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Vol 19, Issue 10

October 2023

GROWING the business

Farmer feeders still loving the game 25 years in

By COLLEEN SCHREIBER
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of Livestock Weekly

TEXLINE, Texas — When Michael Bezner attended Texas A&M University, risk management was one of his favorite classes so much so that he thought he might want to make some sort of a career of it. He wasn't quite sure what that might entail.

Building a feedyard was not something this farm kid from the northwest panhandle initially considered. Instead, he gave the risk management idea a go in Chicago working for Cargill in various commodity market accounts. He loved it, and stayed almost two years.

Upon his return in 1991, he obtained an MBA from Texas Tech University. It was during

this time that the idea of building a feedyard first began to formulate in his mind.

Today at 56, he's still making a career in risk management, but for the last 25 he's been doing it at Bezner Beef which his family built from the ground up beginning in 1997. He admits that building a new feedyard back then made them something of an outlier as the feeding industry was contracting and consolidating not expanding.

"We struggled our way through," says Bezner. The feeding business has been pretty good to us."

Namely, it's given him and his two brothers, Mitchel and Stephen, the opportunity to work together and raise their families. "That's important for us."

Along with growing families, they've also grown the business. Bezner Beef is now a 20,000 head capacity feedyard, up from 12,000 head when they first opened. That growing not only comes from plowing hard-earned capital back into the business but



SWIMMING AGAINST THE TIDE was what young Michael Bezner and his family were doing some 25 years ago when they built a feedyard in the northern Texas Panhandle. In 1997, independent feedyards seemed to be racing against the clock to stay in business.

from having a strong and loyal customer base, Bezner points out.

Michael and brother, Stephen, work hand in glove at the feedlot. Stephen handles the day to day management at the feedyard.

While consolidation in the cattle feeding industry hasn't slowed, Bezner Beef is still in the game and growing. Michael and his brothers are now looking for the next way to diversify so that the next generation can carry on if they choose. (Photo courtesy of Livestock Weekly)

That includes customer relations in terms of keeping them updated on everything from the health of their cattle and how they're feeding overall to marketing advice on their fat cattle.

Stephen also largely handles

the buy side of the equation, working with the order buyers in the various auction markets. Bezner Beef feeds a lot of cattle out of the Oklahoma livestock

See BEZNER BEEF, page 3

Increased competition impacting global pork trade: Rabobank

The global pork trade landscape is undergoing significant changes, marked by heightened competition among major exporters, according to a new Rabobank report.

Producers with lower production costs, notably Brazil and the United States, are poised to hold a competitive edge. Conversely, Europe's position may weaken due to increasing focus on animal welfare and sustainability in market and regulatory requirements. Effective disease-mitigation strategies could provide a critical competitive advantage, given persistent disease challenges in the pig sector. Despite these hurdles, global pork consumption is projected to grow until 2030, presenting continuous trade opportunities.

Disease-related challenges are expected to persist in the pork industry, with their impact contingent on trade policies and mitigation efforts. Various regions are exploring vaccines and gene editing, potentially offering a competitive advantage

to specific producers. African swine fever (ASF) continues to impact importing countries in Asia and indirectly affect European exporters through reshaped trade patterns.

Brazil is emerging as a significant player in the global pork trade due to its cost efficiency. Factors like foreign exchange rates, shipping costs, labor costs, and pig production expenses significantly influence the competitive position of pork exporters. Brazil, capturing 24% of Chinese pork imports in 2022, has solidified its position as China's second-largest supplier.

In North America, the U.S. and Canada retain their status as reliable, low-cost pork exporters, driven by affordable feed and access to key markets. Ongoing consolidation and sustainability initiatives may increase the value of U.S. and Canadian pork over time, although their exports will continue to play a central role in global pork trade, particularly

within the North American trade bloc.

China's pork production dynamics are shifting, aiming for increased self-sufficiency while maintaining trade. Despite achieving 95% self-sufficiency in 2022, China's annual pork imports are projected to stabilize at around 2.5 to 3 million metric tons. Southeast Asian countries like Vietnam and the Philippines

remain critical importers, even as the market shrinks due to heightened competition among exporters.

Despite disruptions, global pork consumption is expected to grow through 2030, with a projected compound annual growth rate of 0.7% from 2022 to 2030. Factors like easing inflationary pressures and further recovery from ASF in Asia are likely to

support consumption recovery in 2024. Additionally, population growth and economic development will drive consumption growth in various parts of the world, such as Vietnam, the Philippines, Brazil, Mexico, and China. The declining consumption trend in Europe will be counterbalanced by growth in other regions.

— Meatingplace.com

U.S. senator from Missouri introduces new meatpacking antitrust bill

New legislation designed to "break up giant meatpacking and poultry monopolies" operating in the United States is being proposed by a U.S. senator from Missouri whose state recently was scheduled to lose more than 2,000 poultry plant jobs.

Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) said the Strengthening Antitrust Enforcement for Meatpacking Act followed a Tyson Foods

announcement that it planned to close its poultry plants in southern Missouri, affecting thousands of workers. The proposed bill would amend the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921 to set up "specific thresholds for market concentration and allow federal antitrust officials to more effectively prohibit or unwind acquisitions by meat companies that "concentrate the meatpacking sector."

"Today's meatpacking monopolists are making massive profits while shutting down competition," Sen. Hawley said in a statement announcing the bill. "Congress must give antitrust prosecutors the power to end anti-competitive behavior without lengthy court battles. It's time to hold monopolies accountable and empower farmers."

— Meatingplace.com

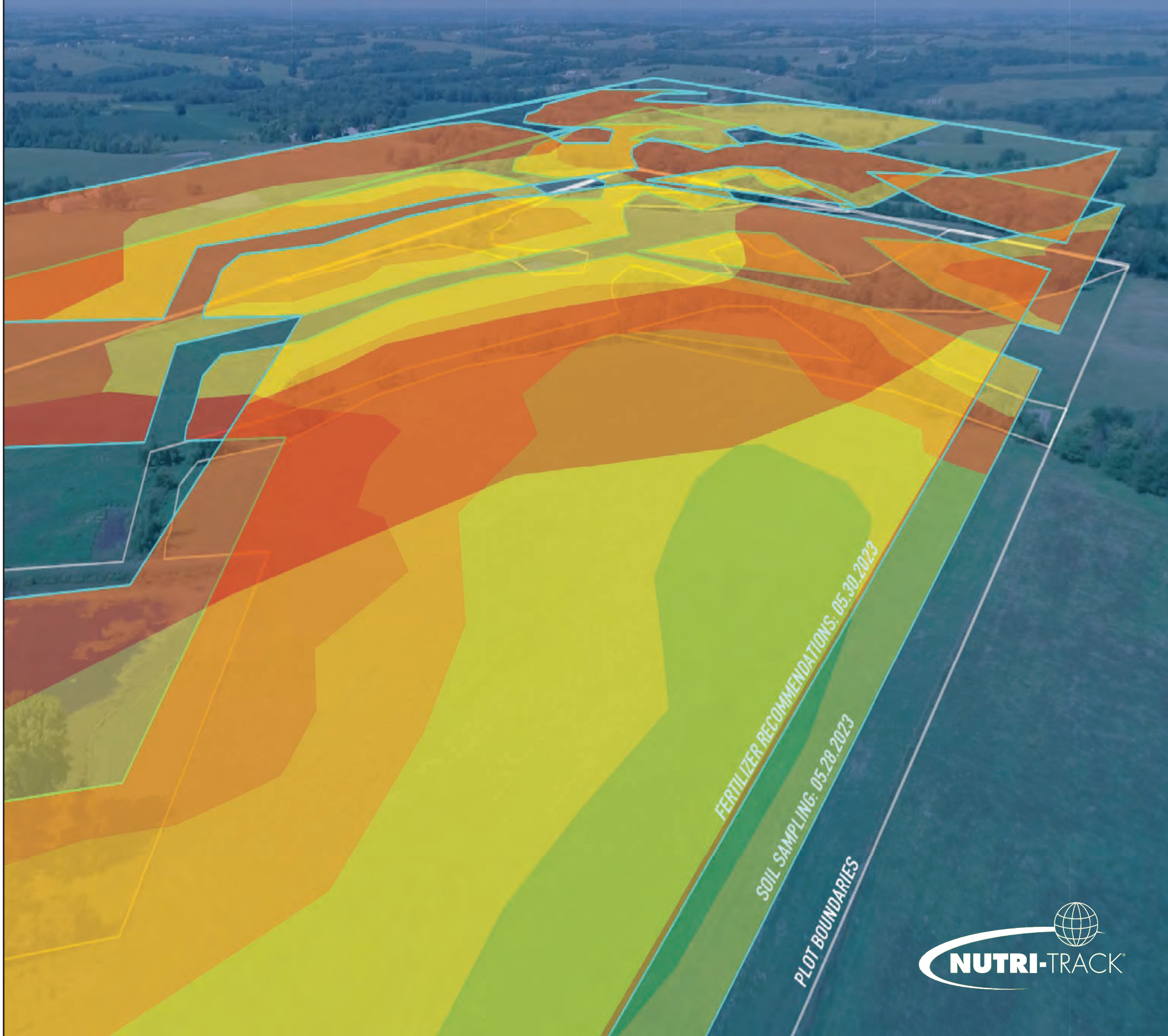


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BEZNER BEEF from page 1

markets and quite a few out of Central Texas as well. They also feed a few out of the southeast, namely Florida and Alabama.

Their order typically involves light cattle. “We don’t like butting heads with feedyards that compete aggressively to buy retail for seven and eight weight cattle,” Michael points out.

The light ones are grown on wheat pasture or perhaps hay-grazer or summer grass before going on feed. That’s typically done on their own farm ground or native grass in and around the feedyard. On occasion, they’ve also utilized a backgrounding facility.

“Stephen is really good at taking care of those light cattle,” says Bezner. “We work really hard at controlling death loss, but that doesn’t mean we don’t have surprises from time to time on specific sets of cattle.”

The morbidity and mortality on the lightweight calves isn’t as bad in January through March but other times of the year, particularly in the fall it can be challenging.

Early on, Bezner Beef bought truckloads of calves straight off their mamas. They’ve since figured out that the feedyard is not the right fit for a bawling calf.

“It doesn’t benefit the person who owns them; it doesn’t benefit my feedyard employees and it doesn’t benefit us,” says Bezner. “We’ve got to have a weaned calf for us to be able to get them on feed and performing in a feed-yard environment.”

With the younger Bezner handling the day to day, that frees Michael to focus on the risk management side of the business. He calls risk management “imperative” for any commercial feedyard but especially in today’s environment.

“There’s too much volatility,” says Bezner. “We can’t stand the swings in prices.”

He adds that it’s not so much that the volatility has changed since they started the feedyard 25 years ago, it’s that the numbers they’re dealing in, meaning the cost of everything, just keeps getting bigger.

“It costs more to do everything, so our exposure is greater,” he explains.

Bezner Beef tries to manage those costs as best as possible by being as efficient as possible and being disciplined in what they do.

“We run a pretty tight ship. We try to buy cattle that we can at least have a chance or opportunity to make work, and when the market lets us lock in a profit we take that opportunity.”

When that opportunity doesn’t present itself, then they at least try to have a floor so as to not make the losses any worse.

In addition to the risk management, Michael handles the fed cattle marketing. Early on, he had guys from all over the U.S. who fed cattle with them as an investment. Still today those investor-feeders account for 30 to 40 percent of their customer base. Another 25 percent would be retained ownership customers, either cow-calf or stock-

Now through 25 years of doing it, he’s pretty well figured out what cattle will meet certain specs that a specific packer desires. He admits that now with the current cattle cycle finding the supplies to fill their yard with the kind of cattle they want is and will get increasingly difficult. It’s simply supply and demand.

er operators. He has two cow-calf producers who have retained ownership on their cattle every year, and they’ve fed with Bezner Beef since it opened. One is from South Texas; another is a local producer. One of the two uses a mix between grid marketing and cash and the other one is strictly grid, says Bezner.

“I have some old school guys who tell me they bought these feeder calves for cash, and they know the cost coming in and they want to know their cost going out.”

He has five packers who buy out of the yard, the big four and STX in Corpus Christi, which has to buy some Texas Panhandle cattle pretty well every week. Consequently, Bezner always has a cash list.

However, 85 to 90 percent of the company cattle are marketed on some type of grid. That has changed since the feedyard first opened. Early on, even the majority of their company cattle were sold in the cash.

“We weren’t gridding many cattle at all back then,” says Bezner. “If we did, we didn’t know what we were doing.”

Now through 25 years of doing it, he’s pretty well figured out what cattle will meet certain specs that a specific packer desires. He admits that now with the current cattle cycle finding the supplies to fill their yard with the kind of cattle they want is and will get increasingly difficult. It’s simply supply and demand.

“We’re looking for cheaper first cost cattle,” says Bezner. “It’s harder to make them fit. We’ll have cattle coming out in six, eight, 10 months that won’t fit these grids as well as we’ve learned to make them fit.

Bezner says he’s just happy he’s not the procurement guy for one of the larger yards. However, he also fully acknowledges that the next few years are going to be really hard for all feeders.

“It’s been a long time since we’ve been through a cattle cycle where numbers are going to get as tight as we expect them to get,” says Bezner. “We’re coming out of this drought, we’ve been feeding what seems like awfully high priced corn for a long time, and it takes forever to get through that.”

He also points out that he’s never been through a period where interest rates went up as fast as they have over this past year.

“It’s going to be a challenge.” In fact, Bezner Beef expects to struggle to be at a profitable occupancy level for the next two years. Then again rain finally started falling across much of the Panhandle this spring and some were or at least considering keeping back heifers.

“It’s hard to make a cow, especially when servicing debt,” he adds. “That’s especially true when there is an opportunity to sell a feeder heifer at a price never sold before, so I don’t know how fast we’ll rebuild this cow herd.”

Thus far, Bezner says the most stressful events he’s been through since starting the feed-yard has been the peak of cattle numbers coinciding with the Holcomb plant fire and COVID.

Before the fire, Bezner Beef was shipping a fourth to as much of a third of their finished cattle to the Holcomb plant.

“Getting through that period and making customers understand that not only did they not

have any control, I didn’t have any control about whether or not I was going to be able to establish a price or even a harvest date was the hardest part.”

There were times that a customer might get a pen sold, but they weren’t given a harvest date. Consequently, they were still having to pay that feed cost and that didn’t make them happy either.

The industry as a whole first began to lose its ability to stay current after the plant fire in the latter part of 2019. Then in the spring of 2020 things got worse when COVID hit, and the packer couldn’t keep enough staff to run the plants efficiently. That went on through most of 2021 and then by late spring, early summer of 2022 peak cattle numbers hit, and many yards were at 105 percent capacity.

It was because of what they went through that the family is a financial supporter of Producer Owned Beef, a new beef process-

ing facility to be built in Amarillo. Like it’s organizers, Bezner points out that the Oklahoma and Texas Panhandle produces 28 percent of the U.S. beef supply, but there is only 16 percent of the harvest capacity in the region.

“We need more regional capacity,” says Bezner.

He admits there are some challenges. For one, it’s questionable whether the cow herd will return to its previous peak. Many say likely not, and Bezner tends to agree. Thus, it will likely come down to efficiency in the plants, and a new plant is likely to be more efficient than an older plant.

He points out that while the business model calls for Producer Owned Beef to be a single-shift plant, 3000-head per day at startup, it’s being built as a double-shift plant.

See BEZNER BEEF, page 12



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From the Publisher... Jon Angell



Well, September came and went in a hurry! If being busy makes time fly, evidently I haven't been touching the ground for some time now.

Rain is still lacking what we need, there were some extra feedstuffs put up in the area — too late for some, but maybe just enough for a lucky few. Harvest is in full swing. Harvest results that I am hearing are coming in at a very wide range, from zero and up, but not too far up.

I am really looking forward to the calf runs this Fall. With the prices on cattle and the moderation of the corn prices, I believe a cowboy has a fair chance of buying and growing some cattle with a little bit of margin to keep for his trouble in this next turn of cattle. The easy low hanging fruit has already been made in this part of the cattle cycle, but that doesn't mean there won't be a few opportunities.

Producing cows will remain good property for those that have feed. The pee wee odd calves from 275 to 475 pounds don't seem too high to me if you can wean them and put a round of shots in them and get them good and straightened out for the next guy.

The guys with an excess corn problem or poor corn turned to silage problem, it sure looks like they will bid up on those packaged up 575-to-775-pound cattle.

Remember that October is "National Dead Calf Month." Producers need to understand that no matter how good the market is... un-managed, un-weaned, short-weaned, un-vaccinated, un-castrated calves will be discounted in October and November as much or more than any other time of the year. And as severe as the discount is... in many cases it is not enough.

Up front this month, we have the kind of story that I really like to bring you. I found Mr. Bezner's evolution to where he is today as interesting. This is a similar path I see other young folks around me taking. Education, working away from home in a corporate setting for a few years, developing skills and experiences before returning back to their roots. When they get home and apply themselves to the family business, good things happen.

In story writing there is a formula called the "Hero's

Journey." In the story arc, it starts with humble ordinary childhood, then moves to a call to adventure in the first act. The second act crosses a threshold and our hero goes through tests, ordeals, and reaps a reward or special skill or knowledge. In the third act is a journey home, bringing an elixir of special knowledge that the returning hero makes good with the hometown folks.

This month's feature reminded me of this well-known story arc, I love a good "Hero's Journey" story.

It was a rough one getting this month's paper done. We had several changes and setbacks ... but in the end, October's edition turned out well. As promised each month, we have several good columns. Also as I have suggested, as part of my goal of growing the paper, on page 19 you will see a submission from my friend Grant Blomme. He manages a market in Memphis, Mo. that I have purchased cattle from over the years. He has agreed to help me work through opening our pages to other livestock markets and in some cases new commentary.

I really like what Grant did there and I hope you enjoy his efforts as well. Maybe he will get a favorable response and will make future submissions.

I'm going to run two of Doc Kerns column this month. On page 11 is his regular column that I really like, but at press time he sent a very timely post that I am willing to share my space to get out to you right away. Although he is a polarizing figure in these pages with his pointed conservative commentary, I appreciate his opinions, but really like his writing and presentation. I didn't see the punch line coming on this page.

We have had a rash of subscriptions and new advertisers. So advancements in our improvements are already having a good effect. I have a couple of reprint requests. In general, with a few exceptions reprinting permission isn't for us to grant. Lee Pitts, or Dr. Kerns, or even many of the hard news stuff are a product that we were granted or paid for one time permission to print. We just can't grant you permission to reprint the majority of our stuff in your local paper or in another of your favored publications. Sorry.

We have several solid anchor advertisements but also several new advertisers the last couple issues. Be sure to take notice and mention us if you have a chance. Thanks for reading and your continued support and feedback. We will keep upgrading for now and look forward to doing this again in a new and improved November issue. Keep hanging with us!

Recorded for Posterity

By KRAYTON KERNS, D.V.M.
Special to The Advocate



What did you do yesterday? Whether you are checking pens, riding the range or stringing wire, your life story will disappear if you do not record it. Fortunately, there are those who journal for the benefit of posterity and Millie was such a person. It was a Tuesday, when Tom and Millie stuffed Phineas, their three-year-old, into the back of the wagon. Joining Phineas was his oldest sister, Rose, who was 13, Roy at 12, Lottie, age 6- and 4-year-old Beatrix. The age gap between Roy and Lottie used to be occupied by sisters Elmira and Lettie, but because they succumbed to Scarlet Fever the previous winter, they would forever remain in Missouri. Tom and Millie Powers, my great, great grand-

parents, left for Wyoming on September 7, 1886, and Millie recorded nearly every day on their journey.

Here are a couple interesting entries.

On September 16, on Elm Creek in northern Kansas, the Powers family happened upon some starving boys foraging in a cornfield when the farmer approached. Millie wrote the boys were out of "chink," meaning they were broke, and the farmer requested restitution for the consumed corn. They had a bird dog, and because Tom's heart was bigger than his wallet, he bought the dog for three dollars so the lads could pay the farmer. Millie recorded, "Don't know as he is good for anything," but now they had a dog.

September 30, after crossing the South Platte River in Nebraska, they discovered they had left their dog in town. "Of course, we couldn't stand that, so we turned our horses' heads, went and hunted him up." Four days later, Millie writes, "Our dog we find is a very good one. He is so obedient."

This brings me to Thursday, October 7, exactly one month since they began their journey. Tom was hunting and Millie tended the wee ones while she "washed, ironed and baked that evening." Let that soak in. The Powers family was halfway through a 1,000-mile camping trip and Millie washes and irons her children's clothes and this brings me to my point.

America 2023 is a cesspool compared to what it was in 1886. Back then, the virtues of self-discipline and self-respect were held in higher regard than self-esteem. All that matters today is how you feel about yourself. Washing and ironing the clothes of your children was the fitting and proper thing to do whether you were headed to church or going camping because if you dress like a slob, you act like a slob. U.S. Senator John Fetterman was unavailable for comment.

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| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| MFA Agri Services |page 2 |
| Andras Red Angus Female Sale |page 3 |
| Meyer Implement |page 3 |
| Hatton Vermeer Sales |pages 5, 9 |
| Hopewell Farms |page 5 |
| Beefland |page 7 |
| Eastern Mo. Cowboy Church |page 7 |
| Martin Veterinary |page 7 |
| Bowling Green Vet Clinic |page 7 |
| Sydenstricker Production Sale |page 8 |
| Ramblings |page 9 |
| Audrain Building Supplies |page 9 |
| Miller Brothers Lumber |page 10 |
| McBride Angus Sale |page 10 |
| The Red Tie Event Sale |page 11 |
| Purina |page 12 |
| Community State Bank |page 12 |
| Prairie Queen Transportation |page 13 |
| Byergo Angus Sale |page 14 |
| Larry Clementz Real Estate |page 14 |
| Mo. Beef Industry Council |page 15 |
| Angell-Thomas Charolais |page 15 |
| PQT Collection Point |page 16 |
| Market reports |page 18 |
| Scotland Co. Livestock Auction |page 19 |
| Angell-Thomas Charolais |page 20 |
| Angell's Western Wear |page 20 |
| Albert's Shoe Repair |page 20 |
| Roy Cary |page 20 |
| CYS Builders |page 20 |
| Nation Polled Herefords |page 20 |
| Pat Costello |page 20 |
| Rhodes Angus |page 20 |
| SHek Boutique |page 20 |
| Mark Robertson |page 20 |
| Savannah's Farm Fresh |page 20 |
| Shannon Farms |page 20 |
| Cattleman's Advocate ad rates |page 21 |
| Lacy's Red Angus Sale |page 22 |
| Herd-Boss Feeders (Raney) |page 22 |
| Angell's Western Wear |page 23 |
| Eastern Mo. Comm. Co. |page 24 |

THE Cattleman's Advocate



A monthly livestock magazine serving Eastern Missouri & Western Illinois

is a publication of
Jon & Charlotte Angell
in close affiliation with
Eastern Missouri Commission Co.
of Bowling Green, Missouri

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Chuck Herron, Virtual Images
Production & Design

Permission to reprint material from this magazine must be obtained from Publisher Jon Angell at:

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The Cattleman's Advocate is currently available free of charge at over 110 locations in Missouri and Illinois. If you would like to receive the publication each month at your home, subscriptions for one year are available by sending \$20 and your name and current address to:

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FARM & FOOD FILE

A hard change is gonna come

By ALAN GUEBERT
For The Cattleman's Advocate

Sometimes the gap between what's real and not real is so narrow that it's impossible to tell truth from fantasy.

For example, recently the front page of a newspaper I receive featured two stories that make perfect sense to almost every farmer and little sense to almost everyone who doesn't farm.

The first laid out current Land Grant University research that farmers can tap in their "quest for 300" bushels-an-acre corn yield.

The second related that California's recent adoption of Proposition 12 — the voter-endorsed law that requires minimum growing space for "egg-laying hens, veal calves and breeding pigs" — is "far and away (the) top priority" of the state's pork group.

Both are typical front page fare for any ag-centered newspaper. What was missing in each story for any non-farming reader, however, was the proverbial "why?"

Why, for example, invest in costly public research for a land-punishing effort to grow 300 bu. per acre corn, or about 126 bu. more than the estimated 2023 national average yield when, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 15 percent of this year's crop will go unsold?

And, too, why strive to grow more corn per acre when 35 percent of today's subsidized crop goes into ethanol, an alternative fuel deeply dependent on government mandates and under increasing assault by electric vehicles?

Similar questions arise about the pork group's "top priority," California voters who have said three times they want their eggs, pork, and veal born and raised

The really hard part will be to change with it; in short, to stop telling the market what we will produce and start listening to the market for what it needs us to produce.

without the use of animal-confining cages and crates. Why are 40 million customers wrong and the ever-thinning ranks of the pork industry right?

Even more worrisome than these debatable ag issues is the reality what everyone needs to consider for anyone to even talk about corn yields or pork markets now or a generation from now: today's radically changing environment.

Elizabeth Kolbert, a Pulitzer Prize-winning writer for the New Yorker, starts that discussion in her 2021 book, *Under a White Sky*, by noting where the Bible starts it: "That man should have dominion 'over all the earth and every creeping thing'" has, she suggests, become "a prophecy that has hardened into fact."

Facts like how mankind has "(T)ransformed more than half the ice-free land on earth—some 27 million square miles," "dammed or diverted most of the world's major rivers," and "our fertilizer plants and legume crops fix more nitrogen than all terrestrial ecosystems combined..."

Meanwhile, "...today people outweigh wild mammals by a ratio of more than 8 to 1" and if you "(a)dd in 'the weight of our domesticated animals—mostly cows and pigs...—that ratio climbs to 22 to 1.'"

Those dark facts (she lists more) suggest that what we have "blandly labeled 'global change'" actually points to "only a handful of comparable examples in earth's history" as life-changing as what we have done now; "the most recent being the asteroid

impact that ended the reign of the dinosaurs, 66 million years ago."

Too bleak? Hold on, Kolbert isn't finished.

Our only earth's present state is so off-the-charts, she writes, that "Humans are producing no-analog"—no comparable—"climates, no-analog ecosystems, a whole no-analog future."

After setting that cheerless scene, most of the book explains current ideas to—as her subtitle suggests—alter "The Nature of the Future" now that we've changed the future of nature.

All the forward-leaning research and in-the-field efforts that Kolbert outlines highlight just how much we must alter the alterations we've already made to nature in order for nature to have any future.

If that sounds too woo-woo and wonky to make much sense, welcome to a world where August 2023 became the hottest month ever in history by breaking the previous record set in July 2023.

None of this is new; we see it in our fields and barns and feel it in our bones. Change is here and even harder change is coming.

The really hard part will be to change with it; in short, to stop telling the market what we will produce and start listening to the market for what it needs us to produce.

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The Farm and Food File is published weekly throughout the U.S. and Canada. Past columns, supporting documents, and contact information are posted at farmandfoodfile.com



Country-of-origins labeling controversies continue

A hot-button topic for years, a dispute over "Product of the USA" on meat is coming full circle in Washington, D.C.

Taking form in proposals to revamp regulation as well as the law, the issue has been playing out on various fronts, including on Capitol Hill and in the courtroom.

"The notion of origin labeling is one that has a long history, and associated government efforts/programs have varied over time and administrations," Kansas State University professor Glynn Tonsor says. "I am 42 years old, and have experienced multiple 'waves' to this discussion."

The current tide has the Biden administration helping to revive a debate that some prefer to view as having been settled more than seven years ago, when Congress exempted beef and pork from Country of Origin Labeling (COOL).

Yet the issue has been percolating all along, with consumers and cattle ranchers going to court and petitioning the U.S. Department of Agriculture to toughen the rules for putting "Product of USA" on meat labels.

As things stand, beef and

pork can be presented as a product of the U.S., even if only repackaged here. That's the result of the looser "Product of USA" standard in play since Congress exempted both forms of protein from COOL, the mandatory law enacted in 2002.

Lawmakers created the loophole after a successful challenge by Canada and Mexico to the World Trade Organization. The WTO found the U.S. law to be "burdensome and discriminatory," and gave Canada and Mexico the go-ahead to impose more than \$1 billion in retaliatory tariffs.

Still, the issue has remained a battlefield, with the USDA now proposing to allow only farm products "born, raised, slaughtered and processed" in the U.S. to claim "Product of USA" on what would be a voluntary label.

Learn all about the COOL controversies in the September issue of *Meatingplace*.

— Meatingplace.com

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Here are the scheduled advertising deadlines for The Cattleman's Advocate through February 2024:
November issue **Ad deadline: October 23**
December issue . . **Ad deadline: November 27**
January issue **Ad deadline: December 26**
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From Our Side of the Fence

By JUSTIN ANGELL
EMCC Owner/Partner

Hello friends. Let’s start with the fun news.

The cattle market is still on fire and the only thing that can stop it is something outside the industry. Most all feeder cattle are worth two dollars a pound or more and even though we’re heading into October, a.k.a. dead calf drag off month, good light calves bring over three dollars per pound. Recently I have been stoking the fire telling people that by early spring we will see light calves bring \$4 per pound. Wouldn’t that be fun.

Apparently, there is still money out in the country if you know where to look. Last week in Malta Bend, Mo. (Missouri River bottom west central Missouri) the previous land sale record was smashed when 115 acres brought \$34,500 per acre. I’m not sure whose math and investing theory the bidders were using, because using a simple money market rate of 5.25% the interest would be \$1,811 per acre. Ya gotta love that optimism.

Money is not just found out on the farm. I’ve read according to Zillow that the average single family home price in the United States is now \$404,000 with the average in the 10 most expensive states at \$523,000 after an increase of 18% this year. In these most expensive 10 states, \$77,000 is median income. In comparison the average home price in Missouri is \$198,000, accompanied by Missouri’s median income of \$57,400. Average home prices are 50% of national average while median income is approximately 75% of national average.

I guess that’s another big reason to love life here.

Staying with the theme of money, I’d

like to discuss the cattle market and inflation. So, let’s talk some hillbilly economics. In our system, money is created when a new debt is formed. If you go to the bank to borrow \$300,000 to buy a house when that loan is made... poof... 300,000 new dollars. Long story short, the government has done this so much in the last 2 1/2 years with trillions of dollars of spending that 40% of all the money created since the beginning of the currency has been created in the last three years.

Interestingly, items we are buying are not getting higher — actually the value of the dollars we are spending is being eroded. Hillbilly logic stands to reason if we have 40% more dollars floating around then it should take 40% more to buy the things now compared to three years ago... including beef.

In the past few months, the euphoria around the Fat Cattle business has been fun, but the guarantees of two-dollar Fat Cattle in the spring look to me like they might be a little bit optimistic. People in business on main street that I talk to generally believe the American consumer is running out of money.

Changing government policies like much higher interest, no more helicopter money from Covid relief funds and finally the big one is increasing gas and energy prices. As I write this today, crude oil is higher again ... \$3 higher as we march ever closer to \$100 barrel oil and \$5 per gallon gas.

I’ve been told there is a six month lag between increasing oil prices in their negative affect on the economy. Poor Mr Biden is merely the fall guy for Obama and his crew’s “progressive policies” that are destroying our energy independence. It began the first day in office by canceling



the Keystone pipeline. Biden’s biggest blow to the American middle and working class is higher energy costs.

Everything we need and use in this country moves with fossil fuel. The higher the fuel, the higher the cost, the higher the inflation. What we are seeing in real time is the disposable income being sucked out of the American consumer. In short, our biggest obstacle to prosperity is our corrupt federal government.

Remember, however, never discount the ingenuity and resilience of the American people. We will prosper, not because of our government, but in spite of it. I believe our magnificent cattle business will be good for years, but for the next few months, we (especially cattle feeders) might be wise to display a prudent amount of caution.

We won’t talk about crime or immigration right now... I might try that next month because I have a theory.

Finally, I can’t resist to tell a quick story about my friend Gene. Gene is tall and tough, old and wise, but mostly Gene is an entrepreneur extraordinaire. Gene got involved in hauling quite a bit of drought hay this summer, so he enrolled in a federal government program that reimbursed him

for mileage.

He tells me that when he went in to get his reimbursement check, the federal employee helping him fill out the paperwork at one point asked him if he “identified” as a woman. Set back on his heels a little bit, Gene asked him why the hell he would ask him that. The embarrassed fed told Gene that according to this federal program, he HAD to ask him, but if Gene wanted to “identify” as a woman, his payment would go from \$60,000 up to \$90,000. I’m not sure about y’all, but I think my buddy Jeannie might be collecting a little extra.

As for the validity of this story ... probably just too insanely stupid and ridiculous to be true. No government program would really do that with our tax money would it? Jeannie is also known to spin tall tales, but either way I thought it was funny and added a bit of levity to a heavy situation.

In closing, I just like to make our long-term readers aware there are changes coming. I’m looking forward to the next chapter for an expanding *Cattleman’s Advocate*. Stay tuned.

That’s all for this month. Hopefully soon I will be able to see you at the sale.

Labor negotiations continue at 3 big meat processing plants

Amidst more media attention than labor unions have gotten on this continent in decades, three major meat processing facilities are engaging in long contract negotiations with their respective unions.

The SAG-AFTRA strike — and possible resolution — along with the UAW's current strike against the three largest U.S. automakers get the headlines, but two plants in Alberta, Canada, are negotiating new contract stipulations.

Local 401 of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) has opened discussions with Cargill Inc. regarding the contract for its case ready facility in Calgary. The union posted the initial position documents for both the union and Cargill on its website.

On that matter, the UFCW said it has meetings scheduled with the company this week, as well as Oct. 3-5 and Oct. 11-13.

Meanwhile, the same Local 401 is working with a mediator, appointed by the Government of Alberta, to reach an agreement with Maple Leaf Foods on behalf of workers at the company's pork plant in Lethbridge in that province.

Talks have been underway with Maple Leaf for months, although the next scheduled meeting isn't until Oct. 23, according to an update on the union's website. The

union is pushing for wage increases, improvements to the pension plan and benefits, while the company is seeking changes to the 37-hour guarantee and vacation entitlement, the union said.

The same UFCW took negotiations with Cargill at its High River beef processing facility to within two days of a threatened strike in 2021, finally getting a ratified agreement that, the union said, included compensation increases, new procedures to ensure worker health and safety, new benefits and new rights for sick workers, among other provisions.

Further east, in Minnesota, talks between Hormel Foods Corp. and Local 663 (UFCW) are ongoing since the workers rejected what the union described as the company’s “final contract offer” earlier this month. Both parties agreed to extend negotiations until Oct. 8, Hormel said at the time. The previous contract ended on Sept. 10. UFCW Local 663 merged with Local 9 in southern Minnesota in 2021, expanding its representation to nearly 20,000 workers across five Midwestern states. Most the former UFCW Local 9 union members worked at Hormel Foods and Quality Pork Processors in Austin, Minn., at the time of the merger.

– Meatingplace.com

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It's The Pitts...

Save people, not flies

By LEE PITTS
For The Cattleman's Advocate

According to the bureaucrats "an endangered species is any fish, plant or wildlife which is in danger of extinction throughout all or part of its range." If that's the standard necessary to be protected by our government I can think of lots of people who are far more endangered than the Miccosukee Gooseberry or the Persistent Trillium, which sounds like a neutron bomb that won't disperse.

The feds say there are 1,300 species that are either threatened or endangered and there's not a machinist, independent truck driver or saddle maker on the list. Here's my list of the most endangered species in America today.

The Sheep Operator- The greenies say we must save "historical populations" but if they didn't have their heads glued to Tik Tok maybe they'd know that sheep thrived on our public lands, and the landscape did too, long before the Endangered Species Act. The sheep fertilized the meadows and broke up the soil while at the same time producing two wonderful commodities, lamb and wool. But now we're told by urban dwellers who've never been west of Kansas City that we must remove the sheep and the people who care for them. So today 74% of the lamb we eat is imported. And because the feds say only a dozen or so of a particular species remain on their range, (only 4,000 of which have been sighted), the American lamb producer could soon be deader than the dodo.

The feds say there are 1,300 species that are either threatened or endangered and there's not a machinist, independent truck driver or saddle maker on the list. Here's my list of the most endangered species in America today.

The Solider- The bird that started this whole endangered species joke was the Spotted owl and when the dust settled we'd spent nine million dollars per owl to save them, so that their cousin the Bard owl could wipe them out. We should have spent the money instead on our returning soldiers who we sent to Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan only to come home to a substandard VA hospital and a citizenry who hated them. We should be ashamed that while many of our soldiers were committing suicide in record numbers due to PTSD, we were spending tax dollars trying to "save" fairy shrimp, winter gnats, Gooding's onion and Townsend's aster. I wonder, were any of them willing to die for their country?

The Journalist- The weekly or daily newspaper used to be a staple of American life and their content was written by real journalists, not CHAT GPT. The writing was so good it could inspire a worthless kid like me to one day become a writer. Now what we have left is a cacophony of clowns doing podcasts, or idiots on Facebook blogging away. And this we call news.

The Student- If I had kids I'd be worried sick every morning sending them off to a shooting gallery for freaks. A country that can't protect its children has no future.

The Fisherman- I live near a fishing village that once had a thriving fishing industry. Now the town is trying to exist by selling whale watching tours and

post cards of the quaint fishing boats that rarely leave their berths, while huge foreign floating factory ships rape our oceans.

The Small Businessman- If you've taken a walk down main street lately you know the small businessperson is far more endangered than gnatcatchers and bearded vultures, which I assure you there are plenty of on Wall Street! The small business person is being put out of business by Amazon with help from the U.S. Post Office.

The Forester- We used the aforementioned spotted owl and lots of bad science to destroy our forests that now burn out of control for months on end. The greens got rid of clear cuts which acted as firebreaks and the roads that the firefighters used to fight the fires. We kicked off the cows and the sheep and silenced the chainsaws which previously reduced the dry vegetation and the bark beetle infested kindling.

If the greens really were really serious about saving endangered species before they burn to a crisp, the best thing they could do is bring back the forester, the sheep and the cow.

The Cowboy- I don't know why so many urbanites hate the cowboy, but I think it's because it contains the word "boy". Maybe instead of trying to save a turtle that can breathe through its butt we ought to be more worried about saving the sexes. Both of them.

— www.LeePittsbooks.com

Anthrax outbreak reported in S.D. livestock

An anthrax outbreak has been detected in Ziebach County, South Dakota, leading to the death of several animals, according to a South Dakota Animal Industry Board in a press release.

The affected herd, consisting of approximately 150 pairs of animals, had not been vaccinated against anthrax.

South Dakota State

University's Animal Disease Research and Diagnostic Laboratory confirmed the disease based on samples submitted by the herd's veterinarian. The Animal Industry Board has placed the affected herd under quarantine, and will do the same for any additional affected herds.

The release also emphasized

the importance of not moving suspected carcasses until a diagnosis is confirmed, and highlights the critical role of proper carcass handling through burning and burial. Anthrax spores can persist in soil indefinitely, and various environmental factors can expose livestock to the spores.

— Meatingplace.com

Cattle on feed numbers down

The number of cattle and calves on feed for slaughter markets is down 2% from the same time last year according to a recent report from USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

In the United States cattle and calves on feed for slaughter markets in feedlots with a capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 11.1 million on Sept. 1.

During August, placements in feedlots summed up to 2.00 million head, a 5% decline from the figures in 2022. Net placements accounted for 1.95 million head. In terms of weight categories, placements were distributed as follows: 420,000 head for cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds, 305,000 head for 600-699 pounds, 455,000 head for 700-799 pounds, 488,000 head for 800-899 pounds, 245,000 head for 900-999 pounds, and 90,000 head for 1,000 pounds and greater.

Marketings of fed cattle in August amounted to 1.88 million head, marking a 6% decrease compared to the same period in 2022.

DTN Livestock Analyst ShayLe Stewart commented on the report, expressing relief among cattlemen and traders for the report aligning with market expectations. Only a few states observed an increase in placements compared to the previous year.

— Meatingplace.com

Lawmaker says Tyson willing to sell shuttering facilities

Tyson Foods CEO Donnie King said the company is willing to sell two closing poultry plants in Missouri, according to U.S. Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.).

The lawmaker tweeted that he visited with King about two facilities closing in his state.

In August, the company announced it would shut down plants in Dexter, Mo., and Noel, Mo., as well as in North Little Rock, Ark., and Corydon, Ind.

"I spoke with the CEO of Tyson Food today, Donnie King," Hawley said on X, formerly known as Twitter. "He told me, first, Tyson is willing to sell its facilities in Dexter and Noel, Missouri to any interested party — including a competitor. I was glad to hear it, because anything less would violate antitrust laws. I hope Tyson is actively pursuing a sale that will

save these jobs in Missouri. Second, he told me Tyson would help any farmer who wanted to keep raising chickens to do so, including helping them get new contracts with Tyson or other companies. We will hold him to these commitments."

Tyson did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In the wake of Tyson's closures announcement, Hawley introduced legislation designed to "break up giant meatpacking and poultry monopolies."

Tyson has been closing plants to balance supply and demand. The company reported a \$417 million loss in its fiscal third quarter, and an 80% year-on-year decline in adjusted operating income in the first half of the year.

— Meatingplace.com

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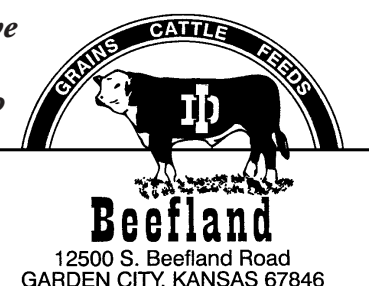
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Livestock News & Notes.....

Advocates intensify opposition to JBS S.A. IPO

More than a dozen advocacy groups are ramping up a campaign against JBS S.A.'s initial public offering on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE).

The latest missive comes a month after the campaign urged the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to derail JBS' IPO over the Brazilian meatpacker's impact on the climate.

Greenpeace, Oxfam, Rainforest Action Network and World Animal Protection are among the 16 organizations urging investors not to finance further expansion by the world's biggest meat company.

JBS in July announced its plan to list shares on the NYSE through a dual listing under a new Dutch parent company.

"The proposed dual class shareholder structure will at the point of NYSE listing consolidate near absolute control for the Batista family and disenfranchise existing or potential minority shareholders, who will have no significant voting power or control," the advocacy groups state in a briefing.

The document warns the structure "would majorly reduce the opportunity for minority shareholders to steer the company on issues like human rights protections or environmental impact."

JBS did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

JBS breaks ground on cultivated protein research facility

JBS recently announced it began construction on a cultivated protein research and development center in Brazil.

The company, which has invested \$22 million in the project and intends to invest \$40 million more, says The JBS Biotech Innovation Centre will be the "largest research facility focused on food biotechnology in Brazil."

Located in Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, the R&D center will include labs, a pilot plant and, eventually, a commercial-sized plant. Expected to open in late 2024, it will be staffed by a team of 25 post-doctoral researchers as well as support staff.

"The JBS Biotech Innovation Centre reinforces our commitment to the cultivated protein sector, consolidates our position as one of the main players in this very promising market, and reinforces our commitment to offering innovative, high-quality products to our consumers," Jerson Nascimento Jr., JBS global supply and innovation director, said in a statement.

Focused initially on cultivated beef program, the staff is focused on creating a production process that is "efficient, scalable and economically competitive."

This isn't the company's first foray into cultivated meat. JBS holds a 51% stake in Biotech Foods, a Spanish cultured meat production company, which currently operates a pilot plant in San Sebastián and is expected to open its JBS-funded commercial plant in mid-2024

Calmer seas for meat prices ahead: USDA

After helping to drive food-at-home inflation to 11.4% in 2022, red meat and poultry is expected to be a significant moderating factor in retail food inflation as 2023 wraps up, according to the latest USDA Food Price Outlook report.

For 2023, USDA's Economic Research Service projects the midpoint for price increases for food bought to consume at home at 5.1%, about half of the rate of rising prices last year. For 2024, the news is even better: ERS predicts the midpoint rate of inflation at about 1.6%, although changing geopolitical and economic factors could push that as high as 9.5% or as low as -5.5%.

In the beef and veal category, USDA expects 2023 to wrap up with a 3.7% increase in price, compared with a 5.3% increase in 2022. In 2024, retail shoppers could see a 6.9% increase in beef prices, driven by significant decreases in the size of the cattle herd.

Pork is expected to log in a 1.1% drop in price for 2023, a significant shift from an 8.7% increase in prices in 2022. The outlook for 2024 is for similarly low price volatility, with a 1.6% increase in pork prices, although the range of potential price changes range widely, from a drop of 8.9% to an increase of 13.7%.

Poultry prices are expected to increase about 3.3% this year, down from a whopping 14.6% increase last year. Chicken price inflation in 2024 is projected at a midpoint of 3.6%.

US imported more cattle, swine year over year: ERS

Latest data from the USDA's Economic Research Service reveals that during the first half of 2023, the United States witnessed a surge in swine imports, reaching 3.3 million head — nearly 1% higher than the same period last year. The influx primarily constitutes young pigs destined for finishing, ultimately reaching slaughter weights and processed within US borders, according to the Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Outlook: September 2023.

Pig imports for finishing were 2% lower year over year but stood 8% higher than the 5-year average, a trend stemming from 2021 due to plant closures and increased costs of pig rearing in Canada.

Cattle imports in the first half of 2023 reached 953,000 head, marking an 11% increase from the same period in the previous year. This growth is likely fueled by tight cattle supplies in the United States and higher U.S. cattle prices. Over the last 5 years, about 75% of imports comprised feeder cattle, 25% were cattle for immediate slaughter, and less than 1% were for breeding. During the first half of 2023, approximately 687,000 head were feeder cattle, with 88% originating from Mexico. Import of feeder cattle increased more than 19% year over year during this period but remained below the 2018–22 average.

On the production and price front, forecasts for 2023 and 2024 in the commercial beef sector remain relatively stable compared to previous projections. Beef imports see an increase for the second half of 2023 and into 2024, whereas beef exports are anticipated to decline further in 2023 and 2024 due to a revised lower demand outlook from Asia.

In the pork sector, continued lower dressed weights offset higher August slaughter numbers, resulting in slightly reduced pork production compared to the previous year. Pork

exports are anticipated to rise in 2023, reaching 6.8 billion pounds, a 7.2% increase from the previous year.

HPAI prompts culling of millions of birds in South Africa

The scourge of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) continues to slam other parts of the world even as the anticipated North American migration has poultry growers and processors nervous after last year's record-breaking domestic HPAI outbreaks.

Quantum Foods — a poultry company that also is South Africa's largest egg producer — announced that it recently confirmed an HPAI outbreak at several of its poultry farms in Gauteng and the North-West province. The outbreak so far has affected 1.5 million layer and breeding stock and follows the culling of 420,000 layer birds

at a farm in the Western Cape in April 2023, the company reported to shareholders this week.

Quantum estimated that the financial impact of H7N6 HPAI so far involved a US\$5.6 million in lost poultry, the company noted in its shareholder report.

Meanwhile, Astral Foods — South Africa's largest integrated poultry producer — reportedly is projecting a shortage of chicken eggs and poultry meat in the wake of an HPAI outbreak that has cost the company a total of US\$11.7 million since the end of May, according to several media reports.

U.S. poultry exports to South Africa have been limited by the latter country's high tariffs, although broiler meat exports to the country increased sharply last year, according to the U.S. Poultry & Egg Export Council, only to trail off again in 2023.

Many of the preceding items were taken from Meatingplace.com

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NE Missouri couple learns about forestry on 55th wedding anniversary

COLUMBIA, Mo. – A forestry field day might seem like an unlikely place to spend a wedding anniversary, says University of Missouri Extension natural resources specialist Brian Schweiss. But a northeastern Missouri couple thought it sounded like “a good outing to someplace we had never been before” to celebrate 55 years of a marriage as strong as the forest’s trees.

The Watsons live on a small farm in Lewis County near Ewing. They have 30 acres of cropland and another 30 acres of woods and creek. They discussed having a timber sale as some of their trees matured and others declined.

They wanted to harvest some for income and encourage the growth of younger trees by making more sunlight available to them. Like many landowners, the Watsons enjoy the trees on their farm and the birds and animals they support. Their main concern in having a timber sale was doing it correctly so their woods will continue to grow and provide the same enjoyment to future generations.

A forestry field day at Rudolph Bennitt Conservation Area in Randolph County, sponsored by MU Extension and the Missouri Department of Conservation, helped them learn about the timber sale process.

The workshop walked participants through various stages of forest growth resulting from past timber sales. They saw harvested areas that were thinned to promote the growth of the remaining trees and others that were cut a bit harder to regenerate oak seedlings and create a young forest.

Participants saw where similar practices had occurred 10 to 30 years earlier to get an idea of how the forest responds to these harvests. Presenters discussed practices like crop tree release and prescribed fire for woodland management, says Schweiss.

China set to open market to Colombian beef

Brazilian meatpacking giant Minerva S.A. said today the Colombian government told the company that China has approved a protocol to open its market to Colombian beef exports.

Minerva has two plants in Colombia, one in Bucaramanga and another in Ciénaga de Oro. Once approved, those facilities can export beef to China, “maximizing the exposure and our arbitration capacity for the Chinese market,” the company said.

The two Colombian facilities would join eight other Minerva plants already approved in Argentina (1), Brazil (3) and Uruguay (4) that process a collective 12,000 head of cattle per day.

Home to 1.4 billion people, China imported more than 3 million metric tons of beef in 2022.

– Meatingplace.com



FIELD DAY: A northeastern Missouri couple, Ed and Janet Watson, celebrated their 55th anniversary by learning about forestry at a field day offered by University of Missouri Extension and the Missouri Department of Conservation. (Photo courtesy of Brian Schweiss)

The Watsons also attended a seminar by MU Extension state

forestry specialist Hank Stelzer last December at the Missouri Livestock Symposium in Kirksville. In his presentation, “Timber Sales: What the Landowner Needs to Know,” Stelzer suggests having a consulting forester help with planning.

“We have done that, but the workshop gave us the opportunity to visit several actual timber harvest sites. We have a much better understanding of what to expect during and after the harvest,” said Janet Watson.

Workshop participants received other tips on forest health and wildlife habitat. These included:

If your goal is to maintain oaks in the forest, make sure oak seedlings are present prior to the harvest. If seedlings are lacking, the future forest may not have many oaks.

Timber sales can help create

young, “brushy” areas mixed in with older trees. This creates diverse cover that benefits a variety of wildlife.

Do not harvest the best and leave the rest! Leaving poor-quality trees today means you

will have poor-quality trees tomorrow.

There are several upcoming workshops this fall for woodland owners. For more information, contact Schweiss at 573-882-4775.

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RAMBLINGS OF A CONSERVATIVE COW DOCTOR

Disinformed

By KRAYTON KERNS, D.V.M.
Special to The Advocate

Last Sunday, I spotted a political sticker stuck to a Hardin gas pump claiming, "If you are sick of high fuel prices you can thank Republicans who take campaign contribution bribes from big oil." This must be a counterintelligence response to previous stickers of a smiling President Biden pointing to the pump price while boasting "I did that!" As I pulled back onto the interstate, I pondered who would believe such a thing before admitting the entire progressive platform is a lie. The ruling class expects us to believe 81 million voters swallowed such socialism in the 2020 election.

Leftists blame climate change on your milk cow laying in the shade and chewing her cud. Bison, deer, elk, antelope and rabbits damage nothing for doing the same, it's only cows. As such, your cows will be taxed into extinction, and you will eat Mr. Gates' meat of modern chemistry or insects. Isn't progress wonderful? Why would any rational citizen support such foolishness, yet there is more.

The Biden administration tells us hurricanes are increasing in frequency and intensity because the unwashed are standing in



Ignoring millions of illegal border crossers invading our country is billed as being welcoming to the huddled masses. Shipping those same masses to sanctuary cities, not so much, and this brings me to my point.

front of the air conditioner while cooking on a gas stove. Lahaina would be standing today were it not for tourists' selfish abuse of ceiling fans.

Moms stuffing their minivans with mini soccer stars and zooming to practice, are contributing to global warming, global cooling, global droughts and global floods. Were they to do the same in electric vehicles having even greater carbon emissions, the damage would be erased by good intentions. For collectivism, it is all about how you feel.

Teaching Dick and Jane that God made man and woman is strictly forbidden. Castrating Dick and removing Jane's undeveloped breasts is considered progress if you keep such surgeries secret from mom and dad. If you speak ill of this bait and switch, statisticians label you transphobic and you will be cancelled. Welcome to the world of woke.

Ignoring millions of illegal border crossers invading our country is billed as being welcoming to the huddled masses. Shipping those same masses to sanctuary cities, not so much, and this brings me to my point.

If you believe the above, including the current two-year spike in fuel prices being due to campaign contributions from big oil, you are as ignorant as leftist

activists think you are. Just because someone thinks you are

stupid does not mean you are obligated to prove them right. Think about it and vote for liberty.

For three decades, Krayton Kerns, D.V.M. has been a veterinarian in Laurel, Montana, and owns Beartooth Veterinary Service.

His three children are gradu-

ates of the Laurel School System where his wife, Druann, is employed as the district technology coordinator.

He served four terms in Montana's House. His hobbies and passions include his family, marathons, triathlons, long distance relay races and aviation. He is an avid hunter, packer, wagon master and mule skinner.

Red meat production down year-over-year: NASS

Red meat production is down 3% year-over-year, according to the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) August livestock slaughter report.

Total commercial red meat production stood at 4.67 billion pounds, marking a 3% decrease from the 4.83 billion pounds produced in the same month of the previous year.

Beef production accounted for 2.36 billion pounds, reflecting a 6% drop compared to the previous year. The decline in beef production was accompanied by a 6% decrease in cattle slaughter, totaling 2.89 million head in August. Notably, the average live weight of cattle increased by 3 pounds from the previous year, reaching 1,351 pounds.

Veal production also experienced a decline, totaling 4.2 million pounds, down by 9% from August 2022. Pork production remained relatively stable, total-

ing 2.29 billion pounds. Hog slaughter increased by 1%, reaching 11.1 million head, although the average live weight decreased by 4 pounds compared to the previous year, settling at 278 pounds.

Lamb and mutton production decreased by 10% from August 2022, totaling 10.5 million pounds. Sheep slaughter slightly increased by 1%, totaling 183,800 head. The average live weight for sheep decreased by 14 pounds from August 2022, settling at 113 pounds.

From January to August, commercial red meat production reached 36.1 billion pounds, indicating a 2% decline from the same period in 2022. Beef production was down by 4%, veal decreased by 11%, while pork production showed a 1% increase compared to the previous year. Lamb and mutton production also saw a 2% decline over the same period.

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BEZNER BEEF from page 3

In today's world other challenges include labor and high interest rates though on the latter organizers were able to get a good bit of the construction costs fixed at a decent rate, Bezner says. As for the labor issue, it will come down to competitive pay and having the best place to work within the industry.

"There's a lot to be said for taking care of your employees, treating them fairly and keeping them safe," he stresses. "We're lucky here that we've got guys that have been with us for 20 years."

For the last decade or so they've also utilized quite a few H2-A workers from Ukraine. One of the challenges is that they have to spend three months out of the year at home.

"They're good farm hands and good mechanics, and they can fill in as cowboy labor when we need help on shipping days," says Bezner.

Currently, they have three, though one has been trying to get back home. The war has been a huge challenge because they had guys who couldn't get home and vice versa.

Besides the Holcomb plant fire and COVID, the whole supply chain issue that has basically plagued most all businesses from 2015 through 2022 and some still today has been one more additional challenge. On the labor issues Bezner says these higher interest rates may resolve some of the problems.

"People may finally decide they have to work, but really it will only change if economics and government behavior change."

As a whole the Bezner's family operation is still pretty well evenly split in terms of enterprises with the feedlot contributing about half to the bottom line and the farming and ranching side making up the other half.

Each of the enterprises operate separately in terms of the balance sheet, and they could exist alone, but there are significant synergies be it harvesting and salvaging crop residues or harvesting and salvaging problem acres, hauled out corn, for example. It also helps that there isn't a middleman brokering and transporting their corn from here to one of the dairies or to another feedyard.

They've fed 100 percent of their corn crop at their feedyard until this year. Historically their crop accounted for half of their needs so the other half is bought from outside sources. He bought a little more last fall and a bit more in January, more than he really needed. However, this spring and summer was the first time the feedyard was at 103 percent capacity, and he was happy to have that extra corn.

The drought has been particularly tough on these farmer feeders. Thankfully, it began raining here the 26th of April. By the end of June, they'd had two or three more inches than all of 2021 and 2022 combined.

"We thought we were going to cut half a wheat silage crop just like we did in 2022," says Bezner. "Then we had something like 13 inches in 60 days. It

As a whole the Bezner's family operation is still pretty well evenly split in terms of enterprises with the feedlot contributing about half to the bottom line and the farming and ranching side making up the other half.

saved our wheat crop. In fact, we ended up with a bumper wheat silage crop."

The influx of dairies to the area has meant that pretty well all the wheat goes to silage. They've figured out how to use it at the feedyard. In fact, he and Stephen prefer it over corn silage as it feeds more consistently throughout the year.

"Now we don't have to raise corn silage, so our corn can go to high moisture corn, or it can go to the bin for flaking down the road."

Problem is they're competing with the large dairies for their forages. Consequently, overall, all their inputs have gone up.

These days there are a lot fewer combines and a whole lot more silage choppers even for the corn because silage is all the dairies use.

"A dairy feeds 20 percent grain whereas we feed just the opposite," Bezner explains. "We feed 80 percent high energy corn, fat, whatever, and 20 percent roughages. A dairy feeds 20 percent grain and 80 percent silage."

He did a quick calculation the other day estimating the number of cattle on feed in all of the area yards. He came up with something over 600,000 head. He estimates that all these feedyards combined use one-fifth of the forage inputs that one large dairy uses.

He refers to water as a "scary subject."

"These droughts are not friendly to these aquifers, and we've pulled on the Ogallala hard," Bezner admits.

Even though their sprinklers continue to get more efficient, the depletion of the Ogallala has meant that they now have areas where they don't grow as much corn as they did in 2000. Namely, it's forced them to diversify into growing less corn and more milo and forage sorghum on those lighter water acres.

Also, when chasing better water to grow more feed they go north now, certainly not south. In 2000 all of their farm ground would have been right in the general vicinity of their headquarters. Today they reach all the way north to the Oklahoma Panhandle.

"It hasn't happened yet, but I wouldn't be surprised to see us become a net seller of sorghum forage in the future on areas where the water is light," says Bezner.

The family's business model has had to adapt to the times. Specific, to the feedlot, things have morphed as well.

"We've learned how to feed to give each animal the best shot we can at grading Choice," Bezner reiterates. "Plus, we've been feeding a lot of our customer's cattle long enough that we know pretty well how they'll perform on the rail."

The weather helps too.

Though the winters can get cold, typically the summers are great for feeding cattle as the heat and humidity are not as extreme as in other parts of the state, particularly this summer.

At 82, his dad, Jody, is still actively involved. For example, he still sprays every acre of corn.

Michael says Mitchel, who handles the farming with his dad, could get on the sprayer in a pinch, but that is his dad's spot. Mitchel now plays a larger role in managing crop rotations and where to plant and when. They now raise quite a bit of certified and registered wheat seed making it a cash crop.

The Bezner brothers are doubly blessed in that their mom, Kay, remains incredibly active in community affairs. She has been the adult leader for the Dallam County 4-H Council for 60 years.

"I don't know whether she'll ever turn that over to somebody

else," says Michael.

Besides the feedlot and the farming, the family also has a 600-head commercial cow-calf operation. Additionally, they partner with Trans Ova Genetics on a satellite embryo collection facility. Bezners provide the facility, the care for the animals and the Trans Ova people do the flushing and the collection of embryos. What embryo work the family does of their own is for their show calf business.

In terms of the biggest change

See BEZNER BEEF, page 13



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BEZNER BEEF from page 12

over the last 25 years, Bezner says it is the technological advancements that have enabled them to be more efficient in all facets of the family operation. Specific to the feedlot, he points to the implant programs and the beta agonists that enable them to make the cattle bigger more efficiently.

"That's a big deal," he insists.

Then there's the technology in the feedmill and in the feed trucks.

"It's just incredible. I mean all the feedtrucks have GPS now making it almost impossible for a guy to feed a wrong pen," he noted.

Plus, now the information comes straight from the feed truck to a computer in the office.

"When we first started, it seemed our day was just getting started after we finished feeding because then someone had to put all that feed information into our accounting program," Bezner explains. "Now it's done seam-

understood the need to have a strong voice not just in Austin but Washington as well. It is one of the primary reasons he became involved in TCFA.

"We have plenty of opposition to our industry, whether it be Cory Booker and the rest of the vegans, PETA or HSUS," he reminds. "They are constantly trying to do damage through the legislature. We have to have somebody watching out for us."

TCFA is also a tremendous resource for its members in terms of all the services they provide from guidance on environmental compliance and Beef Quality Assurance to their insurance program.

One of the accomplishments that TCFA had a hand in this year was the passage of the fake meat bill in Austin.

"It's important that we're proactive in that arena as we've seen what happened to the milk industry," Bezner points out.

Another win on the national

All in all, Bezner is really excited about the next 10 years because of the technology that's on the horizon some of which is already in the testing phase. Included in that list are the ear tags that are monitoring health as well as a camera system that monitors consumption at the feed bunk. There are cameras that can even monitor water consumption.

lessly and automatically."

Speaking of automation, he fully expects there to be self-driving feed trucks available in the near future.

All in all, Bezner is really excited about the next 10 years because of the technology that's on the horizon some of which is already in the testing phase. Included in that list are the ear tags that are monitoring health as well as a camera system that monitors consumption at the feed bunk. There are cameras that can even monitor water consumption.

Like his dad and Mitchel who love farming, he and Stephen simply love watching cattle grow and making a good beef product.

Michael has learned a lot over these last 25 years.

"Truth be known when we started the feedyard I was flying blind with a pretty big ego," Bezner admits. "I'd never managed people to any significant degree, and I hadn't yet helped raise three families and I really didn't know how to get along with my brothers. Plus, I was pretty green when it came to dealing with feedlot customers."

He's gotten better at a lot of that but admits every day is a new day and to a large degree a learning experience. "I try to remember the things that work and really try to remember the things that don't work and do more of the former," he says.

Bezner is nearing the end of his term as chairman of the Texas Cattle Feeders Association (TCFA). He got involved because that's how he was raised.

"If I'm going to complain about something, I better have skin in the game."

That said Bezner has long

front is putting a hold on the requirement to measure greenhouse gas emissions.

"Without NCBA and TCFA fighting against that, we'd probably be sending measurements to the Coast Guard who didn't want them to begin with."

Given that the farm bill is up for renewal, much effort has also been spent this year working to keep a livestock title out of the farm bill. GT Thompson, chairman of the House Ag committee, and John Boozman, on the Senate side, have both been good to work with, Bezner says.

"They will do their best to prevent anything from getting in the farm bill that will be negative to our industry."

He adds that it carries some weight when constituents can have discussions face to face with their legislators about the issues that are important to them and how those issues impact their respective businesses. He uses the checkoff as an example.

"When I was able to sit down with Senator Ted Cruz and explain to him that the beef checkoff is a producer driven checkoff, managed by producers, developed by producers, that was put in place in a democratically elected process by producers, and that we're trying to help ourselves and that it doesn't cost the government anything, that's when he began to understand our position," says Bezner.

The TCFA chairman admits he gets tired of some of the same old industry arguments that seem to never go away.

"The cattle feeding industry is a pretty pure form of capitalism," he insists. "We don't want the government in our business, whether it be overregulation

from the EPA or whoever, and most feedyard managers want to figure out how they're going to sell their cattle on their own and not be told by the government how they have to do it."

The corporate yards that market cattle almost exclusively on a grid do so because it's economically efficient, he insists. Also, he insists that the independent yards that remain have largely figured out their niche enabling them to continue to be successful.

As for what's next for Bezner Beef, Bezner says he and his brothers will keep pressing forward as they have to begin thinking about transitioning to the next generation. That involves

continuing to be open minded about new ideas. One idea they've put some numbers to is direct marketing of some of their own beef to the consumer.

"It changes the bottom line a lot," he insists. "It's something to consider. If this next generation wants to come home, we're going to have to find a new racetrack."

For now his focus remains on selling fed cattle at the best possible price for his customers and his family.

"Never in my wildest dreams would I have ever thought we would sell cattle for \$179-180 in August," says Bezner. "We're profitable right now on these cattle coming out, but we're buying back break evens that are asking

this market to be even better."

He reiterated then the need to lock in a profit when there's a profit to be had and put a floor under them to keep the bottom from falling out.

The demand for the beef product is nothing short of amazing, he insists. He attributes it every bit to the quality of the product. However, there are a few clouds on the horizon on that front as well given supplies. At the moment, it is his biggest concern especially for the independent feedyards.

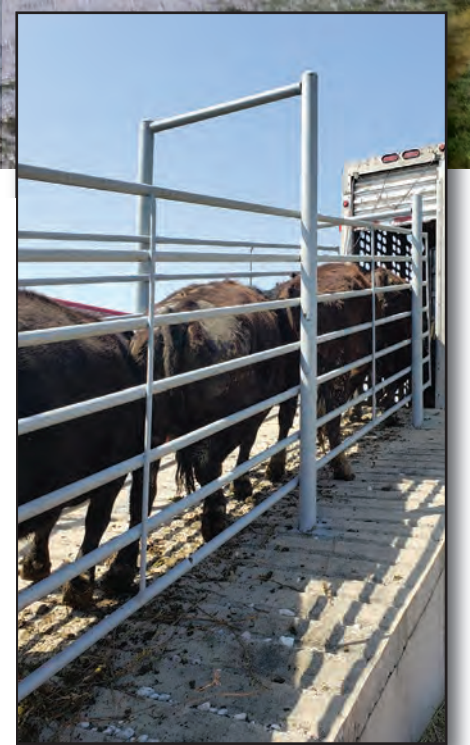
"We're continuing on this trend of a smaller and smaller cow herd which has to indicate more consolidation," Bezner concludes.

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It's time to celebrate life

By TRENT LOOS
Special to the Advocate
Courtesy of High Plains Journal

I am writing this from the Baltimore airport as I wait on my return flight to Nebraska. I flew east to judge The Great Frederick Fair. While it is technically a county fair in Frederick, Maryland, it is actually as big as some state fairs around the country.



Interestingly, a very common question I heard from Uber drivers, food preparers and hotel desk clerks was, "Seriously, you come all the way from Nebraska to judge a pig show?" The short answer is yes. The long answer is coming up.

First, I need to share that I have very much enjoyed judging at the Maryland State Fair for the past two years. Maryland is an interesting state as there is a tremendous amount of agriculture yet the pressure on the farming sector from urbanization is simply crazy. My quick answer in responding to these questions is that judging the Frederick Fair was not about pigs at all, but it was about people. I have many friends in Maryland that I enjoy spending time with and, of course, I love working with the show kids.

Frederick is home to much of our nation's history and I don't think people from outside this area realize that. During the Revolutionary War, Frederick was the key location for a barracks that held the prisoners of war from Britian. During the War of 1812, the second war against Great Britian in a short time, Francis Scott Key wrote the Star Spangled Banner in Frederick. Fredrick was also home to key battles during the Civil War including the first raid in the East with John Brown at Harpers Ferry.

Aside from the political history, it's interesting that The Great Frederick Fair dates back to June 1821 when the farmers that made up the Ag Society recognized the need to showcase agriculture as a means of national security. That's over 200 years of tradition in promoting agriculture.

The importance of beef cattle for meat and sheep production for fiber was the true focus in the early years and that was followed shortly by the importance of fruit

production. My message during the pig show was that we need to focus on the youth that participate in these events because our nation has lost its work ethic, and this is the greatest avenue for getting it back.

One other thing happened that I found significant. Located near the sheep, dairy and pig barn was the birthing pavilion. As the Jersey cow gave birth to a healthy calf, the crowd grew extremely large trying to get a picture or a video of this new life making its appearance. At about 7:40 p.m., a Tamworth sow started farrowing and, despite the rain, folks just started gathering like they knew something big was happening.

That is ultimately what we do in agriculture: create and maintain life. We create life and eventually it is followed by death because only in death does something else live.

She ended up with a great litter of 10 but what I figured out is that people are still intrigued with "life."

That is ultimately what we do in agriculture: create and maintain life. We create life and eventually it is followed by death because only in death does something else live. It stems from the



creation God gave us and our role on earth is to manage that creation to support life as best we can. The more plants we have, the more animals that are sustained. The number of animals that are created has a direct effect on the number of humans the earth can support.

The earth is not even close to the maximum number of humans we can maintain if we stop the policy makers who are trying to put a stranglehold on our capacity

to produce food. It is beyond high time that we truly celebrate life being created on a daily basis.

Editor's note: Trent Loos is a sixth generation United States farmer, host of the daily radio show, Loos Tales, and founder of Faces of Agriculture, a non-profit organization putting the human element back into the production of food. Get more information at www.LoosTales.com, or email Trent at trentloos@gmail.com.




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Study to focus on mental health and loneliness in rural areas

Surgeon General says loneliness can be as harmful as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day

By LINDA WHELAN GEIST
University of Missouri Extension

COLUMBIA, Mo.—Montana State University is partnering with University of Missouri Extension and the MU Department of Psychological Sciences to research the connection between loneliness and mental health in agricultural workers and rural residents.

The study will increase understanding of how isolation contributes to the mental health crisis in rural communities, with the goal of providing insights into targeting future interventions.

A 2023 U.S. Surgeon General advisory, "Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation," documents a historic decline in social

connection, with Americans spending 24 more hours per month alone than they did in 2003. The report notes that lack of social connection "is as dangerous as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day."

MU Extension health and safety specialist Karen Funkenbusch says loneliness leads to poor mental health and increased suicide rates. The problem is particularly acute in rural areas. According to "Growing Stress on the Farm," a 2020 report co-authored by Funkenbusch, the suicide rate among rural Missourians grew by 78% between 2003 and 2017. Over the last decade, hospital emergency department visits for suicide attempts or suicidal ideation increased 177%. Suicide rates in rural areas are 18% higher than in nonrural areas.

People with fewer social connections also see disproportionate increases in chronic disease and other physical health issues.

"There is a direct link between longevity and social connect," says Funkenbusch.

Leading the two-year research project are Peter Helm, who did postdoctoral work at MU and is now an assistant professor at Montana State, and Jamie Arndt, MU professor of psychological sciences.

Physical isolation brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic has decreased social connections,

Helm says. Young people turned to digital connections to stay in touch, but this can increase loneliness since online interactions are not as satisfying as face-to-face contacts, he says.

Loneliness is not the same for everyone, Helm says. You can feel alone because you don't sense that you belong, you don't have a significant other or close friends in your life, or you think that other people don't understand

the way you see things. Determining how one feels and experiences loneliness helps researchers determine the best ways to cope.

The National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities provides funding for the project.

For more information, contact Megan Edwards at 660-620-8930 or megan.edwards@mail.missouri.edu.

DOL investigates facilities for child labor violations

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) is looking into whether or not Tyson Foods and Perdue Farms had migrant children cleaning slaughterhouses, according to a report from The New York Times. The DOL initiated the inquiries after The New York Times Magazine published a story that shed light on migrant children employed during overnight shifts by sanitation contractors in plants located on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, owned by these companies.

Children as young as 13 were reported to be handling hazardous tasks involving acid and pressure hoses to clean industrial machinery of blood, grease and feathers, according to the story.

Federal law prohibits minors from working in slaughterhouses due to the exceptionally high risk of injuries associated with the meat processing industry.

The Biden administration is now evaluating whether large corporations can be held accountable as employers, even when children are employed through contractors within their facilities.

In April, the USDA penned a letter to 18 meat processors, including Tyson and Perdue, to take a stand against the "growing problem" of illegal child labor.

In February, DOL announced that a major sanitation services subcontractor for food processors had employed at least 102 children in hazardous occupations and had them working overnight shifts at 13 meat processing facilities owned by nine different companies. Two Tyson facilities were involved in the investigation. While none of the processors were found legally liable for third parties hiring minors, the DOL is taking a closer look at the law to see if fining the facilities where minors are working is in line with the statute.

Perdue Farms and Tyson Foods did not return request for comment. Meatingplace also reached out to the DOL for clarification about its investigation —

whether the investigation is into the companies themselves or into the question of legal liability. The agency did not immediately respond.



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USDA begins issuing \$581M+in livestock disaster relief to producers

USDA announced it will begin issuing more than \$581 million in disaster relief to eligible livestock producers who suffered losses in 2021 and 2022 drought and wildfire events, the agency said in a release.

The USDA's Farm Service Administration (FSA) is closing out the Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP) for losses suffered in 2021. Ranchers who lost grazing acres due to drought and wildfire and received assistance through ELRP Phase One will soon receive an additional payment through ELRP Phase Two. This second payment will be equal to 20% of the 2021 gross ELRP Phase One payment, and is expected to total \$115.7 million.

ELRP Phase Two payments to producers will be automatic with no application required.

In addition, ranchers who continued to experience significant loss of grazing acres due to drought and wildfire in 2022 will receive ELRP disaster assistance payments for increases in supplemental feed costs — payments that are expected to run to \$465.4 million.

To expedite payments, determine producer eligibility and calculate the ELRP 2022 payment, FSA is using livestock inventories and drought-affected forage acreage or restricted animal units and grazing days due to wildfire already reported to FSA by ranchers when they submitted their Livestock Forage Disaster Program applications. ELRP payments for 2022 losses will be automatic with no application required.

Another \$1.17 billion is expected to be paid out in crop

disaster assistance payments from Phase Two of the Emergency Relief Program (ERP) to producers of eligible crops who suffered losses, measured through decreases in revenue, due to qualifying natural disaster events that occurred in calendar years 2020 and 2021.

"These payments are reflective of the incredible and cumulative financial hits brought on by devastating natural disasters that agricultural producers nationwide have endured while fulfilling their commitment to produce our food, fiber and fuel," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "This additional assistance helps offset the tremendous losses that these producers faced and is a valuable investment in our nation's food security for generations to come."

— Meatingplace.com

Nearly 350,000 visitors enjoy annual Missouri State Fair traditions in 2023

Governor Mike Parson and Missouri State Fair Director Mark Wolfe have announced that nearly 350,000 visitors attended the annual State Fair in Sedalia, which was held Aug. 10-20, 2023. The figure reflects an approximate two and a half percent increase from last year.

"Like many Missourians, the Missouri State Fair is a long-standing tradition for our family," Governor Parson said. "The First Lady and I took our own children to the Fair when they were young and it's an absolute joy to continue making those lasting memories with our grandchildren today. No other event showcases Missouri agriculture like the Missouri State Fair, and we're proud of the exceptional work our team does every year to ensure more Missouri families can enjoy the State Fair."

Special events and exhibits celebrated the 2023 Fair theme Where Traditions Grow. Statistics from fairgoer surveys consistently show that one of the top reasons guests attend the Fair is because it is a tradition for their family.

"This year we showcased many of the traditions that Missourians have come to love about the Fair," Director Mark Wolfe said. "We asked fairgoers to share their traditions with us and posted those on our social media throughout the summer and on signage around the grounds during the Fair. The Missouri Grown Traditions Scavenger Hunt also highlighted the many traditions our fairgoers

submitted to us."

The agriculture showcase, family-friendly attractions and shows, fair food and drink, shopping, and camping also ranked high in the list of why fairgoers came to the Fair in 2023. Concerts were also an important part of the fairgoer experience this year, with the sold-out Lainey Wilson show and nearly sold-out Nelly concert coming in as the most popular.

The carnival midway was a popular destination for Fair guests, recording its second highest year for revenue with the first Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday coming in as the biggest days on record.

Missouri Director of Agriculture Chris Chinn announced that entry numbers were also encouraging with more than 25,500 livestock and competitive entries shown at the State Fair in 2023. Notable increases in livestock entries shown included 37 percent for dairy cattle and 30 percent for rabbits. Agriculture Building entries for hams, bacons and summer sausage, apiculture, and horticulture increased 33 percent.

"The Missouri State Fair is our state's largest agriculture

showcase and a chance to celebrate Missouri's top economic driver," Missouri Director of Agriculture Chris Chinn said. "The Fair becomes the industry's biggest family reunion and is an annual tradition for FFA and 4-H families. People from across the state come to Sedalia each year to enjoy youth exhibits, carnival rides, and food. It was wonderful to see so many people having a good time at the Fair."

The 2024 Fair will be held Aug. 8-18 in Sedalia. To learn more, visit mostatefair.com.

— MCA Prime Cuts

Indonesia a potential hot market for U.S. exports

Indonesia is poised to become a strong future market for U.S. beef and pork, according to the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF).

The organization — which installed a new representative in Indonesia this summer — cited the nation's population of 275 million people, a decline in local red meat supplies and strong growth potential for U.S. beef in foodservice and retail as openings for U.S. suppliers. "Korean-style and Japanese-style barbecue chains are expanding in Indonesia, which creates oppor-

Tyson plant closure creates infrastructure conundrum in small Missouri town

Tyson Foods' decision to close a handful of poultry plants is impacting more than workers and chicken farmers in one Missouri town, according to a local news report.

Most homes on or near three streets in the town of Noel are connected to the Tyson plant's sewer system, which will close along with the facility next month, Terry Lance, mayor of the city, told NBC affiliate KSN16.

The city plans to lay around 3,000-feet of new sewage pipe to connect the affected area to the rest of Noel. Residences should brace for road closures and other potential inconveniences when work begins in a couple of weeks, the mayor relayed.

"It'll be a little bit unhandy for the people, but there's no way around a little bit of inconvenience," Lance told the station.

In August, Tyson said it was shuttering four additional poultry plants in three states as the Springdale, Ark.-based processor looks to cut costs.

— Meatingplace.com

EPA sued after rejecting calls for stricter CAFO rules

More than a dozen consumer and environmental groups are suing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for not adopting stricter regulations for farm water pollution.

The EPA last month denied a 2017 petition calling for revisions to the Clean Water Act to more effectively regulate Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs).

The agency instead said it would create a subcommittee to analyze the issue and make recommendations, a process likely to start next year.

Food & Water Watch and 12 other organizations are now asking the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to require the EPA to immediately reconsider key portions of the rejected petition.

"In the 1950s and 1960s many of Iowa's rivers and lakes were essentially lifeless," Curt Nelson, an Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement member from Cerro Gordo County, said in a news release issued by the non-profit. "The 1972 Clean Water Act began the cleanup process. Huge progress was made and life returned to our waters. Sadly the rise of large-scale CAFOs and over application of other fertilizers has radically reversed that trend."

The EPA's denial of the groups' petition was applauded by the National Pork Producers Council, which contends that a well-designed regulatory system is already in place to protect the environment.

— Meatingplace.com

tunities for high-quality red meat," said Sabrina Yin, USMEF's ASEAN director, in a news release. "Consumers are also seeking convenience while social media is contributing to growing interest in food, protein, nutrition and culture."

Foot-and-mouth disease and lumpy skin disease have depleted Indonesia's domestic beef production and efforts to meet

growing demand for higher quality beef cuts among the nation's growing middle class represent the potential for strong growth opportunities for U.S. producers, USMEF said in a recent report. Meanwhile, Indonesia's pork producers also have been dealing with serious African swine fever issues, boosting demand for imported pork, the agency said.

— Meatingplace.com

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Congress maneuvering to find ways to spend — or not

Complex political sort to play out in Washington very soon

By STEVE DITTMER
Executive Vice President
Agribusiness Freedom Foundation



COLORADO SPRINGS, CO — Political pundit Dan Bongino has a “rule” to inform voters’ understanding of what goes on in Washington D.C. That rule or truism is this: there are lots of Republicans who are really Democrats but no Democrats that are really Republicans.

It looks like there are some maneuverings in Washington coming up that could illustrate that theory in ways having nasty consequences out in the country. In D.C., anyone who wants to cut federal government spending is labeled by the Democrats and the general media as “extremist” or “radical” or “right-wing extremist.” So they term the members of the Freedom Caucus in the House Republican party that way.

But of course, those Freedom Caucus members tend to be more akin in philosophy to the common sense, average taxpayer/voter trying to hold together a household budget these days.

That’s despite President Biden’s mantra that “Everything is beautiful.”

Did you hear that Biden told the G20 gathering that he thought it would be great to take Bidenomics worldwide?

The far left of the political herd is well known for their belief that they should never let a crisis go to waste, as in, use it to further left wing, big government goals. If there isn’t a crisis or “emergency,” then make one up to further the agenda.

The Republicans, prodded by the conservative Freedom Caucus, put pressure on leadership to get some cost cutting measures during the debt ceiling fight. Of course, that means the Democrats have to figure out how to get around those voted in restrictions to spend more money now.

Their tool this time is a “supplemental” package for emergency disaster aid, Ukraine aid and border security. Beware that word “package.” That always means there is more to the eye -- and the pocketbook -- than they’re telling. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer wants to toss a skunk into the middle of the Republican caucus of conservatives, moderates and RINOs and watch them scatter, abandoning spending restraint negotiated in the debt ceiling bill, fighting amongst themselves.

The Democrats already have gotten their billions in green new deal subsidies and their \$80 billion IRS cash infusion. Now, FEMA is running out of money and rather than take some money out of an already record budget, they want more. The original supplemental figure has already ballooned to \$40 billion, with “progressive” lawmakers parading additional requests for more climate change money, money to aid illegal border crossers and new child care funding. And evidently Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell is no help, willing to support a big package.

Speaking of illegal border crashers, instead of offering to reimburse Texas for gas money for the busloads they are sending to sanctuary cities, the Biden administration is reportedly trying to figure out a way to keep the illegals in Texas. Something about putting ankle bracelets on thousands of illegals so they can what? Send a posse after them when the satellite says they have left the state? Does it look at all political that Biden is trying to punish the state that has fought back --- and suffered the most -- from the flood of illegals?

A columnist recently pointed out that the chaos Schumer is fomenting could seriously damage the Republicans’ credibility in professing a desire to cut spending, reduce inflation and

narrow the deficit. Besides frittering away the spending restraint won in the debt ceiling bill, there is another danger. Jam the House, prod the spending hardliners and they might sully up and refuse to pass the 12 appropriations bills House Speaker Kevin McCarthy is trying to get through regular order. He doesn’t want some monstrous Christmas Eve omnibus. A spending hardliner freeze could blow up any attempt at a Continuing Resolution (CR) to avoid a government shutdown Sept. 30 (“Biden Plays Disaster Politics,” Wall Street Journal, 09/08/2023).

Guess who would get the blame for a shutdown?

You see, the debt ceiling bill set some new rules. If Congress doesn’t pass the 12 appropriations bills by Sept. 30, discretionary accounts (including the military) are “subject” to a one percent cut [what does subject mean?]. And if McCarthy does not make serious efforts to hold down spending, remember that a single House member can forward a motion to vacate the chair.

And you thought chess could get complicated?

The Journal column, by noted D.C. observer Kimberley Strassel, notes McCarthy is trying to wangle a short-term CR to get enough time to run the supplemental components through committee in regular order, as they should be.

Schumer is betting McCarthy can’t get all his stubborn mules and wild horses rounded up to accomplish all this. But McCarthy did wrestle a debt ceiling bill through, even if it wasn’t everything conservatives wanted. It was a significant victory.

But as another pundit pointed out, the House has to get these spending bills through. Otherwise, Schumer will craft

something huge in the free spending Senate and send it over to the House. With time bearing down on them, the danger is that the House will go along with such a bad deal and the progressive, big government spenders will have won again.

As Strassel counseled, the Republicans need to stick together again to stop another

spending blowout. You can pass that sentiment on to your members of Congress.

House contact link:
<https://www.house.gov/representatives>

Senate contact link:
<https://www.senate.gov/senators/index.htm>

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U.S. imported more cattle, swine year over year: ERS

Latest data from the USDA’s Economic Research Service reveals that during the first half of 2023, the United States witnessed a surge in swine imports, reaching 3.3 million head — nearly 1% higher than the same period last year. The influx primarily constitutes young pigs destined for finishing, ultimately reaching slaughter weights and processed within US borders, according to the Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Outlook: September 2023.

Pig imports for finishing were 2% lower year over year but stood 8% higher than the five-year average, a trend stemming from 2021 due to plant closures and increased costs of pig rearing in Canada.

Cattle imports in the first half of 2023 reached 953,000 head, marking an 11% increase from the same period in the previous year.

This growth is likely fueled by tight cattle supplies in the United States and higher U.S. cattle prices. Over the last five years, about 75% of imports comprised feeder cattle, 25% were cattle for immediate slaughter, and less than 1% were for breeding.

During the first half of 2023, some 687,000 head were feeder cattle, with 88% originating from Mexico. Import of feeder cattle increased more than 19% year over year during this period but remained below the 2018–22 average.

On the production and price front, forecasts for 2023 and 2024 in the commercial beef sector remain relatively stable compared to previous projections. Beef imports see an increase for the second half of 2023 and into 2024, whereas beef exports are anticipated to decline further in 2023 and 2024 due to a revised lower demand outlook from Asia. In the pork sector, continued lower dressed weights offset higher August slaughter numbers, resulting in slightly reduced pork production compared to the previous year. Pork exports are anticipated to rise in 2023, reaching 6.8 billion pounds, a 7.2% increase from the previous year.

– Meatingplace.com

Pork producers ‘not willing to bet the farm’ on California’s Proposition 12

In a National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) media roundtable offering to cover a wide range of issues facing the pork industry on Tuesday, California’s Prop 12 dominated the discussion.

Clear now is that the U.S. Supreme Court’s affirmation of the measure gives NPPC little to no further legal recourse. The organization, officials on the call said, has turned its efforts more to making the law’s implementation a smooth process for producers and consumers.

Less clear is what will take place after Jan. 1, 2024, when the law takes full effect. NPPC officials and pork producers on the call said they’re not rushing to reconstruct their operations to produce Prop 12-compliant pork. The law requires fresh pork sold in California to be derived from breeding sows allowed at least 24 square feet of floor space. NPPC has estimated the cost of complying would be \$3,500 per sow.

Scott Hays, NPPC board president and a Missouri hog farmer, said that most of the cost is borne by the producer.

And it’s uncertain if consumers are willing to pay more for Prop 12-compliant pork and, if so, how much of that premium will trickle back down through various channels to the producer.

“For my family, we’re not willing to bet the farm that all that is going to happen. There’s a wait-and-see attitude,” Hays said. “Are these going to be real markets that folks are willing to participate in? Obviously the (Californian) consumer voted for [Prop 12], but now we’re going to see if they’re going to open up their wallets and actually [buy Prop 12-compliant product].”

Another question was whether packers will pay enough to help producers recoup the intensive capital investment behind producing Prop 12-compliant pork. NPPC CEO Bryan Humphreys said the pork production industry’s financial struggles — on top of questions about consumer demand — aren’t likely inspiring such expenditures.

Lori Stevermer, NPPC president-elect and a Minnesota producer, said pork producers have historically made changes to

their operations to serve free-market consumer demand and packer incentives, but this is different. “I don’t think California should tell me how to raise pigs,” she said. “... The part that’s frustrating is that it’s one state telling us what to do.”

NPPC leaders said going forward they will continue to push back on state-level measures like California’s Prop 12 and Massachusetts’ Question 3, which took effect in August with some compromises struck.

Meanwhile, NPPC is throwing its support behind Congressional considerations like the EATS ACT — which seeks to prohibit states and localities from regulating agricultural practices and enacting animal welfare protections — and hoping for some relief in the farm bill. In its ruling, the Supreme Court noted the need for Congressional intervention, they noted.

“We believe Congress needs to fix this,” Hays said. “We understand it’s a complicated issue, when you’re talking about commerce between states, but we do need a fix.”

– Meatingplace.com

NCBA issues statement on updated WOTUS Rule

National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) Chief Counsel Mary-Thomas Hart recently released a statement following the Environmental Protection Agency’s revised Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule that is intended to conform with the Supreme Court’s decision in Sackett v. EPA:

“The entire cattle industry breathed a sigh of relief when the Supreme Court curtailed the EPA’s overreach under the Clean Water Act. Today’s revised WOTUS definition is an important step toward bringing the EPA more in line with the Supreme Court’s ruling. NCBA looks forward to working with the agency to protect farmers and ranchers from burdensome regulations and provide them with lasting certainty on WOTUS.

“NCBA was proud to lead the fight against burdensome WOTUS rules from Congress to the courts. We will continue analyzing this latest development to ensure that cattle producers are protected.”

– MCA Prime Cuts

MCA opens 2023-2024 Profitability Challenge “Top 100” Contest

The 2023-2024 Profitability Challenge Contest is open to accepting new contest participants. Animals will need to be delivered by approximately November 1, 2023 and harvest will occur June 2024.

In 2019, the MCA launched the Profitability Challenge “Top 100” Steer Feedout in conjunction with the FFA Fantasy Feedout. This program is designed to provide producers additional data about their respective animals that will assist them with making production decision in the future.

Over fifteen thousand dollars in cash and prizes are given to the producers with the most profitable animals. GrowSafe Technologies provides individual data on each animal throughout the feeding period and allows for detailed information to be provided to the producers. We are also able to partner with the processor to provide carcass data to participants.

If you are interested in participating in the 2023-2024 Profitability Challenge “Top 100” Steer Feedout, please contact Courtney Collins at courtney@mocattle.com.

– MCA Prime Cuts

DOL proposes expansion of overtime pay

The U.S. Department of Labor announced a notice of proposed rulemaking to raise the annual salary level for employees to be exempt from overtime pay.

DOL plans to set the threshold at \$55,068, up from the current \$35,568, or a new weekly amount of at least \$1,059.

“We are committed to ensuring that all workers are paid fairly for their hard work,” said Principal Deputy Wage and Hour Division Administrator Jessica

Looman, in a news release. “For too long, many low-paid salaried workers have been denied overtime pay, even though they often work long hours and perform much of the same work as their hourly counterparts.”

Among other aspects of the rule, it proposes automatically updating the salary threshold every three years to reflect current earnings data.

In a blog for the American Association of Meat Processors, attorney Richard Alaniz explains

employers’ options for complying with the proposed rule.

A 60-day public comment period will end Nov. 7.


– Meatingplace.com

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Eastern Missouri Commission Company, Bowling Green
Market Report for Friday, September 15, 2023
Receipts: 622 Week ago: 1,949 Year ago: 903

Friday's sale had a very light offering of steer and heifer calves weighing mostly under 600 lbs selling mostly in small packages and singles but selling mostly steady within last week's ranges of similar quality and weights. Slaughter steers and heifers sold near steady with slaughter cows trading steady.

Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1 – Few 400-450 lbs 314.00-322.00; pkg unweaned 485 lbs 296.00; pkg 602 lbs 291.00; pkg unweaned 639 lbs 264.00.
Medium and Large 1-2 – Pkg 425 lbs 290.00, pkg unweaned 444 lbs 302.00; 500-600 lbs 273.00-286.00.
Feeder Heifers: Medium and Large 1 – 350-400 lbs 298.00-308.00, pkg unweaned 398 lbs 295.00; pkg 401 lbs 305.00, unweaned 415-465 lbs 281.00-291.00; 550-600 lbs 265.00-266.50.
Medium and Large 1-2 – 350-400 lbs 267.00-295.00; 400-500 lbs 254.00-277.00; 500-600 lbs 246.00-271.00; 635-700 lbs 231.00-250.50.
Feeder Bulls: Medium and Large 1 – 350-400 lbs 335.00-350.00; 600-635 lbs 233.00-237.00.
Medium and Large 1-2 – 425-490 lbs 270.00-279.00; pkg 570 lbs 240.00; pkg 670 lbs 210.00.
Slaughter Cows: Premium White (65-70% lean) Average dressing, 120.00-122.50; and high dressing, 128.00-134.00. Breakers (70-80% lean) Average dressing, 109.00-118.00; high dressing, 119.50-128.00; and low dressing, 100.00-108.00.
Boners (80-85% lean) Average dressing, 105.00-114.00; high dressing, 115.00-124.00; and low dressing, 96.00-104.00.
Lean (85-90% lean) Average dressing, 93.00-102.00; high

Market Reports

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dressing, 105.00-112.00; and low dressing, 86.00-90.00.
Slaughter Bulls: Yield Grade 1-2 – 1300-2400 lbs, 126.00-136.00; 138.00-141.00.
Slaughter Steers and Heifers: (40 hd) Choice 2-3 – 1135-1510 lbs, 181.25-185.50; Select and Choice 1-3 – Few 1200-1365 lbs, 177.00-180.00.


Source: MO Dept of Ag-USDA Market News Service, Bowling Green, MO, Greg Harrison, Market Reporter 573-751-5618. 24 hour recorded report 1-573-522-9244 www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/JC_LS156.txt

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Eastern Missouri Commission Company, Bowling Green
Market Report for Friday, September 22, 2023
Receipts: 1,336 Week ago: 622 Year ago: 1,250

Compared to the last special two weeks ago, steer calves under 600 lbs on a light test sold with a weak to lower undertone, 600-750 lbs sold fully steady to firm. Feeder heifers weighing under 550 lbs were lightly tested with 550-750 lbs selling 5.00-10.00 higher. Demand was moderate to good on a moderate supply. Feeders sold mostly in small lots, packages and singles with several groups of unweaned calves in the offering. Slaughter cows sold steady to 3.00 lower. Cattle on Feed Report was released Friday afternoon coming in within expectations with On Feed at 97.8 percent, Replacements at 95 percent and Marketings at 94 percent.

Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1 400-500 lbs 316.00-335.00, pkg unweaned 480 lbs 301.00; couple lots 525-535 lbs 305.00, couple lots 598 lbs 298.00, pkg unweaned 568 lbs 268.00; 600-650 lbs 276.00-293.00, unweaned 245.00-257.00, few 650-700 lbs 274.00-275.00; 700-780 lbs 262.00-



EASTERN MISSOURI
COMMISSION COMPANY
BOWLING GREEN, MO

267.50; pkg 855 lbs 253.00.
Medium and Large 1-2 – 450-500 lbs 304.00-311.00; pkg 506 lbs 301.00; 550-600 lbs 276.00-290.00; pkg 612 lbs 276.00; pkg 730 lbs 259.00; few 845-850 lbs 243.50.
Feeder Heifers: Medium and Large 1 – Few 450-500 lbs 282.00-285.00; 500-550 lbs unweaned 261.00, 550-600 lbs 269.00-280.00, lot unweaned 578 lbs 266.00; 600-700 lbs 263.00-271.00, Thin blks 615-620 lbs 278.00-282.50; 700-750 lbs 258.00-262.50; lot 840 lbs 232.50.
Medium and Large 1-2 – 400-500 lbs 252.00-274.00; 500-600 lbs 257.00-262.00; lot thin 694 lbs 260.75; lot 707 lbs 249.00.
Feeder Bulls: Medium and Large 1 – Pkg 372 lbs 328.00; pkg 432 lbs 326.00; 475-480 lbs 295.00-312.00; pkg 513 lbs 278.00; 630-650 lbs 242.00-250.00.
Slaughter Cows: Premium White (65-70% lean) Average dressing, 124.50-128.50.
Breakers (70-80% lean) Average dressing, 109.00-116.00; high dressing, 118.00-125.50; and low dressing, 100.00-105.00.
Boners (80-85% lean) Average dressing, 105.00-113.00; high dressing, 114.00-122.50; and low dressing, 96.00-104.00.
Lean (85-90% lean) Average dressing, 93.00-101.50; high dressing, 103.00-105.50; and low dressing, 86.00-91.00.
Slaughter Bulls: Yield Grade 1-2 – 1300-2400 lbs, 124.00-135.00; 138.00-143.00.
Slaughter Steers and Heifers: (20 hd) lot Select and Choice 1-3 – 1410 lbs 180.00.

Source: MO Dept of Ag-USDA Market News Service, Bowling Green, MO, Greg Harrison, Market Reporter 573-751-5618. 24 hour recorded report 1-573-522-9244 www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/JC_LS156.txt

Livestock News & Notes.....

Lawmakers urge USDA to study consolidation's impact on livestock

U.S. Reps. Randy Feenstra (R-Iowa) and Elissa Slotkin (D-Mich.) have introduced a bill that would direct USDA to study the impact of industry consolidation on producers in the meat supply chain.

The Livestock Consolidation Research Act also would compel USDA's Economic Research Service to draft a report on consolidation's effects on new market entrants, access to resources, and consumer purchasing power.

The study would encompass the beef, dairy, pork, and poultry industries.

Feenstra said Iowa farmers are frustrated by current market conditions that disadvantage family farms and small producers. His bill "will help us understand what is truly happening in the industry and root out any discriminatory practices," he said.

Slotkin, who grew up in the meat business, said the pandemic highlighted the vulnerability of a consolidated meatpacking sector. The legislation will help "ensure farmers, ranchers, and consumers aren't left unprotected," she said.

Global use of antibiotics in animals on the decline: WOA

The use of antimicrobials in animals is down 13% from 2020 levels – a significant shift in efforts to preserve the efficacy of such antibiotics in both humans and animals, according to new research from the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH).

The misuse and overuse of antibiotics can cause antimicrobial resistance in animal, human or plant populations, which poses a threat to other species, the Paris-based WOA noted in its seventh annual report on global use of antibiotics intended for animals.

Researchers previously reported that less than 20% of antimicrobials used in animals in 2019 were of "highest priority and critical importance for human health," adding that an estimated 4 million human deaths were linked to antimicrobial resistance in that same year.

WOAH also recently fully digitized its global database into an online platform that provides open access to global and regional data on the use of antibiotics in an interactive way. The updated ANIMUSE system also provides easier reporting, error checks and data visualization tools.

Hormel finishes latest joint solar power program

Hormel Foods Corp. announced the completion of its latest solar energy generation project that will supply electricity to the company's Montevideo, Minn., plant as well as to resi-

dents and businesses in the surrounding community.

The Austin, Minn.-based processor said its new solar array will supply 10% of the annual electricity used at its plant in addition to providing members of its Jennie-O Turkey Store division, community members and businesses a chance to support green energy and receive discounts on their energy bills. The project is expected to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by an estimated 2,265 metric tons per year, the equivalent of taking 504 average gas-powered automobiles off the road for one year, the company said in a news release.

Hormel plans to convert to

100% green power worldwide by 2030 and over the last year has boosted its domestic renewable electricity procurement from less than 10% to 100% via Virtual Power Purchase Agreements that generate 936 million kilowatt hours (kWh) annually, the release added.

Register now for 2023 Missouri Master Gardeners Conference

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Registration is open for the annual conference of University of Missouri Extension Master Gardeners, Oct. 14-15 in Columbia at the Hampton Inn

near the MU campus.

Gardeners can choose from a variety of educational sessions taught by MU Extension personnel and industry professionals, said MU Extension state horticulture specialist David Trinklein.

On both days there will be concurrent sessions dealing with fruits and vegetables, landscaping and ornamentals and miscellaneous topics related to horticulture and the environment. In total, there are 18 sessions to choose from, said Trinklein.

Additionally, MU Extension Master Gardeners can earn advanced training credit in plant disease identification, sustainable lawn care and vegetable


grafting.

The event concludes on Sunday with a luncheon featuring the announcement of Search for Excellence award winners.

For details and registration, visit <https://extension.missouri.edu/events/2023-missouri-extension-master-gardener-conference>.

Many of the preceding items were taken from Meatingplace.com

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Scotland County LIVESTOCK AUCTION

P.O. Box 111 • Hwy 15 North • Memphis, MO
660-465-7213 • Jerry & Barb Blomme
Grant Blomme • 660-341-0069 • Rodney Garman 660-216-4674

My name is Grant Blomme from Memphis, Missouri. I own and manage Scotland County Livestock serving Northeast Missouri, Southeast Iowa and beyond.

My parents Jerry and Barb Blomme purchased the barn in 1996 after starting in the salebarn business in 1984. Together they have over 75 years of experience.

My twin brother and I formally joined the family business in the fall of

2012. We grew up around the cattle industry and spent our childhood in the barns. I started out as a corner cleaner, graduated to skid loader operator and am now managing the barn.

So when I purchased the salebarn, I knew very well what I was getting into. There are several people helping me manage the barn, including my parents Jerry and Barb, my wife Mallory, and good friend and partner Rodney Garman.

Being in this business means I get to work with the public every day and to see the hard work they put into raising their livestock. I see their hard work turning into cash for their families. I take a lot of pride in working for this community and marketing the cattle in this part of the country.

My wife and I had recently had a baby girl and I hope one day she might take a liking to the family business. But first she will have to get out of diapers.

September was a busy month for our barn and the yearling trade was particularly remarkable.

Ranchers brought their spring calves to the salebarn, with most of the calves coming in immediately after they had been weaned from their mamas. This weaning period is a very stressful time for the young calf, so I focus on decreasing that stress as best I can. When they come to the barn, each calf will have clean water to drink, dirt to lie on and a bale of hay to eat.

Ranchers can help this transition by getting a round of vaccines in the calf prior to coming to town. We've seen that calves stay in better health through the transition when they have been introduced to a respiratory vaccine on the farm. This is especially so with the large temperature swings that the month of October can bring.

The yearlings coming off grass did very well this past month. The farmer feeders and big lots out west are getting a very good price for their fats. Many buyers were paying up for these yearlings that will get a good daily gain when they put a little corn in front of them. It's encouraging to see the supply and demand chain working in a way that benefits everyone.

Here are few stand out sales for the month of September:

Top sales Tuesday Sept. 5
9 hd- Blk str 449# \$328.00 unweaned
7 hd- Blk str 456# \$325.00 unweaned
7 hd- Blk str 477# \$326.00 unweaned
17 hd- Blk str 551# \$294.00 unweaned
24 hd- Blk str 557# - \$294.50 unweaned
13 hd- Blk str 570# \$285.00 unweaned
64 hd- Blk Yearling Strs- 832# \$258.25
18 hd- Blk hfrs- 463# \$294.00 unweaned
14 hd- Blk hfrs- 479# \$297.00 unweaned
18 hd- Blk hfrs- 544# \$268.00 unweaned

Top Sales Dairy Sale Tuesday Sept. 12
64 hd- Hols Angus X Strs- 439# \$279.00
52 hd- Hols Angus X Hfrs- 429# \$230.00
17 hd- Hols Angus X Hfrs- 339# \$240.00
31 hd- Hols Strs- 584# \$176.00
Via video auction-
75 hd- Hols Angus X Hfrs- 712#- \$233.00
70 hd- Hols Angus X Strs- 801# - \$237.40

Top Sales Tuesday Sept. 19
11 hd- Blk Strs- 440# \$350.00 unweaned
18 hd- Blk Strs- 605#- \$267.00 unweaned
82 hd- Blk Hfrs 587# \$267.50
62 hd- Blk Yearling Strs- 732# \$290.25
62 hd- Blk Yearling Strs- 845# \$258.75
62 hd- Blk Yearling Strs- 829# \$260.10
54 hd- Colored Yearling Strs- 785# \$256.00
68 hd- Blk Yearling Strs- 737#- \$289.25
61 hd- Blk Yearling Strs- 673# \$294.50
44 hd- Blk Yearling Strs- 833# \$250.00

Scotland County Livestock has sales every Tuesday. Each month we have three special sales, special dairy sale on the second week of every month and a special feeder sale on the first and third weeks of every month.

Please visit us on online at www.scotlandcountylivestock.com for our weekly listings and market reports

You can reach me, Grant Blomme at 660-341-0069



Thank you for reading, and thanks to Jon and Justin Angell for giving me the opportunity to write.

Cultivated meat company ponders partial sale as lawsuits mount: report

Eat Just is considering its options for the Singapore-based portion of its cultivated meat business, GOOD Meat, which may include a sale of the unit or its real estate, according to a report by Axios Pro.

Eat Just disputes elements of the report, saying that the Singapore facility has not been put up for sale, and that no decisions have been made regarding the future of the facility, according to a company spokesman.

Eat Just faces two lawsuits alleging non-payment on contracts, one filed by ABEC, a maker of bioreactors, and one by CRB, for work done in preparation for a greenfield cultivated meat plant.

The company also was recently sued by the Portland, Ore.-based Good Meat Project, a non-profit supporting conventional meat industry innovation, alleging trademark violation and false advertising.

Sources with knowledge of the players say discussions are underway in both of the breach of contract cases.

Eat Just, Good Meat's parent company, has raised a total of \$850 million, according to CrunchBase, including \$270

million for its biotech meat subsidiary.

In recent months, Eat Just CEO Josh Tetrick has reportedly said that a sale of its Just Egg unit could be an option. Just Egg, which makes a plant-based egg analogue, is a growing business with several partnerships with food service providers.

– Meatingplace.com

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It's time to get answers to the 60 million dollar question

Op-ed by BILL BULLARD
CEO, R-CALF USA

First question: Do beef & cattle imports depress U.S. cattle prices just as we already know lamb & mutton imports depress domestic lamb prices? Second question: Why are we even having this conversation?

If you embrace the fundamental economic law of supply & demand then you know that when you increase supplies while demand remains constant, prices will fall. But it's utterly bizarre that mainstream beef industry representatives say that's not true. So, let's look at some evidence.

Remember 2013 through 2016? First, we had tight cattle supplies & cattle prices skyrocketed through 2014. Then suddenly & unexpectedly, and even while cattle supplies remained tight, cattle prices collapsed beginning in 2015 & throughout most of 2016.

Why did cattle prices collapse so suddenly? Especially while supplies were still tight & beef demand remained strong. Here's the answer to that important question provided in writing by the four largest U.S. beef packers who were explaining what happened after the country-of-origin labeling (COOL) rule was repealed. Here's what they wrote: "After the rule was repealed, foreign beef no longer had to be labeled as such. That spurred additional imports and caused domestic cattle prices to fall."

Did you catch that? The four largest beef packers stated that when additional imports were introduced into the U.S. market, they caused cattle prices to fall.

And about the same time the beef packers wrote this, 28 bipartisan members of Congress, including both senators & representatives, & led by South Dakota Senator Mike Rounds and Minnesota Senator Tina Smith, wrote a letter to the U.S. Attorney General & said this regarding the disparity between cattle producers & packers & how imports impact domestic cattle prices: "One potential explanation for this disparity may be the ability of meatpackers to import beef from foreign countries..."

And based on U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) data they wrote, "as the price increases for live cattle, there is a subsequent and consistent increase experienced in beef importation."

And pointing to the repeal of mandatory COOL, the joint congressional letter stated, "Furthermore, the initiation of plummeting prices in the live

cattle market appears to correspond almost exactly with the repeal of Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling, which demonstrates the negative impact of imports on domestic beef prices."

Did you catch that? A bipartisan group of congressional members stated that when domestic cattle prices increase, there is a corresponding increase in imports, & those imports have a negative impact on prices.

And now let's look at what the USDA says. The USDA has stated that imports of beef and cattle compete with domestic beef & cattle in at least two USDA rulemakings, the first in 2007 & the second in 2013. The agency has found that additional beef & cattle imports cause lower domestic cattle prices due to increased supply.

And you caught that? The USDA, which utilizes economic

analyses in its rulemakings, found that increases in beef & cattle imports cause domestic cattle prices to fall.

So there it is. The four largest beef packers, 28 members of Congress, & the USDA have all concluded that beef & cattle imports depress domestic cattle prices.

Earlier I said it was bizarre, but it's really an absurdity that we even have to have this conversation...it's just so fundamental that everyone should know that if you increase supplies with imports, you will decrease domestic cattle prices, period.

But there remains a powerful & very vocal faction within our industry that wants to convince you that beef & cattle imports do not lower domestic cattle prices.

So, ask yourself, who benefits from increased beef & cattle imports that everyone knows

causes cattle prices to be lower?

Well, it is the multinational beef packers and the cattle & beef trade associations they support that benefit because when imports lower domestic cattle prices, then beef packer margins increase, particularly when beef demand remains constant or is increasing.

Right now we are experiencing higher cattle prices due to tight supplies caused by widespread drought & an 8-year stretch of seriously depressed cattle prices, both of which have contributed to cattle liquidations.

So, given this conversation regarding what to expect when cattle prices are high, does it sur-

prise you at all that the CME Group just reported that beef imports in July were 20% higher than they were a year ago?

And now for the \$60 million dollar question: Now that you know how imported beef & cattle are being used by multinational beef packers to lower your domestic cattle prices, what are you going to do about it?

So far we've done nothing, but it's high time we did. And that's why R-CALF USA continues fighting to reduce imports through the use of tariffs & tariff rate quotas so our U.S. cattle industry is afforded the space and level playing field it needs to rebuild.

Do you know of someone who would make a great story for The Cattleman's Advocate?
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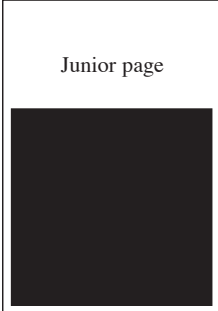
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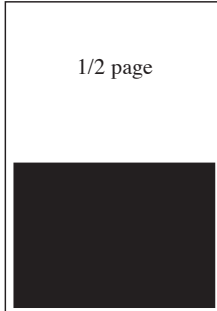
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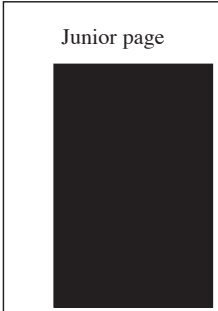
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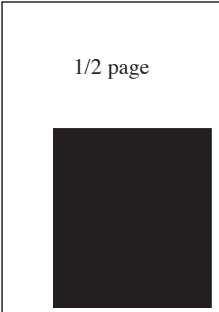
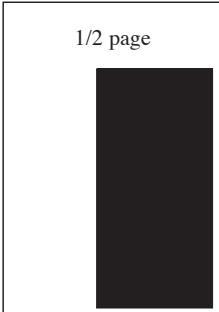
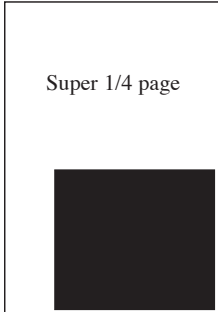
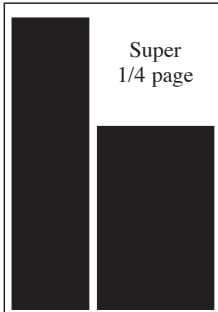
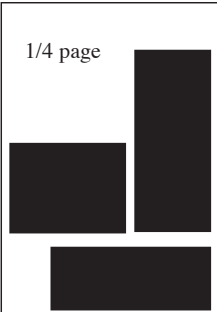
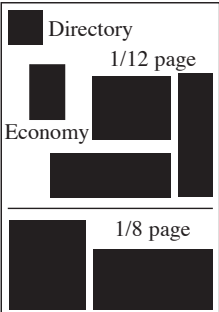
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Booker, DeLauro want FDA, CDC outbreak investigators on the farm

U.S. Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) and U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) have introduced bicameral legislation that would give the FDA and CDC authority to collect microbial samples from concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) during foodborne illness outbreaks.

The lawmakers cite CDC as noting many foodborne illnesses

originate in animal agriculture, and they assert that contamination from animal agriculture facilities can spread to produce fields. They note, for example, that FDA determined nearby cattle were the likely source of E. coli outbreaks linked to romaine lettuce in 2019.

Currently, FDA and CDC lack the authority to enter farms and conduct microbial sampling, which the lawmakers say hinders

efforts to identify the source of outbreaks and to develop preventive measures. Their answer is the Expanded Food Safety Investigation Act.

“Under current law, multinational corporations have the power to stop an FDA foodborne illness investigation in its tracks,” DeLauro said in a news release. “That cannot stand. ... [T]he Expanded Food Safety

Investigation Act ... gives FDA the ability to investigate corporate agribusinesses and uphold its mission of protecting public health.”

The legislation is cosponsored by U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) and endorsed by the following organizations: Antibiotic Resistance Action Center at The George Washington University, Center for Food

Safety, Center for Science in the Public Interest, Consumer Federation of America, Consumer Reports, Environmental Working Group, Food Animal Concerns Trust, Food and Water Watch, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, Natural Resources Defense Council, and Stop Foodborne Illness.

– Meatingplace.com

Beef prices hit record levels in latest CPI survey

Meat prices continued to rise in the latest Consumer Price Index, with beef prices hitting record levels.

According to the survey,

USDA pledges \$225 million in protein development assistance

USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service has pledged up to \$225 million in new Food for Progress cooperative agreements with developing countries, the agency said in a website post.

The awards will range from \$15 million to \$40 million each, with a duration of five years. Among those programs under consideration for funding that are aimed at improved meat and poultry production, are a program applying Climate Smart Agriculture principles to the livestock sector in Bangladesh and strengthening food security through increased domestic production and commercialization of poultry in Lesotho.

Past Food for Progress programs that are still active, related to meat and poultry production, include:

Technical assistance to livestock farmers in El Salvador

Assistance to increase productivity and expand trade in the cacao and dual-purpose livestock value chains in Nicaragua

Helping to improve the value added in production of beef and achieving meat equivalencies with APHIS and FSIS import requirements in the Dominican Republic.

Increasing agricultural productivity in the dairy and beef sectors in the country of Georgia.

– Meatingplace.com

Date set for 56th Annual MCI Convention & Trade Show

Missouri Cattlemen's Association has set the date for the 2024 Missouri Cattle Industry Convention & Trade Show for January 19-20, 2024 at Margitaville Lake Resort in Osage Beach, Mo.

Registration forms and schedule updates will be available soon and include an online registration platform for attendees to register and pay online. Registrations also will be accepted via mail.

which measured August prices, the price of all-fresh beef was \$7.82 per pound, up 0.3% from July and 6.8% from a year ago; per analysis from Daily Livestock Report, that represents the third straight month that fresh beef prices have hit a record high.

Other notable beef prices included: Retail beef prices fell 1% from July's record to \$8.23 per pound, but were still 8.6% above last year; ground beef also fell slightly from record July highs, dropping from \$5.10 to \$5.08 per pound; sirloin steaks were up 10.9% from last year to \$11.43 per pound; and round rose

8% to \$6.66 per pound.

The other major animal proteins also reported notable price increases.

For pork, real prices hit their highest level of 2023 at \$4.83 per pound (up 2.8% from July, down 2.2% from last year). Bone-in and boneless hams, meanwhile, were up 8.5% and 10.3% YOY, respectively, with boneless hams hit a new record of \$5.90 per pound.

For poultry, DLR noted that whole bird prices were up 47% from last year to a new record of \$1.96 per pound.

– Meatingplace.com



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Apple picking time is the perfect reason to try this dessert

Made and reviewed
by CHARLOTTE ANGELL
Rated by JON ANGELL
For The Advocate

Jon's Critique: Well, the cook said that it is apple picking time... and instead of a beef recipe she decided to feature a dessert.

I'll have to say that this one was not only good, it was surprisingly good. It was not the overly sticky sweet that you might find in some apple pie... this was a lite apple flavored cake that strongly suggests a second serving.

This one surprised me for sure. Try this seasonal dessert with your favorite beef dish...

French Apple Cake *Once Upon a Chef*

1 cup all-purpose flour,
spooned into measuring cup and
leveled-off

1 tsp. baking powder

¼ tsp. salt

1 stick (½ cup) unsalted butter,
at room temperature

⅔ cup granulated sugar, plus
more for sprinkling over cake

2 large eggs

1 tsp. vanilla extract

3 Tbsp. dark rum

2 baking apples, peeled, cored
and cut into ½ cubes. (3 ½ - 4 cups

chopped)

Confectioners' sugar (optional),
for decorating cake

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and set an oven rack in the middle position. Grease a 9-inch spring form or regular cake pan with butter or nonstick cooking spray.

If using a regular cake pan, line the bottom of the pan with parchment paper and grease again.

In a small bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and salt.

Using a handheld mixer with beaters or a stand mixer with a paddle attachment, cream the butter and granulated sugar until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well and scraping down the sides of the bowl after each addition. Beat in the vanilla and rum.

Don't worry if the batter looks grainy at this point; that's okay. Add the flour mixture and mix on low speed until combined. Using a rubber spatula, fold in the chopped apples.

Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and even the top. Sprinkle evenly with 1 Tbsp. granulated sugar.

Bake for about 40 minutes, or until the cake is golden and a

toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

Allow the cake to cool on a rack in the pan.

Once cool, run a blunt knife around the edges of the cake. If using a spring form pan, remove the sides. If using a regular cake pan, carefully invert the cake onto the rack, remove the parchment

paper, then gently flip the cake over and place right-side-up on a platter.

Using a fine sieve, dust the cake with confectioners' sugar (if using).

Cake can be served warm or room temperature, plain or with lightly sweetened whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.



Lawsuit claims Arby's does not have the meats

A New York man filed a lawsuit against Arby's, accusing the chain of falsely advertising the amount of meat in its sandwiches, according to court records.

Joseph Alongis filed the class action suit against Arby's in a New York federal court.

The lawsuit claimed Arby's advertisements show its sandwiches contain approximately 100% more meat than the actual sandwiches that customers

receive.

Alongis, who is seeking a jury trial, provided photos used in advertisements and photos he took for comparison of multiple meals the chain offers.

Arby's is not the only chain to be hit by recent allegations of false advertisement.

In August, another New York man filed a lawsuit against Taco Bell for a similar claim of the eatery shorting customers on beef

in menu items.

At the end of August, a Miami judge rejected Burger King's attempt to dismiss a lawsuit that said the company misrepresents the size of its Whopper burgers on in-store menu boards, and that the fast-food operator uses ingredients to make the burger appear 35% larger.

Arby's did not immediately respond for request to comment.

— Meatingplace

Florida man accused of stealing \$200,000 in red meat

Florida authorities say they arrested a man with an alleged taste for stolen beef and German luxury cars, according to local media accounts.

Miami-Dade police on Tuesday arrested Lazaro Izquierdo Crespo, 39, on charges of stealing \$200,000 worth of red meat from the Orlando area, reported Local10.com.

The suspect was taken into custody after trying to evade officers using a frequency jammer to thwart their radio communications, the station said.

Before his latest brush with the law, authorities were already looking for the Hialeah resident in connection with an Audi that had been stolen months earlier.

The Cuban national now

faces more than a dozen charges tied to both incidents, including three counts of grand theft and three counts of aggravated battery on a law enforcement officer.

Izquierdo was given a \$56,000 bond but at last report remained in jail on a magistrate hold, Local10 reported.

— Meatingplace.com

Beef processors concerned about GHG emission plan

A new phase of air emission regulations in Colorado has meat processors and beef industry stakeholders concerned about the potential impact on local production, employment and higher retail beef prices.

The Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Energy Management for Manufacturing Phase 2 (GEMM-2) aims to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) among a variety of industries, including meat processing facilities. Part of the state's House Bill 23-1272, GEMM-2 is expected to help Colorado reduce GHG emissions by at least 26% in 2025, by at least 50% by 2030 and by at least 90% compared with 2005 levels by 2050, according to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

The regional beef industry, however, believes the new rules could hamper beef processing operations and the overall beef market by limiting operations, according to the Colorado

Livestock Association. "GEMM-2 regulations should provide flexibility for beef processing facilities... while recognizing that curtailing operations is not a 'sustainable' pathway to emissions reduction compliance," Jessica Lemmel of the Colorado Livestock Association wrote in an opinion piece in the Journal Advocate.

The new rules first will affect such processors as Cargill Inc., JBS USA and Colorado Lamb, which operate a total of about a dozen meat plants that employ thousands of workers across the state, the association also noted. Cargill representatives last week testified that the GEMM-2 requirements could prompt a relocation of beef production to other states, according to a report in The Fence Post. Cargill already operates beef plants in Kansas, Nebraska and Texas and said it would like to keep its operations in Fort Morgan, Colo., operating at current levels under more flexible GEMM-2 rules.

— Meatingplace.com

North Dakota processing facility to be completed by Q1 2024

A new meat processing facility is on the horizon for Steele, North Dakota, set to be operational by February 1, 2024, as indicated by a sign at the site. NoDak Meats is making its mark, with the building situated just north of Steele along Highway 3, according to a local report. The facility will process beef and pork.

In July 2022, NoDak Meats was awarded \$45,000 from the Agricultural Diversification and Development Fund.

This financial boost was a crucial step towards bringing the pro-

ject to fruition.

The funding included \$200,000 that went towards efficiency upgrades to the South 40 Beef plant in Mott along with the money allocated for NoDak.

In June, the USDA awarded \$155 million in grants to more than a dozen smaller meat and poultry processors in 17 states. The Farmers Union Foundation is received \$800,000 for smaller processors in Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

— Meatingplace.com

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CLOSED MONDAY

2023 World Livestock Auctioneer Champion (WLAC) Jacob Massey is scheduled to sell at EMCC on December 8, 2023

EMCC Monthly Cow Sale Friday, October 20

In conjunction with our regular sale

Weigh cows and bulls followed by odd lots start at 9:00 a.m. Take-home cows, pairs, bulls and bred heifers start at 12:30 p.m.

Early Consignments

Marble Ridge Farms of New Haven, MO

- 27 — Registered Angus bred cows. Born April 2021, Bred to full blood Wagyu bull, 140 FB84622, TF 151 Grandson.
- 18 — Angus cows out of Musgrave's Angus. Born June 2021. Bred to 140 Bull, full blood Wagyu.
- 24 — Commercial Angus 4 year old cows blk/bwf. Bred to full blood Wagyu bull.

Most of the bred cows will be in the 1st and 2nd stage with a few 3rds.

We expect several consignments by sale time.

Plan on joining us and look for details, photos, and new consignments as we get closer to the sale day on our website.

www.emcclivestock.com

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For the most current updates, photos and extra information, go to: www.emcclivestock.com

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| | | | | | | | | |
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Dates to Remember at Eastern Missouri Commission Company in Bowling Green

EMCC Friday start times

- 9:00 a.m. start time for fed cattle & pound cows, followed by bred cows
- 12:30 p.m. start time with veals, followed by yearlings and calves

Cattle receiving hours

Thursday from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. • Friday starting 6:30 a.m.

We feature certain classes of cattle SOME Fridays, but we sell ALL classes of cattle each week and ALL classes are welcome.

Upcoming Sales

These are dates set well in advance and subject to change as current situations warrant:

- Friday, October 6Regular Friday sale
- Friday, October 13...Special Yearling & Weaned Calf Sale with regular sale
- Friday, October 20Cow Sale in conjunction with regular Friday sale
- Friday, October 27...Special Yearling & Weaned Calf Sale with regular sale
- Friday, Nov. 3.....Regular Friday sale
- Friday, Nov. 10.....Special Yearling & Weaned Calf Sale with regular sale
- Friday, Nov. 17.....Regular Friday sale
- Friday, Nov. 24.....No Sale, Happy Thanksgiving
- Saturday Nov. 25.....Annual Autumn Cow Sale

