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INSIDE WLJ

CALIFORNIA WOLVES — New studies show California gray wolves preying on cattle more than any other animal. Page 3

BEEF DEMAND — OSU Extension analyzes the complexities of beef demand. Page 9

A LOOK BACK IN HISTORY

"Proponents of livestock cloning got a shot in the arm recently with the news that the natural-birth calf of a cloned cow is still alive, and the cow continues to impress with her mothering ability. BCC MS Cigar 126 Clone, the first bovine clone born in California, calved unassisted, under range conditions in northern California, according to Dr. Cynthia A. Daley, associate professor of animal biotechnology at the College of Agriculture, California State University, Chico," read the July 7, 2003, *WLJ* article.

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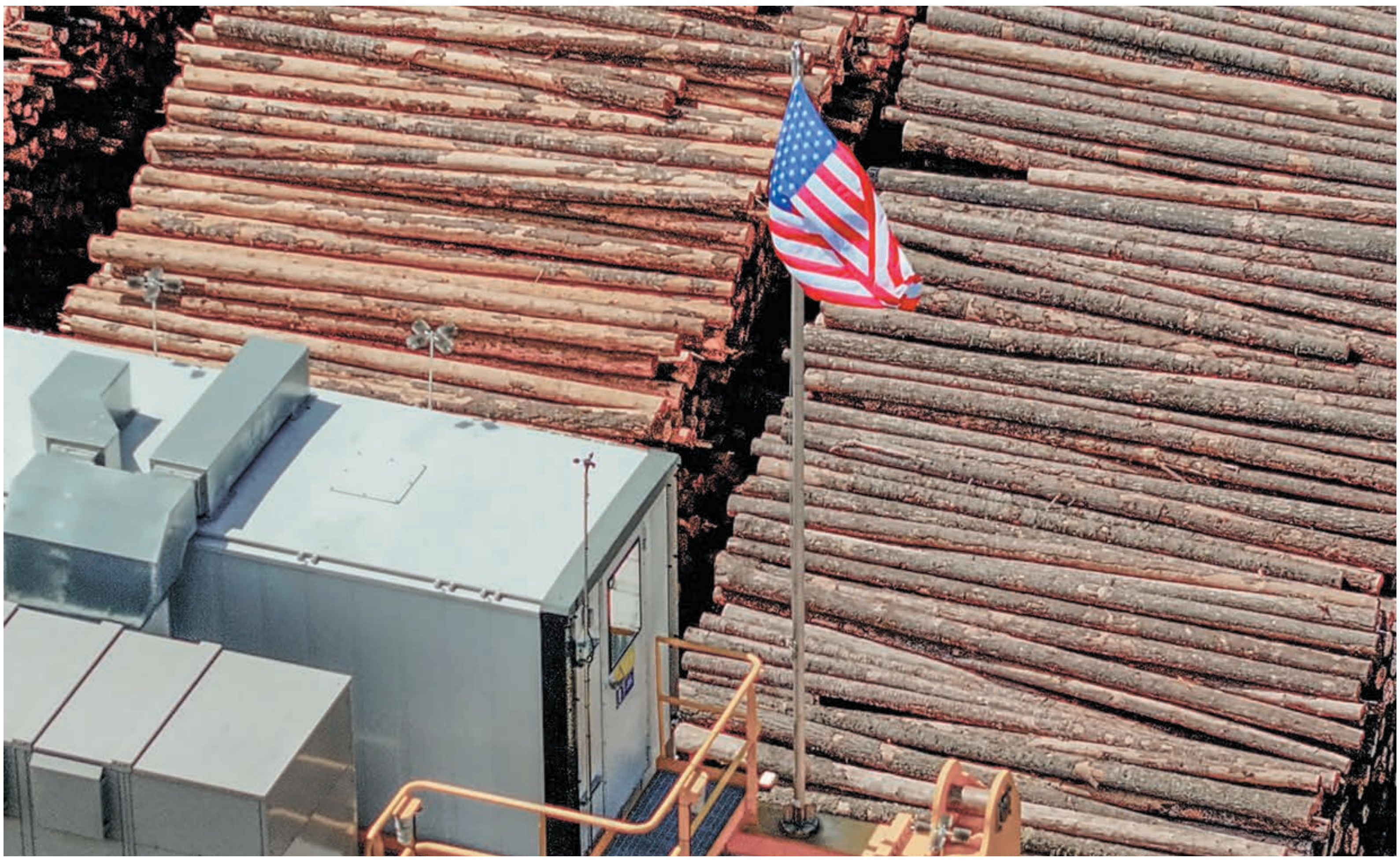


Preston Keres/USDA

A lawsuit about the use of the Congressional Review Act could have long-term implications for Bureau of Land Management public land management decisions. Pictured here, Freres Engineered Wood in Oregon's Santiam Canyon.

Congressional Review Act lawsuit challenges BLM land plans

— Targets Oregon timber plan

An environmental group's lawsuit challenging a western Oregon timber sale could become a test case with implications reaching far beyond a single logging project.

Cascadia Wildlands filed suit June 24 in the U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon, alleging the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) unlawfully approved the Aloha Trout Forest Management Project because it relied on a resource management plan that never legally took effect under the Congressional Review Act (CRA).

The lawsuit argues the agency's 2016 Northwestern and Coastal Oregon Resource Management Plan was never submitted to Congress as required under the CRA and therefore cannot serve as the legal basis for timber harvest or other land management decisions.

Challenge centers on RMPs

The case stems from Congress' decision in 2025 to use the CRA to overturn several BLM resource management plans (RMPs), a move that many organizations warned could create uncertainty for public land management nationwide.

The complaint argues that while federal agencies historically did not consider RMPs to be "rules" under the CRA, Congress effectively changed that interpretation when it relied on Government Accountability Office opinions before passing resolutions disapproving of several BLM land-use plans in 2025. The lawsuit contends

See CRA LAWSUIT on page 7

CoBank: Beef-on-dairy boom drains replacements

— Herd recovery expected in 2027-28

The beef-on-dairy boom has transformed dairy farm economics, creating one of the strongest revenue opportunities producers have seen in years. But according to a new CoBank report, the strategy has also come at a cost: the smallest inventory of dairy replacements in nearly 50 years.

CoBank projects that dairy replacement numbers will remain historically tight through 2026, then begin a gradual recovery in 2027 and 2028 as dairy producers shift more breeding decisions toward gender-sorted dairy semen.

See REPLACEMENTS on page 11

American Prairie granted injunction in state suit

— Bison grazing on state lands in question

In late June, a Montana district court judge granted American Prairie a preliminary injunction against a Montana Land Board directive to halt approval of new or pending bison grazing requests.

The case is separate from the organization's ongoing battle with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) regarding federal grazing permits. This latest development focuses on whether the Montana Land Board followed proper procedures before pausing bison grazing requests on state trust lands.

Lewis and Clark District Court Judge Christopher Abbott on June 26 granted the environmental group's preliminary injunction. The move will temporarily

See INJUCTION on page 5

Cattle market searches for balance

Cattle futures traded lower over the week as wholesale beef prices continued to soften and cash trade remained light through Thursday.

Live cattle futures traded lower over the week. The August contract lost about $6 to close at $235.25, and the October contract lost about $5 to close at $231.60.

Cash trade through Thursday totaled about 19,000 head. Live steers sold for $248, and dressed steers sold from $385-393.

"Some light cash cattle trade has begun to develop as a handful of cattle have traded at $248 in Texas; but not enough have sold to say any sort of trend has been solidified just yet," ShayLe Stewart, DTN market analyst, wrote in her Thursday midday comments.

Cash trade for the week ending July 5 totaled 67,108 head. Live steers averaged $255.09, and dressed steers averaged $402.52.

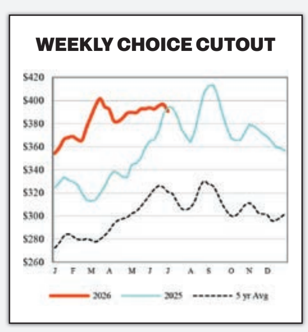
Slaughter through Thursday totaled about 430,000 head, compared to 433,000 head a week earlier. Total slaughter for a week earlier is estimated at 458,000 head due to the holiday-shortened week. Actual slaughter for the week ending June 27 was 535,705 head. The average steer dressed weight was 961 lbs., down 7 lbs. from a week earlier.

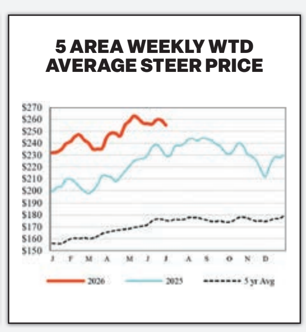
"The processors faced stiff headwinds for the entire month of June and recovered some ground this week as cash markets declined," the Cattle Report wrote on Thursday. "The backdrop for fed supplies will remain tight and cattle owners will hold some leverage but the sustainability for processors to lose $300/head is not a viable proposition."

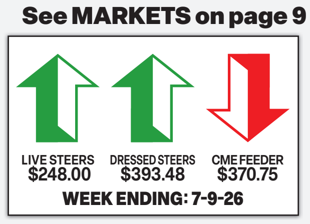
Boxed beef prices continue to trend lower. The Choice cutout lost about $9 to close at $380.81, and the Select cutout lost about $6 to close at $363.49.

"Boxed beef prices are

See MARKETS on page 9







COMMENTS

Protein is cool again


PATTERSON

I'll admit, I never thought I'd see the day when protein became trendy.

Not long ago, it seemed like every trip through the grocery store came with a new villain. First, it was fat. Then, carbs. Then, sugar. Somewhere along the way, red meat got thrown into the conversation too. Every few years there was a new diet, a new miracle food and a new reason to rethink what was on your dinner plate.

Now? Protein is everywhere.

Walk through any grocery store and you'll see "high protein" plastered across cereal boxes, yogurt, ice cream, chips, coffee drinks, pancakes and snacks I never even knew needed protein. If someone could figure out how to put a "20 grams of protein" sticker on a bottle of ketchup, they'd probably sell more of it.

Social media is full of people comparing protein grams like they're trading baseball cards. Doctors and dietitians are talking more about preserving muscle, especially for people using GLP-1 medications to lose weight. Fitness influencers have made protein the star of every meal, and suddenly everyone is reading nutrition labels looking for one number before anything else.

Protein is having a moment.

And if you're in the cattle business, you almost have to laugh.

Because while everyone else was chasing the newest nutrition trend, beef producers never really changed what they were doing. We didn't suddenly wake up one morning and decide protein was important. We've been raising one of the world's best sources of complete protein for generations.

Turns out, Grandma's roast beef was ahead of the trend.

Here's the part that really makes me chuckle. People will think nothing of spending three or four dollars on a protein bar that's about the size of a wallet. They'll gladly buy protein shakes, powders, cookies or chips because the package promises a few extra grams of protein.

Meanwhile, a pound of ground beef starts looking like one of the better values in the meat case.

Who would've guessed we'd live in a world where a protein bar costs almost as much as lunch?

As beef producers, we're sitting in a pretty unique position. For the first time in a long time, the conversation has shifted toward exactly what we've been producing all along.

Consumers aren't just asking, "How many calories?" More and more, they're asking, "How much protein am I getting?" That's a question our industry has been answering for generations.

For years, it felt like we were always on the defensive. Every headline seemed to tell people what they shouldn't eat. But today, nutrition experts, physicians and fitness coaches all seem to agree on at least one thing—protein matters.

And we've been producing one of the best sources of it all along.

Now, that doesn't mean we should get comfortable. It means we're in the driver's seat.

When you're in the driver's seat, you don't let someone else tell your story.

Most consumers have never fixed a fence, checked heifers every two hours during a snowstorm or hauled water. They don't see the early mornings, the late nights or the years spent improving genetics one calf crop at a time. They just see a package in the meat case.

They just see a package of ground beef.

It's up to us to remind them there's a whole lot more behind that package than a price per pound.

Every steak, roast or hamburger started with someone who cared enough to get up before daylight, check water in subzero temperatures, pull calves in the middle of the night and keep showing up even when the markets, the weather or life itself weren't cooperating.

That story matters.

Because while protein may be the latest buzzword, beef isn't just another protein product. It isn't something dreamed up in a food lab or wrapped in flashy packaging to convince people it's healthy. It's real food raised by real families who have spent generations producing something nutritious, wholesome and incredibly versatile.

Maybe that's the biggest irony of all.

The world is spending billions of dollars trying to create the next great protein snack while ranchers have quietly been producing one of the original high-protein foods for decades.

So, let's enjoy this. — **JARED PATTERSON**

GUEST OPINION

IT'S TIME FOR THE SENATE TO ADVANCE THE FARM BILL

When senators return to Washington, they'll have an opportunity to make meaningful progress on one of agriculture's top priorities. With the Senate Agriculture Committee's farm bill discussion draft now released, it's time to build on that momentum and move a new farm bill forward.

For years, farmers and ranchers across the country have urged Congress to deliver a new, modernized farm bill that reflects today's agricultural economy. The House has already done its work by passing a bipartisan farm bill. Now the Senate has taken an important step forward as well. Farmers appreciate Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman John Boozman's (R-AR) work to move this process forward.

It's been nearly a decade since Congress last passed a farm bill, making a new one long overdue. While farmers continue producing the food, fiber and fuel American families depend on, they are working with higher costs, tighter margins and greater uncertainty than anyone envisioned when the current farm bill became law in 2018.

That's why we are encouraged to see the Senate proposal address many of agriculture's most pressing needs. The bill includes improved access to credit, expanded investments in specialty crops, increased transparency in fertilizer markets, and enhanced research and conservation programs.

Congress has an opportunity to act at a time when farmers need it most. Farm families are facing the worst economic environment we've seen in a generation. Expenses are rising while commodity prices continue to fall. Across agriculture, margins have tightened to the point where many farms are struggling to break even. USDA projects farm income this year to be roughly $48 billion below the highs we saw in 2022.

Meanwhile, production costs are expected to reach record-high levels in 2027. Every day without a new, modernized farm bill leaves farmers making long-term decisions under policies that no longer reflect reality on the farm. Farm families need certainty so they can plan for the future, secure financing and continue investing in their farms.

Food security is national security. A strong farm bill helps ensure America continues producing a safe, nutritious food supply while strengthening rural communities and supporting the families who make that possible.

While the Senate Agriculture Committee's proposal represents meaningful progress, there is still more work ahead. The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) will continue working with lawmakers to address several priorities that were not included in the current farm bill discussion draft. Farmers need economic assistance to help weather the current downturn in the farm economy.

We also need a solution that protects interstate commerce from a patchwork of conflicting state laws. Congress should also finally approve year-round sales of E15 to create new market opportunities for farmers while expanding access to affordable fuel for consumers. Farmers also appreciate the recent White House supplemental request that calls on Congress to deliver market relief and year-round E15 to support the farm economy.

None of these priorities should have to wait. We urge the Senate to quickly pass a bipartisan farm bill. And with that same urgency, Congress must work together to address the remaining priorities farmers are counting on.

Farmers and ranchers have waited long enough. It's time to finish the job and deliver the certainty America's farm families need. — **Zippy Duvall, AFBF president**

GUEST OPINION

WHY CONSUMERS STILL CHOOSE BEEF

As we continue into summer grilling season, one question keeps standing out, even to me as a beef producer: How is beef demand still so high even as prices at the meat case continue climbing and consumers continue tightening their budgets?

It's no secret that today's cattle cycle has created challenges throughout the beef supply chain. The U.S. cattle herd remains at historically low levels, supplies are tight and consumers are feeling pressure at the grocery store. According to the USDA Economic Research Service, wholesale beef prices were 19.7% higher in March 2026 than in March 2025 and are predicted to increase by 7.8% in 2026.

Yet consumers continue choosing beef. In fact, despite those higher prices, consumers increased both their spending and purchase volume during that same period. Over the four weeks ending April 19, beef generated $3.56 billion in retail dollar sales, up 7.5% year over year and outpacing competing proteins like chicken and pork.

That says a great deal about what consumers continue valuing most in their food purchases today. People genuinely enjoy the eating experience beef provides. Whether it's a quick weeknight dinner or a meal shared during a special occasion, beef remains a product people look forward to eating. At the end of the day, consumers continue to remind us that taste still matters.

However, they're also placing greater emphasis on protein and nutrition than in the past. In fact, the Beef Checkoff-funded Meat Demand Monitor found that nutrition and health have grown in relative importance in protein purchasing decisions since 2020, reflecting what researchers describe as a broader "pro-protein" mindset among consumers. And beef continues delivering the nourishment and satisfaction many families are actively seeking.

At the same time, beef offers versatility that fits naturally into modern lifestyles. Many households are becoming more strategic about the cuts and products they buy, leaning into options like ground beef and other meal solutions that help stretch budgets while still delivering the flavor, protein and quality they want. That flexibility matters because families are managing busy schedules, work and activities while still trying to put satisfying meals on the table.

As a wife and mom balancing work, family and a cattle operation, I appreciate how naturally beef fits into all kinds of meals and occasions. On busy weeknights, it might mean tacos, burgers or pasta dishes that come together quickly while still providing the nutrition and flexibility our family needs. And while practicality matters, I also believe consumers continue prioritizing beef because of the role it plays in bringing people together.

More Checkoff-funded research shows that grilling remains strongly connected to beef in consumers' minds, especially during summer gatherings and celebrations. As a producer, I know raising cattle requires an enormous amount of care, commitment and responsibility, so I take real pride in knowing that beef becomes an essential part of all those memorable occasions.

Some of my own favorite summer memories are of kids running around outside while people gather near the grill talking and laughing. Moments like those are a reminder that beef continues playing an important role in family traditions and shared experiences, whether it's a family cookout, backyard barbecue, graduation party, lake weekend or a quick dinner on the patio.

Beef's emotional connection with consumers is also why it remains so important for our industry to continue listening and learning. Consumer expectations are constantly evolving and knowing what families value most about beef helps producers and industry leaders continue meeting consumers where they are.

Research funded through the Beef Checkoff helps our industry better understand those ever-changing consumer priorities. That includes their growing emphasis on protein, how they're adapting their purchases during tighter economic times or which of their experiences and occasions continue driving beef demand. That research also informs programs like Beef. It's What's For Dinner., making it possible to share recipes and meal ideas aimed at helping families make the most of more affordable beef cuts while still enjoying the flavor, versatility and nutrition they want.

Taste. Nutrition. Special occasions. They all help explain why beef demand remains so resilient, even in today's economic environment. Consumers may be adapting how they purchase beef, but they continue making room for it because it delivers what they still value deeply: flavor, nourishment and meaningful time together.

As a producer, that's incredibly encouraging as we continue into the summer months. Even as families face financial pressure and tougher purchasing decisions, they continue choosing beef. To me, that fact reinforces how important it is for our industry to keep earning consumer trust long before challenging market conditions arrive. The work we do to understand consumers, respond to changing priorities and deliver a product families genuinely value is what helps sustain beef demand, even during challenging economic times. — **Kalena Bruce, Missouri cattle producer and Cattlemen's Beef Board secretary-treasurer**

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(303) 722-7600 • Fax (303) 722-0155

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EDITORIAL@WLJ.NET	CIRCULATION@WLJ.NET	ADVERTISING@WLJ.NET	FIELD REPS
ANNA MILLER FORTOZO *Managing Editor* *(720) 372-2353 • anna@wlj.net* **CHARLES WALLACE** *Contributing Editor* *(303) 722-7600 • charles@wlj.net* ***Mailing Address:*** *P.O. BOX 370930 Denver, CO 80237-0930*	**HANNAH JACKSON** *Circulation Manager & Copy Editor* *(720) 370-8275 • hannah@wlj.net* **CLASSIFIED@WLJ.NET** **TOM WHITE** *Classifieds Manager* *(720) 370-7977 • tom@wlj.net*	**KIRBY BRINCEFIELD** *Senior Operations Manager* *(720) 716-3363* *kirby@wlj.net* **MIKE OLDCORN** *Advertising Coordinator & Graphic Design* *(720) 370-9095* *mike@wlj.net* **TRISTAN MARTIN** *Advertising Coordinator & Graphic Design* *(720) 372-1763* *tristan@wlj.net*	**JARED PATTERSON** *Caldwell, ID* *(208) 312-2386* *jared@wlj.net* **TY GROSHANS** *Akron, CO* *(970) 818-6016* *ty@wlj.net* **KEVIN MURNIN** *Worden, MT* *(406) 853-4638* *kevin@wlj.net*

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Study: California wolves feed heavily on cattle

Two new studies examining gray wolves in California paint a complex picture of life on California's ranching landscapes: wolves eat cattle more than anything else and the presence of the predators causes significant stress among livestock.

In the first study, University of California (UC), Davis, researchers found wolves from the Lassen and Harvey packs in northeastern California were primarily eating cattle. They collected scat samples during the summer months of 2022 and 2023 and found 72% of wolf scat contained cattle DNA. The research was published in PLOS One.

"Whether it's through scavenging or whether it's through depredation, it's a huge component of the wolves' diet," said lead author Tina Saitone, a professor of Cooperative Extension in the UC Davis Agricultural and Resource Economics Department. "Their conservation success is because of livestock producers in the state."

Cattle appeared as the most frequently occurring food item during both summers of the study, present in 86% of samples in 2022 and 55% in 2023. While all 2022 samples were from the Lassen Pack, the 2023 samples included eight from the newly established Harvey Pack.

Wolves are a state and federally recognized endangered species. The first confirmed wolf entered California in 2011, following a nearly 100-year absence. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife estimates the state is now home to nine wolf packs.

Few natural prey

Wolves in California live in landscapes shaped by people. They have fewer wild ungulate prey options than wolves in other parts of North America. Mule deer are their only significant wild food source, but populations have dropped sharply since the 1970s.

Saitone said the scarcity of wild prey may be one reason wolves are eating cattle instead. Researchers found mule deer in just 45% of the scat samples, significantly less common than cattle.

Keeping wolves away from cattle is difficult on many of these working landscapes.

"Conservatively, we're talking about a million acres in our study area and 10,000 cow-calf pairs," said Saitone. "It's not as simple as putting up an electric fence on a two-acre pasture or putting cattle in the barn at night."

Researchers also examined how living among wolves affects cattle. Their findings suggest the costs of wolf reintroduction extend well beyond animals lost to predation.

A second study, published in Ecology and Evolution, measured cortisol levels in tail hair samples collected from beef cattle grazing rangelands in northeastern California—some herds sharing territory with wolf packs, others in areas without wolves. Cortisol, often called the stress hormone, accumulates in hair over time, making it a reliable indicator of chronic stress rather than a momentary response to fright.

Cattle herds living among wolves had cortisol levels 58% higher than those in control herds—a significant physiological difference. This marks one of the first times hair cortisol analysis has been used to study how the reintroduction of predators reshapes livestock physiology in the field.

"What this really confirms is that death or depredation is not the only impact here," said Saitone. "Living among wolves for cattle is a chronically stressful experience, and that could ultimately have production-related impacts in both the short and the long term."

Saitone said the findings are just a starting point. Researchers next want to understand whether elevated stress levels translate into lower conception rates. It's a concern long raised by ranchers that has not yet been established through direct biological evidence. When breeding cows fail to conceive, it can directly affect a rancher's bottom line.

"That's their whole purpose," said Saitone. "These are mother cows that are supposed to be generating calves as a marketable product."

Other authors of the PLOS One study include Kenneth W. Tate and Benjamin J. Sacks of UC Davis. Funding came from the Russell L. Rustici Rangeland and Cattle Research Endowment and California Cattle Council.

Christina Nord was corresponding author of the Ecology and Evolution study. Other authors include Alexander Pritchard, Rosemary A. Blersch, Brenda McCowan, Jessica J. Vandeleest and Kenneth W. Tate. Funding came from Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education and the Russell L. Rustici Rangeland and Cattle Research Endowment. **— UC Agriculture and Natural Resources**

May beef export value above year-ago levels

May beef exports were below last year's volume but edged higher in value, according to data released by USDA and compiled by the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF).

May beef exports totaled 91,925 metric tons (mt), down 5% from a year ago. But value increased 2% to $818.1 million, bolstered by value increases in Taiwan, Japan, the ASEAN region, Central and South America and Egypt.

Export value per head of fed slaughter soared to $468 in May, the highest in nearly four years. Despite China's mid-May renewal of expired U.S. beef plant registrations, May exports to China remained minimal as technical obstacles are yet to be resolved.

For January through May, beef exports were 10% below last year's pace at 457,063 mt, while value fell 5% to $3.95 billion. But when excluding China from these results, January-May beef exports were down less than 1% in volume and were 6% higher in value.

"Despite significant headwinds, we are seeing some encouraging trends on the beef side," said USMEF President and CEO Dan Halstrom. "Many facilities remain suspended and unable to export to China, while exporters overall remain reluctant to ship until technical obstacles are resolved and China agrees to meet its Phase One Agreement commitments.

"But Taiwan has been a major bright spot this year and while exports to South Korea have trended lower, we expect an uptick in Korea's demand when a higher tariff rate on Australian beef is triggered later this month."

By mid-July, Korea's imports of Australian beef are expected to exceed the safeguard threshold established in the Korea-Australia Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Through the end of the year, Korea's tariff rate on Australian beef will increase from 5.3% to 24%. U.S. beef enters Korea at zero duty under the Korea-U.S. FTA. Australia triggered its beef safeguard for China on June 18, and has since faced a 55% tariff for exports entering that market.

Lamb exports continue trend

Exports of U.S. lamb muscle cuts totaled 215 mt in May, down 41% from a year ago, valued at $1.3 million (down 28%). After a strong start to the year, January-May exports slipped 8% below a year ago in volume (1,257 mt) and 5% lower in value ($7 million). Larger exports to the Caribbean and Central America have been offset by lower shipments to Mexico and no exports to Canada have been reported in 2026. **— USMEF**

THE VIEWPOINT

with Dave Weaber

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.

Courtesy photo

Dave Weaber

Growing up on his family's ranch outside Pueblo, CO, taught Dave Weaber that success in the cattle business is measured over generations, not just market cycles.

That philosophy has followed him through a career spanning nearly every link of the beef supply chain. It continues to shape the advice he offers producers today as senior animal protein analyst at Terrain, an offering of participating Farm Credit associations. While many analysts focus on tomorrow's market movement, Dave spends much of his time looking five, 10 and even 20 years ahead, helping producers understand how economics, consumer behavior and demographic shifts will shape the future of beef.

Dave grew up on his family's diversified operation where cattle were only one part of the business. The ranch ran commercial cows, raised seedstock and show heifers, grazed sheep and, at one time, farmed several thousand acres of dryland wheat. Like many operations, diversification wasn't a business strategy; it was simply how ranch families survived.

He showed cattle through 4-H, judged livestock, dairy cattle and wool, and credits those experiences with teaching him public speaking, critical thinking and leadership long before he realized their value.

One opportunity proved especially influential. While in high school, he and his twin brother, Bob, worked at a neighboring dairy, where they learned artificial insemination, pregnancy checking, feed mixing and nearly every aspect of dairy management. Those skills later benefited their family's cattle operation while exposing Dave to a broader view of animal agriculture.

After high school, Dave earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree in animal science at Colorado State University, with a focus on ruminant nutrition. Dave pursued market analysis, while Bob pursued beef genetics and is currently a professor and head of the Eastern Kansas Research-Extension Centers at Kansas State University.

Learning every link of the chain

Dave chose to learn the entire beef supply chain by intentionally working throughout all its segments.

He began at CattleFax, analyzing cattle markets and helping develop feedyard benchmarking systems. Curious about how packers operated, Dave moved to Swift & Co. in Greeley, CO, where he learned the economics of meat processing from the inside.

From there, he spent nearly a decade helping Delhaize America redesign procurement strategies for thousands of grocery stores stretching from Maine to Florida. Later, Dave joined Express Markets before joining Terrain in 2022.

"I wanted to understand the entire supply chain," Dave told *WLJ*, noting that understanding producers alone isn't enough to understand why cattle markets behave as they do.

Today, that broad perspective allows him to connect ranch-level decisions with consumer purchasing habits, grocery merchandising and global trade.

Herd expansion and calf prices

Few questions dominate producer conversations today more than when the cow herd will finally begin to expand, and Dave believes the answer is more complicated than record calf prices.

Dave said producers are enjoying strong revenues, but many operations remain what he describes as "equity rich and cash poor." Years of drought, rising interest rates and deferred maintenance have left many ranches reluctant to make major investments despite unprecedented cattle prices.

"I think a lot of that is the story of why we haven't seen expansion yet," Dave said. "There's a lot of folks, when you look back at the last couple of years ... it's just shocking to the system how valuable these cattle are. Similarly, how big the net margin can be."

Even with those profits, however, he noted that many cow-calf operations still lack the working capital needed to confidently grow their businesses. His advice is straightforward: build working capital before building cow numbers.

Rather than chasing expansion simply because prices are attractive, Dave encourages producers to strengthen balance sheets, reduce debt and prepare for the inevitable downturn that accompanies every cattle cycle.

"Our job is really to work in the two-, five- and 10-year horizon to help customers get in position," Dave said. "Maybe it's not the time to build. Maybe it's the time to cash the checks and build reserves, so when cows get cheap again, then you go out and do it. The guy that keeps his powder dry is the one that has a better chance of winning the battle long term."

Dave noted that drought also remains the industry's biggest limiting factor.

"I've got one slide," Dave said, describing the presentations he gives to ranchers "It's the drought monitor, and I think it's the thing holding us back. It's not tariffs. It's not interest rates. Those all play a role, but if you don't have grass, none of the rest of it matters."

Dave continued that without adequate forage, attractive markets mean little, and until grazing conditions improve across much of cattle country, many producers will continue to market heifers rather than retain them.

Consumers reward quality

Dave noted that one of the more surprising developments in today's cattle market has been consumers' willingness to continue paying record prices for beef. He spent years analyzing wholesale beef demand by quality grade, and the data consistently point to one conclusion: consumers continue rewarding quality.

"It's just absolutely incredible how good beef demand is," Dave said. "If you had to pick what growing demand looked like, this is it."

His analysis shows spending on Prime beef has climbed more than 20% annually on an inflation-adjusted basis over the past three years, while branded Choice products and ground beef have also continued posting impressive gains. Rather than trading down to pork or chicken, consumers have largely remained loyal to beef.

Dave believes that loyalty didn't happen by accident. It is the result of decades of work by seedstock producers, commercial cattlemen, feeders and packers to improve eating quality.

"When you go back to the early '90s, half of our product was Select, and two out of five Choice steaks were tough," Dave said. "We had to go back to the seedstock level and essentially make different selection decisions to figure out how to make our product better."

Dave continued that those decisions are paying off today through the adoption of better genetics, improvements in marbling and the growth of branded beef programs that have transformed the product consumers find in grocery stores and restaurants.

"We've got enough technology and quality in our cattle that we're raising that we can command a better price," he said. "Fortunately, we've got a product consumers love, so there's some opportunity for growth."

Future success, Dave believes, won't simply come from producing more. It will come from understanding where demand is growing, competing more effectively in export markets and positioning operations to remain financially resilient regardless of market cycles.

Investing in next generation

For Dave, planning for the future extends well beyond balance sheets and succession plans. He believes one of agriculture's greatest investments is in the people who will eventually lead it.

Looking back on his own career, he is quick to credit the ranchers, professors, 4-H leaders and livestock judging coaches who took time to teach and encourage him along the way.

"I got all the mentoring that went into my career," Dave said. "I owe them a lot."

Today, he sees that same responsibility falling to his generation. Whether it's helping a young producer think through business decisions, connecting someone with a job opportunity or simply sharing lessons learned over coffee in a farm shop, those relationships are every bit as important as market outlooks.

"That whole mentorship thing is probably one of the unsung heroes of agriculture," Dave said. "If you look at just about any operation, there's been somebody somewhere along the line that came alongside that operation and said, 'I see you struggling. This might help, and I'm here to help you.'"

For Dave, that's every bit as important to the industry's future as rebuilding the cow herd. Strong cattle markets may come and go, but passing knowledge from one generation to the next remains one of agriculture's greatest strengths. — **Charles Wallace, *WLJ* contributing editor**

US beef shines in Korea's booming home meal replacement sector

Fueled by inflation and the rise in single-person households, Korea's home meal replacement (HMR) industry continues expanding, having nearly doubled in size over the past decade.

High-quality U.S. beef has successfully penetrated this product category through new product development and promotional partnerships with Korean importers, processors, restaurants and retailers.

One such partnership is with Samihun, a prestigious barbecue restaurant brand widely recognized as a market leader in the HMR sector. Renowned for its top-selling galbitang (beef rib soup) and marinated beef barbecue, Samihun utilizes high-quality U.S. beef in many of its HMR products to deliver gourmet experiences to consumers.

Although Samihun sources some domestic beef for its HMR products, U.S. beef products account for more than 90% of its total HMR sales.

Galbitang has established itself as Samihun's flagship product, ranking first in HMR and soup categories on major online sales platforms like Kurly and Coupang for several consecutive years with its galbiang sales exceeding 20 million packages from 2018-25. At the 2026 Korea First Brand Awards, Samihun was awarded first place in the HMR (Soup/Stew) category.

"This award presented us an opportunity to celebrate U.S. beef's usage in this and 17 other Samihun HMR products," said U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) Korea Director Junil Park. "We are promoting U.S. beef's quality and versatility for use in this wide range of top-quality dishes."

A promotional campaign was rolled out featuring 18 of Samihun's HMR products that utilize U.S. beef. With a target customer base aged 30-50, the promotion rewarded purchasers with diverse lifestyle products depending on their spending level. A wide range of social media and online ads promoting this event were also launched.

The HMR promotion was made possible through the Beef Checkoff Program. — **USMEF**

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.)

Sept. 15 – The Montana Stockgrowers Association (MSGA) is encouraging students to apply for its 2026 Annual Convention and Trade Show internship program. The internship will take place Dec. 2-6 in Billings, MT. To apply, visit mtbeef.org or contact the MSGA office at 406-442-3420.

CALENDAR

Coming Events

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

Sept. 15-17 – The Stockmanship & Stewardship event in Grand Island, NE, will help ranchers gain practical, hands-on knowledge that strengthens animal care, enhances cattle handling skills and supports the sustainability of their operations. Details: stockmanshipandstewardship.org.

American Prairie, BLM grazing case continues

INJUNCTION
(from page 1)

pause a February directive from the Montana Land Board to the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) to halt the review of bison leases until a rulemaking is completed.

At the Montana Land Board's April 20 monthly meeting, the DNRC requested approval to initiate a rulemaking regarding grazing lease stocking rates and the absence of bison from existing provisions.

American Prairie filed a motion for preliminary injunction against the action after already having filed suit against the agency earlier in March.

"The Court should set these agency actions aside because they were made in violation of rulemaking procedures, are the result of arbitrary and capricious agency action, and in violation of Land Board's Constitutional duties," the group wrote in its lawsuit.

Judge ruling

Commissioner of Securities and Insurance James Brown told the Daily Montanan that he disagreed with the judge's decision to grant an injunction. Brown is the commissioner who made the unanimously approved motion to develop a rulemaking on the bison grazing issue.

"It's curious to me how a judge can determine that a directive to the DNRC to do rulemaking is in itself rulemaking," Brown told the news outlet. "Either as a matter of common sense or as a legal matter."

In his ruling, Abbott said the motion did not pertain strictly to the American Prairie's proposal and instead created a broad standard, equivalent to a new rule, according to the Daily Montanan.

"By any measure, the Land Board's February 17, 2026, action will likely be found to be a rule," Abbott wrote. "The notice of its action, which consisted solely of an agenda item labeled 'Bison Grazing Proposals,' does not appear to comply with the notice and public comment requirements" found in state law.

Separately, on the same day the injunction was granted, the DNRC released a proposal to process American Prairie's September 2019 request to modify state grazing leases across approximately 5,000 acres of state lease land in Phillips County. The proposal would allow the group to construct, reconstruct, modify and remove fencing and change the class of livestock for five allotments near Malta, MT. The request also includes seasonal and year-long continuous bison grazing.

A public scoping period was open for 14 days through July 10.

BLM case continues

In May, the BLM rescinded American Prairie's bison grazing permits on seven Phillips County allotments, giving the group until September to remove nearly 1,000 head of bison. The agency ruled that the group's conservation bison herd does not meet the definition of "production-oriented livestock" as required under the Taylor Grazing Act.

American Prairie appealed the decision in early June. Western Watersheds Project and Defenders of Wildlife also independently appealed the ruling.

In late June, the Montana Stockgrowers Association (MSGA) filed a motion to intervene in the groups' appeals.

"The decision being appealed reinforced the importance of lawful public lands management and ensured federal grazing policies remain aligned with the original intent of supporting working ranchers, rural communities, and agricultural production," said MSGA Executive Vice President Raylee Honeycutt in a statement.

MSGA is inviting ranchers interested in supporting the group's efforts to intervene in the American Prairie case to visit tinyurl.com/32m5sa7e and select "BLM Appeal" on the donation form.

"MSGA remains committed to defending ranching families, protecting multiple-use public lands, and ensuring federal agencies follow established law in land management decisions," the group said. — **Anna Miller Fortozo, *WLJ* managing editor**

Livestock and rodeo featured on Capitol Hill

Between the U.S. Capitol and the Washington Monument, cattle, goats and rodeo took over the National Mall as part of the 16-day Great American State Fair.

Held as part of the nation's 250th anniversary celebration, the fair featured daily livestock exhibitions, evening rodeos and state pavilions showcasing American agriculture, agribusiness and rural life in the heart of Washington, D.C.

Each morning, members of FFA chapters, 4-H clubs and farm families stepped into a show ring, introducing their livestock to visitors who may have never seen a live steer or market goat up close.

"I filled out the application, not really thinking that we would ever get invited to come, and we did. So we're here," said Caitlin Grantham, agriculture instructor at Washington High School in Charles Town, WV.

Grantham brought students representing three farms to exhibit cattle and market goats. Led by rodeo announcer Justin McKee, exhibitors introduced their animals, explained their projects and answered questions from judges and spectators.

Among those judging in the ring were U.S. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins and Education Secretary Linda McMahon.

"For the first time, in at least 100 years, we have real livestock and FFAers and 4-Hers here at the National Mall to celebrate our great American history," Rollins said.

Rollins spent time talking with students in the ring as well as cattle producers gathered along the fence, many of whom had attended President Donald Trump's dinner the previous evening. One of the cattle exhibited traced its genetics to the herd of renowned Texas cattleman R.A. Brown, whose family was represented at the event.

"We have had county fairs since before the Revolution, and state fairs began shortly after 1830," Rollins said.

The nation's most secure livestock

Bringing livestock into the nation's capital required far more paperwork than a typical county fair.

Grantham said every animal needed current vaccinations, rabies documentation was required, certificates of veterinary inspection, RFID identification tags and permits issued through D.C. Health before entering the National Mall.

"We fortunately have some great veterinarians that we work with on a regular basis and they were able to get that done in the short period of time that we had," Grantham said.

Once on the grounds, exhibitors shared the Mall with one unusual audience: Secret Service agents who patrolled the show ring throughout the event.

Beyond the livestock arena, the fair featured exhibits from some states highlighting local agriculture, food production and rural economies.

The USDA pavilion distributed free fresh fruit to visitors, while state exhibits showcased departments of agriculture and agribusinesses central to the state's success. Educational panels featuring farmers, ranchers and agricultural leaders accompanied culinary demonstrations, like Extension educators would do at county fairs.

The Kansas booth featured interactive crop displays, North Dakota highlighted its sunflower industry, Wyoming let kids practice their lasso skills and Nebraska showcased irrigation technology from Valmont Industries.

Wayne Connley, curator for the USDA Historical Society & Museum, researched the 1926 Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition, a predecessor to the 2026 celebration.

Hosted in south Philadelphia, the exposition featured the Palace of Agriculture, which taught fairgoers how the U.S. transformed "a wilderness into a food-producing powerhouse supporting 120 million people," he told DTN.

The Sesqui, as it was known, covered 450 acres of former marshland in what is now FDR Park and the South Philadelphia Sports Complex. Organizers built five massive "palaces" in an Aztec-Mayan style, an 80-foot illuminated Liberty Bell replica, a recreated colonial High Street and a new 100,000-seat stadium.

Heavy rains, unfinished construction and muddy grounds turned the event into what many called "America's Greatest Flop," drawing about 6 million to 7 million visitors instead of the expected 40 million to 50 million—mirroring discourse over the fair's state in 2026.

USDA employees from across the department's Washington mission areas were assigned to staff the event, where Rollins made nearly daily appearances. One Ohio booth organizer in the governor's office said roughly $750,000 dollars had been set aside for participation, though not all of it had been spent at the time of the event.

The Great American State Fair ranks among the nation's longest-running fairs. At 16 days, it trails only events such as the Arizona State Fair (32 days), the State Fair of Texas (24 days) while exceeding the Indiana State Fair (15 days) and the New York State Fair (14 days).

Livestock demonstrations were held daily, with rodeo performances each evening.

The Great American State Fair ran through July 10 on the National Mall. — **Jake Zajkowski, DTN ag policy editor**

Story Shorts

CA funds wolf conflict reduction efforts

California is investing $2 million to help livestock producers reduce conflicts with expanding gray wolf populations while supporting wolf recovery. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife awarded grants to four organizations through its Wolf-Livestock Compensation Program. The California Bountiful Foundation will reimburse producers for confirmed or probable wolf losses while providing outreach, education and equipment. The Sierra Valley Resource Conservation District will assist ranchers with hazing techniques, detection tools and research into electronic cattle ear tags that could identify unusual herd behavior linked to wolf activity. The Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District will offer technical assistance and deterrent equipment, while Working Circle will provide workshops and ranch-specific guidance on herd management practices to reduce the risk of livestock depredation. For more information about the Wolf-Livestock Compensation Program, visit tinyurl.com/5fv7b75e.

USDA expands online FSA scheduling

USDA has expanded online appointment scheduling for producers at local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices following a successful pilot program. Using Microsoft Bookings, farmers and ranchers can schedule appointments from a computer, tablet or smartphone whenever it is convenient. USDA also launched a new county office locator at tinyurl.com/42wuwajh, allowing producers to search by state or county and access office contact information and a direct scheduling link. Appointments can be held in person or virtually, depending on producer preference. The system automatically sends confirmation and reminder emails. Producers still have the option to call or visit their local FSA office in person to make an appointment.

Iowa declared free of pseudorabies outbreak

Iowa has successfully contained and eradicated a recent pseudorabies outbreak after completing the response protocol established by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. State Agriculture Secretary Mike Naig said follow-up testing found no additional cases, confirming the virus did not spread beyond the original infected swine facility identified in April. Fewer than 10 farms were placed under quarantine, and all have since tested negative and been released, allowing normal livestock movement to resume. Iowa also retains its pseudorabies-free trade status under USDA standards. Officials emphasized the response highlights the importance of strong disease preparedness. Pseudorabies pose no risk to human health, and properly prepared pork remains safe to eat.

PETA proposes museums at former JBS facilities

Following JBS Foods' announcement that it will close a processing plant in Pennsylvania and a packing facility in Tennessee, affecting nearly 1,700 employees, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has proposed leasing the facilities and converting them into museums focused on animal welfare and the meat industry. In a letter to JBS CEO Wesley Batista Filho, the organization said the museums could employ some displaced workers while displaying equipment used in meat processing, including bone saws, shackles and captive bolt guns. PETA said the exhibits would educate visitors about the behavior and experiences of livestock and encourage adoption of a vegan diet.

Agragene advances NWS control technology

Agragene has received funding from the USDA New World Screwworm Grand Challenge and the Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research to advance a new approach for controlling New World screwworm (NWS). The company's precision-guided sterile insect technique uses CRISPR-based genetics to produce healthy, sterile male flies that mate with wild females, reducing future pest populations. CEO Bryan Witherbee said ranchers need additional tools to combat the insect and believes the technology offers a scalable, cost-effective solution. Co-founder Dr. Omar Akbari said the funding will help accelerate development of the technology, which is designed to complement existing control efforts by improving the efficiency and scalability of sterile insect programs targeting NWS.

USDA accepts 2.2 million CRP acres

USDA has accepted 2.2 million acres into the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for 2026, following offers totaling nearly 2.5 million acres. Of the nearly 1.5 million acres scheduled to expire this year, more than 982,000 acres were offered for re-enrollment, while producers also submitted applications covering 1.5 million acres of new land. Nebraska, Colorado and South Dakota led the nation in accepted acres for the 2026 enrollment period.

EPA launches crop innovation challenge

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced a national innovation challenge offering up to $30 million in prize funding to encourage alternatives to chemical crop desiccation before harvest. The agency is seeking practical, cost-effective approaches that reduce reliance on conventional pesticides while supporting crop production. EPA said the initiative is intended to help farmers adopt new tools that can lower production costs and reduce pesticide use while protecting human health and the environment. The challenge will encourage technologies and management practices, including Integrated Pest Management, crop timing, natural drying methods and precision agriculture.

LEGAL LEDGER

BLM to remove horses from Callaghan Complex

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) was set to begin the Callaghan Complex horse gather around July 10 in Lander County, NV. The BLM plans to reduce the current wild horse population and growth rates within established appropriate management levels (AML). The estimated population for the Callaghan Complex greatly exceeds the established AML range of 323-552 horses. The complex was most recently surveyed in February 2025 and was determined to have nearly 4,500 adult wild horses within the complex; BLM plans to capture about 2,000 excess horses from within or outside the complex by using the helicopter drive trap. The complex includes the Callaghan, South Shoshone, Bald Mountain, Hickison (north of US Route 50) herd management areas, and North Shoshone herd area. The gather area encompasses about 1.15 million acres. "Wild horses are frequently moving on the highway 305 right of way and creating public safety issues," BLM said.

USFS streamlines guidance for employees

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is proposing a rule to modernize its directives system, which guides how employees carry out their work. USFS said the rule would redefine the agency's manuals and handbooks to reduce procedural burdens, encourage innovation and give local employees more decision-making authority. "Today, the Forest Service maintains more than 900 chapters of national guidance and thousands of additional regional and unit-level supplements," said Forest Service Chief Tom Schultz. "Half of these directives are more than 20 years old, and many exceed 100 pages in length." Updates to USFS manuals would provide the minimum mandatory direction necessary for legal compliance, and updates to the handbooks would become non-binding guidance to eliminate inflexible mandates and prescriptive procedures, the agency said. USFS also plans to rescind most regional and unit-level directive supplements, and revise national directives to give authorities closer to the field level. Comments on the proposal may be submitted until July 31 at tinyurl.com/3du6ckyp.

CME to launch beef trim contracts

CME Group is planning on launching two types of beef trim contracts. The move is intended to help the industry manage risk associated with producing hamburgers, the group said. Trading is expected to begin July 20, pending regulatory approval. The 90% and 50% lean beef trim futures and options contracts will track products used to produce high-volume ground beef. Units will be traded at 20,000 pounds per unit. "These new contracts are designed for the last stage of bringing cattle to market, giving producers a complete set of risk management tools," said John Ricci, managing director and global head of agricultural products. "By offering both 90% and 50% lean beef trim specifications, market participants can now precisely manage the input costs tied to popular retail blend ratios, bridging the gap between live cattle prices and the ground beef they ultimately sell."

DOJ settles egg price-fixing cases for $3.3M

The Department of Justice and 17 states filed a civil antitrust complaint and also entered proposed consent judgments with three major egg producers, alleging manipulation of egg prices. Cal-Maine Foods, Versova and Hickman's Egg Ranch are alleged to have conspired to manipulate egg prices from June 2022 to March 2025. The complaint alleges the companies produced fewer eggs than their retail contracts required and purchased the shortfall on the Egg Clearinghouse Inc. (ECI) platform, where higher bids could raise Urner Barry benchmarks that determined pricing. Egg price quotations dropped significantly after the companies learned of the DOJ's investigation in March 2025, the department said. The companies will settle for the following: Cal-Maine will pay $1.5 million to the state plaintiffs and donate 30 million eggs, Versova will pay $800,000 to the state plaintiffs and donate 20 million eggs, and Hickman's Egg Ranch will pay $1 million to the state plaintiffs and donate 3.25 million eggs. Each company must also designate a DOJ-approved antitrust compliance officer, and for five years, conduct annual training and submit certifications and provide written explanations for every deleted ECI bid. None of the companies admitted wrongdoing.

USDA signs lawfare partnership with SBA

USDA and the Small Business Administration (SBA) signed a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) to combat "lawfare" against American farmers, ranchers and small businesses. "For too long, a network of government agencies, radical environmentalist (non-governmental organizations), and activist groups have targeted American farmers and ranchers," USDA said. "Producers have been forced to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines, give up prime grazing land, and even sell and stop farming on generational properties." The MOU formalizes collaboration between the USDA and SBA's Office of the National Ombudsman to ensure farmers, ranchers or small business owners "stand alone against abusive or disproportionate enforcement practices," USDA said. For more information or to report instances of lawfare, visit usda.gov/lawfare.

Lawsuit could create legal uncertainty for grazing

CRA LAWSUIT

(from page 1)

that if those plans qualify as rules under the CRA, then every RMP adopted since the law's enactment in 1996 should have been submitted to Congress before taking effect. Because the Oregon plan was never submitted, Cascadia Wildlands argues it is legally invalid.

According to Cascadia Wildlands, the Northwestern and Coastal Oregon and Southern Oregon RMPs together cover approximately 2.6 million acres.

The Northwestern and Coastal Oregon RMP covers about 1.3 million acres of BLM-managed lands in western Oregon and was approved in August 2016. Since 2016, the BLM has approved 449 timber sales totaling more than 2.2 billion board feet of timber with a cumulative value exceeding $577 million.

"The area covered by the Northwestern and Coastal Oregon Resource Management Plan includes forests that are a cradle of biodiversity and wellspring of life for nearby communities," Cascadia Wildlands attorney Nick Cady said in a statement. "Congress' irresponsible use of the CRA has invalidated this exploitive use of our public forests."

The lawsuit specifically challenges the Aloha Trout Forest Management Project, which proposes harvesting up to 75.5 million board feet of timber across approximately 1,305 acres in the Salem District.

The complaint asks the court to declare the Northwestern and Coastal Oregon Resource Management Plan unlawful, vacate the Aloha Trout Forest Management Project, and rule that permits, leases, rights-of-way and other authorizations issued under the plan are null and void. It also seeks preliminary and permanent injunctions preventing the BLM from carrying out actions authorized under the plan, while requesting attorney fees and litigation costs.

Potential effects

The lawsuit has attracted attention because of what it could mean for public land management across the West.

The Idaho Outfitters & Guides Association said it warned Congress last year that treating RMPs as CRA rules could expose virtually every post-1996 plan to legal challenge because agencies never submitted those plans to Congress. The organization said the same legal theory could affect grazing permits, outfitting permits, timber sales, oil and gas leases and other authorizations issued under those plans.

While acknowledging the government has strong counterarguments, the association said the litigation could create years of uncertainty, and urged Congress to clarify that land-use plans are not subject to the CRA.

The Center for Western Priorities also said the implications extend far beyond the Oregon timber sales. According to the organization, dozens of BLM management plans covering more than 160 million acres of public land were adopted after 1996 without being submitted to Congress as rules.

The Center for Western Priorities said the lawsuit could have unintended consequences. If courts rule that RMPs are subject to the CRA, the BLM could face new limits when writing future plans, making it more difficult to include similar protections for wildlife or cultural resources and inviting additional legal challenges nationwide.

Those concerns mirror a November 2025 letter sent to then-Acting BLM Director Bill Groffy by several organizations. The letter warned that Congress' use of the CRA created uncertainty over at least 5,033 oil and gas leases covering nearly 4 million acres by calling into question the validity of underlying resource management plans. The groups urged the BLM to pause new leasing and permitting until the issue is resolved.

The Center for Western Priorities concluded that Congress created the current uncertainty by applying the CRA to land-use plans and argued the most direct solution is legislation clarifying that RMPs and mineral withdrawals are not subject to the CRA while restoring the planning framework for public lands. — **Charles Wallace, *WLJ* contributing editor**

MARKET NEWS

MARKET SITUATION REPORT

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

MARKET AT A GLANCE

MARKET AT A GLANCE	This Week: 7/9/2026		Week Ago	Year Ago
Choice Fed Steers	248.00	▲	N/A	227.01
CME Feeder Index	370.75	▼	377.40	316.76
Boxed Beef Average	380.81	▼	391.26	384.66
Average Dressed Steers	393.48	▲	N/A	368.00
Live Slaughter Weight*	1,455	▼	1,457	1,412
Weekly Slaughter**	458,000	▼	537,000	474,000
Weekly Beef Production***	407.2	▼	477.6	409.2
Hide/Offal Value	14.15	▼	14.17	11.68
Corn Price	4.35	▲	4.22	4.14

*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	COMPREHENSIVE Price	PRIME Loads	PRIME Price	BRANDED Loads	BRANDED Price	CHOICE Loads	CHOICE Price	SELECT Loads	SELECT Price	UNGRADED Loads	UNGRADED Price
July 3	4,935	392.24	241	409.04	935	400.13	1,579	389.41	402	369.76	1,779	360.01
June 26	6,513	390.94	358	406.34	1,184	397.70	1,953	387.40	612	373.09	2,407	360.06
June 19	6,322	391.26	304	398.89	1,116	397.77	1,840	390.35	486	375.50	2,576	360.35
June 12	5,970	391.76	281	402.33	1,112	398.46	1,846	391.37	514	376.86	2,216	364.09

Cutouts — FED BOXED BEEF

DATE	CHOICE	SELECT	COW BEEF CUTOUT	50% LEAN	90% LEAN
July 9	380.81	363.49	359.86	176.25	N/A
July 8	381.20	363.09	359.92	180.37	464.60
July 7	385.77	365.89	358.15	183.22	N/A
July 6	386.48	365.87	358.60	179.11	460.88
July 3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Live Cattle

	7/3	7/6	7/7	7/8	7/9	High*	Low*
Aug.	N/A	24055	23983	23850	23848	25873	16853
Oct.	N/A	23568	23538	23465	23463	25598	16668
Dec.	N/A	23555	23513	23458	23458	25120	17005
Feb.	N/A	23630	23585	23515	23530	25093	18068

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Feeder Cattle

	7/3	7/6	7/7	7/8	7/9	High*	Low*
Aug.	N/A	36313	36253	36410	36408	38103	21920
Sep.	N/A	36035	35938	36085	36060	38280	22268
Oct.	N/A	35733	35628	35685	35665	38020	22460
Nov.	N/A	35415	35310	35285	35330	37860	24118

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

FED CATTLE TRADE

FED CATTLE TRADE	Head Count	Avg. Weight	Avg. Price
WEEKLY WEIGHTED AVERAGES			
Live FOB Steer	40	1,400	248.00
Live FOB Heifer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dressed Del Steer	495	972	393.48
Dressed Del Heifer	160	877	393.00
SAME PERIOD LAST WEEK			
Live FOB Steer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Live FOB Heifer	158	1,400	256.00
Dressed Del Steer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dressed Del Heifer	N/A	N/A	N/A
SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR			
Live FOB Steer	164	1,421	227.01
Live FOB Heifer	1,005	1,316	225.00
Dressed Del Steer	40	889	368.00
Dressed Del Heifer	55	803	360.00

NATIONAL WEEKLY FED BEEF SLAUGHTER VOLUME: JULY 5, 2026

	Domestic	Imported
Forward Contract	24,157	1,775
Formula	200,105	1,079
Negotiated Cash	52,625	65
Negotiated Grid	28,604	1,031
Packer Owned	8,266	N/A
Total	**313,757**	**3,950**

SLAUGHTER FORWARD CONTRACTS / FORWARD BEEF SALES

Delivery Month		FORWARD BEEF SALES	
Jul. '26	95,543	Neg. Sales 0-21 days	1,301
Aug. '26	147,247	Neg. Sales 21+ days	403
Sep. '26	84,010	Formula sales	3,138
Oct. '26	112,314	Forward contract sales	93
Nov. '26	106,343	Domestic sales	4,586
		NAFTA Exports	56

CANADIAN LIVESTOCK PRICES & FEDERAL INSPECTED SLAUGHTER FIGURES

Alberta Direct Sales (4% shrink)	Price	Weekly Change
Slaughter Steers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1300-1500 lbs	250.34	-0.25
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	249.21	+0.71
Ontario Auctions		
Slaughter Steers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1300-1500 lbs	244.51	-0.04
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	243.16	+1.66
Slaughter Cows, Cutter and Utility 1-3, 1100-1400 lbs	168.66	-1.21

*Price comparison from one week ago.

Average feeder cattle prices (CND) for week ending Tuesday, July 7, 2026

Steers:	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Ontario
501-600 lbs	525.64	N/A	490.28
601-700 lbs	450.33	N/A	437.93
701-800 lbs	405.57	N/A	387.67
801-900 lbs	358.01	N/A	356.66
Heifers:			
401-500 lbs	490.02	N/A	460.77
501-600 lbs	460.56	N/A	431.68
601-700 lbs	410.09	N/A	385.18
701-800 lbs	371.63	N/A	347.98

USDA MEXICO TO U.S. WEEKLY LIVESTOCK IMPORTS

Feeder cattle imports weekly and yearly volume.

Species	Current Week	Previous Week	Current Year-to-date	Previous Year-to-date
	6/29/2026	6/22/2026		
Feeders	IMPORTS SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE		0	230,638

USDA WEEKLY IMPORTED FEEDER CATTLE

July 9, 2026

Mexico to United States Feeder Cattle Import Summary

Receipts EST: N/A **Week Ago EST: N/A** **Year Ago Act: 3,500**

THIS REPORT WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED AFTER MAY 12TH 2025. THE BORDER WILL BE CLOSED FOR LIVESTOCK IMPORTS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

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

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

Selected Auctions Week Ending July 9, 2026

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

NORTHWEST

DATE MARKET		200-300 lb.	300-400 lb.	400-500 lb.	500-600 lb.	600-700 lb.	700-800 lb.	800 lb. -up	SLAUGHTER COWS SLAUGHTER BULLS	PAIRS REPLACEMENTS
No report available Blackfoot, ID										
No report available Burley, ID										
No report available Emmett, ID										
No report available Eugene, OR										
No report available Madras, OR										
July 1 Vale, OR	207								179-193 205-230	
No report available Davenport, WA										
July 2 Toppenish, WA	866			425*	460*	350-437.50*			175-188 200-238.50	

FARWEST

DATE MARKET		200-300 lb.	300-400 lb.	400-500 lb.	500-600 lb.	600-700 lb.	700-800 lb.	800 lb. -up	SLAUGHTER COWS SLAUGHTER BULLS	PAIRS REPLACEMENTS
No report available Orland, CA										
July 3 Escalon, CA	N/A								115-183 140-185	
No report available Famoso, CA										
No report available Galt, CA										
July 7 Turlock, CA	1,408		475-570 460-559	425-505 405-485	400-435 370-410	390-425 350-402	340-373 310-330	320-358 300-325	155-188 170-195	
No report available Salina, UT										

NORTH CENTRAL

DATE MARKET		200-300 lb.	300-400 lb.	400-500 lb.	500-600 lb.	600-700 lb.	700-800 lb.	800 lb. -up	SLAUGHTER COWS SLAUGHTER BULLS	PAIRS REPLACEMENTS
July 6 Iowa	599								159-243 183-274	
No report available Miles City, MT										
July 8 Bassett, NE	8,720			525-550 510	505-520 457.50-506	484-535 393.50-452.50	408-463 375-397.50	324-409 305-375		
No report available Ericson, NE										
No report available Imperial, NE										
No report available Kearney, NE										
No report available Lexington, NE										
July 2 Ogallala, NE	2,573			560	484-505 427.50-476	433-473 385-444	394-468.50 355-433	328.50-403 300.50-356		
No report available Valentine, NE										
No report available Herreid, SD										
No report available Torrington, WY										

SOUTH CENTRAL

DATE MARKET		200-300 lb.	300-400 lb.	400-500 lb.	500-600 lb.	600-700 lb.	700-800 lb.	800 lb. -up	SLAUGHTER COWS SLAUGHTER BULLS	PAIRS REPLACEMENTS
No report available Willcox, AZ										
July 6 Colorado	1,738									
No report available La Junta, CO										
No report available Loma, CO										
July 8 Dodge City, KS	1,206		522-530	539-580 465-480	450-488 420-445	358-430 366-383	370-402.50 340.75-358	345-370.50 326.50-356	139-184 176-245	2,300-4,200 1,975-3,500
July 9 Pratt, KS	2,139		522.50	532.50	482.50-502.50	435-478 388-409	392.75-429 370-377	329.50-376 315-349	161-250 201-237.50	3,650-4,475 2,850-3,350
No report available Salina, KS										
July 9 Clovis, NM	2,505	510-675 575	550-690 505-640	505-625 405-540	445-525 342-505	335-435 350-392	344-396 310-370	265-351 296-320	160-285 120-223.50	950-4,325 1,400-4,100
July 8 El Reno, OK	6,000	590	610-680 480-560	490-635 410-500	430-530 380-460	395-435 340-405	375-406 320-359	297-373 285-343		
July 8 McAlester, OK	900		575-675 530-630	495-545 440-520	425-510 400-450	395-445 350-478	385-440 330-390	280-333	169-199 206-230	2,600 1,630-3,800
July 6 Oklahoma City, OK	952	650-700	540	495-520 400-470	422-495 380-410	405-435 341-397	343-387	325.25-340.50		
No report available Cuero, TX										
No report available Dalhart, TX										
No report available San Angelo, TX										
No report available Tulia, TX										

EAST

DATE MARKET		200-300 lb.	300-400 lb.	400-500 lb.	500-600 lb.	600-700 lb.	700-800 lb.	800 lb. -up	SLAUGHTER COWS SLAUGHTER BULLS	PAIRS REPLACEMENTS
No report available Alabama										
July 6 Lexington, KY	479	500-550*	535-552.50* 487.50-585*	495-551* 445-511*	430-483* 410-482.50*	420-449* 352.50-396*	360-385* 297.50-358*	366-370* 259*	164-217 201-233	3,250
July 6 Joplin, MO	5,561		590	510-620 455-515	460-555 410-475	400-480 385-432	365-416 342-377	327.50-377 328-339.50		
No report available Tennessee										
July 6 Virginia	1,406	497.50	476-640 345-506	435-525 375-485	443-500 370-400	399-440 347.50-372	367-417.50 316.50-335	350-360 290-325		

CANADA

DATE MARKET		200-300 lb.	300-400 lb.	400-500 lb.	500-600 lb.	600-700 lb.	700-800 lb.	800 lb. -up	SLAUGHTER COWS SLAUGHTER BULLS	PAIRS REPLACEMENTS
No report available Lethbridge, Alberta										

Beef demand disaggregated by product category

Beef demand is very complex. Although we frequently discuss beef demand as a single concept, it is, in fact, the demand for many different beef products, each of which is a separate market.

Figure 1 shows the average seasonal pattern of Choice boxed beef prices with a peak in June and lows at the beginning and end of the year. The seasonal price pattern in Figure 1 is the net seasonality from many different beef products, each with unique seasonal patterns.

The seasonal indexes in Figures 1-5 are five-year centered moving averages from 2021-25. The seasonal pattern for each product shows the percentage variation around the average from the seasonal high to low price.

The highest price beef cuts, tenderloin and ribeye, peak at the end of the year, with increased restaurant and holiday demand. This is shown in Figure 2, along with the chuck flap, the No. 4 beef cut, which has a similar seasonal price pattern.

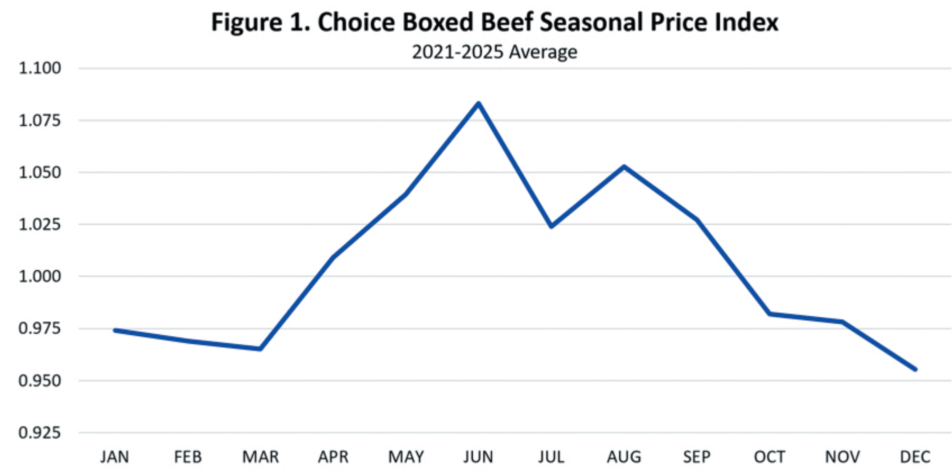
Figure 3 could be called the "Summer Grilling Demand" chart and shows four cuts that all peak in June. These four cuts, strip loin, flank, top sirloin and tri-tip, have the most pronounced seasonal patterns and contribute the most to the overall seasonal pattern of boxed beef prices in Figure 1. For example, tri-tip price has an average range of 43.9% from the peak in June to the October low.

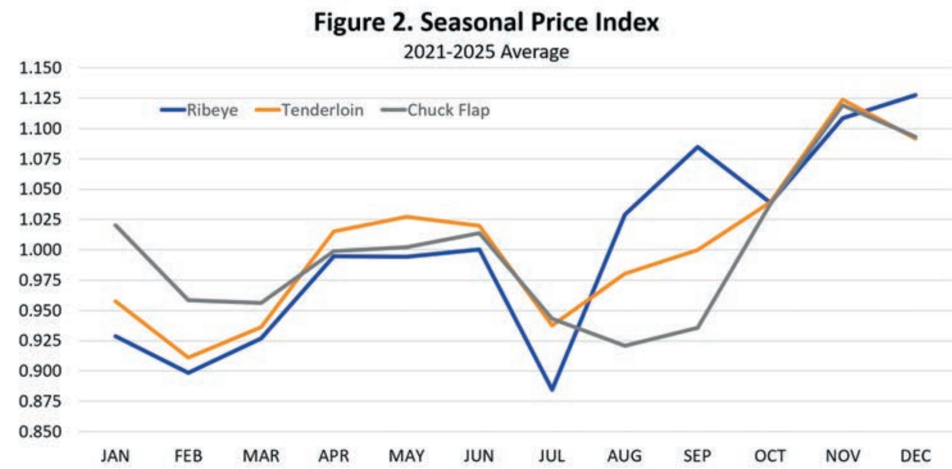
Figure 4 shows the seasonal patterns of three round cuts with very similar seasonal price patterns peaking in the third and early fourth quarters of the year. These relatively low-value cuts—outside round, eye of round and bottom round—are used sometimes for grinding and frequently for other processed beef products, such as jerky and sausage.

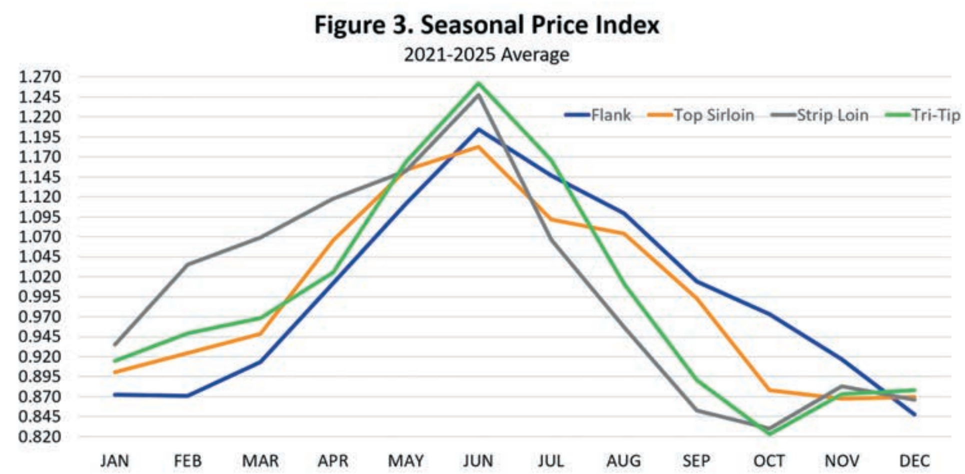
Figure 5 shows three diverse cuts, including brisket, which shows some summer demand tendency, peaking in June, along with short ribs, which are largely an export product, and chuck arm roast, which tends to have higher prices in cooler weather at the beginning and end of the year.

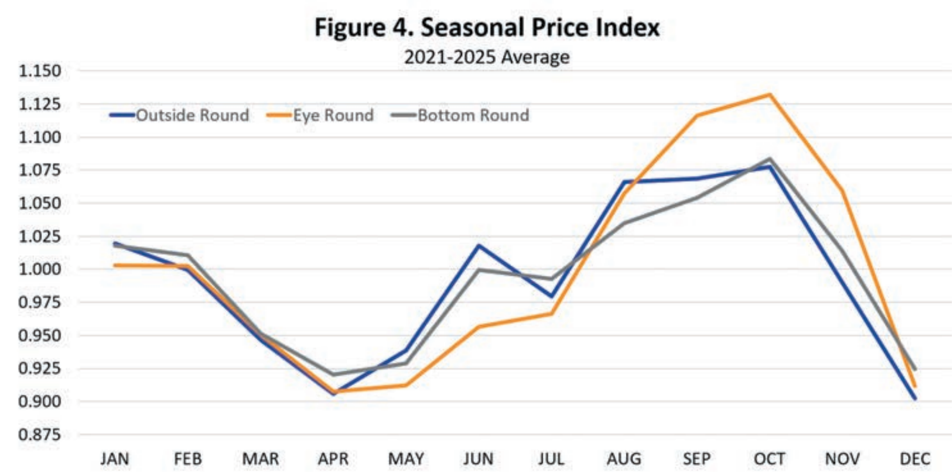
All of these cuts have relatively narrow seasonal price ranges, with chuck arm roast and short ribs each having less than 10% variation from the seasonal peak to low price during the year.

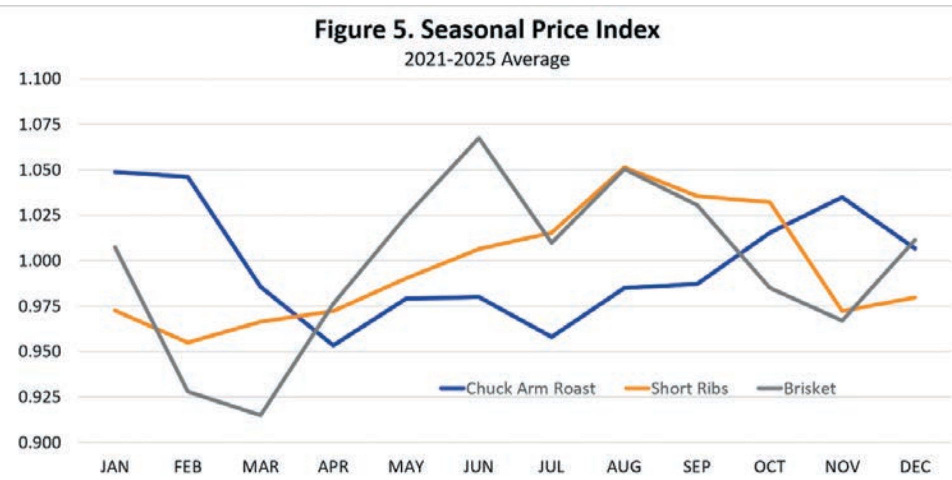
There are many other beef products as well, each of which has a distinct seasonal price pattern and each of which contributes to the overall value of each beef carcass and to beef demand. — **Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension livestock marketing specialist**











Boxed beef prices soften

MARKETS

(from page 1)

trading below a year ago so far in July, the first time in a very long time," wrote Cassie Fish, market analyst, in The Beef on Tuesday. "The move by Walmart and Sam's Club to lower ground beef prices has been well publicized the last 24 hours and it's hard to see how that's a bad thing for the market. With the cutout below a year ago finally and likely to stay that way this quarter, will beef find some renewed interest by retailers? Will any of them follow Walmart's lead?"

Feeder cattle

Feeder cattle futures also closed lower over the week. The August contract lost about $8 to close at $356.15, and the September contract lost about $9 to close at $353.

The CME Feeder Cattle Index lost $6.65 to close at $370.75.

Corn futures traded mostly steady. The July contract gained 6 cents to close at $4.27, and the December contract gained 10 cents to close at $4.52.

Missouri: Joplin Regional Stockyards in Carthage sold 5,561 head on Monday. Compared to a week earlier, feeder steers sold steady to $10 higher with the exception of five-weight steers, which sold $15-18 higher. Feeder heifers sold from $5 lower to $5 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 778 lbs. sold from $365-380, averaging $369.07.

Oklahoma: Oklahoma National Stockyards in Oklahoma City sold 952 head on Monday. Compared to a week earlier, there were not enough cattle to test trends. A somewhat lower undertone was noted on some feeder cattle, but quality and flesh conditions played a factor. Benchmark steers averaging 723 lbs. sold for $387.

Texas: Lonestar Stockyards in Wildorado sold 973 head on Tuesday. Compared to two weeks earlier, there were not enough comparable sales on yearlings due to the light test before the holiday week. Steer and heifer calves were too lightly tested from the previous sale for a market trend, but a sharply higher undertone was noted. A group of benchmark steers averaging 702 lbs. sold for $390. — **Anna Miller Fortozo, *WLJ* managing editor**

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Beef sales are driving profits for many dairies

REPLACEMENTS
(from page 1)

Prices reshape breeding decisions

The driving force behind today's breeding strategies is the historic strength of the beef market.

The U.S. cattle inventory has fallen to 86 million head, the lowest level since 1951, after years of drought and poor forage conditions reduced the national herd by 8.5 million head from its 2019 peak. The tight supply pushed live cattle futures to a record $251/cwt in May.

Record beef prices have fundamentally changed breeding decisions on many dairy farms, according to CoBank. Instead of producing dairy replacement heifers from every cow, producers are increasingly using beef semen on lower-performing females while breeding their best cows with gender-sorted dairy semen to produce future replacements.

The approach generates immediate income from high-value beef-on-dairy calves while maintaining enough heifers to support the milking herd. CoBank notes that selling a crossbred calf provides cash almost immediately, whereas raising a replacement heifer requires roughly two years before she enters production.

That strategy, however, has significantly tightened replacement supplies. CoBank reports dairy heifer inventories have fallen to their lowest level since 1978, with the number of dairy heifers weighing more than 500 pounds down 19%, or more than 909,000 head, since 2016. USDA data show replacement heifers now average more than $3,000 per head, while top-quality animals have recently sold for $3,400-4,400 at auctions in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Beef revenue boosts retention

Rather than aggressively culling cows amid tight replacement supplies, the report notes dairy producers have extended the productive lives of existing cows.

CoBank estimates that from August 2023 through August 2025, dairy farmers retained more than 600,000 cows that would otherwise have been slaughtered. Although culling has increased modestly over the past several months, slaughter levels remain well below those of previous years.

The result has been a growing dairy herd despite replacement shortages. According to the report, the U.S. dairy herd now exceeds 9.6 million head, the largest in roughly 30 years, and has expanded by 254,000 cows since January 2025.

CoBank said that much of that decision comes down to beef revenue. Five years ago, calf and cull cow sales accounted for roughly 5% of dairy farm income. Today, CoBank estimates those sales contribute 12-15% of revenue on many dairies, with some operations approaching 20% on a per-hundredweight basis.

The growing value of beef-on-dairy calves has made beef sales a major profit driver for many dairy operations. CoBank said the "beef check is now driving margins more than the milk check."

CoBank, citing data from the National Association of Animal Breeders, reports that beef semen sales to dairies jumped 62% from 2020 to 2025, and dairy producers now purchase nearly 83% of all beef semen sold nationwide.

The report describes today's breeding strategy as a "triple play" that combines gender-sorted semen, genomic testing and beef semen to maximize both genetic progress and calf value.

Recovery to begin in 2027

Despite the current shortage, CoBank believes the rebuilding process has already begun.

The report projects 438,800 fewer replacement heifers will enter dairy herds during 2026, following another decline in 2025, for a combined reduction of 796,000 head over the two years.

However, stronger sales of gender-sorted dairy semen during 2024 and 2025 are expected to reverse that trend. CoBank forecasts an additional 285,400 replacement heifers entering milking herds in 2027, followed by another 74,900 in 2028, for a combined gain of 360,200 head.

The recovery is expected to be gradual rather than immediate because of the dairy industry's lengthy biological cycle between breeding decisions and the entry of mature cows into production.

Regional demand will also influence replacement values. CoBank notes that roughly $13 billion in new dairy processing investments in states including Texas, Wisconsin, Michigan, Idaho and the I-29 corridor will likely keep replacement demand elevated in those regions even as national inventories begin to recover.

The report highlights that dairy remains an increasingly important contributor to U.S. beef supplies. CoBank estimates roughly one in every five pounds of beef now originates from the dairy sector, either through cull cows or beef-on-dairy offspring, making dairy breeding decisions an increasingly influential factor for the cattle industry as a whole. — **Charles Wallace, *WLJ* contributing editor**

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Sep. 4 – Byrd Cattle Co., Production Sale, Los Molinos, CA
Sep. 5 – Dunipace Angus Ranch & Bar KJ Angus, Bull Sale, Farmington, CA
Sep. 5 – Rhoades Angus Ranch, Production Sale, Cambria, CA

COMMERCIAL

Jul. 13 – Western Video Market, Video Sale, Reno, NV
Jul. 25 – Cattlemen's Livestock Market, Female Sale, Galt, CA
Aug. 1 – Turlock Livestock Auction Yard, Bred Female Sale, Turlock, CA
Aug. 4 – Cattle Country Video, Video Sale, Gering, NE
Aug. 17 – Superior Livestock Auction, Video Sale, Sheridan, WY
Sep. 2 – Superior Livestock Auction, Video Sale, Hudson Oaks, TX

HORSE

Aug. 22 – Memory Ranches, Foal Sale, Wells, NV

SALE REPORT

BALDRIDGE PERFORMANCE ANGUS SALE
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146 Angus total registered females $17,522
Auctioneer: Wes Tiemann
Sale Managers: Cotton & Assoc.

TOPS—Bred heifers: Baldridge Isabel N1051, 1/10/2025 by Yon Saluda bred to Baldridge Blacksmith; to De-Su Angus, New Albin, IA, $170,000. Baldridge Sarah N170, 2/3/2025 by Baldridge Headstart bred to Baldridge Blacksmith; to Apache Rock Ranch, Eagle Nest, NM, $110,000. Baldridge Sarah N1039, 1/11/2025 by Henke Honcho bred to Sitz Program; to 2S Angus, Joplin, MO, $100,000. **Open heifers:** Baldridge Isabel P443, 4/28/2026 by Schiefelbein Gable 311; to De-Su Angus, New Albin, IA, $165,000. Baldridge Erica of NPN288, 4/25/2025 by Maplecrest Masterclass; to Circle F Farms, Baxley, GA, $80,000. — **TY GROSHANS**

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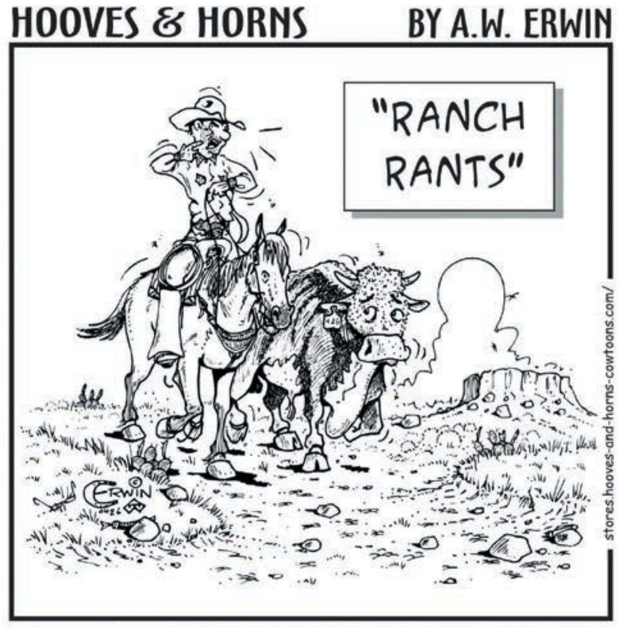

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Superior Sunrise - 7:30 a.m.
Video Auction - 8:00 a.m. (PDT)
28th Annual Superior Livestock Cowboy Golf Tournament - 5:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 29
Superior Sunrise - 7:30 a.m.
Video Auction - 8:00 a.m. (PDT)
Customer Appreciation Dinner Featuring live music from Ned LeDoux, Kevin Davis and Waylon Thibodeaux - 6:00 p.m.

THURSDAY, JULY 30
Superior Sunrise - 7:30 a.m.
Video Auction - 8:00 a.m. (PDT)
Social at Ormachea's
Live music from Waylon Thibodeaux and Kevin Davis

FRIDAY, JULY 31
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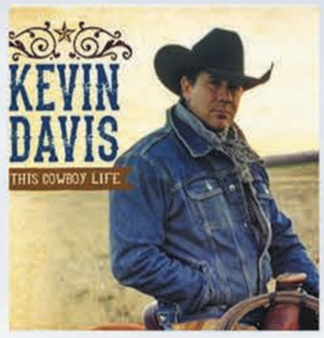

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