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ESA LANGUAGE — USFWS clarifies interpretation of ESA prohibition on "take." Page 13

A LOOK BACK IN HISTORY

"Peace and tranquility are two of the elements of the prairie most valuable to Marvin Kammerer, a rancher in western South Dakota. They are also two of the elements he fears are most in danger of being eliminated if a proposal by the U.S. Air Force to expand a training complex is put into action. The training that will take place will involve bombers flying at altitudes as low as 500 feet, at speeds that will break the sound barrier, and using chaff and flares. These training components concern ranchers, airplane pilots, wind energy proponents and others who live in the area. Kammerer, whose ranch adjoins Ellsworth Air Force Base, is concerned about the effects of noise on the wildlife, quality of life and property values," read the Sept. 27, 2010, *WLJ* cover story.

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BLM increases grazing flexibility in Owyhee Canyonlands

— Greens push back

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing to increase grazing flexibility in the Louse Canyon management area within the Owyhee River canyons near the Oregon-Idaho border.

The agency is proposing to extend the grazing season to better support long-term grazing health and issued three proposed grazing decisions that renew permits across half a million acres in southeast Oregon.

"Healthy rangelands are crucial to the ranching economy," said Acting BLM Vale District Manager Mike Decker.

"These decisions that will provide long-term clarity to our permittees, who are crucial employers in this rural community," Decker said.

BLM issued a Record of Decision for its restoration management actions. The agency also issued separate livestock grazing management records of decision to:

- Renew grazing permits that ensure progress toward meeting standards where they were not met and existing livestock grazing management was identified as a factor.
- Renew grazing permits that maintain or improve current conditions where existing grazing management was not identified as a significant factor for not meeting standards.
- Authorize the construction of range improvements that further aid in livestock management.

BLM began the public outreach

See CANYONLANDS on page 7

Greg Shine/BLM.

The Bureau of Land Management released its final Environmental Impact Statement for livestock grazing within the Owyhee Canyonlands. Pictured here, the view of the West Little Owyhee River, west of Anderson Crossing, in Louse Canyon.

Texas court clarifies liability for loose cattle on highways

— Ruling offers fence guidance

A Texas appeals court has affirmed a lower court ruling in a fatal cattle-vehicle collision, offering livestock producers additional guidance on when escaped cattle on state and U.S. highways can result in liability under Texas fence law.

The 11th Court of Appeals issued its opinion in Surrento v. Cactus Growers Inc., a case stemming from the death of Brianna Surrento after her vehicle struck a cow on U.S. Highway 180 in Gaines County. Her father, Michael Surrento, sued Cactus Growers Inc., the owner of the cattle, along with Jeffrey Carlisle, Jackie Warren and the James and Dorothy Doss Foundation, alleging gross negligence and liability. A district court granted summary judgment for all four defendants, and Surrento appealed.

Background

The accident occurred near the Doss Ranch, which the Doss Foundation owns and leased to Jackie Warren for several years. Warren entered into a grazing agreement with Jeffrey Carlisle, who managed about 250 cattle owned by Cactus Growers on the property. The ranch was divided into three large pastures, including the West and East pastures separated by County Road 135, with Highway 180 running along their southern boundary.

Carlisle said the Cactus Growers cattle were kept in the West Pasture, where he had recently installed new five-strand barbed-wire fencing with steel pipe corners along much of the perimeter. He said the fence separating the West and East pastures was built in the same manner and was tight, in good condition and capable of containing cattle.

Earlier on the day of the accident, a Gaines County sheriff's sergeant found a cow outside the fence and contacted Carlisle. After the cow was returned inside a gate, Carlisle and a ranch hand inspected the property and perimeter fences but found no cattle outside, open gates or fence breaches. Later that evening, dispatch received another report of two black cows on the highway. Surrento's collision occurred shortly afterward.

Ruling and merits

At issue in the case was what must be proven under Texas Agriculture Code Section 143.102. The law applies statewide to U.S. and state highways and prohibits a person who owns or has responsibility for livestock from "knowingly" permitting the animals to roam unattended on a highway right-of-way.

See LIABILITY on page 13

Alliance tracks growing animal activist movement

— Groups raised over $1B

The Animal Agriculture Alliance (Alliance) is tracking growing financial resources and stronger connections among animal rights organizations, along with an increased focus on federal policies affecting livestock producers.

The Alliance recently updated two of its flagship reports examining the organizations, funding and individuals involved in the animal rights movement. The group's Major Animal Activist Groups Web maps relationships among organizations through employees, funding, coalitions and campaigns, while its Radical Vegan Activism report tracks incidents involving groups the Alliance characterizes as extremist.

"These connections are important to understand," said Hannah Thompson-Weeman, Alliance president and CEO. "While animal rights activist groups may differ in their public-facing messages, tactics, and areas of focus, many are connected through staff, funding, coalitions, and campaigns."

According to publicly filed financial records the Alliance reviewed, animal rights organizations collectively received more than $1.07 billion in annual revenue. That is up from $865 million reported by the Alliance last year, an increase of more than $200 million.

Legislative connections mapped

New this year, the Alliance developed a legislative-focused version of its activist web to show how animal rights groups are connected through their involvement in policy debates. The report maps relationships among organizations working on legislative issues. It highlights several newer groups, as well as organizations that traditionally have

See ACTIVIST GROUPS on page 12

Slaughter disruptions cut cattle throughput

Cattle futures moved higher over the week, while processing plant disruptions weighed on slaughter numbers.

Live cattle futures closed higher. The October contract gained about $4 to close at $219.07, and the December contract gained about $5 to close at $221.10.

Cash trade through Thursday totaled about 10,000 head. Live steers sold from $219-223, and dressed steers sold from $348-355.

Cash trade for the week ending Sept. 20 totaled 64,259 head. Live steers averaged $222.38, and dressed steers averaged $350.15.

Slaughter through Thursday totaled about 389,000 head, compared to 420,000 head a week earlier. Total slaughter for a week earlier is estimated at 529,000 head. Actual slaughter for the week ending Sept. 12 was 501,375 head. The average steer dressed weight was 977 lbs., up 4 lbs. from the prior week.

"It has not been business as usual in the Kansas cattle feeding and fed cattle processing business this week," wrote Cassie Fish, market analyst, in The Beef on Thursday. "The disruption caused by ICE's presence rippled through the region and resulted in heavy absenteeism, reducing throughput sharply."

Slaughter for Tuesday was reduced to 100,000 head from the originally estimated 105,000 head.

"Given packer profitability, slaughter should have been 106k to 108k," Fish said. "(Wednesday) was worse; slaughter reported at 94,000 head, down 16k head from where it was scheduled."

Fed slaughter for the week will likely be reduced by 30,000 head or more. Concerns are also lingering for slaughter numbers for the next week too, Fish noted.

"Because there has been little media coverage of the

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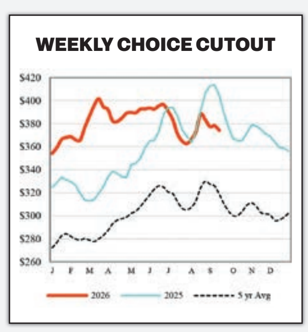
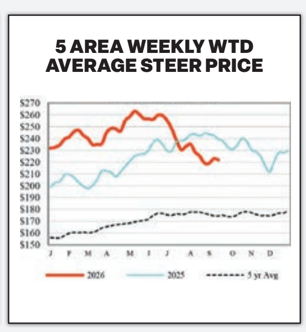
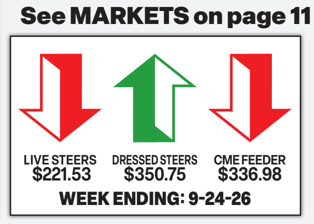






COMMENTS

Ranching the West

DALEY

I appreciate the invitation from *Western Livestock Journal* to contribute to the conversation about public lands ranching in the West. In the coming months, I look forward to sharing my perspective on some of the challenges we face, as well as opportunities to build on our successes.

My family has been ranching on federal lands long before the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) was established. The first generation came to California in the Gold Rush of 1849 and settled in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. They didn't strike it rich, but they built a life rooted in cattle and timber while hunting for the mother lode.

Sometime in the 1860s, ranchers began moving cattle and sheep from the valley to federal lands in the mountains. The range was vast and steep, mostly big timber and browse, but the cattle adapted and did well. By the time allotments and permits were issued by the USFS in the early 1900s, my family had already been moving cattle to the mountains for about 40 years.

There are over 22,000 permittees operating on federal lands in the western states, managing over 240 million acres—150 million acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and 93 million acres of USFS land—of extensive landscapes that vary widely; alpine meadows, forests, deserts, sagebrush, grasslands and everything in between. Each allotment requires an understanding of the land, grounded in the generational experience of the ranching stewards.

Many people don't realize that western states are predominantly owned by the federal government; over half of California, two-thirds of Oregon and 85% of Nevada. That pattern of ownership is typical of the West. Federal lands are administered by the BLM (Department of Interior) and the USFS (Department of Agriculture). Navigating bureaucracies is complicated, challenging and can be frustrating. The agencies are mandated to follow complex policies that are not suited to diverse conditions. Agency policy manuals are often written with a "one size fits all" style, which sometimes limits the permittee and the agency from doing what's best for the land.

Grazing on federal lands has never been simple. By law, the land has a multiple-use mandate which includes livestock grazing as a primary use, along with timber, mining (oil and gas), hunting and other types of recreation. Balancing those sometimes competing interests has never been easy. I have minutes from cattlemen's meetings in the 1920s that were held in our area, recording the occasionally heated conflicts with ranchers and the USFS. There were arguments about time of use, numbers of cattle, fencing, trespass, miners and ranchers, and the list goes on. Sound familiar?

I lived (and in some ways, still do!) through the constant threat of those who didn't want cattle on federal lands. "Cattle free by '93!" dominated the headlines in the livestock sector for over a decade. There are extremist groups who work every day to remove livestock from federal lands. Yet, we are still here. That doesn't mean the challenges go away, but it is a reminder that it has never been simple. The Endangered Species Act, predators, water, fire, wild horses, lawsuits … there is no shortage of problems. And now there are growing concerns with the placement of solar, wind and data centers on federal lands.

But I believe in the resilience of public lands ranchers. For over 150 years, ranchers have cared for the land and sustainably grazed the public domain. We are essential to the health of the ecosystem including fuels reduction, developing water sources for wildlife, road and fence maintenance, and the economic health of rural communities. In many cases, we are the only ones caring for and improving public lands.

The challenges continue, yet I remain an optimist. There is growing recognition of the value of grazing, particularly in fuel reduction, as well as protecting biodiversity, while at the same time sustaining rural communities. I am confident in the ability of ranchers to meet the moment. We continue to do the right thing for the livestock, the land and the people who live in the small towns that dot the West.

I just returned from the 58th Annual Meeting of the Public Lands Council (PLC) held in Colorado. PLC represents all public lands grazers. The presentations and engagement from BLM and USFS leadership, as well as contributions from permittees, were extremely positive as we face so many challenges. I was honored to be selected to join PLC as a member of the officer team for the coming year. PLC is our voice in Washington, D.C., tackling some of the most pressing issues that we face as public lands ranchers.

I look forward to learning from the experiences of so many of you and sharing that information here. — **DR. DAVE DALEY**

GUEST OPINION

RAISING BEEF IS JUST THE FIRST STEP

My life has always revolved around cattle. My late father was a large animal veterinarian, and he bought Cow Track Ranch in California's Nicasio Valley in 1986. Now, I'm a second-generation rancher, raising Angus beef, some of which we sell directly to the guests at our on-site Airbnb. We want people who stay with us to experience what ranch life is all about, including where their food comes from.

Selling direct to consumers has changed the way I think about marketing beef. I've learned customers are looking for more than just a cut of meat. I quickly discovered that a beef sale with a handshake goes far, and that selling beef is often less about convincing someone to eat more meat and more about building trust through transparency and education.

Becoming a member of the Cattlemen's Beef Board and serving on the Beef Checkoff's Promotion Committee has shown me the same basic principle holds true on a much larger scale. Before, I naturally thought about beef primarily through the producer lens—genetics, animal care, quality, sustainability and everything involved in raising cattle.

Now, I'm more aware of everything that happens between the ranch and the consumer and about the business decisions restaurants and retailers must make. Before they put more beef on the menu or new cuts in the meat case, they're weighing price, supply, margins, consumer preferences, menu trends and what will ultimately drive a purchase.

Those decisions should matter to cattle producers because they determine whether beef is even presented as an option. We can raise an exceptional product, but if beef isn't featured on the menu or in the meat case, we lose an opportunity to connect with consumers.

That's why the Beef Checkoff funds the Channel Marketing program at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. The Channel Marketing team works directly with not only restaurants and retailers, but also distributors, manufacturers and even e-commerce platforms. We're talking names like Walmart, Sysco, Costco, McDonald's and others. Together, these businesses help determine the beef products consumers ultimately see and have the opportunity to choose.

Channel Marketing uses market research, beef expertise and marketing resources to help partners better understand, market and sell beef, keeping it visible in the marketplace.

Sometimes the Checkoff's work involves solving a business problem—beef costs are high, so what other cuts or applications could work? Sometimes it's creating new opportunities—what new beef menu items could appeal to this restaurant's customers?

Recently, a burger chain wanted to expand its offerings and introduce new, high-quality menu items. They weren't sure what to offer and how to make it fit with their current menu. The Channel Marketing team developed six new menu concepts during an on-site culinary ideation session, drawing on emerging trends, consumer preferences and relevant cuts that made sense for the chain.

These partnerships go beyond simply "promoting beef." They're about understanding a partner's business, customers and challenges and finding beef solutions that make sense.

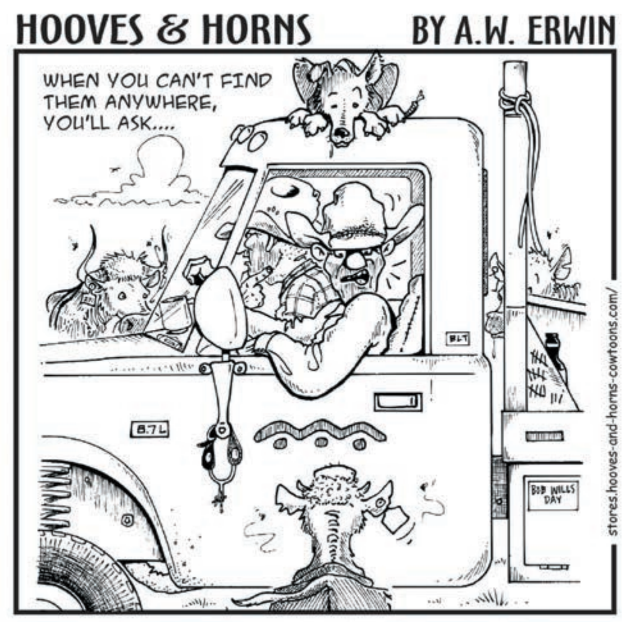
That can mean helping a partner overcome a barrier that could otherwise result in fewer beef offerings. When one foodservice partner faced higher beef costs, the Channel Marketing team helped identify alternative cuts that could work in existing dishes while addressing cost concerns.

Right now, that kind of problem solving is especially important. When prices are high, beef must earn its place in the meat case and on the menu. Businesses are under pressure to maintain margins while still giving their customers the products and experiences they want. That's where beef's versatility can be especially valuable, giving restaurants, retailers and consumers more options beyond the most familiar cuts.

Personally, I've really come to enjoy marketing unfamiliar cuts to our ranch guests, encouraging them to think creatively and step outside the norm in their own kitchens. Whether it's a producer like me selling direct to a consumer or the Beef Checkoff working with restaurants and retailers nationwide, introducing lesser-known cuts and demonstrating beef's versatility is a great way to showcase its value.

I think my fellow cattle producers might be surprised at just how much work goes into connecting beef with the decision-makers at the diner down the street or the grocery store in the next town.

As producers, our job starts with raising great beef. But creating demand also requires making sure consumers continue having compelling opportunities to choose it. — **Melissa Daniels, Nicasio, CA**



"Where's yer Mom an'that Silly Ol'Aunt Becky?

OBITUARY

Skylar Houston; 1967-2026

Skylar Houston, a lifelong Weld County, CO, rancher, respected cattleman, agricultural leader, brother, uncle and friend, passed away to be with his Lord and Savior on Sept. 7.

Skylar was born Dec. 19, 1967, in Denver, CO, the youngest of four children born to Ben and Nita Houston. He was raised on his family's ranch in Weld County, where agriculture, cattle and the values of hard work and responsibility became part of his life from an early age.

Growing up, Skylar was active in 4-H and FFA and showed market steers and breeding heifers at the Weld County Fair and the National Western Stock Show. Those early experiences helped shape a lifelong commitment to agriculture and the cattle industry.

Skylar graduated from Valley High School in Gilcrest, CO, and went on to attend the University of Northern Colorado, where he earned a bachelor's degree in psychology in 1990.

After college, Skylar began his professional career in the paralegal field in Denver. His work included involvement in matters related to the development of environmental regulations affecting feedlots and the agricultural industry. Although that experience gave him a unique understanding of the regulatory side of agriculture, his strongest connection remained with the land, cattle and the family operation in Weld County.

Skylar ultimately returned to the ranch and devoted his life to agriculture. Over the years, he became a highly knowledgeable and respected cattleman whose understanding of livestock, feeding, agricultural markets and the broader cattle industry was valued by those who knew and worked with him.

His involvement in agriculture extended well beyond the family ranch. Skylar was engaged with agricultural organizations, producers and industry leaders and took an active interest in the issues affecting cattlemen and rural communities. He also participated in international agricultural tours, visiting agricultural operations in other parts of the world, exchanging ideas with producers and bringing those experiences and perspectives back home.

Skylar took great pride in Weld County and in the agricultural community that shaped his life. He valued the relationships he developed through ranching and the cattle business and enjoyed the friendships that came with a lifetime spent working alongside other farmers, ranchers and cattlemen.

He also maintained many friendships that reached back to his school years. A number of the friends Skylar grew up with and graduated with remained close throughout his life. Those lifelong friendships were important to him, and many of those same friends remained present and supportive through his final days.

Skylar's family was deeply important to him. The loss of his sister, Pam, earlier this year profoundly affected him. His oldest sister, Diane, remained a quiet and steadfast presence in his life, always there for him when needed. That devotion continued through his final days, when she remained closely by his side.

Skylar was preceded in death by his parents, Ben and Nita; his sister, Pam; his brother, Scott (Kim); and his nephew, Zach. He is survived by his sister, Diane (Richard) Hergert; Diane's children, Travis (Amy), Tawnya (John) and Josh (Jami); Pam's children, Megan (Brent) and Taylor (Bear); and Scott's children, Brandy (Mike) and Tanner and their families.

Skylar will be remembered for his humor and loyalty, the relationships he maintained over a lifetime, and the strong connection he felt to his family, his ranch and the Weld County agricultural community.

For those who knew him best, Skylar's life cannot be separated from the land, the cattle, the people and the traditions of Weld County agriculture. It was the world he grew up in, the work he continued and the legacy he carried throughout his life.

He will be deeply missed by his family, his lifelong friends and the many people throughout the agricultural community whose lives he touched.

Memorial gifts may be made to "UNC Scholarship Fund," "CSU Scholarship Fund" or "National Western Stock Show Scholarship Fund" and sent in care of Young's Funeral Service, 102 E. Charlotte Street, Johnstown, CO 80534.

Letters to the editor: Letters for publication must be no longer than 675 words and must include the writer's name, location and phone number. Phone numbers will not be published. Letters may be shortened for space requirements. Obituaries must be no longer than 700 words. Send a letter to the editor or obituary by emailing editorial@wlj.net or mailing to Western Livestock Journal, Attn: Editorial Dept., P.O. Box 20605, Oklahoma City, OK 73156.

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USDA to bring more states into meat inspection programs

In mid-September, Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins announced USDA will begin an initiative to help states start or expand their meat inspection programs in partnership with the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS).

The move builds on President Donald Trump's earlier September executive order intended to support ranchers and promote market competition.

A total of 31 states currently operate State Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) programs and 11 participate in the Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) program. Participating states have expressed that high start-up costs can deter states from initiating a state meat inspection program.

The newly introduced Stand-Up Program intends to remove high start-up costs so more very small- and mid-size processors can get inspected, according to a USDA news release. The program will provide up to $50 million in new funding to help states start or expand their own meat inspection programs with FSIS.

"Too many states have wanted a food inspection program of their own and could not get past the start-up costs," Rollins said. "Now they can. Food safety standards will not move, and more state programs mean more local processing, more competition for the rancher's cattle, and more American meat on American tables."

State MPI programs must operate "at least equal to" federal food safety standards. Enrolled plants can then sell throughout the state. States with MPI programs are eligible to join the CIS program but must prove their inspection meets federal standards. The CIS program allows state-inspected plants to sell across state lines.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) said that while additional resources are needed and welcomed through the Stand-Up Program, livestock producers "need USDA to make progress on the real and persistent hurdles state meat inspection programs face."

The group noted that high regulatory and compliance costs have been barriers for state participation. In addition, labor challenges in the processing sector continue to create challenges and uncertainty around efforts to diversify processing options, NCBA said.

The following states participate in the CIS program: Indiana, Iowa, Georgia, Maine, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Vermont and Wisconsin.

The following states participate in State MPI programs: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

Shortly after the Stand-Up Program's launch, USDA announced that New Mexico was joining 30 other states with an approved State MPI program.

"New Mexico's participation expands local inspection capacity, enhances food safety oversight, and boosts market access for small and very small meat and poultry processors while maintaining strong national standards," USDA said. — **Anna Miller Fortozo, *WLJ* managing editor**

Non-ultraprocessed food labels spread as debate continues

The push to identify ultra-processed foods (UPF) is gaining ground in grocery aisles and state government, even as the industry argues there is still no widely accepted definition of what makes a food ultra-processed.

The Non-GMO Project announced more than 300 products from 23 brands have now earned the company's Non-UPF Verified label, a significant increase since the certification program launched about nine months ago.

Verified products now span 15 food and beverage categories and include products from brands such as Simple Mills, Chomps and Blue Diamond. Another 41 brands are seeking verification, according to the organization.

The program is also expanding its efforts to reach consumers through an app that lets shoppers scan a barcode on packaged food to determine whether it is Non-UPF Verified.

The growth comes as California moves toward its own certification program. State lawmakers unanimously passed Assembly Bill 2244, which would establish a voluntary Non-Ultraprocessed Certified seal administered by the California Department of Public Health.

Under the bill, foods meeting the state's standards could carry a "Non-UPF Certified" seal. Products considered ultra-processed foods of concern or restricted school foods would not qualify. Certification agents would have to be state-accredited by June 1, 2029.

The bill is awaiting a decision by Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) by Sept. 30.

At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and USDA are also working to establish the government's first definition of ultra-processed foods. HHS announced Aug. 10 that it had submitted the proposed definition for final review after receiving input from thousands of researchers, consumers, industry representatives and other stakeholders.

HHS said studies have linked high consumption of ultra-processed foods with chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes and heart disease, but acknowledged that the lack of a standardized federal definition has made research more difficult to compare.

That lack of agreement is central to concerns raised by the Meat Institute.

In a statement, the organization argued that no single, science-based definition of ultra-processed food exists and that existing approaches can place foods with very different nutritional profiles in the same category.

The Meat Institute also noted that meat and poultry products containing more than one ingredient already fall under USDA requirements, including federal standards governing how certain products are defined and labeled.

The organization warned that another labeling requirement could add compliance, packaging and legal costs without necessarily giving consumers clearer information about a food's nutritional value.

With private certification expanding, California developing its own seal and federal agencies working on a definition, the debate over ultra-processed foods is increasingly moving toward how those foods are identified at the grocery store. — **Charles Wallace, *WLJ* contributing editor**


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California Meat Summit will explore direct meat marketing

Ranchers, processors and buyers from across the West will have an opportunity to connect and explore direct-to-consumer meat marketing during the first North Fork California Meat Summit, Oct. 15-16 in Siskiyou County, CA.

The University of California (UC) Cooperative Extension, Siskiyou County and the Siskiyou Economic Development Council are co-hosting the two-day event, designed to bring together different parts of the regional meat supply chain. Organizers said the summit will focus particularly on ranchers and the challenges and opportunities involved in producing, processing and marketing meat in the region.

The California event is part of a multi-state meat summit effort that began in North Carolina several years ago and is supported by the National Meat Summits Steering Committee. The summits are intended to strengthen connections among producers, processors, distributors and buyers while helping participants better understand the steps involved in moving meat from the ranch to the consumer.

This will be the first summit held in California, and organizers are encouraging participation from throughout the West, particularly Northern California, southern Oregon and western Nevada.

The program will include a ranch tour at Jenner Family Beef in Etna along with tours of Marble Mountain Meats in Fort Jones and StarHarvest processing facilities in Yreka. Attendees will also hear from Mary Heffernan of Five Marys Ranch.

A direct-to-consumer business planning session will be led by Dan Macon, UC Cooperative Extension livestock and natural resources advisor, and Dr. Kasey DeAtley, professor of animal and range sciences at California State University, Chico. A panel will also examine the development and long-term operation of rancher-led cooperatives, featuring Cody Hopkins of Grass Roots Farmers' Cooperative and Morgan Doran, UC Cooperative Extension livestock and natural resources advisor.

Other activities include a tradeshow featuring local direct-to-consumer ranchers and industry resources, networking opportunities, a meat-cutting demonstration and an on-ranch dinner featuring Siskiyou County producers.

Registration is $150 and includes tours, transportation, educational sessions, networking activities and meals. Twenty sponsored registrations are available for qualifying ranchers through support from the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program and California Cattle Council. Dinner-only tickets, which include the tradeshow, networking hour and panel discussion, are also available.

Registration details are available at northforkmeatsummit.com. — **Charles Wallace, *WLJ* contributing editor**

Retaining ownership to get paid for selection

The price at an auction market is the market's estimate of what a calf is worth that day, based on the information buyers can see and trust. There are no real visual indications of the calf's genetic potential for growth, feed efficiency or carcass value. Calves sired by proven sires may have the potential for high rates of gain, improved feed efficiency and exceptional marbling and carcass quality.

However, if the calf is sold at weaning, there is no way for the cow-calf producer to capture that potential value unless they take steps to market their genetics.

A two-year comparison makes this point exceptionally well.

In this example, calves were sired by an Angus bull either by artificial insemination (AI) from top bulls in the breed or natural service clean-up bulls purchased from reputable Angus seedstock producers.

Calves produced through timed AI were 69 pounds heavier at weaning than natural-service calves, but much of that difference came from being born earlier. The adjusted 205-day weaning weights for AI-sired calves were only 9 lbs. heavier than calves from natural service sires. As ownership continued, however, differences in performance associated with genetics became greater.

AI-sired steers were 109 lbs. heavier as long yearlings after grazing wheat pasture. During finishing, the AI-sired steers gained faster (3.74 lbs. versus 3.56 lbs. per day) and produced 50-lb. heavier carcasses. The analysis estimated $150/head greater net return from the AI-sired steers, including $82 less feed, using prices and costs from that time.

Recent Oklahoma State University (OSU) research underscores why "true value" must be defined carefully. Steers that were sired by bull selected for high growth based on yearling weight EPDs had the same weaning weight as moderate-growth contemporaries. By harvest, high-growth steers were 73 lbs. heavier, produced 26 lbs. more hot carcass weight and reached harvest seven days sooner.

However, they also ate more feed and had lower feed efficiency. Moderate-growth steers tended to produce more USDA Prime quality grade carcasses. Selection for growth added productivity, but it did not produce universal superiority in feed efficiency or carcass quality.

To get our calves' full value, we first must create value by early castration and dehorning, a sound health program and nutrition that allows genetics to be expressed. Second, capture value by marketing uniform groups, documenting genetics and management. Finally, choose an marketing outlet where buyers value superior genetics or retaining ownership when feed resources, health, finances, risk tolerance and the market outlook justify it.

Retained ownership reveals calves' real value, to benefit from it you need to know where the value of your calves is, prove it and sell where buyers recognize it. — **Paul Beck, OSU Department of Animal and Food Sciences**

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.)

Oct. 1 – The 2026 California Cattlemen's Association Scholarships applications are now open. For more information about and to access the scholarship application, visit calcattlemen.org/scholarship.

Oct. 9 – Applications are now being accepted for the final year of the W.D. Farr Scholarship program, which helps graduate students pursue careers in meat science, animal science and related fields. Application details: tinyurl.com/5n9ytxsh.

Oct. 9 – Students pursuing careers in the beef industry are encouraged to apply for the 2027 CME Group Beef Industry Scholarship through the National Cattlemen's Foundation. Details: nationalcattlemensfoundation.org.

Grazing plan would increase grazing acres, AUMs

CANYONLANDS
(from page 1)

process in 2016 and submitted a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in 2019. The agency's final EIS was released in late August.

Plan's preferred alternative

The Louse Canyon Geographical Management Area (LCGMA) comprises Ambrose Maher, Anderson, Campbell, Louse Canyon Community and Star Valley Community allotments in the southeastern corner of Malheur County, OR, and the Little Owyhee and Quinn River allotments in the northeastern corner of Humboldt County, NV. The LCGMA occupies nearly 540,000 acres of public land.

BLM's preferred alternative, Alternative A, includes restoration actions, livestock administration acts and grazing permit renewals. Restoration and management actions were proposed to address standards that were not met due to factors other than existing livestock grazing, as well as to facilitate improved ecological conditions after grazing management changes are made and meet greater sage-grouse plan directions.

The preferred alternative would allow grazing across 529,175 acres with up to 36,483 permitted animal unit months (AUMs). This is an increase from the no action alternative, which would authorize grazing across 526,513 acres and the average use of 27,047 AUMs.

"The strategy is supported by investments in infrastructure and is designed to be responsive to changing ecological conditions, ensuring both ecological and operational goals are met," the plan read. "In summary, Alternative A represents a robust, adaptive management framework that leverages restoration, flexible grazing, and infrastructure improvements to achieve long-term rangeland health and habitat objectives."

Changes to the agency's preferred alternative included increasing the total AUMs by about 500 to prevent any net AUM loss for permittees, decreasing the acres of sagebrush thinning, and maximizing future management flexibility by including the full suite of water developments analyzed in the final EIS.

Rangeland restoration and management actions include sagebrush habitat restoration, riparian/meadow habitat restoration, and range improvements that facilitate livestock administrative actions such as fence construction, water developments, livestock crossing routes and livestock range improvement modifications.

As part of the livestock administration actions, BLM will relocate livestock water troughs from riparian areas to upland sites. Fence construction and water developments such as new wells, pipelines, storage tanks and troughs will also be implemented to minimize impacts on sensitive resources. Temporary livestock crossing permits will be issued to allow movement of livestock between permitted areas, with strict terms to minimize impacts on sage grouse and other sensitive resources.

Alternative A would allow the installation of either 26.9 miles of fence, 334 miles of trailing routes and water developments; or 143 miles of pipeline, 70 troughs, 10 water wells and nine storage tanks. The no action alternative would not include any action.

Grazing permits are issued with flexibility to adjust the season of use and livestock numbers in response to precipitation, restoration progress and resource objectives. Active use AUMs are set based on historic averages, utilization limits and trend data. Additional AUMs may be activated after range improvements are completed and resource objectives are met.

A 15-day protest period on the FEIS was authorized beginning Aug. 21.

Western Watersheds Project formally protested the proposed decision, claiming that cattle have overgrazed and damaged riparian areas in the area since the '90s.

"Livestock interests have been trying to expand high-impact cattle grazing into intact sagebrush in sensitive sage grouse and pygmy rabbit habitat in this part of the Owyhee for decades," said Adam Bronstein, Oregon director with Western Watersheds Project. "Instead of lessening the impacts, BLM wants to spread out the problem and sacrifice the remaining wildlands across this spectacular and biodiverse landscape." — **Anna Miller Fortozo, *WLJ* managing editor**

NM prepares for Santa Teresa reopening

New Mexico officials ready Santa Teresa cattle crossing for Sept. 24 reopening

As USDA approaches the one-month mark since reopening the Douglas, AZ, land port to Mexican cattle, New Mexico officials are preparing to reopen their own port, the Santa Teresa livestock port of entry, according to the state's top ag official.

New Mexico Commissioner of Agriculture Jeff Witte told DTN at the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) meeting on Sept. 15 that his agency and the state's Livestock Board have learned from the Douglas site reopening last month and are now preparing for their own reopening.

At full capacity, Santa Teresa can handle between 500,000 and 700,000 head annually in both directions, Witte said.

Witte said he planned to tour and inspect the facility with Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins and industry representatives on Sept. 17. A roundtable was also to be held on Sept. 17.

"This is just an initial inspection," Witte said. "If everything lines up, the target date has been announced as the 24th of September."

In a speech at the NASDA meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 16, Rollins confirmed her plans to visit the Santa Teresa livestock port on Thursday. "I'm headed to New Mexico later tonight to go as we prepare to open the second port ... I think what you all (Arizona) have proved over the last 20-plus days in Douglas is that this is manageable and doable."

After Rollins visited the port on Thursday, she confirmed the planned Sept. 24 opening date.

Witte said the Santa Teresa facility is installing cattle identification technology and working with the Cattlemen's Union of Chihuahua, which operates on both sides of the border, as well as USDA, to prepare.

USDA has said it is taking a phased approach to reopening southern border ports for livestock trade following extended closures tied to New World screwworm (NWS) concerns. The department had planned to allow 30 days of implementation before evaluating biosecurity measures and considering the next reopening. The Douglas, AZ, port of entry reopened to Mexican cattle imports on Aug. 24.

The Columbus, NM, livestock port of entry also remains closed.

In previous news releases, USDA noted, "The reopening timeline will remain flexible and may be adjusted based on Mexico's progress in meeting Action Plan milestones and addressing critical issues."

The initial flow of cattle at Santa Teresa will be 750 head per day, Witte said. "They're going to start slow."

Santa Teresa was closed to cattle since May 11, 2025, when USDA shut the crossing over concerns about the spread of NWS. — **Jake Zajkowski, DTN ag policy editor**

USDA ends Dairy Checkoff funding for dairy environmental initiatives

USDA is ending Dairy Checkoff funding for environmental, social and governance (ESG) initiatives following a lawsuit from a group representing Wisconsin dairy farmers.

On Sept. 17, USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins announced the decision, saying it aligns research and promotion activities within the department's priorities and the mission of checkoff programs.

"American dairy producers, cattle ranchers, and farmers pay checkoff assessments so those dollars can build demand for their products—not bankroll radical climate agendas that raise costs and constrain production," Rollins said in a news release.

The move comes following a lawsuit from the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty, representing three Wisconsin dairy farmers. The group filed suit in June against USDA, claiming the farmers were "forced to subsidize the Dairy Checkoff" that subsidized private organizations promoting an "ESG-focused ideological agenda around the world."

Abby Swan, one of the farmers represented in the lawsuit, said, "Dairy farmers like me are being forced to subsidize private organizations pushing climate change research and ESG mandates for our farms, even though the Dairy Checkoff program is just supposed to market and promote our milk."

In USDA's mid-September announcement, the department said checkoff funds are only authorized for promotion, research and nutrition education that strengthen dairy markets. The checkoff-established Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy has "pursued extensive ESG initiatives, including greenhouse-gas and net-zero targets," USDA said.

"USDA's action ends checkoff support for those ESG-related projects while allowing necessary administrative functions that do not advance such agendas," the department continued.

The move also directs the Agricultural Marketing Service to ensure no research and promotion funds in other commodity checkoffs advance ESG mandates.

"American producers substantially fund these checkoff programs through mandatory assessments," USDA said. "Those funds must serve their statutory purpose of strengthening markets for agriculture—not advance misguided external ESG agendas that can raise costs or potentially constrain production." — **Anna Miller Fortozo, *WLJ* managing editor**

CALENDAR

COMING EVENTS

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

Dec. 2-4 – Registration is now open for the California Cattlemen's Association and California CattleWomen Convention and California Cattle Industry Tradeshow in Reno NV. Visit calcattlemen.org/convention2026 to register and make your hotel room reservations.

LEGAL LEDGER

BLM invests in fertility control for wild horses

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is investing $30 million from the USDA into expanding fertility control efforts for wild horses and burros. "The USDA investment will allow the BLM to increase field capacity, train and deploy more fertility control applicators, and expand vaccine delivery across remote herd areas," the agency said. The move comes following a roundtable with groups of stakeholders including horse advocacy groups and government agencies. BLM also announced it will continue to conduct horse and burro gathers across the West throughout fiscal year 2027. "These operations are designed to rescue animals from deteriorating range conditions, protect remaining horses and burros from resource shortages, and restore balance on drought stricken landscapes," the agency said. BLM also recently updated its bill of sale terms to "better protect wild horses and burros" placed in its wild horse and burros sales program. The new language in the bill of sale "clearly requires" buyers to certify "they will not knowingly, carelessly, or negligently sell or transfer a BLM animal to anyone who may turn the animal or its remains into commercial products."

USDA launches AgInsights for data visualization

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service recently launched a new data dissemination tool called AgInsights as part of NASS' modernization strategy. The AgInsights applications offers "streamlined information dissemination, increased operational efficiency, and a more dynamic, interactive experience so producers have easier navigation and access to the latest agricultural data." USDA said the application will bridge the digital divide and ensure there is equitable access to critical data for all producers. Users may use the tool to view tabular data, charts and maps through a single web-based interface. There are also added functionalities to help users interpret and digest data more easily. To access the tool, visit aginsights.nass.usda.gov.

BLM gathers horses in northwest Colorado

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) began an 11-day gather operation Sept. 19 in and around the Sand Wash Basin Herd Management Area (HMA) in northwest Colorado. The HMA is estimated to sustainably support 163-362 horses, but BLM estimated the total population at 505 horses. A total of 300 horses were planned for gather, with about 245 horses to be removed from the range and 55 to be returned to the HMA, of which 22 were to be treated with fertility control treatment. As of Sept. 22, a total of 138 horses had been gathered.

USDA announces companion animal oversight

The USDA recently partnered with federal agencies to determine actions to implement new companion animal oversight. "Today's announcement will lay out new standards to improve animal welfare, deploy new training and staff to continuously monitor facilities under our care, and build further public awareness to protect our companion animals," said Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins Sept. 21 following a roundtable. The department will put forth a regulatory proposal in 2027 to strengthen Animal Welfare Act standards for dogs, issue regulatory refreshers to dog breeding facilities, deploy the Animal Protection Bureau to identify unlicensed or unauthorized operations, increase inspector general staffing and pursue action against those operating against the Animal Welfare Act.

CO invests $13M in conservation stewardship

The Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) secured $13.7 million from the Natural Resources Conservation Service to expand markets for Colorado agricultural commodities grown with conservation practices. The Advancing Markets for Producers program (formerly known as the Partnership for Climate Smart Commodities) provides funding in the form of direct-to-producer grants between $20,000 and $300,000. The funding will be directed through existing CDA grant programs, which includes Colorado Proud, Colorado State Conservation Board grants, Climate Resilience Grant Program and others. For more information, visit ag.colorado.gov.

USFWS to draft new critical habitat plan for fox

A federal judge recently ruled that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) violated the Endangered Species Act when it did not designate critical habitat in California for the Sierra Nevada red fox. The agency listed a Sierra Nevada distinct population segment as endangered for the species in 2021 but declined to designate any critical habitat. A judge in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California ruled in mid-September that the species needs additional protected areas to recover. USFWS will be required to draft a new critical habitat determination for the fox.

USDA invests $26M into value-added projects

USDA invested $26.5 million into value-added agricultural programs through the USDA Value Added Producer Grant Program. Entities may use the grant funds to develop value-added agricultural products, conduct market research and implement business and marketing strategies. USDA awarded $26.5 million to 194 agricultural projects across the country, including $11.6 million to 80 beef producer projects. "This program helps our producers eliminate the middleman, create homegrown products from the crops and animals they grow, and put more money in their pockets and their local communities. It's a win all around and we're glad to be a part of it," said Under Secretary for Rural Development Glen Smith. For more information, visit rd.usda.gov.

STORY SHORTS

AICA launches Power of Yield calculator

The American-International Charolais Association (AICA) has launched a new calculator that shows what red meat yield means in dollars and cents across the beef industry. The Power of Yield Calculator combines carcass composition differences with updated USDA boxed beef values, allowing users to compare estimated values for Angus, Charolais-sired and straightbred Charolais carcasses at different weights. Users enter a hot carcass weight, and the calculator estimates the value of saleable red meat based on differences in muscling, fat and bone. AICA said the tool builds on earlier research showing that cutability can create additional value beyond carcass weight alone. As cattle are fed to heavier weights and beef values rise, the calculator is intended to help producers evaluate not only how many pounds cattle produce, but the value of those pounds. For more information, visit charolaisusa.com.

Two cattle hauler incidents disrupt traffic

Two recent cattle hauler incidents in Idaho and Colorado brought first responders together to contain livestock and manage traffic. On Aug. 31, an Idaho Transportation Department inspector spotted a cattle hauler on fire near the East Boise Port. The driver escaped, but cattle remained trapped inside. Fire crews opened the trailer, allowing responders to move the animals into a temporary pen away from the interstate. In Colorado, a cattle hauler carrying 48 head rolled into the median of Interstate 76 east of Brush Sept. 15, sending cattle onto the highway. Ten cattle were killed, 29 survived and nine were initially unaccounted for. Several vehicles struck loose cattle. The truck driver and another motorist suffered minor injuries, while the crash temporarily closed I-76 in both directions.

Star Meat recalls uninspected meat products

Star Meat Delivery Inc. of Lucama, NC, is recalling about 167,639 pounds of raw pork, beef and goat products produced without federal inspection, according to USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service. The products carry a false USDA inspection mark with establishment number "EST. 1363," which does not have a federal grant of inspection. FSIS said any product carrying that number should be considered misbranded and unsafe to eat. The meat was produced before Sept. 22 and shipped to A&D Foods in Georgia for distribution to retailers and restaurants nationwide. Some individual packages may carry labels added by retailers rather than the false establishment number. No illnesses or injuries have been confirmed.

USDA models track NWS spread risks

USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) researchers are using predictive modeling to track where New World screwworm (NWS) could spread following recent U.S. cases and help guide surveillance and control efforts. ARS models combine ecological conditions, weather, historical outbreaks and artificial intelligence to identify areas where screwworm could become established. The information can help USDA determine where to position personnel, traps, aircraft and sterile flies. The models also support the Sterile Insect Technique by helping officials decide where and when to release sterile flies to disrupt reproduction. Kim Lohmeyer, director of ARS' Knipling-Bushland Livestock Insects Research Laboratory, said the models provide an early warning tool for surveillance and management decisions. However, she noted they cannot account for every scenario, including people moving infested animals. For the latest information and updates about New World screwworm, visit screwworm.gov.

UC Davis vet school reports record giving

The University of California (UC), Davis Weill School of Veterinary Medicine received a record $261.4 million in donations during fiscal year 2025-26. The school reported 8,024 contributions from 4,841 individuals, corporations and foundations, supporting veterinary research, student scholarships, public service and construction projects within its veterinary medical complex. The total included $120 million from Joan and Sanford I. Weill through the Weill Family Foundation and $75 million from Kathy Chiao and Ken Hao. Both gifts will help fund construction of a new small animal hospital. The Weill donation will also support enrollment growth, research and clinical facilities, and the school was renamed in recognition of the couple. Chiao and Hao's gift will support scholarships, research, veterinary care and access to care, with the new hospital carrying their names.

BLM plans Idaho aerial herbicide treatments

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is planning aerial herbicide treatments across about 27,135 acres in south-central Idaho to reduce wildfire risk and control invasive annual grasses. Working with the U.S. Wildland Fire Service, BLM will treat lands managed by the Jarbidge and Shoshone field offices in five counties. Treatments are scheduled from the second week of September through October, depending on weather and wildfire activity. BLM-approved herbicides will reduce fine fuels, maintain fuel breaks and help perennial vegetation recover after fires. Officials said the work is also intended to protect rangelands, wildlife habitat and watersheds.

BPOC approves Beef Checkoff funding for fiscal year 2027

The Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) will invest approximately $39.5 million into programs of beef promotion, research, consumer information, industry information, foreign marketing and producer communications during fiscal 2027, subject to USDA approval.

In action at the end of its Sept. 2-3 meeting in Denver, CO, the Beef Promotion Operating Committee (BPOC) approved Checkoff funding for a total of 12 "authorization requests"—or grant proposals—for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1. The committee, which includes 10 producers and importers from CBB and 10 producers from the Federation of State Beef Councils, also recommended full CBB approval of a budget amendment to reflect the split of funding between budget categories affected by their decisions.

Nine contractors and four subcontractors brought 13 authorization requests worth approximately $49.6 million to the BPOC, approximately $10.1 million more than the funds available from the CBB budget.

"Each year, our contractors bring forward strong ideas for reaching consumers, strengthening demand for beef and addressing the issues that matter to our industry," said Cheryl DeVuyst, chair of the CBB and the BPOC. "With limited Checkoff dollars available, our responsibility is to carefully evaluate those opportunities and invest in the programs we believe can deliver the greatest value for beef producers."

In the end, the BPOC approved proposals from eight national beef organizations for funding through the fiscal year 27 CBB budget, as follows:

- American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture: $750,000.
- CBB: $2,000,000.
- Meat Foundation: $750,000.
- Meat Import Council of America/Northeast Beef Promotion Initiative: $1,000,000.
- Meat Institute/New York Beef Council: $270,000.
- National Cattlemen's Beef Association: $26,050,000.
- United States Cattlemen's Association/Duke University/University of Florida: $598,000.
- United States Meat Export Federation: $8,100,000.

Broken out by budget component—as outlined by the Beef Promotion and Research Act of 1985—the fiscal year 27 Plan of Work for the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board budget includes:

- $9,270,000 for promotion programs, including beef and veal campaigns focusing on beef's nutritional value, eating experience, convenience and production.
- $9,598,000 for research programs focusing on pre- and post-harvest beef safety, scientific affairs, nutrition, sustainability, product quality, culinary technical expertise and consumer perceptions.
- $7,850,000 for consumer information programs, including Northeast influencer outreach and public relations initiatives, and national consumer public relations, including nutrition-influencer relations and work with primary- and secondary-school curriculum directors nationwide to get accurate information about the beef industry into classrooms of today's youth. Additional initiatives include outreach and engagement with food, culinary, nutrition and health thought leaders; media and public relations efforts; and supply chain engagement.
- $2,700,000 for industry information programs, including dissemination of accurate information about the beef industry to counter misinformation from other groups, as well as funding for Checkoff participation in the annual national industrywide symposium about antibiotic use. Additional efforts in this program area include beef advocacy training and issues/crisis management and response.
- $8,100,000 for foreign marketing and education, focusing on 13 regions, representing more than 90 countries around the world.
- $2,000,000 for producer communications, which includes investor outreach using national communications and direct communications to producers and importers about Checkoff results. Elements of this program include ongoing producer listening and analysis, industry collaboration and outreach, and continued development of a publishing strategy and platform and a state beef council content hub.

The full fiscal year 2027 CBB budget is approximately $43.9 million. Separate from the authorization requests, other expenses funded include $332,000 for program evaluation, $833,000 program development, $214,000 for Checkoff education resources, $540,000 for USDA oversight, $230,000 for state services, $200,000 for supporting services and litigation, and approximately $2 million for CBB administration. The fiscal year 2027 program budget represents an increase of 3.4%, or $1.5 million, from the $42.4 million fiscal year 26 budget.

For more information about the Beef Checkoff and its programs, including promotion, research, foreign marketing, industry information, consumer information and safety, contact CBB at 303-220-9890 or visit DrivingDemandForBeef.com. — **CBB**

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: 9/24/2026		Week Ago	Year Ago
Choice Fed Steers	221.53	▼	222.17	N/A
CME Feeder Index	336.98	▼	342.74	361.31
Boxed Beef Average	376.12	▲	372.15	371.97
Average Dressed Steers	350.75	▲	350.50	364.87
Live Slaughter Weight*	1,448	▲	1,446	1,422
Weekly Slaughter**	529,000	▲	505,000	552,000
Weekly Beef Production***	469.3	▲	448.0	481.7
Hide/Offal Value	15.11	▼	15.51	11.50
Corn Price	5.31	▼	5.37	4.28

*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
September 18	6,837	379.13	299	416.89	1,323	383.22	2,131	376.19	536	354.17	2,548	327.41
September 11	5,948	377.26	215	416.36	1,033	383.71	1,941	375.60	529	354.70	2,230	334.84
September 4	6,486	377.19	232	412.56	1,110	384.74	1,980	373.99	532	355.04	2,632	340.02
August 28	6,721	384.01	253	415.53	1,193	392.33	2,021	381.74	601	360.07	2,654	340.80

Cutouts — FED BOXED BEEF

DATE	CHOICE	SELECT	COW BEEF CUTOUT	50% LEAN	90% LEAN
September 24	376.12	352.10	317.79	90.80	416.42
September 23	377.31	352.34	323.16	84.08	410.26
September 22	378.89	357.85	328.34	85.60	N/A
September 21	376.35	355.77	329.42	83.41	419.83
September 18	371.94	353.26	286.55	87.63	436.15

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Live Cattle

	9/18	9/21	9/22	9/23	9/24	High*	Low*
Oct.	21593	22095	22148	22108	22080	25873	16853
Dec.	21663	22200	22268	22255	22298	25598	16668
Feb. '27	21735	22310	22380	22375	22445	25120	17005
Apr. '27	21823	22418	22485	22480	22570	25093	18068

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Feeder Cattle

	9/18	9/21	9/22	9/23	9/24	High*	Low*
Sep.	33358	33748	33820	33743	33773	38103	21920
Oct.	32350	33025	33160	33348	33458	38280	22268
Nov.	31800	32610	32743	32968	33133	38020	22460
Jan. '27	30893	31815	31900	32185	32400	37860	24118

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

FED CATTLE TRADE

	Head Count	Avg. Weight	Avg. Price
WEEKLY WEIGHTED AVERAGES			
Live FOB Steer	795	1,639	221.53
Live FOB Heifer	323	1,400	220.00
Dressed Del Steer	3,252	1,004	350.75
Dressed Del Heifer	844	886	350.00
SAME PERIOD LAST WEEK			
Live FOB Steer	2,768	1,590	222.17
Live FOB Heifer	480	1,487	223.00
Dressed Del Steer	7,294	1,020	350.50
Dressed Del Heifer	1,906	903	350.83
SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR			
Live FOB Steer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Live FOB Heifer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dressed Del Steer	2,260	987	364.87
Dressed Del Heifer	196	863	365.00

NATIONAL WEEKLY FED BEEF SLAUGHTER VOLUME: SEPTEMBER 20, 2026

	Domestic	Imported
Forward Contract	21,574	1,705
Formula	221,107	4,518
Negotiated Cash	74,025	114
Negotiated Grid	33,263	602
Packer Owned	8,742	N/A
Total	**358,711**	**6,939**

SLAUGHTER FORWARD CONTRACTS / FORWARD BEEF SALES

Delivery Month			
Sep. '26	86,305	Neg. Sales 0-21 days	1,798
Oct. '26	115,396	Neg. Sales 21+ days	1,131
Nov. '26	109,825	Formula sales	3,773
Dec. '26	93,253	Forward contract sales	134
Jan. '27	53,354	Domestic sales	5,809
		NAFTA Exports	75

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	213.94	-0.97
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	212.69	+0.25
Ontario Auctions		
Slaughter Steers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1300-1500 lbs	211.21	-3.04
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	210.03	-2.86
Slaughter Cows, Cutter and Utility 1-3, 1100-1400 lbs	127.03	-11.15

*Price comparison from one week ago.

Average feeder cattle prices (CND) for week ending Tuesday, September 22, 2026

Steers:	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Ontario
501-600 lbs	443.79	N/A	418.70
601-700 lbs	402.10	N/A	388.81
701-800 lbs	356.69	N/A	355.19
801-900 lbs	348.45	N/A	330.78
Heifers:			
401-500 lbs	453.49	N/A	435.57
501-600 lbs	388.62	N/A	373.23
601-700 lbs	361.05	N/A	333.07
701-800 lbs	330.51	N/A	327.51

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
	9/14/2026	**9/7/2026**		
Feeders	4,760	3,922	11,239	230,638

USDA WEEKLY IMPORTED FEEDER CATTLE

September 23, 2026

Mexico to United States Feeder Cattle Import Summary

Receipts EST: 3,000 **Week Ago EST: 2,750** **Year Ago Act: N/A**

Santa Teresa, NM -	Douglas, AZ -
N/A	Compared to Tuesday, steer calves and yearlings sold 5.00 higher. Heifers not well tested. Trade active, demand good. Supply consisted of steers weighing 500-800 lbs.

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	380-395
600-700 lbs	N/A	600-700 lbs	340-355
700-800 lbs	N/A	700-800 lbs	310-325

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

Selected Auctions Week Ending September 24, 2026

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

DATE MARKET		200-300 lb.	300-400 lb.	400-500 lb.	500-600 lb.	600-700 lb.	700-800 lb.	800 lb. -up	SLAUGHTER COWS SLAUGHTER BULLS	PAIRS REPLACEMENTS	
No report available Blackfoot, ID											NORTHWEST
September 17 Burley, ID	260		467-472 430	462 390	385-410			266 292-314	132-162 173-190		NORTHWEST
No report available Emmett, ID											NORTHWEST
September 19 Eugene, OR	1,231		300-485* 285-400*	330-430* 275-425*	300-405* 250-350*	230-360* 220-330*	210-295* 200-282*	220-278* 220-228*	130-161 184-190	2,050-4,000 1,300-2,700	NORTHWEST
September 21 Madras, OR	2,891		485-515 450-510	475-510 420-475	430-470 408-430	400-430 350-400	375-395 310-345	330-349	150-170 167-193		NORTHWEST
No report available Vale, OR											NORTHWEST
September 21 Davenport, WA	452		395-445 200-377.50	200-452.50 235-377.50	155-429 250-364	151-377 155-337.50	149-359 250-344.50	181-350 154-320	135-209 145-240	3,250	NORTHWEST
September 17 Toppenish, WA	1,242			405-455	384 352.50-375	345-377.50		185-269	145-158 165.50-197.50		NORTHWEST
September 17 Orland, CA	2,729			300-475 280-470	300-442 280-410	300-417 280-390	300-386 280-325	260-340 255-310	150-178 150-200		FARWEST
No report available Escalon, CA											FARWEST
September 21 Famoso, CA	212		395-480 320-440	350-450 340-415	340-430 320-405	325-380 310-335	290-346	270-328 260-320	120-220 115-181		FARWEST
September 23 Galt, CA	1,167			400-530 400-485	380-450 360-425	370-410 330-390	320-355 290-335	275-347 285-300	100-175 175-190	2,500-5,800	FARWEST
September 22 Turlock, CA	691		455-567.50 430-530	440-528 425-533	405-472 395-435	347-395 335-350	330-349 325-341	315-337 310-328	140-188 155-180		FARWEST
September 15 Salina, UT	1,327	505-622.50 395-500	400-550 370-480	380-485 345-425	360-442.50 330-380	330-387.50 275-344	300-325 225-290	237.50-305 182.50-290	125-151 165.50-235		FARWEST
September 21 Iowa	9,978	475-610	500-620 452.50-585	432.50-550 380-510	362.50-465 330-428	339-430 300-370	339-375 285-348.25	295-347.25 282-338	140-230 174-231		NORTH CENTRAL
September 22 Miles City, MT	425		550	447.50-455				287.50-317	107.50-162.50 150-185		NORTH CENTRAL
September 16 Bassett, NE	N/A				410	393 339.50-365	373-388.50 334-345	341.50-351 283-330.50			NORTH CENTRAL
No report available Ericson, NE											NORTH CENTRAL
No report available Imperial, NE											NORTH CENTRAL
No report available Kearney, NE											NORTH CENTRAL
September 18 Lexington, NE	2,183		575	476-512.50 417-454	445 362-433.50		340.50-349.75 325	314-367.50 284.50-319			NORTH CENTRAL
September 17 Ogallala, NE	2,752		580 530	492.50-535 440-475	432-458 385	353-409 353-373	377 325-338	278-349 264-336			NORTH CENTRAL
September 24 Valentine, NE	2,000				392	338-380	330-365	326-352.50 258-329			NORTH CENTRAL
September 18 Herreid, SD	2,686						373.25 323	330.25-373.25 301-315			NORTH CENTRAL
September 23 Torrington, WY	3,137		570-583 551-580	470-539 470-516	428-507 398-429	351 300-394	355-380.50 343-361	315-364 299-327			NORTH CENTRAL
No report available Willcox, AZ											SOUTH CENTRAL
No report available Colorado											SOUTH CENTRAL
September 16 La Junta, CO	538		452.50-540 402.50-455	377.50-465 352.50-412.50	352.50-392.50	322.50-340 320-327.50	302.50-327.50	275-282.50	140-154 171-191		SOUTH CENTRAL
No report available Loma, CO											SOUTH CENTRAL
September 23 Dodge City, KS	2,802		502-532 467.50-506	455-502 392.50-445	426-452.50 345-406	371-387 352-357.75	335-347 313-352	305-333.50 302-318	128-168 152-202	3,375-3,600 1,850-4,700	SOUTH CENTRAL
September 17 Pratt, KS	1,785		512.50-533 493	430-465 395-444	382.50-442 352-383	343-382.50 342-356	334-369 307-340	306-344.50 286-325	140-182 161-245	3,050 1,650-3,075	SOUTH CENTRAL
September 17 Salina, KS	2,406			455-457.50 410-450	420-450 356-383	358-403 317-354	346.50-377 314.75-340	293-360 286.50-325			SOUTH CENTRAL
September 23 Clovis, NM	1,659	425-525	498-602 417-502	407-476 357-428	354-422 317-395	328-355 292-405	305-332 300	253-295			SOUTH CENTRAL
September 23 El Reno, OK	7,474		440-490 435-520	400-510 385-465	385-440 332.50-385	342.50-412.50 315-360	327-366 300-330	264-353 265-310			SOUTH CENTRAL
September 23 McAlester, OK	1,200		430-660 425-530	400-495 359-403	363-400 330-374	349-380 311-370	300-378 285-330	310-330 275-300	137-160 166-195	3,250-3,700 1,800-3,600	SOUTH CENTRAL
September 22 Oklahoma City, OK	5,649		462-530 360-450	410-505 352.50-427.50	362-428 347-377	340-397 320-356	336-367 307-335.50	289-354.50 270-311			SOUTH CENTRAL
September 18 Cuero, TX	1,789	480-595 416-595	422-550 412-750	365-450 355-630	335-382 320-590	321-354 313-570	303-342 287-310		125-151 175-184	2,450-3,550	SOUTH CENTRAL
September 17 Dalhart, TX	2,024		500-510 407.50-450	440-485 375-412.50	375-450 340-375	337.50-382.50 358	315-351 317-337	270-335 240-290	124-154.50 147.50-193	2,200	SOUTH CENTRAL
September 17 San Angelo, TX	653		455-470 400-425	397.50-415 345-370	361-390 306-334	307-349 283-296	320	287-300	126-171 172-208	2,275-3,000 2,250-3,075	SOUTH CENTRAL
September 17 Tulia, TX	666		390-445	415-427 365-382	325-407 319-361	330-342 305-315	300-343.50		125-130		SOUTH CENTRAL
September 18 Alabama	7,078	540-620 435-570	455-550 390-482	410-480 355-475	366-425 324-395	325-374 270-340	320-330 250-315	300-310	120-171 160-198	2,500-4,950 1,370-4,400	EAST
September 21 Lexington, KY	1,118	495-570* 475-540*	457-555* 420-547*	410-492.50* 355-445*	380-442.50* 322.50-387*	290-395* 302.50-329*	330-345* 288-332.50*	323-331* 280*	120-148 166-198	2,150	EAST
September 21 Joplin, MO	6,194		540-600 480-530	425-515 390-465	400-475 350-425	375-412 335-365	331-364 315-340	289-355 278-308			EAST
September 21 Tennessee	6,360	450-500 400-450	410-505 350-450	360-483 320-430	330-422 280-379	318-375 277.50-353	310-354 275-327.50	230-340 222-290	128-184 160-210	2,475-4,500 1,400-3,800	EAST
September 21 Virginia	2,838	385	430-510 340-410	375-467.50 310-380	350-430 300-365	305-381 260-330	305-355 251-326.50	257.50-320 218-300			EAST
CANADA											
September 23 Lethbridge, Alberta	9,300		724-789 640-740	694-763 620-727	585-724 535-575	535-609 517-564	486-567 474-531	407-492 325-472	196-222 224-319		

The feedlot house of cards is collapsing

Figure 1. Feedlot Placements and Marketings

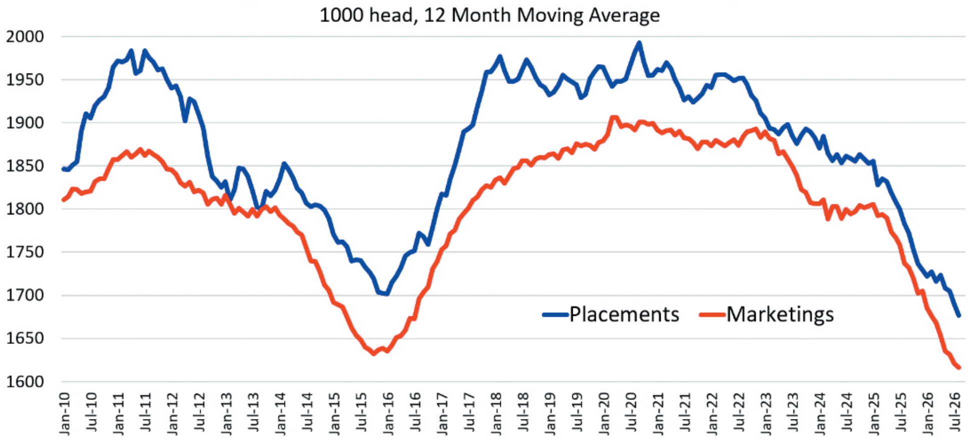
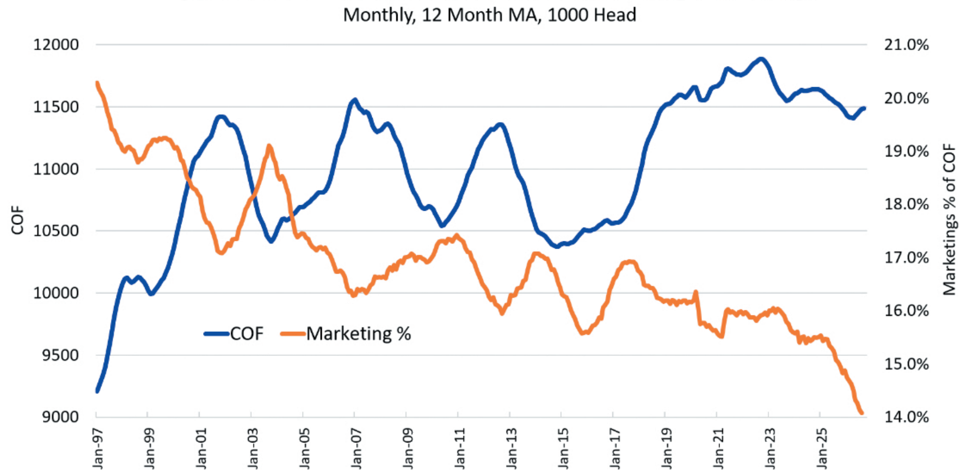


Figure 2. Cattle on Feed and Feedlot Marketing Percentage



The latest USDA Cattle on Feed report shows the September feedlot inventory at 11.163 million head, up 0.7% from one year ago. Monthly on-feed totals have been above year-earlier levels the past five months. Placements in August were down 9.2% year over year and August marketings were down 3.3%. Average feedlot placements and marketings have declined sharply in recent months and are now at record-low levels in available cattle on feed data (Figure 1).

Through the current cattle cycle, the calf crop peaked in 2018 at 36.29 million head and has declined for eight consecutive years, with the 2026 calf crop estimated at 32.5 million head, down 3.79 million head from the cyclical peak.

The decreases in average placements and marketings in Figure 1 are generally consistent with the declining calf crop.

However, cattle on feed inventories have remained relatively high in recent years (Figure 2).

Average feedlot inventories peaked in September 2022 and declined to a recent low of 11.4 million head in April 2026, down just 4%, or 480,000 head. Feedlot inventories have remained elevated due to a slow marketings rate.

The feedlot marketings rate—the percentage of inventory marketed each month—was at 16% in July 2023, having averaged 16% since 2018. The average marketings rate began declining and dropped below 15% in October 2025. Currently, the 12-month average marketing rate in August 2026 is a record low 14.1% (Figure 2). The low marketing rate has even allowed on-feed totals to be higher year over year for the last five months.

The sharp decrease in placements in July and August likely means that feedlot inventories will drop below year-earlier levels soon and for the foreseeable future.

Several consequences have emerged resulting from the ever-lower feedlot marketing rate. The low marketing rate is accomplished mostly by extending days on feed. This has led to a dramatic increase in carcass weight since 2023. For example, steer carcass weights increased 23 pounds in 2024, 24 lbs. in 2025 and are up 32 lbs. thus far in 2026.

From 1960-2022, the average annual increase in steer carcass weights was 4 lbs. per year. Though there have been individual years of significant increase in carcass weight, there have never been multiple years of much heavier carcasses. The roughly 75-lb. increase in steer carcass weights in the last three years is equivalent to the increase over the previous 18 years.

The dramatic increase in carcass weights has also resulted in sharply decreased average yield grades. Recent data shows that the average yield grade 4/5 percentage for the past 12 months is 29.2%, more than double the rate just six years ago. The increased incidence of bovine congestive heart failure has emerged as a major feedlot health issue and is very likely related to extremely heavy fed cattle weights.

Going forward, it will be increasingly difficult to maintain feedlot inventories. Feeder supplies are expected to tighten into 2027 with a smaller calf crop. Resumption of Mexican cattle imports may relieve some of the pressure, at least regionally. Delayed beef cow culling the past three years means that more replacement heifers will be needed just to stabilize the cow herd with additional heifers needed for any potential herd rebuilding.

The feedlot marketing rate may stay low but is unlikely to keep dropping as it has in the past 18 months. In that case, lower placements will push feedlot inventories lower in the coming months. — **Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension livestock marketing specialist**

Lean beef trim contracts trade unsteadily

MARKETS
(from page 1)

production loss nor has it been heavily posted on social media, CME cattle futures response to this week's real world developments today has been to trade both sides of steady except for lower October (live cattle)," Fish said.

Boxed beef prices closed higher. The Choice cutout gained about $4 to close at $376.12, and the Select cutout gained about 20 cents to close at $352.10.

"This past week the slaughter volume fell short of most estimates and will help stabilize box prices," the Cattle Report wrote on Wednesday. "Profits continue in the nation's processing plants as they have been able to hold input costs at bay aided by falling futures prices."

The lean beef trim contracts continue to trade lower. The 50% lean trim futures closed sharply lower, down more than $40 on the September contract to $95 and down $43 on the October contract to $89. The 90% lean trim contracts were modestly lower, down about 50 cents on the September contract and down about $2 to $424.45 on the October contract.

Feeder cattle

Feeder cattle futures closed higher over the week. The September contract gained about $3 to close at $337.62, and the October contract gained about $7 to close at $331.75.

The CME Feeder Cattle Index lost about $6 to close at $336.98.

Corn futures traded slightly lower over the week. The December contract lost 3 cents to close at $5.27, and the March contract also lost 3 cents to close at $5.41.

Missouri: Joplin Regional Stockyards in Carthage sold 6,194 head on Monday. Compared to a week earlier, feeder steers under 600 lbs. sold $10-25 higher. Heavier weights sold mostly steady. Feeder heifers under 550 lbs. sold $5-25 higher, with heavier weights selling from $10 lower to $8 higher. Benchmark steers averaging 782 lbs. sold from $331-358, averaging $339.95.

Oklahoma: Oklahoma National Stockyards in Oklahoma City sold 5,700 head on Monday. Compared to the previous sale, feeder steers over 800 lbs. sold steady to $4 higher and under 800 lbs. were lightly tested and sold steady to $4 lower. Feeder heifers sold $1-5 lower. Steer calves over 500 lbs. sold steady to $5 higher, and under 500 lbs. were lightly tested. Heifer calves sold $5-10 lower.

South Dakota: Sioux Falls Regional in Worthing sold 1,898 head. There were few comparable sales of yearling feeder steers and heifers, but they sold mostly steady. There was moderate to good demand of backgrounded yearlings and good to very good demand for weaned fall calves. Benchmark steers averaging 772 lbs. sold from $355.50-382.50, averaging $372.11. — **Anna Miller Fortozo, *WLJ* managing editor**

Animal rights movement continues to be well-funded

ACTIVIST GROUPS
(from page 1)

not been heavily involved in agricultural policy but have entered the debate since the last farm bill was drafted.

The Alliance developed the resource to give livestock organizations, lawmakers and policymakers more background on groups seeking to influence policies affecting farmers, ranchers and the broader food system.

Emily Ellis, marketing and communications director for the Alliance, told *WLJ* that the organization has noticed a shift in where some of that activity is taking place.

"Over the last several years, there has been a noted trend of animal rights groups focusing on local legislation like city-wide ballot measures," Ellis said. "However, this year we've noticed increased activity at the federal level."

Ellis said much of the recent federal activity has focused on proposals affecting state livestock production laws, such as California's Proposition (Prop) 12. The Alliance has also tracked organizations with ties to established animal rights groups that present themselves as representing agricultural interests, with Ellis pointing to Farm Action and the American Meat Producers Association (AMPA) as examples.

The activist web identifies several organizations formed since the 2018 Farm Bill, including AMPA, Farm Action, Animal Wellness Action, Our Honor, Pro-Animal Future, the Animal Activism Collective and the Center for Responsible Food Business. The Alliance's graphic also traces current and former staff connections, project collaborations and funding relationships between newer organizations and more established groups.

AMPA is one of two organizations added to the Alliance's broader activist web this year, along with the International Council for Animal Welfare (ICAW). According to the Alliance, AMPA was founded in 2025 with a focus on policy and has opposed provisions in the 2026 Farm Bill addressing state livestock production laws such as Prop 12. The Alliance also reports that AMPA leadership has ties to Humane World for Animals, formerly the Humane Society of the United States.

ICAW is another recently formed organization, with staff who previously worked with groups including The Humane League and Mercy For Animals, according to the Alliance. The group has focused on grassroots activism and efforts to organize local protests targeting restaurant and retail policies involving fur, foie gras and cage-free eggs.

Activist incidents tracked

The Alliance also updated its Radical Vegan Activism report, which provides an overview of incidents and tactics it tracked during 2025.

According to Alliance figures, the report documented 41 incidents of vandalism, 36 cases involving animal theft or release and 23 trespassing incidents. The Alliance also reported that nearly one in four attacks it classified as animal rights extremist activity targeted farmers or food workers.

"This year's findings show that the animal rights movement continues to be well-funded and highly connected, using a range of tactics that can threaten the safety and security of the entire food supply chain," said Abby Kornegay, the Alliance's director of issues and engagement.

Kornegay said tracking organizations, individuals, funding sources, and activist tactics is part of the Alliance's effort to keep livestock producers and others throughout animal agriculture informed about emerging campaigns and potential security concerns. — **Charles Wallace, *WLJ* contributing editor**

EPA, HHS partner on glyphosate study

EPA, HHS reach agreement to expand scientific review of glyphosate health risks

With an updated risk assessment of glyphosate expected to be completed early next year, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on Sept. 22 announced a plan to expand the volume of information available in making that evaluation.

Under a memorandum of understanding (MOU), the agencies expect to exchange scientific information, identify research gaps and expand research into potential human health effects of glyphosate, according to a news release from the agencies. Glyphosate is the active ingredient in Roundup.

EPA said it "retains sole authority" for registration decisions under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, or FIFRA, and the agencies said in the news release the MOU "creates no new authority" for either agency.

The agreement on glyphosate comes about one year after the first Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission report said glyphosate and other pesticides may have negative health effects on children. A second MAHA report, however, recommended no change in how pesticides are regulated.

"FIFRA requires us to reexamine registered pesticides on a recurring cycle against the best available science and that is exactly what we are doing with glyphosate," EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin said in a statement.

"This agreement with Secretary (Robert) Kennedy and HHS gives our scientists access to research capacity at HHS that addresses potential gaps in the record. EPA will weigh what that work produces the way we weigh any other scientific evidence. We will evaluate the relevant evidence, address important scientific questions, and show our work, providing insight into how the science informs our decisions, as we always do, to conduct the most transparent and thorough review possible."

In addition, an EPA public comment period on glyphosate ended on Sept. 24 as the agency has been seeking additional information for its risk assessment.

The agencies will establish a joint technical working group that brings together experts from EPA, according to the agreement, including the Office of Pesticide Programs and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, National Toxicology Program, National Cancer Institute, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Environmental Health, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

"The working group will identify priority scientific questions, coordinate research and information-sharing, and align its work with EPA's registration-review schedule," the agencies said.

"The partnership will focus on key areas where additional research and scientific coordination can strengthen the evidence base available to EPA, including the toxicology of glyphosate formulations and surfactants, occupational epidemiology, human exposure and biomonitoring, and dietary exposure."

As part of its registration review, EPA said it will "systematically evaluate" relevant peer-reviewed research published since its previous assessment and explain how the evidence informs its updated conclusions.

EPA said its human health risk assessment will address exposure to glyphosate-based formulations, dietary exposure including from pre-harvest applications and occupational exposure.

The agency said it also will evaluate the available cancer, genotoxicity, reproductive and developmental evidence on glyphosate.

FIFRA and the Food Quality Protection Act require the EPA to determine that there is a "reasonable certainty" of no harm from dietary exposure for infants and children.

"Americans have a right to know what the best science tells us about the chemicals they encounter in their food, workplaces, and environment," Kennedy said in the news release.

"We are bringing the scientific resources of HHS to the table to answer unresolved questions, strengthen the evidence, and give EPA the data it needs to conduct a rigorous review. We will ask the hard questions, demand sound science and follow the evidence wherever it leads."

The agreement between the agencies establishes a formal framework to exchange scientific information, identify outstanding research questions, coordinate additional research and bring HHS expertise and data to EPA's review. — **Todd Neeley, DTN environmental editor**

Grazing arrangements can affect livestock liability

LIABILITY
(from page 1)

The appeals court noted that Section 143.102 provides the exclusive liability standard when a livestock collision occurs on those highways.

The standard goes beyond whether an owner was negligent or "should have known" cattle might escape. Citing previous Texas cases, the court said liability requires evidence that the livestock owner knowingly permitted an animal to roam at large. The court also noted that an escape alone does not establish liability and that knowledge a cow might escape is insufficient to satisfy the statute.

Tiffany Lashmet, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension agricultural law specialist, said the decision underscores the higher "knowingly permit" standard that applies to collisions on state and U.S. highways.

That standard requires more than evidence that a livestock owner should have known an animal could get out, she said. Evidence must show the owner was "reasonably certain" livestock would escape. Actual knowledge that cattle are out provides the strongest evidence, although poor fencing combined with a history of escapes can also be relevant.

The court described two ways a plaintiff could establish that knowledge. Direct evidence could show the owner knew the particular animal involved in the collision had escaped but failed to take sufficient action to retrieve it. Circumstantial evidence could combine inadequate fencing with a history of livestock escapes. Under the circumstantial approach, both inadequate fencing and recurring escapes are required.

In this case, the court found no evidence that the fencing used to contain the herd was inadequate. It also found no established pattern of recurring escapes. Although loose cattle were reported on the day of the accident, Carlisle and the ranch hand inspected the property after the first report and found no loose cattle, open gates or fence breaches. The court concluded those isolated reports did not establish the recurring pattern needed to create a fact issue under the circumstantial theory.

For producers, Lashmet said the case reinforces the importance of responding immediately whenever they learn livestock may be loose.

"Any time a livestock owner receives information that they have livestock out, they should act as quickly as possible to contain the animals to avoid potential liability," she said.

The ruling also provides guidance for leased grazing property. Section 143.102 applies to the person who owns or has responsibility for controlling the livestock, not simply the person who owns or controls the land. The court found neither Warren nor the Doss Foundation assumed responsibility for controlling the cattle through their agreements. It specifically noted that responsibility for fencing does not necessarily amount to responsibility for livestock.

Lashmet said producers and landowners should pay close attention to lease language because an agreement could assign livestock-related responsibilities differently.

Ultimately, the appeals court found insufficient evidence to support the statutory claims against any defendant and affirmed the trial court's judgment. **— Charles Wallace, *WLJ* contributing editor**

USFWS clarifies ESA 'take' interpretation

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) issued a new directive outlining how staff should interpret the Endangered Species Act's (ESA) prohibition on "take" following the rescission of the regulatory definition of "harm."

In a Sept. 14 memo to USFWS staff, Director Brian Nesvik outlines that the ESA prohibition on "take" only applies to acts intentionally and purposefully directed at an animal. The memo explains that when there is no direct intention to harm an animal, there is no take, however serious the resulting injury to the animal may be.

"Felling a tree is not a take of the bats roosting in it unless the tree is felled for the purpose of killing or capturing them," the memo read, noting that the action is directed at the timber and reaches the animal only indirectly and accidentally.

The explanation follows an earlier rescission of the regulatory definitions of "harm" under the ESA, which took effect in mid-September.

In his memo, Nesvik wrote that the "Harm Rule" rescinded the USFWS' regulatory definition of "harm" and adopted Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia's interpretation of "take" as set out in the dissent of a Supreme Court case from earlier in the summer.

"Under Justice Scalia's interpretation, 'take' reaches only an affirmative act that is intentionally and purposefully directed at a particular animal," the memo read. "The action thus reaches an animal without an intervening link, although the consequences of the act might arrive later (as with baiting or poisoning)."

The intentionality element describes the action itself, Nesvik wrote, and is separate from the ESA's mens rea, referring to the mental state required for criminal liability.

"The ESA's mens rea attaches to the animal's biological identity," the memo read.

Nesvik further writes, "In sum, Justice Scalia's interpretation begins with one fundamental point: did the actor intend to act on the animal itself. This factor guides interpretation and application of the ESA's 'take' prohibition."

Environmental groups immediately condemned the memo, calling the action an "all-out war against America's wildlife."

Andrew Bowman, president and CEO at Defenders of Wildlife, said, "The administration's absurdly narrow statutory reinterpretation hamstrings the ESA's effectiveness and makes a mockery of our nation's half-century commitment to saving and recovering America's imperiled wildlife."

Environmental groups have challenged the rescission of the harm rule in court, while agricultural groups have largely supported the move. **— Anna Miller Fortozo, *WLJ* managing editor**

PLC honors awardees during Annual Meeting

During their 58th Annual Meeting, the Public Lands Council (PLC) honored two individuals who have made significant contributions to the federal lands ranching community.

Association of National Grasslands (ANG) President Ty Checketts was selected for the 2026 President's Award and rancher Joe Guild from Nevada was selected as the 2026 Friend of PLC.

Checketts owns and operates the historic Fiddleback Ranch with his family in northeastern Wyoming. Along with his duties as ANG president, Checketts is a member of the Wyoming Stockgrowers, National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) and serves as a PLC board member. He is a constant presence on policy talks surrounding grazing on national grasslands and working to prevent catastrophic wildfires.

"The President's Award goes to someone each year that has gone above and beyond the call of duty to advocate for grazing permittees," said PLC Immediate Past President Tim Canterbury. "Ty Checketts is the strongest voice and advocate for those who ranch on national grasslands, but he also does so much work to help all federal lands ranchers.

"Checketts has testified in Congress and led engagement with state and local officials for years, which is a costly endeavor to spend time away from your operation, even though the impact for ranchers across the West is clear. Checketts is well deserving of the President's Award, and I am proud to serve with him on the PLC Board of Directors."

Guild is a rancher and lawyer that got his start working in natural resource and water law, before founding his own consulting business supporting other ranchers in the industry. Joe manages a cow/calf operation on 25,000 acres on national forest land and is also part of a ranch management team with both cows and sheep on 1 million acres of land. He is a past president of the Nevada Cattlemen's Association, former treasurer of the NCBA and a longtime member of PLC.

"There is no better friend to PLC than Joe Guild; he has been in western policy battles we have faced for years and is always working to do more to advocate for and protect the American rancher," said PLC President Ron Cerri. "He has spent his career standing up for livestock producers in court and our nation's capital, while managing multiple livestock operations. I do not know where we would be as an industry without Joe's leadership because he has really set us up for the successes we are seeing today, due to his extensive body of work. Thank you, Joe for everything you have done for PLC and the western grazing community." **— PLC**

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SALE REPORTS

GONSALVES RANCH BULL SALE
Sept. 16, Modesto, CA

29 SimAngus bulls $10,198
34 Angus bulls 10,155
1 Hereford bull 6,000
Auctioneer: Max Olvera
Sale Manager: The Judge Source

TOPS—Angus bulls: Gonsalves Growth Fund 520, 4/2/2025 by Deer Valley Growth Fund; to Mapes Ranch, Modesto, CA, $14,000. Gonsalves Clarity 541, 5/3/2025 by Stellpflug Clarity 2421; to John Dambacher, Snelling, CA, $14,000. **SimAngus bull:** GRS Trail Boss N544, 5/29/2025 by CCR Trail Boss 2145F; to Landon Ichord, CA, $15,000. — **JARED PATTERSON**

DAL PORTO & RANCHO CASINO BULL SALE
Sept. 17, Denair, CA

134 Angus bulls $14,492
Auctioneers: Rick Machado & Max Olvera

TOPS: Dal Porto LLL Beacon D298, 9/16/2025 by Connealy Broadcast; to Grimmius Cattle Co., Hanford, CA, $45,000. Dal Porto Patronage D113, 4/2/2025 by HAYNES Patronage 122; to Ward Angus Ranch, Gardnerville, CA, $42,000. Dal Porto Groundwork D245, 8/22/2025 by Boyd Bedrock; to Stump Ranch, NE, $26,000. Dal Porto Jameson D104, 3/27/2025 by Dal Porto Jameson D104; to Mapes Ranch, Modesto, CA, $21,000. Casino Bomber Y19, 1/12/2025 by Casino Bomber N33; to Hewitson Cattle, Avenal, CA, $20,000. Dal Porto Stonewall D270, 8/30/2025 by Boyd Bedrock; to John Ginochio, Walnut Creek, CA, $20,000. Casino Patronage Y246, 8/11/2025 by HAYNES Patronage 122; to Hewitson Cattle, Avenal, CA, $20,000. — **JARED PATTERSON**

O'CONNELL RANCH & DIXIE VALLEY RANCH BULL SALE
Sept. 18, Galt, CA

71 Angus bulls $12,095
Auctioneer: Jake Parnell
Sale Manager: M3 Marketing

TOPS: Sterling Congress 5203, 1/14/2025 by Crouch Congress; to Grimmius Cattle Co., Hanford, CA, $30,000. O'Connell Commerce 5022, 7/3/2025 by Connealy Commerce; to Doug & Judy Parker, Williams, CA, $20,000. Sterling R O I 5184, 8/20/2025 by Sterling R O I; to Grimmius Cattle Co., Hanford, CA, $19,000. — **JARED PATTERSON**

THE LEGACY RANCH HORSE SALE
Sept. 19, Prescott, AZ

20 Geldings $26,838
11 Mares 22,545
3 2-Year-olds 13,000
6 Yearling colts 6,500
3 Brood mares 7,500
Auctioneer: Rick Machado

TOPS: Razzle Pop Rocks, 1/1/2021 by KR Rock Candy; $87,500. FSF Onceinablumoon, 1/1/2020 by Fast Steppin Fiesta; $50,000. CJ Hancock Bar Lena, 1/1/2021 by Spryo; $40,000. — **JARED PATTERSON**

STEGALL CATTLE PRODUCTION SALE
Sept. 19, Colusa, CA

56 Red Angus bulls $9,426
8 Red Angus open heifers 5,444
Auctioneer: Randy Baxley

TOPS: SCC Nitro 5018N, 2/4/2025 by LSF SRR Control 9191G; to Gary Gove, Red Bluff, CA, $31,000. SCC American Freedom 5012N, 1/31/2025 by NIO American Freedom 1005; to White Cattle Co., Atwater, CA, $16,000. — **JARED PATTERSON**

WARD ANGUS RANCH BULL SALE
Sept. 19, Gardnerville, NV

44 Angus bulls $8,875
Auctioneer: Eric Duarte
Sale Manager: M3 Marketing

TOP: Ward Cascade Y05, 4/1/2025 by Dal Porto Cascade Z33; to Jerry Norene, CA, $15,000. — **JARED PATTERSON**

WESTSIDE CONNECTION BULL SALE
Sept. 23, Dos Palos, CA

51 Angus bulls $10,769
30 SimAngus bulls 8,166
12 Red Angus bulls 7,708
Auctioneer: Matt Lowery
Sale Manager: The Judge Source

TOP: HCC Doc Ryan 517, 2/8/2025 by V A R Doc Ryan 2378; to Cozzi family, Dos Palos, CA, $13,500. — **JARED PATTERSON**

MONTANA RAM & EWE SALE
Sept. 17, Miles City, MT

352 Commercial yearling ewes $594
30 Commercial ewe lambs 483
41 Black face yearling rams 1,398
2 Île-de-France yearling rams 1,400
3 South African Meat Merino yearling rams . . . 517
4 American Cormo yearling rams 975
54 Rambouillet yearling rams 1,478
186 Targhee yearling rams 1,164
Auctioneer: Collin Gibbs

TOPS—Black face yearling ram: Hamp/Suffolk; to Capra Ranches, Boyes, MT, $2,800. **Rambouillet yearling ram:** Helle Rambouillett; to Peter Witzfeld, Sentinel Butte, ND, $4,000. **Targhee yearling ram:** Ortmann Targhee; to Bob Innes, Gillette, WY, $9,500. — **KEVIN MURNIN**

WEAVER QUARTER HORSES PRODUCTION SALE
Sept. 19, Great Falls, MT

5 Yearling colts $5,650
1 Stud 44,000
3 Brood mares 9,667
35 Fillies 9,400
34 Stud colts 5,926
Auctioneers: Lynn Weishaar and Seth Weishaar

TOPS—Fillies: Weavers CallMe Light, 5/10/2026 by Bet Hesa Echo Cat; to Walter Sullivan III, Napa, CA, $32,000. Weavers Miss Two, 5/22/2026 by Originally Smooth; to Micheal Yoder, Montezuma, GA, $25,000. Weavers KeepTheGirl, 4/10/2026 by Genuinley Busy; to Coates Ranch, San Angelo, TX, $21,000. Weavers Busy Alida, 5/3/2026 by Genuinely Busy; to Micheal Yoder, Montezuma, GA, $18,500. **Stud:** 44000, 6/7/2024 by One Guna At A Time; to Ronald Dimmerling, Saraville, OH, $44,000. — **KEVIN MURNIN**

SUPERIOR Livestock Auction — VIDEO AUCTION

Sept. 17, Hudson Oaks, TX
Southern and Midwest feeders sold $15-25 higher than the last test at Superior Livestock Auction's Sept. 17 video auction, where producers marketed 21,577 head, even as USDA's announcement of a Sept. 24 reopening at the Santa Teresa livestock port landed mid-sale.

Cattle producers sold a total of 111 lots consigned from 23 states, with 55 successful buyers. Cattle sold on contract to deliver immediately through February 2027.

"As we head into the fall run of cattle, we saw shorter numbers this week as our reps are busy delivering," said Ralph Wade, auctioneer for Superior Livestock Auction. "Six-dollar-plus diesel adds cost to getting feeders to the feedlot, dry conditions are hanging on in the wheat pasture country, and there's sword rattling in Washington."

Southern and Midwest feeders were lightly tested, with sales $15-25 higher than the last test. Eight-weight cattle brought $320-350/cwt, roughly $2,616-2,950 a head. Calf prices held strong, with some four-weight calves selling above $500. Western and northern calves were highlighted by a set of 700-pound weaned steer calves out of California that brought $392/cwt, about $2,744 a head, for immediate delivery. Heifers were soft, though not well tested, and beef-dairy demand slipped on the lightweight calves. Good quality cattle stayed in strong demand, as they have for months, though the test was light across every class.

September feeder cattle futures closed above $343 on Sept. 14 before easing through the week, settling at $334 on auction day. USDA confirmed mid-auction that it planned to reopen the Santa Teresa, NM, livestock port on Sept. 24, the largest of the southern cattle crossings, closed since May 2025. Drought remains a concern across cattle country, though scattered showers brought relief in places over the past week and producers who caught meaningful moisture have already started planting wheat. Cattle numbers remain tight and the underlying fundamentals have not changed.

"Stay the course and don't chase a volatile market trend," Wade said. "The short supply and high demand has not changed, this is just another bump in the road. Only a slow trickle is crossing the border at best, mostly rodeo steers, and heifer retention is slow. Stay with your marketing plan."

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

Oct. 3 – Turlock Livestock Auction Yard, Bull Sale, Turlock, CA
Oct. 4 – Cal Poly Bull Sale, San Luis Obispo, CA
Oct. 17 – Western Stockman's Market, Macfarland, CA

ANGUS

Oct. 2 – Elwood Ranch, Bull Sale, Red Bluff, CA
Oct. 3 – Colyer Hereford & Angus, Female Sale, Bruneau, ID
Oct. 8 – Bar KJ Angus, Female Sale, Bakersfield, CA
Oct. 9 – Kern Cattle, Female Sale, Visalia, CA
Oct. 10 – Vintage Angus Ranch, Female Sale, Modesto, CA
Oct. 11 – Arellano Bravo, Female Sale, Walnut Grove, CA
Oct. 13 – 9 Peaks Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Fort Rock, OR
Oct. 13 – Coleman Angus, Female Sale, Charlo, MT
Oct. 14 – Montana Ranch, Female Sale, Big Fork, MT
Oct. 15 – Thomas Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Baker City, OR
Oct. 16 – NILE Angus Female Sale, Billings, MT
Oct. 17 – Basin Angus Ranch, Female Sale, Billings, MT
Oct. 17 – Lambert Ranch, Bull Sale, Oroville, CA
Oct. 17 – Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, Dinuba, CA
Oct. 24 – 44 Farms, Bull Sale, Cameron, TX
Oct. 26 – Dal Porto Livestock, Female Sale, Anselmo, NE
Oct. 28 – Riverbend Ranch, Bull Sale, Idaho Falls, ID
Oct. 30 – Birch Creek Angus, Bull Sale, Ruby Valley, NV
Oct. 31 – Bear Mountain Angus, Bull Sale, Palisade, NE
Oct. 31 – Evergreen Exclusive, Female Sale, Ellensburg, WA
Nov. 4 – Hornung Livestock, Female Sale, Stratton, CO
Nov. 9 – Green Mountain Angus & Rooney Angus, Bull Sale, Billings, MT
Nov. 10 – Beartooth Angus, Bull and Female Sale, Billings, MT
Nov. 11 – Riverbend Ranch, Bull Sale, Idaho Falls, ID
Nov. 12 – Hoffman Ranch, Bull Sale, Thedford, NE
Nov. 12 – JR Ranch & Sackmann Cattle, Production Sale, Othello, WA
Nov. 13 – Artnzen Angus, Bred Cow Sale, Hilger, MT
Nov. 14 – Montana Ranch, Bull Sale, Big Fork, MT

HEREFORD

Oct. 2 – Elwood Ranch, Bull Sale, Red Bluff, CA
Oct. 3 – Colyer Hereford & Angus, Female Sale, Bruneau, ID
Oct. 17 – Lambert Ranch, Bull Sale, Oroville, CA
Nov. 12 – Hoffman Ranch, Bull Sale, Thedford, NE

RED ANGUS

Oct. 16 – NILE Red Angus Bull Sale, Billings, MT
Nov. 7 – Bet on Red Sale, Reno, NV

SIMANGUS

Oct. 17 – Lambert Ranch, Bull Sale, Oroville, CA
Nov. 4 – Hornung Livestock, Female Sale, Stratton, CO
Nov. 12 – JR Ranch & Sackmann Cattle, Bull Sale, Othello, WA

STABILIZER

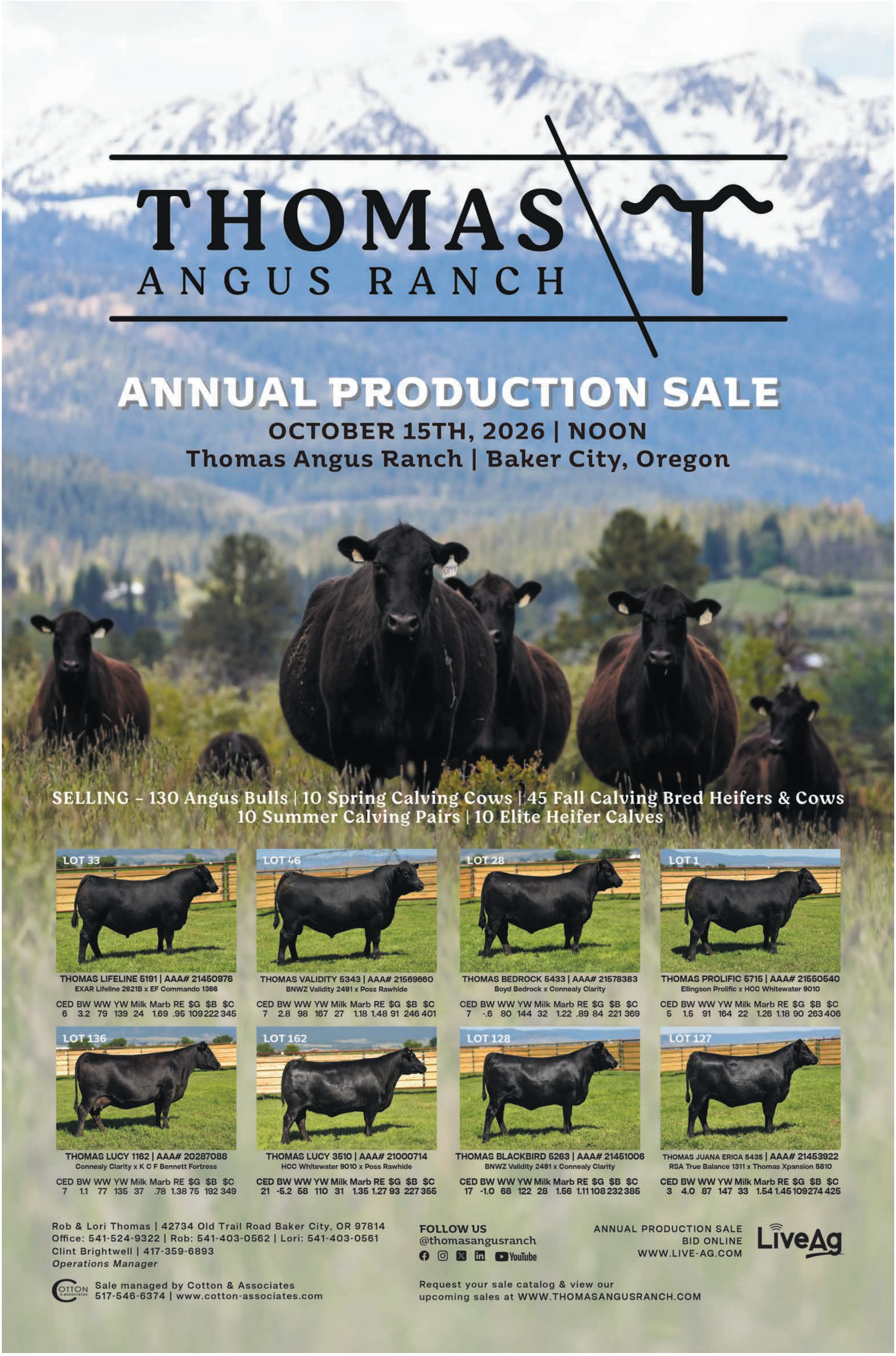
Oct. 17 – Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, Dinuba, CA

COMMERCIAL

Oct. 3 – Turlock Livestock Auction Yard, Bull Sale, Turlock, CA
Oct. 4 – Cal Poly Bull Sale, San Luis Obispo, CA
Nov. 5 – Weaver Ranch, Female Sale, Lewistown, MT
Nov. 13 – Artnzen Angus, Bred Cow Sale, Hilger, MT

HORSE

Oct. 1 – Bowman Livestock, Horse Sale, Bowman, ND
Oct. 8 – Jamison Ranch, Horse Sale, Quinter, KS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LOT 33
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6 3.2 79 139 24 1.69 .95 109 222 345
LOT 46
THOMAS VALIDITY 5343 | AAA# 21569660
BNWZ Validity 2491 x Poss Rawhide
CED BW WW YW Milk Marb RE $G $B $C
7 2.8 98 167 27 1.18 1.48 91 246 401
LOT 28
THOMAS BEDROCK 5433 | AAA# 21578383
Boyd Bedrock x Connealy Clarity
CED BW WW YW Milk Marb RE $G $B $C
7 -.6 80 144 32 1.22 .89 84 221 369
LOT 1
THOMAS PROLIFIC 5715 | AAA# 21550540
Ellingson Prolific x HCC Whitewater 9010
CED BW WW YW Milk Marb RE $G $B $C
5 1.5 91 164 22 1.26 1.18 90 263 406
LOT 136
THOMAS LUCY 1162 | AAA# 20287088
Connealy Clarity x K C F Bennett Fortress
CED BW WW YW Milk Marb RE $G $B $C
7 1.1 77 135 37 .78 1.38 75 192 349
LOT 162
THOMAS LUCY 3510 | AAA# 21000714
HCC Whitewater 9010 x Poss Rawhide
CED BW WW YW Milk Marb RE $G $B $C
21 -5.2 58 110 31 1.35 1.27 93 227 355
LOT 128
THOMAS BLACKBIRD 5263 | AAA# 21451006
BNWZ Validity 2491 x Connealy Clarity
CED BW WW YW Milk Marb RE $G $B $C
17 -1.0 68 122 28 1.56 1.11 108 232 385
LOT 127
THOMAS JUANA ERICA 5435 | AAA# 21453922
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