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Bull of the future

Ranchers shell out \$140K for unborn calf of famous million dollar Angus bull

By JOHN THOMPSON
Cowboy State Daily

Doc Ryan is a 3-year-old Angus bull that sold at auction for \$525,000 in 2021 and now earns more than \$1 million per year.

And his genetics are so sought after that one of his offspring sold at auction last week while still in the womb. The heifer, which won't draw its first breath of fresh air until March, sold for \$140,000.

Doc Ryan produces about 200 straws (each enough to inseminate one cow) of semen each week that sell for \$100 each. That's just over \$1 million per year in earnings. If he were a human, Doc Ryan would be in the top 5% of U.S. earners.

In other words, he's a four-legged baller who makes awesomesauce for a living, and he doesn't even have opposable thumbs. He's arguably one of the most valuable animals on the planet.

Wyoming 'Wow' Factor

The in-utero heifer, along with 260 other Doc Ryan-bred cows, sold at auction recently for an average of \$4,553 each, said Trey Wasserburger, owner of TD Angus in North Platte, Nebraska.

Wasserburger is a cattle rancher from Gillette who raised Doc Ryan from birth and named the bull after friend and mentor Ryan Neiman of Hulett. Neiman died in 2020.

Wasserburger moved to North Platte, Nebraska, and bought the TD Angus Ranch in 2017.

People who know cattle genetics know Doc Ryan is a standout. "Wow," is the word most often heard when people see him for the first time, Wasserburger said.

"It's like seeing a pro football



DOC RYAN is a Wyoming-born Angus bull that sold for more than \$500,000, and is so sought after that a rancher has shelled out \$140,000 for one of his unborn calves. (Courtesy photo)

player when you walk into a restaurant or an airport," Wasserburger said. "When you see an NFL guy you just know it. They look like athletes and that's what makes this bull stand out."

Wasserburger sold Doc Ryan as a yearling to Herbst Angus Farm near Falls City, Nebraska, in 2021. The farm owns several high-end Angus bulls and anyone who wants to geek out over cattle genetics, learn more about the beef seedstock industry and its

own unique verbiage can do that at its website.

A 'Generational' Bull

If muscles are what you're looking for in a bull, Doc Ryan is all that. He doesn't have much in the way of a neck, his ears basically blend into his shoulders.

In a video recorded when Doc Ryan was sold, auctioneer Greg Goggins described the bull as "a

See **DOC RYAN**, page 3

CPI: Foodservice inflation 157% above groceries

While inflation of groceries continues to moderate, the cost of food at restaurants shows no sign of slowing.

According to the latest Consumer Price Index from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, prices for "food at home" rose just 2.1% year-over-year in October; that's far below the 5.4% rise for the "food away from home" category.

Consistent with recent CPIs, there was a pronounced difference between animal proteins.

Thanks to numerous market factors, beef prices were up 8.9% YOY in October, with notable increase in ground beef (up 7.9%), roasts (up 9.7%) and steaks (up 10.6%). Only the veal category was more modest at 4.1%.

By contrast, pork prices were up only 0.3%, with prices falling 1.2% for breakfast sausages and 0.6% for roasts/steaks/ribs. The sharpest increase, among pork, was chops at 4.3%.

In the "food away from home" category, vending machines and mobile vendors saw the biggest price hikes, with the CPI tracking a 14.9% YOY increase.

— Meatingplace.com

Livestock Symposium honors NE Missouri vet, Dr. Mac Wilt

KIRKSVILLE – Dr. Vincil "Mac" Wilt, a veterinarian from Paris, Mo., was honored with the 2023 Livestock Achievement Award by the Missouri Livestock Symposium at their annual event on December 1.

Dr. Wilt was born and raised south of Shelby, Missouri. He graduated from South Shelby High School in 1972. During his years on the Wilt Angus Farm with his siblings and parents, McVae and Anna Jean, Dr. Wilt spent as much time as he could with local veterinarians, developing a passion for livestock and veterinary medicine. Dirt hogs and cattle were a common fixture on almost all farms at this time, and Dr. Wilt developed a firm foundation in the livestock industry through the experiences of his youth.

After graduating high school, Dr. Wilt attended the University of Missouri-Columbia, obtaining a dual Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture in 1976 and a Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine in 1978. He practiced



Dr. Vincil "Mac" Wilt Receives 2023 Livestock Achievement Award

in Plattsburg, Missouri for one year, and then returned home to Monroe County to join Dr. Art Griswold at the Paris Veterinary Clinic. In 1995, he became sole owner of the clinic. Currently, Dr. Wilt practices veterinary medicine that treats small and large animals. He has grown the practice to include two associate veterinarians.

Perhaps the greatest influence Dr. Wilt has had on the cattle industry is his eagerness to help his peers and clients. Dr. Wilt's reputation for sound intellect, knowledge, advice, and service is well known throughout the veterinary community.

If you were to use a single word to describe the life and career of Dr. Wilt, "service" would be that word. Aside from serving his clients for more than 45 years and ushering them through decades of change in the industry, Dr. Wilt has served as a member or officer of several professional organizations and committees, including the Northeast District Veterinary Medical Association, Missouri Veterinary Medical Association, Missouri Academy of Veterinary Practice, Missouri Veterinary Medical Foundation, Missouri Stocker Feeder Quality Assurance Program, and the American Veterinary Medical Association.

In 2001, Dr. Wilt was honored

by the Missouri Veterinary Medical Association as Veterinarian of the Year.

In 2014, Dr. Wilt was appointed by then Missouri Governor Jay Nixon to the Missouri Veterinary Medical Licensing Board.

Dr. Wilt has a rich tradition of service in his personal life. He currently fills many roles at First Baptist Church in Paris, including Deacon, Sunday School teacher, and Royal Ambassador Leader. He has served as Treasurer for the Mark Twain Chapter of Quail Forever for the past 25 years and is a 25-year member of the TPNB Bank Board of Directors.

During his career, Dr. Wilt has had an immeasurable influ-

ence on the cattle industry. Dr. Wilt was instrumental at the beginning of the Missouri Show-Me-Select program in 1998 which has now set the standard for replacement heifers in the state. He and his practice have been on the cutting edge of industry innovation in disease treatment and prevention, ultrasound procedures, and beef nutrition.

Perhaps the greatest influence Dr. Wilt has had on the cattle industry is his eagerness to help his peers and clients. Dr. Wilt's reputation for sound intellect, knowledge, advice, and service is well known throughout the veterinary community. He not only consults with numerous other veterinary professionals on a frequent basis, but he has hosted and mentored high school, undergraduate, and veterinary students his entire career.

Family is important to Dr. Wilt. He has been blessed with his wife, Pam, of 44 years; 2 daughters, Lisa and Amy; and 5 grandchildren.

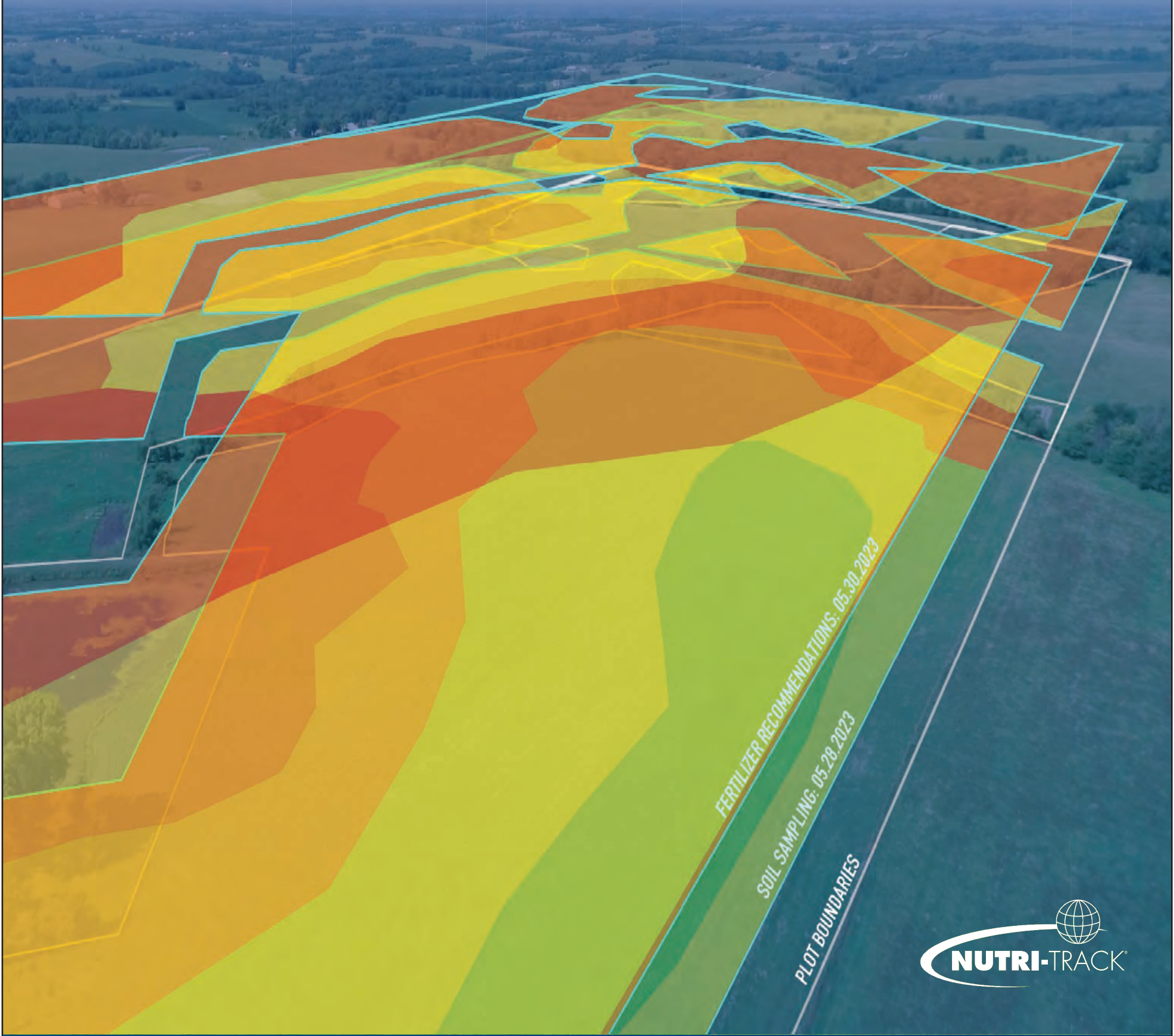


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DOC RYAN from page 1

powerful, powerful individual, one of the generational bulls of my lifetime in the Angus cattle business.”

Doc Ryan is the son of a first-calf heifer and weighed 918 pounds as a yearling.

Regarding the in-utero heifer calf that Wasserburger sold last week, he said an ultrasound was conducted to determine the calf's sex. The calf was bought by two buyers who paid \$70,000 each, he said. The Nov. 10 auction drew about 200 people and was livestreamed by Superior Livestock Auctions. People from Australia and the United Kingdom viewed it. The cattle were sold to people from 20 states, but there were no international sales, Wasserburger said.

Big-Time Breeding

When Wasserburger sold Doc

In a video recorded when Doc Ryan was sold, auctioneer Greg Goggins described the bull as “a powerful, powerful individual, one of the generational bulls of my lifetime in the Angus cattle business.”

Ryan, he made a deal with the new owners that he can continue to use the bull's semen and buy it at cost. He said Doc Ryan has his semen extracted twice each week and generates 100 units each time. That's enough to impregnate 200 cows per week.

Semen extraction and artificial insemination is relatively new to the beef cattle industry and is mostly used by seedstock breeders. Some large commercial beef herds are adopting the technology, but most small ranchers still use range bulls for

breeding. The technology was developed in the 1930s for horses and soon spread into the dairy industry, where most of the breeding is done artificially.

Wasserburger also is part of a new producer-owned beef packing plant that is under construction near North Platte. He said about 20 feedlots joined together to build the \$400 million plant, and it will take about two more years to complete the construction.

Walmart is a minority owner in the project, called Sustainable Beef LLC, and will market the company's product.

The 500,000-square-foot plant will process about 1,500 cattle per day.

States file amended complaint over EPA's WOTUS rules

Despite recent changes to the Environmental Protection Agency's Water of the U.S. rule, 24 states filed an amended complaint in federal court recently.

The states argued that the federal government overreached its statutory jurisdiction, violated the Administrative Procedure Act, and infringed on constitutional rights.

In May, the U.S. Supreme Court limited the scope of the Clean Water Act in the Sackett v. EPA case.

In January, the Biden Administration announced rules that expanded the waters and wetlands that the Clean Water Act regulated, and it met stiff opposition from both industry and state governments.

A North Dakota federal judge, who granted a preliminary injunction in 24 states, issued a stay on the case until the Administration

was able to revise its WOTUS rules, which were published at the end of August.

On November 13, the same states filed an amended complaint. Attorneys for the states criticized the new rule for its ambiguity, lack of justification and adverse impact on state sovereignty and landowners. The states asked the court to deem the rule unlawful, vacate it or issue another injunction against its enforcement.

The follow states are named in the lawsuit: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming.

— Meatingplace.com

Just 6 strains for ASF virus: USDA

The USDA's Agricultural Research Service announced that its researchers have reclassified the number of African Swine Fever (ASF) virus strains from 25 to only six unique genotypes, the agency announced in a release.

The decision may help redefine how ASF researchers globally classify ASF virus isolates, and may make it easier for scientists to develop vaccines that match the different strains circulating in ASF endemic areas across the globe.

“Our research team recently re-evaluated all the publicly available virus DNA sequence and found that the majority of genotypes (genetic makeup) originally identified as novel were not correctly identified nor compared to already existing ASFV virus genotypes,” said senior ARS scientist Douglas Gladue. “Based on this analysis, there are actually fewer unique genotypes than the ASF research community believed, and that means that there is less diversity of ASFV affecting communities across the globe. This information is important as it may reduce the number of vaccines previously thought to be needed.”

Accurate classification of viruses is paramount for epidemi-

ological investigations and the development of cost-effective countermeasures, such as vaccines.

To reach this conclusion, ARS researchers re-analyzed more than 12,000 historical and current virus isolates that were produced from ASFV labs worldwide. They used the computing power of SciNet, which is ARS' super computer cluster for solving agricultural big data problems.

Although the ASFV virus is causing profound economic losses to the global swine industry, there have not been any outbreaks in the United States. The highly contagious ASF virus spread from Africa to the Republic of Georgia in 2007, and has since swept through Europe, the Dominican Republic, and Asia, before reaching South Africa in early 2023. The virus is unable to transmit from pigs to humans.

This research is highlighted in this month's issue of Viruses and includes research and development input from the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility, the Canadian Food and Inspection Agency, and Makerere University in Uganda.

— Meatingplace.com

New USDA Packers and Stockyards Act rule receives mixed reviews

USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack said November 8 that the department finalized a set of rules under the Packers and Stockyards Act aimed to help contract poultry growers and ensure transparency in their agreements with major processing companies, according to a USDA release.

The rules are designed to help address competition issues within agricultural markets and promoting fairness for small- and mid-size farmers, the department said.

Poultry Transparency and Accountability

The new rule mandates large processing companies, known as Live Poultry Dealers, to provide vital information to poultry growers regarding their agreements. This "Live Poultry Dealer Disclosure Document" is designed to help growers make informed financial decisions and sets accountability and governance standards for poultry companies.

Domestic Origin Requirements for Meat Products

The USDA has clarified that meat products for USDA purchasing programs must originate from animals born, raised, and slaughtered in the United States,

Biden promises \$5 billion for rural ag, meat industry

While campaigning in the Midwest, President Joe Biden promised to channel \$5 billion to rural areas, with the intention of arming family farms that grow livestock, Reuters reported. Citing a highly concentrated corporate beef, pork and poultry industry, he positioned industry diversification as both a factor in supply chain stability and for fostering family farm ownership.

Doing so likely means working with the smallest family farms, which are more likely to raise livestock, according to a 2021 USDA report. About 88% of family-owned farms produce only 19% of the value of all agricultural products but 57% of them raise livestock. Larger family farms, those with \$1 million in annual sales, account for 3% of all farms and 43% of agricultural output — primarily field crops.

Since 2012, the USDA report found, about 4%, or 80,000, family farms have disappeared. Families own 96% of U.S. farms.

Rural voters are a hotly contested demographic for the 2024 general election. Pew Research analysis revealed that GOP strongholds include rural white Southerners — 60% of whom affiliate with Republicans — and white men who did not attend college — 62% of whom affiliate with Republicans. On the Democrat side, 37% of white voters who did not attend college voted for Biden in 2020, roughly even with the proportion who voted in 2016 for that year's Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton. And the growing cohort of Latinos, who now account for 10% of the electorate, appear to be open to either party.

— Meatingplace.com

benefitting U.S. producers and nutrition assistance programs.

Chief Competition Officer at USDA

A new senior-level career position, the AMS Chief Competition Officer, has been established to address competition challenges in the agricultural sector and collaborate with other federal agencies.

On the same day of the announcement, Food & Water Watch released a statement calling for transparency. Food & Water Watch Attorney Emily Miller said she applauds the administration's commitment to strengthening and enforcing our nation's antitrust laws but said more can be done.

“USDA must do more to actually protect farmers from corporate abuse, beyond merely informing producers how exploitative the system is,” she said in a written statement. “The

Biden Administration must move quickly to finalize the remaining Packers & Stockyards Act rules and stop capitulating to industry demands that serve only to maintain the status quo...”

The National Chicken Council said the rule is designed to “chum the water for lawsuits.”

“It is just the first salvo in the administration's attempts to resurrect failed policies that would dismantle a successful industry structure that has benefited farmers, chicken companies and ultimately consumers all around the world,” NCC President Mike Brown said in a statement.

The council said the rule could have, “a devastating financial impact on the U.S. chicken industry by raising costs and administrative burdens, opening the floodgates for frivolous litigation and ultimately destabilizing a successful compensation system for our farmers.”

— Meatingplace.com

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— Ken Burch,
manager of Beefland



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From the Publisher... Jon Angell

Wow, what happened to 2023? It seems like such a short time ago we were deep into summer projects and now we are printing the last issue of the year. It may be the last, but it sure isn't our least, as we have a big mix of topics to cover.

The top story comes to us as a suggestion from a Boone County reader. I found the article about Doc Ryan both informative and incredibly interesting. I've limited knowledge or nearly no practical involvement in the purebred/seedstock side of the industry. The feature story was a little like pulling back the curtain in the land of Oz. Seems like a risky gig if you ask me, but if you happen to hit on the next popular genetic package, it sounds like an easy path on a golden brick road.

Also on the front, we'd like to congratulate Mac Wilt as he is honored in Kirksville at the Livestock Symposium. I know a bunch of our readers are clients of Doctor Wilt, and is highly regarded, so a livestock achievement award seems very appropriate.

This month the vet I started out with passed away unexpectedly. "Doc" Hudson out of Mexico, Mo. was probably my first regular vet as I started my cattle raising career. He was an old school large animal vet, and frankly like I told another vet at news of his passing, the vet that I "benchmarked" all other vets.

Old school vets worked too cheap, and seemed to be on call 24/7 all year long. He covered his trade area in a small plain Ford Ranger. It got good gas milage and could be bought reasonably. He was well known for managing a client's expectations. He would make sure you knew that the calf was in trouble with death knocking at the door. He would make sure you were prepared and leaning toward a likely

worst-case outcome, but rarely did worse case outcomes come about after Doc Hudson went to work.

He was the best at following up of any vet I've known. How he had time to make so many follow up phone calls and cover as much of the country on "farm calls" I will never know.

Besides being a workaholic, he was incredibly compassionate. I'm kind of a dog person who gets attached to my dogs. When it came time to euthanize our old farm dog (Marty was full of cancerous lumps, and started to be in a lot of pain), this rose to the level of a "farm call." Do vets still do that?

Doc Hudson had sold his practice and retired several years ago. In fact, you can go back in our archives online and read our December 2014 story that featured "Doc's" retirement. I enjoyed going back to read it. I was sorry to hear of his passing, he left a lasting impression on many of us.

Also passing this month (see page 22) was my friend Gary Linnenbringer who I worked with for several years sorting and moving cattle around the old Columbia Livestock Auction. I later had the pleasure of sorting and working cattle with both Gary's children, Jill and Carl.

Since Gary retired to the farm, I had kept up with Gary and spoken to him at length every couple of months it seemed like for a lot of years. Getting the call that he was putting his affairs in order, and I was to haul the cows to the sale, was one of those calls you dread getting, but I was glad to be there near the end. At least, helping with the cows was something I could do.

We have numerous other stories of interest this month. On page 10 we have Texas Ranger story that I enjoyed with a few interesting twists. I find those Texas law enforcement stories out of the Livestock Weekly are always a good read.

As always, we have several opinion columns that seem plenty spicy. Be sure to check out our advertisers too — plan on sitting down and spending a little time in these pages.

Thanks for reading, and your continued support.

Don Hudson Nov. 22, 1943 - Nov 11, 2023

Don "Doc" Hudson, DVM, 79, of Mexico, passed away after a tragic tractor accident on his farm in Paris on Saturday, November 11, 2023, only 10 days before his birthday.

Don was born on November 22, 1943, in Callaway County, the son of Harold Francis and Gretta Arlene (Boyd) Hudson. After graduation from Fulton High School Don attended and graduated from the University of Missouri School of Veterinary Medicine.

He married the love of his life, Carole Spence on



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August 30, 1964, and they adopted two children, Dale and Kim.

Dr. Hudson owned the Veterinary Clinic and spent over 40 years caring for large and small animals there. He loved animals and working.

Don enjoyed farming and taking his great-grandkids fishing and to get ice cream.

Don was a devout Christian and strong in his beliefs in the teachings of Christ. He was a longtime member of the Lockwood Park Baptist Church. Don was an exceptionally kind and generous person and his passion was taking care of others.

He leaves behind his loving wife, Carole of the home; one daughter, Kim Hudson of Mexico; five grandchildren, Dayton (Hillary) Hudson, Hope Hudson, Taylor McCoy, Dillon Mills and Darrell Houston; nine great-grandchildren, Daniel Hudson, Bailey Hudson, Chelsea Hudson, Noah Hudson, Asher Hudson, Mercedes Adams, Kylor McCoy, Bray Kelsay and Kaylynn Mills; one brother, David Hudson of Vancouver, WA; and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Harold and Arlene Hudson; and one son, Dale Hudson.


There will be no services honoring Don's request.

Memorials may be made to Missouri Veterans Home, 1 Veterans Dr., Mexico, MO 65265 or the Boys Baptist Home, 11300 St. Charles Rock Road, Bridgeton, MO 63044.



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FARM & FOOD FILE

Don't bury just the CO2 pipelines: bury their very idea

By ALAN GUEBERT
For The Cattleman's Advocate

"Mathematics," once explained Edward Frenkel, a renowned mathematician and author, "directs the flow of the universe, lurks behind its shapes and curves, [and] holds the reins of everything from tiny atoms to the biggest stars."

Another explanation notes that "Math is the only place where truth and beauty mean the same thing."



That elegant, beautiful truth comes to mind when reading a just-published "case study" that compares the cost and net carbon dioxide (CO2) output of the planned 2,000-mile Summit CO2 pipeline to the wind- and solar-based electricity that could fuel "battery-electric vehicles," or BEVs.

At its heart, the new study asks, what gives the better environmental and financial return—billions spent on a CO2 pipeline that encourages more ethanol use or investing the same amount on solar and wind generators to power BEVs?

The resulting math, presented by the study's author, Mark Z. Jacobson, a civil and environmental engineer at Stanford University, is detailed, compelling, and irrefutable in its conclusion: Don't spend another penny on Summit's five-state, CO2 pipeline.

Jacobson's focus is on E85, the 85-percent-ethanol-to-gasoline blend now being pushed by farm groups as the way to maintain production of the corn-based fuel even as BEVs rise in popularity. (The U.S. Department of Agriculture forecasts that 35 percent of the 2023/24 U.S. corn crop, or 5.3 billion bushels, will be used to make ethanol.)

The higher ethanol blend, however, doesn't change the hard math underlying the colossal investment and environmental costs of CO2-generating ethanol plants, ethanol's use, or any of the three proposed CO2-carrying pipelines, writes Jacobson.

"This study concludes that investing in wind turbines to provide electricity to BEVs is far more beneficial in terms of consumer cost savings, CO2 emissions, land use, and air pollution than making the same investment in a plan to capture CO2 from ethanol refineries, pipe the CO2 to an underground storage facility, and use the ethanol to produce E85 for FFVs," or flex fuel vehicles.

Moreover, Jacobson continues, quoting his revealing math,

The clear bottom line to the Summit pipeline—and, really, any CO2 pipeline—says Jacobson, is as obvious as one-plus-one: Don't bury CO2 pipelines; instead, bury their very idea. Fast.

"The fuel savings alone," an estimated "\$66.9-\$111 billion over 30 years"—"is 12-20 times the \$5.6 billion investment in [the] Summit [pipeline] project."

And just to drive home his rural bona fides, Jacobson offers a comparison of the costs to operate competing models of the ever-popular, four-wheel-drive, Ford F-150—the eight-cylinder flex fuel version that costs "\$48,290"—versus its electric twin that costs \$21,705 more or "\$69,995."

"Even with this upfront cost difference... the net fuel cost saving to drivers over 30 years (of the electric F-150) is still... 7-12 times Summit's investment [cost]," he notes.

Environmental costs between the two technologies—wind and solar versus ethanol—show even bigger differences because wind and solar electric generation are zero-carbon emitters and easily beat almost any blend of any fossil or bio-based fuel.

A key element of ethanol's argument, however, is Big Ag's insistence that it's a "green" fuel that, at worst, is carbon neutral and, at best, is carbon negative. Still, no outside-of-ag scientist supports ag's contention and neither does the Stanford engineer. His math shows more brown and

no green.

"With respect to air pollution, tailpipe emissions from E85 vehicles may increase the level of ozone throughout most of the United States in comparison with tailpipe emissions from gasoline vehicles."

"Moreover," he adds, "the production, transport, and refining of corn to produce ethanol creates air pollution that may exceed the upstream pollution from gasoline."

The engineer's hammering math dives into other aspects of the bad bargain that is CO2 pipelines. For example, photosynthesis "is only 1% efficient" while solar panels are "20-23% efficient" and therefore need "only 1/20th of the land to produce the same energy as a biofuel crop."

The clear bottom line to the Summit pipeline—and, really, any CO2 pipeline—says Jacobson, is as obvious as one-plus-one: Don't bury CO2 pipelines; instead, bury their very idea. Fast.

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Cattle on Feed numbers add some beef: analysis

The USDA's Cattle on Feed report for November reveals a 2% increase in inventory from Nov. 1, 2022.

The total of 11.9 million head, sourced from feedlots with 1,000 head or more, showed Texas, Nebraska and Kansas leading with 2.9 million, 2.54 million, and 2.52 million head, respectively.

Kansas State University professor Glynn Tonsor said last year's decline in Kansas was due to drought conditions, while favorable conditions and reduced feed costs in 2023 contributed to the increased numbers.

Tonsor cautioned that while lower feed costs benefited feedlot operators, the expectation of lower fed cattle sales prices indicated a shift from previous forecasts. Looking ahead, he also shared concerns about maintaining volumes, and obtaining feeder cattle placements may become more challenging over the next two to four months.

Cattle on feed reached the fourth-highest level on record, following 2021, 2006 and 2020, according to analysis from the Daily Livestock Report (DLR). Cattle marketings in October totaled 1.758 million head, reflecting a 2.5% decrease year

over year. This decline, lower than the average estimate, aligned with analysts' predictions of a 2.0% drop, according to DLR.

October cattle placements increased by 3.8%, with 2.164 million head, surpassing estimates but falling below the average expectation of 6.1% growth. Various weight categories saw increases.

Furthermore, analysis of the beef cow and heifer population in 2023 indicates that some liquidation is ongoing, and will continue in 2024: "From the beginning of the year, the supply of bred heifers meant that beef cow slaughter in 2023 would have to decrease sharply — in excess of 18% year over year — in order to avoid additional herd liquidation this year," wrote Oklahoma State's Darrell Peel in his weekly column for the Cow-Calf Newsletter. "Cumulative beef cow slaughter reached a maximum year over year decrease of 13.8% in early September, a significant decrease, but not enough to prevent additional herd liquidation." The July Cattle report confirmed that the beef cow herd was down by 2.6% from 2022 levels by mid-year, Peel added.

— Meatingplace.com

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From Our Side of the Fence

By JUSTIN ANGELL

Sooooo. What a difference a month can make. We've got a few things on the list to discuss, but first two personal notes. I just want to thank everyone who has called to say hello or just to check up on me most recently: Grant, Charlie, Johnny, Kevin, Terry, David and a couple of my good daughters... Thank you. Good to hear from you.

Secondly, I'd like to note the passing of an old friend, Gary Linnenbringer. We spent many, many, hours in the back of the Columbia Livestock Auction barn sorting cattle when he was in college and many years after. He taught me a lot. One of the biggest challenges was teaching me how to spell his last name. So many letters...

Once again the cattle business has been visited by the dreaded black swan. It started with the October cattle on feed report.

Compared to October 2022:
1% more cattle on feed
6% higher placements
11% less marketed.

But even this should not have resulted in the collapse of the cattle futures markets that we have just witnessed this past month. Apparently, however, an unsubstantiated, but plausible rumor, is that some of the underwriters for LRP programs had not covered those contracts when they were sold to producers. Covering those contracts puts downward pressure on the board, and I think those underwriters saw an opportunity to leave contracts open to see the board move higher creating much greater profit margins.

If the October cattle on feed report caught them by surprise like it did every-

one else, then they would've been forced to try and cover the LRPs on a rapidly declining market. Apparently, in an attempt to remain solvent, they were forced to cover contracts at a negative profit margin, which caused a cascade lower, trying to cover more and more contracts on a continuing falling market.

I am not an LRP expert by any means and have only used them occasionally, but in my opinion the bottom line here is... this recent step down in the futures market is artificial and temporary. I say that with a big asterisk! I believe the latest step down is artificial, but the first step down in price I believe is the real market. Last month, I did write that it appeared to me that the \$1.90 Fat Cattle price was the limit we could get consumers to consume all the beef at corresponding high retail prices. The Packers reinforced this theory when they began cutting their kills in the late summer and especially early fall.

Looking forward, we have to remember this was one of the driest springs on record, and so depending on where you were, 10% to 50% of our cattle were sold six months early. Many of you reading this were a victim of that dry weather. My point is the 6% inflated placements weren't more cattle produced, they were just cattle pulled forward into the beef supply chain. That means the shortage of cattle later should be more pronounced yet.

Sooo, if you want to work a lot and gamble a little, I believe that it's time to buy good light cattle. If you are a backgrounder, buy them now. If you're a cow calf man with fall calves, you could buy high quality calves to market with your own raised calves. Larger drafts tend to bring more money, so even if the market



were only to go sideways you potentially would still be improving your price at marketing.

If you calve in the spring, you could buy some good bred cows. To many of you, this may seem like we're trying to walk up a steep hill or swim upstream. Just remember only dead fish go with the flow. Of course, all this "advice" assumes relatively normal weather, and no unpredictable black swans. I think it's important in this business to always remember the markets can take our money, but don't ever let them take our joy.

Just because something is inevitable does not necessarily mean it is eminent. Years ago I was convinced of the dollar's demise so I became a victim of the silver head fake. I believed that for many reasons, silver and gold were and are very underpriced and would be appreciating.

I'm pretty sure I have the first part right, but the second part, the appreciation part, I did not. I will step out on that same limb again now, and say that for many reasons (inflation, dying fiat monetary system, massive global government spending, global central banks, buying gold, global unpayable government debt etc.etc.etc.) it sure looks like precious metals will be a good place to store wealth, especially compared to traditional stocks and bonds.

Land, especially farmland, is the best investment because of its income potential as it appreciates, but it looks to me like land prices are a little bit topsey.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the newest source of wealth investment, and that would be bitcoin. Young investors call it digital gold... I am slowly becoming comfortable with it because if it was going to be killed off; it would've happened already.

Maybe I wasn't wrong about metals appreciating, maybe I was just early! None of this is investment advice. I'm just expressing my opinion. (insert fine print here about seeking professional investment advice, past performance is not indicative of future returns, and other such legalese to keep the filing of lawsuits away)

Finally, let's talk about insurance. I don't expect or want my house to burn down, but I have fire insurance. I don't want or expect my country to burn down, but I think there's just some times insurance is warranted.

Wouldn't you insure your hay barn if on a dry windy day your oblivious, idiot neighbor is welding or burning brush across the road? Of all the stupid, traitorous actions the Biden administration and our Washington, D.C. based federal government is party to, the wide-open border is the greatest threat to this country's safety, probably throughout our history. (If you're keeping track, the suspicious money transfers/money laundering/bribery through the Biden family shell companies, is up to \$50 million as of this writing, according to New York Representative Elise Stefanik)

Just look at the numbers. At least 7.5 million people have walked across that border illegally entering this country since Joe Biden took office; 9,300 yesterday. For perspective that is more people than populations of 37 states.

Hundreds of people on the government's terrorist watchlist have been apprehended.... Think about that for a minute, terrorists just walking into this country... the 9/11 attack was seven people who entered legally.

The 9/11 attackers took flying lessons in Florida. At one point during their training, one of the terrorists told his instructors, he wasn't worried about learning how to land. We know this because that was reported to the FBI by the instructor. That agency would be the same that is running interference for the Biden Crime family. If the FBI couldn't follow a solid lead like that — when we had limited controlled immigration — how do they do any kind of job protecting citizens under the wide-open flood of illegal entries? There's been 1 million people called "got a ways" because they weren't apprehended; they GOT AWAY.

Many Americans now being killed by the fentanyl (from China) coming across

See OUR SIDE, page 11

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It's The Pitts...

A real endangered species

By LEE PITTS
For The Cattleman's Advocate

As a typical prey species I want to return to the last place where I felt comfortable and safe but that was in my hometown in 1956 when I was just five years old. Now I'm an endangered species and I feel the world closing in around me.

Here's how really rare I am. I don't own a cell phone, I've never twittered or tweeted, exposed myself on Facebook and have no idea what an Instagram is. I don't Hulu or Peacock, I've never watched porn on You Tube nor placed a bet with Draft Kings. I rarely watch television and haven't been inside a movie theater in over 15 years. I've only played a video game one time in my life and it turns out I was just as bad a golfer in cyberspace as I was on real estate.

I've never tasted plant-based meat, pheasant under glass, white truffles, Beluga caviar or psychedelic mushrooms. I've never smoked marijuana, cigarettes or a cigar. The only pills I've taken were prescription meds and Advil. I haven't tasted a beer in 33 years or any other alcoholic drink for that matter. I've never had a Mimosa, tasted tequila, Jack and Coke or a craft beer. I've been tipsy probably twice in my life and it shames me to admit it.

I still write thank-you notes on stationary and mail them with a stamp. I don't owe a penny

I am a totally unique, one of a kind animal who is definitely endangered. There's never been another like me, nor will there ever be again. And I know the many people I've offended in the past 40 years of writing a weekly column will be real happy about that.

except for my one credit card which my wife pays off religiously every month. My car is 15 years old but I can't drive it due to my propensity to have seizures. I've never killed anybody that I know of.

My wife and I have never hired a gardener, a cleaning lady or a handyman. We paint our own house and mowed our own lawns. I can still lay down a pretty bead with an old arc welder, I keep my knives razor sharp and my tools rust-free.

I am not represented by any of the letters in LGBTQ+ and have been married to the same wonderful woman for 50 years. I've never had a mistress or an affair. I don't have a single tattoo or body piercing and have not done anything to prevent my loss of hair. Hair plugs or a toupee would be a big waste of money because I wear a ball cap or a cowboy hat 90% of my waking hours.

I'm not an Eagle, Lion or Elk nor do I belong to any other organization. I've never put a bumper sticker on the back of my car or truck. I did try to join my county cattlemen's but they said they never got the check. I guess I didn't meet their high standards. I've never been in jail nor have I served on a trial, although I did show up for jury duty every time I was asked. I've had lunch and a great conversation with a President (he was our

governor at the time) and I've voted in every election except for the one year we lived in Australia. I've never been to a Super Bowl but I've been to several NFR's. Likewise, I've never been to an opera but I would have loved to have heard Johnny Cash at the Opry.

The Post Office hasn't delivered a package from Amazon to my house in months, there are no solar panels on my roof, I still write longhand and do most math in my head. I read extensively which has been one of the great joys of my life. I thoroughly enjoyed raising both cattle and sheep.

I demand reparations because my father's family were Okies and were poorly treated once they got to California. And doctors have been trying to kill me for 32 years now. The Feds already own land the size of India but I think they should carve out a refuge for me and stop all this harassment. There's a 6,000 acre ranch I've had my eye on for a long time that would do quite nicely.

I am a totally unique, one of a kind animal who is definitely endangered. There's never been another like me, nor will there ever be again. And I know the many people I've offended in the past 40 years of writing a weekly column will be real happy about that.

— www.LeePittsbooks.com

Beef companies face another antitrust lawsuit

The beef industry, once again, finds itself in the middle of allegations that the nation's largest producers conspired to fix prices starting in 2015, according to a lawsuit filed in a North Carolina federal court Tuesday.

Compass Group, one of the country's largest catering businesses, filed the complaint against protein giants Cargill, JBS, Swift, National Beef and Tyson Foods, alleging the companies conspired to limit the supply of beef in the United States, artificially inflating beef

prices.

The complaint highlighted the concentrated market power of the companies, their role in controlling beef pricing and how structural characteristics of the beef market facilitated their alleged conspiracy.

The complaint also cited ongoing investigations by the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Agriculture into possible price-fixing by the meatpackers.

This is the second swipe other industries have taken at the beef

companies in the past few weeks.

In October, a group of small food distributors have filed a similar lawsuit against the same companies. They said the alleged scheme continued and has caused them financial harm at least through the end of 2021.

In September, a Colorado federal judge ruled that red meat producers will have to face allegations of widespread wage fixing after the court declined to dismiss an antitrust lawsuit.

— Meatingplace.com

Missouri DNR proposes denial of permit for meat packing plant

It appears unlikely that Missouri Prime Beef Packers will be allowed to dispose of treated waste in the Pomme de Terre River after all.

As first reported by local media, the Pleasant Hope, Mo.-based company had been pursuing permission to pour 350,000 gallons of effluent directly into the river, instead of continuing to layer the material over agricultural fields. Residents that lived nearby previously raised concerns about the potential adverse effects on the river ecosystem.

Recently, the Missouri Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Missouri Clean Water Commission filed a notice of intent to deny the company's request. Public hearings for final comment are scheduled to begin in December and continue into early January.

Missouri Prime Beef Packers began operating the beef processing plant in 2021.

— Meatingplace.com

USDA issues final rule allowing import of Paraguayan beef

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) on November 9 announced a final rule to allow the fresh beef imports from Paraguay under certain conditions.

The final rule will enable raw intact beef products produced from cattle slaughtered in certified Paraguayan plants on or after the Dec. 14 effective date to be eligible for export to the United States.

In March, FSIS granted a reinstatement of equivalence to Paraguay for their raw intact

beef products food safety inspection system. The agency's assessment included verification audits in Paraguay in January 2021 and July 2022. However, at the time, Paraguay had been ineligible to export raw beef products to the U.S. due to animal health restrictions imposed by APHIS due to foot-and-mouth disease.

FSIS will update the Import & Export Library page on the FSIS website to reflect the change in Paraguay's eligibility once the final rule is in effect.

— Meatingplace.com

Pilgrim's Pride driver charged with selling load of stolen chicken

A truck driver hauling 41,000 pounds of chicken from Pilgrim's Pride's Sumter, S.C., plant was arrested Monday and charged with theft of most of the load, local police said.

Christopher Thomas, 55, of Florence, S.C., was hired by Pilgrim's to deliver the product to two locations in Milton, Ga., and is suspected to have stolen the chicken to sell it, the Sumter County Sheriff's Office said in a news release.

Investigators believe Thomas sold 33,000 pounds of the 41,000-pound haul, valued at \$80,000, in various locations. They suspect he also was in the process of selling more when deputies performed a traffic stop and arrested him, after they received a tip.

Thomas is being held on a \$50,000 surety bond for breach of trust with fraudulent intent (value of \$10,000 or more).

— Meatingplace.com

Got an idea for a story you'd like to see in The Advocate? Drop us a line and let us know at: cattlemans@virtualimages.us

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Charges dismissed against Wyoming ranchers for bleaching penises onto neighbor’s cows

By CLAIR McFARLAND
Cowboy State Daily

Two Crook County, Wyoming, ranchers who had been accused of bleaching male genitalia and other markings on their neighbor’s cows are no longer facing charges, as the judge didn’t find sufficient evidence to advance the case to the felony-level court.

The property destruction charges against Patrick Sean Carroll, 66, and his son Tucker Kye Carroll, 34, both have been dismissed without prejudice, meaning a prosecutor could bring the charges again if additional evidence compels him.

“After hearing testimony, the Court hereby finds that there is not sufficient probable cause and the matter is hereby dismissed without prejudice,” wrote Sundance Circuit Court Judge Lynda Bush in a court order. Bush’s order came after both Carrolls had a hearing in her court.

Crook County Attorney Joseph Baron, the prosecutor, declined to comment to Cowboy State Daily.

Neither Patrick Sean Carroll nor Tucker Kye Carroll responded immediately to Cowboy State Daily voicemails.

The men were originally accused of bleaching penises and other shapes onto the bodies of 189 of their neighbor’s heifers and six of his bulls to get the neighbor’s attention after three years of the cattle crossing onto their land.

The case started June 21 when the cattle’s owner, Philip Habeck, contacted the Crook County Sheriff’s Office to complain about the bleaching, which had allegedly knocked thousands of dollars off the cows’ total value.

Coming on for three years

The day before, Habeck’s ranch hand had noticed that some cattle got out of their pasture and went over to Sean Carroll’s land. Another hand came to help her get them back in, but they couldn’t find them, the affidavit says.

Later that evening the ranch hand and her dad went to Carroll’s corrals, and there they found Habeck’s cattle in the corral. Sean Carroll was “marking” the cows with bleach while two other men helped push the cattle through the alley and into a chute, the document claims, adding that the bleach is a common peroxide mixture used to mark cattle for “various reasons.”

The ranch hand’s father witnessed the bleaching, the affidavit says.

“This has been coming for three years,” Sean Carroll reportedly told the man. Carroll then told the man to leave so he wasn’t a part of the feud, the affidavit says.

So, the man told his daughter to get in the pickup and they soon left. But first, she snapped some photographs of the bleached cows.

The photographs show heifers that had been bleached all along their backs. Some had bleach marks around their faces. One photo displayed “an attempt at drawing a penis” on a cow’s ribs, says the affidavit.

No injuries though

Habeck asked sheriff’s personnel if there could be some criminal charges to make up for his financial losses.

Jessen said he’d need to look into that.

He returned to Habeck’s ranch July 3 with Dr. Wade Crawford of Crook County Veterinarian Serfices, Wyoming Livestock investigator Chris Strang and Wyoming Brand Inspectors Glen Gordon and Toni Gipson, says the document.

The brand inspectors verified that all the bleached cows were Habeck’s.

The affidavit says Crawford inspected them for injuries from the bleach since the photos showed a pasty concoction that may have been thicker than ranchers typically use.

Crawford noted very few instances of skin irritation or damage, but no damage to any of the animals’ eyes. The bleach marks ranged from a football-sized spot on a cow’s back to spine-length markings to genitalia drawings, the affidavit says.

The deputy took drone photos of several heifers sorted off in another pen, that had not been marked, for comparison.

Down \$140,000

Rusty Williamson of Williamson Land and Livestock also came to the corrals, says the affidavit.

Williamson has experience selling between 30,000 and 40,000 head of bred heifers every year, including this same type of heifers from Habeck’s breeding program, says the affidavit.

He estimated each bleached animal now was worth \$500 to \$700 less per head, but said he’d consult with some buyers.

And he did. The buyers reportedly told Williamson that the heifers, unmarked, would have been worth about \$2,600 per head, but now they were worth about \$1,850.

Buyers may think the cows were marked to signal something wrong with them, says the affidavit.

The loss among 189 heifers would be \$141,750, says the affidavit. This figure doesn’t account for any losses among the marked bulls.

In Wyoming, property destruction rises to the felony level if more than \$1,000 worth of goods are destroyed.

Had the charges not been dropped and the men convicted, they faced up to 10 years in prison and \$10,000 in fines for each of two counts of property destruction.

Marking them up

Jessen interviewed Carroll July 10, the affidavit says, adding that Carroll said he’d

love to talk about the incident.

Habeck has leased the ranch neighboring Carroll’s since 2014. But over the past three years, the number of cows that get through the fence onto Carroll’s property has increased to the point that hundreds cross over at any given time, Carroll said, according to the affidavit.

Carroll grew frustrated. When he would call Habeck to let him know, Habeck would be “laid back like it’s not a big deal,” says the document.

“It sometimes takes Philip (Habeck) a few days to move his cows back,” the affidavit relates from the interview.

Carroll reportedly “admitted” the fence is old and in poor condition, but said when they see a problem they try to fix it.

Then Habeck’s cattle crossed over about June 20. The Carrolls were branding that day and decided it was time “to get Philip’s attention,” says the affidavit.

The document claims Sean and Tucker Carroll – and another man whom Sean Carroll would not name – pushed the cattle up the alley, into the chute and “marked them up pretty good.”

Jessen asked about the penises.

That maneuver was to mock Habeck for thinking the fence issue was a “game” and “never (doing) anything to fix the problem,” the affidavit says.

Nothing to do with that

Jessen spoke with Tucker Carroll by phone Aug. 11. Tucker gave the same story and insisted that the third man didn’t know what was going on and had nothing to do with the Carrolls’ feud with Habeck, says the affidavit.

The third man echoed that in his own phone call with Jessen, saying he just liked to help out when he could.

About this fence

Habeck described the problems with the fence differently, giving a shorter timeline.

He said the boundary fence crosses a creek, and several times “with all the recent rain,” the water gaps in the fence would get washed out. And when the water went down, the cows could move right through the fence, the affidavit relates.

Habeck noted there was an arrangement in the works, with money being allocated from one of the ranches he leases to repair that fence. The affidavit doesn’t explain how Carroll might be involved in that arrangement, but it relates from Habeck’s interview: “After this incident, he said any deal with Carroll is off.”

Habeck also said that his ranch hand had rebuilt several of the water gaps in the fence, and that Carroll would sit on his porch “just watching them” as they fixed it.

EDITOR’S NOTE: This article combines information from two separate articles written by Clair McFarland of Cowboy State Daily.

Beyond Meat lays off 19% of non-production workforce

In a surprise announcement a week before its scheduled report on third quarter financial results, Beyond Meat said its report will be a disappointment, and that 19% of its worldwide non-production workforce would be laid off. In addition, major elements of the business, including the breadth of its product line and its highly touted production facility under construction in China, will be subject to review.

CEO Ethan Brown said that third quarter revenues will be about \$75 million, a 36% drop from second-quarter top line results, itself a 30.5% drop from 2023's first quarter. Gross profit will be a loss of between \$7 million and \$8 million, compared with a positive \$2.3 million gross profit in the second quarter.

For the full year, Beyond now expects net revenues to be in the range of \$330 million to \$340 million, representing a decrease of about 21% to 19% compared to 2022.

"We anticipated a modest return to growth in the third quarter of 2023 that did not occur," Brown said in the release, citing economic circumstances. He said the company's plans to address the shortfall begins with a 19% reduction in employees who are not working on actual production of Beyond's products.

In response, Brown said the company is undergoing a global reevaluation of its operations, which may result in the "potential exit of select product lines," changes in pricing in certain channels; and a review and potential restructuring of the company’s operations in China, among others.

– Meatingplace.com

U.S. pork exports steady, U.S. beef exports struggling: USMEF

U.S. pork exports in September decreased slightly from a year ago, while maintaining a steady pace, and U.S. beef exports in the same month continued to struggle compared to record 2022 totals, according to USDA data compiled by the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF).

Pork exports totaled 221,140 metric tons (mt) in September, a dip of less than 1% from a year ago, while export value fell 4% to \$643.7 million. Over the first three quarters of 2023, pork exports increased 9% year-over-year to 2.13 million mt and climbed 7% in value to just under \$6 billion.

“Pork exports achieving another \$200 million month in Mexico is fantastic,” said USMEF President and CEO Dan Halstrom, “But the good news doesn’t end there, as growth in regions such as Central America, the Caribbean and Oceania helped offset lower shipments to China and Japan.”

September beef exports, meanwhile, totaled 98,757 mt, down 15% from a year ago and the lowest of 2023, while value fell 12% to \$795.5 million. For January through September, exports were 13% lower in volume (980,100 mt) and down 18% in value (\$7.49 billion).

“U.S. beef continues to face tough sledding in our Asian markets, where weakness in major currencies persist and consumer confidence remains guarded,” Halstrom said. “In the past few weeks we have seen several Asian trading partners step up efforts to stimulate their economies and ease pressure on consumers. In the meantime, bright spots for U.S. beef continue to emerge in the Western Hemisphere, led by strong demand in Mexico.”

– Meatingplace.com

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Livestock News & Notes.....

JBS SA delaying NY Stock Exchange listing

JBS SA has announced it will delay the listing of its shares on the New York Stock Exchange. The announcement, courtesy of CEO Gilberto Tomazoni, came during a call with analysts about the company's Q3 earnings, according to a report from Reuters. Tomazoni explained that the delay resulted from the American Depositary Receipt holders, who want to vote on JBS' stock listing proposal. The Securities and Exchange Commission is also analyzing JBS' stock listing proposal, and Tomazoni did not share a timeline for when the company would ultimately list its stock. The stock listing is also being fought by more than dozen advocacy groups, who are challenging JBS on its environmental impact.

Recent challenges for JBS

The stock listing delay is the latest snag for the massive meat processor. Earlier this week, JBS reported that its Q3 profit was down 85.7% from 2022, while its adjusted EBITDA was down 43.3%. Here in the U.S., revenue for JBS USA Pork was down 11.3%, while Pilgrim's Pride revenue was down 9.3%. And last month, two new lawsuits were filed against JBS and other packers: One alleging price fixing since 2015, and another alleging the fixing of worker wages.

Oklahoma AG asks judge to keep poultry producers in pollution case

The Oklahoma Attorney General's Office asked a federal judge in the state to keep poultry producers in a nearly two-decade long case involving the companies' roles in polluting in the Illinois River watershed. In October, the poultry producers, including Tyson Foods, Cargill, Cobb-Vantress, Aviagen, Cal-Maine Foods, George's, Peterson Farms, Simmons Foods, Willow Brook Foods and several subsidiaries, asked the judge to dismiss the 18-year-long case due to timeliness and the change of leadership in the companies since the case began. Recently, the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office responded, saying the companies had not indicated any change in their poultry waste practices to cease pollution in the Illinois River Watershed. The state argued that passage of time, alone, is not a good enough reason to dismiss a case and that the change of leadership does not equal a change in practices. In January, U.S. District Judge Gregory Frizzell agreed with arguments from the state against various poultry companies that operated within the watershed. The judge ordered mediation

between the two parties, but after three meetings, the sides were unable to agree on a settlement.

Florida bill would ban sale, distribution of cultivated meat

Florida House Republican Ryler Sirois on November 13 introduced a new bill (HB 435) that would criminalize the manufacture, distribution, storage or sale of cultivated meat products within the state. The proposed legislation calls for individuals found violating the law to face a misdemeanor of the second degree, accompanied by a fine ranging up to \$1,000. Additionally, the license of any restaurant, store or business found in violation could be immediately suspended. The legislation mandates that the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services adopt additional specific rules governing cultivated meat in the state. If signed into law, the bill is set to take effect in July 2024. The proposed bill comes to the Florida House floor just five months after the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service announced that Upside Foods and Good Meat had completed the pre-market regulatory review process for cultivated meat. Both companies subsequently began selling their product to restaurants in California and Washington, D.C.

Consolidation expected in booming cultivated meat industry: Report

Though interest in cultivated meat only continues to grow, the sector is headed for a period of consolidation, according to a new report released by London corporate finance firm Oghma Partners. The report details how a small handful of companies have dominated fund raising over the past 10 years, with UPSIDE Foods taking in nearly 22% of the total investments globally. Combined with Believer Meats, Wildtype, Aleph Farms and Mosa Meat, UPSIDE accounts for 47% of the total funds raised since 2016. Big Idea Ventures led the pack in cultivated meat invest-

ments, with 32 investments spread over 22 companies, mostly in the earliest stages. Most investors focused on early stage investments with only SOSV, CPT Capital, Lever VC and conventional meat companies (Tyson and Cargill) investing at later stages. "Significant investment into the cell-based meat industry has led to increasing cap-ex spend with many companies scaling up production capacity and R&D facilities," Mark Lynch, partner at Oghma Partners, said in a statement e-mailed to Alt-Meat, a sister publication to Meatingplace. Given all of this funding, Lynch posits that the US is "paving the way" for the cultivated meat industry, with Israel and the UK as the second- and third-most active countries, in terms of funding. "A favorable regulatory environment and ease of business is seeing the US become a hub for industry activity," Lynch said. Despite the influx of cash since 2016, the report predicts an M&A-fueled period of shrinkage. "The industry will be challenged to deliver sales to consumers and to stretch funding runways to the point of delivering profitability," Lynch said. "We see a shake-out similar to that we are seeing in the plant-based meat sector, with consolidation amongst the players most likely."

Australian ranch prevails again in global 'best steak' competition

An Australian ranch prevailed to win the title of purveyor of the world's best steak at a cookoff in Amsterdam. Jack's Creek claimed three titles, including the top prize of World's Best Steak, for its cross breed Wagyu sirloin. The long-time family-run operation in New South Wales cross-bred Black Angus with Tahima Wagyu, from the Hyogo Prefecture in Japan, which the ranch then built into a proprietary brand. This year's win extends the Jack's Creek winning streak. The North American award was earned by Creekstone Farms for its wet aged ribeye. Since 2015, the World Steak

Challenge has applied the expertise of experienced chefs to premium beef entrants, with blind judging on both raw and cooked criteria. The mission of the competition is to recognize and celebrate excellence in premium beef. This year, Australia claimed the most gold medals – 18 – with Ireland winning the most medals overall, with 67 across gold, silver and bronze.

Nebraska processor to produce Halal-certified beef bacon

A Nebraska processor is adding Halal-certified beef bacon to its name. Copperstone Foods in McCook, Neb. will use a now-shuttered plant in Eustis for the production, according to a report from the Nebraska Examiner. The facility, previously owned by The Village PieMaker, was closed in 2020 and moved to Omaha. Copperstone plans to process up to 30,000 pounds of beef bacon daily, with intentions to employ approximately 18 full-time workers. They also plan a 2,500-square-foot expansion for added refrigerated storage, according to the report. Dawson Public Power District aided Copperstone Foods in securing a \$15 million grant from the USDA's Meat and Poultry Intermediary Lending Program. This funding will support building expansion, equipment purchases, and the incorporation of robotics to smoke and slice the beef. Copperstone will source beef plates from Halal-certified processing plants, then brine, smoke, slice and package the beef bacon in Eustis. The final

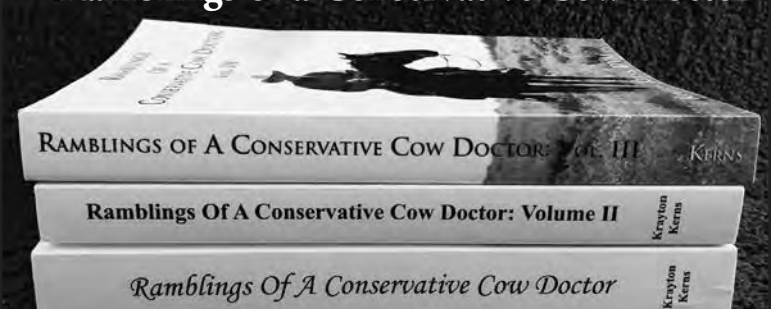
product will be shipped to Crescent Foods in Chicago, a prominent provider of Halal products that Meatingplace profiled in 2022. Halal certification necessitates minimal animal suffering, prohibits pork, intoxicants, harmful elements or unsanitary components in the food products. While two meatpacking plants in Omaha hold Halal certification, the sourcing of beef for Copperstone's operation is yet to be determined, the story said.

More convictions in Plainville Farms turkey abuse cases

Two more former employees of Plainville Farms have been convicted of animal abuse, bringing the total to 9 in the long-running case. Additional charges are still pending. PETA was behind a 2021 investigation of the allegations. Its evidence pivots on undercover videos of Plainville Farms employees mishandling turkeys that resulted in 141 animal abuse charges against 12 people. PETA claims it is the most sweeping animal abuse case in national history. The videos depict workers roughly handling turkeys in transit, kicking them for sport, and even mimicking a basketball game using turkeys as balls. The workers were charged in Oct. 2022, and two workers pled guilty to the charges earlier this year.

Many of the preceding items were taken from Meatingplace.com

Ramblings of a Conservative Cow Doctor



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TSCRA Special Ranger HD Brittain has worked some interesting cases

By JOHN BRADSHAW

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from Livestock Weekly

CHRISTOVAL, Texas — HD Brittain is a Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association Special Ranger, a position he has held for 26 years and one he actively sought for seven years before he was finally hired. He also runs a ranch when he's not out protecting them.

Brittain, who is now 61 years old, grew up in Sonora. His family had an oilfield construction business, but the oilfield never called to him. He preferred to cowboy, and even as a child he was interested in law enforcement.

"When I was growing up, I was always talking to the sheriff and the game warden and the chief deputy," Brittain said, sitting in the hunting lodge of the ranch he takes care of. It's a livestock operation subsidized by some hunting on the side.

In the early '80s, Brittain attended Texas A&M, although he never graduated. Instead, he went to Africa, where he had the opportunity to work security for a Liberian gold mining operation. It was a different world there.

"It was kind of like the Wild West," he said. "It was an eye-opener. I can tell you that."

He believes all American kids should visit third-world countries to see what life is like elsewhere. Those kids should visit the reality of those countries, he amended, and not just a resort somewhere.

"I lived in a tent in the jungle, so it was different," he said. "If I was 30 years younger, I'd love to go back over there."

He returned to Texas after a time, where he ran a ranch near Eastland for a couple of years. Then he drove a truck, which was interesting due to the country he saw, but kept him away from home too much. He decided that if he was going to pursue law enforcement, the time was then. He enrolled in the law enforcement academy at Tarleton State University.

He worked the night shift at Walmart unloading trucks during the first part of his time in the academy. Later he was offered a job with the Erath County Sheriff's Office as a dispatcher on the midnight shift, which allowed him to remain in school.

"I was in dispatch for about six months, until they had an opening in the jail," Brittain said. "I think that everyone who is out on the street as a police officer should have to work in a jail somewhere for at least six months."

He feels that way because his time in the jail taught him how to handle people, and how to talk to them. Many of the prisoners were very threatening, or at least they tried to be.

Brittain often had to handle those violent men alone.

"You had to learn who you could push and who you had to pull," Brittain said. "That helped me on the street a lot."

His job included prisoner transport, mostly to and from

He began applying with TSCRA, and every six months he would update his resume and application. Finally, after seven long years of applications, Brittain was offered a position as Special Ranger. He began in September of 1997, stationed at the headquarters in Fort Worth.

prison. They once had to transport a giant man with serious mental issues. There was an arrest warrant for him, after which Brittain and another deputy were to transport the man.

"He had picked up a refrigerator and threw it out the door," he said. "This guy was huge."

The giant was known to like peanuts, so they had a doctor lace some peanuts with a strong sedative. It worked, and while the man was unconscious, they placed him in cuffs and leg irons, loaded him in a car and took off.

"We got into Granbury, and this guy goes to stirring," Brittain said.

The driver looked back at the giant prisoner waking up in the back seat. He flipped on the flashing lights and mashed on the accelerator.

On another occasion, Brittain and a female jailer transported a female prisoner to a hospital. The prisoner was very taken with Brittain, and as they walked to the hospital she held his arm, laid her head on his shoulder and told him they should just run off together. Brittain told her his wife might not appreciate that.

"But part of that was learning how to talk to people," Brittain said. "But don't get me wrong, we got in a lot of fights in the jail."

One prisoner was a local man who was very nice, up until he got drunk. Then he would fight anyone.

"One night I was working, and he decided it was my turn," Brittain said.

By the end of it, the man had kicked Brittain in the face, giving him a black eye. The prisoner was sober by the next evening when Brittain came on shift. The man asked Brittain what happened and was surprised to learn he had done it. He immediately apologized.

"And he was genuinely sorry," Brittain said. "He just couldn't hold his liquor."

Brittain visited many prisons, and he never liked the feeling he got when he was inside them. Even though he knew he could leave, it still bothered him.

He once even transported an old family friend to Huntsville. The friend was an upstanding citizen who one day decided to rob a bank. The man has since been released and is doing well. He and Brittain are still friends. The man told him robbing the bank just seemed like the thing to do at the time.

After a while, Brittain was promoted to deputy and he was the first deputy in Erath County to work the midnight shift, which had just been added.

"And I worked it by myself," he said.

The evening and morning

deputies were on call as his backup, and he could get assistance from the Stephenville Police Department if necessary. But he was typically on his own. During his tenure with the sheriff's office, he went on to become chief deputy and later an investigator. He was the assistant commander of a joint SWAT team between the sheriff's office and the Stephenville Police Department.

He enjoyed his time with the sheriff's office, but he always had another goal in mind. Back when he was running the ranch in Eastland, he knew the Special Rangers in the area. Later, with the sheriff's office, he ran into the Special Rangers occasionally.

"I decided that's what I really wanted to do," he said.

He began applying with TSCRA, and every six months he would update his resume and application. Finally, after seven long years of applications, Brittain was offered a position as Special Ranger. He began in September of 1997, stationed at the headquarters in Fort Worth. He had that district for 15 years, which then included the counties of Tarrant, Parker, Hood, Johnson, Somervell, Erath, Eastland and Ellis, and at one point Denton.

His mother was thrilled at his new job. He would no longer be on the SWAT team. She felt it

was safer.

"One of the first calls I had was back in Erath County," he said. "There was a lady who had been murdered."

The two suspects had fled on foot and the shooting had happened not far from Brittain's house. His wife Penny was home alone. He called her. She had two big dogs in the house and a gun near at hand. The sheriff asked Brittain to ride horseback with the hound dog handler out of Huntsville, who would be tracking the murderers. "I had ridden with them a bunch, so I knew some of those guys. I even knew some of the trustees they brought with them," Brittain said.

It was a cold February night when they set off. There were three men on horseback, and there was no moon. It was pitch black. They followed the sound of the dogs, which had moved ahead.

They were traveling through the darkness at a lope when they approached a big cedar tree. The other two men went one direction around the tree and Brittain went the other.

"That horse and I hit a net wire fence," Brittain said. "We just sunk into it, and the fence sort of shoots us back."

Both Brittain and the horse fell to the ground, but they were surprisingly unhurt. After a few minutes the other men returned. Their route had taken them past a fence corner, so they never even saw the fence.

"You don't think about those things, loping across the pasture in the dark," Brittain said. "I do now though."

Both suspects were arrested, one quickly and the other after several days. Brittain is still friends with one of the trustees

he met that night, a man who had been imprisoned for conspiracy to commit murder. They still talk on the phone several times a year.

Brittain always wanted to be stationed back home in West Texas, away from big cities and all that entails, but the denser population in the headquarters district kept him busy.

There were cattle thefts and all sorts of property crimes. Thieves stole equipment in Fort Worth and sold it in Dallas, while other thieves stole equipment in Dallas and sold it in Fort Worth.

"I would like to say that it's a whole different kind of criminal, but it's not. They are a little different, but it's the same guys," Brittain said. "In this day and time, a lot of the ranch thefts you have are tied back to drugs."

Meth was the common drug of choice for the thieves, and rural meth labs were a big thing for a while. Brittain told of a lady in Stephenville who, while high on meth, tried to steal roofing nails by dumping them down her pants.

"None of it made any sense, but that's where she was," Brittain said.

While many of the cattle thefts he worked were linked to drugs, not all of them were.

"Sometimes it's a cowboy who lost his job and he steals the only thing he knows how to steal, which is cows, to support his family," Brittain said. "And he'll tell you that."

While Brittain was stationed at TSCRA headquarters he was involved in a very big case, one that before it was over drew national attention and got Brittain interviewed by GQ.

See RANGER, page 13



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RAMBLINGS OF A CONSERVATIVE COW DOCTOR

Cow business

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

One of my favorite cartoons depicts two shipwrecked cowboys leaning against the single palm tree on a one hump deserted island when a thin canner cow swims ashore. One cowboy groans, "Great, with all the bad luck we have had lately, now we are back in the cow business."



Understanding the cowboy's sentiment is easier if you own cows and I have. Let me leave our two cowboys and cow while

If you see no problem with a multinational company determining ag winners and losers based on the color of a young farmer's skin, then Zoetis is your company. They are not mine.

I ramble to another subject. Don't worry, they will be here when we come back because they are surrounded by water and even a crazy cow can't brush-up in a one-tree timber patch.

In an Epoch Times news story, Consumers' Research suggested Black Friday shoppers avoid retail chains which have gone woke. Their top five woke and soon to be broke companies were:

#1) Best Buy, who has a goal to fill one third of new corporate positions with BIPOC employees by 2025, BIPOC being

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

#2) Activision which mandated the number of women and non-binary employees to increase by 50 percent in five years.

#3) Target who targets children with LGBT Pride products.

#4 and #5) Nordstrom and Home Depot who are promoting the "Welcoming School Program" advancing gender inclusion.

Now, for a company not on the Consumers' Research list but prominently printed on the Conservative Cow Doctor list.

The Zoetis pharmaceutical giant recently announced their foundation would be donating to the FFA to create a new program promoting diversity, equity and inclusiveness (DEI). If you see no problem with a multinational company determining ag winners and losers based on the color of a young farmer's skin, then Zoetis is your company. They are not mine. You innocent, blue-coated FFA students are being used like a dime-store hooker and after doing your dirty deed you will be dumped at the closest street corner.

We immediately closed our Zoetis account and will no longer carry their products. Because my practice has become mostly small animal, my trading elsewhere will have little effect on their bottom line. In years past, we could swing a couple hundred thousand dollars off their balance sheet, and this brings me to my point.

"With the string of bad luck, I

have had lately," I might have to get back in the cow business so I can be certain at least one cow outfit never uses Zoetis products. Just like every Democrat pie-in-the-sky talking point, not a single business or government agency has improved life by imposing DEI. Woke is a cancer which even fenbendazole can't cure.

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

His three children are graduates 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.

OUR SIDE from page 6

the border are not being killed by overdoses, they are being poisoned. Did you know they confiscated enough fentanyl last month to kill every citizen of the United States? Although being smuggled into this country by drug cartels, almost all the fentanyl coming here is produced in China. Speaking of China... Joe and Hunter Biden's sponsor...

Also coming across the border now, 2,000-3,000 Chinese military age men every month. At least the Trojans got a horse before their country was destroyed...

How do Chinese men get here from China? The cartels charge \$15,000 per person to carry you to or across the border? Of that 30,000 potential Chinese agents, let's just assume that only 1% are intent on causing this country harm. That would be 300 trained saboteurs either intent on sabotage or maybe they'll just go to the public library and hack into our electric grid, banking systems, flight controllers' computers, water and waste systems, communications networks etc... and shut it all off.

When I think about things like this, I think that we are too stupid as a country to deserve the quality of living, and the gifts that we

have received from our forefathers.

Unfortunately, the danger is not only from terrorists and saboteurs, but maybe an even bigger threat to American citizens is from our own federal government/deep state. What will be the response of our government to any terrorist events? After 9/11, we passed the Patriot Act, fear caused us to give up many of our personal freedoms trading them for supposed security. Does anyone know if the federal government has the right to postpone elections under martial law? Under martial law, are individual rights guaranteed? Under martial law, are your Second Amendment rights to own firearms valid? It is not a stretch to say the federal government/deep state would benefit from terrorist activity and the resulting fear in this country. Our government has a proven track record of chaos and overreach following the Covid 19 scare. Don't think there aren't several looking for the next excuse to do it again. Remember what Rahm Emanuel advised the Democrats to, "Never let a serious crisis go to waste. And what I mean by that, it's an opportunity to do things you think you could

not do before."

Fear, is a powerful tool to a committed manipulator.

If you want to buy insurance, I would look into companies... Patriot Supply for example, for ideas on self-sufficiency. Guns and ammunition are only a small fraction of what would be necessary if something bad happened. I don't expect this to happen, and I don't live my life worrying about it, but I do know the potential for bad things to happen has greatly increased... I just choose to believe the Boy Scout motto "always be prepared".

So its 5:45 a.m. and lil'ol Kelly has been putting around listening to me construct this article. She just stopped as she was walking through to say, "Be sure you don't forget the good stuff. Wish everyone a Merry Christmas and most importantly don't forget Christmas is for Jesus."

Pretty much sums up the important stuff. Thanks Kell Kell So I guess that's all for this month. I hope to be back around in sale barns in a few weeks. Look forward to seeing you there! Merry Christmas!

JBS reopens largest beef plant in Latin America

JBS SA resumed operations at its Friboi beef plant in Diamantino, in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso, following a fire that occurred there in June.

The facility, now with a capacity of 3,600 head per day, emerges as the largest beef plant in Latin America, employing 3,000 people in two shifts per day.

Operations resume with an initial capacity of 600 head per day, ramping up to 1,800 head in the coming weeks, while supported by Friboi plants in Barra do Garças and Campo Grande. The initial phases represents an investment of R\$300 million

(US\$61 million).

Combined with state-of-the-art new equipment and a more than doubled processing capacity, the updated Diamantino plant meets international market standards, including those for halal products.

Upon completion of the plant expansion in 2024, the plant will feature a new freezing tunnel, expanded vacuum packaging capabilities, and an area designated for future line installations that will produce portioned beef cuts.

The effort reflects the company's plans to boost value-added products.

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Veteran and urban groups team up to grow produce and peace of mind

By LINDA WHELAN GEIST
University of Missouri Extension

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – University of Missouri Extension, the Missouri Institute for Defense and Energy at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and Veterans Community Project are working on a problem shared by deployed military personnel and urban residents: access to fresh food.

The partners are looking at controlled-environment agriculture (CEA) as an alternative way to grow fresh and local food. Extension horticulturists plan to teach growing food with hydroponics, a technique that uses a nutrient solution rather than soil.

Using hydroponics and other systems, CEA farming allows plants to grow in their ideal environments without the usual constraints of temperature, water, sunlight, soil or location. It can also lessen shortages due to supply chain interruptions, says Juan Cabrera-Garcia, a horticulture specialist with a dual appointment at MU Extension and UMKC’s Missouri Institute for Defense and Energy (MIDE).

Cabrera-Garcia leads horticulture training in a pilot program to teach veterans to use CEA to grow food in Kansas City. The USDA Beginning Farmers and Ranchers program and the UMKC Entrepreneurship Innovation Program through the Kauffman Foundation fund the three-year From Seed to Table program.

The program is the brainchild of Angela Cottrell, director of research and institute programs for MIDE and adjunct instructor at UMKC. She envisioned a program in which veterans could gain new skills, receive pay, find future employment in agriculture or begin a new farming business.

Cottrell oversees three shipping containers retrofitted to grow hydroponic crops and indoor mushrooms. The container units are near the Veterans Community Project at 89th Street and Troost Avenue in Kansas City. The nonprofit project supports 49 nearby tiny homes and other services for military veterans where homelessness replaces homelessness.

Hydroponics is not new to agriculture or the military. USDA plant scientists have studied hydroponics for more than a century. The U.S. Army used hydroponics to grow food on infertile islands during World War II. Cottrell says controlled-environment agriculture is expected to be a \$170 billion industry by 2025.

Activists push slaughterhouse ban in Denver

A petition that would ban slaughterhouses and fur production in Denver has been submitted to the Denver city clerk for potential citizen referendum.

The opposing sides are represented by Pro Animal Denver, whose mission is to eliminate animal protein and fur, and as an intended byproduct, the small but well-established livestock industry within the city.

Superior Farms operates lamb processing plants in both Denver

Hydroponics does not compete with or replace traditional agriculture, she says. Instead, it supplements existing ways to grow fresh food for urban residents and military personnel in places where it is difficult or impossible to grow food.

Cottrell says the versatility of CEA systems allows the military to drop a grow container into a military forward operating base so that soldiers can have fresh, safe food regardless of location or climate. CEA systems also increase resilience in urban food systems where traditional agriculture is not suitable due to lack of space. This brings food production closer to consumers.

A retired veteran’s daughter, Cottrell explains how the veterans put their produce-safety training into practice in the container farm. “We want our customers to know that our product is clean and safe,” she says.

Cottrell and Cabrera-Garcia oversee growing and harvesting of basil and mushrooms in the containers. Basil grows in a circulating nutrient solution under timed grow lights. Mushrooms grow in an inoculated medium such as sawdust or soy hulls in a room with controlled temperature, humidity and carbon dioxide levels. The team plans to add a third container for hydroponic strawberries.

The project’s goal is to train 50 military veterans, most within driving distance of Kansas City, to become beginning farmers, and for at least half of them to move on to full-time employment in agriculture.

“The purpose of this project is not to give any sort of employment, but meaningful employment, where our military veterans can feel proud of what they are doing and can carry this experience with them long-term,” says Bryan Meyer, CEO and co-founder of the Veterans Community Project.

Others will gain skills and certifications that open doors, he says. If the program is successful, Veterans Community Project hopes to implement it in five other states.

Cabrera-Garcia trains 12 veterans at a time, and there is a waiting list. MU Extension specialists and others give lectures and hands-on training on horticulture, pesticide safety, food safety, business skills and marketing. “They are always willing to learn,” he says. “It’s something the veterans find interesting.”

In addition to practical skills, veterans gain peace of mind while growing produce and friendships with other veterans.

and in Dixon, CA and claims to be largest processor of American lamb. The company has been in business for over 70 years. Pro Animal Future specifically targets Superior Farms with the rationale that it’s better for people and animals to shut down all animal slaughterhouses.

One of the provisions in the petition is to prioritize employees thrown out of work should Denver animal processors be shut down.

“Join the program if you get a chance,” says Steve, one of the participants. “There is tremendous peace of mind with being able to grow your own food indoors when land is really expensive and food costs are becoming more expensive.”

Ryan, another participant, agrees. “The more I work with plants and produce, it calms that part of me that I could never get calmed.”

Veterans sell basil and mushrooms from the containers under the name Chow Hall Farms at farmers markets and to upscale restaurants in Kansas City.

MU Extension is increasing its efforts to teach hydroponics because consumers increasingly value locally grown fresh food, says Cabrera-Garcia.

Cabrera-Garcia and MU Extension horticulturist Donna Aufdenberg are leading an effort to train specialists about hydroponics so that they can teach classes statewide. The Missouri Department of Agriculture’s Specialty Crop Block Grant Program funds the training. Cabrera-Garcia teaches some of the classes in both English and Spanish.

UMKC also is exploring an option to offer a minor in hydroponics. UMKC recently received a \$29,998 grant from National Institute of Food and Agriculture’s Higher Education Challenge Program to survey the CEA industry to identify training needs and assess interest among UMKC students in developing a hydroponics program.



GROWING YOUR OWN: Three retrofitted trailers at 89th and Troost in Kansas City serve to teach veterans how to grow food without the usual constraints of temperature, water, sunlight, soil or location. The trailers are near a community of 49 tiny homes for veterans. (Photo courtesy of Brandon Parigo, UMKC Vanguard Magazine)



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RANGER from page 10

Brittain, not being overly concerned with men's fashion, was previously unfamiliar with the magazine.

The case began when a man from South Texas called, saying he believed a man he had turned out cattle with was selling some of his cattle.

Brittain began looking at brand inspection papers, noticing the large number of cattle the suspected thief had sold recently, it was a sizable number.

The case continued to grow as he investigated the thief. Brittain enlisted the help of Troy McKinney, another Special Ranger, and Tracy Murphree, who was then a Texas Ranger, but is now the sheriff of Denton County.

The thief was not only selling cattle that did not belong to him, but he was also billing other owners for cattle he never even bought for them.

"This guy told them he had 14,000 acres up there, that he had plenty of country," Brittain said. "Well, he had 140 acres."

When owners visited, the thief drove them around and showed them cattle that belonged to the neighbors, claiming it was his land and the customer's cattle. He would apologize that he had not had time to get them branded just yet.

"There was always a story," Brittain said.

The man, whose name was Bob Leach, was already on parole. He was basically a career criminal.

"And everyone loved him," Brittain said. "Everybody talked about what a good guy he was. Well, he was a wonderful con man."

One story Brittain was told was that Bob also offered trail

rides to the public, for which he of course charged a fee. Although his place was only 140 acres, the trail riders were city folk who didn't know better. Bob led them in circles through the brush for four hours and they thought they were on a big ranch.

One day after a ride, Bob and the trail riders were sitting around drinking beer and reliving their adventure when a car drove up. Bob quickly asked them to hide their beer, explaining that the driver was a lady from a local church.

"He went out to the car and talked to this lady," Brittain said. "She was his parole officer. He wasn't supposed to be drinking."

As the investigation continued, they found Bob had also been taking out large bank loans. For collateral he put up cattle he did not own.

Brittain and the other authorities worked with all the victims as best they could, but Brittain told them all upfront that they would be taking a loss. There just was not enough collateral to go around.

"At the end of the day, there just weren't any cattle that the banks could claim," Brittain said. "They all took a loss."

They brought in an FBI agent named Ron Watson, who knew livestock and understood the situation. They were actively hunting Bob but had been unable to locate him. Then one day things got tight and he kidnapped a woman for her car. He later released her and fled on foot, but he was arrested the next morning while hiding in a nearby barn.

Bob was jailed in Grayson County, where he declined to speak with the authorities. In October of 2001, Bob Leach and

four other inmates broke out of the jail.

The inmates, who soon became known by the media as "The Grayson County Five" climbed through an HVAC vent and made their way to the basement, which had a dirt floor. From there they dug a tunnel to freedom.

"Basically, Bob was the oldest of the bunch, and he got four guys to do all the digging for him," Brittain said. "They tunneled out, and here we go again."

Another Texas Ranger named Tony Bennie joined the chase. Family members of the fugitives helped them get out of Grayson County, but three of the men were caught within a few days, leaving just Bob Leach and a man named Gerald Gantt.

The fugitives soon stole a vehicle and took a hostage. Later they stole another vehicle but kept the hostage. Their hostage still in tow, they broke into a house and took two more prisoners. Both men reportedly raped the woman.

"We were escalating," Brittain said. "The manhunt went on for about a week."

The men left the original hostage and took the female homeowner instead, fleeing in the couple's vehicle. She later escaped, but the fugitives traveled on.

Finally, the two fugitives were cornered in a rural house near Forestburg, in Montague County, after two deputies encountered them and the men fired at the deputies.

"One of the deputies had a heart attack," Brittain said.

In the house, the fugitives found an older man and woman, whom they tied up in a bathroom.

"Before it was over, the old man and old woman just loved Bob," Brittain said. "They wouldn't file charges on him or anything."

The woman was even later quoted as saying "Everybody's got a little good in them." The lawmen outside the house were in telephone contact with Bob and Gantt, who refused to surrender. Then Gantt began shooting at the helicopter overhead and the law enforcement vehicles parked in the distance.

"That changed the game a little," Brittain said.

Bob soon decided to release the old couple. He told the police of his plan, but he did not tell his partner. He untied the couple and helped them out a window, and they escaped. Brittain and the other lawmen thought Bob was coming out.

"We were sitting there, and all of a sudden BAM!" said Brittain. "Then Bob came running out holding up his hands. He had shot his partner."

Gantt survived the gunshot by his partner in crime. Bob Leach received multiple life sentences for his crimes. He occasionally writes to Brittain, who has yet to respond.

Years ago, Brittain worked a case after multiple cattle were shot and killed in four counties southwest of Fort Worth. While investigating, Brittain found spent .30-06 and .44 magnum cartridges. He assumed one man was shooting a bolt-action rifle and the other a lever-action .44

magnum, probably a Winchester '94 model.

They removed slugs from the dead cattle, and Brittain worked with the medical examiner's office in Fort Worth.

"We worked it just like a murder," Brittain said.

The case was publicized, and one day a man called with information. He had overheard two coworkers talking about the crime, and he gave their names. The suspects initially denied their involvement.

"I told them that one of them was shooting a bolt-action .30-06 and the other was shooting a Winchester '94, .44 magnum, and that kid's eyes got real big. He asked how I knew that," Brittain said.

The men turned over their guns and confessed. They said they were headed home from a deer lease near Ozona. They bought some beer and decided it would be fun to shoot cattle.

Brittain did not immediately arrest the men, although he told them they would be arrested later. He would call them, and they could come in voluntarily and easily with their lawyers present. Or they could run, and he would chase them. He told them he liked chasing people.

The men chose to come in voluntarily. Brittain once had a criminal take him up on the challenge. The man fled.

"It took me four years to catch him," Brittain admitted.

See RANGER, page 22

Do you know of someone who would make a great story for The Cattleman's Advocate? Email us at: cattlemans@virtualimages.us





You're not 'rewilding' Earth with my dime

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

Remember back in the day when we were encouraged to plant a tree? Well apparently, now the cool thing to do is to kill a tree. I recently received a phone call from a friend near Valentine, Nebraska.



She told me I needed to come see them cutting all the shelter belts out of the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge. So, I went and, sure enough, I witnessed the cutting and piling of 60 years of work and dedication to creating natural protection for the land and wildlife. The real reason, I have learned, is because there are people who have decided it is time to "rewild Earth."

I attempted to follow up on the endeavor and I found the flawed logic that is being repeated throughout the entire country as evidence by the link another friend sent me to a South Dakota State University Extension newsletter that just came out:

'Removing mature shelterbelts from grassland'

"Shelterbelts and tree claims were initially established in this region during the homestead act as a source of shelter, fuel, and economic benefit to those settling the area. Since that time, additional shelterbelts of a variety of shapes and sizes have been added to the landscape. Primarily, these shelterbelts were installed to protect exposed agricultural soils from wind erosion.

"There are three primary drivers that warrant substantial consideration when evaluating the need to remove or forego planting a shelterbelt for wildlife or conservation purposes related to grassland communities. Research has shown that shelterbelts can serve as perch sites for aerial predators, such as raptors. These perch sites have a sphere of impact around them that can extend for several hundred yards and can be detrimental to grassland birds. Shelterbelts, scattered large volunteer trees, and even lone trees in a grassland system (known as 'wolf' trees) can serve to impact the grassland wildlife community through predation by raptors and others."

In 1900, the Great Plains of America was barren. In fact, the earliest pioneers called it The Great American Desert. Through time and resource management,

At the end of the day, the very technology and resource management that built the irrigation system, wildlife habitat and an efficient food system is clearly under attack.

we have created a tremendously healthy ecosystem that enables food production, wildlife habitat and planet health. Who in their right mind can suggest that we don't have a shelterbelt because trees may grow in places you don't want them. Don't you have a chainsaw?

This is not just a situation in the Great Plains because if we look to the forested areas of the West, they are cutting and burying trees in the name of trying to achieve "carbon neutral" status.

At least some are not hiding it anymore. I recently discovered the movement called Rewilding Earth and you can read about their mission directly from their website:

"The ultimate goal of rewilding efforts is to mitigate the species extinction crisis and restore healthy and sustainable ecosystem function in areas that require little or no human intervention or management.

"That vision is of dynamic but stable self-regulating and self-sustaining ecosystems with near pre-human levels of species diversity. John Davis observed that 'Rewilding, in essence, is giving the land back to wildlife, and wildlife back to the land.'"

At the end of the day, the very technology and resource management that built the irrigation system, wildlife habitat and an efficient food system is clearly under attack. Typically, when I identify a mission to attack the modern food system, I trace it back to some well-funded non-governmental organization trying to control the land and resources. In this case, it appears to have had support from a governmental entity.

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 trentloos@gmail.com.

Heroes to Hives to expand in 2024

By LINDA WHELAN GEIST
University of Missouri Extension

COLUMBIA, Mo. – In 2024, University of Missouri Extension will add a fourth site for Heroes to Hives, a free program that offers military veterans professional training and community development skills centered around beekeeping.

The fourth site will be in the St. Louis area, which has a large veteran population. Existing sites are in Warrensburg, Mount Vernon and Poplar Bluff. More than 250 Missouri veterans have participated in the program, now in its third year.

Heroes to Hives offers veterans more than just beekeeping skills, says University of Missouri Extension health and safety specialist Karen Funkenbusch. It also offers them a way to connect and share experiences.

The need is great for the more than 400,000 veterans who call Missouri home, she says. Military veterans living in Missouri die by suicide at three times the rate of the U.S. general population. Funkenbusch says the figures are surprising even though Missouri suicide rates consistently rank higher than the national average. Most veteran deaths by suicides occur in veterans 18 to 34 years old. That age group is where suicide ranks as the second-leading cause of death in Missouri's overall population as well.

Funkenbusch leads several programs for MU Extension that work closely with the state's veteran population. Among these are Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Program, AgrAbility and Heroes to Hives. She also works with groups to promote rural mental health awareness and resources and serves on the Governor's Challenge To Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans & Their Families.

One indicator of Missouri's suicide rate among veterans lies in benefits received by veterans. Nearly a fourth of the state's 442,579 veterans receive some type of disability payment, according the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. These disabilities often include post-traumatic

stress disorder. Veterans experience PTSD at a higher rate than the general population, and deployed veterans have even higher rates, says Funkenbusch. The rate is significantly higher among younger veterans.

Heroes to Hives is one of the programs Funkenbusch oversees along with MU Extension agronomist Travis Harper. The program helps veterans address financial and personal issues by offering free training and community development centered around beekeeping.

The program teaches veterans how to establish apiaries and sell honey and wax products. The group also tours veteran-owned businesses throughout the state. But much of Heroes to Hives' draw is in the social connections that veterans make, says Harper.

Larry Soles, who served in the Army with the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, says he enjoys the peace he feels while working his hives near Green Ridge, Mo. He sells a variety of honey products and wooden hive merchandise for other beekeepers under the name of Muddy Creek Honey LLC.

"Heroes to Hives and working with bees help me with PTSD," he says. He loves being outside and feels a wave of calmness come over him when he opens a beehive and hears the humming of bees. He also likes the camaraderie of visiting with other veterans who are beekeepers or aspire to become beekeepers.



BEEKEEPERS: MU Extension offers Heroes to Hives for veterans who want to learn about beekeeping. MU Extension offers three training sites in the state, with a fourth to be added in 2024. (Photo courtesy of Eric Work)

"It does me good," he says. Veteran Eric Work is another Heroes to Hives participant and volunteer. He attends numerous other MU Extension events for small and beginning farmers.

"As a beginning veteran farmer, I benefit from the amazing high-quality learning opportunities that University of Missouri Extension continually provides, not only to veterans but many other diverse groups that are interested in learning and potentially pursuing new careers," says Work, a 25-year military veteran.

To learn more about MU Extension's Heroes to Hives program, go to <https://mizzou.us/heroestohives> or call 1-800-995-8503.

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Got an idea for a story you'd like to see in The Cattleman's Advocate? Drop us a line and let us know at: cattlemans@virtualimages.us

Livestock News & Notes.....

Steakholder Foods achieves major milestone as Nasdaq delisting looms

Israeli cultivated meat firm Steakholder Foods on Thursday announced that it has reduced the cost of its in-house growth media for beef cell cultivation in suspension by just over 75% versus two years ago.

Steakholder's R&D efforts have been focused not only on lowering the cost of growth media, which is a significant challenge for the cultivated meat and seafood sector, but also on optimizing the growth media to ensure that cell yields remain consistently high.

"Our ability to achieve a significant cost reduction in growth media is a testament to the dedication and innovation of our biology team," said Dan Kozlovski, CTO at Steakholder Foods, in a statement. "It propels us toward our goal of making cultivated meat a viable, sustainable and cost-effective solution for the future."

The news comes on the heels of an official notice from Nasdaq Listing Qualifications, indicating that Steakholder is not in compliance with the minimum \$1 bid price requirement for continued listing. The company has until April 29, 2024, to regain compliance by holding its closing bid price at at least \$1 for a minimum of 10 consecutive business days.

DOJ files complaint against Koch Foods for chicken grower contracts

The Department of Justice filed a civil lawsuit against Koch Foods, alleging the company's exit penalty policy for chicken farmers violates federal antitrust laws, according to the complaint in an Illinois Federal court on November 9..

The lawsuit said Koch Foods imposes exit penalties, which can exceed 50-100% of annual income for some farmers, for switching to competitors within 10 to 15 years. The DOJ claims practice hinders farmers' ability to secure better terms or switch processors for improved working conditions. The complaint argues that the exit penalty violates the Packers and Stockyards Act and the Sherman Act, restraining trade and harming competition.

Koch Foods' enforcement of exit penalties, including lawsuits against farmers, is highlighted, creating a deterrent for farmers seeking to switch processors, the complaint said.

The DOJ requested legal intervention to prevent Koch's alleged unfair practices and protect farmers' ability to compete and negotiate fair terms.

The federal agency also filed a consent decree that would require Koch Foods to

Not demand, request, collect or accept any termination pay-

ments.

Include Termination Payment Obligation in any Live Poultry Agreement

Not engage in or support retaliation, intimidation, or harassment against Independent Poultry Growers involved in Termination Payment disputes or litigation.

Not have any retaliation against those cooperating with authorities in investigations related to Termination Payments or Termination Payment Obligations.

Netherlands ag minister suggests no subsidies for meat production

Potentially teeing up a head-on collision with some of Europe's most enduring meat-centric traditions, the Netherlands' Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality made an opening shot in a potential war on meat.

According to local reports, Piet Adema, the Netherlands' Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, recently zeroed in on the meat industry at a recent EU meeting by saying that the EU should not include subsidies for meat production.

The EU's Common Agricultural Policy does not specifically address animal protein in its 2023 - 2027 plan, which adopts a high-level priority for sustainably safe livestock production practices and a food supply chain that is economically and environmentally sustainable. The CAP policy outlines priorities for subsidizing rural farm economies and other aspects of sustainable food production. Over the past several years, the European Union has adopted a number of goals for livestock management, such as a goal to ban caged livestock by 2027.

The Netherlands is assuming an activist role in international food production, positioning the country's own track record as a model and intending to raise international standards for imported meat quality to meet its own.

Meanwhile, per capita annual meat consumption by Dutch consumers is trending down slightly overall, at 75 kilograms

in 2022, though pork remains reliably popular. For over 35 years, Amsterdam has been holding its Bokbier Festival, the Dutch equivalent to Germany's famed Oktoberfest, with the equivalent menu of dark beer and brawurst.

New rule to 'promote fairness' in poultry contracts is a step closer to reality

A final set of rules under the Packers and Stockyards Act, aimed to help contract poultry growers and "ensure transparency" in their agreements with major processing companies, are due to be published in the Federal Register today, kicking off a 75-day countdown before the final rule is effective, according to documentation submitted by USDA for publication.

The rule would change a number of requirements in poultry production, including greater disclosure to growers of information related to their contracts, the creation of a "Chief Competition Officer" position at USDA, and a requirement for USDA purchasing programs to source meat products from animals born, raised and slaughtered in the U.S.

The National Chicken Council — no fan of the proposed changes — told Meatingplace that "we're still reviewing the fine print and how the regulations would affect our members," and that it would seek some clarification on some of the wording of the new rules, as well.

Effort to expand Nebraska beef plant wins local support

Officials in Hastings, Neb., unanimously approved a plan to seek more than \$1 million from a state agency to help support the proposed expansion of a WR Reserve beef plant that will double its daily processing capacity once operational.

Noah's Ark Processing, doing business as WR Reserve, is expected to spend the next two years and \$43 million on the plant expansion project that is

expected to involve an 11,000-square-foot addition allowing for processing of 1,100 head of cattle per day.

The 8-0 vote by members of the Hastings City Council will next involve an application for a block grant from the state of Nebraska to be used to cover working capital and equipment purchases linked to the project, according to a report in the Hastings Tribune. The project also is expected to involve funding from a variety of loans and investments by the company, the report noted.

The expansion is expected to create at least 30 new full-time jobs with a minimum of 51% of the positions being offered to low- to moderate-income workers. The current processing facility employs 380 workers at a company that was the first to export U.S. beef to Israel in 13 years, starting in 2016.

The proposed expansion follows Noah's Ark's appeal to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals over the National Labor Relations Board's finding that the processor had negotiated in bad faith with union representatives in a contract dispute dating back to 2018.

Consumers are getting gloomy

U.S. consumers are increasingly disenchanted with their current economic conditions and are pessimistic about future conditions, as well.

Preliminary November results for the University of Michigan's monthly survey of consumer sentiment dropped 5.3% from October, to 60.4. It was the fourth consecutive month of declines.

Consumers' assessment of current economic conditions also dropped, by 6.9%, to 65.7, and the index of consumer expectations dropped 4.0%, to 56.9.

"The long-run economic outlook slid, in part due to growing concerns about the negative effects of high interest rates," wrote Surveys of Consumers Director Joanne Hsu in an accompanying commentary. "Ongoing wars in Gaza and Ukraine weighed on many consumers as well."

Overall, lower-income consumers and younger consumers exhibited the strongest declines in sentiment, Hsu said. Long-run inflation expectations also rose, from 3.0% last month to 3.2% this month, the highest reading since 2011.

Animal right activist found guilty in "open rescues" case

A jury in California has found animal rights activist Wayne Hsiung guilty of felony conspiracy and misdemeanor trespass charges linked to nonviolent mass "open rescues" of injured animals at Sunrise Farms in Sonoma County in 2018.

After nearly a week of deliberations, the jury hung on similar charges related to a 2019 open rescue at the Reichardt Duck Farm, also in Sonoma County, according to local reports.

Direct Action Everywhere has said that Hsiung "plans to appeal the conviction in Sonoma based on several rulings by Judge Laura Passaglia," including her decision to exclude most of the photo and video evidence showing animal cruelty at Sunrise Farms.

Hsiung, co-founder of Direct Action Everywhere, was not granted bail and will remain in jail until his sentencing hearing, which is scheduled for the end of November. He has been convicted on criminal charges in connection with removing animals from private property in the past.

Many of the preceding items were taken from Meatingplace.com

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\$26 million here, \$24 million there: Real money?

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

The United States Secretary of Agriculture has an absolute statutory duty to “strengthen [America’s] family farm system” of agriculture (7 U.S.C. 2204b(c)(2)(D)), including to develop solutions to problems faced by “small- and moderate-sized family farming operations.” (7 U.S.C. 2204(b)).

But there’s a prominent agency within the department that doesn’t think writing regulations that directly harm the economic and financial interests of family farmers and ranchers is inconsistent with the Secretary’s statutory obligation.

Here’s how I know this.

In January, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued a proposed regulation to require U.S. cattle ranchers to affix costly radio frequency identification (RFID) eartags on their cattle at an estimated total cost of over \$26 million annually to affected cattle producers – all those who ship adult cattle across state lines.

We commented on this proposal and urged APHIS to withdraw its mandate because, among other things, the proposed rule that imposed a \$26 million cost on cattle producers would impose an untenable financial burden on independent cattle producers.

Then, in March, APHIS proposed another rule, this one to open the United States market to imports of fresh and frozen beef from Paraguay, a country that is not considered free of the most highly contagious disease known

to cattle – foot and mouth disease or FMD. That proposed rule stated that in return for increasing the risk of introducing FMD into the United States, cattle producers in the United States would suffer up to a \$24 million loss.

We commented on this proposal too. And in our comments, we stated the proposed rule that was certain to cause millions of dollars of losses to U.S. cattle producers was antithetical to the Secretary of Agriculture’s statutory obligation to help, not hurt, America’s family cattle farmers and ranchers.

Now, unlike the RFID rule that has not yet been finalized, the Paraguay rule has, and APHIS responded directly to our argument about the Secretary’s duty to help, not hurt, America’s family cattle farmers and ranchers.

Now I’m not making this up. Here’s what APHIS said in the final rule:

[The Secretary’s statutory obligation] does not represent an overriding ministerial obligation. This [Paraguayan] rulemaking was issued pursuant to a different statute, the Animal Health Protection Act (AHPA, 7 U.S.C. 8301– 8317), which is not mutually contradictory with the statute cited by the commenter [the statute R-CALF USA cited that states the Secretary’s duty is to help family farmers and ranchers].

So, in a matter of just three months – January through March of this year – APHIS proposed to burden independent U.S. cattle producers with an unnecessary RFID mandate that will cost \$26 million – a cost that producers will have no way to recover in the marketplace. And, it has finalized

a rule that will burden independent U.S. cattle producers by another \$24 million by allowing high-risk and unnecessary imports of fresh and frozen beef from Paraguay.

Now, \$26 million here, and \$24 million there, doesn’t anyone think we’re talking real money?

And consider this. The USDA’s own data reporting on U.S. production costs for U.S. family cattle farmers and ranchers show they haven’t been able to recover all their costs of production in the marketplace for over a decade. And, yet the USDA is willfully and knowingly burdening them with tens of millions of dollars in additional costs, with no expectation whatsoever that those millions will ever be recovered.

What’s going on here? If not America’s family farmers and ranchers, who is APHIS and its USDA parent beholden to? Is it the multinational eartag companies and packers who want to control these family farmers and ranchers by requiring them to register their RFID tagged cattle in some national registry? Is it the multinational beef packers whose profits will soar when they can import cheaper, albeit high-risk beef from foreign countries and pass it off to U.S. consumers without even a country-of-origin label?

I think you know what I think, but you deserve to know the truth. You deserve to know why, when our government says it’s concerned about the chronic, long-term loss of America’s family farmers and ranchers, does it continue writing burdensome regulations that will cause even more family farmers and ranchers to go out of business.

You should be angry. And you should call the President and your members of Congress and ask them why your tax dollars are funding a U.S. Department of Agriculture that cares not for the survivability of America’s food producers.

I hope you make those calls because your silence is deafening. Here’s a place to start: you can call the White House at (202) 456-1111 and tell them you want to know.

Hays slated as new leader of Missouri Pork Association

In April, fifth-generation pork producer Scott Hays will take over as executive director of the Missouri Pork Association, the association announced. One of his priorities will be building on the association’s relationship with the University of Missouri.

Currently president of the National Pork Producers Council and a consistent presence in state farm groups, Hays is a familiar presence at state hearings and committee meetings, representing both family farms and the pork industry to legislators and regulators. In 1994, he and his wife, and his parents and extended family, founded Two Mile Pork in the Monroe City, MO area. Now, Hays’ children are taking over the operation.

NCBA blasts USDA’s approval of Paraguayan beef imports

The National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) said it “strongly opposes” USDA’s approval of Paraguayan beef imports, to start next month, because it endangers the safety of the U.S. cattle herd.

A final rule issued Thursday enables raw intact beef products from cattle slaughtered in certified Paraguayan plants on or after Dec. 14 to be eligible for export to the U.S. The agency had earlier granted reinstatement of equivalence to Paraguay for its related food safety inspection system, and cited verification audits in that country in January 2021 and July 2022.

Paraguay previously had been ineligible to export raw beef products to the U.S. due to animal health restrictions imposed by USDA related to foot-and-mouth disease (FMD).

NCBA reiterated its concerns

with Paraguay’s FMD issues and what it called “outdated information” used as the basis of USDA’s approval, which may pose a risk to the safety of the U.S. cattle herd. The group further argued that the decision was a “bargaining tool” for larger U.S. economic interests in trade with Paraguay and other South America nations.

NCBA called on USDA to halt the “unscientific, unsafe” rule-making.

Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Mexico historically have been the largest suppliers of U.S. beef imports. Paraguay is expected to ship between 3,250 metric tons and 6,500 metric tons of fresh beef, or about 0.05% of U.S. average annual fresh beef production and some 0.05% of U.S. average annual imports of fresh beef.

– Meatingplace.com

Co-op breaks ground on \$10M facility

The Appalachian Producers Cooperative broke ground on its new facility in Telford, Tennessee, according to local media reports.

The \$10 million facility, which has been in the works for more than two years, received \$2 million from the Washington County commissioners in January.

In October 2023, the co-op received a \$991,546 federal grant distributed by Appalachian Regional Commission.

The project aims to address the challenges faced by local farmers and consumers consider-

ing that existing meat processing facilities in the region lack the capacity to promptly handle all available cattle for processing. Local farmers end up on extended waitlists to have their livestock harvested.

The co-op expects the facility to generate 25 jobs, and collaborate with local schools on educational programs in agriculture. The facility is expected to have the capacity to process about 125 head each week.

Construction of the facility is scheduled to be completed by October 2024.

– Meatingplace.com

Feedstuff Finder: One-stop shop for Missouri buyers and sellers

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Farmers and ranchers have a new tool to find or list hay and co-product feedstuffs for sale: Feedstuff Finder, developed by University of Missouri Extension for individuals looking to buy or sell products.

As drought and transportation issues make finding quality feed ingredients difficult, Feedstuff Finder helps livestock producers and feed producers find each other easily, said Wesley Tucker, MU Extension agricultural business specialist. Sourcing and pricing alternative feed sources is made more intuitive with the website’s mapping tool, he said.

Sellers of co-products like soyhulls, distillers grains or corn gluten feed, as well as forages like corn silage or hay, can share prices, product information and locations with potential buyers at no cost. Buyers can view available products on an easy-to-navigate map, complete with product details and a delivery cost estimator. Feedstuff listings are free and can be sorted by forage or co-product type and price per unit.

“We hope to see Feedstuff Finder become the go-to platform for suppliers and livestock producers in Missouri,” Tucker said. “This is a one-of-a-kind tool that can better connect the industry and make sourcing local feed products easier. This winter, many Missouri

cattle producers are going to be searching for feed. A lot of hay and other feed ingredients are going to be hauled into and around Missouri. Feedstuff Finder can make the job of keeping livestock fed easier.”

Feed is the most significant cost for many livestock producers, and major market risks exist as a variety of factors can affect the availability, cost and quality of feedstuff products. As MU Extension works to double the value of Missouri agriculture, assisting the state’s farmers and ranchers in mitigating risk is of particular importance, Tucker said.

“Feedstuff Finder has been developed to make farmers’ lives simpler,” said MU Extension agricultural economist Ryan Milhollin. “The platform helps producers and consumers of feedstuffs geographically find each other, cut transportation costs and manage tight winter feed supplies when feed costs and availability can be volatile.”

MU Extension is collaborating with the Missouri Department of Agriculture and the MU Agricultural Electronic Bulletin Board to populate directories and help users become familiar with Feedstuff Finder. Instructional videos, in-person training and other resources will be available to assist new users.

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Is the federal government here to help agriculture?

USDA's priorities are all messed up when it comes to agriculture

By STEVE DITTMER
Executive Vice President
Agribusiness Freedom Foundation



COLORADO SPRINGS – USDA is a bit confusing to someone who has followed American agriculture for many decades.

As we've mentioned before, log onto USDA's website and one discovers that, of the four main priorities listed for the department, agriculture is fourth.

That's right, the Agriculture Department's priorities are, in order,

- 1) Advancing racial justice, equity and opportunity.
- 2) Addressing climate change
- 3) Tackling food and nutrition insecurity
- 4) More, better and new market opportunities

Now we understand that the overwhelming majority of Farm Bill spending is human feeding programs of various stripes, which is what number #3 is about. But you'd think agriculture would at least be listed as the number two priority.

Nope, this is the "woke" USDA under a far-left president and his administration. The folks who produce, process, market and deliver our food to American and hundreds of other countries are dead last on the priority list.

Now, given that the federal government doesn't always improve situations when they get involved, in some instances, that could be a good thing

There are some good things. The creation of risk mitigation through crop insurance, then livestock grazing insurance -- given that farmers and ranchers can do nothing to affect the weather that absolutely determines the fate of crops and livestock, and, therefore, the food supply -- makes common sense for agriculture and for citizen/taxpayers.

Putting up millions of dollars to create or support small meat processors is a chancy effort to

create more markets for cattlemen that while well-intended, is a long shot to really helping the overall food supply. It might create an outlet for smaller producers in certain geographic areas far away from a major processing plant. But it does put the federal government in the position of financing competition for the private sector major meatpackers that supply over 80 percent of the beef for the U.S. and overseas customers.

We didn't like the idea of the federal government pouring taxpayer money into the computer chip manufacturing business either. We're afraid such programs for livestock processing could be like the federal governments success rate for climate change companies, i.e. Solyndra and the magic EV bus company that took our money and then bit the dust.

You can't repeal the laws of economics. It's hard to overcome a \$250-300/ hd. disadvantage.

With USDA's interest in getting involved in the cattle marketing system, we have definitely preferred the feds stay in the information business and stay out of dictating how the system should be "fixed." Inject politics into the cattle markets and trouble lurks.

If the government had more control over cattle marketing the last couple years, with general inflation and food inflation in particular, having an obvious public relations and re-election influence on the political outlook, does anyone think the administration would not have used any such power to keep meat prices lower?

Would cattlemen have had the fed prices, feeder cattle prices or packers the boxed beef prices we've seen if the government could do something to ease consumer complaints about food prices?

The (relatively) free market

punishes sometimes and rewards others, but at least it is mostly the market -- consumers -- not politicians, making the determination.

So, the government creating a hunting season and the financing for state attorneys general to go kick up some competition violations was not a comforting thought. The anti-trust group and anti-free market economist they chose to work with, were certainly disturbing to anyone with a free market bent.

Now, USDA has announced it is creating a whole new staff position: Chief Competition Officer. Mind you, this is not a political appointment subject to the party in power but a staff position, assumedly selected by the Secretary of Agriculture, who is a political appointment.

In fact, that new position is but one part of a "package of rules and orders" from President Biden seeking to "increase competition in the livestock industry."

The new executive order also mandates that "all red meat purchased by USDA must be 'born, raised and slaughtered' in the United States." Given that this is a leftist administration, it's not too astonishing that a partial mCOOL rule be accomplished in this back door fashion. We're not international trade lawyers, so we don't know how the WTO and international trade rules might view such a mandate. But there is definitely a good chance the price of lean ground beef school lunch and DOD items will go up.

The rules package is part of the administration's "competition and farmer fairness agenda," as well as "many other steps," including "enhancing our labeling regulations."

Fairness for farmers is important but we wonder if they are cognizant of consumer fairness, in the form of the best prices for

the best quality and safest product.

And "labeling regulations" holds a host of threats to the marketing system. There are some things that could be improved to achieve their "transparency" goals but we're not sure they will come to the fore for consumers in the current political environment.

Fast Fact - How much money has been pumped into the U.S. economy by the federal government since the March 2020 Covid outbreak?

Steve Moore totes it up at \$7.4 Trillion. And yes, those dollars were authorized by our Congress.

Did that have anything to do with inflation?

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Report: Consumers expected to be seeking bargains, convenience this holiday season

Even affluent consumers are already on the hunt for holiday bargains, according to newly released year-end consumer spending forecasts released by McKinsey and PwC.

Seemingly contradictory trends are emerging: Both consulting giants report that three-quarters of consumers are intent on finding bargains across all holiday spending categories, including entertaining. But, consumers are willing to spend on what's important to them, whether that's the quality of the actual goods or their mode of shopping.

The PwC report found that

overall consumer holiday spending will rise by about 7%, though much of that household average of \$1,530 will go to travel, which continues strong from the summer boom.

Spending priorities differ by generation, according to McKinsey analysis. While product quality is the top factor for Gen X, millennials and Gen Z, baby boomers are making shopping convenience their top priority.

Both consulting firms found that consumers are spending their holiday budgets incrementally across the entire season -- even stretching into January.

The implication for marketers, said McKinsey, is to communicate consistently across the entire season, across all marketing channels, as opposed to focusing on one blowout promotion.

And, consumers crave engagement as they shop, whether that's in the setting for holiday entertaining and meals, or, a meaningful brand backstory, said McKinsey. Marketers needn't belabor the storytelling if they spin short tales via social media, especially through short-form videos, the report recommended.

– Meatingplace.com

North vs South — contrasting beef markets temper global production

Dynamics in the Northern and Southern hemispheres continue to behave in contrast, tempering global beef production, according to Rabobank.

In its global beef quarterly for the fourth quarter, the firm noted continuing high prices and contracting production amid strong but possibly weakening demand in the US and low prices and increasing volumes in the Southern Hemisphere. In the backdrop of that “two-part” story is weak demand and high inventory levels in Asia.

The outcome, according to Rabobank, is an estimated

decline in global beef production of 1% in 2023, compared with 2022. Increases in Brazil and Australia have not been sufficient to offset declines in Europe and the US, analysts noted.

They predict 2024 will unfold similarly, with the divergent dynamics in the Northern and Southern hemispheres. North American cattle prices continue to track at high levels, while prices remain soft in Southern Hemisphere countries. Australian cattle prices plummeted — down 28% since June — while New Zealand and Brazil also saw prices fall, in

smaller amounts.

Meanwhile, cattle prices in the US were steady, while Canadian prices rose 3% between June and October. The conflict in the Middle East is not expected to materially impact beef trade; the import volumes of Israel and the Palestinian territories make up approximately 1% of global beef imports. If the conflict extends across the broader Middle East and North Africa region, the impact on global beef trade will remain relatively small, Rabobank analysts said.

— **Meatingplace.com**

Tyson Foods posts \$450 million Q4 loss as beef, chicken, pork units struggle

Tyson Foods Inc. reported a net loss of \$450 million in the fourth quarter of 2023 as sales in the period slid 2.8%, compared with year-ago results, to \$13.3 billion.

The protein giant cited volatility in the commodity market and other “economic headwinds” that have prompted the company to take steps to become more operationally efficient, opening the door for potential long-term opportunities in upcoming fiscal years. Those actions include the closings of eight plants this year that company officials told analysts in a conference call were older and less efficient, ultimately moving the processing operations to larger, more efficient facilities.

“These older, less efficient plants are being selected for capacity moves,” Tyson President and CEO Donnie King said in a conference call related to the release of the quarterly and annual results.

Tyson registered net income of \$538 million in the fourth

quarter of 2022, and company officials reiterated that the cost-cutting measures and improved market conditions for its chicken and pork operations in 2023 are allowing the company to “manage what we can control,” King added.

In the most recent quarter, operating losses in Tyson’s beef (\$323 million), chicken (\$257 million) and pork (\$11 million) units contributed to an overall operating loss of \$463 million in the period. The prepared foods division reported operating income of \$118 million, while the international business posted operating income of \$20 million in the period.

For all of fiscal 2023, Tyson sales reached \$52.9 billion versus \$53.3 billion reported in fiscal 2022. The operating loss for the year totaled \$395 million compared with operating income of \$4.4 billion for all of fiscal 2022, Tyson reported.

Company officials expressed optimism that the cost-cutting and potentially improving market conditions bode well for 2024, although King also told analysts that there was more pressure because of “rising cattle costs combined with limited export opportunities and an imbalance that (is) affecting spreads” for most of 2023.

— **Meatingplace.com**

Another Easterday lawsuit against Tyson dismissed

A federal judge, once again, ruled to dismiss a lawsuit against Tyson Foods brought on by a man convicted of defrauding the company, according to court records.

In December, Cody Easterday filed a lawsuit against Tyson Foods, alleging the company

broke an oral agreement to sell a product in Japan using Easterday’s name and photograph for the joint venture. The agreement supposedly included provisions for sharing profits and risks generated by the two parties.

On Oct. 31, the judge ruled the

Rural bridge progress

By REP. SAM GRAVES
Congressman, 6th District of Missouri

It’s no secret that our rural roads and bridges need attention. For years, they were neglected, left to fall into disrepair, leaving places like North Missouri behind. While there’s much work left to be done, I’m glad to report we have made some headway.

The North Missouri countryside has been dotted with one lane bridges supported by timber pile for years. While they’ve served their purpose in the past, these bridges all end up weight-limited, so taking an 80,000-pound semi across one wouldn’t be advisable. I’d also venture a guess that there are some who’ve never had the frightening thrill of speeding up to get across one of these bridges right before a blind curve. They simply aren’t safe.

In 2019, I worked with the Missouri Department of Transportation, Governor Parson, and the Trump Administration to get a grant lined up that would specifically target some of these aging rural bridges in North Missouri. The Fixing Access to Rural Missouri (FARM) Bridge Program targeted 31 one-lane, weight-restricted, poor condition bridges supported by timber pile.

It should come as no surprise that replacing these bridges with new 21st century bridges isn’t cheap. However, we were able to secure a \$20.8 million federal grant and combine that with \$5.2 million from MoDOT. All told, we got the 31 new bridges constructed and the project just wrapped up at the end of last month. It’s partnerships like these, targeting specific infrastructure issues, that get the job done. By eliminating these bridge projects using federal resources, it opens the possibility of using those transportation dollars elsewhere.

I toured one of the FARM bridges as it began construction and another as it was finishing construction. If you’ve driven them before and after, you know what a difference this project has made. Unless you live on these roads, it can often be hard to make the case that they need replaced if they don’t see that much traffic.

It’s the same story with the condition of our lettered routes. However, rural roads and bridges matter and it’s why we are placing a focus on them. Just as with the FARM Bridge Program, the work doesn’t happen overnight, but it is getting done.

With these bridges completed, other bridge projects under construction and work moving forward on our lettered routes, we are making progress. There’s much infrastructure work to be done and I look forward to working into the future to ensure that we are taken care of in North Missouri.



EASTERN MISSOURI
COMMISSION COMPANY
BOWLING GREEN, MO

Eastern Missouri Commission Company, Bowling Green
Market Report for Friday, November 17, 2023
Receipts: 766 Week ago: 1,887 Year ago: 1,126

Compared to last week, a very light test of feeders were not well tested with feeders selling in small packages and singles many were unweaned. Slaughter cows on a nice offering traded fully steady to firm, spots 3.00 higher on the high dressing cows. Cattle on Feed Report was released Friday afternoon with On Feed at 102 percent same as average guess; Placements came in at 104 percent, 2 percent below average guess; with Marketings at 97 percent, 1 percent below average guess.

Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1-2 – Few 450-500 lbs 250.00-251.00, unweaned 400-500 lbs 220.00-231.00; pkg 539 lbs 261.50, pkg fleshy 540 lbs 235.00, 550-600 lbs 248.00-258.50, unweaned 550-600 lbs 214.00- 216.00; 600-650 lbs 228.00-234.00, unweaned 215.00-222.00; pkg 831 lbs 205.50.

Feeder Heifers: Medium and Large 1-2 – Few 300-400 lbs unweaned 201.00-210.00; 450-500 lbs few 238.00-256.00, unweaned 213.00-218.50; 500-550 lbs 221.00-235.00, 550-600 lbs 211.00-219.00, unweaned 201.00-205.00; 600-675 lbs few 211.00-222.00, unweaned 201.00-211.00; 700-750 lbs few 222.00-205.00.

Feeder Bulls: Medium and Large 1-2 – Pkg 312 lbs 231.00; 400-500 lbs 256.00-266.00; 550-600 lbs 206.00-219.00; pkg 606 lbs 206.00.

Slaughter Cows: Premium White (65-70% lean) High dressing, 118.50-125.00.
Breakers (70-80% lean) Average dressing, 95.00-105.00; high

Market Reports

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dressing, 106.50-120.00; and low dressing, 85.00-92.00. Boners (80-85% lean) Average dressing, 90.00-98.00; high dressing, 99.00-106.00; and low dressing, 82.50-89.00. Lean (85-90% lean) Average dressing, 83.50-90.00; high dressing, 94.00-95.50; and low dressing, 78.00-83.50. Shelly 69.00-75.00.

Slaughter Bulls: Yield Grade 1-2 – 1300-2400 lbs, 118.00-128.00; 105.00-115.00.

Slaughter Steers and Heifers: Scarce

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 Special Bred Cow and Heifer Sale
Saturday, November 25, 2023
Receipts: 1,030 Year ago: 1,463

Eastern MO. Commission Company’s annual Thanksgiving weekend Special Bred Cow and Heifer Sale, with the main attraction on the bred heifers was held Saturday November 26, 2022. A very good offering with several large consignments of near 400 head of top quality mostly Black bred heifers mostly in the 3rd stage, few in the 2nd stage with several consignments of top quality young cow/calf pairs sold with active bidding from a large standing room only crowd of buyers. Several consignments of bred cows 4-6 yrs of age mostly in the 2nd-3rd stage sold with good demand. Overall

quality was very good from start to finish on the heifers. Demand was good to very good with a moderate to heavy supply of bred heifers and pairs. A large offering of slaughter cows were also included in the auction.

Bred Heifers: Medium and Large 1 – Fancy Blks (40 hd) 1140-1345 lbs 3rd stage start calving early Feb 3450.00-3700.00; Top quality 1000-1300 lbs 3rd stage mostly blk 2400.00-3350.00 (weighted average price on 220 head not counting the Fancy blks was 2733.10) top quality blk 960-1200 lbs 2nd stage 2225.00-2575.00.
Medium 1-2 – 950-1300 lbs 3rd stage 2250.00- 2450.00; 2nd stage 960-1050 lbs 1725.00-2100.00.

Bred Cows: Medium and Large 1 – 3-4 yrs 1125-1225 lb 2nd stage 2500.00- 2810.00; 4-6 yrs 1150-1470 lbs 2nd-3rd stage 2100.00-2300.00.
Medium and Large 1-2 – 3-6 yrs 1075-1475 lbs 2nd-3rd stage 1800.00-2000.00.

Cow/Calf Pairs: Medium and Large 1 – 1st calf Heifer Pairs 1050-1300 lb w/200-250 lb calves 3050.00-3200.00; 4-6 yrs 1300-1450 lbs w/150-300 lb calves 2975.00-3350.00; 7 yrs to short solid mouth 1250-1350 lbs w/200-250 lb calves 2150.00-2450.00.
Medium and Large 1-2 – 3-6 yrs 1000-1600 lbs w/150-250 lb calves 2200.00-2650.00; short solid mouth lot 1250 lbs w/200-250 lb calves 1850.00.

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.....

Supreme Beef's manure management plan approved

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has approved a plan by a cattle feeding company to manage manure from as many as 11,600 cattle, according to a local report by The Gazette.

Supreme Beef can move ahead months after running into legal opposition after environmental groups sued over concerns about the feedlot's impact on local waterways in the Driftless region of Northeast Iowa.

After a public hearing held in Oct. 16, the IDNR accepted Supreme's revisions made earlier this month.

The plan, allowing the company to apply liquid manure to farmland, will be in effect through the 2028 crop year. The company is required to keep records of applications so the state can review them during inspections, the Gazette reports.

Opponents of the plan questioned whether it is legal for the state to accept revisions after the Oct. 16 public hearing.

JBS Q3 net profit falls 86% year-over-year, reverses Q2 loss

JBS had a net profit of BRL572.7 million (\$116.7 million) in the third quarter of 2023, down 85.7% from the same period last year, but reversing a net loss of BRL263.6 million (\$53.7 million) in the second quarter of this year, the company announced Monday.

The group's consolidated net revenue totaled BRL91.4 billion (\$18.6 billion), 7.6% below that recorded a year earlier. Adjusted EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, amortization and depreciation) reached BRL5.4 billion (\$1.1 billion), a 43.3% decline year-on-year.

"The results in the third quarter of 2023 demonstrate that we are on a path of consistent recovery, as we have indicated in previous quarters," CEO Gilberto Tomazoni, said in the company's earnings report. He said the company continues to work toward restoring the profitability of two businesses performing below potential: Seara and JBS Beef North America.

"In Seara, we have executed the majority of our previously identified adjustments. This should positively impact our results in the coming quarters. There's still room for improvement in results with the ramp-up from the new facilities, which are not yet operating at full capacity," Tomazoni said.

Seara had a 13.3% drop in net revenue in the third quarter from the same period last year, to BRL10.2 billion (\$2.1 billion), due to lower revenue from exports and excess chicken supply, which reduced prices in the Brazilian domestic market.

JBS Brasil, which includes the Brazilian beef businesses, had a

11.1% fall in net revenue to BRL14.4 billion (\$2.9 billion). Increased volumes sold in the domestic market were not enough to offset the 10% drop in net revenue from fresh beef sales in the foreign market due to lower prices.

JBS Beef North America's net revenue reached BRL29 billion, stable from the third quarter of 2022. In US GAAP and US dollars, net revenue reached \$5.9 billion, up 7% compared to the third quarter of 2022.

"In our US beef business, operational measures adopted since March this year in the commercial and industrial areas are helping us navigate through the lowest point of the cattle cycle," Tomazoni said. "The margins of the operation are showing gradual recovery, even in a scenario of tighter spreads and reduced cattle supply, demonstrating our commitment to operational excellence."

JBS Australia recorded net revenue of BRL7.7 billion, down 12% year-on-year, impacted by the 7% appreciation in the Brazilian currency. In US GAAP and US dollars, net revenue fell 5% to \$1.6 billion in the third quarter 2023.

"Volumes from the beef business grew 13% compared to 3Q22, given the growth in sales in both the domestic and export markets," the company said.

JBS USA Pork had an 11.3% reduction in quarterly net revenue to BRL9.9 billion, also affected by the appreciation of the Brazilian real and a 7% drop in wholesale pork prices due to the reduction in industry inventory levels. In US GAAP, the company had a 4.6% drop in net revenue to

\$2 billion. Pilgrim's Pride had a net revenue of BRL21.3 billion, down 9.3%. In US GAAP, PPC net revenue fell by 2.4% to \$4.4 billion.

JBS sees tougher scenario for U.S. beef in 2024, recovery in pork

JBS expects margins for its US pork business to recover in 2024 and a more challenging year for the beef segment amid low cattle availability, company executives said in conference calls with analysts recently.

Margins in the US pork business are expected to recover closer to the company's historic levels, near high single digits, after a decline in the first half of 2023, according to JBS USA CEO Wesley Batista Filho.

Higher hog availability and lower grain prices reducing costs should support this improvement.

"We think that next year, pork will have a very important advantage amid lower beef availability in the market. We believe that the US (pork) is very competitive in exports compared to other players in Europe, which have been reducing slaughtering and production," Batista Filho said during the conference call in Portuguese.

The US beef business will face a more challenging scenario in 2024 than in 2023, with margins reaching low single digits at the lowest point of the cattle cycle availability, according to the executive.

However, the performance of JBS US beef business won't necessarily decline as the company continues to work towards capturing efficiencies in the commercial

and operational fronts.

"We expect 2024 to be a challenging year, more challenging than this year, but having said that, we have a lot of internal opportunities that we are capturing," said Batista.

JBS global CEO Gilberto Tomazoni said margins in the Brazilian Seara business and JBS Australia are expected to rise to double digits in 2024.

JBS announced on Nov. 14 an 86% decline in its net profit for the third quarter of 2023 to BRL572.7 million (\$116.7 million).

USMEF name Randy Spronk as new chair

The U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) announced Randy Spronk as the organization's new chair, according to a USMEF news release.

The announcement came at the federation's Strategic Planning Conference, which wrapped up last week in New Orleans.

Spronk is a pork and grain producer from Edgerton, Minn. and is president and managing partner for Spronk Brothers Holding.

The new chair is also part of a group of producers that purchased a former Hormel plant and is marketing pork products under the label of Wholystone Foods.

He succeeds outgoing USMEF Chair Dean Meyer, a corn, soybean and livestock producer from Rock Rapids, Iowa. Steve Hanson, a cattle rancher from southwestern Nebraska who is also president of the Nebraska Cattlemen, will serve

as USMEF chair-elect in the coming year. The vice chair is Jay Theiler, executive vice president of corporate affairs for Agri Beef, based in Boise, Idaho.

Hord Family Farms acquires New Horizon Farms

Fifth-generation pork producer Hord Family Farms on November 17 announced that it had completed the acquisition of New Horizon Farms, a farrow-to-finish swine operation located in Pipestone, Minn.

"As a family-owned company, we are guided by our values of providing excellent care to our animals and supporting our team," Hord CEO Pat Hord said in a media release. "While we will always have deep roots in Ohio and continue to make investments here, this acquisition reflects our deliberate strategic growth and dedication to producing quality food."

With the acquisition, Hord gains five sow farms, six nurseries and 60 finishing farms, located across southwest Minnesota, eastern South Dakota, and northwest Iowa. The new farms will operate as Hord Farms West and will maintain New Horizon's current pork operations, to be managed by the valued existing Minnesota leadership team.

Hord Farms itself produces more than 800,000 pigs per year. The family also has a feeder-to-market beef cattle farm.

Many of the preceding items were taken from Meatingplace.com

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the folks at Scotland County Livestock!



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for our weekly listings
and market reports

Avian flu flares up in Oregon, South Dakota and California

Four outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in Oregon leading to mass bird depopulations highlight a flare-up of the deadly poultry disease in the U.S. as the nation celebrates Thanksgiving. Nearly 800,000 chickens at

two commercial operations in Linn and Marion counties (Ore.) have been euthanized, the Oregon Department of Agricultural reported, with local news reports noting this as the state's largest HPAI outbreak. Two backyard operations in

Marion and Deschutes counties (Ore.) also were hit with outbreaks. Meanwhile, HPAI cases continue to pop up elsewhere in the U.S., with South Dakota particularly hard hit. USDA's Animal and Plant

Health Inspection Service, between Nov. 17-21, confirmed cases at a total of seven commercial turkey operations in four South Dakota counties, affecting nearly 270,700 birds. Meanwhile, commercial broiler operation was also hit Nov. 21, impacting 198,200

birds. The agency also reported a confirmed case in a commercial duck breeding operation in Fresno County, Calif., involving 23,400 birds. The latest cases follow a particularly infectious week earlier this month for HPAI's spread. - Meatingplace.com

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Laugh Tracks in the Dust.....

By MILO YIELD
Special to The Advocate

New Old Geezer Gang

Folks, I've joined a new gang of old geezers here in Riley. I've dubbed it the Old Geezer Gang of Gossip, Gospel and Government. The loosely-knit group meets every morning at the local Short Stop convenience store to sip coffee, share local "doings" and discuss and debate any topic that happens to arise that morning. Quite a few members simultaneously work to enhance their retirement by winning scratch-off Kansas Lottery tickets.

It wuz quite an exclusive debate society to join. I invited myself in and wuz heartily accepted. However, to become a full-fledged member required that I buy one \$5 pan of cinnamon rolls made by an enterprising local lady who runs the Fork in the Road store.

So far, the group has not solved a single local, state, national or global problem. But we've put forth a lot of worthy suggestions. What I've really appreciated is learning about Riley's citizens and history from folks who've lived here all or most of their lives.

Readers will recall my occasional rant — as a red/green colorblind person — about manufacturers always using red/green lights to show stop and go. I've mentioned that the use of red/blue contrasting lights would be quite helpful for us colorblind folks.

Well, I'm happy to say that the Insignia brand of headphones — to help my 80-year-old ears hear television better — features red/blue on-off and battery charge buttons. Now, if I could just coax the folks who make traffic lights to put a little blue dot in the middle of the red light, I'd make a major contribution to traffic safety.

Once again I've immunized myself against both the flu and Covid. In the last two weeks, I got both vaccinations. I didn't hesitate for a moment in making the decision. Vaccines have kept me alive for four-score years. Once again, no reactions to either shot.

Along the same vein of thought about old geezers and hearing, two old farmers were arguing. One fellow seemed to be doing most of the talking and he went on and on while the other tried unsuccessfully to slide an occasional word in edgewise.

Finally, when it seemed as if the talker was about to run out of words and the other old fellow could get his chance, the geezer who wuz flapping his jaw summed up his argument vehemently and, with a flourish, turned off his hearing aid.

Back in the day of the one-room rural schoolhouse, a teacher was having daily trouble with an unruly boy in the sixth grade. It got so bad that she decided to stop

by the boy's home and speak to his parents about their undisciplined son.

When she knocked on the door, the unruly boy answered the knock. The teacher asked to speak to his mother or father.

"They was here," the kid replied, "But, now they ain't. They's gone."

"Where," demanded the teacher, "is your grammar!"

"She's taking a nap," the kid replied as he slammed the door.

A lazy farm boy, fresh after high school graduation, tired of doing farm chores, so he got a job at a local agri-manufacturing plant.

After several weeks of totally shirking on the job, finally the kids boss called him into his office and said, "Son, do you know you are mentioned in the Bible?"

"Really," replied the kid. "How so?"

"Yep," said his boss. "It says in the Bible, 'The Lord made every creeping thing.' That saying pretty much nails your work performance so far. You'd better pick up the pace if you want to keep this job."

I doubt the astute members of Congress will ever come to an agreement on a new farm bill.

So, I have a suggestion for the stalemated Congress.

Introduce a "truth in packaging" law that applies to government agencies. I propose that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's truthful name should be "The Department of Consumers, Reformers, Regulators, Activists and the Poor."

A farmer came home from buying feed in town and told his

wife, "I nearly hit a jaywalker from San Diego when I was in town this morning."

His wife skeptically asked, "And just how do you know the jaywalker was from San Diego?"

The farmer replied, "After I missed him and he got on the sidewalk, he hollered something to me about the sun and the beach."

It was a so-so weekend for my favorite football teams. The teams at my two alma maters — Bea Wilder U I and Bea Wilder U II — both won. But the KC Chiefs laid an egg and lost to the Philly Eagles. My college basket-

ball teams won a big one and lost a close one.

Words of wisdom for the week: "If you want to buy an inexpensive mixed green salad in these inflationary days, use fives, tens and twenties."

"Communism is the system where everybody always shares equally in getting the short end of the stick. Capitalism, when it is working well, is the system that makes the sticks longer."

"Just be glad you're not getting all the government you're paying for."

Have a good 'un.

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RANGER from page 13

There was one case in which Brittain had a good idea that a particular young man had been stealing saddles. The thief had moved on, but Brittain heard he was around Haskell or Seymour. He called Scott Williamson, who was the Special Ranger there at that time.

Williamson soon located the thief, who had several unusual items outside his house, including a pickup-bed trailer full of receiver hitch inserts.

The two Special Rangers began working the case. There had been some thefts of wheat-pasture cattle in the area, which soon tied in with the saddle thief. This thief, who was in his early 20s and named Roddy, had teamed up with a set of twin brothers.

The trio went out at night to the wheat fields. One of the twins drove the pickup while the other ran a spotlight. Roddy, his rope tied to the pickup, would rope wheat pasture cattle they ran down. The young men would then tie down the calf.

"They'd come back with a trailer and load it, or if it was small enough they'd load it in the pickup and take it with them," Brittain said. "They stole quite a few calves doing it that way."

In his spare time, Roddy also broke into barns and other country properties, stealing whatever he found. Brittain and Williamson later spent a week with Roddy. When asked, he told them he stole the receiver hitches off parked vehicles, though he could not explain why.

He also told them he had once traveled to Wyoming for a vacation. He stopped at every unattended tractor from Texas to Wyoming and stole all the tools out of them.

"He had a trailer-load of tools," Brittain said. "He just had to."

Roddy was eventually sent to prison and has since been released. As far as Brittain knows, he has not been in trouble again.

Brittain worked some cases where rustlers went in horseback and penned cattle, but he said they just do not see that as often now as in the past.

"Nowadays we don't see that as much, because nearly everything you can soak them to a pen with feed," he said.

A rustler in Erath County was somehow catching calves out of pastures. Brittain and other lawmen often found marks where the calves had been dragged under fences, but they could not figure out how the thief was catching them.

Brittain had an idea, and they made a careful search in one pasture. He turned out to be correct, and they found a dart.

"They were tranquilizing those calves," he said.

They found darts in other pastures, and soon they had a suspect in mind. But when they flew over the suspected thief's place, there were no calves. Then one day Brittain got a call that they might have the evidence they needed.

"The kid had gotten lazy, and



LAWMAN: HD Brittain has spent most of his life in law enforcement and the last 26 years as a Special Ranger with Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association. (Photo courtesy of Livestock Weekly)

he went to his neighbor's across the road. He darted a calf and took it under the fence, drug it across the road and into his property."

But when Brittain arrived, there were no calves on the place. Later that day they found a penful of calves at the thief's parents' home. The mother claimed they had bought the calves.

"Well, the calf that he drug across the road, one side of it didn't have any hair from being drug," Brittain said. "Guess who was in that pen?"

Some of the calves could be identified as specific stolen calves. A few of them were so fresh that they paired up with their mothers when they were taken home.

There was a stolen backhoe at the parents' place. The entire family went to jail by the time it was over.

In 2012, Brittain was offered a transfer to District 19, which he had always wanted. He had the opportunity to move onto a ranch southeast of Christoval that was owned by the Powells but later sold to William Foster Ranches, LLC. Brittain runs that ranch for them.

"I'm still here," he said. "They're great people."

His territory now covers Concho, Menard, Kimble, Sutton, Schleicher, Tom Green, Crockett, Terrell, Sterling and Irion counties.

Brittain said there is a dividing line splitting Texas, and it's not Interstate 35, as most believe. To him it is further west and basically splits off West Texas, leaving Central Texas with East Texas.

"There is a different mindset out here," he said. "West Texas has its way of doing things. Out here there are larger properties, and these guys are on the ranch nearly every day."

A problem everywhere, though, is that too many ranchers do not brand or earmark their calves. This makes things easier for the thieves and harder for the Special Rangers.

There was one theft of 10 head of registered Brangus

heifers that wore tattoos and nothing else. Brittain told the owner he would probably never see them again.

"If they go through a market, nobody would know," Brittain said. "We don't check for tattoos."

Later, Special Rangers were investigating a suspected cattle thief. They flew over the man's place. They saw cattle and also a stolen trailer they could identify because of a logo painted on the side.

"We had enough to get a search warrant," Brittain said. The man was arrested. They found stolen vehicles, equipment, guns, and a number of stolen cattle, including those 10 Brangus heifers with tattoos. The owner came and picked them up, and he branded them that day.

Brittain and his wife Penny have one daughter, Hannah, who is finishing a master's degree at Texas A&M.

While Brittain still enjoys his position as a Special Ranger, he has begun to occasionally think about retirement. It's not time yet, but he wouldn't mind someday just staying on the ranch and never leaving.

Gary Linnenbringer passes away

Gary Walter Linnenbringer, 70, of Auxvasse, Mo., passed away peacefully on Sunday, November 26, 2023, at his home after a battle with cancer.

He was born March 26, 1953, to the late Hadley and Gladys (Borgelt) Linnenbringer.

Gary was a lifelong farmer in Callaway County, Mo.

He was united in married to Joan Huskey on December 3, 2010, and she survives of the home. Together they attended Harmony Baptist Church.

Gary earned his Animal Husbandry degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1972. There he was active in Alpha Gamma Sigma fraternity.

Gary was a member of the Agricultural Leaders of Tomorrow (ALOT) class, served on North Callaway School Board, as a volunteer for the North Callaway fire department and was an employee at Columbia Livestock Auction and an agent director for Farmers Mutual Insurance Company. Gary ran for public office with the slogan 'Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.'

In addition to his wife Joan of 12 years, he will be sadly missed and lovingly remembered by his daughter, Jill (husband Kurt) Fansler with their children Hunter, Addison and Hayden Fansler; his son, Carl (fiancée Ashley) Linnenbringer; a step-son, Darrell Huskey with daughter Audri Huskey; his siblings, Hadley (Lynn) Linnenbringer, Sylvia (Phil) Glenn, Hershel (Betty) Linnenbringer, and Jayne Elaine (Robert) Walker; along with numerous cousins, nieces and nephews, other relatives and many dear friends.

Funeral services were November 30, 2023, at the Harmony Baptist Church near Auxvasse, Mo. Interment was at the Harmony Baptist Church Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Harmony Baptist Church or to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, c/o Oliver Funeral Home, P.O. Box 125, Centralia, MO 65240. Condolences may also be made to the family at www.oliverfuneralhome.net



Mistletoe: Menacing plant with an intriguing past

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Of all the plants used in holiday decor, few match mistletoe's interesting history. And few equal its potential for harm

An evergreen plant with white berries, mistletoe is quite toxic, said David Trinklein, horticulture state specialist for University of Missouri Extension.

American mistletoe (Phoradendron leucarpum) contains a toxic protein in its leaves and branches. However, mistletoe harvested in the U.S. isn't as toxic as European mistletoe (Viscum album), Trinklein said. The latter contains a mixture of toxic proteins in all parts of the plant, including its berries.

Unfortunately, mistletoe isn't usually labeled "American" or "European," and only a trained botanist would be able to identify the difference, he said. In either case, if the plant accidentally is ingested it would be wise to seek immediate medical attention.

Trinklein said the safest choice would be to use artificial mistletoe made from fabric or plastic.

Mistletoe is a hemiparasite,

which means it derives some of its food from its host—most often a tree—while carrying on photosynthesis to make the remainder of its food, he said.

Mistletoe's mysterious powers go back to ancient times

So, how did a toxic, hemiparasitic plant like mistletoe become a part of Christmas? "From the standpoint of human usage, mistletoe has a long and interesting history dating back to ancient times," Trinklein said.

"The use of mistletoe around the holidays dates back to pre-Christian times, when it was used by Druids in rituals associated with the winter solstice," he said. "After being harvested by Druid priests with a golden sickle, people placed it over their door as a means of warding off evil in the coming year."

A cure for war on the battlefield and at home

Where did kissing under the mistletoe begin?

"Various theories exist," Trinklein said. "In Scandinavia, it

was considered a plant of peace under which enemies could declare a truce. Accordingly, mistletoe offered a way for warring spouses to kiss and make up. Each time a kiss was exchanged under the mistletoe, a berry had to be plucked. Once all the berries were gone, the plant lost its magic."

'Dung on a twig' in a former life

What about the name? The word mistletoe, comes from two Anglo-Saxon words that, literally interpreted, mean "dung on a twig," Trinklein said. This less than romantic name originated after people observed that mistletoe tended to take root on tree limbs where birds left their droppings.

Many might consider stealing a kiss under mistletoe to be socially and hygienically questionable. "Omitting it from holiday décor probably would be prudent," he said. But for those who insist on following tradition, give real mistletoe the heave-ho-ho-ho and use artificial mistletoe instead.

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These apple cream cheese turnovers will be hard to resist

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

Jon's Critique: These turnovers are hard to resist. Eating just one is hardly possible.

Our girls both came home for Thanksgiving this year, and this recipe was one of the breakfast treats the super mom prepared. We didn't eat all of them for breakfast but we came close. These filled in as lunch desert and afternoon snacks. I don't think there were any left by supper time.

The cook tells me that they aren't at all hard to make and are actually kind of fun to make. This one was a big hit at our house. With Christmas coming maybe you too might try this one to encourage the children to visit more often.

Apple Cream Cheese Turnovers

*Better Homes and Gardens,
Best Apple Recipes*

3 Tbsp. butter
1/3 cup packed brown sugar

3 cups peeled and chopped cooking apples
1/4 cup plus 1 Tbsp. water
6 oz. cream cheese, cut up and softened
2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
1 egg yolk
1 17.3-oz pkg. (2 sheets) frozen puff pastry sheets, thawed
1 egg, lightly beaten
1 1/4 cups powdered sugar
Milk

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper.

For the filling, in a 10-inch skillet heat the butter and brown sugar over medium heat until butter melts. Add apples and the 1/4 cup of water. Cover and cook 5 minutes. Uncover and cook 8 to 10 minutes more or just until the apples are tender, stirring occasionally.

Remove and cool slightly. Stir in 4 oz. of the cream cheese, the flour, and the egg yolk; mix well.

On a lightly floured surface unfold and roll out one pastry sheet to a 12-inch square. Cut into nine 4-inch squares. Spoon a rounded tablespoon of the filling into the center of each square. Brush edges of pastry squares with water.

Fold each square in half to form a triangle. Seal edges with the tines of a fork.

In a small bowl combine the beaten egg and the 1 Tbsp. water. Brush half of the egg mixture over the pastries. Arrange the pastries on one of the prepared baking sheets.

Bake 15 minutes or until puffed and golden. Remove and cool on a wire rack placed over waxed paper. Repeat with the remaining puff pastry, filling and egg mixture to make nine more turnovers.

In a medium bowl beat remaining 2 oz. cream cheese with a mixer on medium until smooth. Gradually beat in powdered sugar. Beat in enough milk, 1 Tbsp. at a time, to reach a thick drizzling consistency.

Transfer to a sealable plastic bag. Snip one corner from the bag. Drizzle icing over turnovers.

Serve warm or let cool. Makes 18 turnovers.



Petition seeking revised port inspection policy met with opposition from meat groups

The United States Canadian Border Inspection Agency (USCBIA) has submitted comments to USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) opposing a petition seeking a relaxed port-of-entry inspection protocol.

In July, the Meat Import Council of America (MICA) and the Global Cold Chain Alliance (GCCA) submitted the petition, which asks FSIS to modify its "50-mile" internal policy. Currently, the policy requires approved establishments to operate within a 50-mile geographic radius of a U.S. ocean or land port of entry.

MICA and GCCA says FSIS

should consider approving grants of inspection for inland inspection houses beyond that 50-mile constraint when circumstances and conditions may warrant doing so. Benefits, the petitioners say, would include more flexibility for supply chains, reduced congestion at U.S. ports of entry, increased available inspection and cold storage capacity.

Advancements such as real time tracking of shipments alleviate many of the concerns in place when the policy was adopted decades ago, they contend.

But USCBIA oppose the petition, saying the current policy

provides FSIS the maximum control over imported meat products.

"The further away from the port of entry an imported meat shipment travels without being inspected, the greater the chances are for a food safety incident..." the group stated, adding that no amount of data sharing, preclearance or harmonization will eliminate the need for verification within the 50-mile radius.

FSIS acknowledged receipt of the MICA/GCCA petition on July 27, and referred it to the Office of Policy and Program Development for review.

- Meatingplace.com

Study shows beef, dairy could help fight cancer

A new study said that beef and dairy might could help the body fight off fight tumors.

Scientists at the University of Chicago published the study in the journal, Nature, last week.

The study focused on a nutrient called trans-vaccenic acid (TVA), which is not naturally found in the human body but can be found in foods like beef and dairy.

The scientists said TVA plays a role in enhancing the function of immune cells (CD8+ T cells) and supporting immunity against tumors. The study suggested that TVA, derived from our diet, might be a valuable tool in boosting our body's ability to fight tumors, opening new possibilities for cancer treatment.

The study was funded by grants from the National Institute of Health, UChicago Biological Sciences Division Pilot Project Award, Ludwig Center at the University of Chicago, Sigal Fellowship in Immuno-oncology, The Margaret E. Early Medical Research Trust, AASLD Foundation, and Harborview Foundation Gift Fund.

- Meatingplace.com

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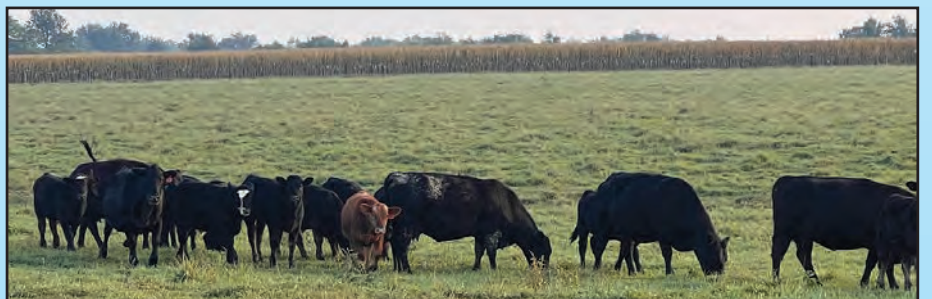
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