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INSIDE WLJ

GRANTS GOING OUT — USDA to award 147 meat processors under $57 million expansion grant program. Page 7

FEED GOING UP — Rabobank predicts higher feed costs for producers in 2027 despite ample corn and soybean supply. Page 14

A LOOK BACK IN HISTORY "The prion subcommittee of the Japanese Food Safety Commission (FSC) voted last week to accept a report which stated the risk of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) entering Japan through imports of U.S. beef is very low. The vote removes one of the remaining barriers to the resumption of U.S. beef exports to Japan," wrote John Robinson, *WLJ* associate editor, in the Nov. 7, 2005, *WLJ* issue.

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The state of Montana is appealing a district court's decision to grant American Prairie a preliminary injunction allowing the group to graze their bison on federal allotments in Montana.

Montana seeks reversal of American Prairie injunction

— Challenges bison grazing

The state of Montana is asking the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals to reverse a lower court's preliminary injunction that allows American Prairie to keep its bison on federal grazing allotments in Phillips County, MT.

In a Nov. 2 appeal, the state petitioned the court to confirm the scope of federal grazing permit laws and "prevent harm to Montana's state trust lands" as a result of the preliminary injunction.

"The district court fundamentally misunderstood what Congress authorized in the Taylor Grazing Act," Gov. Greg Gianforte (R) said. "The Bureau of Land Management made the correct and lawful decision to cancel these permits. Our administration will continue advocating for the generations of Montanans who have stewarded our lands with care."

In September, a judge in the U.S. District Court for the District of Montana granted the conservation group a preliminary injunction to block the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) from enforcing its May decision requiring American Prairie to remove its bison from three grazing allotments.

The ruling by Judge Brian Morris allows the bison to remain on the Telegraph Creek, Box Elder and Whiterock allotments while the court considers the underlying legal challenge. Morris declined to extend the injunction to three other allotments where the group did not already graze bison.

Appeal

The state's appeal includes Gianforte, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Montana Department of Agriculture, Montana Department of Livestock and Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

The state questioned whether federal laws authorize grazing permits for a bison herd managed as wildlife, whether the district court erred in finding irreparable harm

See BISON on page 14

USDA study details health across US cattle feedlots

— Management practices vary

Respiratory disease reached more than three-fourths of U.S. feedlots in 2020, with nearly every large operation reporting at least one case, according to USDA. Overall, 77.5% of feedlots reported the disease, including 98.8% of large operations and 74.7% of small ones.

The finding comes from USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) report, "Health and Management Practices on U.S. Feedlots, 2021," which examines vaccinations, antibiotic use and disease preparedness.

USDA collected data across 22 states during 2021-22, primarily covering 2020 practices. The study defined small feedlots as having capacity for 50-999 head and large feedlots as 1,000 or more. According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service's 2017 Census of Agriculture, large feedlots held 77.2% of cattle on feed but represented only 5.2% of U.S. feedlots.

Processing, disease management

USDA found 75.9% of feedlots processed cattle as a group within four weeks of arrival, moving them through a chute for vaccinations, parasite treatments or other procedures. Among those operations, 36.7% processed all cattle on arrival day, while 12.1% waited four to 13 days and 11.7% waited 14 to 28 days.

Vaccination and parasite control were common. The report found 80.8% of these feedlots vaccinated all cattle against bovine viral diarrhea (BVD), 70.1% against clostridial diseases and

See HEALTH on page 16

9th Circuit upholds BLM's horse gather timeline

— Rejects firm deadlines

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against two Nevada ranchers seeking faster wild horse removals, finding that the law's requirement to act "immediately" gives federal officials time to handle animals humanely and address practical challenges.

Ranchers Colvin & Son LLC and Stone Cabin Ranch LLC argued that once the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) determines horses are overpopulating the range, it must remove the excess animals immediately rather than spread that work over a 10-year planning period.

Writing for the three-judge panel, U.S. District Judge John W. Holcomb said the law requires removal "as promptly as logistically and reasonably possible," while accounting for humane treatment and other statutory duties. The decision affirmed a Nevada district court judgment favoring federal officials.

Background

The case concerns wild horse gather plans for the Little Fish Lake Joint Management Area and Stone Cabin Complex in Nye County, NV.

Little Fish Lake is jointly managed by BLM and the U.S. Forest Service and covers approximately 117,041 acres, with an appropriate management level (AML) of 79-132 horses. BLM estimated the wild horse population in 2021 at 291 horses, and the agency said that excess animals were within the herd management area (HMA).

The Stone Cabin Complex includes the Stone Cabin and Saulsbury HMAs and covers more than 540,000 acres. Its combined AML is 242-404 horses, and the agency estimated the population at 1,097 horses.

Court documents show BLM adopted a gather plan for Little Fish Lake in 2022 and a plan for Stone Cabin in 2023. Each outlined 10 years of initial removals, population controls and maintenance gathers.

The ranchers challenged the plans under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), and the district court granted the government summary judgment. The ranchers appealed, and the appellate panel heard arguments on March 11. They asked the courts to set aside the plans as contrary to federal law or beyond BLM's statutory authority.

See DEADLINES on page 10

Cattle markets struggle amid uncertainty

Cattle futures posted steep losses over the week, with cash trade also trending lower.

Live cattle futures headed lower. The December contract lost about $12 to close at $214.40, and the February contract also lost about $12 to close at $217.62.

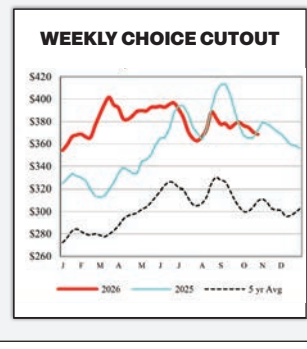
"Combine the market's lack of confidence thanks to last week's dramatic sell off, with the strike threats looming at the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports (where approximately 25% of beef exports pass through) and you can easily see why the live cattle complex is struggling," ShayLe Stewart, DTN livestock analyst, wrote in her Thursday midday comments. "An announcement overnight showed that the contract at the ports had been temporarily extended from Nov. 6 as negotiations continue."

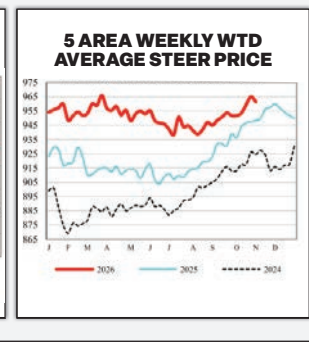
Cash trade through Thursday totaled about 59,000 head. Live steers sold from $215-219, and dressed steers sold from $335-345.

Cash trade through Nov. 1 totaled 68,178 head. Live steers averaged $223.30, and dressed steers averaged $345.

"This week's comprehensive fed cattle report showed a decline in carcass weights and quality grading—some indication of getting a handle on heavy cattle in the north," the Cattle Report wrote on Thursday. "Generous packer margins and improved efficiency in plant utilization rates also will help clean up overweight cattle."

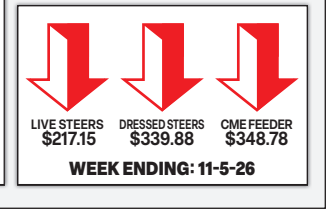
Slaughter through Thursday totaled about 430,000 head, compared to 434,000 head a week earlier. Total slaughter for a week earlier is estimated at 543,000 head. Actual slaughter for the week ending Oct. 24 was 548,337 head. The average steer dressed weight was 991 lbs., down 3 lbs. from the prior week.





Boxed beef prices traded mixed over the week. The Choice cutout lost about $6 to close at $361.56, and the

See MARKETS on page 19



PERIODICAL : Time Sensitive Priority Handling

COMMENTS

Pumping rights for a price



BALIN HIILL

In the West, water has always been worth fighting for, but what about getting paid not to use it? As drought, limited surface water supplies and declining aquifers place increasing pressure on western agriculture, groundwater conservation easements present a creative approach to water conservation. But are groundwater conservation easements a practical path forward for the West, or do their long-term restrictions warrant a closer look? And perhaps more importantly, is western water law prepared to recognize and protect the right to conserve?

Groundwater conservation easements are voluntary agreements through which landowners may agree to limit pumping or permanently retire wells in exchange for compensation, potential tax benefits or both. Conservation easements frequently impose restrictions for extended periods of time or in perpetuity, potentially binding landowners and future generations indefinitely. These easements aim to conserve groundwater by financially incentivizing reductions in groundwater pumping over long periods of time, potentially slowing aquifer depletion. Yet one thing money cannot buy is a look into the future.

Agricultural production changes, irrigation efficiency and technology evolve, droughts come and go and generations pass. Yet the restrictions imposed by perpetual groundwater conservation easements may remain unchanged. For easements that run with the land and bind future generations, the question becomes: is today's incentive worth tomorrow's loss of flexibility?

For example, a landowner decides to move production into dryland farming for compensation and potential tax incentives provided through a groundwater conservation easement, permanently retiring wells. Depending on the easement terms, this decision may effectively "lock" the land into limited operations. But what happens when the next generation wants to return to irrigated agriculture, or advancements in irrigation technology make previously uneconomical production viable again? This decision may not be reversable and the decision to conserve groundwater today may ultimately limit the agricultural opportunities for future generations.

However, it is important to recognize that consumptive use and conservation are not always the most compatible. At what point does the need for groundwater conservation justify limiting flexibility in future agricultural operations. Perhaps we have reached that point in certain states, particularly in heavily utilized aquifers with low recharge rates. But landowners should approach permanent restriction with caution, and it may not be the answer in every circumstance.

While practically, one landowner's reduction in groundwater pumping may preserve water within an aquifer, it does not necessarily mean that water becomes legally available for new or neighboring uses. Nor does it guarantee that other users will reduce their pumping. This raises a broader question: whether western water law is equipped to accommodate conservation.

Under many western water law regimes governed by "prior appropriation," a system for generally prioritizing earlier water rights over later ones, beneficial use remains central to maintaining water rights. It is critical to recognize that water law is state specific and modern day regulatory structures have varying requirements in different states, yet some states continue to apply beneficial use standards. Historically, western water law has required applying water to a useful and legally recognized purpose while limiting the quantity to what is reasonably necessary for that purpose.

Some states declare beneficial use as domestic use, stock watering, industrial and commercial use, agriculture, irrigation, hydroelectric, mining and recreation, among others. However, the history of western water law lies in the fact that a "beneficial use" must also be reasonably efficient and accomplish a beneficial purpose without waste. Yet, when a groundwater conservation easement involves leaving water in the ground rather than pumping it, states must grapple with how conservation fits within existing water law frameworks.

Perhaps the answer is not as simple as whether conservation constitutes a beneficial use, but whether our existing legal frameworks are equipped to protect conserved groundwater and address the consequences for future generations.

For some landowners, groundwater conservation easement may be an opportunity they are looking for. Retiring irrigated acreage, reducing pumping costs and receiving compensation for conserving a resource may make practical sense. But landowners must critically examine the easement terms they are entering, considering the long-term value of their land, the future interests of their operation and those interests of the next generation. Landowners must also be wary that their states are prepared to integrate conservation easements into their broader water law principles and regulations.

Ultimately, conservation and agriculture production do not have to be opposing interests. The challenge is finding ways to encourage groundwater conservation while recognizing the long-term interests of those who depend on the land and the legal consequences of permanent restrictions.

After all, the question is not simply what groundwater is worth today, but what the ability to use it may be worth tomorrow. — **ELISE BALIN HILL**

(Elise Balin Hill is an attorney for Nicholas Law in Cheyenne, WY, where she covers civil litigation, agriculture, natural resources, water, environmental and energy law.)

GUEST OPINION

VETERAN FARMERS CARRY SERVICE INTO A NEW SEASON

A military uniform and a pair of farm boots tell different stories, but the people who have worn both carry the same sense of purpose. They get up each morning knowing others are counting on them, ready to give their best to something bigger than themselves.

As Veterans Day approaches, I'm reminded of how much we owe the men and women who have defended our freedoms. As the father of a veteran, that gratitude is personal, just as it is for every military family in our great nation. Across farm country, we also see that spirit of service at work as veterans care for the land and communities they call home.

According to USDA, 15% of America's farms have at least one farmer with military experience. That is a powerful presence in our fields, pastures and rural communities. For some veterans, coming home means returning to a family farm. For others, it is an entirely new chapter. Either way, farming offers an opportunity to build a business, care for the land, and serve the community in a new way.

Veterans bring valuable experience to that work. They know how to solve problems under pressure, work as a team and keep going when the day gets difficult. Those qualities serve them well in agriculture, where plans can change without warning and there is always something new to learn.

For former U.S. Army Major Jim Hartman, a new chapter began with a beehive. After 10 years as a paratrooper and bomb disposal technician, including two deployments to Iraq, Jim spent another 14 years training soldiers to identify and avoid improvised explosive devices. When he returned home to North Carolina, Jim turned to beekeeping as a way to manage post-traumatic stress disorder.

That hobby grew into Secret Garden Bees. Today, Jim's honey products reach more than 180 stores in 27 states. Jim could have stopped at building a successful business for himself. Instead, he has made his farm a place where others can get their fresh start too. He employs disabled veterans through apprenticeship programs and provides training opportunities for veterans interested in agriculture. He also shares what he has learned about resources that can help them get started.

The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), with support from Farm Credit, recognized Jim with this year's Veteran Farmer Award of Excellence. The award honors veterans who demonstrate excellence in agriculture while making a positive impact on their communities. We are honored to share Jim's story and shine a light on the many veterans who continue to serve their neighbors through agriculture.

Anyone who has started farming knows that a little guidance can save a lot of hard lessons. A neighbor's advice or an invitation can open a door that once seemed closed. Farm Bureau members can offer that welcome. That might mean inviting a veteran to a county meeting, introducing a beginning farmer to a mentor or sharing information about training resources. Just taking time to listen and learn about someone's goals can be the start of a meaningful connection.

Jim's story reminds us that the good we do can grow well beyond our own fencerows. When we help one person succeed, we strengthen the whole community. This Veterans Day, I hope you will join me in thanking our veterans and military families. We are grateful for their sacrifices, the freedoms they have protected, and the leadership they continue to bring to our country and rural communities. — **Zippy Duvall, AFBF president**

GUEST OPINION

A GROWING LAMB MARKET, A SHRINKING AMERICAN INDUSTRY

America's sheep producers are losing ground in their own market, even as Americans consume more lamb. That's the central problem we asked the U.S. International Trade Commission to confront in our post-hearing brief on lamb imports.

We're asking the commission to recognize the injury to our domestic industry, include sheep growers and feeders in its analysis, and find that increased imports are a substantial cause of that injury.

Australia tells a different story. Its government argued that drought and other longstanding problems reduced American production, and imports simply filled the resulting supply gap. Representatives of Australia's lamb industry also argued that imports help sustain demand and keep the domestic market supplied.

Our response begins with what is actually happening in the marketplace.

From 2021 through 2025, the commission's data show U.S. lamb consumption grew more than 17%. Yet domestic sales of American lamb fell more than 10%. Our producers lost sales volume and market share while their lamb market was expanding.

And we presented evidence that imports replaced American lamb that was available to sell.

Superior Farms testified that a major retail customer switched to cheaper imports even though Superior could meet that customer's needs. Another processor explained that import prices limited what he could bid to ranchers.

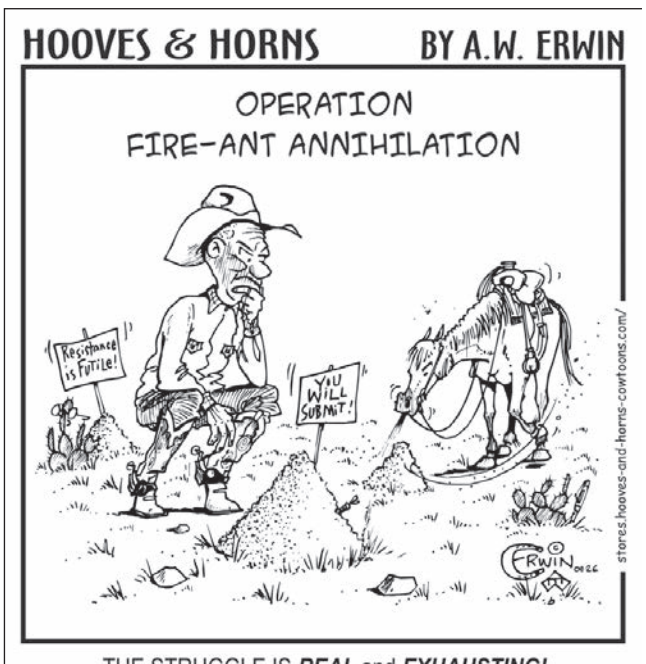
Our witness, sheep producer Michael Bardsley, described established buyers who stopped buying or could no longer make a bid. His operation sold only half its lamb crop in the fall of 2022, receiving less than half the previous year's price per pound on those sales.

Those experiences show how a lost meat sale reaches all the way back to the ranch.

The commission's pricing evidence reinforces that testimony. Imports undersold domestic lamb in 144 of 154 quarterly product-price comparisons. That is a pattern of lower prices, backed by accounts of customers switching to imported supplies.

We also challenged the argument from Australia's industry representatives that growers and feeders should be excluded. Their attorney said the investigation should cover processors alone.

We argued that the law recognizes competition between products at different stages of processing. A live market lamb becomes lamb meat. When imported meat replaces meat from an American lamb, the rancher can lose a buyer or receive a lower bid. We asked the commission to include the people raising those animals when it evaluates the damage. — **Bill Bullard, CEO of Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund, USA**



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$M 137 $C 374



Lot 2–SITZ Hi-Range 12285 REG# 21261745
S: Ellingson Hi-Range MGS: SITZ Accomplishment 720F
CED 11 BW -0.3 WW 84 YW 144 SC 1.55 HP 10.4
Milk 28 Teat 0.65 Udder 0.60 Marb 0.67 REA 0.94
$M 91 $C 309



Lot 3–SITZ Centerfold 12055 Reg# 21237817
S: S Armstrong MGS: SITZ Barricade 632F
CED 10 BW -0.6 WW 84 YW 151 SC 1.28 HP 16.2
Milk 30 Teat 0.57 Udder 0.56 Marb 0.66 REA 1.16
$M 99 $C 367



Lot 4–SITZ Foundation 8025 Reg# 21256384
S: SITZ Foundation 9473 MGS: LT Confidante 8002
CED 5 BW 1.2 WW 77 YW 136 SC 1.15 HP 18.0
Milk 30 Teat 0.63 Udder 0.58 Marb 0.67 REA 1.02
$M 111 $C 346



Lot 5–SITZ Bandit 12435 Reg# 21234601
S: M Diamond Ranahan 111 MGS: SITZ Resilient 10208
CED 13 BW -1.6 WW 84 YW 144 SC 0.67 HP 16.8
Milk 29 Teat 0.31 Udder 0.28 Marb 1.04 REA 0.75
$M 111 $C 337



Lot 15–SITZ Heritage 10145 Reg# 21227277
S: SITZ Heritage 8732 MGS: SITZ Logo 8148
CED 12 BW -1.4 WW 75 YW 133 SC 1.23 HP 16.4
Milk 27 Teat 0.92 Udder 0.85 Marb 0.65 REA 1.17
$M 127 $M 329

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County commissioners seek to change Idaho Roadless Rule

Idaho County commissioners are asking the state's governor and other elected officials to change public land classifications within their county, Commissioner Skip Brandt told state legislators Oct. 29.

Brandt detailed his proposal during the Idaho Legislature's Committee on Federalism's meeting Oct. 29, which took place at a Super 8 motel in Grangeville, ID, and was livestreamed online.

During the meeting, Brandt told legislators serving on the committee that about 4.5 million acres of land in Idaho County is public land of some sort. That includes about 2.3 million acres of wilderness land and another 1.7 million acres of roadless areas classified under the Idaho Roadless Rule.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) describes Idaho's Roadless Areas as "the core of the last intact forest ecosystem in the lower 48 states—where all of the native plants, fish and wildlife—from the smallest plant to the largest predator—can still be found."

But Brandt says the problem with wilderness and Idaho Roadless Areas is restrictions on the land prevent logging, building roads and using motorized vehicles in those areas. Brandt also said restrictions make wildfire response more difficult and create a barrier to recreational access.

"And if you can't afford to hire an outfitter to get you back there, or if you aren't in shape enough to walk for five days with a big pack, you just don't do it," Brandt told the Committee on Federalism. "And so my contention is that the wilderness is land of no use as it stands. It's just sitting there ready to cook."

Brandt told the Committee on Federalism he plans to petition Chief of the USFS Tom Schultz to change the management theme of Idaho Roadless Areas within Idaho County to the general forest, rangeland and grassland designation, which is the least restrictive management classification available.

Currently, Brandt said the vast majority of Idaho Roadless Areas within Idaho County are under more restrictive management classifications.

Schultz, who formerly served as the director of the Idaho Department of Lands and a vice president with the Idaho Forest Group logging company, has strong ties in Idaho.

Changing to the least restrictive classification could allow for timber harvest and road construction on those lands.

Brandt outlined part of his plans in a Sept. 29 letter he sent to Little and U.S. Sen. Jim Risch (R-ID).

In the letter, which the Idaho Capital Sun obtained a copy of, Brandt and the other two Idaho County commissioners said they were notifying Little and Risch that Idaho County intends to request the modification of Idaho Roadless Area classifications in Idaho County.

"The lands would remain Idaho Roadless Areas; the requested modification would change their management classification to provide greater flexibility to properly manage them to meet Forest Service and county goals," Brandt and fellow commissioners Ted Lindsley and Brad Higgins wrote in the letter.

Little and Risch wrote back to the Idaho County commissioners, telling the commissioners to work with the Idaho Roadless Rule Implementation Commission and provide it with specific examples of necessary projects that are blocked, wildfire risk information and other supporting materials.

"We appreciate your request for the (Idaho Roadless Rule Implementation) Commission's assistance, and we are committed to working with you on the country's proposed modification once you have secured its support," Little and Risch wrote.

Returning to the meeting of the Committee on Federalism, Brandt told state legislators he "needs to do a little more due diligence," but hopes to move forward soon with filing official documents.

"Hopefully within the next week or two weeks we are going to actually be able to step forward with a petition to formally request that all of our acres are moved into general forest and grassland," Brandt said.

The Committee on Federalism did not take any action on Brandt's proposal. **— Clark Corbin, Idaho Capital Sun**

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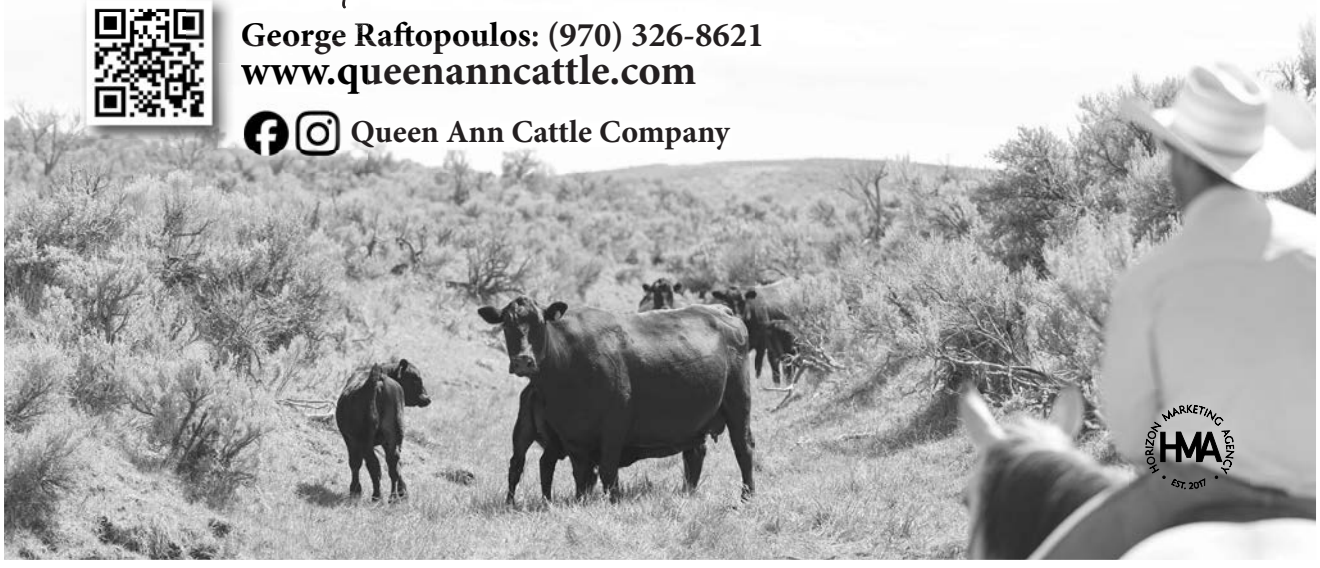


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Calving workshops, webinar offered in NE

Nebraska Extension will offer a series of hands-on calving workshops and a free webinar in December and January to help beef producers prepare for calving season and improve outcomes for cows and newborn calves.

Led by Dr. Lindsay Waechter-Mead, Director of Nebraska Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) and Dr. Becky Funk, professor in the School of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the programs will cover the stages of labor, when and how to assist during birth, managing abnormal presentations, calf resuscitation and practices to keep both cows and calves healthy.

"Calving season is one of the most important times of year for cow-calf producers," Waechter-Mead said. "Our goal is to help producers recognize when assistance is needed and give them the knowledge and confidence to respond appropriately."

The in-person workshops will provide participants with an opportunity to practice calving techniques using a life-sized cow and calf model. This hands-on approach allows producers to work through common calving challenges and develop practical skills they can apply to their own operations.

In-person workshop dates and locations include:

- Dec. 16 at 10 a.m. — Elwood Civic Center, Elwood, NE. Meal sponsor to be announced.
- Dec. 17 at 10 a.m. — Alma Country Club, Alma, NE. Meal sponsored by Harlan County Meat Processors, Republican Valley Animal Center and Harlan County Cattlemen's Association.
- Jan. 19, 2027, at 1 p.m. — Eastern Nebraska Research, Extension and Education Center, Ithaca, NE.
- Jan. 20 at 1 p.m. — Tecumseh Community Building, 355 Clay St., Tecumseh, NE.
- Jan. 21 at 10 a.m. — Fillmore County Extension Office, Geneva, NE. Meal sponsored by Farmers and Ranchers College.

Registration is $20 per in-person workshop. Participants will also earn two BQA continuing education credits toward BQA recertification.

In addition to the workshops, Nebraska Extension will host a free live webinar Jan. 18 from noon to 2 p.m. The webinar will cover core calving management topics, providing an opportunity for producers to strengthen their knowledge ahead of the calving season.

Registration is required for both the webinar and in-person workshops. To register or learn more, visit go.unl.edu/calvingcollege2027. For additional information, contact Lindsay Waechter-Mead at lindsay.waechter-mead@unl.edu. **— Nebraska Extension**

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Annual Production Sale

KG RANCH

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2026

12:30 MT AT THE RANCH THREE FORKS, MONTANA

REG. 21579876



Basin Exclusive 2519 **X**
SITZ Impulse 732J

REG. 21579877



Basin Exclusive 2519 **X**
HA Cowboy Kind 8157

REG. 21580618



Ellingson Badlands 0285 **X**
SITZ Verdict 744H

Featured Sires

Ellingson Prosper, Sitz Impulse, Sitz Eternity, Ellingson Badlands,
GDAR All In, Basin Exclusive, Sitz Asset, Poss Relevance,
TH Legacy, Sitz Verdict, JCH Logo, Sitz Dividend

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Mineral supplementation in cow-calf operations

Proper mineral and vitamin nutrition contributes to strong immune systems, improved reproductive performance and calf weight gain. A properly balanced mineral program requires consideration of previous cow and calf mineral nutrition and current diet. Diets with mineral imbalances may cause poor animal performance, resulting in reduced profitability.

Much like other nutritional requirements, mineral needs are dependent on forage mineral content, animal age and stage of production. Knowing the animal's requirement is only one component in evaluating an animal's mineral status. Mineral needs also tend to be area specific and change with soil type, fertilization rates, rainfall, and other factors. An understanding of the need for minerals is necessary for making decisions about what and how much mineral to feed.

As a general rule, Oklahoma forages do not have severe mineral deficiencies or high levels of mineral antagonists compared to forages in many other states. Mineral antagonists are those minerals that, when in high enough amounts, may block the availability of other minerals to the animal. That being said, forage mineral concentration is extremely variable and site-specific mineral problems in Oklahoma have been identified.

Several general principles are evident relative to supplementing minerals to grazing beef cattle in Oklahoma. Almost all forages require salt supplementation as a source of sodium. Summer native range and prairie hay require phosphorus supplementation. Most grasses common to Oklahoma are marginal to deficient in copper and zinc.

It is apparent that good quality legume-based forages require very little if any mineral supplementation with the exception of zinc and salt, depending on the amount of this type of hay provided in the total diet. Lush growing forage and forage with a substantial legume component contains significantly higher concentrations of most minerals.

The most common methods of providing supplemental minerals to cattle is through a protein/energy supplement or through a free-choice mineral supplement. Animal to animal variation in intake is greatest with free-choice mineral supplements. Some cattle consume no supplement, while others may consume as much as four or five times the intended daily amount. This variation is reduced considerably when minerals are incorporated into protein/energy supplements that are provided on a regular basis.

Best management practices

When feeding free-choice mineral supplement, keep mineral available year-around. Over time, this tends to reduce variation in daily intake. Typical loose, free-choice mineral mixes are designed for a 3- to 4-ounce daily consumption per head. Consumption rates naturally fluctuate with the season (e.g., dropping from about 4.5 oz/day in April down to about 2 oz/day by June).

Mineral feeder placement is important. Place mineral feeders near water sources, shaded areas, or loafing spots to encourage consistent daily intake. Keep white salt separated from free-choice mineral blends.

Anaplasmosis control can be administered through free-choice mineral containing chlortetracycline (CTC). This requires a valid Veterinary Feed Directive from your veterinarian. Fly control can also be administered using a feed-through insect growth regulator (IGR) incorporated into the mineral mix, which passes through the digestive tract into fresh manure to disrupt the horn fly life cycle. It is possible to use CTC and IGR in the same mineral formulation.

Producers can utilize forage and water testing (such as through Oklahoma State University's Soil, Water and Forage Analytical Laboratory) or cattle calculator software to evaluate specific herd needs. **— Mark Z. Johnson, Oklahoma State University Extension beef cattle breeding specialist**

Risk management strategies to consider for your herd

Record-high cattle prices may be creating optimism across the beef industry, but Kansas State (K-State) University experts say the strong market also increases the importance of managing risk.

During a recent episode of "Cattle Chat," experts from the Beef Cattle Institute discussed how producers can protect profitability through market planning tools and risk management strategies while navigating uncertainty tied to weather, herd rebuilding and volatile cattle prices.

K-State agricultural economist Dustin Pendell said understanding the "basis" is one of the first steps producers should take when considering how futures markets work.

"The futures market is based out of Chicago, but your local market may be Manhattan, KS," Pendell said. "That difference between the local cash price and the futures price is the basis."

Pendell said basis levels can vary depending on transportation costs, local supply and demand and regional market conditions. Understanding those differences can help producers make more informed marketing decisions and better evaluate price protection opportunities.

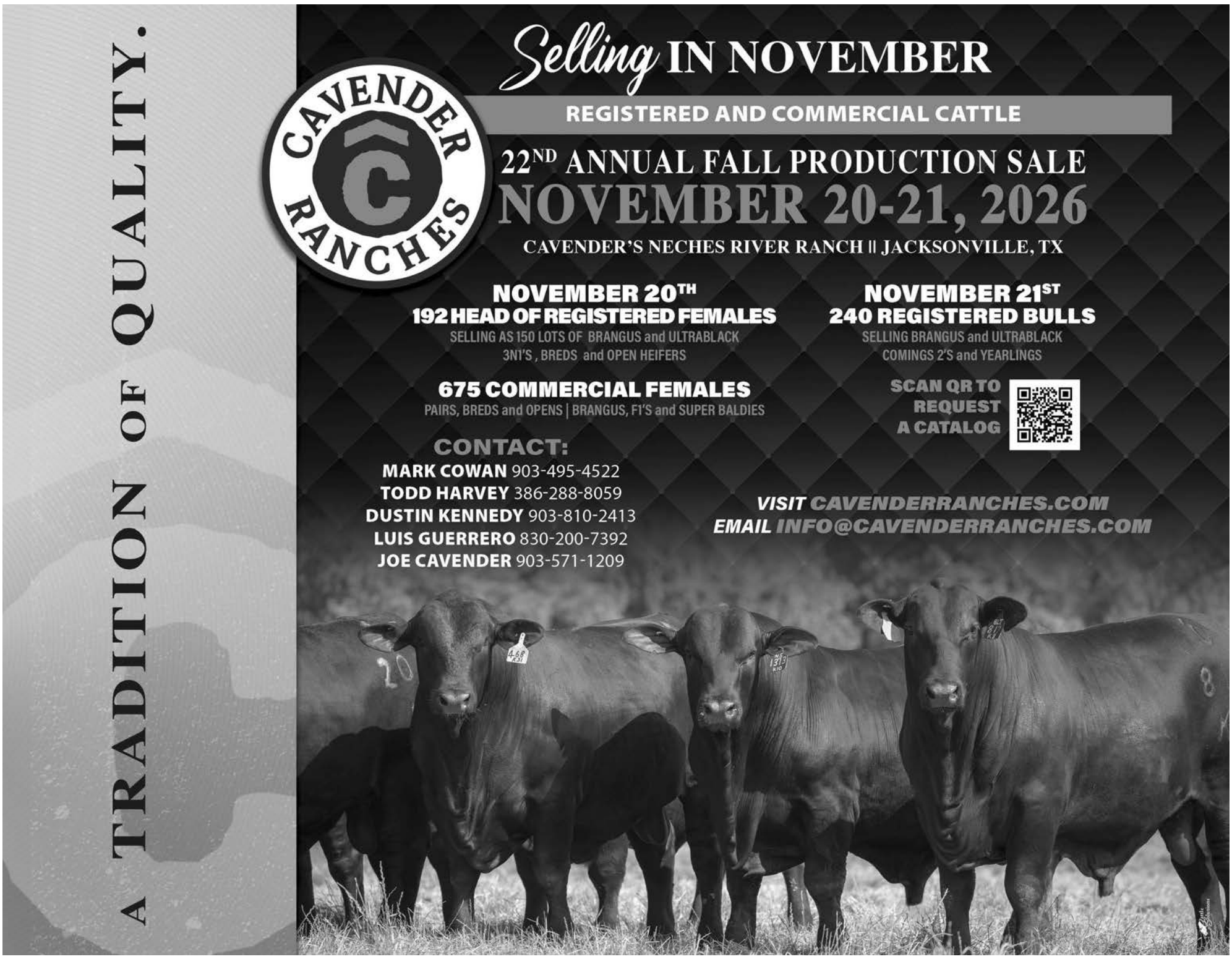
As producers look for ways to reduce downside risk, Pendell highlighted Livestock Risk Protection insurance, commonly known as LRP, as one tool available to cattle operations.

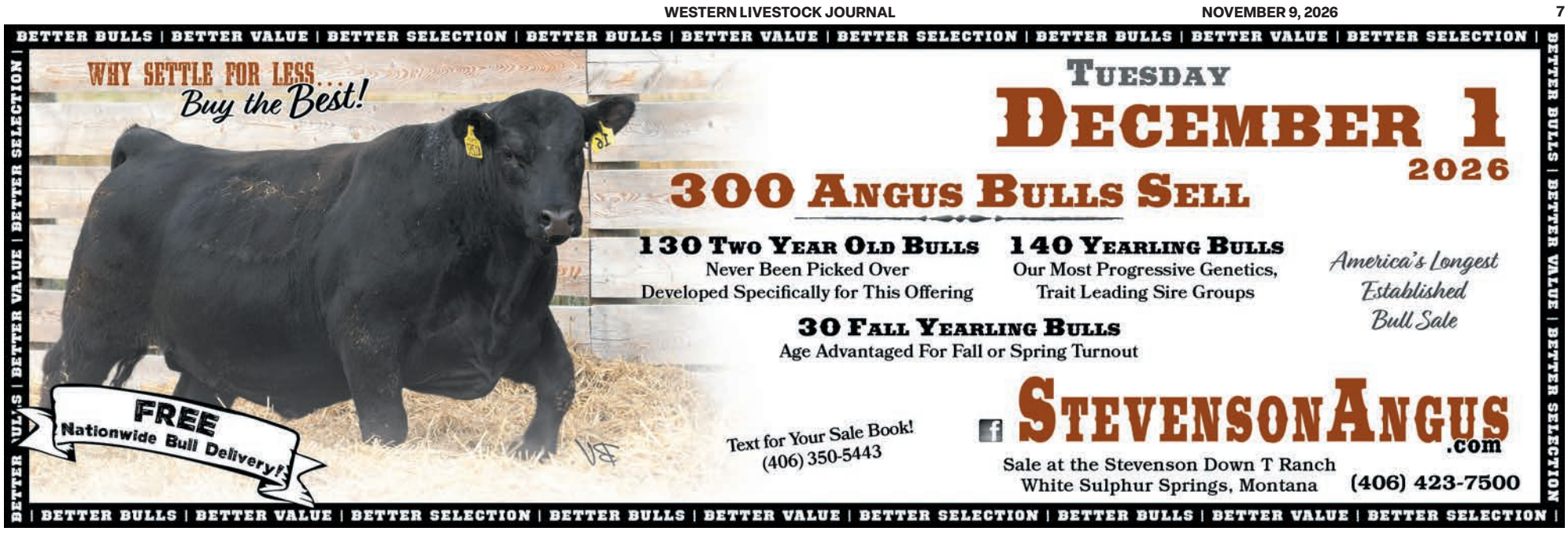
"With Livestock Risk Protection, producers pay a premium for coverage and if prices move against them, that protection can help offset losses," Pendell said.

Unlike futures contracts, LRP allows producers to establish a price floor while still benefiting if markets continue to rise. Pendell noted that flexibility can make the program attractive for cow-calf producers who may be less familiar with traditional futures market strategies.

The discussion also focused on how current market conditions are increasing the financial exposure for producers making herd management decisions.

"High calf prices create opportunities, but they also increase the amount of risk producers are carrying," K-State veterinarian Brad White said. Shifts in drought conditions, feed costs or cattle supplies could quickly impact profitability for operations that are not prepared for market swings. **— K-State Research and Extension**





USDA announces expansion grants for meat processors

Following its announcement of $57 million in funding to expand meat processing capacity, USDA has identified the independent processors selected to receive grants.

At the end of October, USDA announced that processors in 40 states were set to receive $57 million through the Meat and Poultry Processing Expansion Program. The program is moving forward with 147 awards intended to expand processing capacity and encourage competition in the meat processing sector.

"Now that these funds are moving, ranchers will have more options close to home, more competition will return to the market, and more of the value of American-raised beef will stay in rural communities," said USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins.

Funding was allocated for projects ranging from equipment upgrades and adding new products, to expanding and renovating processing facilities.

Of the western states announced as of Nov. 4, Texas and Kansas processors were selected to receive the most funding at $7 million and $4 million, respectively.

The following 10 processors were awarded funding in Texas:

- Rowena Packing of Rowena, TX, will receive a $939,496 grant.
- MTX Beef of Mason, TX, will receive a $761,163 grant.
- Local Cuts Meat Company of Zephyr, TX, will receive a $1,032,800 grant.
- Fort Worth Meat Packers of Fort Worth, TX, will receive a$1,800,000 grant.
- Tejas Premium Meats of Itasca, TX, will receive a $1,538,719 grant.
- Hometown Meat Market of Luling, TX, will receive a $417,738 grant.
- Wiatrek's Meat Market of Floresville, TX, will receive a $249,999 grant.
- I O Ranch Processing of Evant, TX, will receive a $146,658 grant.
- Huse Processing of Malone, TX, will receive a $217,817 grant.
- Cobb's Meat of Sumner, TX, will receive a $151,832 grant.

The following 10 processors were awarded funding in Kansas:

- Diamond A Processing of Junction City, KS, will receive a $182,094 grant.
- Hat Creek Butchery of Plains, KS, will receive a $249,367 grant.
- Meade Locker & Processing of Meade, KS, will receive a $249,711 grant.
- Meatworks of Kansas of Riley, KS, will receive a $228,750 grant.
- Mitchell Bolling of Moran, KS, will receive a $197,338 grant.
- Plainview Beef Company of Peabody, KS, will receive a $2,000,000 grant.
- Randel Inc. of Grinnell, KS, will receive a $249,845 grant.
- Stroot's Meat Company of Goddard in Mulvane, KS, will receive a $250,000 grant.
- T & W Meat Co. of Kingman, KS, will receive a $250,000 grant.
- Walnut Valley Packing of El Dorado, KS, will receive $116,280 grant.

Additional western states received the following in funding:

- Montana: A total of $2.4 million for seven processors.
- North Dakota: A total of $500,000 for three processors.
- Oregon: A total of $351,880 for one processor.
- Nebraska: A total of $250,000 for one processor.

New plant coming to TX

On Oct. 29, USDA said its Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program would support the construction of a locally owned, USDA-inspected beef processing plant in Dimmitt, TX. The facility is backed by a $24.6 million commercial loan and is expected to process approximately 400 head of cattle per day.

The project was initiated by 36 local investors who are involved in raising cattle in the Texas Panhandle.

"Their goal is to develop an alternative to major national meatprocessing companies and support more competitive beef prices," USDA said.

The new facility is expected to create 220 new jobs with an average wage of $30 per hour. **— Anna Miller Fortozo, *WLJ* managing editor**



High schoolers train to ease a rural veterinarian shortage

Pecos, TX, sits in what veterinary professionals call a "veterinarian desert," or a region with too few veterinarians to meet demand for pets, livestock and show animals alike. At the Pecos-Barstow-Toyah Independent School District, a high school is partnering with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to train teenagers to help close that gap.

The Veterinary Science Certificate Program (VSCP), managed through AgriLife Extension, is not, in the words of Joe Tyus, high school technical education coordinator, an "I like puppies club." It is a program where students get their scalpels out, learn how to suture and work with hypodermics.

Nikki Boutwell, AgriLife Extension program specialist in the Department of Animal Science and program coordinator for the certificate program, has helped Tyus implement the nationally recognized program at Pecos High School.

Boutwell said she began working with the district's Career and Technical Education (CTE) veterinary science program when Tyus was the teacher. He later became the district CTE coordinator.

"Joe implemented our program and is doing some amazing things," she said. "We knew getting students their clinical skill hours in a veterinary desert would be a challenge. Resources were scarce. But Joe took proven AgriLife Extension models and ran with them."

In just a short time, Boutwell said Tyus built a thriving, community-backed program that meets students' needs while filling a vital local gap.

A program worthy of the building

Pecos High School built a new career technical education facility with space specifically designed for vet science, including a kennel room, washroom with blowers, step-in tubs, a surgical room and a dog run right off the classroom. Tyus joined as the vet science teacher but needed a curriculum to go with the new space.

As a Texas A&M University graduate, Tyus checked with his alma mater to see what it had to offer, found the certificate program, met with Boutwell and began adopting the curriculum. The coursework is very rigorous but has been well received.

"I'd never taught veterinary science specifically before, but the program has enough supports built in; it has been very doable," Tyus said.

Veterinary science is one of 15 career pathways offered at the high school, giving students a clear route into a postsecondary education or the job market, Tyus said. The number of students is limited because admission is selective, requiring an application and a parent essay.

The program is designed for high school students interested in becoming a veterinary assistant or pursuing an associate, undergraduate or graduate degree in veterinary science.



Joe Tyus

Students in the Pecos-Barstow-Toyah Independent School District Veterinary Science Certificate Program get hands-on experience observing and working beside veterinarians at a community pet clinic.

Students must log more than 200 classroom hours and 300 clinical hours to be eligible to sit for their certification examination. Tyus said this experience is more than some second-year college veterinary school students have had.

"None of my students could even drive, but they had already logged 50-plus internship hours and clinical hours with a veterinarian or a vet tech," Tyus said.

Only about 40-50% of applicants are accepted, he said, adding that because the schedule includes Fridays and Saturdays under a four-day school week, some students are counseled out due to other commitments.

Tyus said the exposure to veterinary clinical activities weeds out students who are not prepared for the realities of veterinary medicine. The sights and smells can be more than expected.

The program is currently in its second cohort, with juniors and sophomores. Tyus said most students hope to apply to veterinary school; others aim to become licensed veterinary technicians. Either way, the hands-on hours give them a real edge in a competitive field.

"A student who has already logged 225 clinical hours and demonstrated 100 skills stands out immediately on a vet school application," Tyus said.

Benefiting the community

Because the region is considered a "veterinary desert," establishing the VSCP in the Pecos school system benefits more than just the students.

As Tyus brings in veterinarians for the student experience, they also provide a significant community service.

The program partners with the Pecos Animal Shelter and One Tail at a Time Rescue to host an annual spay-and-neuter clinic, now in its third year.

Four veterinarians came from Lubbock to take part this year, and roughly half of the 110 appointment slots were filled within the first 12 hours, demonstrating a great community need, Tyus said.

Students also treat show animals such as lambs, goats, pigs and cattle at the school's ag barn under the supervision and observe local veterinarians during larger procedures to log more hours, Tyus said.

"This collaboration is a perfect example of how the VSCP and a committed educator have come together to help youth learn and give back to their community at the same time," Boutwell said. — **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension**

Over 300 females sell

10 FEATURE OPEN HEIFERS
15 FALL EXPOSED HEIFERS AI TO STELLPFLUG BIGHORN
65 SPRING BRED HEIFERS
2 FALL PAIRS
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100 EMBRYOS
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SPRING COVE RANCH
2026 Female CONNECTION SALE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2026 AT SPRING COVE RANCH, BLISS, IDAHO • 1:00 PM MT



CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	CW	MARB	RE	$M	$W	$F	$G	$B	$C
+7	+1.6	+89	+142	+31	+65	+1.14	+.72	+105	+112	+99	+78	+177	+335

Black Barrel x Blossom 050 (Southern Charm)

Spring Cove Blossom 644 AAA +21633836
The first daughters to sell by the exciting and useful son of Jameson, Kesslers Black Barrel.



CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	CW	MARB	RE	$M	$W	$F	$G	$B	$C
+12	-.9	+80	+136	+25	+63	+.81	+1.09	+115	+94	+111	+66	+178	+346

Vindicator x Pretty 3041 (Essential)

Spring Cove Pretty 5087 AAA *21568611
The first daughters of Tehama Vindicator M302 sell. This one is bred to Stellpflug Bighorn.



CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	CW	MARB	RE	$M	$W	$F	$G	$B	$C
+8	+1.5	+79	+138	+27	+70	+1.18	+1.31	+84	+83	+112	+90	+203	+347

Warbucks x Liza 141 (Accomplishment)

Spring Cove Liza 5016 AAA +21285448
This daughter of Pine View Warbucks sells bred to LT Anchor 4031.



CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	CW	MARB	RE	$M	$W	$F	$G	$B	$C
+9	+.5	+76	+130	+29	+57	+.75	+1.15	+99	+92	+104	+67	+172	+322

Maverick x Carol 186 (Reno)

Spring Cove Carol 5017 AAA +21545401
This member of the famed Carol family that produced Grant sells bred to Spring Cove Arthur 5N.

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PINE VIEW ANGUS, IA
BUB RANCH, MO
PATTON FARMS, ID
POTTER'S EMMETT VALLEY, ID
IO ANGUS, CA
DIXIE VALLEY RANCH, CA
GUESS CATTLE, CA
ROCK CREEK CATTLE, IL
REVERSE ROCKING R, NM
SPRING COVE RANCH, ID
TRIPLE L ANGUS, ID

COMMERCIAL FEMALE BREEDERS
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TRIPLE L ANGUS, ID
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Three reasons why small, weak-born fall calves may happen

"Each fall we receive questions about small, weak-born calves in fall-calving herds," said Craig Payne, director of veterinary extension at the University of Missouri (MU). "There is rarely a simple explanation for why these problems occur, and several factors may be involved."

Payne, along with Tim Evans, MU Extension state specialist in veterinary toxicology and animal health, and Jamie Courter, MU state beef genetics extension specialist, look at three factors that may contribute.

Heat stress

Most of the research evaluating heat stress during late gestation has been conducted in dairy cattle, where cows were either heat-stressed or cooled during the final 45 to 60 days before calving. Research has shown that calves born to heat-stressed cows weigh 9 to 15 pounds less at birth than calves born to cooled cows, and many continue to lag in growth through weaning, says Payne.

> "Many producers select bulls for low birth weight, either by choosing a favorable birth weight expected progeny difference or considering the bull's own birth weight. But low birth weight is not the same as calving ease and should not be used as a substitute for selecting for calving ease."
>
> — Jamie Courter

Research has also demonstrated other effects, including lower blood oxygen in the calf at birth, reduced efficiency of antibody absorption from colostrum after birth, and changes in immune function that persist beyond the neonatal period. Several studies have also reported gestation lengths that were three to four days shorter, but this finding has not been consistent.

Although the amount of research in beef cattle is much smaller, studies in Brangus and Angus-cross cows have reported similar findings, including lighter calves, greater sensitivity to heat after birth and immune changes that persist into the feedlot.

Why do we see these effects?

"Research has consistently shown that prolonged heat stress during late gestation reduces blood flow to the uterus and placenta," Payne said. "Over time, this can impair placental growth and function, reducing the transfer of oxygen and nutrients to the developing fetus. Because approximately 70% of fetal growth occurs during the last trimester, even modest reductions in oxygen and nutrient delivery during this period can affect fetal development and may contribute to lower birth weights and other changes associated with heat stress during late gestation."

While the impact of heat stress on birth weight is well documented, there is less evidence linking it to weak-born calves, stillbirths or abortions. Large observational studies in dairy cattle have reported an increased risk of stillbirths during periods of severe environmental heat. However, in controlled studies, that finding has not been consistent, and there is little direct evidence linking heat stress to weak-born calves or abortions. This is not to say heat stress cannot increase the risk of these outcomes, only that current research provides limited evidence that heat stress alone is responsible, Payne said.

Where fescue may fit

"If your herd grazes toxic tall fescue, the picture may become even more complicated," says Evans.

Toxic fescue contains ergot alkaloids, primarily ergovaline, which constrict blood vessels throughout the body. In cattle, this is best known for reducing blood flow to the tail and feet. However, research has also demonstrated constriction of the uterine blood vessels, suggesting reduced blood flow to the developing fetus during late gestation. This may further reduce oxygen and nutrient delivery to the fetus during a critical period of development.

Evidence that toxic fescue directly causes abortions or stillbirths is much stronger in horses than in cattle. Pregnant mares grazing toxic fescue commonly experience little to no milk production, prolonged gestation, difficult foaling, and stillborn or weak-born foals. Cattle appear less sensitive, likely because some of the toxin is degraded in the rumen before it is absorbed. That is not to say toxic fescue cannot contribute to abortions, weak-born calves or stillbirths in cattle, only that research directly demonstrating that relationship is limited.

Could genetics also play a role?

There is one other factor worth mentioning. Jamie Courter, MU Extension beef genetics specialist, says one of the most common questions she receives during producer meetings is whether selecting for calving ease is also contributing to lower birth weights than intended.

"Many producers select bulls for low birth weight, either by choosing a favorable birth weight EPD or considering the bull's own birth weight," Courter explained. "But low birth weight is not the same as calving ease and should not be used as a substitute for selecting for calving ease."

The genetic correlation between calving ease direct and birth weight is only about 0.30, meaning the traits are related but can be selected for independently. Producers can identify bulls with favorable calving ease while maintaining moderate, acceptable birth weights.

Continually selecting for the lowest birth weight generation after generation may drive birth weights lower than necessary. When combined with factors such as shortened gestation and late-gestation heat stress or fescue toxicosis, this may help explain why some fall-calving producers observe calves that are substantially smaller or less vigorous than expected. The goal, Courter emphasizes, is not to produce the smallest calf possible. It is to select for calving ease while maintaining an appropriate birth weight. — **MU Extension**

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.

Dec. 3-5 – Registration is open for the Montana Stockgrowers Association Annual Convention in Billings, MT. Visit mtbeef.org to register.

Vermilion Ranch Fall Performance Sale

NOVEMBER 27-28, 2026
Public Auction Yards, Billings, MT
2,000 ANGUS SELL

Selling Friday, November 27 at 1:00 PM

1,200 Fancy Commercial Angus Bred Heifers
One-Iron – Montana's Best. Bred to Circle L Unified and Vermilion Irish Whiskey, followed up by top performing Vermilion bulls. Bred to calve in February and March 2027.

100 Commercial Cow Dispersion
All 2019 born Commercial Angus Cows from the Diamond Ring Ranch to calve in April 2027.

Selling Saturday, November 28 at 11:00 AM

340 TOTAL PERFORMANCE BULLS
Bulls are genomic measured with ANGUSGS and PAP tested at 6,000'.

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Fall bulls are the best of our Fall Breeding Program! Sired by Unified, Jameson, Long Teton, Riverside, Bedrock, Prosper and top Vermilion Sires.

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Special Feature! All 2019 born registered Angus cows. Proven producers that all sell – no exceptions. Bred to Win The Day, Cattle Call, Denali, EB Commodore, Validation, Irish Whiskey and Trail Boss.

80 April-Calving Registered Cow Dispersion
100 Registered Bred Heifers ANGUSGS


LOT 104: Vermilion Prosper N837
AAA 21467114
DOB: 8-12-25 Sire: Ellingson Prosper MGS: Casino Bomber
CED +16 BEPD -.1 WEPD +90 YEPD+151 MILK +22
SC +1.29 MARB +.69 RE +.96 $M +100 $C +341


LOT 170: Vermilion Riverside N515
AAA 21312741
DOB: 2-15-25 Sire: Vermilion Riverside MGS: Myers Fair-N-Square M39
CED +8 BEPD +1.1 WEPD +91 YEPD +156 MILK +24
SC +.78 MARB +.39 RE +.81 $M +94 $C +278


LOT 7: Vermilion Jameson N784
AAA 21467069
DOB: 8-16-25 Sire: Basin Jameson MGS: Connealy King Air
CED +15 BEPD -.7 WEPD +77 YEPD+118 MILK +37
SC +1.41 MARB +.92 RE +.46 $M +105 $C +279


LOT 35: Vermilion Unified N815
AAA 21467098
DOB: 8-28-25 Sire: Circle L Unified MGS: Casino Bomber
CED -3 BEPD +4.3 WEPD +100 YEPD+149 MILK +26
SC +1.29 MARB +.73 RE +1.00 $M +136 $C +373


LOT 530: Vermilion Blackbird 5433
AAA 21288295
Sire: Circle L Unified MGS: Flying N Fortune 0093
AI bred to Vermilion Irish Whiskey 5/2.


LOT 331: Vermilion Eulima 9270
AAA 19508416
Sire: Casino Bomber MGS: Connealy Countdown
Progeny Ratios WR 107 – YW 109. AI: Long Teton 5/29 carrying a bull. Maternal sister to Vermilion Riverside's dam.

Vermilion Ranch
Pat Goggins Family
Bob Cook - Records & Sales
Cell: 406-670-0078
Jeff Mosher - Vermilion North
Brandon Mosher - Pryor Creek
Jake Kading - Herdsman
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Business group pushes to open Oregon land for industry

Oregon should open up a "phantom supply" of land in the state for economic development by creating a $250 million industrial site readiness fund, expanding local programs allowing industries to set up across multiple jurisdictions and establishing dedicated swaths of underdeveloped land for future growth, according to a new report from business leaders.

The 29-page Industrial Lands & Economic Competitiveness report released Oct. 26 by the Oregon Business Council frames the state's decades-old land use system as outdated. The system regulates residential, industrial and commercial development to protect Oregon's natural resources and environment, including through limiting where and how cities can grow. The council is made up of more than 40 business leaders in the state, including top executives and public policy leaders.

The report argues that Oregon's economic landscape has changed since the origins of the system, shifting from a focus on agriculture and timber to manufacturing and semiconductors. It points to a forthcoming survey finding that 80% of respondents reported missing out on economic development projects due to a lack of developable land and a 2026 report by the University of Oregon noting that limited industrial land availability is stymieing new semiconductor investment in the state.

"Oregon has also spent decades building competitive advantages in industries such as semiconductors through private capital investment, specialized workers, supplier networks, research capacity and public infrastructure," the report reads. "Those advantages are no more automatic or permanent than productive farmland."

Oregon's land use system was established about 50 years ago with the goal of stemming the loss of farm and vulnerable forestland to suburbanization and sprawl. But lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have suggested that the system needs updating, making it an issue that could be revisited in the 2027 legislative session.

State lawmakers earlier this year voted to expand a program to allow cities to push past their urban growth boundaries for additional senior and manufactured housing. While Business Oregon, the state's economic development agency, offers a $25 million industrial site loan fund, the report praises Gov. Tina Kotek's (D) prosperity council recommendation this summer that Oregon invest in a larger $250 million dedicated site readiness and infrastructure fund.

"Land without infrastructure isn't ready. Land cannot support homes or industry without adequate roads, utilities and electricity," John Tapogna, president of the Oregon Business Council, said at a webinar. "The prosperity council certainly pointed that out on the industrial land side. It is also true on the housing land side."

Other key areas identified in the report that could turn into potential legislation next session include expansion of industrial land banks, which are often publicly controlled swaths of land that are underutilized or contaminated and set for development in the future.

The report also recommends expanding a "large lot" industrial program to create more regional voluntary programs across the state, pointing to an arrangement in Central Oregon allowing cities and counties to collaborate and designate land that is prime for employment and industrialization opportunities.

The Bend-based Central Oregon LandWatch, an environmental nonprofit, didn't oppose specific policies outlined in the report but expressed hesitant support for some of its recommendations. It also said the ideas outlined in the report are similar to efforts to improve access to land in the housing sector.

"Some of these ideas have merit, such as better land inventories and a focus on infrastructure, and others don't," Corie Harlan, the organization's cities and towns program director, said in a statement. "We're ready to engage in this industrial lands work to ensure our land use program delivers the opportunities and exceptional livability Oregonians know, love, and need." **— Shaanth Nanguneri, Oregon Capital Chronicle**



Ranchers argued BLM could delay gathers

DEADLINES
(from page 1)

Ranchers sought firmer deadlines

Congress passed the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act in 1971, and subsequent amendments enable BLM to manage wild horses and burros to maintain an ecological balance on public lands.

Under the opinion, the law requires BLM to track herd populations and determine how many animals the range can support. Once the agency determines that excess animals must be removed, it must act immediately to bring the population within those limits and restore ecological balance.

The ranchers argued that BLM's plans failed that requirement because they set no enforceable deadlines for initial gathers. They argued that a 10-year management framework could not substitute for the immediate removal obligation triggered by an excess-population finding.

The ranchers also challenged provisions tying later gathers and population controls to available funding and other national priorities. Without clear deadlines, they argued, BLM had too much room to put off removals.

Opinion

Holcomb wrote that the word "immediately" must be read alongside the statute's other requirements, including humane care, scientific recommendations and consultation with state wildlife agencies. A rigid timing requirement could prevent BLM from meeting those obligations, the panel concluded.

"The Wild Horses Act does not require that removal actions occur within a specific time frame," he wrote. "Nor does the Act require BLM to set a specific time frame for removal actions."

The judges also rejected the argument that the plans allowed BLM to stretch initial removals across 10 years. Both required prompt gathers to reach the lower management level, with population controls and maintenance gathers continuing afterward. The planning period did not permit BLM to wait a decade to address existing overpopulation.

Holcomb noted that the Little Fish Lake plan calls for reducing horse numbers to the lower management level as quickly as possible, and the Stone Cabin plan acknowledges the legal duty to remove excess animals immediately. Bad weather, horses escaping capture and a shortage of contractors could require more than one gather. Recognizing those obstacles showed BLM had considered how to carry out removals, Holcomb said, and did not establish unlawful delay.

That flexibility does not allow BLM to put off removals indefinitely. Holcomb wrote that both plans require prompt action. If the agency takes too long, a party with legal standing could challenge the delay under the APA.

Holcomb wrote that BLM must plan to remove excess animals "as promptly as logistically and reasonably possible." The agency has considerable flexibility to determine what that requires, but its reasons must be grounded in the law. The panel found both gather plans stayed within those limits.

W. Alan Schroeder, attorney for the ranchers, told *WLJ* they are "processing the next steps" and that he had contacted his clients for further comment, but *WLJ* had received no response as of press time. **— Charles Wallace, *WLJ* contributing editor**

LEGAL LEDGER

Protections ordered for CA spotted owl

A federal judge has ordered the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to finalize protections for the California spotted owl under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) by the end of next April. Judge Eumi K. Lee of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California ruled in a Nov. 2 motion that USFWS failed to comply with the mandatory statutory deadline to issue a final listing determination for the California spotted owl. The decision comes following a lawsuit brought by the Center for Biological Diversity. "I'm so relieved California spotted owls will finally get the protection they need," said Noah Greenwald, endangered species codirector at the Center for Biological Diversity. "Since we first petitioned for their protection more than a quarter century ago the threats to these beautiful and curious owls have only mounted."

BLM gathers horses in Nevada, Utah

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) completed a wild horse gather in Nevada at the end of October and was set to conduct a gather in Utah in early November. BLM concluded gather operations near Reno, NV, on Oct. 22, rounding up 323 horses in the North Complex, which comprises the Dogskin Mountains, Flanigan and Granite Peak herd management areas (HMA). Recent wildfires and drought conditions have reduced the suitability of the HMAs to support wild horses, BLM said. The appropriate management level (AML) for the complex is 101-157 horses but its population was estimated at 424 prior to the gather. Gathered animals were taken to Litchfield, CA, and will be prepared for the BLM's horse and burro adoption program. On Nov. 2, BLM began gather options in the Swasey HMA near Delta, UT. The agency planned to remove about 140 horses, as the latest population was projected at 247 horses compared to the AML of 60-100 horses. "This effort will help improve herd health, reduce pressure on range resources, and support a balanced, healthy environment for wild horses into the future," the agency said. As of Nov. 3, BLM had gathered 28 animals. Animals removed from the range will receive care before being made available for adoption or sale.

Los Padres forest management plan reduced

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) reduced the scale of its Los Padres National Forest Wildfire Risk Reduction Project by approximately 200,000 acres. The vegetation and fuels management project was first announced in 2022 and included more than 235,000 acres across central California's Coast and Transverse ranges. In late October, USFS announced the project would now span approximately 33,000 acres. The revised project reduces work in roadless areas and critical habitat. Last year, USFS reduced the project to roughly 100,000 acres and published a draft Environmental Assessment. A coalition of conservation groups and other organizations urged the agency to reduce the scale of the project. "While we appreciate those improvements, this remains a large and complex project, and there are still important areas where further refinement is needed," said Los Padres ForestWatch Director of Advocacy and Field Operations Benjamin Pitterle.

Greens intervene in WY sage grouse suit

The Center for Biological Diversity and Western Watersheds Project recently filed a motion to intervene in and dismiss a lawsuit seeking affirmation of the Trump administration's greater sage-grouse management plan in Wyoming. "We're intervening because when both sides of a lawsuit want the same outcome, nobody is speaking up for greater sage grouse and the lands they need to survive," said Randi Spivak, public lands policy director at the Center for Biological Diversity. The lawsuit, brought by Western Energy Alliance and the state of Wyoming against the Department of the Interior, seeks confirmation that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) complied with the law in its sage grouse plan for Wyoming. "Challenges have created recurring legal doubt as to whether the plans will remain in effect, be vacated, or be replaced, notwithstanding BLM's repeated findings of statutory compliance," the December 2025 lawsuit read. "This uncertainty in turn results in leasing uncertainty and permitting uncertainty through (resource management plans), lease sale, and permitting related legal challenges."

USFS finalizes Administrative Site Leases rule

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has finalized its Administrative Site Leases rule, which provides the agency greater flexibility to implement the Administrative Site Leasing Program. The program allows USFS to lease or exchange administrative sites, such as ranger stations. The rule removes administrative site leasing from special use regulations and reclassifies it as non-special use activity. "Unlocking underutilized federal administrative sites gives USDA a vital tool to expand affordable housing options across rural communities," said Rural Housing Service Administrator George Kelly. "By modernizing these leasing practices, Rural Development can support the Forest Service in partnering to address critical housing shortages for local workforces and families."

As Montana's rifle season opens, wolf harvest climbs

General rifle season for big game started Oct. 24 across Montana. According to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) data, the season is off to a mixed start for deer and elk in southwest Montana, the busiest region in the state. Meanwhile, wolf harvest is quickly increasing as hunters enter the woods.

Hunters killed 11 wolves across the state as of Oct. 30. The modest spike in wolf mortality reflects a broader wolf-hunting trend in Montana, FWP officials say—the majority of wolf hunters aren't exclusively searching for wolves. Instead, they're opportunistic hunters who carry a wolf license in case they encounter one while searching for other game.

Region 3, which encompasses southern Montana's portion of Greater Yellowstone, has long hosted the largest number of both elk hunters and harvested elk in the state. In the first two days of rifle season, 2,200 big game hunters stopped at FWP check stations in the region. Fewer than 1 in 10 were successful.

Check-station data isn't exhaustive, but state officials documented a harvest of 59 deer and 146 elk in Region 3 over opening weekend of big game rifle season. Those totals were near or above historical averages at some check stations, and below average at others, according to FWP.

At the same time, the state wolf dashboard shows hunters have taken a total of 32 of the canids since the season opened in early September. More than one-third of the total harvest has been killed since Oct. 24.

"[We've seen] more deer and elk hunters on the ground and an uptick in wolf harvests," said FWP Chief of Conservation Policy Quentin Kujala. "That reflects deer and elk hunters with a wolf tag running into wolves."

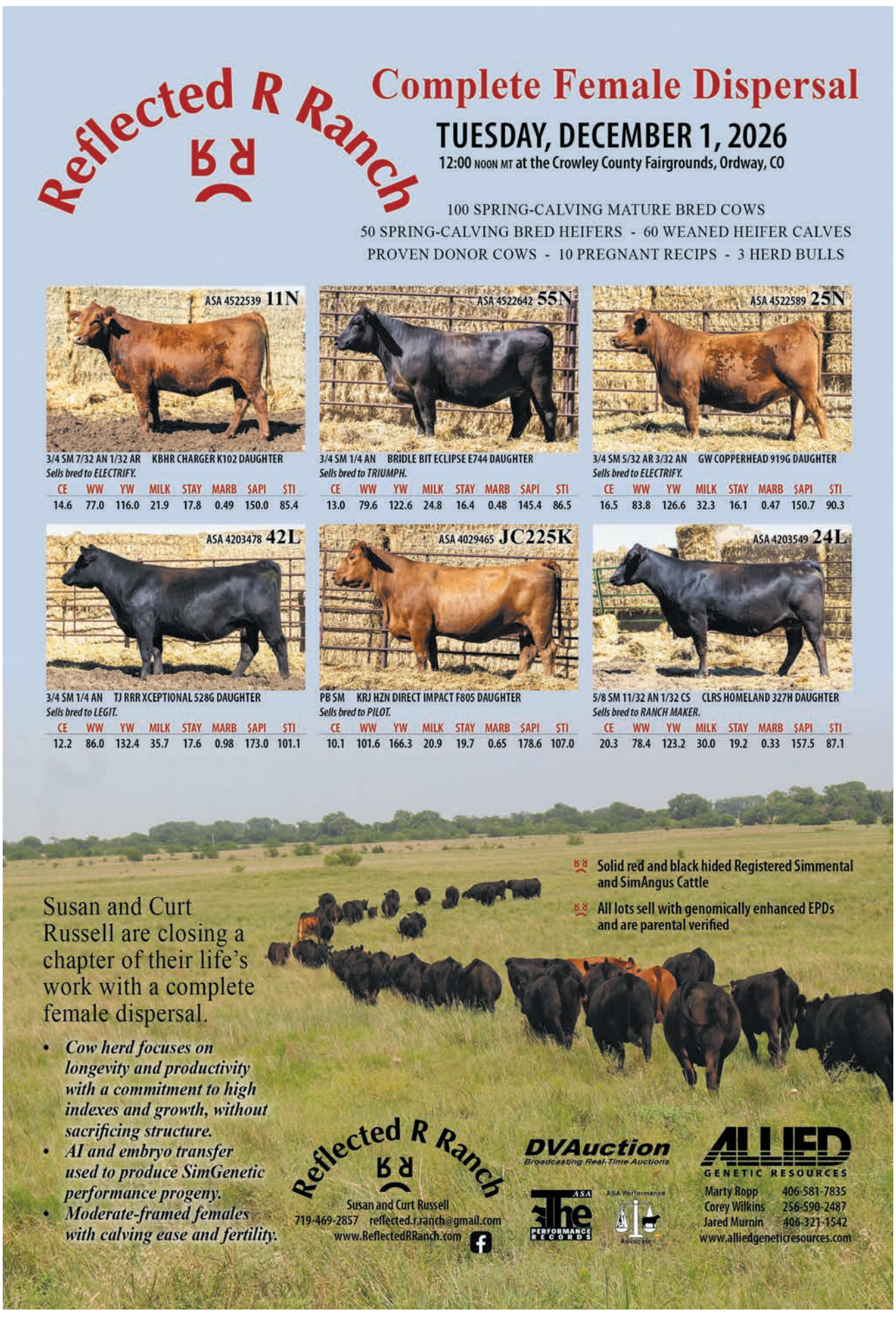
Kujala said the agency's assessment of wolf hunters in general is qualitative; there's no specific survey asking wolf hunters how actively they're pursuing wolves.

The agency keeps track of wolf-harvest data going back to 2009, the state's first-ever legal wolf season. FWP spokesperson Greg Lemon said the harvest so far this year is slightly lower than years past. "There's a recent uptick," he said. "But we're still well behind most years."

Another rapid increase usually occurs, according to Lemon, when trapping season opens on Nov. 30 in some parts of the state and Jan. 1 in others. Trappers, FWP officials said, are almost always dedicated—rather than opportunistic—wolf hunters.

The state lowered its wolf quota this year following a new population estimate that showed the species had far lower numbers in Montana than wildlife officials previously believed. Hunters and trappers can kill as many as 300 wolves this season, down from 458 last year.

Big game season ends in late November, but shoulder season hunts extend through mid-February. Wolf hunting and trapping ends March 15. **— Nick Mott, Montana Free Press**



Using pelvic area measurements to select heifers can minimize calving difficulty

Calving difficulty is a major issue for beef producers and is a primary problem that comes to mind when we are calving out first-calf heifers. Difficulty during calving reduces calf vigor and sucking behavior. This in turn reduces colostrum intake and passive immune transfer resulting in increased calf death loss of four to eight-times greater than in uncomplicated births.

Calving difficulty also has large impacts on the cow, reducing the cow's milk production and subsequent reproduction performance and increases the potential of losing the cow.

The factors that affect calving difficulty include:

- Calf birth weight, which is related to the length of gestation and the sex of the calf.
- Body condition of the cow at calving. Cows can be too thin or too fat.
- Inadequacies in heifer development that lead to calving heifers that are too small.
- Pelvic area of the cow. The size of the birth canal limits the size of the calf that can be delivered.
- Abnormal presentation of the calf at birth.

The biggest cause of calving difficulty is a large calf at birth combined with cows with small birth canals. Pelvic area affects calving difficulty, independent of cow weight. Heifer weight and age and external dimensions of width of hooks and length of rump are not always good indicators of pelvic area or predictors of calving difficulty, so pelvic measurements are a good tool to cull heifer with a higher potential for calving difficulty.

Based on research from the University of Nebraska, pelvic measurements obtained before breeding of a heifer at 12 months of age can be divided by a factor or 2.1 to estimate the calf birth weight the heifer can deliver as a 2-year old at calving without substantial difficulty (Table1).

For instance, a 600-pound heifer with a 160 cm2 pelvic area is expected to be able to deliver a 76-lb. calf when she calves as a 2-year-old (160/2.1 = 76-lb. calf).

Pelvic area increases with the growth of the heifer. Pelvic area can also be measured during pregnancy checks. For an 18-month-old heifer, we use a factor of 2.7.

So, an 800-lb. heifer with a pelvic area of 205 cm2 at 18 months of age would be expected to deliver the 76-lb. calf as a 2-year-old (205/2.7 = 76 pound calf).

The included table from Deutscher's 1987 University of Nebraska factsheet shows the pelvic area/birth weight ratios for differing heifer weights and ages to determine the calf birth weight she should be able to deliver.

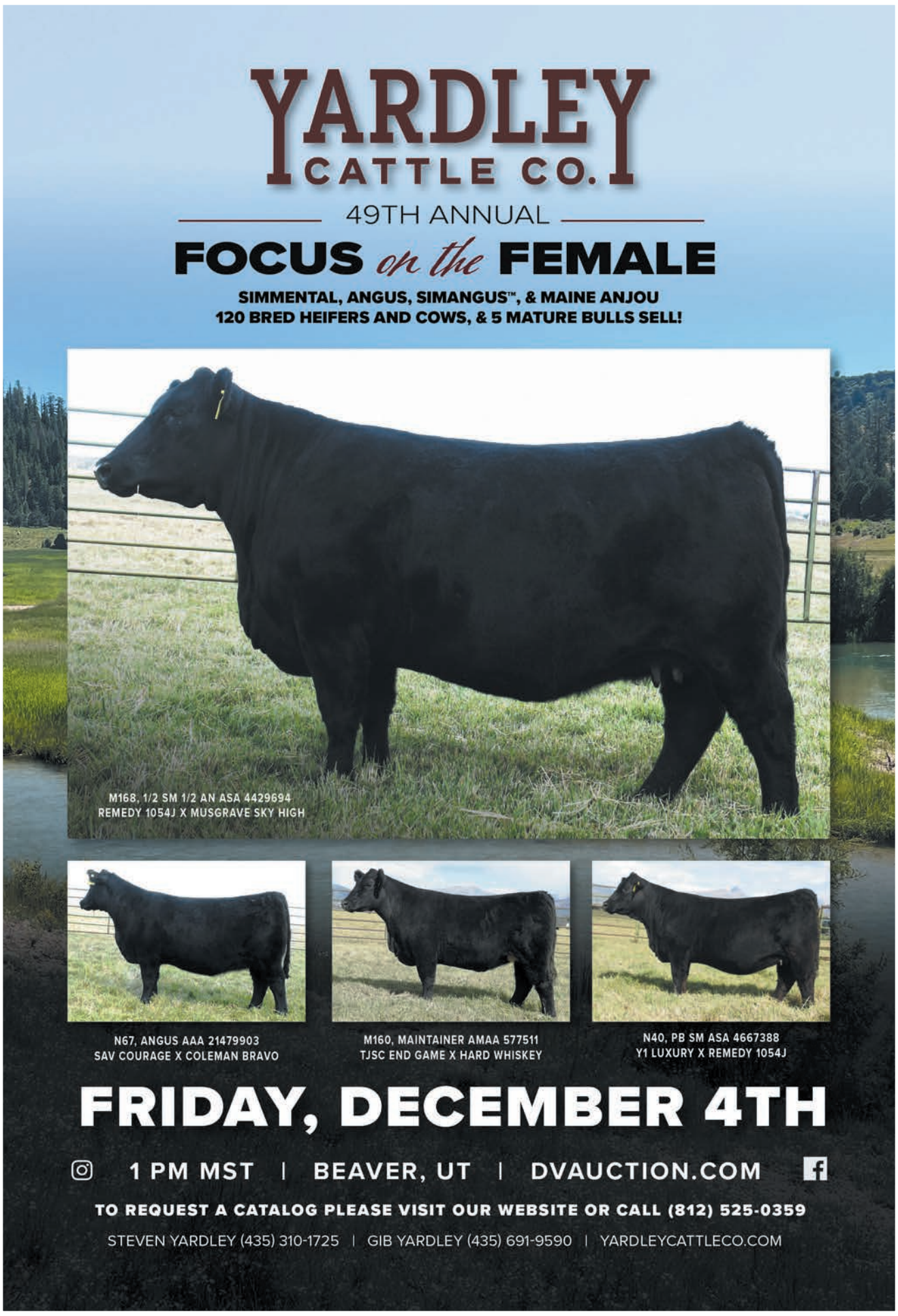
Pelvic area is only part of the equation. To reduce calving difficulty in heifers we need to:

- Use proven calving-ease bulls to breed heifers.
- Grow and develop heifers to targeted weights before calving.
- Calve heifers at a minimum body condition score of 5.
- Measure pelvic area and cull heifers with abnormally small pelvic areas. **— Paul Beck, Oklahoma State University Extension beef cattle specialist**

Table I. Using pelvic measurements to estimate deliverable calf size (birth weight).

Time of Measurement	Heifer Age, mo.	Heifer Wt, lb	Pelvic Area cm²	Pelvic Area/ Birth Wt Ratio	Estimated Calf Birth Wt, lb
Before breeding	12-13	600	140	2.1	67
			160	2.1	76
			180	2.1	86
Pregnancy exam	18-19	800	180	2.7	67
			200	2.7	74
			220	2.7	82

From: Deutscher, 1987, G87-895 Pelvic Measurements for Reducing Calving Difficulty, https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1321&context=extensionhist



Pasture mealybug, drought take toll on hay fields, forage yields

Pasture mealybug and prevailing dry conditions have put a dent in hay production for parts of the state, while other areas have fared well this season, according to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service experts.

Overall, forage production statewide has been a mixed bag.

"Depending on location, for those who have had rainfall, we've seen some good hay produced," said Vanessa Corriher, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension forage specialist and professor, Department of Soil and Crop Sciences, Overton.

"However, those with pasture mealybug will be relying on last year's hay. Between dry weather and pasture mealybug, production has definitely been a moving target."

Producers in good shape where rain fell

"Despite the hits from the pasture mealybug, our producers had a pretty decent hay season that ramped up storage earlier in the spring and summer," said Chadd Caperton, AgriLife Extension agent for Brazos County. "Some did feed a little hay during the dry period but supplemented with syrup tubs and tanks to help reduce the amounts needed."

Caperton said producers across the region appear to be in pretty good shape going into the colder months. Fall armyworms were hitting pastures after the recent rains and cooler temperatures, but he said producers were actively combating those infestations.

Caperton said a couple of producers indicated they will likely begin feeding hay at the end of the month or early part of November as the growth of the warm-season grasses slowly declines and they go dormant.

"Overall, even with the pasture mealybug, we are in decent shape," he said.

Hay supplies tighten in other areas

Dry weather took a significant toll on producers in South Central Texas, which hampered hay yields and supplies. The start of the hay season was good, but rainfall became nonexistent later in the growing season. Many operations will not make a third cutting.

"Central Texas hay produced was average," said Shane McLellan, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension agriculture and natural resources agent for McLennan County.

"The rains from March through mid-July provided great moisture. But the rains ended in July until about a week ago. Seventy-plus days of no rain and above average temperatures did negatively affect hay production."

Producers do have the benefit of carryover hay from the 2025 production season, he said.

"Prices for hay remain lower than expected due to supplies and carryover bales," McLellan said. "There has been a lot of hay moving out in the country the last month due to livestock producers feeding hay as they were out of grazing. Pastures that aren't stocked were greening up, but hay feeding continues in our area."

Options for producers

The best approach to winter feeding and forage will depend on the location of the operation, said Jason Banta, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist and professor, Department of Animal Science, Overton.

"In most cases, there is no reason at this time to purchase extra hay," Banta said. "If hay is the primary source of forage during the winter for your operation, then this year is just like years prior to the introduction of the pasture mealybug."

Banta said if an operation is in a lower rainfall area and relies on stockpiled native range during the winter, then the pasture mealybug was not expected to have an impact this winter.

If operations use stockpiled introduced forages like Bermuda grass, Bahia grass or Old World bluestem to reduce hay feeding, then the amount of forage that is produced for eight to 10 weeks prior to frost is important to consider.

"In many areas of Texas yield of stockpiled introduced forages will be down this year due to drought, so some extra hay would need to be purchased anyway," Banta said.

"In some situations, however, the pasture mealybug may reduce yield of stockpiled introduced forages. If this is expected to be the case, then it would be wise to purchase extra hay to make up for the loss of the stockpiled forage." **— Texas A&M AgriLife Extension**

STORY SHORTS

Arizona confirms first NWS case

Arizona officials confirmed its first New World screwworm (NWS) case on Oct. 28 after a Cochise County veterinarian found maggots in a wound on a dog's back two days earlier. Testing confirmed the pest, and the dog remains under veterinary care. State Veterinarian Dr. Ryan Wolker said preparation helped officials respond quickly. Arizona is working with USDA and regional partners to monitor NWS and coordinate response efforts. Federal officials will establish an infested zone, and Arizona has requested sterile fly releases to prevent the pest from taking hold. Livestock and pet owners should check wounds closely and report suspicious maggots promptly to state animal health officials. USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service reported 36 NWS cases in October and 11 in November as of Nov. 3.

Eight more processors adopt USA label

Eight additional processors have adopted USDA's voluntary Product of USA label, bringing participation to more than 30 companies since the agency launched its nationwide campaign earlier this year. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins said labeled products are now available in all 50 states, giving shoppers another way to find American meat and poultry. The newest participants are Mesorah Farms, Pennsylvania; KJ Poultry, New York; Strauss Brands, South Carolina; Legacy Maker Farms, Indiana; Demkota Ranch Beef, South Dakota; Delta Pride Catfish, Mississippi; Eel River Organic Beef, California; and Krogman Home Grown Meats, Illinois. USDA says the effort helps domestic producers and processors reach shoppers who want to know where their food comes from before buying.

USDA funds feral swine control projects

USDA has awarded $51.9 million to 29 partnership projects in 13 states to help landowners control feral swine and repair damage to farms and ranches. The funding is part of a $105 million investment in the Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service are coordinating the effort. Projects are located in Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas. NRCS grants will help partners provide trapping, land restoration and training to landowners, reducing feral swine threats to agriculture, landscapes and human and livestock health. For more information, visit nrcs.usda.gov.

Washington dairy worker dies from HPAI

A Yakima County, WA, dairy worker has died after contracting highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) following exposure to infected cattle. The Yakima Health District said the worker had underlying health conditions and was hospitalized with a severe HPAI infection. Officials also confirmed the county's third human case in a resident exposed to infected dairy cattle. That person has not become seriously ill or needed hospitalization. In Colorado, routine bulk milk testing detected HPAI at a Weld County dairy on Oct. 24, marking the state's first dairy detection since August 2024. The herd is under quarantine. Health officials say the risk to the general public remains low. USDA reported 48 HPAI cases in cattle in the last 30 days as of Nov. 4.

NRCS pilot to boost conservation planning

USDA is launching the "Farmer First, Field Focused" pilot to put conservation planning first and simplify financial assistance for producers. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will help producers develop plans around their land's needs and operational goals before considering funding options. Field staff will provide planning and technical assistance, while program specialists handle contracts, payments and paperwork. States will draw on local input to establish funding priorities and use a streamlined application evaluation process. The nine participating states are Hawaii, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, South Dakota, Utah and West Virginia. USDA expects faster decisions, fewer administrative demands and $3 million redirected toward conservation priorities identified by states and local communities. For more information, visit nrcs.usda.gov.

USDA plans $472M food purchase

USDA plans to purchase up to $472.5 million in domestically produced food for food banks and other nutrition assistance programs. The planned purchases include $165.5 million in dairy products, $41 million in pork and $20 million each in chicken and farm-raised catfish. Other purchases will include rice, legumes, fruit, nuts and Pacific whiting. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins said the purchases will support American producers while providing food to people in need. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service will buy the products for distribution through charitable organizations and federal nutrition assistance programs.

Breedr raises $27M for expansion

Cattle management software company Breedr has raised $27 million in Series B funding to expand its U.S. team and reach more ranches and feedyards. The company also plans to expand the data available to producers, including genomics. Its platform lets users record breeding, calving, weights, treatments and performance by phone, keeping individual animal histories available to their teams. Through its Connected Beef program, producers can market cattle with those records through private treaty or Superior Livestock Auction. Breedr says the network has traded nearly $500 million in cattle this year.

Grazing crop residues to extend grazing and stretch hay supplies

Drought conditions across much of Oklahoma have reduced pasture production and hay supplies going into winter. Many producers have already started feeding hay, raising concerns about having enough forage to carry cowherds through the winter.

Grazing crop residues following grain harvest is an underutilized way to economically extend grazing and conserve hay supplies in Oklahoma.

Corn and grain sorghum residues are a valuable grazing resources for beef cows, particularly during mid-gestation when nutrient requirements are relatively low. Cattle selectively graze the most nutritious plant components first, consuming any remaining grain, followed by leaves and husks. Stalks and cobs are selected last and are considerably lower in digestibility and should not be considered the primary source of nutrients for the cow.

The University of Nebraska indicates that corn residue from each acre of a field yielding 100 bushels can support a 1,200-pound cow for 30 days.

Grain sorghum produces 8-12 lbs. of grazable residue per bushel of grain harvested, so an 80-bushel/acre grain sorghum crop could provide 640-960 lbs. of grazable forage per acre.

> *Stocking rates should reflect the amount of palatable residue available, and cattle should be moved before the remaining forage becomes too low in quality to meet their nutritional requirements.*
>
> *— Paul Beck*

A field yielding 150 bushels could provide approximately 45 cow-grazing days per acre. These estimates assume cattle consume approximately 50% of the leaves and husks, representing only about 15% of the total residue.

For all crop residues, nutritional value declines as grazing progresses because cattle selectively consume the higher-quality portions first. Protein supplementation may be necessary as residue quality declines, particularly for lactating cows and growing replacement heifers.

Producers should exercise caution when grazing drought-stressed sorghum or corn residues because of potential nitrate accumulation. Grain sorghum regrowth, particularly following frost, can also present a prussic acid risk. Herbicide grazing restrictions should be checked before turning cattle into harvested fields.

Grazing crop residues can delay hay feeding, reduce winter feed costs and provide additional value from harvested cropland. However, stocking rates should reflect the amount of palatable residue available, and cattle should be moved before the remaining forage becomes too low in quality to meet their nutritional requirements. — **Paul Beck, Oklahoma State University Extension beef cattle nutrition specialist**





Rabobank predicts higher feed costs in 2027

U.S. livestock producers should expect slightly higher feed costs in 2027, although ample corn and soybean supplies should help keep increases in check, according to Rabobank's recent report, "Feeding the animal protein market in 2027."

Rabobank expects feed costs to remain manageable, with transportation, energy and other operating expenses keeping delivered prices above 2026 averages. The report emphasizes that what producers pay to get feed to their operations may matter as much as commodity prices.

Larger U.S. corn inventories, record 2026 soybean production and expanding soybean processing capacity should provide some protection against production setbacks, Rabobank said. Additional soybean meal supplies could also limit price increases, even as domestic use and export demand remain strong.

For cattle producers, pasture, hay and silage conditions will help determine feed needs. Rabobank says El Niño could bring wetter conditions to the southeastern U.S. and greater dryness risk in the northern U.S. Poor forage quality could increase reliance on purchased feed. However, the report cautions that El Niño alone does not mean corn yields will fall below trend.

Rabobank projects U.S. beef production to be roughly steady to slightly lower in 2027. Milk production could increase 1-2%, largely through higher production per cow following herd expansion from 2024 through 2026. Dairy feed purchases will depend on milk margins, regional forage supplies and the relative costs of available ingredients.

Rabobank expects overall feed demand to remain relatively steady, with animal weights, production per head and feeding efficiency influencing consumption alongside herd and flock numbers.

Co-products offer another way to manage costs. Rabobank says ingredients such as dried distiller's grains with solubles, other processing byproducts and recovered fats can reduce reliance on corn and other primary crops. Their value depends on quality, freight, storage and how much can be included in each species' ration.

Those supplies have limits, the report notes. Slower ethanol, food processing or soybean crushing activity can reduce availability, while biofuel and industrial buyers compete for fats and other ingredients. A cheaper ingredient may offer little savings if transportation or handling costs are high.

Higher fertilizer, chemical and diesel costs pose another risk. The report says growers could reduce acreage or fertilizer applications, with corn more exposed than soybeans. Transportation disruptions could also leave individual regions facing expensive feed despite adequate national supplies.

Mexico should remain an important buyer of U.S. corn, soybean meal and other feed ingredients, helping support prices, according to Rabobank. However, exchange rates, border delays and freight costs will influence Mexican purchasing decisions.

Rabobank recommends spreading purchases over time, comparing delivered costs and preparing ration alternatives before supplies tighten. Producers should also consider how feed choices affect livestock performance and whether expected selling prices will cover production costs. **— Charles Wallace, *WLJ* contributing editor**

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MT disputes American Prairie's permit eligibility

BISON
(from page 1)

from American Prairie's claims and when the court weighed the equities, and whether the injunction is overbroad in reaching Whiterock Coulee.

Issuing grazing permits to a "non-production-oriented, wildlife management focused" conservation bison herd exceeds federal law, the state argued. This includes violations of the Taylor Grazing Act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act.

"American Prairie's bison herd is not a commercial, production herd," the state asserted. "This is clear from (its) mission, which is 'to create the largest nature reserve in the continental United States, a refuge for people and wildlife preserved forever as part of American's heritage.'"

The state further argued that a preliminary junction is an "extraordinary and drastic remedy" and that the district court's determination that American Prairie will suffer harm is "unsupported, accepting broad and unsubstantiated claims of financial and genetic harm despite evidence to the contrary, and failing to compare the extend of any financial harm to (its) multimillion-dollar enterprise."

The May decision reissued American Prairie cattle permits on the same allotments at the same stocking rates when the group reported more than $202 million in assets on its 2024 tax filing, the state said.

The state continued that the lower court's conclusion that the balance of equities and public interest tips in favor of injunction is "similarly erroneous, rejecting clear evidence that, under injunction, bison will trespass on Montana's Trust Lands and jeopardize the State's fiduciary obligations."

Even if an injunction was appropriate, the state furthered, the scope was overbroad and an abuse of discretion.

The injunction applied to three allotments, but the last uncontested status preceding controversy was when the group grazed on two allotments, the Box Elder and Telegraph allotments, the appeal read. Including the Whiterock Allotment exceeds the status quo prior to litigation, the state contended.

The appeal asks the court to reverse and vacate the preliminary injunction, or at least limit the injunction to the Box Elder and Telegraph allotments.

Background

American Prairie owns about 940 bison and 8,000 cattle that graze on leased and deeded lands in Montana's northern plains.

In May, BLM determined the group manages its bison for conservation and ecological restoration rather than production purposes. The agency said the Taylor Grazing Act only allows grazing permits for livestock managed primarily for production and revoked American Prairie's grazing permits. The group then had until the end of September to remove bison from the federal allotments, an order which was stayed by the preliminary injunction. — **Anna Miller Fortozo, *WLJ* managing editor**

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.)

Nov. 18 – Applications are currently open for the Angus/Talon Youth Educational Learning Program. Host ranch applications are due Oct. 31, while student intern applications must be submitted by Nov. 18. Angus breeders and students interested in more details may visit tinyurl.com/yunna6j8.

Dec. 15 – The Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is seeking students with a passion for entrepreneurship and a drive to turn their purpose into action. Scholarship applications for the 2027-2028 academic year are now being accepted at englerjourney.com.

Jan. 4, 2027 – The Sandhills Task Force is now accepting applications for the 2027 Sandhills Ranch Internship and Apprenticeship opportunities. To learn more and to apply, please visit sandhillstaskforce.org. For questions, please contact KyLee at kylee@sandhillstaskforce.org or call 308-340-2781.

Heavier carcasses unlock value for Country Natural Beef ranchers

Country Natural Beef's cattle became less feed efficient as the cooperative extended days on feed, but they also produced more beef and returned nearly $400 more per head to member ranches.

Tylor Braden, CEO of Country Natural Beef, explained how retained ownership allows the producer-owned cooperative to follow cattle from ranch to harvest and determine where value was created. Braden presented the findings June 3 at the 2026 Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Symposium in Boise, ID.

"One of the benefits of Country Natural Beef is allowing producers to participate in the complete value chain," Braden said.

Retained ownership

Country Natural Beef began with 13 central Oregon ranchers marketing three head per week in the mid-1980s. Today, more than 80 family ranches across 11 states in the West, including Hawaii, market about 75,000 head annually through the cooperative. The cattle are all-natural and grain-finished and participate in third-party verification programs. Ownership transfers at harvest.

That structure gives the cooperative access to feedyard closeouts, individual carcass records, fabrication yields and final return-to-ranch data. Braden's analysis included more than 229,000 carcass records, 700 harvest lots and 2,200 feedyard closeouts. Prices and costs were held constant to isolate changes in production and management from market movement.

Beginning in 2022, the cooperative gradually extended feeding periods. Average days on feed increased from about 170 to 220, while hot carcass weight climbed from approximately 840 pounds to more than 965 lbs. Dry matter conversion worsened by about 0.6 lb., but the cattle produced 63 additional pounds of red meat per carcass.

Overcoming declining efficiency

Hot carcass weight explained about 85% of the variation in net carcass value. Each additional pound of carcass weight generated an estimated $4.74 in net value, or about $3.01/lb. of live gain at a dressing percentage of 63.%.

"If the last pounds they're putting on are less than $3 cost of gain, then you're making money to continue adding pounds," Braden said.

Across the period studied, an additional 125 lbs. of average carcass weight created $637 per head in net carcass value and approximately $395 in added return to the ranch after feeding costs. Longer feeding increased fat deposition and the number of yield grade 4 and 5 carcasses. However, total pounds of saleable red meat continued to rise, while many cooperative costs remained fixed on a per-head basis.

Braden cautioned producers against using days on feed alone to judge profitability. Lighter cattle generally require more time to reach a common endpoint. When the analysis controlled for placement weight, return to ranch increased with additional days on feed even as feed conversion declined.

Management allows genetics to show

The cooperative has no breed or genetic requirements, and Braden said the rapid performance change could not be credited to a coordinated genetic shift. Instead, longer feeding allowed cattle to express genetic potential already present in member herds.

The percentage of cattle grading Choice or better increased nearly 10 percentage points to about 98%. Prime increased 21 percentage points, and the share grading high Choice or Prime increased 32 percentage points to approximately 85%.

Country Natural Beef is now evaluating its grid so producer incentives better reflect measured value. Potential changes include raising the minimum carcass weight from 700 to 800 pounds, removing some traditional quality- and yield-grade premiums and discounts, and rewarding carcasses weighing more than 900 lbs. that maintain yield grades 1 through 3.

Braden emphasized that the findings are not a blanket call for larger cows. Producers could instead prioritize terminal genetics, a longer yearling program or delivering a 900-lb. feeder rather than a 600-lb. calf. The goal of Country Natural Beef is to give ranchers economic signals that help them match genetics and management to their resources while capturing more value from every animal.

Access the 2026 BIF Symposium presentation archive, which is continuously updated, at BIFsymposium.com. — **BIF**

New livestock watering system provides many benefits to ranch

A new solar-powered livestock watering system implemented with assistance through the USDA is allowing Crawford County, IA, farmer Ralph Dorale to better utilize his pasture, reduce soil erosion, increase his cow herd, and improve cattle performance on his rented 153-acre pasture.

Dorale grew up farming near Charter Oak and operates Ra Ra Farms with his wife, Becky. He also works with his sons, Adam and Alex, growing corn and soybeans, cutting hay and raising cows and hogs.

Livestock watering system

Dorale's new livestock watering system includes practices planned and implemented with assistance through USDA's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), administered by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

His new practices include:

- An above-ground water pipeline.
- A solar-powered pumping plant.
- Two water tanks.
- Heavy-use protection areas surrounding the water tanks.

The two new insulated tire water tanks are located at the top and bottom of the hilly pasture. The tanks complement an existing nine-paddock rotational grazing system that requires cows to utilize the entire pasture.

Dorale said each of the water tanks supplies a drinking water source to about half the pasture, via multiple pasture paddocks. "We moved the paddock fencing to better utilize the new water system," he said.

Prior to installing the new water tanks, Dorale said cattle drank primarily from a run-down pond. "We had a big mud hole out here. Cows would get stuck in it and the water quality was absolutely terrible," he said. "Even conception rates were down compared to our other pastures."

Convenience is another benefit of the livestock watering system, which includes video cameras, so Dorale knows if the tanks are working properly. "This project turned out really good. There is no maintenance and we have fresh water," he said. "Since we don't live on the property, this is a big deal for us."

Dorale installed tile lines throughout the pasture to feed the watering system. "The nice thing about the tile is there is no maintenance, it runs constantly, there's plenty of fresh water available, and you don't have to worry about drying up the well," he said.

NRCS Resource Conservationist Pat Corey credits Dorale for making such a large investment on rented pasture. "We tried to help him improve pasture conditions at minimum cost," he said.

For example, Dorale installed above-ground water pipeline powered by solar panels to carry water to the hilltop water tank, a less expensive option than burying water pipeline underground.

Dorale gives kudos to his landlord for his interest in the conservation projects. "Our landlord has always allowed us to make improvements to the land," Dorale said. "He wants to be involved with what's going on and for the land to be better. He believes solar power is good for the future, so this is a win-win for me and our landlord."

Cover crops for animal feed

The Dorales have been growing cover crops to supplement pasture in the fall for about 10 years. Between the three Dorale families, they grow about 1,000 acres of cover crops annually. Although they primarily aerial apply cereal rye, they have also grown radishes.

The family has utilized EQIP funding through NRCS for cover crops and cost-share through the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship to offset cover crop expenses.

"Normally, we save a few cereal rye acres to chop and use for feed, and then we'll plant soybeans behind it," Dorale said. "Cover crops are also helping our crop production with erosion control and to help suppress weeds."

In addition to cover crops, Dorale has been no-till farming for about 40 years which he says is necessary on his rolling hills and highly erodible soils. "It's amazing how rocky soil will actually yield much better after a few years of no-till," he said. "Before no-till, we'd get nothing in those areas."

Dorale said he feels lucky to get to work with NRCS' Corey. "Pat has cows of his own, so he understands how this all works and knows the programs, which helps us a lot," he said.

For more information about conservation practices and programs to help you treat the natural resource concerns on your farm, visit your local NRCS office or go to nrcs.usda.gov/ia. — **USDA NRCS**



Texas A&M AgriLife aims to breed parasite-resistant sheep

Internal parasites are one of the most detrimental issues small ruminant animals deal with in Texas. Texas A&M AgriLife researchers are working to breed sheep that stay healthy and productive despite persistent threats.

Internal parasites, such as the barber's pole worm, are the primary target of a collaborative research and education effort within the Texas A&M Department of Animal Science, led by Jake Thorne, Ph.D., Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service statewide sheep and goat specialist and assistant professor, San Angelo, TX.

The research is supported by a gift from Tim Turner, DVM, and Judy Turner, who established the Family of Tim R. Turner, DVM, and Judy D. Turner Small Ruminant Parasite Program within the department. This includes work conducted at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at San Angelo and the Texas A&M Sheep and Goat Center in College Station, TX.

"Because stomach worms are historically a large problem in the Texas sheep industry, we want to put tools in the hands of producers to better select healthier and more parasite-resistant sheep," Thorne said.

Breeding for worm resistance

Texas has a variety of production environments, which sets it apart from many other states, and sheep need to be able to thrive in all of those environments. But with a limited number of dewormers in the U.S. to treat stomach worms, the emphasis is shifting to preventative strategies, Thorne said.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Research team in San Angelo manages flocks of Dorper and Rambouillet sheep, two foundational breeds to the Texas industry due to their adaptability, maternal ability and carcass value; but they are not known for parasite resistance.

By collecting fecal egg counts and other measures of parasite response, the research is factoring in resistance to estimated breeding values, which can then be used by producers to make genetic selection decisions.

The research team also uses this information to help with the genetic selection of sheep and goats with improved natural resistance, which is the next strategy. Researchers are identifying naturally parasite-resistant animals and using them as breeding stock to improve Texas A&M AgriLife's flocks. Then, through ram sales, genetic progress and resistance are introduced into the industry.

"Combating parasites is a complex problem and requires a multifaceted approach to solve it," Thorne said. "Being able to identify resistant animals, and keeping those as replacements, is a key component to help producers successfully battle parasites. But you can't just go buy a ram and fix everything. You can't just buy one dewormer and fix it all.

"Parasite control encompasses smart grazing management, proper use of dewormers, long-term selection of animals that don't succumb to parasites, and enabling producers to accurately select for those animals."

Collaborative work

The focus on breeding for parasite resistance has also strengthened collaboration across the Department of Animal Science. Clay Mathis, Ph.D., department head, has helped champion the effort, which brings together Thorne with Shawn Ramsey, Ph.D., professor, assistant department head for academics and Texas A&M Wool Judging Team coordinator; Carey Satterfield, Ph.D., AgriLife Research physiology of reproduction researcher and professor; and sheep unit manager Allen McElroy to combine expertise in sheep production, genetics, reproduction and student education.

That collaboration has expanded the work to the Texas A&M sheep unit in College Station, where Ramsey and McElroy are leading data collection in an environment where internal parasites pose an especially persistent challenge.

The College Station work creates opportunities for undergraduate students to participate directly in data collection and breeding decisions. Exposure to the parasite challenge, and to emerging genetic and reproductive technologies being used to address it, can help prepare the next generation of sheep producers and animal scientists.

What's next?

Alongside genetics, the team is evaluating management-based tools, including a feed-through product with a worm-trapping fungus and copper oxide wire particle boluses.

"Ultimately, this is research built for the people raising the flocks," Thorne said. "Every piece—the genetics, the management tools, the breeding stock coming out of the university flocks—is aimed at putting practical, science-backed options directly into producers' hands. We want to help Texas sheep and goat operations stay productive and profitable even where parasites are a constant challenge." — **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension**

Respiratory disease is leading cause of death

HEALTH
(from page 1)

87.6% against respiratory diseases, while 83.7% treated all cattle for parasites. Fewer tested for BVD (7.3%), used immunostimulants (4.8%) or checked lungs with a stethoscope (5.5%).

USDA reported that large feedlots more often vaccinated against BVD than small operations (98% versus 83.3%) and administered injectable antibiotics (72.7% versus 37.2%). Parasite treatments were more common in the West than in the East (98.7% versus 85.8%). Among feedlots processing heifers, large operations also more often checked for pregnancy (51.5% versus 7.8%) or gave drugs to end pregnancy (57.9% versus 17.3%).

The report identifies respiratory disease as the leading cause of feedlot sickness and death. It affected 12.2% of cattle and occurred on 77.5% of feedlots. Lighter arrivals were more likely to become sick: 25.9% of cattle arriving under 400 pounds developed respiratory disease, compared with 9.6% arriving at 700 lbs. or more.

USDA found 63.6% of feedlots performed no postmortem examinations on cattle that died, although these can help identify disease and assess treatment results. Separate hospital pens for treating sick cattle were available on 67% of operations.

Antibiotic use

USDA found that 90.2% of feedlots used antibiotics for at least one animal in 2020, including 83.7% using injectable or bolus-dosed products, 69.9% using antibiotics in feed and 5.9% using them in water.

Giving injectable or bolus-dosed antibiotics to groups of cattle for respiratory disease was more common on large feedlots, at 36.5%, than small operations, at 4.1%. These figures reflect operations using the practice, rather than cattle treated.

Among feedlots using injectable or bolus-dosed antibiotics, 82.4% rated veterinary advice as very or extremely important when choosing products, alongside personal experience (83.7%) and duration of action (62.4%). Tulathromycin and florfenicol were common first treatments for individual respiratory cases.

Ionophores were fed by 56.6% of feedlots, reaching 77.6% of cattle. Among users, 91.6% cited growth promotion or improved feed efficiency, while 55.6% used them against coccidiosis.

Medically important antibiotics were used in feed by 52.2% of operations, most commonly for respiratory disease. These uses require a veterinary feed directive and are limited to disease treatment, control or prevention. Tylosin, used to reduce liver abscesses, reached 49.2% of cattle and was more common on large feedlots; chlortetracycline, often used for respiratory disease, reached 11.3% and was more common on small operations.

Nutrition, biosecurity

The report found that nutritionists helped formulate rations on 61.2% of feedlots, including 94.6% of large operations and 56.8% of small ones.

In 2020, 22% of large feedlots used beta-agonists, compared with 1.9% of small feedlots, reaching 53.2% and 4.2% of cattle on those operations, respectively. Overall, 45.1% of cattle received beta-agonists, with use more common in the West (51.7%) than the East (5.7%).

Written or electronic biosecurity plans were reported by 30.3% of large feedlots and 5.6% of small ones. USDA says plans should map access points, vehicle routes, cleaning areas and carcass pickup locations.

The report found 66.9% of feedlots were unfamiliar with the Secure Beef Supply Plan, which helps producers prepare for disease-related movement restrictions. USDA noted that preparedness funding awarded after the survey may have increased awareness. — **Charles Wallace, *WLJ* contributing editor**

Nebraska ranchers share land decisions through UNL grazing research project

On Nebraska ranches where families have managed the same land for generations, decisions about grazing, infrastructure and stewardship are rarely made for a single season. Instead, they are shaped by decades of observation, evolving research and a deep sense of responsibility to the land.

Researchers at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) are documenting those decisions as part of a $5 million research project focused on sustainable beef production and grazing systems.

The effort is part of Advancing Development of Assessments, Practices and Tools to Produce Beef in Grazing Systems, a five-year project led by Galen Erickson within the university's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

The interdisciplinary project brings together animal scientists, range scientists, remote sensing researchers and social scientists to develop tools that measure carbon sequestration in grazing systems while ensuring rancher perspectives remain central to the research.

As part of the project's social science component, anthropologist Effie Athanassopoulos and rural sociologist Gwendwr Meredith are speaking with ranch families across Nebraska to explore how management decisions evolve over generations.

"We're talking with ranchers who have been on the land for generations and who are leaders in the industry," Athanassopoulos said. "What has been especially striking is how environmentally conscious ranchers are and how deeply they care about the land."

She said many ranchers describe themselves not simply as business owners, but as caretakers of the landscape.

"They see themselves as caretakers," she said. "Their goal is to maintain the grasslands and pass them on to the next generation."

Listening to ranch families

The first round of interviews has focused on ranches near the Barta Brothers Ranch in the Sandhills, where many participating families have managed the same land for three or four generations.

Many of the ranchers interviewed are recognized leaders within the beef industry. Their insights offer a window into how knowledge is passed between generations and how producers adapt research findings within their own operations.

"We're really trying to understand how ranchers make decisions," Meredith said. "They're constantly adapting based on weather, markets, family dynamics and what they observe on their land. It's hard to be rigid because conditions change year to year."

For many ranchers involved in the study, collaboration with university researchers is a natural part of managing rangeland.

Producers often attend field days, participate in demonstrations and observe research being conducted at sites like Barta Brothers Ranch. Over time, those interactions influence how ranchers adjust grazing systems, water distribution and pasture management on their own operations.

"They interact with the university and integrate research into their own lands," Athanassopoulos said, describing it as "a conversation between science and practice."

Those conversations help researchers understand how innovations move from research plots to working ranches.

Early interviews suggest that new practices often spread through relationships among producers and nearby research sites. Athanassopoulos and Meredith said ranchers described how ideas such as rotational grazing gained traction as producers observed research demonstrations and shared experiences within their communities.

Across interviews, researchers have heard a consistent theme: Ranchers make decisions not only for current production, but for the long-term health of the land and livestock.

Infrastructure investments such as wells, pipelines and fencing are often evaluated based on how they improve grazing distribution and protect fragile landscapes.

At the center of those decisions is the recognition that ranchers are temporary caretakers of a long-lived ecosystem.

"They often describe themselves as stewards rather than owners," Meredith said. "Their goal is to leave the land in good condition for the next generation."

Expanding the research westward

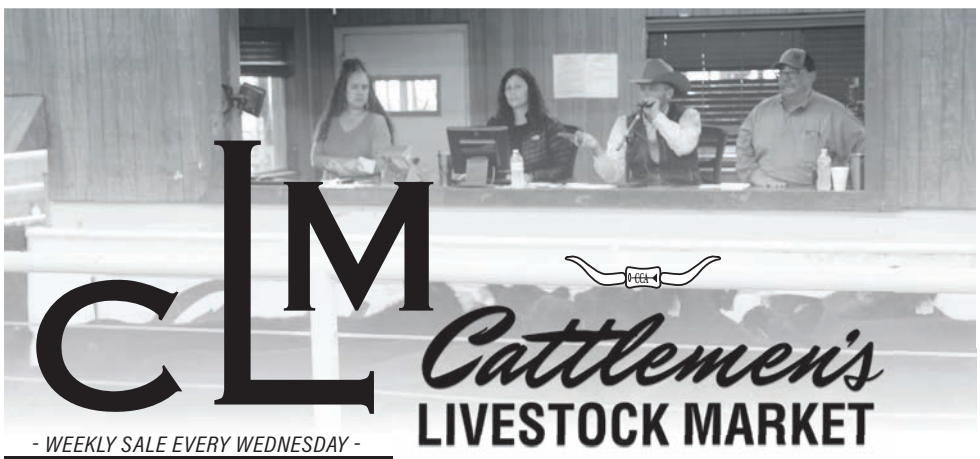
After focusing initial interviews in the Sandhills, researchers plan to expand the project into western Nebraska to capture a broader range of landscapes and ranching systems.

Nebraska's rangelands vary widely in climate, soils and vegetation, and those differences shape how producers approach grazing management.

Researchers will continue conducting interviews over the next several years while working to share the results through academic publications and public-facing projects, including a traveling museum exhibition highlighting Nebraska ranch families and the history of ranching in the state.

By documenting how ranchers adapt practices across these diverse environments, the research team hopes to better understand how science and producer knowledge can work together to support resilient grazing systems.

Ultimately, the project aims to ensure that rancher perspectives remain central to research shaping the future of beef production and rangeland stewardship. — **Nebraska Extension**



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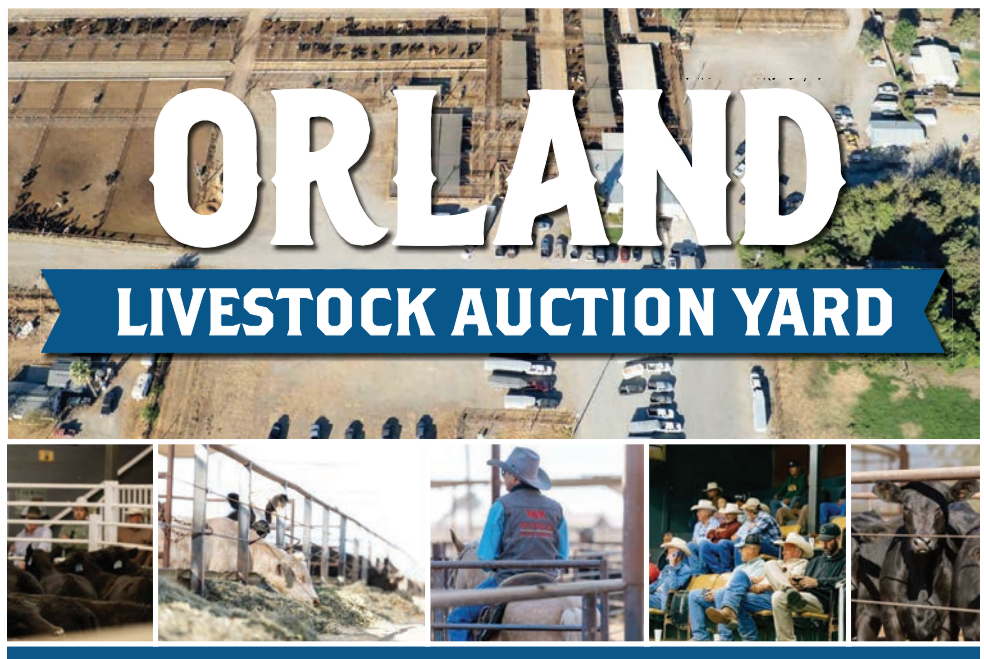
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MARKET NEWS

MARKET SITUATION REPORT

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

MARKET AT A GLANCE	This Week: 11/5/2026		Week Ago	Year Ago
Choice Fed Steers	217.15	▼	224.13	228.98
CME Feeder Index	348.78	▼	351.00	349.42
Boxed Beef Average	361.56	▼	367.28	377.97
Average Dressed Steers	339.88	▼	352.89	358.36
Live Slaughter Weight*	1,464	▲	1,458	N/A
Weekly Slaughter**	543,000	▼	546,000	N/A
Weekly Beef Production***	487.3	▲	487.3	N/A
Hide/Offal Value	14.61	▼	14.87	11.40
Corn Price	4.44	▼	4.54	4.35

*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
October 30	6,663	370.82	282	409.37	1,278	375.38	2,039	365.78	516	353.11	2,549	323.62
October 23	6,554	371.93	262	408.09	1,124	377.25	2,030	368.27	516	351.67	2,622	322.62
October 16	6,975	376.00	308	412.79	1,223	381.57	2,237	373.02	516	351.78	2,692	330.62
October 9	6,955	375.85	278	411.22	1,152	383.67	2,149	373.44	569	353.29	2,806	324.47

Cutouts — FED BOXED BEEF

DATE	CHOICE	SELECT	COW BEEF CUTOUT	50% LEAN	90% LEAN
November 5	361.56	352.32	294.65	94.11	N/A
November 4	362.50	356.65	295.31	88.32	366.19
November 3	365.23	358.37	296.93	81.20	N/A
November 2	365.04	354.94	297.60	83.83	365.48
October 30	364.66	351.98	298.37	82.80	369.42

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Live Cattle

	10/30	11/2	11/3	11/4	11/5	High*	Low*
Oct.	22728	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	25873	16853
Dec.	22570	22400	21970	21815	21800	25873	16668
Feb. '27	22888	22095	22353	22143	22083	25598	17005
Apr. '27	23153	22420	22615	22370	22320	25120	18068

CATTLE FUTURES: CME Feeder Cattle

	10/30	11/2	11/3	11/4	11/5	High*	Low*
Nov.	34648	33778	33843	33453	33203	38103	21920
Jan. '27	34950	33178	33268	32838	32573	38280	22268
Mar. '27	33778	32728	32830	32398	32085	38020	22460
Apr. '27	33610	32553	32653	32253	31940	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	14,590	1,626	217.15
Live FOB Heifer	4,418	1,445	217.10
Dressed Del Steer	13,134	1,038	339.88
Dressed Del Heifer	2,596	908	339.82
SAME PERIOD LAST WEEK			
Live FOB Steer	8,640	1,638	224.13
Live FOB Heifer	5,521	1,437	224.06
Dressed Del Steer	14,278	1,025	352.89
Dressed Del Heifer	2,816	896	353.03
SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR			
Live FOB Steer	16,288	1,573	229.98
Live FOB Heifer	8,444	1,381	228.96
Dressed Del Steer	11,383	1,032	358.36
Dressed Del Heifer	2,320	879	358.96

NATIONAL WEEKLY FED BEEF SLAUGHTER VOLUME: OCTOBER 25, 2026

	Domestic	Imported
Forward Contract	25,850	2,943
Formula	222,099	5,828
Negotiated Cash	77,914	176
Negotiated Grid	29,606	1,429
Packer Owned	9,729	N/A
Total	**365,198**	**10,376**

SLAUGHTER FORWARD CONTRACTS		FORWARD BEEF SALES	
Delivery Month		Neg. Sales 0-21 days	1,830
Nov. '26	117,504	Neg. Sales 21+ days	961
Dec. '26	99,246	Formula sales	3,797
Jan. '27	61,161	Forward contract sales	75
Feb. '27	65,668	Domestic sales	5,883
Mar. '27	46,910	NAFTA Exports	79

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	211.48	+1.65
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	210.01	+1.81
Ontario Auctions		
Slaughter Steers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1300-1500 lbs	215.26	+2.66
Slaughter Heifers, mostly Choice & Select 1-3, 1200-1400 lbs	213.58	+2.43
Slaughter Cows, Cutter and Utility 1-3, 1100-1400 lbs	121.21	-6.46

*Price comparison from one week ago.

Average feeder cattle prices (CND) for week ending Tuesday, October 26, 2026

Steers:	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Ontario
501-600 lbs	456.81	456.47	439.50
601-700 lbs	407.50	405.97	404.47
701-800 lbs	371.25	374.20	362.03
801-900 lbs	343.00	347.88	331.04
Heifers:			
401-500 lbs	452.53	444.61	435.87
501-600 lbs	405.70	396.63	395.02
601-700 lbs	355.89	359.93	362.58
701-800 lbs	337.27	326.68	313.36

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
	10/26/2026	10/19/2026		
Feeders	13,995	11,267	66,747	230,638

USDA WEEKLY IMPORTED FEEDER CATTLE

November 4, 2026

Mexico to United States Feeder Cattle Import Summary

Receipts EST: 8,600 **Week Ago EST: 8,350** **Year Ago Act: N/A**

Santa Teresa, NM -

Compared to Tuesday, steers under 600 lbs sold 10.00-15.00 higher; steers over 600 lbs traded steady. Heifers have no comparison. Trade and demand moderate. Supply consisted of steers and spayed heifers weighing 400-800 lbs.

Feeder heifers: Medium and large 1&2	
500-600 lbs	340-350
600-700 lbs	385-395
700-800 lbs	335-345
Feeder steers: Medium and large 1&2	
500-600 lbs	370-380
600-700 lbs	320-330
700-800 lbs	290-300

Douglas, AZ -

Compared to Tuesday, steers under 600 lbs sold 10.00-15.00 higher; steers over 600 lbs traded 5.00 lower. Heifers were 5.00-15.00 lower as compared to last week. Trade and demand moderate. Supply consisted of steers and spayed heifers weighing 400-800 lbs.

Feeder heifers: Medium and large 1&2	
500-600 lbs	340-350
600-700 lbs	310-320
700-800 lbs	280-290
Feeder steers: Medium and large 1&2	
500-600 lbs	380-390
600-700 lbs	330-340
700-800 lbs	300-310

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

Selected Auctions — Week Ending November 5, 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	
October 30 Blackfoot, ID	N/A		490-534	400-515 400-470	350-448 320-420	310-388 290-350	290-348 280-320	270-314 270-308	120-158 150-167		NORTHWEST
No report available Burley, ID											
No report available Emmett, ID											
October 31 Eugene, OR	933		340-440* 280-410*	300-400* 220-342*	210-330* 250-308*	210-322* 220-282*	200-275* 207-237*		130-156 160-184	2,150-2,600 1,150-2,675	
November 2 Madras, OR	393			420-500 400-425	371-450 328-415	337-390 310-350	320-365 300-330	295-319	140-149 150-165		
October 28 Vale, OR	1,656		546-597 470-517	457-574 412-478	399-465 347-413	352-390 320-342	337-365 305-331	290-356 287-323	115-145 157-179		
November 2 Davenport, WA	996	400	505	370-428.99	250-375.72	280-349.78	272.50-332.21	161-280.02	77.50-386.60 141-212.65	3,800 1,300-2,187.50	
No report available Toppenish, WA											
No report available Orland, CA											FARWEST
No report available Escalon, CA											
No report available Famoso, CA											
No report available Galt, CA											
November 3 Turlock, CA	2,430		470-525 425-520	440-477.50 410-495	410-446 400-425	386-423 360-380	334-360 315-327	310-329 295-309	120-154 147-160		
October 27 Salina, UT	3,570	400-660 385-580	385-595 380-562.50	360-555 295-530	340-470.50 280-447.50	340-411.50 260-362.50	320-369 250-345	292.50-342.50 167.50-311.0	122.50-178 135-165		
November 2 Iowa	6,664		505-514 380-515	412-567.50 390-480	389-480 330-419	339-426 306-381	316-382 306-353	292-361.50 251-327.75	105-237.50 142-210		NORTH CENTRAL
October 27 Miles City, MT											
November 4 Bassett, NE	1,590		500-516	473-496 423-447.50	410-465 392.50-400	373 337.50-375	334-377 335.75	280-289			
No report available Ericson, NE											
No report available Imperial, NE											
No report available Kearney, NE											
No report available Lexington, NE											
No report available Ogallala, NE											
No report available Valentine, NE											
No report available Herreid, SD											
November 4 Torrington, WY	2,299		570-642 485-500	481-555 435-482	429-492 360-400	399-431 331-360	331	294-299			
No report available Willcox, AZ											SOUTH CENTRAL
November 2 Colorado	12,682	500-567.50 407.50-520	505-617.50 405-530	440-555 332.50-514	360-495 312.50-453	319-435 275-371	308-380 290-332.50	272.50-357.50 234.50-317.50	71-240 141-195	3050-4200 1150-3550	
October 28 La Junta, CO	2,722		475-617.50 402.50-530	420-537.50 344-450	380-465 306-385	320-385 275-350	307-380 290-322.50	313-340 277.50-317.50	140-152 152-181	1725-2650	
November 2 Loma, CO	2,869		540-600 450-505	465-515 395-470	402-480 395-407.50	347.50-367.50 322.50-342.50	301-339 271-305	251-312 185-264	129-162.50 167-172	1,000 1,825-3,225	
November 4 Dodge City, KS	3,125		541-575 450-552.50	425-527.50 390-465	404-467 375-427	384-404 338.75-365	322-365.50 320-339	305.25-329 282.50-308.50	111-155 171-235	1,625-2,725	
No report available Pratt, KS											
No report available Salina, KS											
November 5 Clovis, NM	1,565	505	490-575 395-490	407-487 337-429	352-427 320-370	320-360 307-360	302-326 297-329	259.50-308 250-252			
November 4 El Reno, OK											
November 3 McAlester, OK	860		433-534 373-460	363-485 340-405	330-381 312-360	311-387 306-332	300-338 258-281	280-284 250-261	124-143 161-185	1,600-3,500	
No report available Oklahoma City, OK											
October 30 Cuero, TX	1,535	433-555 415-555	385-500 365-450	357-465 330-530	325-382 306-352	315-340 299-450	290-320 260-316		105-157 105-180	1,700-3,650	
No report available Dalhart, TX											
No report available San Angelo, TX											
No report available Tulia, TX											
No report available Alabama											EAST
November 2 Lexington, KY	777	475*	447-500* 392.50-455*	450-477.50* 357-400*	360-412.50* 265-380*	333-379* 245-352*	315-356* 280-323*	296-321* 220-287*	105-152.50 150-191	2,675-2,700	
November 2 Joplin, MO	5,943		500* 450	434-480 390-420	390-440 357-395	357-400 338-355	340-365 317-327.50	315-344 294-298.50			
November 2 Tennessee	7,926	465-560 400-530	412.50-600 365-480	380-480 335-430	325-440 270-370	280-400 245-355	306-365 260-320	280-353.50 235-301	104-164 130-200	2,750-3,900 1,600-3,250	
November 2 Virginia	3,384	375-390	397.50-450 285-395	335-455 300-387.50	351-416 305-359	334-368 250-318	305-335 260-308.50	260-316 243-268			
CANADA											
November 4 Lethbridge, Alberta	593								155-186 225-244		

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Feeder cattle futures post major losses

MARKETS
(from page 1)

Select cutout gained less than a dollar to close at $352.32.

The lean beef trim contracts traded steady to lower over the week. The 50% lean beef trim November contract was unchanged at $85.30, while the 90% lean beef trim November contract lost $21 to close at $376.

Feeder cattle

Feeder cattle futures nosedived over the week. The November contract lost about $26 to close at $325.05, and the January contract lost about $22 to close at $320.32.

"Until some support is found, and the live cattle market sees some improvement too, the feeder cattle contracts are likely going to continue to trail lower," Stewart said.

The CME Feeder Cattle Index lost under $4 to close at $348.78.

Corn futures traded lower. The December contract lost 11 cents to close at $4.40, and the March contract lost 10 cents to close at $4.54.

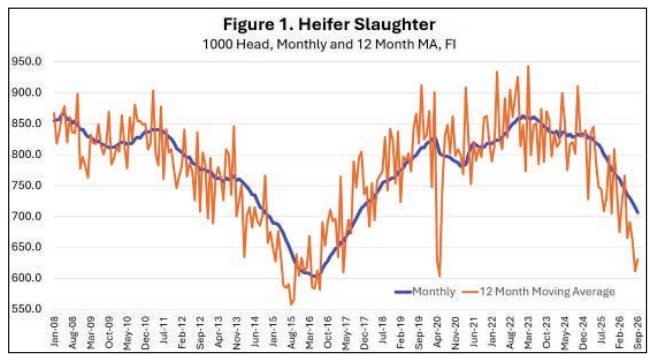
"October and November are the largest marketing periods of the year for replacement cattle, but this year they are not so large, or at least the October component," the Cattle Report said. "Generous rainfall and mild temperatures allow many operations to hold cattle late on pasture."

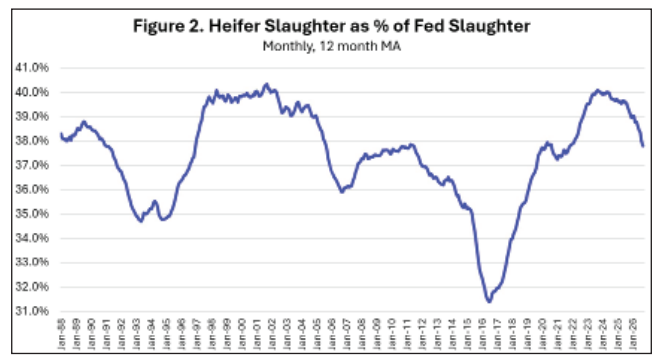
Missouri: Joplin Regional Stockyards in Carthage sold 5,943 head on Monday. Compared to the previous sale, feeder steers sold steady to $10 lower. Feeder heifers under 600 lbs. sold steady to $8 higher. Heavier weights sold $6-12 lower. Benchmark steers averaging 720 lbs. sold from $355-365, averaging $358.86.

Oklahoma: Oklahoma National Stockyards in Oklahoma City sold 4,394 head on Monday. Compared to a week earlier, yearling-type feeder steers and heifers were lightly tested and $4-12 lower. Sixty-day weaned feeder type cattle sold sharply lower. Steer and heifer calves sold $10-20 lower on lesser quality, some $30 lower. Benchmark steers averaging 719 lbs. sold from $340-368, averaging $357.50.

Wyoming: Winter Livestock in Riverton sold 3,246 head on Tuesday. Compared to the last auction, feeder steers were mostly steady with lower undertones noted. Feeder heifers sold with steady to lower undertones, with the offering less attractive than the previous week. Benchmark steers averaging 718 lbs. sold from $320-339, averaging $330.62. — **Anna Miller Fortozo, *WLJ* managing editor**

Heifer dynamics and herd rebuilding into 2027





Two components are necessary for cyclical herd rebuilding: decreased beef cow culling and increased heifer retention. Decreased cow culling is mostly about slowing herd liquidation and stabilizing cow inventory at the cyclical low. From that point, increased heifer retention provides the means to expand beef cow inventories. The first part of that process is in place. Beef cow culling dropped from a record high of 13.19% in 2022 to a projected record low of 7.35% in 2026. Current projections are for 2026 beef cow slaughter to be down over 48% from the 2022 levels.

However, the heifer retention component has been very slow to develop. Both the January and July 2026 Cattle reports showed a slight increase in beef replacement heifers ... but not enough to suggest herd growth. In fact, four years of decreased cow culling means that more old cows in the herd will have to be replaced relatively soon.

It appears that a minimum of 200,000 head of beef replacement heifers are likely to be needed in the next year just to maintain the current herd. The January data showed an increase of 41,700 head and the July report showed a 100,000 head increase in beef replacement heifers. Neither is enough to indicate herd rebuilding.

Between the semi-annual inventory data, the best indication of heifer dynamics is weekly and monthly slaughter data. Through the first three quarters of 2026, heifer slaughter is down over 11% year over year; down more than twice as much as steer slaughter is down. Figure 1 shows that heifer slaughter is decreasing faster recently. The sharp drop in monthly heifer slaughter (orange line) in the last couple of months may be a stronger indication of heifer retention.

Both beef and dairy heifers are included in heifer slaughter data. The decrease in heifer slaughter could reflect heifer retention in either or both sectors. The July inventory data showed an increase in both beef and dairy replacement heifers. There are indications that both sectors are trying to retain replacement heifers, and both could be contributing to decreased heifer slaughter.

Additionally, heifer slaughter is down, in part simply because there are less cattle being slaughtered and less cattle to slaughter.

Figure 2 provides a relative comparison of heifer slaughter as a percent of total fed cattle slaughter. A decrease in this percentage indicates that heifer slaughter is decreasing faster than the general decrease in cattle slaughter. On average, heifer slaughter has been 37.8% of fed slaughter for the past 12 months, down from the peak of 40.1% in late 2023.

All in all, there are indications of a modest increase in heifer retention in 2026, perhaps accelerating late in the year. Nevertheless, prospects for herd growth going into 2027 remain limited with growth beyond 2027 yet to be confirmed.**— Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension livestock marketing specialist**

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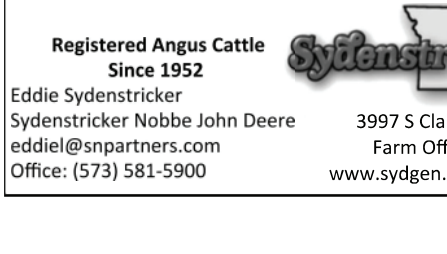
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The annual SydGen Production Sale is a source for many of the Angus breed's top potential AI sires, as well as the new generation of herd bulls for many top commercial herds. We believe in "all the information all the time". All performance information, including progeny records, is included in the sale book and on our website. Our 10-12 page sale day update sheet has current weights and frame scores on all calves and fall yearlings as well as ultrasound data.

Highlights include:

- A large offering of progeny by GAR **Verified** 2683 and URF **Alpha** G138, who excels for carcass merit, foot structure and calving ease.
- Our first offering of calves by the exciting young sires SydGen **Southland** GA 3760, SydGen **Empire** 3715 and Yon **Audrain** L940.
- Although still a "virtual dispersion" of our 7-year-old cows, we will sell a lot of 3 to 6-year-olds.
- 100% of the registered cattle are genomic tested and parentage verified.
- The fall yearling bulls offered average 1,262 lbs. adj. YW, 34.6 cm SC, 5.6 frame, 3.74% IMF, 14.9 adj. RE and rib fat cover of .28.
- All the bulls offered average EPDs are 8 CED, 143 YW, 13.6 HP, .41 Claw, 1.19 MARB, +86 $M, +204 $B and +351 $C.

Also selling progeny of these SydGen sires: BAR **Sequence** 1840, Connealy **Zenith** 3133, De-Su **Volunteer** B122, ESF **Influence** G47, RC **Complete** K106, SydGen **Blueprint** 7169, SydGen **Bonus** 8084, SydGen **Enhance**, SydGen **Exceed** 3223, SydGen **Gamma** 3482, SydGen KCF **Gavel** 8361, SydGen **Leader** GA 3734, SydGen **Smokey** 2001, SydGen **Validate** 2275, and URF **Alpha** G138. Progeny of these popular sires will also sell: Baldridge Heat Seeker H925, Basin Jameson, Crouch Congress, Connealy Clarity, EZAR Step Up 9178, FF Rito Ambitious, GAR Liberty 5352, Pollard Hennessey 3920, Schiefelbein Executive 1423 and ST Wizard 1585.

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Ag exports contributed $369.2 billion to the economy in 2024

U.S. agricultural exports support economic activity both within agriculture and across the broader economy. As farm and food products enter export channels, they generate demand for services such as transportation, storage, handling, packaging, marketing and financial services to move goods from producers to the ports.

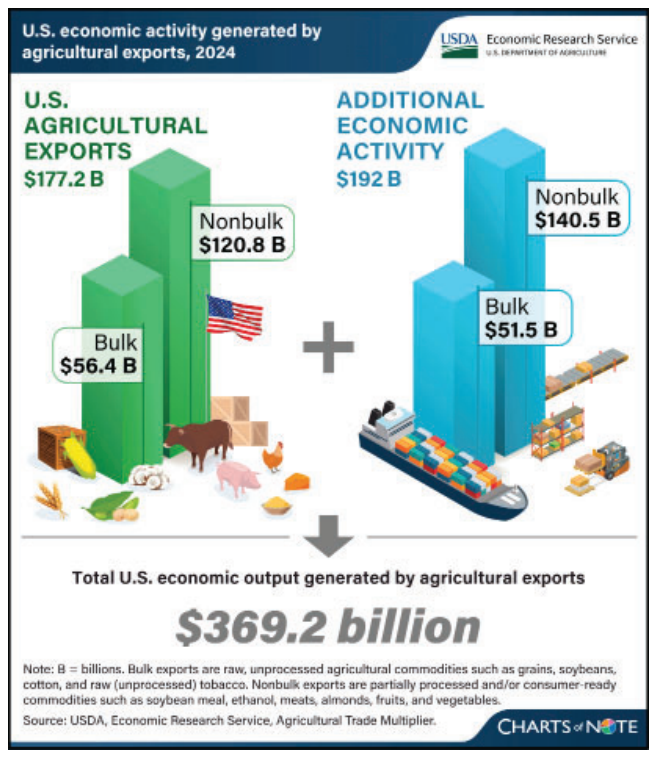
The USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) captures these linkages through the Agricultural Trade Multipliers, which estimate how agricultural exports support U.S. economic output and jobs.

In 2024, the value of U.S. agricultural exports, including biodiesel, totaled $177.2 billion alone. These exports supported an additional $192 billion in economic activity, resulting in $369.2 billion in total U.S. economic output.

Bulk, unprocessed commodities, such as grain, soybeans, cotton and raw (unprocessed) tobacco, were valued at $56.4 billion in export value and supported an additional $51.5 billion in domestic economic activity.

Nonbulk exports—products that undergo additional processing or require specialized handling, such as soybean meal, ethanol, meats, almonds, fruits and vegetables—added substantial value beyond their export prices. In 2024, nonbulk agricultural exports totaling $120.8 billion supported an additional $140.5 billion in domestic economic activity.

Overall, each $1 of U.S. agricultural exports supported $2.08 in total U.S. economic activity in 2024. — **USDA ERS**



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Grazing is key to drought recovery and resilience

Ranchers should have a grazing management plan in place that includes the possibility of drought continuing into the 2027 growing season.

Drought conditions have impacted grazing resources across North Dakota this year, creating challenges for ranchers. As the grazing season has progressed, drought has expanded to cover 64% of the state and continues to intensify.

Management decisions made now and in the aftermath of the drought can have long-term impacts on grazing resources. Grazing management decisions will directly influence the ability of rangelands and pastures to recover from drought and can increase a ranch's drought resilience.

North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension specialists say ranchers should have a grazing management plan in place that includes the possibility of drought continuing into the 2027 growing season.

"It is critical that every rancher has a grazing plan in place with well-defined triggers and actions for drought and other disturbances so they can respond quickly and build resilience," said Miranda Meehan, NDSU Extension livestock environmental stewardship specialist.

Grazing this fall will be driven by late-season precipitation and species composition of rangelands and pastures. If the pasture comprises tame grass species such as brome grass or Kentucky bluegrass, there should be no long-term negative impacts from grazing this fall, as long as pastures are not overgrazed.

Late-season precipitation will create the opportunity for regrowth of native grasses that were grazed before reaching the reproductive stage.

"If grazing native range this fall, be careful to monitor utilization and avoid overgrazing to protect tiller development of cool-season grasses," Meehan said.

As a general rule of thumb, grasses should not be grazed below the second node, which is located between the first and second leaves.

Tillers are used by plants to initiate growth in the spring. Fall droughts either prevent buds from breaking dormancy, thus preventing new tiller growth, or cause the death of those tillers that did grow. If a tiller is lost due to drought stress or grazing, the plant will need to develop a new tiller in the spring, delaying grass growth and development.

Meehan recommends that ranchers avoid grazing pastures that received heavy use this grazing season to allow them to recover. The stress of drought, in combination with overuse, can have long-term impacts on rangeland.

"As we look forward to the 2027 grazing season, pastures will require special care next spring to help them recover from the drought," said Kevin Sedivec, NDSU Extension rangeland management specialist, emphasizing that ranchers should be prepared for a delay in grass growth and development.

NDSU Extension specialists have observed delays of up to three weeks in grazing readiness for introduced cool-season species and four weeks for native cool-season species following drought.

"While it may be tempting to start grazing early due to limited forage resources, it can have long-term impacts on forage production and plant health," Sedivec said.

Regardless of grass species, grazing before plants reach the appropriate stage of growth for grazing readiness reduces herbage production by as much as 60%. Pastures and range grazing too early may take several years of deferment or even rest before the stand regains productivity.

Allowing pasture and rangeland to recover this fall or next spring will improve these grazing resources' ability to recover from the drought.

"Even though there are many unknowns looking toward the 2027 grazing season, now is the time to evaluate your grazing system to determine how to increase management flexibility and resilience of your grazing resources and ranch," Sedivec said.

Sedivec said a grazing system should be planned around the available grazing resources to achieve optimal forage and livestock production. Grazing systems that include both cool- and warm-season plants have greater resilience. Having a diversity of cool- and warm-season grasses helps reduce susceptibility to drought, ensuring some level of forage growth regardless of precipitation timing.

Integrating annual forages provides opportunities to extend the grazing system earlier in the spring and later in the fall. These additional forage options provide for greater flexibility in management, reducing the stress of early grazing and/or overutilization on pastures.

To read more about recovering from a dry 2026 growing season, visit ndsu.ag/drought-graze26. — **NDSU Extension**

Robotics, AI to be employed to raise sheep in harsh environments

The Basque sheepherders who emigrated to Nevada in the 1800s would be amazed to see what's going to be happening in the hills of Nevada today: a "RoboHydra" robot wandering with the sheep, providing them with water and tracking their movement and health.

Researchers at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) are developing an autonomous mobile robotic watering system, paired with a facial-recognition artificial intelligence (AI) model, that will digitally identify each sheep and automatically capture and store detailed health and performance data that can help producers identify early signs of illness and make more informed breeding and management decisions.

The project is one of two university projects recently awarded $1,150,000 each over the next four years to promote sheep production and health and enhance grazing management. The second project complements the first, creating a broader, national set of data for the sheep industry, including traits such as health indicators, feed intake and wool quality, and pairing it with genetic, microbial and economic data.

Both projects are funded by the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, a program of the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The projects build on the university's longstanding sheep research programs, including its development of the Rafter 7 Merino line more than 30 years ago, which is internationally recognized for its fine wool and meat quality.

RoboHydra

The first project is a first-of-its-kind project in the sheep industry and includes a multidisciplinary team of researchers from the university's College of Engineering and College of Agriculture, Biotechnology & Natural Resources.

The team is led by Parikshit Maini, assistant professor of robotics in the Department of Computer Science & Engineering; and comprises Andrew Hess, assistant professor of animal genetics and breeding in the Department of Agriculture, Veterinary & Rangeland Sciences; Ankita Shukla, assistant professor of AI in the Department of Computer Science & Engineering; and Tracy Shane, livestock specialist with the university's Extension unit. The project team also includes collaborators at Texas A&M University.

In the first phase of the project, Maini and his students in the Systems and Algorithms For Robot Autonomy Lab will develop the RoboHydra robotic watering system designed to guide sheep to underused pastures, promoting uniform grazing and improved rangeland soil health. The team will build RoboHydra in stages, beginning with a small prototype that can carry about 110 pounds to test movement and basic functions.

Once proven, the team will scale up to a rugged, full-size platform weighing up to 4,000 lbs. and able to haul up to 1,100 lbs. of water, enough to support a flock of about 50 sheep.

Instead of relying on a fixed trough, RoboHydra will carry a closed water tank and use a push-activated bowl so sheep can drink on demand. A flow meter will track how much water each animal consumes. An onboard computer will use this information to evaluate grazing and water-use patterns and determine when and where the robot should move next.

"We're putting autonomous robots and sheep together in real pastures, not controlled labs, and developing advanced algorithms to let them interact safely," Maini said. "That gives us a powerful way to provide water, protect the land, and learn how individual animals are coping with heat and limited water."

RoboHydra will be tested at the university's Main Station Field Lab using 300 of the Rafter 7 Merino yearling rams. Hess oversees breeding selection of the sheep at the university's Great Basin Research & Extension Center in Eureka, NV, and conducts research as part of the University's Experiment Station, which houses both the Center and the Main Station Field Lab.

Equipped with sensors, RoboHydra will also capture data on individual animals as they approach to drink water, including facial and overhead images, thermal images showing temperature differences across the body, water intake, body condition, movement patterns and activity levels. Shukla will lead the development of the project's AI models.

"We'll clean this stream of information and analyze it using AI and machine learning models," Shukla said.

Shukla said the system will be trained to recognize individual sheep based on facial features and link those identities to physical condition, movement and behavior patterns, an approach that could eventually reduce the need for ear tagging and extensive notetaking.

By drawing from multiple data collections rather than a single observation, the system aims to produce a more comprehensive and objective picture of each animal's health. The data will be shared with Hess, who will also provide input on what data to collect. Hess' research focuses on innovation in genetics and breeding of livestock. He will pair the data collected with genetic information to better understand how performance is shaped by both DNA and management. The insights could help improve wool and meat quality while supporting overall flock health.

Connecting to the real world

Bringing research data from the lab to the classroom and to producers is Shane. She will help translate findings into course materials for a new class to be offered at the university on precision livestock management using AI, robotics and genomics.

Off campus, Shane will lead outreach to producers, providing them with information on the research. She works regularly with producers across the state, organizing workshops, demonstrations and educational materials for industry meetings, such as those for the Nevada Farm Bureau, Nevada Cattlemen's Association and Nevada Wool Growers Association.

The team will share research findings and introduce robotics to K-12 students through outreach in several Washoe County schools, summer camps, Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program and other after-school robotics programs.

Through short videos and hands-on activities, students will explore how robotics and AI can support animal care and welfare.

Drawing on her own experience in 4-H, and now as a parent with children in the program, Shane said the effort will help young people see how technology and agriculture intersect and how they can play a role in the future of agriculture.

Taking the data to a national level

The second, complementary project, led by Hess, will expand data collection and sharing to the national level. It will generate a broader dataset, including health indicators, feed intake, wool quality, carcass traits, movement, body weight and growth rate, and pair it with genetic, microbial and economic data from multiple sheep operations and research flocks nationwide, including Nevada's semiarid regions and collaborating institutions in North Carolina and Wyoming.

The goal is to develop comprehensive breeding indexes to guide feeding, health management and breeding decisions. The team will also create decision-support tools to help producers manage daily operations, such as predicting disease risk, estimating days to market weight and tracking feed efficiency over time.

To support these tools, the project will draw on detailed data, including repeated weight and growth measurements, feed intake records, and rumen and nasal microbial samples, combined with genetics and economic information. A key focus is identifying animals that remain healthy and productive under environmental stressors such as rapid temperature swings and harsh, semi-arid grazing conditions, enabling producers to breed flocks that are better adapted to a changing climate.

"Sheep producers are being asked to do more with fewer resources and under increasingly unpredictable conditions," Hess said. "By combining genetics, health records and real-time data from flocks across the country, we can turn complex science into practical tools that help ranchers select the right animals, make smarter feeding decisions and keep their operations profitable and sustainable over the long term."

Data collected through the project will be contributed to the National Sheep Improvement Program, a nonprofit that provides genetic evaluation services to sheep producers.

"We've seen significant investment in genetics and management tools for other livestock industries such as cattle and swine, but sheep producers haven't always had access to the same level of resources," Hess said. "It's exciting to see that starting to change and to be part of efforts that bring more attention and practical tools to an industry that plays an important role, especially in many rural communities."

Hess' team will also train graduate students and early career researchers in data-driven livestock production, helping to build a workforce capable of applying advanced analytics alongside hands-on knowledge of ranch systems. The team includes incoming doctoral and master's students, as well as co-principal investigators from Purdue University and the USDA's Agricultural Research Service Meat Animal Research Center. Also central to the effort are researchers from North Carolina State University, the University of Wyoming and AbacusBio, an international livestock technology company.

Looking ahead, the researchers see the two projects as an important first step in addressing persistent challenges in sheep production, with more work needed to strengthen the sector.

A successful pilot could pave the way for a future in which robotics and AI work alongside sheepherders to support flock management with data delivered directly to producers through reports or dashboards.

"The future of the U.S. sheep industry is in data-driven management," Hess said. "Our goal as a research College is to provide high-quality data and practical outreach so all producers, large and small, can better manage their operations for productivity and profitability and help sheep become a stronger sector in agriculture." — **UNR Extension**

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LOT 157 - MARDA GREAT LAKES 370 SON

CED	BW	WW	YW	M	MARB	REA	$M	$W	$C
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SALE CALENDAR

ALL BREEDS

Nov. 19 – Superior Livestock Auction, Video Sale, Hudson Oaks, TX
Dec. 3 – Superior Livestock Auction, Video Sale, Hudson Oaks, TX
Dec. 17 – Superior Livestock Auction, Video Sale, Hudson Oaks, TX
Jan. 16, 2027 – Western Elite Sale at NWSS, Denver, CO

ANGUS

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 – Arntzen Angus, Bred Cow Sale, Hilger, MT
Nov. 13 – Montana Ranch, Bull Sale, Big Fork, MT
Nov. 16 – Montana Angus, Female Sale, Billings, MT
Nov. 20 – Connealy Angus, Bull Sale, Whitman, NE
Nov. 20 – Rollin' Rock Angus, Bred Female Sale, Pilot Rock, OR
Nov. 21 – Baldridge/Tiedeman & Frank Cattle Co., Female Sale, Lodgepole, NE
Nov. 21 – Queen Ann Cattle Co., Bull & Female Sale, Loma, CO
Nov. 21 – Redland Angus, Bull Sale, Buffalo, WY
Nov. 21 – Spring Cove Ranch, Female Sale, Bliss, ID
Nov. 21 – TLC Angus, Bull Sale, Jerome, ID
Nov. 24 – Paint Rock Angus, Bull Sale, Hyattville, WY
Nov. 27 – Vermilion Angus, Bred Cow Sale, Billings, MT
Nov. 28 – Vermilion Angus, Bull and Female Sale, Billings, MT
Nov. 30 – Stevenson's Diamond Dot, Production Sale, Hobson, MT
Dec. 1 – Stevenson Angus, Bull Sale, Hobson, MT
Dec. 1 – ZumBrunnen Angus, Bull Sale, Lusk, WY
Dec. 2 – McDonnell Angus, Bull Sale, Columbus, MT
Dec. 3 – Sitz Angus, Production Sale, Harrison, MT
Dec. 4 – KG Ranch, Bull Sale, Three Forks, MT
Dec. 5 – Reverse Rocking R Ranch, Bull Sale, Maxwell, NM
Dec. 7 – Hollow Top Angus, Bull Sale, Pony, MT
Dec. 7 – Jacobsen Ranch, Bull Sale, Great Falls, MT
Dec. 9 – Shipwheel Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Chinkook, MT
Dec. 12 – Gaugler Angus, Bull Sale, Judith Gap, MT
Dec. 16 – TK Angus, Bull Sale, Valentine, NE
Dec. 17 – Bobcat Angus, Bull Sale, Great Falls, MT
Jan. 14, 2027 – Foundation Angus Sale, Denver, CO
Jan. 19 – Ken Haas Angus, Bull Sale, La Grange, WY
Jan. 22 – McConnell Angus, Production Sale, Dix, NE
Jan. 22 – Ruggles Angus, Production Sale, McCook, NE
Jan. 25 – Doug Booth Family Angus, Bull Sale, Torrington, WY
Jan. 29 – Kovarik Cattle Company, Bull Sale, Ord, NE
Jan. 30 – Baldridge Performance Angus, Bull Sale, North Platte, NE
Feb. 3 – Huwa Cattle, Bull Sale, Roggen, CO
Feb. 4 – Bear Mountain Angus, Bull Sale, Palisade, NE
Feb. 5 – Poss Angus, Bull Sale, Scotia, NE
Feb. 9 – Werning Cattle Company, Bull Sale, Emery, SD
Feb. 10 – Jindra Angus, Production Sale, Clarkson, NE
Feb. 11 – Booth's Cherry Creek Ranch, Bull Sale, Veteran, WY
Feb. 12 – Raml Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Goodwin, SD
Feb. 15 – Frank Cattle & Genetics, Bull Sale, Lodgepole, NE
Feb. 15 – Weaver Ranch, Production Sale, Fort Collins, CO
Feb. 16 – McClun's Lazy JM Ranch, Production Sale, Torrington, WY
Feb. 17 – Ostrand Angus, Production Sale, Mason City, NE
Feb. 18 – Krebs Ranch, Bull Sale, Gordon, NE
Feb. 19 – Hoffman Ranch/Stellpflug Cattle Co., Bull and Female Sale, Thedford, NE
Feb. 20 – Colorado State University, Bull and Female Sale, Fort Collins, CO
Feb. 20 – Schiefelbein Farms, Bull and Female Sale, Kimball, MN
Feb. 22 – MR Angus Ranch, Bull Sale, Wheatland, WY
Feb. 23 – Haynes Cattle Company, Bull Sale, Ogallala, NE
Feb. 24 – TC Ranch, Bull Sale, Franklin, NE
Feb. 26 – RS Angus, Production Sale, Dodge City, KS
Feb. 27 – Black Gold Genetics, Bull Sale, Pritchett, CO
Mar. 5 – Parry Angus, Bull and Female Sale, Sterling, CO

BALANCER

Feb. 1, 2027 – Taubenheim Gelbvieh, Production Sale, Amherst, NE
Feb. 26 – Pot of Gold Bull Sale, Montrose, CO
Feb. 27 – Black Gold Genetics, Bull Sale, Pritchett, CO

BRANGUS

Nov. 20 – Cavender Ranches, Production Sale, Jacksonville, TX

CHAROLAIS

Feb. 10, 2027 – Broberg Charolais, Bull Sale, Tilden, NE

GELBVIEH

Feb. 1, 2027 – Taubenheim Gelbvieh, Production Sale, Amherst, NE
Feb. 26 – Pot of Gold Bull Sale, Montrose, CO
Feb. 27 – Black Gold Genetics, Bull Sale, Pritchett, CO

HEREFORD

Nov. 12 – Hoffman Ranch, Bull Sale, Thedford, NE
Nov. 19 – Largent & Sons, Bull Sale, Kaycee, WY
Nov. 23 – Berry Herefords, Bull Sale, Cheyenne, WY
Jan. 18, 2027 – Van Newkirk Herefords, Bull Sale, Oshkosh, NE
Jan. 28 – Ridder Hereford Ranch, Bull Sale, Callaway, NE
Feb. 6 – Upstream Ranch, Production Sale, Taylor, NE
Feb. 16 – McClun's Lazy JM Ranch, Production Sale, Torrington, WY
Feb. 19 – Hoffman Ranch/Stellpflug Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Thedford, NE
Feb. 20 – Colorado State University, Bull and Female Sale, Fort Collins, CO
Feb. 2 – Jamison Herefords, Bull and Female Sale, Quinter, KS

OPTIMIZER

Dec. 7 – Jacobsen Ranch, Bull Sale, Great Falls, MT

RED ANGUS

Nov. 21 – Baldridge/Tiedeman & Frank Cattle Co., Female Sale, Lodgepole, NE
Dec. 3 – Green Mountain Red Angus, Female Sale, Three Forks, MT
Dec. 14 – Cross Diamond Cattle Co., Bull Sale, Bertrand, NE
Feb. 12, 2027 – Ludvigson Stock Farms, Bull Sale, Cheyenne, WY
Feb. 15 – Flat Iron Red Angus, Bull Sale, Veteran, WY
Feb. 15 – Frank Cattle & Genetics, Production Sale, Lodgepole, NE

SALERS

Dec. 7 – Jacobsen Ranch, Bull Sale, Great Falls, MT

SIMANGUS

Nov. 12 – JR Ranch & Sackmann Cattle, Bull Sale, Othello, WA
Dec. 5 – Montana Simmental Association, Female Sale, Billings, MT
Dec. 5 – T-Heart Ranch, Female Sale, LaGarita, CA
Dec. 12 – Big Country Genetics, Bull Sale, Cody, WY
Jan. 17, 2027 – The One & Only Simmental Sale at NWSS, Denver, CO
Feb. 1 – APEX Cattle, Bull Sale, Dannebrog, NE
Feb. 3 – Larges Farms, Bull Sale, Wauneta, NE
Feb. 9 – Werning Cattle Company, Production Sale, Emery, SD
Feb. 12 – Raml Cattle, Bull & Female Sale, Goodwin, SD
Feb. 15 – Eagle Pass Ranch, Bull Sale, Highmore, SD
Feb. 25 – Meyring Cattle Co., Production Sale, Alliance, NE
Mar. 4 – Kearns Cattle Co., Production Sale, Rushville, NE

SIMMENTAL

Dec. 1 – Reflected R Ranch, Female Dispersal Sale, Ordway, CO
Dec. 5 – Montana Simmental Association, Female Sale, Billings, MT
Dec. 12 – Big Country Genetics, Bull Sale, Cody, WY
Jan. 17, 2027 – The One & Only Simmental Sale at NWSS, Denver, CO
Feb. 1 – APEX Cattle, Bull Sale, Dannebrog, NE
Feb. 9 – Werning Cattle Company, Production Sale, Emery, SD
Feb. 25 – Meyring Cattle Co., Production Sale, Alliance, NE
Feb. 26 – Pot of Gold Bull Sale, Montrose, CO
Mar. 4 – Kearns Cattle Co., Production Sale, Rushville, NE

STABILIZER

Nov. 20 – Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, Meriden, WY
Dec. 5 – Leachman Cattle, Bull Sale, Loma, CO

COMMERCIAL

Nov. 13 – Arntzen Angus, Bred Cow Sale, Hilger, MT
Nov. 16 – J&L Livestock, Female Sale, Billings, MT
Nov. 16 – Montana Angus, Female Sale, Billings, MT
Nov. 20 – Rollin' Rock Angus, Bred Female Sale, Pilot Rock, OR
Nov. 21 – Queen Ann Cattle Co., Bull & Female Sale, Loma, CO
Nov. 27 – Vermilion Angus, Bred Cow Sale, Billings, MT
Dec. 2 – Western Video Market Auction, Reno, NV

SALE REPORTS

RIVERBEND RANCH BULL SALE
Oct. 28, Idaho Falls, ID
181 Angus bulls $14,353
Auctioneers: Trent Stewart & Rick Machado
Sale Managers: Cotton & Assoc.

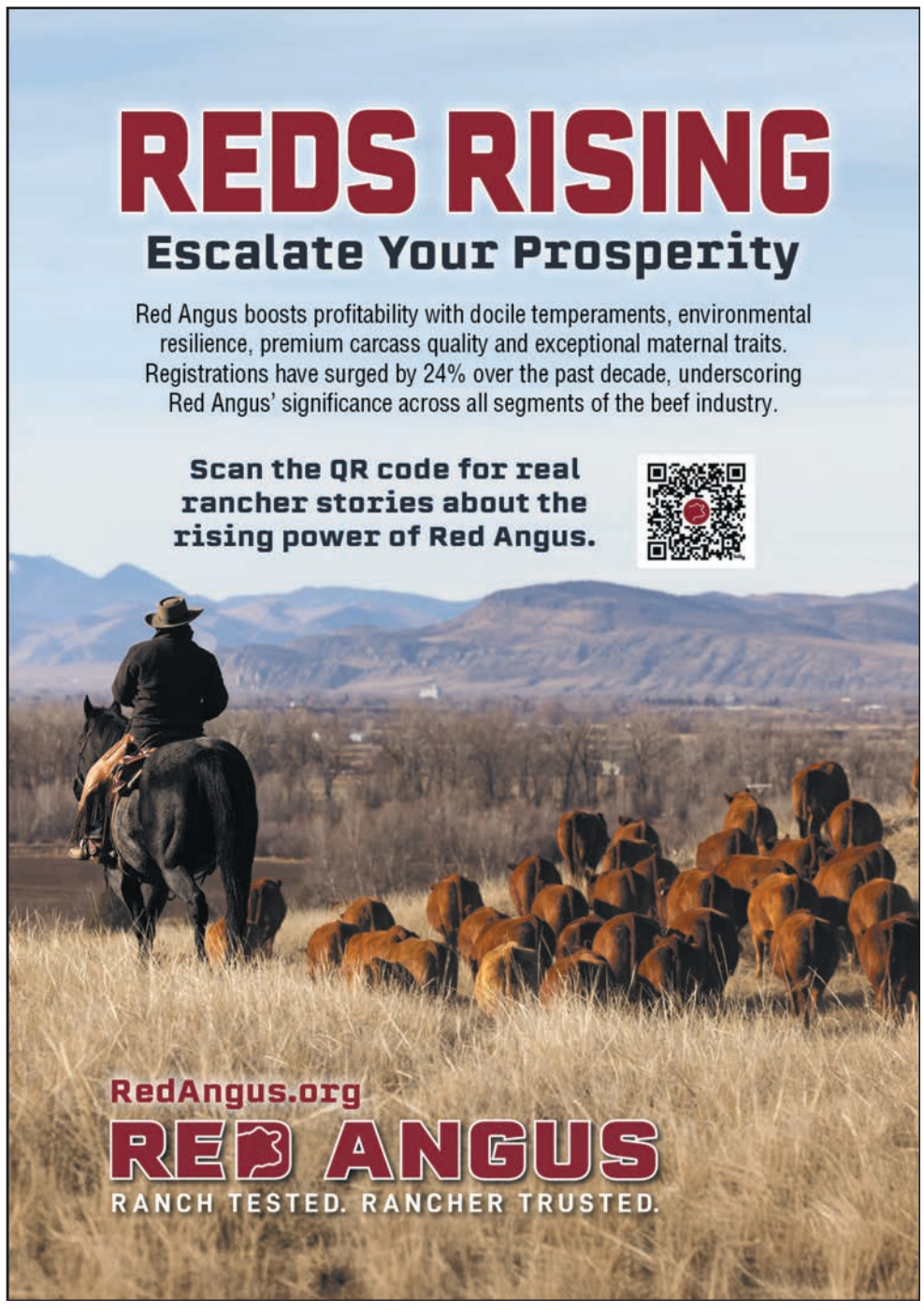
TOPS: Riverbend HomeTown N1804, 4/9/2025 by EXAR Hometown 2057; to San Benito Cattle, Hollister, CA, $27,000. Riverbend Commerce N1814, 4/24/2025 by Connealy Commerce; to The DLX, Baker City, OR, $25,000. **— JARED PATTERSON**

BIRCH CREEK ANGUS BULL SALE
Oct. 30, Ruby Valley, NV
68 Angus bulls. . . . $9,320
17 Angus bred heifers 5,320
16 Angus bred cows. 4,900
40 Angus open heifers 3,800
Auctioneer: Rick Machado

TOPS—Angus bulls: Birch Creek Bravo 560, 3/7/2025 by SAT Bravo 063; to McQueary Ranch, Ruby Valley, NV, $17,000. Birch Creek Black Mass 5001, 1/27/2025 by B Bar B Black Mass 1113; to J Bar M Ranch, Ruby Valley, NV, $17,000. **Bred heifer:** Birch Creek Joy 5023, 3/7/2025 by Spring Cove Target K65 bred to Penz Bandit 2524; to Neal Bailey, Liberty, UT, $10,000. **— JARED PATTERSON**

BEAR MOUNTAIN ANGUS PRODUCTION SALE
Oct. 31, Palisade, NE
2 Angus older bulls $16,000
9 Angus fall pairs 13,944
33 Angus bred heifers 10,765
1 Angus spring pair 10,500
14 Angus open heifers 8,696
11 Angus bred cows. 5,818
143 Commercial bred heifers 4,334
15 Angus embryos . . 1,260
Auctioneer: Matt Sims
Sale Manager: Matt C. Sims Auction, Inc.

TOPS—Bull: Bear Mtn Justice 3821, 9/9/2023 by Bear Mtn Justice; to Laflin Cattle, Olsburg, KS, $23,000. **Bred heifers:** Bear Mtn Forever Lady 5676, 3/9/2025 by Ellingson Prosper bred to High Point Provision; to Claylick Run Farm, Newark, OH, $35,000. Bear Mtn Pride Dent 5524, 1/13/2025 by Ellingson Prolific bred to Bear Mtn Grizz 4712; to Kiesewetter Angus, Farmington, IL, $33,000. Bear Mtn MRS Jamie 5518, 1/11/2025 by Bear Mtn North Star bred to Coleman Revenue 5142; to Prairie View Farm, Gridley, IL, $32,000. **Fall pair:** Bear Mtn Pride Dent 0550, 1/28/2020 by Bear Mtn Justify; to Rockin A Ranch, Mullenville, KS, $40,000. **Open heifers:** Bear Mtn EAF Eisa Erica 5746, 12/14/2025 by Bear Mtn Covert 4554; to TR Cattle Company, Copan, OK, $23,000. K A Forever Lady 517, 8/31/2025 by Ellingson Prosper; to Wilber's Fish Branch Farm, Mexico, MO, $18,000. **— TY GROSHANS**

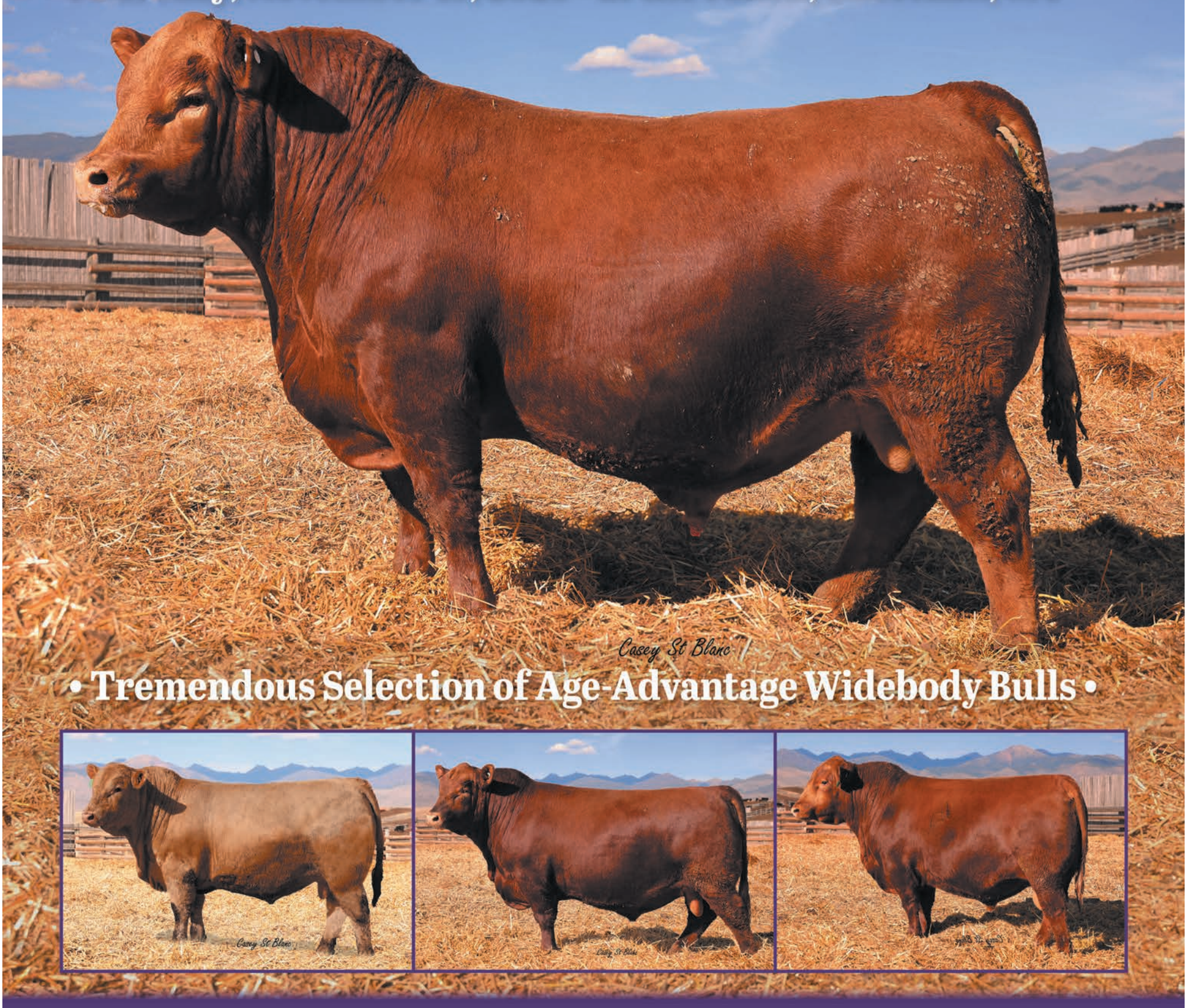


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