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Serving Central & Eastern Missouri & Western Illinois Vol 19, Issue 9 September 2023

Unpacking the Details

A closer look at meatpacker capacity

By CARRIE STADHEIM
Editor, Tri-State Livestock News
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Just a year ago, articles in beef publications industry-wide declared the need for more beef packing capacity. Many companies had plans to construct new processing plants as well as to expand existing plants.

Cattle prices were low. Cattle inventories were dropping.

Some industry experts are saying today that more “shackle space” or “chain space” is not the answer. In fact John Nalivka of Sterling Marketing goes so far as to predict that any new plants that open within the next four years will be “struggling when they open the door,” especially if they are competing with the “big four”

in the industry.

“This occurred in the late ’80s and early ’90s. That’s what’s going to happen when you increase capacity and reduce cow numbers. And then the existing packers buy up the plants that can’t make it, and nothing changes,” he said. “It’s just the economics of the industry, and I firmly believe by having USDA and the government coming in to say “we’re here to help you,” that doesn’t change the economics at all. In fact I’d say it may draw some people in to a comfortable position because the projects are funded by USDA. That’s not really good,” he said.

Nalivka believes that some smaller plants are being built under the premise that fed cattle will be available as needed. He believes that the feeders producing those cattle will sell to the highest bidder in most cases, rather than staying loyal to a certain plant such as a smaller, local

See MEATPACKER, page 3



With the hot days of August almost behind us, area farmers are scrambling to make hay while the sun shines. Here, a Pike County, Mo. farmer uses every last minute of daylight to get ready to bale. (Courtesy photo)

Nelson: Key issue is multi-plant coordination

By CARRIE STADHEIM
Editor, Tri-State Livestock News
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A 2022 Iowa State University study concluded that “multi-plant coordination” for each of the big packers allows them to manage their pricing. In other words, the big packers who own multiple large packing plants don’t view

each plant as a separate financial entity – either successful or not. Rather, they may shutter one plant, but not necessarily reduce slaughter numbers. They can shift slaughter from one plant to another.

Additionally the other packers can benefit from the closure of a plant. (see sidebar on page 3 for the synopsis of the Iowa State

study).

Eric Nelson, a cattle feeder from Moline, Iowa, recalls plants being shuttered recently, and the affect that had on the industry.

Nelson, the R-CALF USA Vice President, calls the activity “creating scarcity.”

See COORDINATION, page 3

Gov. Parsons reminds Missourians state is still in serious drought

Recently, during a listening session for the 2023 Farm Bill with Missouri Producers at the Missouri State Fair, Governor Mike Parson reminded Missourians that the state remains in serious drought. While recent widespread rains have brought some much-needed relief, most of Missouri is still suffering under serious drought conditions. According to the Missouri Drought Assessment Committee, nearly 92% of Missouri is experiencing drought conditions.

“Hot summers are nothing new in Missouri, but this summer, Missouri’s drought conditions are mainly impacting our state’s livestock producers,” Governor Parson said. “While recent rains have helped, they’ve come late in the summer when hay production has already been severely limited and farm ponds have dried up. Most farmers entered the year with depleted hay reserves due to last year’s drought, and their concerns were again echoed today during our listening session with producers

from across the state. More is needed, and we are committed to doing what we can to help our farmers and ranchers facing the effects of continued drought.”

More relief may be in sight, with the National Weather Service predicting below-average temperatures and above-average precipitation for the next few weeks and above-normal precipitation through October. However, because of moisture deficits left by last year’s drought, and the timing of rainfall deficits this spring, the current drought’s impacts will likely linger well into the winter or longer, leaving some farmers and ranchers in desperate need of water and hay for their livestock.

In June, in response to worsening drought, Governor Parson announced the availability of emergency hay and water for Missouri farmers and ranchers. Boat ramps at 25 Missouri state parks and 36 Department of Conservation areas are open for farmers to collect water. Nearly 700 acres were made available

for haying at 17 state parks.

To date, 13 state parks and historic sites have contracted a total of 537 acres for hay. Four parks still have a total of 140 acres available for haying: Wallace, Route 66 and Bryant Creek state parks, and Battle of Island Mound State Historic Site. In addition, the Department of Transportation is offering special overwidth hauling permits at no charge to help farmers and ranchers move hay.

Livestock producers who have been affected by drought may be able to defer gains on livestock

sold to the next tax year or until livestock that were sold are replaced. Provisions in the Internal Revenue Service Tax Code give relief to those affected by weather-related sales of livestock on forms 1033(e) or 451(g). The State of Missouri is coupled with that tax policy, and Missourians can make similar claims on the Schedule F form for state tax purposes. Producers should first consult their financial advisors to see if these provisions would be beneficial for their specific operations.

Missourians are encouraged to

help local, state, and national decision makers better understand drought conditions across the state by completing a survey via the Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR) service at droughtimpacts.unl.edu/Tools/ConditionMonitoringObservations.

Updated drought information, including a link to the national drought conditions reporting survey and a U.S. Drought Monitor map of Missouri, and much more is available at dnr.mo.gov/drought.

– MCA Prime Cuts

Judge cuts ranchers from beef antitrust lawsuits

A federal judge in mid-August ruled that a class of ranchers, who indirectly sold beef cattle to major producers, failed to establish antitrust standing in lawsuit that claims the companies fixed beef prices, according to court filings.

In November 2022, the rancher class joined the sprawling antitrust lawsuit, but the corporations asked the judge to dismiss

ranchers’ claims in February. Minnesota District Judge John R. Tunheim ruled in favor of the large beef producers on August 16.

The ranchers claimed the beef producers caused a collapse in fed cattle prices in 2015, leading to a similar decline in prices of cows and calves. The judge said the ranchers did not clearly explain

how manipulating fed cattle prices affected cow-calf prices.

Tunheim also said the lag between selling calves and producers purchasing cattle weakens the ranchers’ case. The court said the claim required that the ranchers were the target of anticompetitive activity, not suffering indirect or remote injury.

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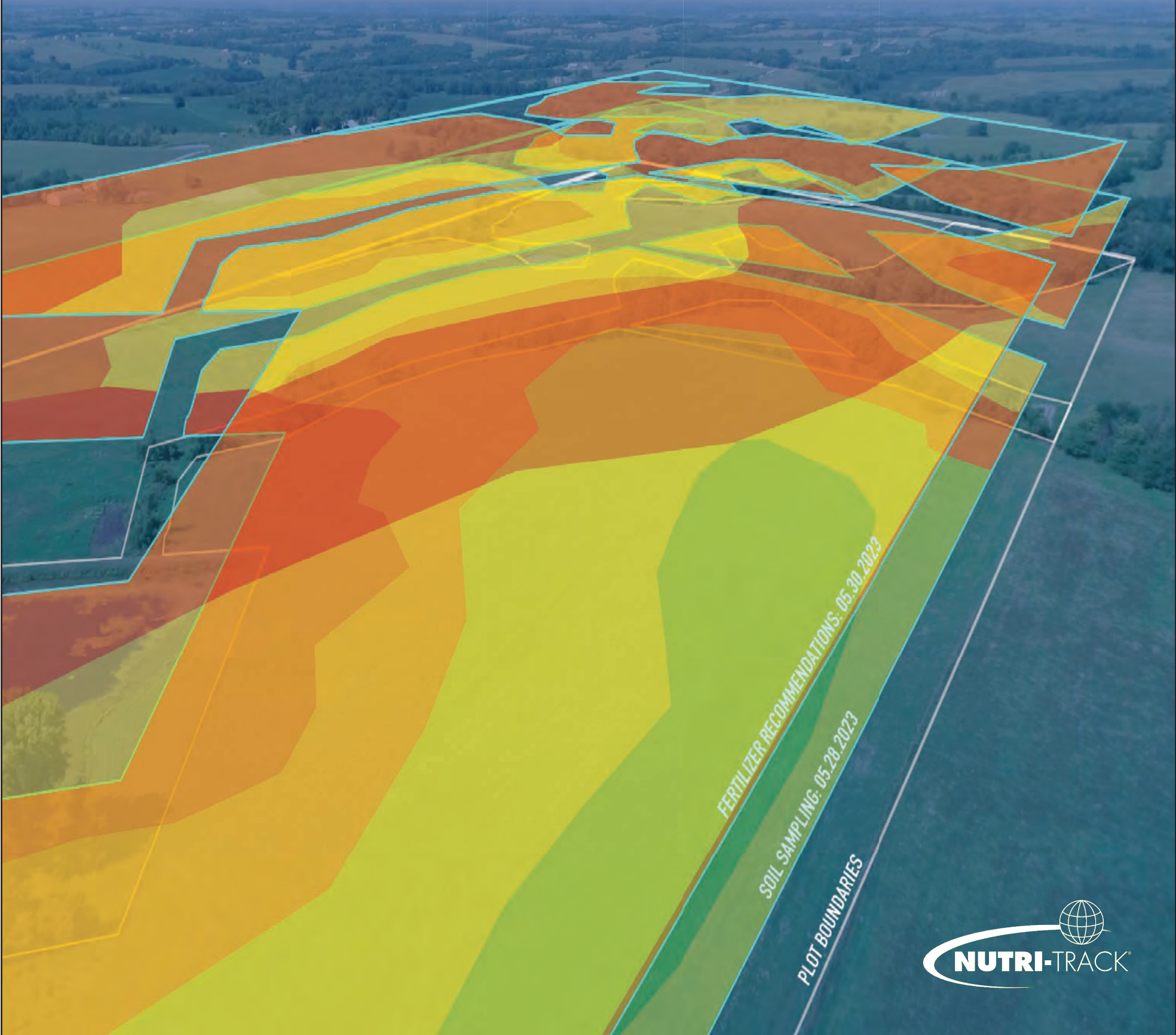


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plant. “When there becomes a huge spread between what the new plant can pay and what an existing (larger) plant can pay and that spread gets wider, the guy selling cattle will go to the place paying the most money,” points out Nalivka.

“Adding capacity to an already over-capacity situation is not a solution,” said Nalivka. “You’ve already seen and heard about proposed plants for sale to be shut down. What everyone is doing right now is very seriously addressing the issue of capacity,” said the Oregon-based market analyst who completed his mas-

Nalivka believes one solution for producers is to get into a mindset that “you are a part of the supply chain.” He said this could include building a database with genetic information about your cattle that you can share with a buyer to help them predict how your cattle will perform.

ters thesis on the economy of scale.

“I’m saying this whole situation won’t go on with packers losing \$100 per head. That’s what they are losing now,” said Nalivka.

“I don’t believe that having

that 80 percent of the capacity in the hands of the 4 big packers is the problem,” said Nalivka.

Nalivka believes the big packers are looking at the profit centers within each plant and may be planning to focus more resources on the areas of the plant that are

COORDINATION from page 1

“They closed the Dennison (Iowa) plant for efficiency. (Referencing a 2015 plant closure.) That really trimmed the overall capacity down to razor thin. Then with the Holcomb fire, we found out what can happen when plants close and there is already barely enough capacity – we lost huge money and packers made record money,” he said.

“They keyword here is coordination. In a highly concentrated industry, they get to decide what everyone else’s margin is going to be. That’s what’s changed, and it would appear they are readying to dictate what the margin will be for producing those cattle,” said Nelson.

“When they control slaughter capacity tightly, and something like the Holcomb fire happens, when there is no resilience in their plan. It doesn’t cost them. They made record profits. A bunch of us (cattle feeders) got cremated,” he said referencing feeders such as himself who had cattle ready to slaughter but were unable to get a bid, and lost hundreds of dollars per head on the cattle when they were finally sold because they cattle were over finished, causing them to take discounts, in addition to the cost of excess feed and excess risk (higher death loss). Nelson said this happened after the plant fire in Holcomb, Kansas and also during the Covid pandemic.

“They don’t want more capacity. They now know during Covid, when we were underwater, when I had cattle ready in April and couldn’t deliver until July, I got crucified because the big four had maneuvered packing capacity down so that there was

no resiliency. If there was a small hiccup, let alone a big one, it’s obvious they don’t pay a price at all. They made record profits by cutting capacity,” said Nelson.

“They want to manage everything in advance, and likely be determining which bulls producers can use,” said Nelson.

In order to make the entire industry more resilient, the re-enforcement of country of origin labeling would be a good start, he said. “The sheep industry has been eviscerated by imports that have replaced all that domestic product. They didn’t have COOL to protect the domestic industry. R-CALF has said for years that the sheep industry is the ‘canary in the coal mine’ and I believe it’s true. With increased imports, processing plants are still needed to further break down the carcasses. But the American producer is no longer needed,” he said.

“The big four packers can’t game the system if we get country of origin labeling laws again. They were in place for almost five years,” he said. More stringent enforcement of the Packers and Stockyards Act, along with updates to better protect individual cattle producers, would be another important step, said Nelson.

“It’s why our country was formed. To have referees so that those who are allowed to operate with tremendous power – like the big four packers – have to operate by a set of rules that doesn’t harm the others in the supply chain,” said Nelson.

Nelson said that often, producers aren’t rewarded for quality. “The packing industry has stated repeatedly that formula pricing is

all about quality, but the areas that have predominantly formula pricing also slaughter the lowest quality cattle so they are really mutually exclusive,” he said. This calendar year, the highest quality cattle have been slaughtered in the north, which is also where the highest amount of cash negotiation goes on, said Nelson. “It’s about market access,” said Nelson. “For example, the big plant down the road from my feedlot is buying mostly pre-arranged cattle.”

“They know what happened when that Tyson plant closed. The lesson is there, it’s in the playbook to cause them to get their margins exactly where they want them. And nothing has happened since then. There is no governance over them now,” said Nelson.

most profitable – the further processing of beef into specialized items such as ground beef patties, branded steaks and roasts. “That’s where the profit margin is. Not necessarily slaughtering more cattle,” said Nalivka. He explains that, for about 10 years now, plants have been expanding their capabilities to further process beef so that they are shipping more and more “case ready” beef rather than primal and sub primal that have to be cut up, sliced, ground, or repackaged in the supermarket or restaurant.

Nalivka believes one solution for producers is to get into a mindset that “you are a part of the supply chain.” He said this could

include building a database with genetic information about your cattle that you can share with a buyer to help them predict how your cattle will perform.

He believes the quality of beef has improved in recent years, which has helped drive demand upward.

“It’s not just quality, it’s consistent quality,” he said. “If I was looking at my own cattle and I had a good quality herd, I’d want to put more numbers to it. Then I can demonstrate to you right here why these cattle ‘of mine’ have the quality,” he said. “I think cattle should be valued on their ability to produce a good eating experience,” he said.

Multi plant coordination in the U.S. beef packing industry

Iowa State University research by Christopher Pudenz and Lee Schulz

Synopsis

“U.S. beef packers openly began employing multi-plant coordination during the last decade. Using the Salop Circular City framework, we demonstrate that this leads to wider spreads between downstream beef prices and upstream fed cattle prices. Taken together with market concentration, geography and transportation costs, alternative marketing arrangements, and cattle cycles and related beef packer capacity utilization, multi-plant coordination helps explain farm-

to-wholesale beef price spreads that have remained wide absent any obvious market shocks. We find that, as cattle inventories decline, a multi-plant coordinator will permanently shut down a plant before a plant run as an individual profit center will shut down, which is consistent with packer behavior in recent years. We further demonstrate that adding a strategically-located packing plant, owned by a different firm, can narrow the price spread. Our results add new underpinnings to ongoing policy discussions.” See the full research findings: <https://www.card.ias-tate.edu/products/publications/synopsis/?p=1343>



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From the Publisher... Jon Angell

As much as I'd like to think every issue we print makes for a great read; I know some are far better than others. I think the content of this one is better than many. I think you will want to set aside some extra reading time. We were able to land some interesting news and information stories. The front-page stories from the Tri-State Livestock News I found particularly interesting.

I ran a couple of extra of some of the regular columnists as I thought they had some very good stuff this month and I didn't want to choose only one at the loss of the other. I also have picked up what I think will be a regular column for us on page 13. The Agribusiness Freedom Foundation led by Steve Dittmer is a think tank promoting free market principles. I find their positions interesting and often thought provoking. I find some of their positions agreeable and some of their ideas rather disagreeable. I find value in their perspectives and what they put forward in policy debates.

As I get into the new work and printing rhythm, I can envision a positive result. Fingers crossed. I think this issue reflects just a bit of the possibilities moving forward.

In the last issue, we were in some of the worst of the drought. After printing the August issues, some general rains fell in much of our trade territory. This was a huge benefit, but for many it came too late. We are still seeing many good cows come to town to be slaughtered. Corn crops and pasture are still set back from their normal potential. Livestock producers are still scrambling to secure feed to get through another year.

I have been scrambling myself to secure feed. I have tried several things to much different results. I no-tilled in some Sorghum Sudan grass and broadcast and harrowed some Teff Grass in a couple pastures early. Both failed.

I tried again with some Sorghum Sudan later in the summer that caught the moisture just right, so that

attempt looks like it will be successful in generating a lot of feed later.

I had intended to grow some corn for silage on a renovated creek bottom field. As the drought looked to set in early, I changed plans and drilled the field to milo, thinking it had a better chance during the dry spell. We had difficulty in setting the drill and put on twice as much seed as needed. It turned out thick and nice, but instead of harvesting the grain, we are mowing it to "wet bale" and wrap it in plastic to feed this winter. It looks great and is producing a whole bunch of feed. I looking forward to seeing how this works.

The other major project I have going presently is a bunk silo. I was going to use this to chop and pack the corn I raised. My nutritionist said something that caught my attention. It was something to the effect of if you ever thought you might want a silo for silage this is the year to do it, "with the price of hay, it could be that silo will pay for itself this year."

But since I switched plans during the drought and grew no corn of my own, I had a halfway built bunk. I



told neighbors it was my version of A Field of Dreams, "build it and they will come."

Sure enough I continued to build the silo and the silage will come next week. I found a neighbor with corn he is willing to sell for silage and what seems like a reasonable price.


I have never fed silage, but I have had several friends and acquaintances that have all encouraged me to give it a try. The general idea is that if you get set up for it few crops can give you the same quantity and quality as consistently as corn silage. The key to the silage as best as I can gather is the set up. A bad set up makes for a struggle to feed it.

The need for concrete was a common theme from several I talked to. That was a HUGE expense for an experiment in feedstuffs. However, my fallback position was that if the whole silage thing didn't work out.... I would have a heck of a start on a perfect machine shed/shop. The concrete would be of value no matter what happened.

We have one of the worst droughts in years and the funny thing is I may go into this winter with more feed put up than I ever have before. The problem however that isn't so funny... the expense of an inventory to feed is going to be a hurdle. Interest and risk are all up. At least while this thing holds together the value of the pounds gained sure is worth a lot more than my cost to put it on. At least that is my plan.

Like I said, plan on spending some extra time with us this month as this issue is packed with what I feel is really good stuff. Thanks again for reading and your support in what we do....





THE Cattleman's Advocate

A monthly livestock magazine serving Eastern Missouri & Western Illinois

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

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Permission to reprint material from this magazine must be obtained from Publisher Jon Angell at:
The Cattleman's Advocate
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P.O. Box 26 • Paris, MO 65275
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The Cattleman's Advocate is currently available free of charge at over 110 locations in Missouri and Illinois. If you would like to receive the publication each month at your home, subscriptions for one year are available by sending \$20 and your name and current address to:

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FARM & FOOD FILE

August reports show continued loss of export markets

By ALAN GUEBERT
For The Cattleman's Advocate

There was a time when the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) August Crop Production report was more feared by American farmers than any paste-colored Soviet leader with a shaky finger near the nuclear launch button.

Now, however, the August report generates more yawns than yips.

So it was again Friday, Aug. 11, when USDA's first detailed look of the 2023 corn/soybean production year confirmed what most farmers already suspected: Almost everyone in American agriculture will be dealing with lower prices, shrinking profits, and tighter belts for much of the upcoming marketing year.

Still even tougher—if not as well-reported—soybean market news arrived the same day in USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service's (FAS) Oilseeds: World Markets and Trade report.

The bad-news portion of that report showed just how little total U.S. soybean exports have moved compared to how far Brazilian soybean exports have soared since the 2020/21 crop year. According to the FAS, this coming year's U.S. soybean exports will extend their four-year slide from 61.6 million metric tons (mmt) in 2020/21 to 49.7 mmt for 2023/24. That 11.9 mmt drop translates into 440 million bu. less U.S. soybeans going overseas this coming year than just four short years ago.

And it's not because the world (principally, China) is



How much more hard evidence do farm groups and Farm Bill writers need before they acknowledge that yesterday's export-directed, revenue insurance-heavy Farm Bills need revision for U.S. farmers to compete in today's changing global markets?

importing fewer soybeans; total year-to-year world soybean imports are pretty stable at 165-166 mmt.

Brazil's simple trick is no trick at all; it just takes market share, almost at will, through price. In 2020/21, for example, Brazil exported 81.6 mmt of soybeans. This coming year, FAS estimates Brazil will export a whopping 96.5 mmt, an increase of 545 million bu.—or 105 million bu. more than the total bushels lost by the U.S.—in the last four years.

Despite that loss, U.S. soybean exports are still in better shape in today's global market than other big American ag exports like corn, wheat, cotton, and milled rice. In a striking and informative Aug. 11 video presentation by farmdocDAILY, Joana Colussi compared 2022 U.S. exports for the four crops to their 2017-2022 average exports.

The results were stark. U.S. corn exports last year were 25 percent lower than their five-year average, wheat's 2022 exports were off 16 percent, cotton down 16 percent, and milled rice down 31 percent. Soybean exports over the same period were as flat as an anvil.

As revealing as those figures are, they are even worse when 2022 U.S. ag exports for all five crops are compared to what American export competitors sold. While our corn, wheat, cotton, and rice exports were headed south, the rest of the world increased its 2017-2022 exports—mostly at our expense—of corn by 10 percent, wheat by 16 percent, and rice by 17 percent.

And our soy competitors? The rest of the world increased

their collective soybean exports by 11 percent over the five marketing years while ours just held steady. (The competitors' cotton exports fell 11 percent while ours was off 16 percent. Worldwide, cotton continues to fall out of favor.)

All these numbers point to two growing worries for the Biden White House, Congress, and U.S. farm and commodity groups.

First, given our coming, more-than-enough corn and soybean crops, sagging exports, and bound-to-slip prices, the Biden Administration will be under increasing pressure to come up with creative ways to boost farm program payments when farm income inevitably slides and election-year politics just as inevitably pick up steam.

Second, how much more hard evidence do farm groups and Farm Bill writers need before they acknowledge that yesterday's export-directed, revenue insurance-heavy Farm Bills need revision for U.S. farmers to compete in today's changing global markets?

And, no, America's days as a major ag exporter aren't over, but its days as the dominant player in the global corn, cotton, wheat, and rice markets likely are even as it clings to its part of the global soy market.

A forward-thinking farm bill would recognize that plain fact even if we choose not to.

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

Nonprofit sues prominent cultivated meat company

Portland, Ore.-based Good Meat Project, a nonprofit supporting conventional meat industry innovation, has sued cultivated meat firm Good Meat and its parent company, Eat Just, alleging several counts of false advertising and violation of the Lanham Act, as well as trademark infringement.

"GOOD Meat, Inc.'s process of creating lab-grown or cultivated food products is the antithesis of Plaintiff's educational and promotional services, which support consumers, farmers, ranchers, butchers, chefs, and other food professionals who engage in meat production and consumption practices," according to the complaint.

The complaint alleges that its consumers may confuse the two organizations, and may incorrectly believe the Good Meat Project endorses cultivated meat, costing the organization business and damaging its reputation within the conventional meat community.

The Good Meat Project, founded in 2014, registered its name as a trademark for use in commerce in October 2022, according to court documents filed in the case in U.S. District Court for the Northern District

of California. The nonprofit also alleges it has "common law" trademark rights on the term "good meat," considering they have used the mark since "at least 2018."

Eat Just established Good Meat with an intent-to-use application in September 2020, but through a series of communications and applications with the United States Patent and Trademark Office, the application did not receive a notice of allowance until April 2022.

The Lanham Act

Additionally, Good Meat allegedly violated an anti-trafficking rule in this federal trademark statute, according to the Good Meat Project, because it used its trademark of the term "good meat" as collateral for a funding agreement in July 2021 — before it received a notice of allowance.

The lawsuit seeks an order to prevent Eat Just and its subsidiaries from using "good meat" as well as exemplary, punitive, and treble damages and attorney fees.

Eat Just told Meatingplace that the company does not comment on active litigation.

— Meatingplace.com

Here are the scheduled advertising deadlines for The Cattleman's Advocate through January 2024:

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November issue **Ad deadline: October 23**
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January issue **Ad deadline: December 26**

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From Our Side of the Fence

By JUSTIN ANGELL
EMCC Owner/Partner

Hello everyone...
Last week was a big week. Tuesday, I signed the papers selling my share of Eastern Missouri Commission Company. On Wednesday, the doctors took a bone saw and cut the bottom of my leg off and replaced my ankle joint with plastic and steel. Of those two ordeals, I’m pretty sure selling the barn hurt the worst.

Fortunately, Nurse Ratchet has a supply of magic white pills that transports me from the hurt zone to cloud nine in only a few minutes. Nurse Kelly has also supplied me with an endless supply of nutrition and ice achieving this with only two slight meltdowns (so far).

As those of you who know me can imagine, my body is in neutral but my mind is going 100 miles per hour.

So now that I’m laid up for a few months I think it’s most important that I keep looking forward and utilize this time to develop a plan for the future and the skills to implement it. So let’s talk about the future.

Thankfully, the drought weather for most of middle America has moderated. The cattle market is still incredible and should be strong for many many months.

I’ve privately told people that by next spring we’d see grazing calves at \$4 cwt. I was wrong. It’s beginning to happen now. 600 lb steers bring either side of \$3 and big yearling steers mostly \$2.40 or more.

Opportunity may still reside in bred females. Cow prices are up but have not skyrocketed to the elevated levels calves and feeders have. According to cattle cycle history, the cow prices will outrun the current market soon, certainly by spring grass.

If you have feed and the room; buy ’em now.

Although we have relief from a drought this week, the heat index has been off the chart. I want to throw a shout out and a big thank you to my daughter Savannah, son-in-law and little Paisley. They are currently struggling calving my fall cows. Hang on cowboys it’ll cool down soon.

On a different topic since I’m required to “keep my toes above my nose” for 2 weeks I’ve watched a lot of TV. I’d recommend 3 movies/shows

- 1) In theaters – Sound of Freedom
- 2) Netflix – “Quarterbacks”
- 3) Netflix – “Suits”

I guess this is all for this month.



Beef packer margins at worst point since 2018: DLR

A new batch of data and analysis has reiterated the present struggles in beef processing.

According to the Daily Livestock Report, cattle slaughter for the final week of July was down 7.1% from the same period last year, with fed cattle slaughter down 6.5%. For all of July, it's estimated that Saturday slaughter was down 50.3%.

The lower slaughter numbers, DLR explained, are "perfectly reasonable," given that "packer margins are now at the lowest point they have been in five years."

Packer and feedlot margins were further underscored by the latest Sterling Beef Profit Tracker, which detailed reversing fortunes for the two industries.

Packer margins for the week ending July 29 were -\$101.95, versus -\$81.48 the week before, \$104.42 the month before, and \$220.30 a year ago; in the last year,

packer margins have fallen more than 146%.

Feedlot margins, meanwhile, have skyrocketed: A year ago, feedlots earned \$83.04 a head, but last week, the margin was \$442.92, an increase of 433%. A month ago, feedlot margins were at \$434.13.

In an analysis of the Oklahoma cattle markets, Professor Derrell Peel of Oklahoma State University noted that the current price of 500-pound steers “is just 8% below the record,” and that with heifer residual supply so low, “higher prices are ahead.”

– Meatingplace.com

Missouri ponders concerns about meatpacking discharges and waste

Missouri is contending with concerns about discharges and waste from meat processing facilities.

The state is reviewing a request from Missouri Prime Beef Packers to discharge treated wastewater into the Pomme de Terre River, according to KCUR, an NPR outlet in Kansas City.

The company is asking to be allowed to release 350,000 gallons daily into the southwest Missouri river instead of its current practice of using the waste as a fertilizer.

The Missouri Coalition for the Environment and the Sierra Club are urging state environmental regulators to deny the request involving a river already tainted

with E. coli, according to the story by the Missouri Independent.

Separately, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources has scheduled a hearing for Aug. 21 in Macon on a proposed holding basin for waste from meat processing plants.

Arkansas-based Denali Water Solutions is looking to open a four-acre lagoon in a rural area in Randolph County to hold up to 18 million gallons of dead animal material, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch is reporting.

Area residents expressed concerns about possible odors and discharges at a June meeting with county officials.

– Meatingplace.com

Ground broken on \$4M meat processing plant in small town in Minnesota

Construction has begun on a roughly \$4 million meat processing plant in Waubun, Minn., a town of about 400 that currently lacks a grocery store.

A groundbreaking event was held Wednesday for the USDA inspected livestock processing facility, which will be run by Benson and Turner Foods, the Grand Forks Herald reported.

Business owner Paul Benson relayed how work to get the processing plant off the ground hit a rough spot when friend and business partner, Doyle Turner, died of complications from COVID-19 in September of 2021.

“I guess perseverance pays off,” he told the newspaper.

His company was awarded a USDA grant of nearly \$1 million in December to help build the facility, which will butcher about 30 beef a week, according to AgWeek.

The facility expects to put up to “80% of the consumer’s beef dollar in the hands of the beef producer. So this could make a dramatic change,” Benson told AgWeek.

The plant is expected to open June 1, 2024, and will include a storefront with a full-service meat counter.

– Meatingplace.com

Consumers expect inflation to recede in coming months: U of M survey

Consumers continue to expect that inflation will recede in the coming months, according to a survey from the University of Michigan.

Consumer sentiment in August remained largely unchanged compared to July, with minor fluctuations within the index. Although consumers didn't notice significant shifts in the economic landscape compared to the previous month, they did recognize substantial improvements compared to three months ago.

Expectations for inflation over the next year slightly decreased from 3.4% in the previous month to 3.3% this month, show-

casing remarkable stability over three consecutive months.

This reading remains higher than the 2.3-3.0% range observed in the two years leading up to the pandemic. Long-term inflation expectations also held steady at 2.9%, consistently staying within the narrow 2.9-3.1% range for 24 out of the last 25 months. These expectations are higher than the 2.2-2.6% range seen in the two years before the pandemic.

The sentiment index stood at 71.2 points, which is a 42% increase from the record low in June 2022.

– Meatingplace.com

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It’s The Pitts...

Mr. Chips

By LEE PITTS
For The Cattleman’s Advocate

It's no accident that in my dictionary the word "help" comes after "hemorrhoids" and before "Hell" as the following story will illustrate.

The man I call Mr. Chips made his millions with exactly that... chips. And I'm not talking Ruffles with ridges, no, I'm referring to computer chips. He used a week's worth of interest income to buy a small "ranchette" that bordered part of a ranch we leased and he was the best, and the worst, neighbor we ever had. He had a new chain link fence installed between us and made a pest of himself wanting to help whenever we'd let him. The problem was he was raised on the pavement and the closest he'd ever come to a cow was the milk in his morning Cocoa Puffs.

Mr. Chips learned everything about the cow business from binge watching Yellowstone so he thinks all ranchers do all day is have torrid romances and play cowboys and Indians.

On his way to becoming a cowman Mr. Chips ordered some checks from the bank with the name of his 20 acre spread on them: "El Rancho Grande". He paid me to make him a silver buckle with his brand written in gold: CHIPS. He ordered a cow branding iron with letters five inches high and I worried that his calves, if he ever had any, wouldn't be long enough for the brand to fit. He purchased a new 4 horse slant trailer that was 32 feet long and cost north of

Mr. Chips learned everything about the cow business from binge watching Yellowstone so he thinks all ranchers do all day is have torrid romances and play cowboys and Indians.

\$100,00 and to pull it he bought a Peterbuilt he didn't know how to drive, nor did he possess the necessary license to do so.

We let Mr. Chips buy lunch for several of us every day and the hefty price we had to pay was having to listen to him recite his cowboy poetry. Maybe we praised him too highly because the next thing we knew Mr. Chips reserved a room in Elko and started wearing gaudy wild rags and designer neon boots. Despite never having swung his leg over a horse before he bought a 22 year old nag that fully funded the retirement plan of a local horse trader of questionable repute.

Within the first week of his being a rancher Mr. Chips asked me to teach him how to rope and ride in preparation for branding season which was less than a month away. The first thing I told him to do was quit wearing his custom-made American flag shirts because we didn't know if we were supposed to rise as one, put our hats over our hearts and sing our national anthem every time he entered the room. I also told him to lose the peacock feather in his new Stetson that he wore straight out of the box.

One week prior to our branding Mr. Chips asked, "Would this be a good time for you to teach me to ride and rope?"

"Maybe we'd better save that for another day."

"Well then, what can I do to

help?"

"I'll tell you what Mr. Chips, why don't you bring a pot of beans for the lunch?"

I could see disappointment in his face but on the day of the branding Mr. Chips showed up with a pot of beautiful beans. I should have known something was amiss because the beans were bubbling like a Yellowstone mud pot and they weren't even over a fire. But they tasted good and Mr. Chips was proud to tell everyone he'd cooked them.

Ours was an all-day affair as we gathered cattle in the morning and went back to work after the noon meal to brand the calves. At least for a little while we did until one by one the ropers slid off their saddles in gastrointestinal distress and the ground crew was hunting for brush they could squat behind.

We only got half the calves branded and henceforth Mr. Chips didn't dare show up at another branding. Not long after he sold his ranch for twice what he paid and moved back to Silicone Valley where, I'm told, he entertains his rich friends with his poetry while wearing all his cowboy garb. He insists everyone call him "The Computer Cowboy".

As for me, I put up a big sign at the entrance to the ranch that reads, "NO MORE HELP WANTED!"

– www.LeePittsbooks.com

Restaurants see uptick in beef sales during stressful times

Bret Thorn, a food editor for Nation's Restaurant News, in his recent column, provides a bit of context for the results of a recent Purdue University College of Agriculture survey showing consumers want to eat beef.

Restaurant-goers are currently acting "a bit recessionary," Thorn says, which obviously means they're responding more strongly to value pricing offers. "But less intuitively it also means that they're interested in beef."

Even with the price of beef continuing to increase.

The longtime food and beverage trend tracker says that during times of economic, political or weather upheaval events, consumers engage more frequently in "emotional self-care." And when money is tight, that often means splurging on a "nice meal."

In America, a "nice meal" translates into an uptick in beef sales. Thorn sites anecdotal as well as hard numbers — results from recent quarter earnings calls. Ribeye steaks, for exam-

ple, are now one of the top-selling items at BJ's Restaurants, and Shake Shack reported that their luxury white truffle burger was a major driver of sales in the first half of 2023.

– Meatingplace.com

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

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WTO rules against China in U.S. tariff dispute

The World Trade Organization (WTO) has ruled against China in a trade and tariff dispute with the United States.

The dispute dates back to 2018, when the Trump administration placed levied 25% tariffs on China-imported steel and 10% on Chinese aluminum. China responded with a 25% tariff on 128 U.S.-made products (including pork), and shortly after, levied another retaliatory tariff on 106 additional products – including beef and soybeans.

The U.S. filed a complaint with the WTO, and in the ruling, the organization sided with the U.S., stating that China's retaliatory tariffs were "inconsistent" with current trade regulations.

"Pursuant to Article 19.1 of the DSU, the Panel recommends that China bring its WTO-inconsistent measure into conformity with its obligations under the GATT 1994," the organization stated.

In a statement to the Wall Street Journal, China's Commerce Ministry said it is studying the WTO's conclusions and will "follow up in accordance with WTO rules." The ministry also called on the U.S. to lift its steel/aluminum tariffs, and said the entire 2018 dispute began with the "unilateralist and protectionist behaviors" of the U.S.

The American Farm Bureau Federation released a statement that is is "pleased" with the ruling. "Agricultural trade is necessary for food security around the world and should not be endangered by retaliation for unrelated concerns," stated AFBF President Zippy Duvall.

– Meatingplace.com

MU Extension offers self-paced series on vegetable production

University of Missouri Extension will offer a self-paced "Conventional Vegetable Production Series" this fall.

"We know vegetable growers are busy," says MU Extension horticulturist Justin Keay. "Many hold an off-farm job in addition to their on-farm responsibilities. We recognize that offering content to growers in multiple formats is the best way to reach our audience. This includes offering in-person workshops, webinars and, now, our first offering of a self-paced class series."

The self-paced series includes access to 21 recorded classes, scheduled office hours and course materials. Topics include planning, fertility, insects, weeds, diseases, produce safety and crop-specific classes on 12 of the most-grown vegetable crops in Missouri.

"This class series will provide current and aspiring growers a solid foundation of knowledge covering the most critical concepts of vegetable production," says Keay.

Register at <http://muext.us/CVPS>.

Access to course materials is available until Nov. 20.

For more information, contact Keay at 573-324-5464 or justin.keay@missouri.edu.

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El Niño could bring wetter weather pattern in next three to five years

By COLLEEN SCHREIBER
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of Livestock Weekly

NORMAN, Okla. — In the cattle market, there are the basic fundamentals of supply and demand and then there are uncontrollable factors like the weather.

For the last 20-plus years much of the U.S. has been in persistent drouth, what some weather prognosticators refer to as “mega drouth.”

It now appears that in the next few years not only will the fundamentals in the cattle market favor cow-calf operators, so too could the weather. Better yet a more favorable wet pattern is likely to stay in place for some 20 to 30 years.

That was the gist of what Matt Makens, Makens Weather, shared at the recent Oklahoma Cattlemen’s Association convention.

Makens trained under Art Douglas, CattleFax’s weather guru for 20-plus years. After Douglas retired a year or two ago, Makens took over that slot. With a formal education in atmospheric science and a professional background in communications, Makens has other ties to CattleFax dating back to its start in the 1970s.

Topper Thorp, CattleFax’s first CEO, was Maken’s mentor. Young Makens was just a starting out in 4-H and livestock judging. Even back then Makens loved learning about the weather and though Thorp suggested to the young kid that he needed to work for someone like CattleFax, weather became Maken’s chosen path.

Little did he know then that he would not only fulfill his wish to work in weather, but also Thorp’s desire for him to work with CattleFax in the cattle industry.

As a kid, weather in general interested Makens but that interest grew as he learned about how weather has long impacted history. He pointed to the War of Independence when George Washington used the cover of darkness and a thick fog to get across the island of Manhattan.

“That’s a weather event that changed the world,” said Makens. “Had that fog not been there the British would have decimated what was left of his army.”

In 1274 and 1281 the Mongols tried to invade Japan, and every time the typhoon storms or the kamikaze “divine winds” sank countless ships and killed hundreds of thousands of people and ultimately saved Japan from invasion.

“That’s another weather event that would have changed the course of time,” said Makens. “Then there was Napoleon who got stuck in a blizzard that killed so many of his men.”

In the 1870s the Signal Corps began. It was the first real rudimentary try at predicting the weather to warn about pending storms. When the biplane was

It now appears that in the next few years not only will the fundamentals in the cattle market favor cow-calf operators, so too could the weather. Better yet a more favorable wet pattern is likely to stay in place for some 20 to 30 years.

invented, it was used to launch balloons to look at the weather from above and during WWII, D-Day would not have happened if not for the ability to have a weather forecast ahead of time.

“They had to time the moon, the tide and the weather,” said Makens. “Weather really took off for meteorologists during WWII.”

He also said had it not been for embedded meteorologists providing ground truth so that aircraft could fly during a specific two week window into a specific airfield, U.S. Special Forces would never have been able to catch Saddam Hussein off guard and pull him out of his hole.

“Weather events change the world,” Makens reiterated.

During the Cold War, the space race with the Russians brought the invention of satellites. It is because of advances in technology that weather forecasting has continually gotten better and better, he said. He likened weather forecasting to an engine with a bunch of gears.

“It’s my job to figure out the gears and how they work together and apply that to a forecast,” Makens told the group.

He added that there is never a perfect forecast. Rather it’s about minimizing the error. He also stressed that everything pertaining to weather needs to be put into perspective.

“Lately we hear about the record heat across the South and the West,” said Makens. “Give me perspective. Give me the history. Is it really changing things or are we just blowing up smoke? Perspective is everything.”

He also contended that when it comes to weather, perspective has been lost. As an example, he pointed out that of late everyone has been talking about the record rainfall that much of Oklahoma has received. Yet long-term records indicate it’s actually average. Makens, however, reiterated that it comes down to perspective.

“It doesn’t really mean anything until it gets down to county level data,” he stressed.

There are definitely counties in Oklahoma that have been drier than average, but in recent months moisture has started to increase to the West as the weather pattern transitioned from La Niña to El Niño.

Makens said that transition can be smooth, but often it is abrupt, and this year appears to be one of those years.

“Starting in late May through June we really had a tremendously strong El Niño environment,” Makens told participants. “Today that window has narrowed a bit, and some other factors have taken over.”

He shared some data on tornadoes as well. During La Niña years, the risks of tornadic events are much higher. With El Niño those risks are lower. Some contend that tornado alley is shifting, and Makens agreed that as we eventually shift out of this 20 to 25 year pattern of persistent La Niña’s and move to a wetter period, the risk of tornadoes will shift further to the southeast towards Mississippi.

Turning then to the forecast, he told the group that the last couple of weeks corn has been the big stressor, particularly in Iowa, and whether timely rains would come.

“Pollination is pretty much done,” said Makens. “We’ll see what the result is here in a week or two.”

As for the August forecast, Makens said the intense heat will remain across the South. Later in the season that heat will get sent up to the Rockies and on into Canada and then back down to the northern states, the upper Midwest and the Corn Belt.

As for precipitation, without a strong El Niño rains will be hit or miss, Makens said. And in fact, in terms of the strength of this El Niño he predicted that it’s not likely to be very strong. His models indicate this year’s El Niño will be similar to 1987, 1991-92, 2002-03 and 2009-10.

With a weaker El Niño the amount and where the water falls really shrinks. He reiterated again that it’s all about perspective.

“We all get excited when we hear El Niño, but a weak El Niño for the Osage and the Flint Hills is not something to really get excited about,” said Makens.

See WEATHER, page 15

COF report shows no sign yet of beef market bottom

Last week’s Cattle on Feed report showed that cattle and calves on feed for the slaughter market in feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 11.0 million animals as of Aug. 1, 2023, coming in 2% below levels on the same date a year ago, and below expectations, according to analysis by Daily Livestock Report.

The August survey came in “just outside the lower range of pre-report estimates,” the DLR said, following a July report that was at the very low end of estimates, as well.

Cattle placed on feed was down more than 10% year-over-year in several states, including California, Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

Placements in feedlots during July totaled 1.62 million head, 8% below 2022. Marketings of fed cattle during July totaled 1.73 million head, 5% below 2022.

Continued shrink in the size of the beef herd promise continued high prices, especially heading into the fourth quarter.

“In recent years, fourth quarter beef demand has been a positive note for the industry. Beef as part of the holiday selection menu will likely remain a staple even as relative prices of whole turkey and ham are attractive. We expect that trend to continue and could provide some upward momentum for beef and cattle prices in the short term,” the DLR said.

– Meatingplace.com

ERS study takes in-depth look at beef cow-calf farms

The U.S. beef cow-calf industry showcases a diverse landscape, encompassing both small and large operations devoted to beef calf production, according to a recent report by the USDA’s Economic Research Service.

The study looks at various aspects within the industry, covering structural composition, financial metrics, utilization of advanced technologies, management practices and different production systems.

From 1997 to 2017, the industry saw a slight reduction in the number of cow-calf operations, coupled with a notable shift toward larger-scale operations. The study drew on data from the National Agricultural Statistics Service’s Census of Agriculture and the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) spanning 1996, 2008, and 2018.

Key findings from the report indicate that specialization in cow-calf production observed a progressive increase from 1996 to 2018. Although the use of advanced record-keeping systems experienced growth during the

years 2008 to 2018, the adoption of advanced breeding technologies, production systems and specialized services remained relatively consistent. Geographical variations also emerged, with the Southeast and Southern Plains regions hosting more cow-calf operations, while larger scale operations were predominantly located in the Northern Plains and West regions. Cow-calf/stocker and cow-calf/finisher operations exhibited distinct characteristics compared to those solely focusing on cow-calf production.

The report also highlighted that operations with larger beef cow inventories displayed higher rates of adopting advanced technologies and management practices, along with lower total economic costs per cow. In terms of farm typology, commercial farms — characterized by substantial income and distinct ownership structures — displayed a greater inclination towards adopting advanced technologies compared to rural residence or intermediate farms.

– Meatingplace.com

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Livestock News & Notes.....

Worker dies at N.J. processing facility

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is investigating a fatal accident that occurred at United Premium Foods in New Jersey in late July. The incident happened at around 1 p.m. July 28 when a woman fell into a food processing machine, according to a CBS affiliate report.

In a statement, United Premium Foods CEO, Ken Mayer, confirmed the incident and offered condolences to the victim's family. Mayer said the company is fully cooperating with the investigation.

The identity of the employee has not been disclosed.

United Premium Foods is known for producing and packaging various food items, including Italian meat, cured and smoked meats, as well as mass-producing pet food. Additionally, the company provides cold storage services for its customers.

Vilsack urges Brazil to beef up BSE reporting

USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack urged Brazil to improve disease reporting after the country recorded two cases of atypical bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) two months after the positive tests. Most nations report the disease findings within days.

In a letter penned to the Brazilian government, Vilsack said the country needs to improve reporting because other countries would be handicapped in preventing further disease spreading due to the lag.

“It is for this reason that I urge Brazil in the strongest terms, to continue its progress in streamlining timely animal disease reporting,” wrote Vilsack, later adding, “I propose a call between us to further discuss this matter.” Vilsack said in a letter, which he posted on his social media feed.

The U.S. opened its markets to import fresh meat from Brazil in 2016. Earlier this year, China temporarily suspended exports from Brazil after a Brazil reported a case of atypical BSE.

China lifted the ban about a month later.

Brazilian consultancy Agrifatto estimated 140,000 to 150,000 metric tons in missed beef exports from Brazil to China due to the embargo. Consultant firm Datagro Pecuaria estimated that beef packers lost between \$20 million and \$25 million per working day.

Tyson to close four poultry plants

Tyson Foods announced the closing of four poultry plants during its Q3 earnings call Monday morning.

The move is an attempt reduce costs in the wake of declining demand for chicken, market conditions and higher feed costs.

The company said it will shut down four smaller plants in North Little Rock, Ark.; Corydon, Ind.; Dexter, Mo.; and Noel, Mo.

The plant closings by early 2024 will bring the number of Tyson chicken operations to shut down within a year to six following the closings of two facilities in March of 2023.

“Plant closings will continue to be evaluated and (the company) still has capacity to meet demand,” King added.

Tyson officials said it would move the work performed in the plants to newer facilities that are closer to its customers, but declined to say how many employees were affected, according to a Reuters report.

When asked if Tyson is considering closing beef or pork plants to address challenges for those proteins, King said, “We’re evaluating everything. There are more tailwinds than headwinds for chicken in the near term.”

The company also recently laid off employees in Chicago and South Dakota who declined to relocate to Tyson’s headquarters in Arkansas as part of the company’s OneTyson policy.

Brazilian meat lobby: Illegal deforestation harms its image

Illegal deforestation of the Amazon is harming Brazilian meat producers by contaminating their supply chain, the Brazilian Beef Association (ABIEC) told Reuters.

A majority of deforestation in Brazil occurs illegally on public property, according to Fernando Sampaio, sustainability director for the beef lobby, the wire service reported on Thursday.

The Amazon “should be a heritage of all Brazilians, but there are smart people who end up going there and appropriating it privately. The first thing people do is [put] a cow there to hold that land,” Sampaio said.

The illegal deforestation harms the industry’s reputation and prompts markets to shut Brazil out as consumers demand tracking of raw-material origins to curtail climate change.

Brazil and seven other Amazon countries ended a summit on Wednesday without agreement on a specific goal for ending deforestation, multiple news outlets including Reuters reported.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva had urged the region to unite behind a policy of ending deforestation by 2030, a goal he has embraced.

A U.S. Senate panel in June reviewed allegations that Brazil’s largest beef processor disguises its use of cattle raised on deforested Amazonian land.

The Greeley, Colo.-based global chief sustainability officer for JBS told lawmakers in June the meat giant has “zero tolerance” for producers who hide the origin of cattle.

Seaboard Foods will not settle remaining antitrust lawsuits: SEC

Seaboard Foods will take its chances in court regarding allegations it, along with other pork producers, conspired to fix prices, according to a recent SEC filing from the company.

Seaboard Foods, which reached a \$9.8 million settlement with the direct purchaser plaintiff class (DPP) in June, said it intends to defend the claims from other class plaintiffs. The DPP class was one of four classes suing pork producers for alleged anticompetitive actions.

Late last year, Minnesota District Court Judge John Tunheim ruled to consolidate 27 cases involving 146 parties. The pork processors involved in the lawsuit control more than 80% of the wholesale pork market.

“Seaboard believes that it has meritorious defenses to the claims alleged in these matters and intends to vigorously defend any matters not resolved by the above settlement,” the filing said. “It is impossible at this stage either to determine the probability of a favorable or unfavorable outcome resulting from these suits, or to reasonably estimate the amount of potential loss or range of potential loss, if any, resulting from the suits. However, the outcome of litigation is inherently unpredictable and subject to significant uncertainties, and if unfavorable, could result in a material liability.”

The growing problem of meat cargo thefts

The following is an excerpt from "Eastbound and Down," an article in the August issue of Meatingplace.

On May 25 of this year, three defendants pleaded guilty to what state and federal investigators described as a “sophisticated organized criminal enterprise.” It involved dozens of intricate thefts across six states, more

than \$9 million in stolen goods, and possible prison sentences of 10 years. The stolen items, though, were not jewels, big-screen televisions or automobiles; they were cargoes of frozen meat.

In the last two years, there have been numerous, high-profile thefts of meat cargo, including: \$100,000 from a JBS facility in Iowa; 37,000 pounds from an unnamed processor in Nebraska; and \$750,000 from Gibbon Packing Co. in Grand Island, Neb. According to analytics firm CargoNet, food and beverage were the No. 1 targeted commodity in cargo thefts in 2023’s second quarter, and overall cargo thefts were up 57% from Q2 2022.

“There’s a golden rule with cargo thieves, and that is they will steal what they know they can sell,” says Scott Cornell, the transportation lead and crime theft specialist for Travelers insurance. “They do that based on what’s in demand, what’s the scenario going on, and what are people spending money on. It’s a very simple formula.”

And for numerous reasons, according to Cornell and other experts, meat products are an attractive target for cargo thieves, who exploit specific weaknesses in the U.S. supply chain to orchestrate their thefts. Processors, though, are hardly powerless. Through heightened communication and careful planning, those same experts explain, cargo thieves can be stopped.

Learn all about this emerging issue in the August issue of Meatingplace

Tyson sends meals to Maui to help in wildfire aftermath

Tyson Foods on August 22 said it is donating more than 100,000 pounds of protein, or 404,000 servings, to help people affected by the wildfires that devastated Maui and surrounding areas.

Tyson will send the product to

Hawaii-based retail customer Foodland Supermarket for distribution to area nonprofits such as the Maui Food Bank and Hawaii Food Bank.

The wildfires burned more than 2,500 acres across multiple historic towns, destroying homes and businesses and killing more than 110 people, with hundreds more still reported missing.

Local chefs responded by volunteering their culinary skills to form cook teams and prepare Tyson products for the community.

Other processors to have assisted relief efforts in Maui include Hormel, whose Spam brand has donated cash and product with a retail value of more than \$1 million to directly help those affected by the wildfire.

Three men sentenced in \$9M interstate meat-theft ring

A judge handed down prison sentences for three Miami men, who pleaded guilty to federal charges in a case involving a \$9 million interstate meat theft ring, according to court records.

Yoslany Leyva Del Sol, 38, Ledier Machin Andino, 37, and Delvis L. Fuentes, 39, each received two years in federal prison on charges of transporting stolen goods.

Prosecutors dropped charges of money laundering after the men pleaded guilty in May.

Police arrested the men in October with three tractor trailers with \$550,000 in stolen merchandise. A probe uncovered about 45 thefts across Nebraska and in Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota and Wisconsin during the prior year.

Each suspect faced up to 10 years in prison, but federal prosecutors recommended two years with cooperation from the suspects.

Many of the preceding items were taken from Meatingplace.com

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Fighting to strengthen America’s food security

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

Over a decade ago, R-CALF USA began warning the U.S. cattle and sheep industries that the sheep industry was the canary in the coal mine. Where the sheep industry is going, so will go the cattle industry.

The first chart I used to demonstrate the plight of the sheep industry was created in 2012. It showed that since the early 90s, U.S. lamb production had been declining drastically. But at the same time, lamb imports from Australia and New Zealand were exploding year after year.

It was the year 2006 which R-CALF USA declared as the year the U.S. sheep industry became the first livestock sector in America to be outsourced. The proof was that in 2006, American consumers ate more foreign lamb than the beleaguered domestic sheep industry could produce. That year foreign lamb imports exceeded domestic lamb production.

We cried wolf! But no one listened. Instead, they said we were just a bunch of radicals trying to establish relevance in a world when globalization was king, and every new free trade agreement was touted as America’s next economic savior.

Well, we might have been a bit hard-headed, or perhaps we just thought we were right, but either way we updated our sheep chart each year and presented it to Congress, the Administration, and to the cattle and sheep industries. The updated charts showed the situation for the sheep industry was getting progressively worse – domestic production continued to drastically decline, and imports continued to skyrocket.

USDA guidelines for ‘free range’ not good enough: animal-welfare groups

The USDA’s recent effort to strengthen guidelines for labels including “humanely raised” for meat is positive, but doesn’t go far enough, animal-welfare groups said in recent comments to the USDA.

Any definition of “pasture raised” or “free range” should mandate the poultry breeds come from genetically healthier strains equipped to be outdoors, Farm Forward argued to the USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS).

“A revised definition that requires farms to use breeds or strains of poultry with higher-welfare genetics more accurately reflects consumer expectations for the term,” according to the Portland, Ore.-based group.

A majority, or 64% of U.S. adults believe “pasture raised” means slower-growing chickens with unrestricted access to pasture, according to the Farm Forward, citing a 2023 survey conducted with research firm Data for Progress.

That’s despite the fact that most U.S. poultry is produced with fast-growing strains, often

Even in the face of exceptionally strong demand for lamb as American consumers began consuming more and more lamb, imports captured all the growth while domestic production continued falling.

Still, no one listened. So, what do you do when that happens? Well, you either quit or you fight harder. We chose the latter.

In early May, we called an emergency sheep meeting to develop a strategy to Save American Lamb, which is the name of the project we undertook on behalf of the sheep industry.

We decided we would petition the U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC) to initiate what is called a Global Safeguard Investigation under the Tariff Act of 1974 to seek relief from mounting imports. To be successful in obtaining such import relief such as tariffs, tariff rate quotas, or some type of quantity restrictions, we would have to prove that the sheer volume of imports were a substantial cause of serious injury to the U.S. sheep industry.

And so, we immediately set out to prove that and after three months we completed a comprehensive research paper that we submitted to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative on August 3.

What we submitted was a Petition for Relief to Save American Lamb, and we believe the petition meets our burden of having to prove that imports are a substantial cause of the serious injury the U.S. sheep industry is experiencing.

Here are some highlights:
-The U.S. sheep industry has declined 62% since 1980; and with only 5 million sheep, we now have the smallest sheep

inventory in history.

-The number of full-time American sheep producers has fallen 60%.

-Lamb and mutton imports primarily from Australia and New Zealand have increased 2,363% in dollar value and 543% in quantity.

-Today, 74% of the lamb consumed in America is derived from foreign soil and all the increases in domestic consumption over the last several years have been met with imports – meaning imports have captured 74% of our domestic market away from domestic sheep producers. That means that Americans are now dependent on foreign supply chains for this important staple.

-We found that foreign imports do not have to meet America’s higher production standards. For example, the poison compound 1080 is widely used in Australia and New Zealand to kill predators, but it has been all but banned in the U.S. due to environmental concerns.

-We also found that the global sheep market is severely distorted by three factors: First, is because foreign imports do not have to meet America’s higher sheep production standards. Second, the global sheep packing and processing industry is highly concentrated. And third, the much weaker value of the Australian dollar versus the U.S. dollar allows foreign imports to severely undercut the value of domestic lamb for no other reason than misaligned currency values.

And with all this, the domestic sheep industry has been hard-hit by inflation, which has driven up fuel and feed prices and the cost of virtually all inputs.

Our goal is this: to stop the ongoing destruction of our domestic sheep industry and to provide an opportunity for it to reestablish a dominant market share position so American consumers no longer have to rely on foreign supply chains for this important protein.

Thus, we are fighting to strengthen America’s food security.

Consumer preference for beef keeps plant-based ‘alternative meats’ a niche product

Consumers don’t yet embrace meat alternatives as better than beef from cattle.

So says the July round of research from Purdue University’s Consumer Food Insights Report, which found further that plant-based, not other meat alternatives (lab-grown, cell-cultured), ranked higher than beef in consumers’ minds only on animal welfare.

Other than that, beef held higher esteem in everything from environmental impact to taste, the research found.

“The biggest takeaway from our alternative meat questions is that consumers still overwhelmingly prefer beef from cattle across a wide range of product attributes,” said the report’s lead author, Joseph Balagtaas, an ag economics professor at Purdue and the director of the school’s Center for Food Demand Analysis and Sustainability (CFDAS). “This result reinforces the fact that plant-based meat remains a niche product.”

While cell-cultured meat has not yet hit the market, the Purdue study highlights that marketing — and, in particular, the naming of a new product or technology — can influence consumer perceptions of the product.

The USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service has used the term “cell-cultured” in its recent directives on these products. “There is potential for some tension if food companies find that a term like ‘lab-grown’ markets better,” Balagtas said.

CFDAS’s survey-based report assesses food spending, consumer satisfaction and values, support of agricultural and food policies and trust in information sources. Purdue experts conducted and evaluated the survey, which included 1,200 consumers across the U.S.

Other main findings included that consumers who are most satisfied with their food consumption spend the lowest share of their incomes on food, and nearly three of every four Americans generally continue to report that their food satisfaction is thriving.

– Meatingplace.com

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Man Up

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

Restoring our 90-year-old ranch house has been a demanding 14-month project, but the end is near. In mid-January, a gust of wind blew me from the second story roof to the first story to the driveway thereby fracturing my femur. My leg was pinned and screwed, and I was walking within 24 hours, but complete recovery will take time.



On the bright side, tackling this project meant spending 56 weekends working alongside the four of my grandkids who will be moving into our family homestead on Pass Creek when we are finished.

Liam, the 11-year-old, and Henry who is nine, are now accomplished skid steer operators eager to attack anything

Contrary to the wealthy, white, socialists who coined this racist term, white privilege has nothing to do with the color of one's skin.

needing skid steered plus things not needing skid steered. For example, most of last year's snow around the barnyard never melted, it was plowed, plowed and re-plowed until it just wore out and left on its own. Their enthusiasm is impressive.

Last weekend, we were pouring concrete for post supports and this required hand mixing 80-pound bags of concrete in a wheelbarrow. I knew involving family in this project was fitting and proper when I heard six-year-old Conor arguing with Nora, his seven-year-old sister, that it was his turn to mix the concrete. Apparently, after shoveling hundreds of pounds of bat guano from the attic, hand mixing concrete in the driveway is a dream job. My grandkids will remain blind to their white privilege until social science classes in college teach them to hate America.

Contrary to the wealthy, white, socialists who coined this racist term, white privilege has nothing to do with the color of one's skin. Rather, it is a degrading term city people use to diminish the value of country folk who embrace manual labor. To the elitists, cleaning toilets, shoveling concrete, building houses, pulling calves, irrigating sugar beets and combining wheat is the menial work of the little people.

To the contrary, introducing your young children and grandchildren to the great equalizer of hard work foils the socialist's attempt to shape them into sheep. Parents must get involved.

Moms for Liberty and Moms on a Mission are telling the elites to get their hands off the American children. The momma bears are furious government schools are sexualizing impressionable small children when

they are at the age where they should be shoveling concrete. This brings me to my point. Where are the dads? There should be a take-no-prisoners Dads for Liberty group. There isn't because half the dads are Democrats who are so feminized, they are practically lactating. Lose the man-bun and skinny jeans because it is time to man-up and raise your families rather than letting government head your household.

For three decades, Krayton

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.

Tyson may sell China poultry business

Tyson Foods Inc. is looking at the possible sale of its China poultry business, according to published reports citing people close to the U.S. meat company.

Springdale, Ark.-based Tyson plans to sell the business and has hired Goldman Sachs Group to advise on the sale, Reuters first reported, based on three insiders.

Tyson's China poultry business generates about \$1.1 billion in annual sales, according to one of the people the wire service spoke with.

The process is in its initial stages with some interest from private equity, according to people with knowledge of the matter, Bloomberg News reported on Thursday. Tyson may determine it wants to keep the business, those people told the media outlet.

Tyson this month said it was

reviewing all operations and shutting four additional poultry plants in the U.S. as it looks to cut costs after a disappointing third quarter.

Tyson opened its first factory in China in 2001, and runs a regional headquarters in Shanghai, according to the company's website. Tyson Foods China includes three R&D centers, seven processing plants and dozens of breeding farms for chicken, cattle and pigs.

In May, Cargill agreed to sell its poultry operations in China to private equity firm DCP Capital.

Tyson did not respond to requests for comment.

— Meatingplace.com

Congress on break, but sparring over EATS Act continues

While members of Congress are on recess until September, a heated debate over legislative efforts to overturn California's Proposition 12 is not taking a breather.

Republican senators including Iowa's Chuck Grassley and Roger Marshall of Kansas in June introduced the Exposing Agriculture Trade Suppression (EATS) Act.

The lawmakers made their move in responding to a U.S. Supreme Court decision in May upholding a California ban on the sale of pork, veal and eggs from animals whose housing conditions violate the state's standards.

Attorneys general from 16 states last week penned an appeal to House and Senate leaders for federal legislation "to fix Proposition 12," California's voter-approved measure.

"The EATS Act prevents states like California from regulating farmers and ranchers nationwide, by preserving the right of states and local government to regulate agriculture within their jurisdictions," wrote Brenna Bird, Iowa's AG and her counterparts in 15 other states.

Others argue those opposed to the animal-welfare restrictions are making much ado about nothing, and caution EATS could bring on unintended consequences.

According to a new report from the Center for a Humane Economy, the EATS would not only unwind two state referendums, but per analysis from a team of legal analysts at Harvard University, it would also undo more than 1,000 other state laws, states.

Additionally, the report argues that a diversified U.S. pork production sector can already meet the "modest demand" created by state mandates passed by voters in California and Massachusetts.

The industry has been in transition since Florida banned the use of gestation stalls in 2002, and is already equipped to supply gestation-stall-free pork to both states, according to the report's findings.

Nearly 40% of breeding sows are in group housing systems instead of gestation stalls, and California and Massachusetts together will need 6% of total U.S. pork production, according

to the analysis.

In a statement to Meatingplace, the NPPC reiterated its opposition to Prop 12, and support of the EATS Act:

"Once again, animal rights extremists are promoting mistruths that support their agenda. The facts are that California Proposition 12 is not science-based, will increase a farm's environmental footprint and creates conflict with our trading partners. As a result, this flawed law will increase prices and shrink supplies of an affordable and healthy protein for families inside and outside California, forcing consolidation within the livestock sector and the loss of family farms. That is why NPPC supports finding a legislative solution to Proposition 12 to prevent state and local governments from interfering with the production of agricultural products in other states and preserving consumer choice."

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Native warm season grasses help feed livestock through drought

The drought in Missouri has taken a toll on cool-season grasses, diminishing forage for cattle and other livestock.

“Native warm-season grasses are the ideal forage for summer during the production slump of cool-season grasses due to heat, especially in a drought,” said Rusty Lee, University of Missouri Extension agronomy field specialist.

Lee says now is a teachable moment. While they take one year for establishment, warm-season grasses (WSGs) can be lightly grazed in year two and fully grazed in year three and beyond.

“When I ask them, producers say they want high forage yields, which warm-season grasses provide in spades,” said Lee. “They want forage growth without the risk of toxins, such as fescue toxicosis in cattle. They want a long stand life, not having to replant every three to five years. They want animal performance, and they want a system that is cost-effective. Warm-season grasses check all those boxes.”

Lee said warm-season grasses do not need to be a wholesale replacement of cool-season grasses in pastures, but producers should try it for the many benefits.

Those who have tried like it and have increased WSG acres on their farms, Lee said.

Plan ahead

“WSGs get a bad rap because they take one to two years to establish,” Lee said. “Allocate one year, and, depending on your pastures, do dormant winter seeding or spring seeding.”

“Embrace herbicide usage to help control the old cool-season grass stand. Warm-season grasses are very tough and resilient, but the roots grow first and weeds tend to shade them out. The seedlings, at first, are weak. The goal is to leave the pasture alone for the first year after planting and not graze it.”

To prepare, graze your cool-season grasses close this fall, he said. Before it’s dormant, spray with a glyphosate herbicide – generally in October. Seed can be drilled in the spring. Expect a four-week window for emergence. Before emergence, weeds should be controlled with an additional application of glyphosate.

“I recommend planting a mix of Indiangrass, big blue and little bluestem — heavier on the big blue,” Lee advised. “These three species have tolerance to an additional herbicide, imazapic, that when tank-mixed with the spring glyphosate application gives some residual weed control.”

Broadcast the seed in winter dormancy or no-till drill it. When planting warm-season grasses in the spring, remember to make the second application

Native warm-season grasses are the ideal forage for summer during the production slump of cool-season grasses due to heat, especially in a drought.

of glyphosate after the cool-season grasses green up, then drill WSGs at the end of April to early May.

“Keep in mind, WSG seed is expensive – up to \$300 an acre,” Lee said. “And soil test now in time for fall.”

There is an establishment cost of not grazing during the first year, but subsequent years’ production will more than make up for it, Lee stressed.

WSG seed availability varies as demand consumes supply. “So get your seed order placed now.”

Lee recommends soil testing to determine what fertility amendments are required. If lime additions are necessary, an application this fall will fit perfectly with seeding the following spring. The seed and your effort are valuable, so take the time to understand the drill settings for planting depths and seeding rate calibrations to ensure a successful stand.

Weed control, seeding depth and seeding rate are the three most common factors determining success or failure, he said.

Use of established WSGs depends on the species. They’ll be at their peak late May through early September, then dormant after a winter freeze.

Cost share

There are several cost-share programs available through the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

“Each agency’s programs are different, and some can fit producers needs better than others,” said Rachel Hopkins, MU Extension ag business specialist. “Contact your local NRCS/SWCD office to find out about their cost-share programs for native forages. For programs offered by MDC, contact your local private lands conservationist. Before choosing a specific program, producers should evaluate the offerings to find one that best fits their needs.”

Each program has pros and cons, Hopkins said. “Farmers can think about this as an opportunity to build resilience in their forage program. Native warm-season forages grow well during the peak of summer heat. Many people will be renovating pastures at considerable expense. The cost-share programs incentivize farmers to try something new in their operation.”

There are lots of ways people can get creative to use more of what they have, said Hopkins.


“Producers can start looking

for value where no one else sees any,” she said. “This can be grazing ditches, ‘weeds’ such as broomsedge, which is great feed. It doesn’t die, is not hard to graze out, but it does have to be managed.”

Lee said that warm-season grasses, once established, will produce a lot of tonnage for your cattle and small ruminants.



GOING NATIVE: Katahdin sheep grazing Indiangrass, big bluestem, little bluestem mix during D3 drought in Truxton, Mo. (Photo by Rusty Lee)



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In light of pocketbook reality, turmoil might come before enlightenment

By STEVE DITTMER
Executive Vice President
Agribusiness Freedom Foundation



There’s nothing like a dose of pocketbook reality to engender some doubt among citizens about so-called “conventional wisdom” or “everybody knows” or, these days, “progressive” movements. The price of gas, food, insurance, electricity and inflated prices for nearly everything, has begun sifting into most people’s minds. Of course, those sentiments follow the thinking of many of us since about January, 2021. As was pointed out in a recent radio show, energy and interest rates pretty much factor in everything modern society functions on. So the left’s concerted effort to make energy prohibitively expensive and pump trillions into the economy boosting inflation and interest rates are working well enough that perhaps even the most oblivious -- what Rush used to call the “uninformed” -- are becoming aware of the sources of our troubles.

seem to have a faster impact on company policy from the inside if the top executives are more responsive to social trends and fear being pilloried by activists on social media. Response to shareholders takes more time. If federal government incentives, disincentives, regulations and subsidies join in, things can get out of hand faster than we realize. Ford laying off engineers and executives in internal combustion engine departments already and states outlawing the sale of gasoline engine vehicles in a few short years defies all common sense. But “progressive” furor, government regulations and government subsidies have persuaded auto manufacturers that there is no

follow the orthodoxy and two, by the time many executives reach the CEO suite, they are a few years from retirement and don’t want to create a ruckus, get fired and lose their pensions. Huntsman said adhering to ESG and DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) ideologies has created the goal of “appearing right-

eous” as important as producing profits. At the same time, the terrific progress businesses have made in the last 50 years to improve efficiency and productivity is ignored by the naysayers. Producing the same amount of carbon emissions as in 1970, we produce much more electricity, transport and drive many more miles, produce more goods more efficiently and have grown GDP by 30 times, Huntsman said. Huntsman is one of a growing number of folks willing to speak out that while the climate may be shifting, there is no “climate emergency.” Regulating and taxing Americans to attempt to achieve


arbitrary, unfounded climate goals is a fast way to kill innovation and kill production of the fossil fuels we need until valid replacements are found. Corporate CEO’s don’t talk about American exceptionalism, American free markets, he said. “The more you travel around the world, you see the progress we’ve made here. No place has come remotely close to what we’ve done in this country, and it seems like people almost want to avoid talking about that.” And yet, our political elite are intent on following the paths that socialist-Communist- Marxist systems have proven over and over do not work.

There are a host of similar stories from panicky EV owners getting locked inside cars with dead batteries, getting towed because charging stations were inoperable, cars that won’t charge in really cold weather, ranges that shrink drastically in certain situations and discovering a dead cell phone can be a bigger problem than they knew.

We began writing about the “woke” ESG (environmental-social-corporate governance) movement infiltrating major corporations in the spring of 2021. There are many regular, average Americans who rely on financial institutions and publicly held corporations to generate income for their retirement income, pensions, investment funds and living expenses. They have begun jerking back corporate executive suites to the concept of putting fiduciary interests of shareholders and satisfaction of customers ahead of “woke” social movements and wish lists of inexperienced employees. Even Larry Fink, the wiseacre who runs Blackrock and supports the social justice scoring system the big corporations fear to offend, has evidently heard the clamor from the street far below. He has acknowledged soft pedaling his insistence that the whole world must heel to the ESG movement because ESG has gotten “too political.” That’s like saying wading in the ocean at the seashore has gotten “too wet.” Using government edicts to achieve ends the electorate has not voted for is kind of political. Strident yelling at corporate annual meetings to try to force ends and methods that are not designed to achieve economic, business or profit-making goals must, therefore, be political. In fact, in recent months, shareholder resolutions at annual meetings have less often involved ESG and DEI goals as shareholders have gotten tired of indulging far left ideologies that are designed to wreck or hobble companies and industries. Huge corporations are complex things. Young millennials in public relations departments and as employees at some companies



future in gasoline engines. Stellantis, once known as Chrysler, Dodge and Jeep, is already planning to start restricting the number of Jeeps it ships to California and like states because they don’t want to be stuck with inventory in dealerships that won’t be allowed to sell them. But the recent admission by Ford’s CEO that getting out of town very far in an EV is fraught with difficulties was an interesting event. There are a host of similar stories from panicky EV owners getting locked inside cars with dead batteries, getting towed because charging stations were inoperable, cars that won’t charge in really cold weather, ranges that shrink drastically in certain situations and discovering a dead cell phone can be a bigger problem than they knew. You see, the only way to unlock certain EV’s when the battery goes dead is some app on a cell phone. What if you’re out of cell coverage range? Who knew? In an industry like the meat business where the weather and the consumer keeps everyone so close to reality, it is hard to understand how major Fortune 500 corporations can become so lost. A story in this weekend’s Wall Street Journal sheds some light. Much of the story concerns the lack of scientific and economic proof for the climate change revolution that has taken over government and many corporations. The question is, how did this happen? Peter Huntsman, chairman and CEO of an international chemical company his father, Jon Huntsman Sr. founded over 50 years ago, gave two reasons from his experience dealing with CEOs of major corporations. One, the fear of a “vociferous, branding, cancellation attack” if one doesn’t

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The core of farming

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

Imagine spending a day immersed in what you think is an absolute environment of pure joy and pleasure. Oh wait, I do not need to envision this because I just lived it.



Recently, I was fortunate to be asked back to judge the Oliver County Fair Junior livestock show in North Dakota. This showing world is one that our family has enjoyed for the past 17 years, and in fact I have been a part of the livestock exhibition world for my entire life. But quite honestly, I enjoyed this event more than any I ever remember. Nothing really special happened and yet everything that happened was special.

Young people paraded their hogs, goats, sheep and beef cattle in front of me. I had to remind the grandparents several times, particularly in the showmanship divisions, that this would not be a quick process because I was there to get to know the kids and learn about their projects. I did visit with each kid who exhibited an animal every single time they came into the ring.

This would be a great time to remind everyone of a quote that has been used by livestock judges for years, although the original author is not known for certain, it hits the nail on the head: “We are not using the kids to make the livestock better, we use the livestock to make the kids better.”

Upon reflection of the day, there were really several reasons it was such a special event. First off, it was a complete escape from the troubling issues we face in the world today. Instead, the weather was ideal and families were all calmly working together to showcase their projects. In addition, I visited with kids that were rooted, confident and committed to finding their own way in life. As I visited with each one of them, they expressed how much fun they were having, how much they enjoyed working with their animals and how much they were looking forward to the future.

Let’s face it, it is not an easy time to be a teenager with a daily barrage of headlines about young people who may have lost their way, but this group of young livestock enthusiasts were anything but that. I must also mention that I had a great showing of young men who were not sitting back letting the young women run away with the show. Far too many of our youth groups today are completely dominated by

“We are not using the kids to make the livestock better, we use the livestock to make the kids better.”

dedicated young women. Being the dad of three strong, independent young women, I get that. In Oliver, there were young women battling for the top spots in each class, but particularly in showmanship, the young men were in contention and won half of the species.

I mentioned to Rick Schmidt, the Extension educator who runs the show, how well all the kids get along. This was an open junior show so 4-H members from all counties were welcome to exhibit at this fair. Schmidt told me that he gets quite a bit of grief because he refuses to make it a series point show and, in his opinion, that keeps the families coming back that seek a great environment for their kids instead of just a cut-throat competition. I am as competitive as anyone but I feel that in far too many cases we have parents that have lost sight of what the real purpose of the activity is supposed to be.

To give you a glimpse of the show, here are the goals I had as the judge: Encourage youth to have a positive outlook about being part of the keystone business responsible for feeding humanity. Remind them how important they are to all of our futures. And finally, more selfish in nature, I get a hard-core refresher course about the importance of what I do when I am away from what I love most. Being away from home is only justified by the fact that I am fighting so that everyone in rural America can continue making a living in the best family business anyone can be engaged in—farming and ranching.

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

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Legislators pitch a new COOL bill

Harriet Hageman, a Republican congresswoman from Wyoming, has introduced the Country of Origin Labeling Enforcement Act of 2023.

The bill, co-led by Representative Ro Khanna (D-Calif.), would bar beef retailers from labeling foreign beef as an American-made product by defining U.S.-produced beef as coming from animals “exclusively born, raised, slaughtered, and packaged in the United States.”

The bill would fine processors \$5,000 per pound of beef illegally labeled as “made in the USA.”

“Beef is a key product of the American West, and enhanced country of origin labeling guidance is vital to protecting small-scale farmers and ranchers that

must compete with mega meat-packing conglomerates,” Hageman said. “Clarifying what it means to be ‘made in the USA’ will give consumers greater confidence in what they feed their families, support local farmers and economies, and crack down on deceptive labeling practices by the big four meatpackers.”

The Biden Administration in March announced a proposed rule that would allow the voluntary “Product of USA” or “Made in the USA” label claim to be used on meat, poultry and egg products only when they are derived from animals born, raised, slaughtered and processed in the United States.

The current rule allows for products to use the labels if the

animals were processed in the U.S., regardless of where they were raised.

The Biden proposal received immediate backlash from industry and from Canada, who contend the bill, while voluntary, would ultimately discriminate against cattle traded between the two countries and Mexico, and cost thousands of jobs.

Hageman’s bill has received bipartisan support in the House, as well as from groups such as R-CALF, US Cattlemen’s Association, and Farm Action Fund.

“Labels should clearly say where food comes from,” said Joe Van Wye, Farm Action Fund’s policy and outreach director.

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Livestock economist gives cattle price and herd rebuilding outlook

By LACEY VILHAUER
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of High Plains Journal

Scott Brown, a livestock economist at the University of Missouri, spoke at the recent Cattle U event in Manhattan, Kansas, on the historic low cattle numbers and opportunities within the market for optimal cattle prices.

“2023 is actually the first year beef production has declined since 2015, and it won’t be the last year of the decline,” Brown said.

Although summer rains have lessened drought conditions for much of the High Plains, many areas are still experiencing dry conditions. Brown said a consequence of the drought has been an offset of economic incentive for herd rebuilding.

“I don’t think this rebuilding experience will be like what we came through in 2014 and 2015,” he said. “I don’t expect to see the same quick build up that we saw back then. We had a record profitability in 2014. Even though we might have record cattle prices

today, we don’t have record profitability. The cost side of the equation looks a lot different.”

Furthermore, Brown said as good as prices are today, they are expected to go even higher in the future. However, as prices increase, he is concerned it could cause a consumer shift away from beef due to high prices in the grocery store.

“When do they decide that’s too high?” Brown asked. “What’s happened in the past may not be the best predictor of what’s happening going forward.”

Brown said when consumers walk up to the meat case, they look at the price of beef, then check the price of pork, then find the price of chicken. They make their shopping decision based on those relative prices. The question is, if and when will they substitute pork or chicken for beef.

“My concern is at some point there could be a switch, and I think if it’s a switch, it’s a hard switch,” Brown explained. “There’s nothing gradual about consumer behavior. I think we could have very high beef prices

and frankly, it’s not going to change consumption very much. But if we all of a sudden see consumers make a big switch, it could be very difficult to get that market back.”

Predicting consumer purchasing trends has become complicated, partly due to COVID-19 and the anomalies created by stimulus checks and lockdowns. In 2020, consumers purchased differently than they probably would have without the stimulus money injected into the economy, so beef continued to be on their shopping lists. Now that the checks have stopped and the economy is still struggling for consumers, Brown wonders what the future will hold

if beef prices continue to rise. Although he does not know what to expect as far as consumer response, Brown does have cattle number predictions.

“My estimate of Jan. 1, 2024, is slightly more than 28 million beef cows, that will be below 2014 numbers,” he said. “However, we are so much more productive today than we were in 2014 and 2015. We’re producing a lot more calves out than we did just a few years ago.”

Even if we continue to move out of drought, beef cow numbers will still be low because input costs are still so high.

“I think hay is going to stay fairly tight for us, which means

we need higher cattle prices, for the sake of profitability.”

As far as beef cow slaughter, Brown said year to date we are down a little more than 11%. In 2022 there was a remarkable amount of beef cow slaughter, so even though slaughter levels are down, Brown said when he looks at the big picture, slaughter numbers are still above average compared to normal years. Although cattle prices are high and will continue to rise, risk remains. With the high operating costs, inflation and unknown consumer response during recession, cattle producers should be cautiously optimistic for the future, but prepared for more curveballs.

Smithfield targeted over odors at St. Charles, IL plant

New complaints of foul odors from neighbors living near a Smithfield Foods processing plant in St. Charles, Ill., prompted a U.S. congressman to seek assistance from two federal regulatory agencies.

Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-Ill.) sent letters to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and an official at USDA last week calling for separate inspections of the Smithfield facility, which produces dried sausages and has about 500 employees. Krishnamoorthi noted in the letters that complaints from neighbors and St. Charles officials were on the rise, concerns that also were raised

during a July meeting of the St. Charles City Council.

Smithfield representatives told those who attended that meeting that it has taken steps to mitigate the odors, which were being caused by meat in wastewater and other liquid waste that is processed at the company’s treatment facility each day, according to a report from Shaw Local News Network.

“We fully understand the concerns with odor associated with our wastewater system in St. Charles and are working to be sure we are doing our part to mitigate any odor issues,” a Smithfield spokesperson told Meatingplace in an email. “It is

important to note that the last complaint was more than three months ago,” he added.

Illinois EPA also visited the facility this spring and noted that the plant’s odor control system appeared to be operating properly without any odors, the statement said. Smithfield installed an odor control system at the plant earlier this year and invested more than \$350,000 toward odor neutralization and system setup, the statement noted.

Smithfield also is in “constant communication” with St. Charles officials and plans to reach out to Rep. Krishnamoorthi with more information on the situation.

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CDC links persistent strain of salmonella to chicken

Federal health authorities are pointing to a persistent strain of salmonella in poultry as behind numerous outbreaks.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention labels strains of bacteria as persistent when they cause illnesses over months or years.

Salmonella infantis REPJFX01 “is a leading strain of salmonella found in chicken produced in the United States,” the CDC said on a new web page.

“In the past, REPJFX01 has spread to people through contaminated chicken in the United States and through exposures through international travel,” the agency said in a post last week.

Through 2022, data on 2,900 people infected with the multi-drug resistant strain had been reported to PulseNet, according to the CDC. Those sickened reside in all 50 states, and illnesses were first reported in 2012.

The median age of patients was 54, and 62% were female, with cases occurring year round but most common in July and August.

The USDA in recent days extended its deadline for comments on its proposal to declare salmonella as an adulterant in breaded and stuffed raw poultry products.

– Meatingplace.com

WEATHER from page 8

excited about,” said Makens.

He also reminded that El Niño and La Niña weather patterns are dictated by changing ocean temperatures. Makens said that the ocean temperatures have signaled the change from a La Niña to an El Niño, but the atmosphere lags a bit.

“When the ocean and the atmosphere pop together we will have a full on El Niño,” said Makens. “Give it another month or two.”

He also noted that an El Niño increases the risk of cold weather for Oklahoma. If it’s a strong El Niño, that cold punch is typically delayed until January whereas with a weaker one, the cold is spread out over the entire winter beginning in November and carrying on into the new year.

“Watch out when calving,” said Makens. “With El Niño, the cold tends to be much colder.”

A normal El Niño typically lasts 12 to 18 months. However, many meteorologists are predicting that this one will fade out next year.

“I anticipate it lasting for one season and then fading away,” he told participants.

Makens reiterated that the biggest impact on the cattle industry over the last 20 to 25 years has been La Niña.

“She will not go away. Drouth has constantly come back.”

He predicted that one more La Niña is likely and then that pattern of persistent drouth should turn a corner likely in the next three to five years or certainly by the end of this decade.

“If it doesn’t happen by then, I will be scratching my head.”

Makens also stressed that it all hinges on changing temperatures in the Atlantic.

“If history repeats itself in the Atlantic, we’ll see more frequent surpluses and less frequent drouth.”

Finally, Makens reiterated that the wetter pattern historically lasts 20 to 30 years. Hopefully, that will enable the cattle industry to finally fully recover and replenish numbers in a significant way.

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Cattle producers direct NCBA action on cell-cultured protein products

Recently, the members of the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) passed a directive at the NCBA Summer Business Meeting to continue the association’s advocacy efforts on transparent labeling and inspection of cell-cultured protein products.

“Cattle producers are not afraid of a little competition, and I know that consumers will continue choosing real high-quality beef over cell-cultured imitations,” said NCBA President Todd Wilkinson, a South Dakota cattle producer. “Our priority is ensuring that consumers accurately know the difference between real beef and cell-cultured products through transparent and accurate labeling. We have already been successful at engaging the U.S. Department of Agriculture to conduct robust

inspections and oversight to protect food safety.”

This directive was brought forward by the Tennessee Cattlemen’s Association, California Cattlemen’s Association, and Florida Cattlemen’s Association and passed at the Summer Business Meeting. All policies passed at this meeting will be forwarded to NCBA’s general membership for a full vote in the fall. This grassroots policy process ensures that NCBA’s policy positions reflect the views of cattle producers.

Background

Earlier this year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS) issued two grants of inspection to companies producing cell-cultured chicken imitation products. These grants of

inspection permit companies producing cell-cultured products to sell their products in interstate commerce. While no cell-cultured imitations of beef have received a grant of inspection, we are aware of several companies attempting to create these products.

• NCBA previously advocated for USDA oversight of cell-cultured meat and was pleased to see FSIS inspecting these products as opposed to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). USDA inspections occur more frequently and hold these companies to a higher food safety standard. Moving forward, NCBA will be urging Congress to set labeling requirements, so cell-cultured products are clearly distinguishable from real beef and to prevent confusion or misrepresentation about these products.

Major beef supplier to US decimating Nicaraguan rainforests, documentary says

Ranchers in Nicaragua are illegally trashing rainforests to raise cattle that ends up in US supermarkets, according to a documentary funded by Leonardo DiCaprio.

The film PATROL, financed in part by the actor’s nonprofit Re:wild, tracks an effort by indigenous groups to stop ranching in the Indio Maíz Biological Reserve.

More than 70 community members have been killed and

thousands displaced by ranchers ignoring the rights of indigenous people to the land, the filmmakers allege.

The US exports about \$12 billion of beef annually, but also purchases from nations including Brazil and Nicaragua, according to the USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service. Nicaragua was the sixth-biggest foreign exporter of fresh beef to the US last year.

Nicaragua in 2020 vowed it

would monitor its cattle suppliers amid reports of ranchers violating indigenous rights and quickening deforestation in the country.

In a statement provided to Meatingplace, Industrial Commercial San Martin, members of the Nicaraguan Chamber of Beef Exporting Plants (CANICARNE), denied Nicaraguan Beef Industry is linked to the purchase of cattle from protected areas, such as the Indio Maíz Biological Reserve.

Smithfield to lay off 92 in Missouri this fall

Smithfield Foods said it will lay off 92 employees in northwestern Missouri this fall, according to a company notice filed late last week under the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act.

The layoffs, to begin Oct. 8, are related to the dozens of sow farm closures that Smithfield

announced in May, spokesman Jim Monroe confirmed.

The company didn’t specify in the most recent WARN notice which facilities were affected, but noted their location in Lucerne, Princeton, and Newtown counties.

Smithfield has 132 company-owned farms and 109 contract farms in Missouri, and operates a

hog processing plant in Milan, Mo. Excess supplies, low demand, high input costs and low prices have combined to gut the North American pork market this year, forcing major contraction. Canada’s Olymel and HyLife are other notable companies to have closed pork facilities this year to help rebalance the market.

NCBA member and Missouri cattle producer testifies in support of Black Vulture Relief Fund

On July 27, National Cattlemen’s Beef Association member and Missouri cattle producer Charlie Beshar testified before the House Natural Resources Water, Wildlife and Fisheries Subcommittee in support of the Black Vulture Relief Act. Beshar, the chairman of NCBA’s Property Rights and Environmental Management Committee, shared how predatory black vultures take a toll on cattle producers’ livestock and livelihoods.

“Black vultures play a role in the ecosystem, and cattle producers have no desire to eradicate the species, but to continue managing them under such a restrictive system is ludicrous. The species is abundant across the continent, and no longer a conservation concern. These birds are extremely vicious predators and their attacks on cattle are devastating, both emo-

tionally and financially,” said Beshar. “As a cow-calf producer who has invested for years in voluntary conservation in Missouri, I’m proud to testify in support of the commonsense Black Vulture Relief Act. On behalf of NCBA and the thousands of producers who are losing cattle each year to black vultures, I urge Congress to pass this legislation to give farmers and ranchers more tools to protect their livestock.”

After 50 years of federal protections, black vultures now number 190 million strong and are an abundant species across the country. Even though a growing number of producers lose calves each year to black vulture depredation, the current framework for lethal take is overly restrictive and burdensome.

Introduced by Rep. John Rose (R-TN) and Rep. Darren Soto

(D-FL), the Black Vulture Relief Act is bipartisan legislation that would allow cattle producers to take vultures without a permit, when there is an immediate need to protect their livestock from injury or death. Currently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issues black vulture depredation permits to states and states issue sub-permits to producers, but these permits only allow for take of three individual animals per year. Given that black vultures can attack multiple times a month in flocks as large as 50, the current permits are completely insufficient to address the problem. Black vulture numbers are also on the rise, and they attack cattle in a particularly vicious way, usually targeting calves hours or even minutes after birth.

The Black Vulture Relief Act is also supported by numerous NCBA state affiliates.

Registration open for 50th Missouri Governor’s Conference on Agriculture

The Missouri Governor’s Conference on Agriculture is coming back to Tan-Tar-A Resort in Osage Beach, Missouri. for its 50th celebration of agriculture. Today, the Missouri Department of Agriculture announced registration is open and the event is set for Nov. 16-17.

“Agriculture remains the backbone of our state’s strong economy,” said Governor Mike Parson. “At this conference, you will hear firsthand how our administration’s priorities are making a lasting impact and bringing greater opportunities to farm families and communities. Together, we are moving Missouri forward, and we are not done yet.”

Missouri farmers, ranchers, agribusiness leaders and aspiring agriculturalists are invited to enjoy the robust program, which will include a commodity outlook, awards luncheon and nationally recognized speaker line-up. The Best of Missouri Grown reception will also return Thursday, Nov. 16.

“I’m proud to serve alongside Missouri farmers and ranchers and always love this opportunity to come together,” said Director of Agriculture Chris Chinn. “We hope these two days provide valuable information, connections and optimism as agriculturalists move their operations and agribusinesses toward 2024.”

The Missouri Agriculture Awards will honor two individuals who are leaders in Missouri agriculture education and food animal veterinary medicine. To nominate a leader for a Missouri agriculture award, visit Agriculture.Mo.Gov/awards.

Conference registration is required and is now available here.

Members of the media planning to cover the Missouri Governor’s Conference on Agriculture should contact Christi Miller for additional information and media registration.

For more information about the Missouri Department of Agriculture, visit the Department online at Agriculture.Mo.Gov.

A record: 48,083 wings, 24 hours

Americans do love their wings — especially, it seems, in Wyoming.

On National Chicken Wing Day (July 29), Laramie-based food truck operator Weitzel Wings, known locally at Double Dubs, set a new world record for the most (by number) chicken wings sold within a 24-hour period, besting the previous record by nearly 20%. Selling out of four food trucks outside a brewery in Cheyenne, Double Dubs recorded a total of 48,083 wings sold, according to a report by the Wyoming News Now news ser-

vice. The wing-slinger also topped the previous world record for the 8-hour category, selling 28,049 wings in the shorter period.

More than 3,000 fans lined up to aid in the effort, despite a downpour, according to a write-up by Fox News Digital. The haul represented more than about 6,400 pounds of poultry, altogether, served by a crew of about three dozen cooks, servers and runners.

Note: Double Dubs serves blue cheese dressing only with its wings — no ranch!

– Meatingplace.com

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Leading the way: Whatever happened to the Judas goats?

By MEGAN ULU-LANI BOYANTON
ambrook.com

Named for leading their fellow livestock into slaughter, these betrayers aren’t as common as they used to be. But they’re still around.

In the American meat processing plants of yesteryear, sheep destined for dinner plates didn’t follow humans to their final destinations. Instead, they trailed behind aptly named Judas goats, trained to “betray” other livestock by leading them to slaughter.

In a move meant to keep the sheep docile, the plant’s live-in Judas goat would receive training to routinely lead the flocks to their fates like a four-legged pied piper, stepping aside after completing the job — and often earning a reward of a cigarette to munch.

With a bell around its neck and tobacco in its belly, the goat would carry out its duty, time and time again at the slaughterhouses of the 20th century. The Judas goat’s harsh moniker was given because it leads fellow animals to their deaths, though today’s agriculture experts would be more likely to characterize them as leaders.

Today, its legacy lives on as they and other lead animals continue to herd on smaller scales nationwide.

By 2023, the practice of training goats to lead animals at abattoirs had somewhat fallen out of vogue, due in part to higher consolidation in the meatpacking industry that forced smaller players out. Still, from Texas to Hawai’i, farmers and government officials rely on Judas goats and other lead animals for duties that humans can’t fulfill.

The Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park on the Big Island currently serves as home to three Judas goats — the final agents of an effort first launched in 1981 to protect the local ecosystem, said park spokesperson Jessica Ferracane.

Because goats are considered invasive and destructive mammals on the islands, the government tried to rid them from the park in the 1980s through fencing and other methods of removal. The park staff’s initial success meant only around 250 goats remained, but they lived in small groups across remote areas spanning a total of about 80,000 acres, Ferracane said. They were exceedingly difficult to track.

In order to wipe out those herds, employees turned to Judas goats to lead them to the rogue animals. They fastened radio-tracking collars to kids, which are more likely to find the other goats “because they don’t want to be alone,” Ferracane said. Although the technique isn’t entirely foolproof — for instance, the Judas goats might stay solo or their collars could malfunction — she called it “a cost-effective method” for the job.

In a move meant to keep the sheep docile, the plant’s live-in Judas goat would receive training to routinely lead the flocks to their fates like a four-legged pied piper, stepping aside after completing the job — and often earning a reward of a cigarette to munch.

Across the Pacific Ocean, officials on the Galápagos Islands also embraced Judas goats at the turn of the 21st century as their solution to exterminating its non-native goat population, which was wreaking havoc on the islands’ habitat. In an effort similar to the Hawaiian initiative, Judas goats led them to the other goats, with the project considered a success by 2006.

They fastened radio-tracking collars to kids, which are more likely to find the other goats “because they don’t want to be alone.”

In addition to tracking other goats, they’re also still used to herd livestock. Dana Stewart of the Martin Cattle Company in Judsonia, Ark., first witnessed Judas goats at work a few years ago at a sheep and goat auction in Texas.

“It was very fascinating to see sale animals follow the lead goat, or Judas goat, into the ring,” she said. “Watching these Judas goats work was like watching a well-orchestrated system of moving parts — livestock and people working together.”

The Judas goats would bring groups of animals into the ring, then lead them into pens or outside of the arena following transactions. “This went on throughout the sale, sometimes with another Judas goat offering relief to the others, like subbing players on a sports team,” she added.

Stewart, 40, counts as the sixth generation to reside on her family’s beef cattle farm. Her great-great grandfather purchased Hereford cattle in 1936, intending to raise registered seedstock and sell bulls to other ranchers. Five years ago, the family also began selling goats to 4-H and National FFA Organization students, with about 60 in their herd right now.

“Having a trained animal to lead the herd is a smart move,” she said. “If there’s not a leader, it takes more manpower to gather the animals and move them to where they need to go.”

Instead of opting for Judas goats, Stewart’s farm uses individual cows to drive each pasture group when it’s time to eat or move. Often, an animal naturally leads the herd — a cow “that, without fail, is always the first to come” when called. “If you can get one or two moving in the right direction, most of the herd will follow,” she said.

For instance, in a natural goat herd, the group relies on a pecking order of dominance that results in a top buck and a top doe, according to Cornell University. The doe’s responsibility is to lead the herd to graze.

Some slaughter plants and feedlots still utilize Judas goats, although “good facilities should negate the need for them.”

In a domestic herd, if a human takes on the role of feeding the goats, “the herd may attempt to follow you wherever you go,” Cornell reports. “This becomes a problem when you try to send the herd out to pasture and they keep trying to follow you home.”

And among sheep flocks, commercial operations use Judas sheep from the farm to transportation to marketing to processing, said the American Sheep Industry Association’s Amy Hendrickson. She called the term Judas sheep “simply another name for a ‘lead’ sheep,” noting that sheep will easily follow a leader.

“These sheep live for years on an operation, providing wool but obviously no lamb production,” Hendrickson said. She called the use of lead sheep “simply another management tool, similar to herding or protection dogs.”

Casey Kammerle, spokesperson for the North American Meat Institute, described sheep as gregarious, making them “more at ease following a lead animal, which limits the need for human handlers, which could cause additional stress.”

Many farms depend on leader animals — “not necessarily goats” — to guide the others, said Susan Schoenian, sheep and goat specialist emeritus at the University of Maryland Extension.

Some slaughter plants and feedlots still utilize Judas goats, although “good facilities should negate the need for them,” she said. This can be achieved through intentional design. “With pens and corrals, the animals can be moved naturally from one point to another, following the one ahead of them,” Schoenian said. “There are specific ways to design facilities to move animals through slaughterhouses naturally.”

Although the role of the Judas goat has evolved over time, and expanded to include other lead animals, some can recall its original purpose. Even without an agriculture background, Allan Musterer, 80, ties a distinctive moment in his childhood to Judas goats. In the 1940s, his father brought him and his brother to a Hoboken, N.J., slaughterhouse run by a fellow church congregant.

After taking them to a corral of lambs, his dad fed several cigarettes to the flock’s lone Judas goat — a bell hanging around its neck, Musterer said. A noisy signal at the plant spurred the goat into action, gathering the livestock and marching them

onward.

“They just kept following and following, lamb after lamb, until all the lambs were in that chute,” Musterer said. “The goat came out, the door closed, and the lambs went off to slaughter.”

Megan Ulu-Lani Boyanton works as a business reporter at The Denver Post. For two years, she chased after lawmakers on

Capitol Hill as Bloomberg Government’s agriculture and trade policy reporter. Megan has covered the Venezuelan refugee crisis in Peru, parliamentary affairs in England, White House press briefings in Washington, D.C., and the cannabis industry in Colorado. She also serves as an adjunct professor at Arizona State University’s Walter Cronkite School of Journalism.

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- **Hank Hedges**
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- **Hilty’s Meats**
Bowling Green, MO
- **HNB Bank**
Bowling Green, MO
Hannibal, MO
Monroe City, MO
Perry, MO
- **Jersey Farmers Elevator**
Jerseyville, IL
- **Jones Brothers AgriServices**
La Monte, MO
- **Jonesburg Grain Co.**
Jonesburg, MO
- **Josephville Meat Processing**
Wentzville, MO
- **Kingdom Feed**
Fulton, MO
- **Kyle Hendricks**
Buffalo, MO
- **L & S Equipment**
Hermann, MO
- **Lehenbauer Farm Repair**
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- **Liberty Feed Mill**
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Martinsburg, MO
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Farmington, MO
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Washington, MO
Wentzville, MO
- **Missouri Cattleman’s Association**
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- **Missouri Valley MFA**
Alma, MO
Higginsville, MO
- **Missouri Valley Commission Co.**
Boonville, MO
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Paris, MO
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Fulton, MO
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Country Club, MO
- **Windmill Ridge**
Shelbyville, MO

MCA proposes new policies at NCBA summer business meeting

The Missouri Cattlemen's Association proposed and passed five new policies at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association's Summer Business Meeting in San Diego, Calif. Policies were introduced by MCA President David Dick, MCA Past President Bruce Mershon and MCA Secretary Charlie Beshar. These policies are critical, not only for Missouri, but for the whole cattle industry, said Dick.

The 2023 Cattle Industry Summer Business Meeting is an avenue for the cattle industry's leading voices and organizations to come together to discuss critical issues, develop initiatives, and establish direction for various projects aimed at improving the beef cattle industry.

"It is vital to discuss these issues at the national level to ensure the voices of our MCA members are heard. It is the purpose of MCA to provide represen-

tation on behalf of our members and their needs as producers in the beef industry," said Dick.

The first policy introduced was the push for changes to the U.S. drought monitor. MCA discussed the issue of how the current drought monitor does not accurately reflect on-the-ground conditions. MCA proposed updates to the drought monitor to consider forage differences and availability within any given area.

MCA introduced and passed policy to ensure access for vaccine technologies for herd health. Producers need scientifically approved vaccines to care of their herds when necessary. MCA also proposed within this policy to oppose any effort at the state or federal levels to restrict access to these vaccine technologies. Dick said legislation was introduced this year in Missouri that would have required beef from Missouri cattle to be segregated and labeled

as potential gene therapy if vaccines were given.

“That legislation would have devalued and isolated Missouri commodities. It was a slap in the face to animal welfare and we simply won’t stand for it,” said Dick.

Also included in that legislation was an effort to require beef derived from cattle fed genetically modified (GMO) feed grains to be labeled as potential gene therapy. That is why MCA leaders brought forth and passed policy at the national level to support biotechnology and oppose efforts to require special labeling of meat products if the livestock consumed GMO feed.

MCA introduced the policy to push government agencies to better streamline efforts to assist livestock producers in minimizing loss caused by black vultures. This has been an ongoing issue for Missouri's cattle producers as these black vultures have created many issues within producer's herds. Along those lines, the association also passed policy to improve the Livestock Indemnity Program when it comes to financial assistance for producers who have suffered losses caused by predators.

“We do not sit on the sidelines and most certainly shake things up when we participate in policy discussions,” said Dick. “We work for Missouri cattle producers.”

– MCA News

Taco Bell sued for not using enough meat on menu items

A lawsuit filed in August in a New York federal court accuses Taco Bell of being deceptive in advertisements about the amount of meat used on some menu items.

The complaint, filed by Frank Siragus, said the eatery shorts customers on beef on its Crunchwrap Supreme, Grande Crunchwrap, Vegan Crunchwrap, Mexican Pizza and Veggie Mexican Pizza.

The lawsuit features photos of advertisements and photos taken of menu items ordered by Siragus.

The advertising photos show menu items bursting with beef, while the photos taken by Siragus show the same items in a much more beef-depleted state.

The plaintiff is seeking class action status for the lawsuit.

– Meatingplace.com

Easterday, of Tyson cattle fraud, owes Uncle Sam \$12.5 million

Convicted cattle swindler Cody Easterday and his spouse owe the IRS \$12.5 million, according to a local media report from the state of Washington. The federal agency recently filed a lien against the imprisoned rancher as well as his spouse, Debby Easterday, reported public radio station KNKX.

The document submitted in Washington state’s Franklin County involves taxes owed in 2021, the same year Easterday Farms and Easterday Ranches went into federal bankruptcy, noted KNKX.

“Debby Easterday is in communication with the taxing agencies, and will be working with them to resolve any remaining issues,” the couple’s lawyer told the media outlet in an emailed statement.

Cody Easterday is in a federal prison, serving 11 years for billing Tyson Foods nearly a quarter of a billion dollars for non-existent cattle. The rancher has been ordered to pay \$244 million in restitution to Tyson as well as a \$1 million fine to the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. A cattle feeder for Tyson for more than 20 years, Easterday has filed multiple lawsuits against Tyson from prison, including one alleging breach of contract over a branding deal.

– Meatingplace.com

Nearly 3,000 jobs impacted in latest Tyson plant closures

Tyson Foods’ cost-cutting decision to close another four poultry plants will impact several thousand workers in three states, suggest multiple published reports.

About 3,000 work at the facilities marked for closure, reports Bloomberg News, citing a person familiar with the matter. Tyson intends to relocate some employees to other facilities, the person added.

Tyson did not confirm a tally of people employed at the plants in Arkansas, Indiana and Missouri, but one Arkansas publication estimates about 2,800 positions.


The majority involve Noel,

Mo., where about 1,500 work at the poultry production complex slated to shut in October, according to Talk Business & Politics.

North Little Rock, Ark.’s further processing plant will shave 200 jobs in October, TBP reports. Plants in Dexter, Mo., and Corydon, Ind., have 500 and 600 workers, respectively, and are scheduled to close early next year, according to the publication.

Tyson and other meat producers have seen profits take a hit amid a confluence of factors including supply and demand issues.

– Meatingplace.com



Eastern Missouri Commission Company, Bowling Green
Market Report for Friday, August 11, 2023
Receipts: 1,540 Week ago: 502 Year ago: 1,915

Compared to the last special three weeks ago, on limited comparisons of comparable weights and quality feeders, most feeders sold with sharply higher undertones with many feeders under 750 lbs selling mostly 10.00-20.00 higher. Good rains over the last couple of weeks have much improved pasture conditions along with demand especially for feeders weighing 400-650 lbs. Demand was good to very good with supply moderate. Many mixed cross feeders in Friday's sale sold with moderate to good demand with the good black hid feeders and better quality cattle selling with good to very good demand. as there was a wide variance in quality. Slaughter cows sold steady with slaughter steers and heifers trading steady to 2.00 higher.

Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1 – Pkg 390 lbs 330.00; 440-500 lbs few 310.00-328.00; 500-550 lbs 303.00-327.00, pkg thin 520 lbs 335.00, 550-600 lbs few 283.00-290.00, Thin/fancy blks 550-556 lbs 317.50-324.50; 600-700 lbs 277.00-284.00, Thin/fancy blks 600-606 lbs 296.00-301.00; 700-750 lbs 251.00-266.00, 750-800 lbs 240.00-247.00; 800-900 lbs 232.00-242.00; pkg 910 lbs 233.00. Medium and Large 1-2 – Pkg 338 lbs 330.00; lot 470 lbs 274.50; pkg 536 lbs 281.00, lot 561 lbs 265.00; 600-650 lbs 261.00-270.00, 650-700 lbs 250.00-251.00; lot 712 lbs 239.25; 800-820 lbs 228.00-230.00; 900-960 lbs 212.00-220.00. Medium and Large 2 – Lot 392 lbs 261.00; pkg 410 lbs 275.00; pkg 549 lbs 225.00; lot 640 lbs 245.00. **Feeder Heifers:** Medium and Large 1 – Pkg 368 lbs 282.00; 445-500 lbs 275.00-283.00; 500-550 lbs 269.00-282.00, 550-600 lbs 261.00-272.00, Fancy blks 575-580 lbs 280.00-286.50; 600-650 lbs 264.00-264.50, 650-700 lbs 252.00-259.50; 700-750 lbs 245.00-250.25, 750-800 lbs 232.00-243.00; 800-900 lbs 220.00-232.00. Medium and Large 1-2 – Pkg 456 lbs 266.00; 500-550 lbs 240.00-263.00; 600-650 lbs 248.00-250.00, 650-700 lbs 235.00-246.00; lot 723 lbs 237.00; lot 815 lbs 218.00; pkg 900 lbs 221.00. Medium and Large 2 – Lot 383 lbs 249.50; lot 486 lbs 246.75. Large 1 – Lot 672 lbs 232.50; lot 1004 lbs 205.75. **Feeder Bulls:** Medium and Large 1 – Lot 570 lbs 263.00. Medium and Large 1-2 Pkg 565 lbs 242.00. **Slaughter Cows:** Premium White (65-70% lean) Average

Market Reports

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dressing, 116.00-122.00; and high dressing, 1127.00-137.00. Breakers (70-80% lean) Average dressing, 110.00-120.00; high dressing, 123.00-138.00; and low dressing, 98.50-108.00. Boners (80-85% lean) Average dressing, 107.00-114.00; high dressing, 116.00-128.00; and low dressing, 98.00-105.00. Lean (85-90% lean) Average dressing, 95.00-105.00; high dressing, 106.00-117.00; and low dressing, 81.00-93.00. **Slaughter Bulls:** Yield Grade 1-2 – 1300-2400 lbs , 124.00-134.00; 139.00-143.00; 122.00. **Slaughter Steers and Heifers:** (70 hd) Choice 2-3 – 1160-1550 lbs 185.50-188.00; Select and Choice 1-3 – 1150-1350 lbs 180.00-183.50.

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

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Eastern Missouri Commission Company, Bowling Green
Market Report for Friday, August 18, 2023
Receipts: 856 Week ago: 1,540 Year ago: 805

Compared to last week, a very light offering of feeders this week sold steady on similar weights and quality, selling mostly in small packages and groups. Several bred cows and pairs sold with good demand with several packages of bred heifers, young pairs mostly 3-7 years. Slaughter steers and heifers sold steady to 2.00 lower with slaughter cows trading mostly 2.00-5.00 lower. Cattle on Feed Report was released Friday afternoon with on Feed down 2 percent at 98 percent, Placements down 8 percent at 92 percent and Marketings down 5 percent at 95 percent.

Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1 - Pkg 587 lbs 289.00; pkg 613 lbs 285.00. Medium and Large 1-2 – Pkg 418 lbs fleshy 284.00, pkg 456 lbs 302.00; lot 596 lbs 269.00; pkg 611 lbs 267.00; pkg 708 lbs 238.00; pkg 800 lbs 232.00. **Feeder Heifers:** Medium and Large 1-2 – Few 350-400 lbs 261.00-272.00; 400-450 lbs 249.00-262.00, 450-500 lbs 244.00-250.00; pkg 500 lbs unweaned 241.00, 550-600 lbs 245.00-259.50; 600-625 lbs 232.00-243.00; few 735-790 lbs 227.00-234.00. Medium and Large 2 – Pkg 492 lbs 236.00;

530-560 lbs 233.00-240.00; pkg 672 lbs 221.00. **Feeder Bulls:** Medium and Large 1 – Pkg 502 lbs 277.00. Medium and Large 1-2 – Pkg 375 lbs 279.00; 450-500 lbs 263.00-269.00; 520-550 lbs 242.00-254.00.

Replacement Cows: Bred Cows-Medium and Large 1 Heifers pkg top quality black 1190 lbs 3rd stage 3350.00. Medium and Large 1-2 Heifers 975-1120 lbs 3rd stage 2440.00-2450.00, pkg 2nd stage 973 lbs blk 1950.00. Bred Cows- Medium and Large 1-2 3-6 yrs 1140-1250 lbs 3rd stage 1675.00-1800.00, 2nd stage 3-6 yrs 955-1260 lbs 1290.00-1550.00; pkg short solid mouth 1300 lbs 2nd stage 1410.00. Pairs-Medium and Large 1 pkg 4-6 yrs 1100 lbs w/150-200 lb calves 2725.00; pkg 7 yrs to short solid mouth w/200-250 lb calves 2550.00. Medium and Large 1-2 pkg 3-5 yrs 1050 lbs w/150 lb calves 2100.00; pkg short solid mouth 1000 lbs w/150-200 lb calves 1975.00. **Slaughter Cows:** Premium White (65-70% lean) Average dressing, 113.00-121.00; and high dressing, 125.00-140.00. Breakers (70-80% lean) Average dressing, 109.00-119.00; high dressing, 120.00-131.00; and low dressing, 101.00-106.00. Boners (80-85% lean) Average dressing, 105.50-112.50; high dressing, 113.50-120.00; and low dressing, 97.00-104.50. Lean (85-90% lean) Average dressing, 94.00-102.00; high dressing, 104.00-113.00; and low dressing, 85.00-93.00. Shelly, 80.00-82.00. **Slaughter Bulls:** Yield Grade 1-2 – 1300-2400 lbs, 124.00-138.00; 139.00-154.00; 109.00-114.00 **Slaughter Steers and Heifers:** (80 hd) Choice 2-3 – 1200-1400 lbs, 183.50-186.00; Select and Choice 1-3 – 1150-1450 lbs 178.00-182.50; Select 1-2 – 1175-1300 lbs 170.00-173.00.

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.....

Drought assistance programs, resources and tools

The United State Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency continues to extend assistance to Missouri counties in desperate need of emergency credit. Numerous Missouri counties have continued to face drought for weeks on end leading to more counties being placed as primary natural disaster areas. The following links contains an updated list of designated Missouri counties along with information about natural disaster assistance.

- Secretarial Natural Disaster Designation
- Disaster Assistance Information
- Loan Assistance Tool

The United States Small Business Administration provides economic injury disaster loans to Missouri small businesses facing the current drought. These loans offset economic losses because of reduced revenues caused by drought in the following primary counties that began July 11. The following links include press release includes a list of Missouri counties which can apply for these loans and fact sheet to learn more information.

- SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans Available to Missouri Small Businesses
 - U.S. SBA Fact Sheet
- Missouri Cattlemen's Association also recommends utilizing the Condition Monitoring Observer Report tool to submit a survey form along with photographs of the drought conditions you are facing. The Drought Assessment Committee currently hosts meetings to further coordinate drought response actions for those who are interested in attending. MCA will also provide a tab within the website to access the Missouri DNR page.

Here’s a link to learn more information or find the resources that will best work for your operation:

<https://dnr.mo.gov/water/how-s-water/state-water/drought>
– MCA News

Consumers prefer beef to alternatives by wide margin

A new survey by the Purdue University College of Agriculture has made it clear just how much consumers prefer beef from cattle to alternative proteins.

According to the research, 71% of consumers think the best of beef is "much/somewhat better" than plant-based alternatives, and 73% think it is better than cell-cultured meat.

Other notable comparisons include: appearance (66% versus plant based, 70% cell cultured), freshness (57% and 68%), naturalness (64% and 71%), price (61% and 63%), and farmer wellbeing (62% and

71%).
"By far, consumers feel beef from cattle is superior to the alternatives," the survey concluded.

Researchers also asked consumers for their feelings about "lab-grown meat" — which is the same thing as "cell-cultured meat" — to gauge any difference in responses, and they tracked closely to the aforementioned term.

The one category where alternatives edged out beef was animal welfare, and only when compared to plant-based alternatives — in that comparison, 42% thought the alternative was better, versus 38% for beef. Additionally, although consumers thought beef's environmental impact was better than all alternatives, the divide between beef and plant based was close at 41%/34%.

For both categories, though, beef was far preferred to cell-cultured meat.

Appeals court has final say in Rabobank’s fate in antitrust case

The Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals decided to not rehear a case against a bank involved in a lawsuit alleging it helped poultry producers fix prices.

Illinois Federal Judge Thomas Durkin dismissed Rabobank from the case early this year. Plaintiffs in the sprawling lawsuit claimed the bank, which is a well know agricultural bank, facilitated the processor’s alleged agreement of fixing prices, or had knowledge of their coordination.

However, the complaint primarily presented emails demonstrating Rabobank's unilateral actions aimed at protecting its interests.

The court ruled that those emails did not suggest any agreement and, as a result, effectively granted summary judgment in favor of Rabobank.

In July, the appeals court upheld Durkin’s ruling, but plaintiffs asked the court to reconsider and hear arguments to reinstate Rabobank the case. The Seventh Circuit denied the motion this week, according to court records.

In July, the district court dismissed Sherman Act and RICO claims against Perdue Farms, Fieldale Farms, Foster Farms, Claxton Poultry and Wayne Farms. Claims against Agri Stats, a company accused of facilitating monitoring of production and pricing activities, were also dismissed.

Cargill trying to fend off subpoena from Russia-owned bank

A Russia-owned bank has subpoenaed Cargill over allegations the food giant was one of many corporations involved a multi-year trade finance fraud.

Trust Bank, controlled by the Russian central bank, is seeking

over \$1 billion in damages from Cargill and other major traders for the allegations. Cargill is fighting a financial subpoena issued by the bank.

Court records show the bank alleged the traders facilitated Russian businessman Mikail Shishkhanov's alleged defrauding of Binbank and Rost Bank, which he owned before their incorporation into Trust Bank.

The dispute originated when Trust Bank initially made these accusations against Cargill and others in a New York court earlier this year, aiming to access transaction records related to dealings with offshore companies linked to Shishkhanov.

While New York judge Paul G. Gardephe allowed subpoenas to be served, Cargill launched a counteraction to quash them, asserting the validity of their transactions and the misinterpretation of trade finance.

Tennessee processing plant receives \$1M grant, slated to open sometime in 2024

A Tennessee processing plant is set to open next year, thanks in part to a \$1 million grant from the state’s Forestry, Agriculture, and Rural Markets cost share program (FARM).

Roane Custom Beef and Pork is building a 10,000-square-foot plant in the Roane County Industrial Park in Rockwood, Tenn., where it will process up to 3,760 animals per year and service 5,500 farmers within a 17-county region, according to a company news release.

The FARM cost share was designed to stabilize and strengthen the agriculture and forestry supply chain, to include businesses such as meat processing plants. In the first round, more than \$18 million was awarded to 20 agricultural, food, forestry and nonprofit entities in the state, according to the release.

Many of the preceding items were taken from Meatingplace.com

Change your strategies to manage the cowherd during forage shortages

By N. T. COSBY, PhD
Senior Consulting Nutritionist, Land O’Lakes Purina Feed

Extended dry weather is stressful for both cattle and cattle owners. Implementing strategies early during the course of a drought can often prevent drastic and “last ditch” efforts later. Handling forage shortages in a cowherd requires changes be made both in management strategies and feeding strategies.

Management Strategies

Sorting cows and feeding according to nutrient requirements is a strategy to stretch limited forage resources. Priority should be given to 1st and 2nd calf cows that are more difficult to rebreed. These cows should be the best genetics on the farm and every effort should be made to get them rebred. Older cows will have a lower requirement than the younger cows and should be sorted off onto the poorer pastures. If enough pastures are available, cows could be sorted by Body Condition Score and fed accordingly as well.

Early weaning is an excellent strategy to reduce cow requirements in times of forage shortages. Calves may be weaned as early as 60 days, although 100 - 150 day early weaning is more typical. Early weaning reduces the cow’s energy requirements by 30% thereby helping to maintain condition during periods of limited forage. The calf can be fed in drylot with grain and protein supplements with limited forage. Calf prices typically follow a strengthening pattern through September before declining into the fall.

Culling decisions on the cow herd should be made now rather than in the fall if a producer is facing forage shortages. Culling cows during the summer will stretch the forage for the remaining cows. Cull cow prices are also seasonally stronger during the months of April through July before declining to the seasonal low in November. Calves from the culled cows may be early weaned and fed as described previously. Culling now and culling deeper in the herd for age, larger cows with higher maintenance requirements, genetics, or performance will pay off in improved cull cow price and more forage for remaining cows.

Nutritional Strategies

When forage is in short supply, hay prices and forage substitutes will tend to increase in price. Every effort should be made to get the most dollars returned per dollar invested in forage. Poorer quality hay may be improved by ammoniation. Anhydrous ammonia is added to a covered and sealed stack of hay at a rate of 60 lbs per ton. The stack is left sealed for 4 to 8 weeks to complete the ammoniation process, depending on temperature. University data have shown digestibility improvements of 10 to 30% and intake increases of poor quality hay by 15 to 20%. Ammoniated wheat straw may be a viable solution for some producers.

Low protein range cubes or pellets (12 – 14%) can be used to extend forage. Byproduct mixes can also be used to extend pastures by replacing forage. Byproduct mixes should be balanced with appropriate minerals and additives/ionophores to capture the best results. Your feed sales specialist and nutritionist can help design programs with available ingredients to stretch forages during drought.

Summary

Managing a cowherd through periods of forage shortages requires changes both in management strategies and nutritional strategies. Priority must be placed on the younger cows in the herd with the higher nutrient requirements so calving percentage is not affected on next year’s calf crop. Early weaning and summer culling strategies offer sound economic decisions.

Cattleman’s Advocate

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Animal law expert David Favre breaks down Proposition 12 impacts

The following is an excerpt from "Animal Kingdom," a feature in the August issue of Meatingplace.

David S. Favre did not, at first, have aspirations of becoming an animal law scholar. Initially an environmental lawyer, Favre was

struck at how saturated the field was when he began his academic career in the late '70s, what with Earth Day and the work of conservationists like Rachel Carson. Searching for an original angle to his legal work, Favre began writing about the rights of wildlife,

and what followed is a career whose trajectory matches the field's growth and complexity in the decades since.

"When I look back 30 or 40 years, there has been a huge transformation in the consumer awareness of what [food] they are buy-

ing, where it is coming from, and what the consequences are of what they're buying," Favre says. "[Animal law is] an endless source of need for people to give thoughtful consideration about how the law should integrate the interest of animals."

Perhaps nothing demonstrates those trends more than the Animal Legal Defense Fund. Favre co-founded the organization in 1983 with a \$25,000 grant, and it now has an annual budget of \$14 million. Additionally, Favre created

(and still edits) AnimalLaw.info, the largest animal law website in the world. Such engagement, of course, involves animal agriculture and meat processing, and with the last 12 months bringing some of the most significant cases of animal law in the meat industry's recent history, Meatingplace sought out Favre for his perspective not only on those recent developments, but also on how animal law will continue to evolve in the coming years.

- Meatingplace.com

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Why cattle rebuilding is in slow motion

By DERRELL S. Peel
Oklahoma State University
Extension Livestock
Marketing Specialist

This article was first published in the Cow/Calf Corner Newsletter and is republished with the author’s permission.

The mid-year cattle inventory report showed that cattle numbers continue to get smaller and there is no significant indication of herd rebuilding so far. Despite sharply higher cattle prices this year, there is no data to suggest heifer retention or enough decrease in beef cow slaughter to initiate herd expansion, although the most recent weekly slaughter data are encouraging. The process thus far is considerably slower than the herd expansion after the drought in 2011-2013 pushed cattle inventories to a cyclical low in 2014. There are several reasons why producers are moving more slowly and cautiously thus far.

Continuing Drought is still an issue in significant regions of cattle country. While drought is not likely causing a great deal of additional herd liquidation from a broader market perspective, it surely is preventing herd expansion in those drought-stricken areas.

Drought Recovery - Pastures and ranges in locations recently emerged from drought need time to heal after 2-3 years of drought damage and stress. Hay supplies are depleted and must be replenished. Many regions are still vulnerable to redeveloping drought and there is uncertainty that forage production may remain restricted.

Financial Recovery - Many cattle operations have suffered from considerable financial stress from drought and high input costs. The short run need to realize immediate returns from higher cattle prices may be causing continued heifer and cull cow sales for now.

Input Cost Uncertainty -

High, and in many cases record high, input prices were a particular challenge in 2022. Record hay prices and elevated supplemental feed costs have had a huge impact in drought regions. Record or near-record high fertilizer, chemical and fuel costs have been a significant challenge for producers, especially in regions of introduced pastures. Though some input prices have moderated in 2023, input price uncertainty has producers reacting cautiously to higher cattle prices.

Interest Rates - Not only are inputs costs higher but sharply higher interest rates creates a different economic climate that may temper the pace of herd expansion compared to the 2014-2019 period. Higher finance costs will be a much more significant factor as breeding heifer and cow costs rise in the coming months.

Producer Expectations - All of the above factors contribute to the economic backdrop of the industry and become part of the producer expectations that are the key to herd rebuilding. Until enough cow-calf producers anticipate enough returns for a long enough period of time, herd expansion will be tempered. In the meantime, cattle supplies will continue to tighten. Market prices for calves and feeder cattle will continue to increase as the market provides more price incentives that will eventually strengthen producer expectations and jump-start herd expansion. That process is likely to begin in earnest in the remainder of 2023 and into 2024.

The U.S. food supply may be “the safest in the world,” but a new documentary now streaming on Netflix outlines several serious foodborne illness outbreaks despite the efforts of 15 federal agencies assigned to protect the public.

“Poisoned: The Dirty Truth About Your Food” tracks recalls and illnesses – some of them fatal – that have ranged across products from chicken, eggs,

hamburgers, lettuce, spinach and other foods contaminated with such pathogens as salmonella and E. coli. Based on a 2018 book by Jeff Benedict, the nearly 90-minute documentary also features commentary from a wide range of industry-related sources. These include food safety advocate and attorney Bill Marler and representatives from both the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and USDA offering perspectives on where the regulatory agencies stand in terms of effectively monitoring food safety.

The “Poisoned” documentary quotes several experts who deem America’s food supply as “the safest in the world,” but the film also cites Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 48 million U.S. citizens become sick from foodborne illnesses every year. The film doesn’t let consumers off the hook, either, noting that home cooks often fail to pay enough attention to the risks of cross-contamination in their own kitchens when preparing meals, increasing the likelihood of foodborne illnesses.

Mountains are hard to move, but it’s possible

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

Everyone knows mountains are hard to move; but everyone also knows that with enough time and the right equipment, it’s not impossible to move a mountain...it’s just hard. But what if that mountain you want to move is a mindset deeply ingrained in the psyche of our political leaders?

Well, that mountain is hard to move as well but, again, it’s not impossible. It just takes time and the right message. So, what is it that is so deeply ingrained in the psyche of our political leaders that we must now move?

It has two parts: First is the belief in globalization, that there should be one set of rules that every nation abides by to achieve a borderless world when it comes to trade, free trade that is.

Now the free trade mindset essentially says that the production of a good should take place in the region of the world that maintains a comparative advantage. In the case of livestock that would mean anywhere in the world where cattle and sheep can be produced cheapest and most efficiently – say where grass grows year-round, and that’s where cattle and beef and sheep and lamb should be produced and then exported worldwide.

And for regions of the world, say the United States, that are producing cattle and beef under more expensive and arguably less efficient conditions, well it should simply divert whatever resources were used to produce cattle and sheep into some new endeavor for which the United States could achieve a comparative advantage.

But don’t laugh, this is the driver behind free trade, and as

Rats infest North Carolina town, poultry farms blamed

Residents in southeast Hoke County have been battling a growing rat infestation — and they’re pointing the finger at three large chicken farms that raise chickens for Mountaire Farms.

Though the residents say the rats have been a problem for several months, the infestation hit a fever pitch in mid-July — soon after the chicken farms completed “a whole-house cleanout” of 48 chicken houses, according to the Hoke County Cooperative Extension Service.

Experts theorize that the clean out pushed the rats out of the chicken houses and onto neighboring properties.

The state Department of Environmental Quality and the state Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services visited the facility but have said that the rats were not related to “the disposal of livestock and poultry,” meaning they have no regulatory jurisdiction to offer help or services.

Mountaire has reportedly told local journalists that the chicken houses have rodent control programs in place and blamed recent flooding in the area for the rat problem. Despite that, the company offered to provide exterminator service to nearby residents for a year.

The company says the chicken houses are currently empty and will not be restocked until the rat infestation is resolved.

The infestation is damaging property, stripping ears of corn and contaminating hay and animal feed on properties between Dundarrach and Lumber Bridge, about 20 minutes outside of Fayetteville.

Mountaire Farms is the fourth-largest producer of chicken in the United States, with headquarters in Millsboro, Delaware. The company runs poultry processing plants in Lumber Bridge and Siler City, N.C.

– Meatingplace.com

Subway deal nearly finalized

Atlanta's Roark Capital is close to finalizing a \$9.6 billion deal to acquire Subway, according to a report from the Wall Street Journal.

The private-equity firm has reportedly outpaced rivals TDR and Sycamore in a heated auction. While Roark seems to have the upper hand, there's still a chance that the opposing group could return with a higher offer.

Founded over 50 years ago, Subway is known for its subs and quick-service restaurants. The sale exploration began in January, with advisors enlisted in February. As the eighth-largest

US restaurant chain, Subway generated \$9.8 billion in domestic sales across its 20,810 locations last year. Although Subway once rapidly expanded, its global sales peaked at \$18 billion in 2012.

Under the company’s first non-family CEO John Chidsey, Subway focused on a turnaround, closing US locations while expanding abroad, particularly in China.

Roark Capital has a history of food investments, with brands like Auntie Anne's, Arby's and Baskin-Robbins in its portfolio, according to the WSJ report.

Saturday, Aug. 5, in Detroit.

The two brands joined forces 30 years ago in commercials featuring “Macho Man” Randy Savage and the tagline “Snap into a Slim Jim!”

– Meatingplace.com

Slim Jim revives WWE sponsorship

World Wrestling Entertainment Inc. (WWE) and Conagra Brands’ Slim Jim have inked a sponsorship deal, the companies announced.

The multiple-event pact will begin with a WWE match on

fanciful as this sounds now, this is what our political leaders have believed for decades.

Now the second deeply engrained thing we must move is the notion that the U.S. must lead the world by its example. In other words, even if no other nation believes in free trade; or, if like China, they simply refuse to play by any rules, our U.S. politicians have long believed the U.S. must lead the world by example and adhere, at any cost, to this fantastical free-trade notion.

We ran headlong into this in the early 2000s when we filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for trying to relax our BSE or mad cow restrictions. We kept the U.S./Canadian border closed to the importation of high-risk Canadian cattle for over two years. But the USDA said the U.S. policy is open borders and that it needs to lead by example to accept some risk so other countries would agree to accept our exports in the event of a future U.S. outbreak. Who was right? Well, our position harbored the least risk, and we really don’t know what the real risk is given that the incubation of BSE in humans is believed to take up to 40 years or longer.

But more recently, we met with U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and asked that he temporarily ban beef imports from Brazil due to Brazil’s food safety problems over the past several years and its failure to provide timely notifications about cattle detected with BSE.

The Secretary said he wouldn’t do that, citing the need for the United States to abide by its global obligations and to lead the rest of the world by example.

So, we changed the subject and asked the Secretary to

reconsider U.S. trade policies that have already destroyed our commercial sheep industry as evidenced by the fact that over 70% of the lamb consumed in America is now imported causing U.S. consumers to be dependent on foreign supply chains for this important protein. We said the cattle industry is on the same course, that domestic producers have suffered years of low cattle prices in part due to lower-cost, undifferentiated imports and unless relief is granted the U.S. will continue losing its cattle farmers and ranchers.

The response was nearly the same: that trade was important, that the U.S. must lead by example, and besides, not all cattle associations share our opinion that imports need to be regulated to create opportunities for the domestic cattle industry.

Two things are abundantly clear: First, not enough time has passed to move this mountain, so we need to keep fighting. Second, our message must change some to reflect the fact that we want the United States to lead by example, but not as an example of holding up a failed free trade ideal.

Instead, we want the United States to demonstrate how nations can use country of origin labels, tariffs, and tariff rate quotas to ensure fair trade and to ensure that the United States and other nations can achieve their food security goals by protecting their domestic family farm and ranch systems of agriculture so they can continue producing an abundant, wholesome, and affordable food supply for their citizens.

And, yes, we’re going to need your help! So please call your members of Congress and let them know that the era of globalization is over.

Laugh Tracks in the Dust.....

A bad day

By MILO YIELD
Special to The Advocate

A morose, sad-eyed, down-trodden farmer wuz sitting at the bar one smothering, stifling afternoon staring at his frosty mug of beer, watching the condensing water run down the side of the mug and puddle on the bar.

Then a large, loud, trouble-making biker slams the front door to the bar, steps up next to the farmer, grabs his frosty mug and gulps the cold beer down in one swig.

Then he looked condescendingly over at the farmer and blares menacingly, “Well, whatcha’ gonna do about that you pansy farmer,” he said. “You gonna just sit there like a coward and take it?”

The farmer unexpectedly burst into tears.

“Aw, come on, man," the biker says, "I didn't think you'd cry. I was just being a biker bully. That’s what us bikers are supposed to do. It’s our schtick. It’s how we’re supposed to uphold biker tradition. In truth, fella, I can't stand to see a grown man crying."

"This is the worst month of my life, the worst week of my life, and the worst day of my life," the farmer sniffles, wiping his eyes and nose on a red kerchief. "I'm a complete failure. My crops are drying up. My ponds are drying up. My dog bit me. My credit card in maxed out. My banker won’t speak to me. My wife and kids and parents disown me.

“Then this morning early my tractor broke down, so I came to town for parts. The dealership didn’t have the parts. So, I stopped here to ponder my life. After a few beers, I went outside to go home and I found my old pickup had been stolen and I don't have any insurance.

“So, I walked down to the farm supply store and bought some rat poison pellets and came back to this bar to work up the courage to put an end to it all. I ordered another drink with my last dollar. I dropped a few poison pellets into my beer and was sitting here watching the poison dissolve. And, then, bully you show up and drink the whole darned thing!"

"But, heck, enough about me, how are you doing?"

As I say about every week. You can’t live in the country without having frequent interactions with wildlife. This week it wuz a blacksnake again. Yesterday morning I wuz relaxed

on riding my Country Clipper lawn mower cutting the patches of crabgrass and foxtail that have managed to stay green when I heard and felt a loud “WHUMP!"

I knew I’d hit something with the mower, but it didn’t sound like a tree limb and I knew it wuzn’t a rock. Then I saw the fore, mid, and aft sections of a big black snake that the mower spit out left, right, and front. It was an instantaneous demise for the snake and I wuz surprised that I didn’t see it before I chopped it up. It wuz a pure case of wrong time, wrong place, for the hapless, and headless, snake.

We got a little six-tenths of an inch of rain a few days ago and it perked everything up for a day or two. We need a lot more, but I’m thankful for the dribs and drabs of rain that we’ve been getting.

At any rate, it rained enuf to

begin the blooming of the fall flowers — both tame and wild. The domesticated variety that erupted overnight were the Naked Lady flowers. The official name for the pink flower is Amaryllis Belladonna. They are fragrant light-pink flowers that appear in mid-August once their green foliage has died back. They bloom atop a stark stem with no leaves, giving them the common name of “Naked Ladies.”

The first and most obvious of the wildflowers are the Snow-on-the-Mountain. Their snow white blooms are nestled in a cluster of green on the top of a tall stem. Also, the first of the fall sunflowers are blooming, but the main sunflower season is still a few weeks away. While driving around on my ATV, I see that the Blazing Stars are preparing to bloom. It’s my favorite fall bloomer.

We’ve been busy getting ready for our downsizing auction. The date is Saturday, Sept. 16. We know we’ve got to get shed of a lot of stuff, before we move into our new home. The problem is what to sell and what to keep? Our big garage now has two growing stacks of “stuff.” One stack sells and the other moves.

Speaking of our new home. Construction is progressing rapidly. The exterior is painted, along with the trim. The sheet-rocking is done and the interior painting has begun. The electricity and water will be hooked up soon. The move-in date is projected to be October 1. We’ll wait and see it that date holds true.

Ol’ Nevah and I passed another marriage milestone on Aug. 16. We’ve been putting up with each other for 59 years. We had a quiet anniversary all to ourselves and ate at a nice restaurant in Emporia to celebrate. Next year, if we make it to 60, we’ll have a big blowout celebration.

Words of wisdom for the week: “Without freedom of speech, we wouldn’t know who the idiots are among us.” Have a good ‘un

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Email us at: cattlemans@virtualimages.us

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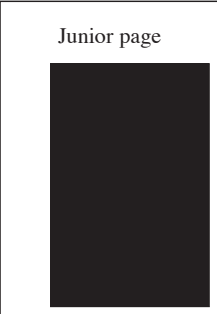
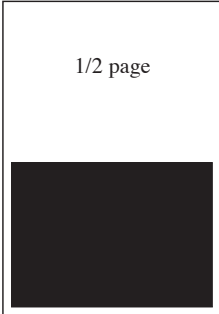
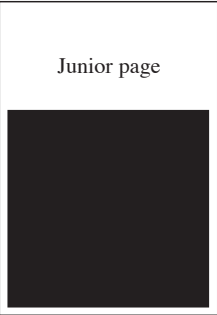
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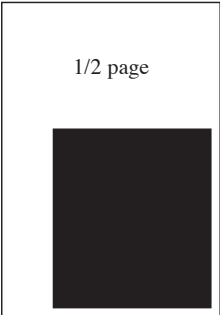
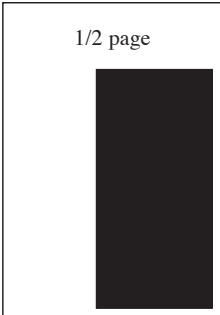
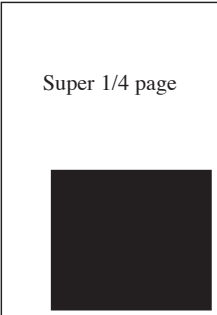
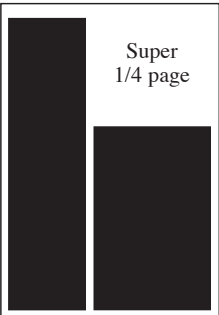
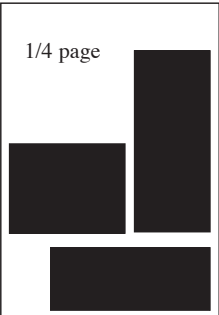
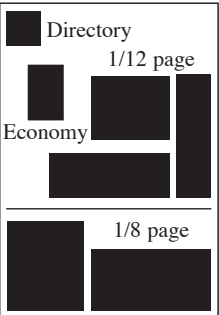
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Check out this slow cooker lasagna recipe

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

Jon’s critique: One of the consistent comments from readers is for quick or easy recipes. These days it seems that everyone has a full life of work and lifestyles of on-the-go activities. This recipe looks like a good recipe to prepare over the lunch hour and throw in the pot to have come supper time of an evening.
I like lasagna of all kinds. This one came out of the pot thick and hot and.... I haven’t met a lasagna dish that didn’t reheat well for leftover meals later.

As fall calving season is on us and the harvest will be on us soon

this crock pot meal might be just the one you are looking for.

Slow Cooker Lasagna *The Easy Beef Cookbook*

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 (12 ounce) package lasagna noodles
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 12 ounces cottage cheese
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste
- 16 ounces shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 ½ teaspoons salt

In a large skillet over medium heat cook the ground beef, onion

and garlic until brown. Add the tomato sauce, tomato paste, salt, and oregano and stir until well incorporated. Cook until heated through.
In a large bowl mix together the cottage cheese, grated Parmesan cheese, and shredded mozzarella cheese.
Spoon a layer of meat mixture onto the bottom of the slow cooker. Add a double layer of uncooked lasagna noodles. Break to fit noodles into slow cooker. Top the noodles with a portion of the cheese mixture. Repeat the layering of sauce, noodles, and cheese until all the ingredients are used.
Cover and cook on LOW setting for 4-6 hours.



RAMBLINGS OF A CONSERVATIVE COW DOCTOR

Seriously Y’all

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

I heard of a Nevada cowboy who was hospitalized with Covid. The standard treatment protocol was killing him, so a ventilator was suggested. His wife demanded he be discharged but the hospital refused. These were not ordinary Nevada country folk, so late one night the patient’s buddies cowboied him out of the hospital. Once freed from the deadly bureaucratic restrictions, he started a daily course of ivermectin. Three days later, he went skiing. Different versions of this same story appeared repeatedly across America during the Covid scam-demic. Once people learned of effective repurposed, inexpensive, over-the-counter drugs they shunned hospitals where you were expected to die for the greater good.



The goal of the entire Covid fraud was to inject gene-altering substances into as many people as possible. If an effective treatment, such as ivermectin, were available, an emergency use authorization (EUA) could not be approved so ivermectin was viciously demonized. “Seriously, y’all. Stop it.” was the FDA’s August 2021 derogatory tweet against ivermectin. Today, the FDA claims they do not have the authority to block doctors from prescribing ivermectin to treat covid. Sadly, the brave doctors who were pink slipped because they continued prescribing it could not be reached for comment. Obviously, the FDA has joined the CDC, NIH, IRS, DOE, and DOJ as just another agency willing to lie to get the unwashed to

submit. Seriously, y’all. Stop submitting.
To be balanced, here is one story where ivermectin appears to fail. This is my story as a pure-blood, but it could be yours if you closely associate with the stroke poked. Late last summer, despite weekly prophylactic ivermectin, I was likely infected by spike protein shed by a hot, jabbed recipient. I developed myocarditis. April 2nd, while wearing a Holter monitor and riding my Peloton stationary bike, I reached down to loosen my toe clips and felt lightheaded. As I stood in the stirrups, my ventricular rate shot to 290 beats per minute, and I died. By the grace of God, the impact of landing flat on my back on the concrete floor acted as a precordial thump to restart my heart. Because my feet were still wedged in the stirrups now above my head, all the blood in my thighs gravitated into my newly beating heart and this brought me back to life and to my point.
SARS-CoV-2 rarely causes myocarditis, it is the spike protein your body manufactures after being jabbed which damages you and you in turn shed to innocent bystanders. Because myocarditis can be asymptomatic, when it kills you, you will be the last to know. Worldwide, of the 5.5 billion guinea pigs who took the stroke poke, if you are considering your 3rd, 13th, or 23rd booster, seriously y’all. Stop it!

For three decades, Krayton 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,

IngredientWerks grows beef proteins in corn

Molecular farming company IngredientWerks announced it has produced a variety of corn, dubbed "Meaty Corn," that expresses high levels of bovine myoglobin, a heme protein that provides the taste, texture and aroma of conventional beef products.
Using corn as a "manufactory" for the production of proteins, IngredientWerks said it can leverage existing agricultural cultivation and processing infrastructure

to produce proteins at industrial scale, with a carbon neutral footprint, and at a fraction of the cost compared to current methods.
"This achievement is to the alternative protein industry as is the advancement in lithium-ion battery technology to the electric vehicle market — an engine that creates quality, affordable and sustainable value and helps drives consumer adoption," Matt Plavan, CEO of IngredientWerks, said in a news release.

IngredientWerks, a spin off of Novus International, signed an agreement with Motif FoodWorks to co-develop heme via cellular agriculture in March.
– Meatingplace.com

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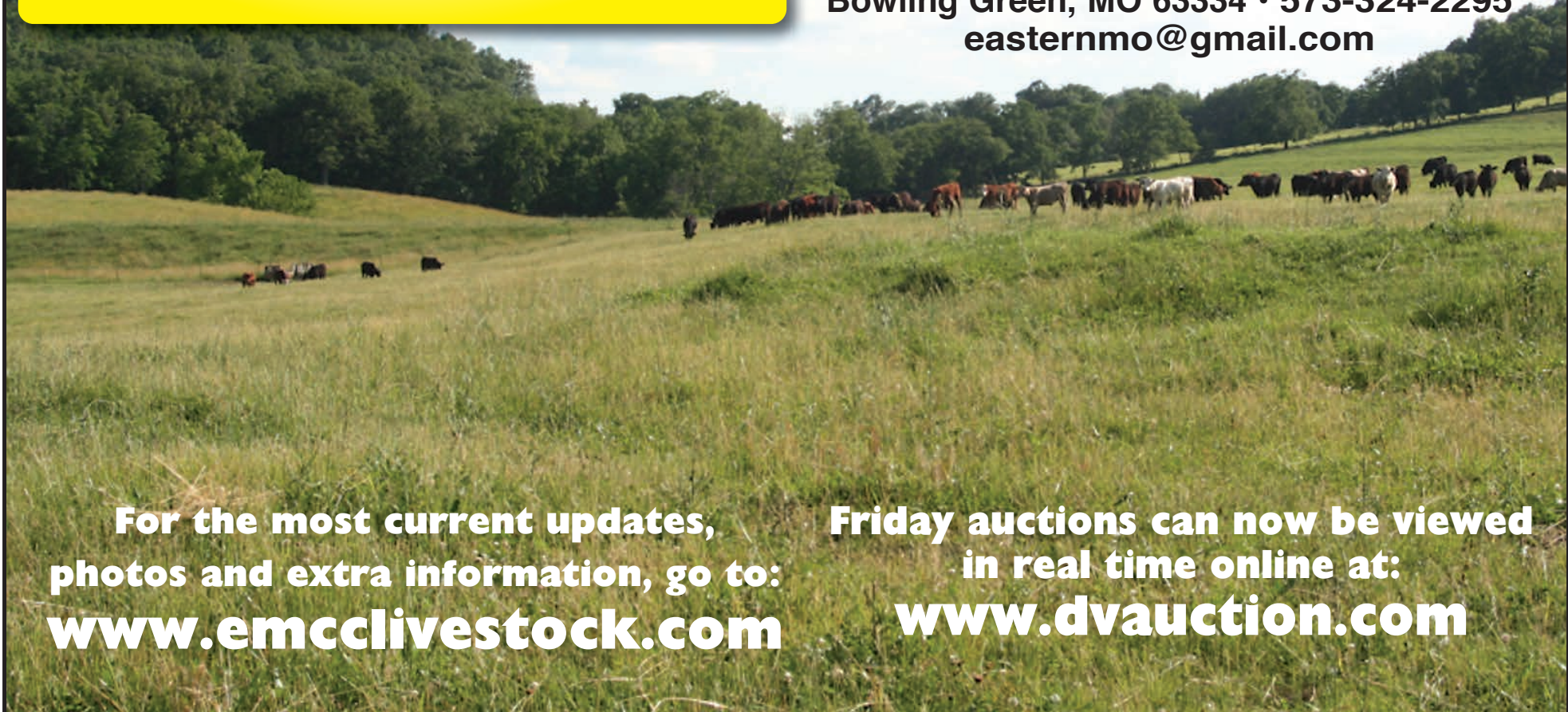
Weigh cows and bulls followed by odd lots start at 9:00 a.m.
Take-home cows, pairs, bulls and bred heifers start at 12:30 p.m.

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

www.emcclivestock.com



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It all starts with you! Keep up the good work and we can
grow together in the years to come. Thank you.

Mike VanMaane	Lori VanMaanen	John Sutton	Terry Syrcle	Frank Scherder	Mike Magruder	Tom Morehead	Cody Hanold	Mike Bolte
573-881-0402	573-682-7008	702-336-4713	217-440-8384	573-669-5321	314-605-1094	217-371-0702	618-781-9810	573-470-2988

Dates to Remember

at Eastern Missouri Commission
Company in Bowling Green

EMCC Friday start times

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

Cattle receiving hours

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

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

Upcoming Sales

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

Friday, Sept. 1Regular Friday sale
Friday, Sept. 8Special Yearling & Weaned Calf Sale with regular sale
Friday, Sept. 15Cow Sale in conjunction with regular Friday sale
Friday, Sept. 22Special Yearling & Weaned Calf Sale with regular sale
Friday, Sept. 29Regular Friday sale
Friday, October 6Regular Friday sale
Friday, October 13...Special Yearling & Weaned Calf Sale with regular sale
Friday, October 20Cow Sale in conjunction with regular Friday sale
Friday, October 27...Special Yearling & Weaned Calf Sale with regular sale

