder steers sold \$5-10 higher, while yearling heifers were not well compared. Benchmark steers averaging 713 lbs. sold for \$270-289, averaging \$284.78. — **Anna Miller, WLJ managing editor**

## October red meat exports above 2023

Exports of U.S. beef posted year-over-year increases in October, according to data released by USDA and compiled by the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF).

October beef exports totaled 105,269 metric tons (mt), up 1% from a year ago, while value increased 3% to \$860.4 million. Shipments to Mexico maintained their impressive 2024 performance in October, while exports rebounded to South Korea and China/Hong Kong and increased year-over-year in Central America, the Caribbean and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region. For January through October, beef export value was 4% above last year at

\$8.68 billion, despite a 2% decline in volume (1.066 million mt).

"It's encouraging to see an uptick in demand for U.S. beef in China and Korea, where the economic headwinds have been formidable this year," said USMEF President and CEO Dan Halstrom. "Our Western Hemisphere markets have been outstanding, and exports have also expanded to the ASEAN region. So if U.S. beef can regain momentum in these larger Asian destinations, this bodes well for 2025."

### Lamb exports steady

October exports of U.S. lamb totaled 185 mt, up 2%

from a year ago, though value fell about 8% to just over \$1 million. Exports to the Caribbean trended higher in October, led by strong demand in the Bahamas, but shipments were lower to Mexico and Canada.

January-October lamb exports were 12% above last year at 2,298 mt, while value climbed 14% to \$12.1 million.

A detailed summary of the January-October export results for U.S. beef, pork and lamb, including market-specific highlights, is available from the USMEF website, [usmef.org](http://usmef.org). — **USMEF**

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**WEDNESDAY WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

Butcher Cows.....	8:30am
Cow-Calf Pairs/Bred Cows.....	11:30am
Feeder Cattle.....	12pm

“

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12..... AI/Semen/Embryos	30..... Equipment For Sale
13..... Brands	31..... Equipment Wanted
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# 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. 14, 2025** – Cattle Country Video Sale, Torrington, WY  
**Jan. 18** – Western Elite Bull & Female Sale at NWSS, Denver, CO  
**Jan. 25** – Red Bluff Bull & Gelding Sale, Red Bluff, CA  
**Feb. 1** – Klamath Cattlemen's Association, Bull & Heifer Sale, Klamath Falls, OR  
**Feb. 4** – PAYS Blue Ribbon II Sale, Billings, MT  
**Feb. 15** – Colorado State University, Production Sale, Fort Collins, CO

### ANGUS

**Jan. 16, 2025** – Foundation Angus Sale at NWSS, Denver, CO  
**Jan. 18** – Redland Angus, Bull Sale, Buffalo, WY  
**Jan. 21** – Ken Haas Angus, Bull Sale, LeGrange, WY  
**Jan. 24** – Flesch Angus, Production Sale, Shelby, MT  
**Jan. 24** – McConnell Angus, Bull Sale, Oshkosh, NE  
**Jan. 24** – Ruggles Angus, Bull Sale, McCook, NE  
**Jan. 25** – Baldridge Performance Angus, Bull Sale, North Platte, NE  
**Jan. 25** – Little Goose Ranch, Production Sale, Buffalo, WY  
**Jan. 27** – Doug Booth Family Angus, Bull Sale, Torrington, WY  
**Feb. 1** – Ellingson Angus, Production Sale, St. Anthony, ND  
**Feb. 1** – Beartooth Angus, Bull Sale, Billings, MT  
**Feb. 2** – Frey Angus Ranch, Production Sale, Granville, ND  
**Feb. 5** – Huwa Cattle, Bull Sale, Roggen, CO  
**Feb. 6** – Bear Mountain Angus, Bull Sale, Palisade, NE  
**Feb. 7** – Burgess Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Homedale, ID  
**Feb. 7** – Poss Angus, Bull

Sale, Scotia, NE  
**Feb. 8** – Schaff Angus Valley, Bull Sale, St. Anthony, ND  
**Feb. 10** – Skyline Angus, Bull Sale, Stevensville, MT  
**Feb. 11** – South Mountain Cattle, Bull Sale, Caldwell, ID  
**Feb. 11** – Werning Cattle Co., Production Sale, Emery, SD  
**Feb. 12** – Meadow Acres Angus, Production Sale, Stanfield, OR  
**Feb. 12** – Jindra Angus, Production Sale, Clarkson, NE  
**Feb. 13** – Booth's Cherry Creek Angus, Bull Sale, Veteran, WY  
**Feb. 14** – Dutch Flat Angus & CX Ranch, Bull Sale, Lewiston, ID  
**Feb. 14** – Powder River Angus, Bull Sale, Buffalo, WY  
**Feb. 15** – Great Basin Bull Sale, Fallon, NV  
**Feb. 15** – Schiefelbein Farms, Bull Sale, Kimball, MN  
**Feb. 16** – Bruner Angus, Bull Sale, Drake, ND  
**Feb. 17** – Frank Cattle & Genetics, Bull Sale, Lodgepole, NE  
**Feb. 17** – Teixeira Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Terrebonne, OR  
**Feb. 17** – Weaver Ranch, Bull Sale, Fort Collins, CO  
**Feb. 18** – Double D Angus, Production Sale, Columbus, NE  
**Feb. 18** – Kessler Angus, Bull Sale, Milton-Freewater, OR  
**Feb. 19** – Hyline Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Bozeman, MT  
**Feb. 19** – Shaw Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Caldwell, ID  
**Feb. 20** – Krebs Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Gordon, NE  
**Feb. 20** – Van Dyke Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Manhattan, MT

### CHAROLAIS

**Feb. 12, 2025** – Broberg Charolais, Bull Sale, Tilden, NE  
**Feb. 18** – V-A-L Charolais Ranch, Bull Sale, Nyssa, OR  
**Feb. 20** – Small Livestock, Bull Sale, Winnemucca, NE

### GELBIEH

**Feb. 3, 2025** – Taubenheim Gelbvieh, Production Sale, Amherst, NE

### HEREFORD

**Jan. 20, 2025** – Van Newkirk

Herefords, Bull Sale, Oshkosh, NE  
**Jan. 28** – Churchill Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Manhattan, MT  
**Jan. 30** – Ridder Hereford Ranch, Bull Sale, Callaway, NE  
**Feb. 1** – Upstream Hereford Ranch, Production Sale, Taylor, NE  
**Feb. 5** – Durbin Creek Ranch, Bull Sale, Worland, WY  
**Feb. 6** – Stroh Hereford Ranch, Bull Sale, Killdeer, ND  
**Feb. 7** – Elkington Polled Hereford, Bull & Female Sale, Oshkosh, NE  
**Feb. 14** – Topp Herefords, Bull Sale, Grace City, ND  
**Feb. 21** – Rees Bros., Bull & Female Sale, Morgan, UT  
**Feb. 10** – BB Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Connell, WA  
**Feb. 11** – South Mountain Cattle, Bull Sale, Caldwell, ID  
**Feb. 14** – Bar KD & Lambert Ranch, Bull Sale, Alturas, CA  
**Feb. 14** – Topp Herefords, Bull Sale, Grace City, ND  
**Feb. 19** – Shaw Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Caldwell, ID

### RED ANGUS

**Feb. 7, 2025** – TJS Red Angus, Production Sale, Buffalo, WY  
**Feb. 17** – Frank Cattle & Genetics, Bull Sale, Lodgepole, NE  
**Feb. 19** – Shaw Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Caldwell, ID

### SIMANGUS

**Jan. 27, 2025** – APEX Cattle, Production Sale, Dannebrog, NE  
**Feb. 13** – Lassle Ranch Simmentals, Bull Sale, Glendive, ND  
**Feb. 17** – Bulls of the Big Sky, Bull Sale, Billings, MT

### SIMMENTAL

**Jan. 27, 2025** – APEX Cattle, Production Sale, Dannebrog, NE  
**Feb. 13** – Lassle Ranch Simmentals, Bull Sale, Glendive, ND  
**Feb. 17** – Bulls of the Big Sky, Bull Sale, Billings, MT

### COMMERCIAL

**Jan. 15, 2025** – Maternal Merit Bred Heifer Sale at NWSS, Denver, CO

### HORSE

**Jan. 21-25, 2025** – Red Bluff

Bull & Gelding Sale, Red Bluff, CA

### DOG

**Jan. 21-25, 2025** – Red Bluff

Stock Dog Sale, Red Bluff, CA



## SALE REPORTS

**SHIPWHEEL CATTLE CO. BULL SALE**  
**Dec. 11, Chinkook, MT**  
**108 Angus 2-year-old bulls** ..... \$10,319  
**35 Commercial bred heifers** ..... 3,175  
**Auctioneer: Kyle Shobe**  
**TOPS:** Shipwheel Grand Canyon 3656, 4/22/2023 by SAV Grand Canyon 0969; to 33 Cattle Co., Killdeer, ND, \$29,000. Shipwheel Right Time 3671, 4/23/2023 by SRight Time 7861; to Black Pine Farms, Huron, MT, \$29,000. Shipwheel Right Time 3508, 4/17/2023 by SRight Time 7861; to Scott Knutson, Helena, MT, \$28,000. Shipwheel Renown 3529, 3/21/2023 by Ideal 0026 Rito of REN; to Stepper Ranch, Culbertson, MT, \$23,000. Shipwheel Renown 3644, 5/18/2023 by Ideal 0026 Rito of REN; to Thompson Livestock, Whitlash, MT, \$19,000. Shipwheel Grand Canyon 3631, 4/21/2023 by SAV Grand Canyon 0969; to Evers Ranch, Geraldine, MT, \$19,000. — **DEVIN MURNIN**

**GAUGLER ANGUS RANCH BULL SALE**

**Dec. 14, Judith Gap, MT**  
**10 Angus 2-year-old bulls** ..... \$9,650  
**76 Angus bull calves** ..... 8,490  
**20 Commercial bred cows** ..... 4,000  
**40 Commercial bred heifers** ..... 3,650  
**40 Commercial open heifers** ..... 2,050  
**Auctioneer: Kyle Shobe**  
**TOPS—2-Year-old bull:** RD Trendsetter L144, 3/26/2023 by Redland Trendsetter 1869; to Kale Gardiner, Arlee, MT, \$15,500. **Bull calves:** GA Law M166, 3/26/2024 by Blair's External Law; to Bill Clark, Roff, OK, \$19,000. GA Law M191, 3/27/2024 by Blair's External Law; to Thompson Angus Ranch, Mountain City, NV, \$14,500. GA 4RealM164, 3/26/2024 by Duff-JC 4Real16250; to Mundt Angus, Belt, MT, \$14,250. GA Rito of REN M355, 4/3/2024 by Ideal 0026 Rito of Ren; to Nash Land & Livestock, Harlowton, MT, \$13,250. — **DEVIN MURNIN**

**CROSS DIAMOND CATTLE CO. PRODUCTION SALE**  
**Dec. 9, Bertrand, NE**

**231 Red Angus bulls** ..... \$11,121  
**50 Commercial bred 3-year-olds** ..... 3,465  
**396 Commercial bred heifers** ..... 3,352  
**Auctioneers: Charly Cummings and Cody Lowderman**  
**TOPS:** Pope Chisum L006, 4/21/2023 by Brown Top Tier G242; to Cross Diamond Cattle Co., Bertrand, NE, \$33,000. CRS Diamnd Influence 3132, 4/25/2023 by Axtell Dominator 6010; to Rough Diamond Ranch, Elwood, NE, \$31,000. CRS Diamnd Level Best 3358, 5/19/2023 by REDSSS Big Shot 703G; to Rough Diamond Ranch, Elwood, NE, \$30,000. Pope Conagher L020, 4/23/2023 by Brown Top Tier G242; to Loonan Red Angus, Corning, IA, \$28,000. CRS Diamnd Level Best 3081, 4/23/2023 by REDSSS Big Shot 703G; to Right On Cattle Co., Bertrand, NE, \$27,000. CRS Diamnd Gladiator 3130, 4/25/2023 by CRS Diamnd Spartacus 809; to Ravenscroft Red Angus, Nenzel, NE, \$23,500. — **TY GROSHANS**

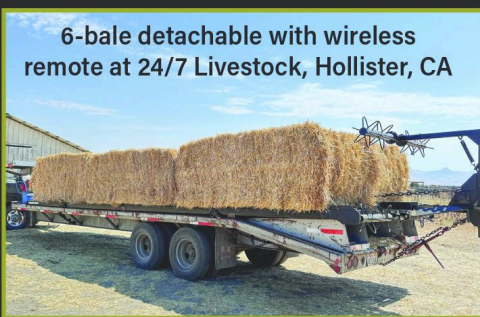
## CLASSIFIED CORRAL

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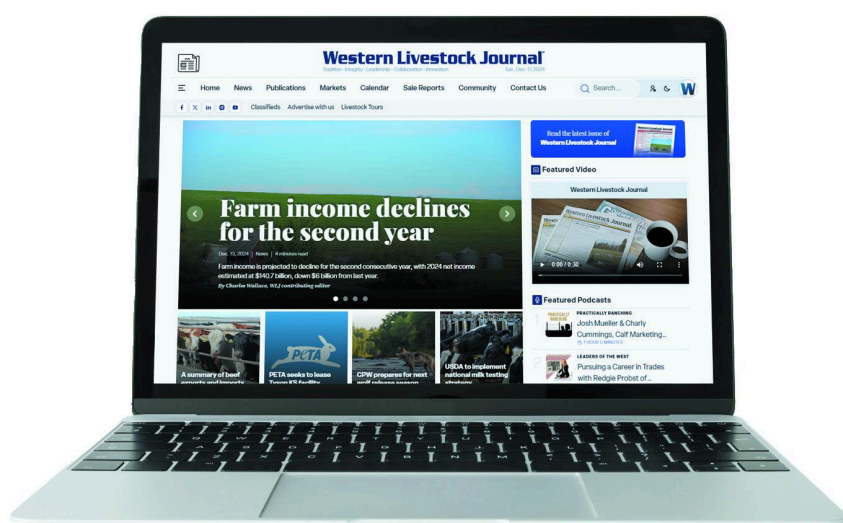
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# Summit Carbon Solutions receives MN, ND permits

Summit Carbon Solutions cleared two more regulatory hurdles as governing boards in Minnesota and North Dakota approved important permits for the construction of segments of a 2,500-mile carbon pipeline across five states.

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) granted a routing permit for a 28-mile segment of the pipeline in Otter Tail and Wilkin counties, that would run from an ethanol plant owned by Green Plains in Fergus Falls, MN, to the North Dakota border.

With the incoming Trump administration and a Republi-

can Congress, concerns have been raised about the future of various tax incentives for carbon capture and sequestration, including the Section 45Q tax credit that has been in place since 2008.

Prior to the vote, Commissioner John Tuma asked for assurances from Summit that if the project falls through, landowners are not left with uncovered pipeline trenches on their properties.

"If the federal tax credits go away but you can tell me otherwise, that the project doesn't become viable and Summit no longer exists," Tuma said. "There's a possibility that some

tax credits could be disappearing here, even within a matter of months. If they go away, does this project?"

A Summit representative told the commission that the 45Q tax credit is an integral part of the business operation and project plans, and if it is eliminated it would lead the company to reassess.

As part of the permit, Summit is required to have insurance as well as a decommissioning plan if the project falls through. In addition, Summit said the 28-mile segment would not require the digging of large trenches for what

would be a 4.5-inch pipe about 54 inches underground.

Summit estimates construction on the pipeline segment in the two counties could begin in 2026. The company has not used eminent domain to acquire land along the 28-mile segment and said it still is negotiating with seven landowners in Minnesota for the remaining segments of ground.

The Industrial Commission of North Dakota also granted carbon storage permits for three sequestration sites in the southwest part of the state.

Those permits allow Summit to permanently store more

than 350 metric tons of carbon dioxide from 57 ethanol plants in geological formations more than one mile underground.

The company said the approvals will allow the project to stay on track.

"With today's approval of both the sequestration permits and the Minnesota pipeline permit, along with recent major milestones including the North Dakota pipeline permit and the Iowa permit, Summit Carbon Solutions is making significant progress toward project completion," Summit said in a press release.

"With the South Dakota

PUC application also submitted Summit Carbon Solutions is on track to begin construction in early 2026 and operations in 2027."

In November, the Iowa Supreme Court sided with the company in appeal by a Hardin County landowner who has been fighting against allowing survey access to their property. In addition, on Nov. 5, voters in South Dakota rejected a referendum to keep a law in place that would have dictated how counties regulate carbon pipelines. — **Todd Neeley, DTN environmental editor**

## HOOVES & HORNS

BY A.W. ERWIN



"Yew found us! We wuz gittin'worried,... we've been operatin'unner assumed names cuz of all that notty-or-nice hooley."

## Judge: USFS isn't obligated to ask for data

### OR HORSES (from page 1)

reasonably consider all available data when making its decision.

"By committing itself to recalculating this AML, the agency is committing itself to following the law," said Sasha Petrova, the horse advocates' attorney.

The horse advocacy group argued that the agency only considered winters with above-average snowfall, and also estimated only 19% of the 5,000-acre territory in question was available as winter range.

The plaintiffs said USFS failed to consider their data that showed a map of areas where horses were seen over three winters. USFS said the

data was unusable because it didn't specify which sightings were during winters with less snowfall. Additionally, the data was not originally submitted during the comment period; the plaintiffs' comments noted that they had the data, and for the agency to "let them know" if they needed it.

Judge Salvador Mendoza Jr. disagreed with Petrova that it was the agency's duty to "follow up" with the group to make sure they were using the most accurate data.

"If the statute says they're supposed to consider all available information, which they did—they didn't consider the information you had because you never gave it to them—so they technically are consistent with the statute," Mendoza

said.

The Central Oregon Wild Horse Coalition filed suit last summer and appealed a lower court's ruling in 2023, which found USFS did not violate any laws by planning to reduce the horse population to less than half.

The 9th Circuit Court did not indicate when it would rule on the case.

### Background

The Ochoco Herd lives on about 25,000 acres of the Big Summit Wild Horse Territory within the Ochoco National Forest and is the only feral horse population in the Pacific Northwest managed entirely by USFS, according to the agency. USFS is unaware

of the herd's origins, although there are early accounts in the 1920s of ranchers turning horses loose to ensure a supply of quality horses.

The Ochoco National Forest approved a new herd management plan for the horses in 2021, which prescribed a range of 47-57 horses as an AML. The plan approved gathers and the use of fertility control to manage excess levels.

The horse advocacy group and two individuals filed suit after USFS released its environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact, claiming the agency failed to take a "hard look" at the environmental impacts of the updated plan. — **Anna Miller, WLJ managing editor**

# RED BLUFF

## Bull & Gelding Sale

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## 2025 SCHEDULE

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Range-Ready Bull Show

**Wed. January 22:**  
Halter Bull Show

**Thurs. January 23:**  
Gelding Sift and Dry Work  
WVM Feeder/  
Replacement Female Sale

**Fri. January 24:**  
Stock Dogs - Final Work  
47th Annual Stock Dog Sale  
63rd Annual Gelding Sale

**Sat. January 25:**  
84th Annual  
Red Bluff Bull Sale  
Red Bluff Bucking Battle

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