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Vol 21, Issue 8

August 2025

Living the Good Loaf

The Renaissance man who pulled strings and gave new life to old grains

By CLAIRE STEVENS
Texas Co-op Power magazine
Reprinted by permission

James Brown has a fascination with history.

For 23 years, the Texas native played the viola da gamba, a bowed instrument that resembles a cello but fell out of favor nearly 300 years ago.

"The whole thing was to put the listener in a time and a place," Brown says. "When you're hearing this music, if you closed your eyes, it'd be the same as being in Germany in 1735 hearing Bach conducting the chapel choir and orchestra on the same instruments."

Brown specialized in music of that era, performed and conducted around the country, and was director of worship and arts for a church. But in 2016, he was looking into a second career.

Brown had been baking bread and pizza as a hobby (though he does have a culinary degree picked up among various music

degrees). In pursuit of a better loaf, he happened upon a blogger in New Mexico who was touting the wonders of baking with locally grown grains from a co-op in Albuquerque.

To his surprise, he couldn't find a similar operation in Texas.

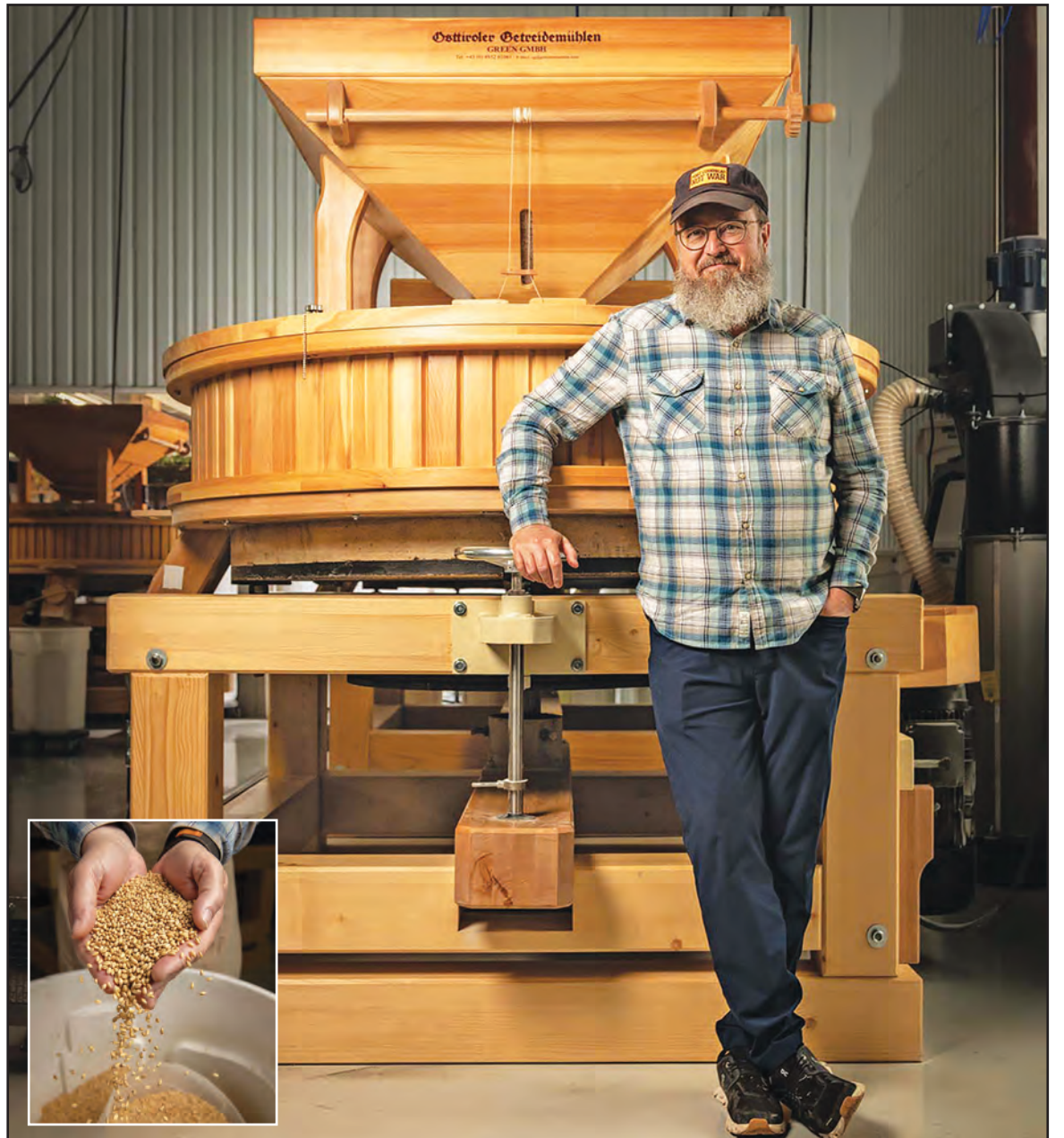
So Brown, who was living in Austin at the time, looked into establishing a small-scale mill that could process grains from local farmers. And, just as in his music career, he turned to the wisdom of the past, bringing those around him on a journey through time—this time by way of wheat.

Armed with historical documents detailing the grain varieties grown in Texas in the early 20th century and some hazy information about mills powered by Austin's Barton Springs in the 19th century, Brown set out "to take people to a time and place" that no longer exists.

"What was growing in Texas? What were people eating? What was being milled in your hometown?" he wondered.

Brown got to work in 2017, and eight years in, Barton Springs Mill in Dripping

See ANCIENT GRAINS, page 3



NEW LIFE TO OLD GRAINS: James Brown, owner of Barton Springs Mill in Dripping Springs, Texas, stands in front of one of his three mills, each fitted with a pair of 2,500-pound stones.

His plant produces flour from grain varieties grown in Texas in the early 20th century. Bottom left, Brown shows unmilled Sonora soft white wheat kernels. (Photos by Wyatt McSpadden)

Border closed again to Mexican livestock imports due to new case of NWS

Just two days after southern ports were beginning to reopen for the importation of cattle, bison and equine from Mexico, a newly reported case of New World Screwworm (NWS) just 370 miles south of the U.S.-Mexico border has prompted their closure, effective immediately, USDA said in a news release late July 15.

On July 15, USDA said, Mexico's National Service of Agro-Alimentary Health, Safety, and Quality (SENASICA) reported a new case of NWS in the state of Veracruz, which is approximately 160 miles northward of the current sterile fly dispersal grid.

This new case has been detected about two months after northern detections were reported in Oaxaca and Veracruz, less than 700 miles away from the U.S. border, which triggered the closure of U.S. ports to Mexican

livestock on May 11.

Imported Mexican cattle is a key addition to the U.S. herd, particularly for feedlots and processors in Texas and the Southern Plains. USDA had announced a risk-based, phased re-opening of the southern ports beginning as early as July 7, however, "this newly reported NWS case raises significant concern about the previously reported information shared by Mexican officials and severely compromises the outlined port reopening schedule of five ports [through] Sept. 15," the agency said.

"We are pausing the planned port reopenings to further quarantine and target this deadly pest in Mexico. We must see additional progress combatting NWS in Veracruz and other nearby Mexican states in order to reopen" the ports, USDA Secretary Brooke L. Rollins said.

To ensure the protection of U.S. livestock herds, USDA said it is holding Mexico accountable for proactive measures taken to maintain a NWS-free barrier, through animal movement controls, surveillance, trapping, and following the proven science to push the NWS barrier south in phases as quickly as possible.

"Secretary Rollins has made significant gains holding Mexico accountable for their role in eradicating" NWS, said National Cattlemen's Beef Assn. CEO

Colin Woodall, in a statement. "She successfully removed bureaucratic barriers to the screwworm sterile fly flights and increased surveillance in Mexico. Unfortunately, screwworm continues to move north through Mexico and it's clear that the United States needs a sterile fly facility of our own here at home. We cannot wait any longer and we urge USDA to immediately begin work on a sterile fly facility."

In June, Secretary Rollins

launched a plan to combat New World Screwworm, and announced the groundbreaking of a sterile fly dispersal facility in South Texas.

At the same time, USDA is moving forward with a design for a domestic sterile fly production facility.

The federal agency is working with Arizona, New Mexico and Texas on a coordinated approach with federal, state, and local partners.

— Meatingplace.com

Vietnam opens market to JBS beef from Brazil

Brazilian meat giant JBS has shipped 27 tons of beef to Vietnam, opening up a large and fast-growing export market.

The shipment of JBS's Friboi brand came from a plant in Mozarlandia, one of two of the company's facilities in the southern interior state of Goiania to

receive export licensing from Vietnamese regulators.

"The opening of the Vietnamese market represents more than just access to a new trade destination," JBS said in a statement. "It's a strategic move by JBS in Asia, a region with growing demand for animal pro-

tein and increasing economic relevance."

Brazil is a global competitor with U.S. beef exports. U.S. beef exports to Vietnam jumped 27% last year to 5,052 metric tons, an increase by value of 65% to \$43.4 million dollars.

— Meatingplace.com

UPCOMING SALES

Tuesday, July 29 – Regular Sale
Tuesday, Aug. 5 – High Noon Cow Sale
Tuesday, Aug. 12 – Feeder Special
Tuesday, Aug. 19 – Regular Sale
Tuesday, Aug. 26 – Feeder Special
Tuesday, Sept. 2 – High Noon Cow Sale
Tuesday, Sept. 9 – Feeder Special
Tuesday, Sept. 16 – Feeder Special
Tuesday, Sept. 23 – Regular Sale

Cattle Receiving Hours

Sunday: 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Monday: 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday: All Day Sale Day



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Good market is here for awhile

Don't let the Packers or any naysayers steal your joy. Anybody still in the cattle business deserves all the good things happening to us now! I drive down the road and I see miles and miles of rolling farm ground that in my opinion would be better rolling pastures. I've never been a farmer and I do not wish ill on anyone, I am just really happy for the few farmers who still have their fences and facilities to handle cattle. For the next few years, cattle will provide a lot of financial support for many of you. It is definitely our turn!

I'm pretty confident the good market is here for awhile, although I'm also confident that we will have volatility and unseen challenges. So it's time to be careful, but it's also time to be bold. The only mistake now is not to have an inventory of something. I've said many times never have we seen the value of the gain we put on beef animals be so profitable. If you buy cows/pairs that seem a little high now, in 60 days the calf will be 120 pounds bigger. At five dollars a pound, that \$600 can fill in a pretty deep starting hole. For those wanting to step out and be bold, remember the high noon cow sale August 5. Please don't ask what time it starts, lol.

The team at F&T Livestock in Palmyra, Missouri looks forward to providing you and your neighbors no risk cattle marketing services. In my opinion, F&T is the best kept secret in Northeast Missouri. If you'd like to do business where both you and your cattle will be appreciated, give one of us a call. Don't procrastinate, do it right now!

– Justin Angell
F&T Field Representative

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High Noon Cow Sale

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F&T Livestock Auction, Palmyra, MO

Early Consignments

Dwain Shelton

12-12 Black heifer pairs with big calves. They have been exposed to an Angus bull since June 24th.

Brown Farms

8 mostly young black cows to calve at the end of August through September to Angus Bulls. These are all home raised cows.

Drew Miller

28 Fall calving Red Angus heifers to start calving August 28. These heifers were pregnancy checked on the farm and 24 of the 28 are expected to calve within a 30 day window. These heifers originated as calves hand picked from the Alfred Crow Ranch by Quest Fleshner. The heifers were grown and held over to grow out and will be calving at 28 months old and averaging 1100ish pounds.

Wendel Yoder

6-6 Angus Pairs 4 of which will be two and three years old. 3 Char cows bred in the third period. 2 Black bred cows, five and six year olds.

Fesler Farms – Dispersal

50 mostly Angus and Angus crossbred home raised fall calving cows. The overwhelming majority should be four to seven years old and have been bred to Angus and SimAngus bulls.

*Please check the website for updates and videos.
If you have cows to sell, get ahold of your
F&T representative, consign early
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Look online for updates and photos of early consignments.

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ANCIENT GRAINS from page 1

Springs, about 20 miles west of Austin, provides freshly milled grains to a growing audience of restaurants, distilleries, bakeries and home bakers. It's showing folks why they should care whether their flour is local and organic or an ancient, heritage or landrace variety.

The grains are selected with a focus on ancient varieties—those largely unchanged over time and still closely resembling how they looked and tasted before human intervention—and landrace and heritage grains—those developed in the 19th and 20th centuries, before more intensive hybridizing. Landrace grains are specifically adapted over time to the local climate where they are developed.

In addition to churning out flour, BSM offers tours of its 17,000-square-foot facility, which houses all the equipment to store, clean, mill and ship grains.

In a classroom opposite the mills, staff and guest instructors teach visitors to make breads, pastas and other baked goods. Through large windows in the classroom, visitors can watch the three stone mills.

The 7-foot-tall pine structures are fitted with a pair of 2,500-pound, flat composite stones. A pattern etched into the stones crushes the grain. The miller can control the result by adjusting the stones' closeness, the speed at which grain is added and the speed at which the upper stone rotates. Power would have been provided by the water of a nearby creek a century ago, but today the mills get their energy from Pedernales Electric Cooperative.

The rumbling stone mills look like relics of the past. In some ways, they are. These days, most commercial milling is done with roller mills, which can produce flour much quicker.

Brown's goal is to show that flour can have its own incredible flavor and aroma. He wants the loaves of bread to transport them back in time, much like his music. Stone-milling preserves the germ and the bran, flavorful parts of the wheat kernel that are typically removed when milling white flour (though included in whole wheat).

"You pick up the aroma and the flavor and the characters of these wheats, and they become an equal player in anything that you make," he says. "It becomes an ingredient that contributes those things, rather than just being neutral."

TAM 105, a variety of hard, red wheat developed by Texas A&M University in 1976 and one of the mill's more modern grains, smells to Brown like a wet dog while it's being milled. Fortunately, that doesn't translate when the finished flour is used for baking, and Brown recommends it for breads, pastas and pizza dough.

On the other hand, rouge de Bordeaux, a 19th-century wheat, naturally smells and tastes of cinnamon, baking spices and molasses. "People will swear that's in the bread," Brown says. "No, that's just the wheat—wheat, yeast, water and salt."

Brown has gone to great lengths to track down seeds for wheat varieties he desires. He found farmers still growing marquis, which was popular in the U.S. in the beginning of the 20th century, in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan. Other seeds he could get only from the Department of Agriculture's National Plant Germplasm System, a bank of plant material that conserves plant genetics.

When BSM was just an idea, Brown convinced 10 organic farmers across the state to meet with him. Over coffee or a meal, he presented his pitch: He'd provide the seeds and buy the wheat they produced. To his surprise, all 10 were interested, which meant he had to turn some down due to a lack of capacity.



BARTON SPRINGS MILL'S warehouse. To keep the grain fresh in the Texas heat, oxygen is removed from each bag of wheat. Last year, the mill processed 650 tons of grain. (Photo by Wyatt McSpadden)

Henry Martens has been growing wheat for Brown, in rotation with peanuts and cotton, at his farm in Tokio, about 40 miles southwest of Lubbock, since 2017.

A fifth-generation farmer, Martens always knew he wanted to farm. In 2015, when a piece of land became available that hadn't yet been treated with chemicals, he couldn't pass it up. He began organic peanut farming, which he rotated with cotton.

Today, Martens farms roughly 2,000 acres but likens his experience farming organic to tending a garden. The work is especially labor intensive—keeping up with weeds and caring for crops without the use of chemicals—but he says organic farming is worth it for him.

"It takes dedication and love," he says.

When he met Brown, Martens had been looking to add another crop to his rotation. Crop rotation is particularly important for organic farmers, who rely on it to manage pests and diseases and keep soil healthy. Peanuts reintroduce nitrogen, a key nutrient, into the soil. Plant only cotton too many years in a row, and pests become a problem.

Wheat is a good rotation crop for Martens because it can be planted in winter, when weeds are less of a concern, and the tall grass provides cover to the ground, protecting it from high winds. As another plus, Brown pays his farmers significantly more for their crops than the market rate.

An additional benefit for Martens is getting to try the flour from his wheat.

"When you see it, it's not what you're used to seeing—the flour, where it's so fine and perfect and white," Martens says. "But I guess that's never mattered to me

and my wife. We care about it being organic and it being directly from the farm that we know, and it tastes amazing."

The best way to test a grain's flavor, Brown says, is to make a pancake with it. They're simple, quick and allow the flavor of the grain to come through.

And since "nobody wants to eat a spoonful of flour," Brown sends visitors next door to Abby Jane Bakeshop, which sells a variety of baked goods that use only BSM grains.

Brown is proud to help farmers, supporting what he calls the local grain economy. He works with four to five farmers each year (groups rotate in and out with their crops). Most are in Texas, but he has also worked with farmers in Oklahoma, Colorado and Arizona.

Brown says he gets a call from a farmer wanting to grow for him about once a

week, but he's at capacity. Last year, the mill processed 650 tons of grain. This year, it may take in a record 800 tons.

"I got into all this because I wanted a better loaf of bread," Brown says. "That's really the long and short of it."

"But along the way, I became more intimately acquainted with what's going on with American farms and with American farmers and became quite passionate about how we treat farmers, regard farmers and our farmland."

Claire Stevens is a Texas Co-op Power communications specialist who can appreciate going to great lengths to bake great bread. Her specialty is baguettes.





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From the Publisher... Jon Angell

Especially since the Wuflu of 2019/2020, and the supply chain problems, local foods have surged in popularity. The local farmers' markets are filled with fruits and vegetables, as well as locally sourced eggs and meat protein products. What about local grains?

Chuck ran across this feature story of how one foodie in search of a "better loaf of bread" started a second career in the milling business. Local grains and flour isn't something I have ever given much thought before this article, but why not local flour?

I learned a good deal and thought what James Brown is doing in Dripping Springs, Texas milling grain, has a good deal of appeal. I found it very interesting and assume many of you will as well.

Schyler is back with a submitted story we are running as an inside feature on page 10. Many of you will remember the youth page that my nieces produced for many years in these pages. Schyler has graduated from college and is now sporting a new last name; she is no longer an Angell, she is now a Marley!

The Wire Works story idea came from Schyler's love of the products and her stint working for the company. She is a fan.

I would point out that after reading their story, they will be set up at the Missouri State Fair. If you go by their displays, be sure to tell them you read about them in *The Cattleman's Advocate*.

On the front, we have a news item about the closure of cattle crossing the Mexican border. This will likely be a repeated on and off story. The livestock trade between the U.S. and Mexico is both big and important.

Managing trade against the New World Screwworm issues will be a hot issue for a good while. Fear of screwworm introduction into the U.S. is real and for legitimate reasons.

On page 15, Bill Bullard's commentary has some interesting information on the matter. We'll keep watching for news like this.

Elsewhere, we have plenty of interesting regular columns.

Of course, Carolyn Allen's Barns of Pike County has become a favorite of mine. This month's column shows the depth of research she does when looking into these barns and their history, quoting several different sources on this month's grouping of barns. The Pike County Assessor records, Vandalia Leader, Vandalia Mail, Bowling Green Times, and Mexico Ledger were all given as source material.

Wow! I'm impressed with the digging into the story. Salute!

Thanks for reading. Thanks for your continued support of our efforts.

Brazilian packers facing steep losses from 50% U.S. tariff

Brazil's beef industry is reconsidering exports to the United States after President Donald Trump announced a 50% tariff on Brazilian products, Reuters reported.

The U.S. is Brazil's second-largest market for beef products after China. Brazilian firms have reportedly begun cutting cattle purchases and halting shipments bound for the U.S. as they reassess logistics and demand.

Brazilian meatpacking association ABRAFRIGO estimated that the industry could lose as much as \$1.3 billion in the second half of the year if the looming import tax takes effect, according to a separate Brazilian media report. Losses in 2026 could reach \$3 billion if the trade levy remains in place.

Meatpackers have scrambled to redirect production following the tariff news, effective Aug. 1. Minerva, one of Brazil's largest beef exporters, said U.S. sales account for about 5% of its net revenue and had already surged U.S. shipments ahead of the announcement.

Brazil supplies roughly 23% of U.S. beef imports, according to Genial Investimentos. Analysts warn the tariff could raise prices for American consumers at a time when domestic cattle supplies remain tight.

- Meatingplace.com

Feedlot profits climb, beef packer margins threatened by rising cattle prices

Feedlots saw a major boost in profitability last week, but packer margins may be on the verge of turning negative, according to Drovers' July 12 Beef Profit Tracker.

Feedlot margins jumped nearly \$100 per head, reaching \$737.64, up from \$619.59 the previous week, driven by an \$8/cwt increase in 5-Area Choice steer prices to \$238.93/cwt. That compares to a breakeven of \$186.24/cwt.

Packers remained in the black last week, with Sterling Marketing estimating a \$34.08/head profit based on the prior week's cattle cost of \$230.56/cwt. But with early signs of weakness in the boxed beef cutout and higher cattle prices, Drovers analysts cautioned that packer margins could slide back into the red this week.

Beef cutout value dipped slightly to \$387.54/cwt, and fed plant capacity utilization climbed to 79.6%. Total cattle slaughter rose to 568,000 head.

- Meatingplace.com

'Guide to Meat Processing' touts meat's nutritional importance

The Meat Institute and Meat Foundation launched an updated "Guide to Meat Processing" to boost understanding of the industry's processes and the ingredients it uses to produce nutrient-dense meat and poultry.

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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The rollout comes as policymakers seek to define ultra-processed foods, review ingredients used in food processing and determine a strategy to improve the health of children.

"Public discourse around meat consumption is often clouded by confusion over nutrition, processing definitions, labeling practices, and ingredient functions," said Julie Anna Potts, president and CEO of the Meat Institute, in a news release. "This guide defines processed meats and provides more transparency on meat and poultry's nutritional importance and safety to better inform key stakeholders and the public."

The guide explains, for example, that all meat is processed and falls into two categories — minimally processed meats and further processed meats — and features easy-to-read tables explaining ingredients, uses and processing methods.

The guide cites nutritional science underscoring the importance of nutrient-dense processed meats to the diets of children, adolescent girls and the elderly.

The guide was written by Dr. KatieRose McCullough, the Meat Foundation's chief scientist and the Meat Institute's senior director of science and public health.

- Meatingplace.com



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THE Cattleman's Advocate



A monthly livestock magazine serving Eastern Missouri & Western Illinois

is a publication of
Jon & Charlotte Angell

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

The Cattleman's Advocate
P.O. Box C • Centralia, MO 65240
573-682-4656

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FARM & FOOD FILE

Follow the money to the one-tenth of one percent

By ALAN GUEBERT
For The Cattleman's Advocate

Lost in the breathless reporting on the huge federal budget cuts and even more massive federal tax cuts just passed by the heel-clicking Congress was a report on just how rich America's mega-rich now are.



The answer is unfathomably, headshakingly rich. In 2024 alone, for example, the top 10 richest Americans made \$365 billion, or \$1 billion a day, according to Oxfam, a global non-profit that fights poverty and inequality.

To give an idea of how much those single-year earnings are, Oxfam calculated it would require 10 U.S. workers earning an average \$50,000 a year to work a collective 726,000 years to earn the same amount as the top 10 did in 2024.

And yet this solid-gold 10 just got a big, beautiful tax cut courtesy of the Trump White House and Congressional Republicans that, roughly calculated, would have saved them \$7.3 billion in 2024 earnings had it been made retroactive—and, of course, they paid taxes.

By contrast, when the new tax law fully bites—well after the 2026 and 2028 elections, as designed by Republicans—the bottom 10 percent of U.S. workers will see their "household

Processor supports Texas flood recovery

Greater Omaha Packing Co. joined nationwide recovery efforts for victims of the devastating floods in Texas.

According to a release from the processor, the company donated more than 38,000 bottles of water (more than 5,000 gallons total) in partnership with a ministry in Boerne, Texas.

"We're proud to be able to step in and offer support during this difficult time," said Henry Davis, president and CEO of Greater Omaha Packing Co. "As a company rooted in community, we believe in taking action when our neighbors are hurting—no matter how far away they are."

The floods, which began on July 4 at the Guadalupe River, caused more than 130 deaths, with economic costs estimated between \$18 billion and \$22 billion. In the first week of July, Tyson Foods and Walmart partnered to provide 10,000 meals to flood victims.

— Meatingplace.com

"Don't call it a budget reconciliation bill. Call it a 'farm bill for one-tenth of the 1%'"

resources... drop by 4% in 2033," according to the Congressional Budget Office.

This widening economic split isn't just between a handful of politically-connected billionaires and the tens of millions politically-unconnected Americans whose Medicaid and SNAP subsidies will now be used to further feather BigMoney's already down-filled nest.

Big Ag also did well in the big, beautiful budget deal while small ag was passed over.

For example, according to the Environmental Working Group (EWG), the budget bill's newly raised payment limits on many of today's generous federal farm programs will benefit few big farms far more than the many small farms.

"In particular," EWG notes, "the [budget] bill increases the limit on farm subsidies for certain commodity crops from \$125,000 to \$155,000. Less than one-tenth of 1% of farmers received more than \$125,000 linked to government price guarantees in 2024... according to data provided by the Department of Agriculture (USDA)."

The same ratio was true in 2023, USDA data proves, while "only two-tenths of 1% received a payment greater than \$125,000 in 2022."

As such, EWG notes "Don't call it a budget reconciliation bill. Call it a 'farm bill for one-tenth of the 1%'"

Moreover, the reconciliation bill also allows a costly, 30-million-acre "increase [in] the number of base acres eligible for farm program payments."

That 11 percent boost in acres, according to Gary Schnitkey, an ag economist with the farmdocDAILY team at the University of Illinois, mostly benefits three Southern crops—rice, cotton, and peanuts—and raises the cost of farm programs another 11 percent.

Ferd Hoefner, a long-time Capitol Hill ag policy expert, was more blunt in his assessment of this expansion of program acres in a June 25 briefing facilitated by the EWG. Why should 14,000 cotton farmers, 4,900 peanut farmers, and 12,000 rice farmers get most of this benefit? he asked.

Hoefner's broad answer focuses on the sum of big farm-favoring changes in the bill: "It puts an end to the idea that we have a 'farm safety net,'" he notes.

In short, no one in American agriculture should keep a straight face when claiming the nearly \$70 billion Farm Bill will help rural America when the top 1 percent of farm program recipients garner 25 percent of all payments and the top 10 percent receive 70 percent.

And now they'll do it while cutting federal food assistance and government-backed medical care—by more than \$1 trillion—to pay for these rising, narrowly-focused subsidies.

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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

Animal protein, tariff costs cloud Conagra financials

Still facing headwinds in the back half of its fiscal year 2025, ended May 25, Conagra Brands Inc. Thursday reported financial results for the fourth quarter and full fiscal year that were lower than expected, and provided cautious guidance for fiscal 2026.

For the fourth quarter, Conagra reported a 4.3% drop in net sales to \$2.8 billion, and net income of \$256 million, compared with a loss for the same period in fiscal 2024. For the full year, net sales dropped 3.6%, to \$11.6 billion, though net income at \$1.15 billion logged a better-than-3x improvement over net income from the fiscal year earlier.

For the most recent fourth quarter, operating margin was 11.5%, and for the full fiscal year, 11.8%, a slight increase over fiscal 2024.

"I'm proud of the Conagra team for their hard work throughout fiscal 2025 as we navigated an environment that proved to be more challenging than we anticipated," CEO Sean Connolly said in an earnings release. "In fiscal 2026, we expect elevated inflation and macroeconomic uncertainty to persist but remain focused on proactively managing the business by investing in our

high-potential frozen and snacks domains, prioritizing volume strength, and further enhancing supply chain resiliency while continuing disciplined cost management and focus on cash flow."

Adjusted earnings (a non-GAAP measure) will be as much as \$1.85 per share, according to reporting in Bloomberg, compared with analysts' estimates of \$2.19 per share.

Ongoing economic and business uncertainty dampened Conagra's outlook for its fiscal year 2026. In a conference call with analysts about the results, Chief Financial Officer David S. Marburger noted that about 20% of the company's materials costs are animal proteins, and that those costs overall are expected to increase at double-digit rates in fiscal 2026.

The animal protein piece, then, is the single biggest contributing factor to Conagra's projected 4% core inflation rate in fiscal '26, along with assumption of a 50% tariff rate on imported tin plate steel and aluminum, a 30% rate on limited imports from China, and a 10% reciprocal rate on imports from certain other countries.

— Meatingplace.com

Here are the scheduled advertising deadlines for The Cattleman's Advocate through January 2026:

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October issue Ad deadline: September 15
November issue Ad deadline: October 17
December issue ... Ad deadline: November 17
January issue Ad deadline: December 15

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Thoughts From Justin's Side of the Fence

By JUSTIN ANGELL

Last month after the Fat Cattle market surged past \$2.40, the market took a pause and actually retraced down into the \$230s in Northern Plains, \$220s in southern Plains last week.

That pause appears to be over now with prices returning to the \$240s this week. Many of you reading this don't finish cattle and that price may seem to be irrelevant to you, but we all have to remember that the fed cattle market is the engine that pulls the entire industry higher.

As I write, it rains every week and so we are positioned to have another fantastically bountiful crop. We have cheap corn and high cattle are getting higher. Heavy yearlings are now over three dollars a pound while light calves approach and sometimes exceed five dollars per pound. How could things be any better?

My cousin James sent me an interesting podcast of which Joplin Regional Stockyard was the subject. The discussion included an expansive tour, JRS history, explanations of how

things work in the Livestock Auction business and a good description of how big the industry is.

Two of the statistics that I found truly amazing was that in 2024, JRS sold about 450,000 head worth \$1,009,000,000. (Look for a link on The Cattleman's Advocate website.)

Unlike the government budget, \$1 billion worth of cattle is a very, very, big number.

Another one of my five readers, Schuyler, sent me the link for an interesting podcast called The Lanecast. This podcast first highlighted the loyalty of the beef consumers.

I did not realize that beef is actually gaining market share even with these high prices. One of the contributing factors for beef's solid demand is that somewhere around 12% to 15% of US adults are taking some type of GLP1 weight loss drug. These tens of millions of adults, in conjunction with the GLP1 drugs, often shift their diet to higher proteins especially higher beef consumption.

Currently, the big unknown



question is how many heifers are being pulled out of the beef supply to be bred. On the Lanecast, economist Dr. Don Close theorized the size of heifer retention may have a conclusive answer when the July cattle on feed and national beef inventory reports are made public. The key number to watch is for a 36% heifer placement. That number will indicate whether too few heifers are being kept.

Dr. Close made a very good point pointing out, even when

heifers are initially retained, producers have multiple opportunities for sale. Even though I believe there are a much higher number of heifers being retained for breeding, I also agree that these heifers can be sold back into the beef chain at any time.

The podcast consensus was that the January 1, 2026 cattle inventory report will actually see a slight decrease in the cowherd and predicted there would be no beef inventory expansion until 2027. Another supportive trend for the beef market is smaller beef on dairy calves are going to be produced in 2025 due to the necessity of

breeding more purebred, Holstein's for our nation's dairy industry.

With all those positives coming down the road, I think now would be a great time to highlight the high noon cow sale August 5. We have early consignments listed in the advertising and there's at least one very nice pending consignment along with late consignment that will bolster the volume and make the August 5 high noon, cow sale, an attractive opportunity to expand your cow numbers.

I guess that's all for this month. I will see you at the auction!

USMEF hoping for return to 'Phase One' deal with China

The first Trump administration's "Phase One" trade deal with China opened lucrative opportunities for the U.S. beef industry that were never fulfilled.

The January 2020 arrangement included promises to buy \$200 billion of U.S. goods and services within two years — especially soybeans, beef and other agricultural products — but amid COVID-19 and the resulting economic and trade disruptions, Beijing let its commitments slide, and the deal fell apart.

Trade talks are underway again between China and the new Trump administration, after an explosive confrontation led to prohibitively high tariffs between the world's two largest economies, before a ceasefire of sorts in May.

Erin Borrer, U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) vice president for economic analysis, said

beef would have been "the big winner" if the Phase One purchase agreements had been kept.

"China adds additional value to every animal we produce when we have that market, because, not only are they buying \$2 billion worth of U.S. beef, but they're competing for every Asia item that we produce off that animal, so that supports those prices," she said from a beef industry meeting in San Diego. "We really need China to again abide by that Phase One Agreement, and be able to return to \$150 to \$165 per head that China does add to our industry."

— Meatingplace.com

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It's The Pitts...

E-Cows and consequences

By LEE PITTS
For The Cattleman's Advocate

It's looking more and more like ranchers are going to have electronic ear tags shoved down their throat whether they like it or not. In the future you'll be required to use EID tags so your cattle can be scanned like a can of peaches in the grocery store.

Here are ten events I see happening to ranchers someday as a result. Just remember, you read it here first.

#10 - The IRS will have a huge air force of drones for the sole purpose of flying over ranches to take an inventory so they'll know exactly how many animals you have so that at the end of the year you'll get an all-new inventory tax bill. Whatever happened to the unwritten rule that it's impolite to ask a rancher how many cows he or she owns?

#9 - Not only will the feds have drones to count cows, ranchers will have their own drones to take a daily inventory. Then your neighbor will send you a feed bill for having five cows on his place for 27 days. If you thought the Hatfield and McCoy's feud was bad, just wait until ranchers start spying on their neighbors.

#8 - The Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management will also have a drone air force too. One day after your due date for getting all your cows removed from your allotment they will do a flyover to make sure you got off on time. But because the EID tag is still in the ear of a dead cow that was either killed by wolves or

Good help will be as rare as a cowboy with a 401K. That's because a cattleman will someday be able to check the temperature of all his cows, or all his cattle in a feedlot, with a drone and a special EID reader. Cowboys will be replaced by drone pilots and virtual fences.

shot by a short-sighted hunter, the feds will assess you a huge fine, take your allotment away and throw you in jail for not removing ALL your cows in a timely manner.

#7 - The USDA will say that their new rules will apply only to those cattle involved in interstate commerce. But is a rancher in California going to commit economic suicide because most of the California stockers are sold to feeders in Nebraska, Colorado, etc. and by not using EID tags he's going to eliminate them from bidding on his cattle?

#6 - Auction markets are disappearing faster than a dozen donuts at a police station due to the U.S. beef cattle herd being the smallest it's been in 64 years. This is really hurting some of the smaller auction yards. When they are told how much it will cost to install EID readers on their scale and to update computer programs to tie that information in with the price paid, many of the auction owners will just quit.

#5 - EID readers and computer programs will make the USDA's job much easier. At the touch of a keystroke they will know how many cattle and what prices were paid. This will allow packers to know immediately which auction markets to send their buyers to in order buy their cattle the cheapest.

#4 - One day you'll sell a

slaughter cow that will be ground up in a big batch of ground beef that could potentially have meat in it from a couple dozen countries. When it's found that a specific batch of hamburger has e coli in it and because they'll know your cow contributed to that particular batch the USDA will send officials out to your place to depopulate your entire herd, including those two new \$10,000 bulls you just bought. D9 bulldozers will then show up to dig a big trench and bury all your beautiful cows. The packers will love it because they can assign all the blame to you and you'll get sued and lose your ranch despite the fact that the dirty cow meat actually came from Australia.

#3 - Using the IRS inventory you will receive a BIG BILL from the EPA based on how many head you own multiplied by their supposed greenhouse gas production.

#2 - Good help will be as rare as a cowboy with a 401K. That's because a cattleman will someday be able to check the temperature of all his cows, or all his cattle in a feedlot, with a drone and a special EID reader. Cowboys will be replaced by drone pilots and virtual fences.

#1 - You inventory tax bill may be inflated by one head thanks to the Longhorn head hanging over your fireplace with an EID tag still in its ear.

- www.LeePittsbooks.com

Animal disease tracking across borders spotty, at best

With the U.S. meat supply chain battling wave of highly pathogen avian influenza (HPAI) and on high alert as African Swine Fever (ASF) has moved closer to U.S. production systems, wide variations in country-by-country surveillance and reporting hampers efforts to contain the spread of these and other animal diseases. This, according to a review of policies and actions taken by member countries/territories of the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), published recently in the journal, Nature Communications.

"In recent years, the trans-boundary spread of HPAI and ASF Viruses has become particularly prominent," researchers said.

Evaluating the reporting processes in these countries between 2016 and 2023, for ASF, and 2020 to 2023 for HPAI, the authors found that "while a few countries/ territories appeared to perform exceptionally well or poorly," after controlling for "other factors," there were inconsistencies in the information gathered and shared.

"Our findings highlight the need for more targeted national and global efforts to strengthen animal health surveillance capacities," they wrote. "A key next step would be to focus global and regional efforts on identifying the specific drivers that influence the functioning of HPAI, ASF, and other animal disease surveillance systems. By doing so, we can develop more targeted, effective, and efficient recommendations to improve animal health surveillance capacities."

Lawmaker 'disappointed' by decision on Proposition 12

The recent U.S. Supreme Court decision to deny a petition aimed at regulating California's controversial Proposition 12 law prompted U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) to express his concern regarding the decision.

Grassley responded to the High Court's ruling to deny an appeal from the Iowa Pork Producers Association (IPPA) and 20 other states challenging Prop 12 after an appellate court rejected the challenge to the mandate.

"The constitution says Congress and the federal government has the right to do interstate and foreign commerce and to regulate it," Grassley said during his weekly public affairs program. "California is interfering with Congress' ability to regulate it," he added while referring to the state's animal housing standards for products sold in the Golden State.

Iowa is the nation's leading producer of pork products, and Grassley now expects the next step in legislating Prop 12 to be included in the next Farm Bill, which will set the tone on the rule and similar laws for the next five years. He previously launched legislation to strike down Prop 12 and what Grassley described as "arbitrary, nonsensical standards" that have resulted in a "harmful patchwork of regulations across 50 U.S. states."

- Meatingplace.com

Brazil halts vote on proposed Marfrig-BRF merger

Brazil's regulatory agency for securities has again blocked a vote by shareholders of poultry and pork processor BRF on the proposed takeover of the company by fellow Brazilian meat giant Marfrig.

The merger, which was approved last month by the country's competition regulator, would forge a new major conglomerate in the global protein sector with annual revenues of \$28 billion.

The last vote was scheduled for Monday, July 14 before the renewed action by the regulator, CVM, which already halted a shareholder meeting last month, which was the first attempt to consider the deal. The first 21-day

postponement action followed complaints from minority shareholder Latache, a Brazilian asset manager.

Marfrig, which already holds a controlling stake in BRF, announced the proposed share-swap deal in May.

According to the filing, the regulator received and analyzed new requests to postpone the meeting.

Brazilian newspaper O Globo reported last week that BRF had failed to provide required disclosures to shareholders. A new date for a vote on the deal has not been set, but the CVM ordered at least a 21-day pause.

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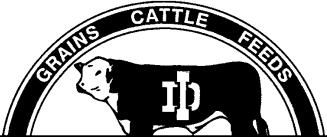
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Animal protein segment appears to be healthy, Cobank economist says

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in poultry and New World screwworm-related disruption to cattle imports will continue to be liveside wildcards for meat processors, Cobank's Brian Earnest, lead economist for animal protein, cautions in a new report.

Midway through 2025, global demand has "remained favorable" amid consumer interest in protein, with the USDA is forecasted about a 2% increase in meat this year, he explains in the agricultural lender's quarterly update on agriculture and the rural economy.

"While low feed costs typically usher in expansion, animal numbers have stalled in part due

to processing capacity constraints, tight labor conditions and elevated capital costs," Earnest wrote. "Animal protein is not immune to global market disruptions with import restrictions including disease, tariffs and non-tariff barriers. ... Overall, the animal protein segment appears to be healthy."

Highlights in the report —
Chicken: Rising capital costs have constrained production. "Demand both domestically and abroad are good, but production is moderately outpacing expectations. Seasonal market pressure is likely as the year progresses, especially as demand cools during the third quarter," Earnest said.

Beef: Pasture conditions this year have deteriorated somewhat compared to 2024. Calf prices, feeder and fed cattle futures, and live cattle futures are all up significantly year-on-year, within a range of 18%-25%. "Rebuilding the nation's beef cow supply is likely to be delayed under current conditions," Earnest said.

Pork: Inventory and production have been stable from January-June, but hog prices "have jumped significantly," he said. Ham prices are higher and bellies are much higher. A June dip in the USDA cold storage report signals "strong international demand for U.S. pork," Earnest said.

— Meatingplace.com

Neighborhood butcher pivoting to wholesale sales

Indianapolis butcher Turchetti's Salumeria is executing a transition from public-facing direct retail to a rapid expansion aimed at exclusively wholesale distribution.

Founder George Turkette shuttered his whole animal butcher shop, specialty food store and counter service delicatessen in September 2024 after nine years.

"We're in an expansion and growth phase right now, hiring new staff, adding new automation equipment, adding new accounts, going to food shows," Turkette told Meatingplace. "Really switching from being the neighborhood restaurant/butcher shop that supplies restaurants in the area to working on becoming a national brand."

When the lease was due for renewal on his 6,000-square-foot retail space, which included a USDA certified processing plant, Turkette bought a dedicated space at a nearby location, now producing about 5,000 pounds a week and quickly increasing to meet demand from co-pack and private label customers.

He described it as a lifestyle and business choice to focus on one of meat processing's most elaborate arts.

"My passion is salami and the value-added products, and specifically salami, because it's just such a special, niche thing," Turkette said. "It's the most regulated meat product out there to produce: a fermented, ground, self-stable meat product. ... I just love the whole process behind charcuterie production."

He is now expanding from two employees who work alongside him, adding three more people to production staff plus a salesperson, with wholesale sales rising from \$140,000 in 2024 to a projected \$1.2 million this year. "It just shows the growth that we can achieve without me having a restaurant and all these other things to manage at the same time," Turkette said.

In the process, he's switching from whole-animal to boneless inputs and emphasizing distributor partners over direct distribution to restaurant clients.

The company sells 18 SKUs in four categories: eight flavors of shelf-stable pork salami in

chubs or sliced charcuterie trays; five flavors of deli meats including roast beef, salami and turkey; four flavors of bulk loose pork sausage in 1-pound retail chubs and 5-pound food service bags; and bacon.

In addition to angel investors, Turkette has used the website Wefunder to allow participation by small-dollar investors, many of whom were fans of the retail butcher shop, who receive legal equity in the business, unlike Kickstarter-style crowdfunding.

— Meatingplace.com

Training rural doctors

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

Rural North Missourians know that accessing healthcare can sometimes be a challenge. Longer wait times for an appointment, farther drives to deliver a baby, or getting immediate care after a heart attack are just some of the difficulties. Earlier this month, I told you about the Save America's Rural Hospitals Act, which I introduced to ensure we keep our rural hospitals and clinics open. While they definitely need financial help and less burdensome regulations to keep operating, they also need one of the basics of medicine: doctors.

Getting medical students into rural and underserved areas has proven challenging. Unless a student grew up in a rural area and wants to return home to practice, it might not be everyone's first choice. Certainly, if a student hasn't trained in a rural area, they won't know the benefits of practicing there or how to handle the unique challenges they might face.

One of the best ways to fix this? Make sure medical students train in rural America while they are still in school. When students get real experience working in small hospitals and community clinics, they are much more likely to come back and serve those communities after they graduate.

That's why I joined several colleagues from both sides of the aisle to help introduce the Community Training, Education, and Access for Medical Students (TEAMS) Act. The bill sets up a grant program to help medical schools give their students the opportunity to complete clinical training in rural and underserved areas. It also makes it easier for schools and local clinics to work together, helping students get the experience they need, while giving communities better access to care.

This is not just about giving students more options; it is also about building a stronger health care system across the country. By training students where the need is greatest, we create a pipeline of doctors who are ready and willing to serve rural America.

We are blessed to have great medical schools and rural hospitals and clinics in North Missouri. It only makes sense that it's easier for them to work together to ensure the next generation of doctors returns to practice in rural America. The Community TEAMS Act is a practical way to make that happen. It provides more opportunities for students, strengthens rural health care, and helps ensure that patients in rural communities have the care they need when they need it.

Teenager dies in accident at California meat plant

A 19-year-old sanitation worker died Sunday night in an accident at a meat processing facility in Vernon, Calif.

According to multiple media reports, the incident occurred at about 9:30 p.m. Sunday at the

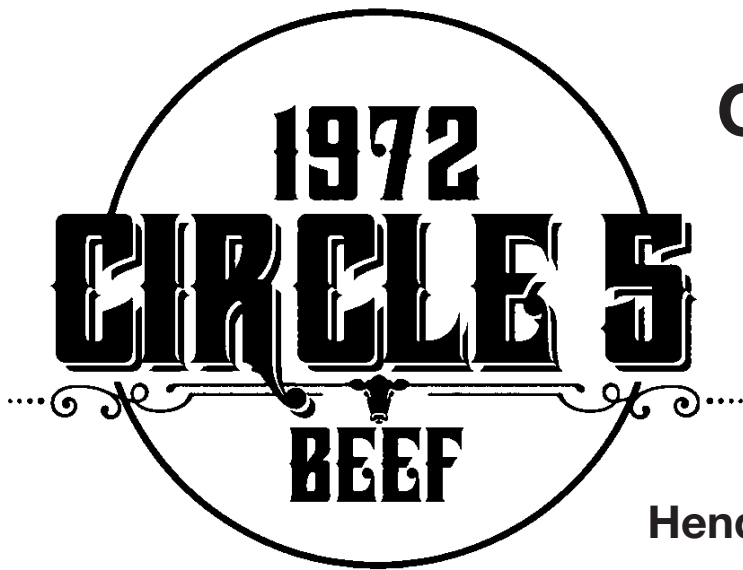
Tina's Burritos plant, which is owned by Camino Real Foods Inc.

Police said the worker was cleaning an industrial food processor when the machine activated, and coworkers who

heard him calling for help tried unsuccessfully to turn off the machine. The man had already died when police arrived, the reports state.

The victim's name has not been released.

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Livestock News & Notes.....

Industry urges White House to appoint ag trade negotiator

More than 40 U.S. agricultural organizations are asking President Trump to “expeditiously nominate” a chief agricultural negotiator in the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR).

Participating groups with meat industry ties include the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) and National Turkey Federation (NTF), along with the American Farm Bureau Federation and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture. Their joint letter points out that the chief agricultural negotiator post is “critical to prioritizing the needs of American agriculture as reciprocal trade negotiations continue around the globe.”

The letter notes that U.S. farmers and ranchers are “facing challenging economic conditions with low prices, high input costs, increased global competition and languishing markets.” An appointee to the job is expected to “optimize the U.S. position to prevent missing time-sensitive opportunities to reduce trade barriers, open new markets and eradicate unfair trade practices.” The letter is being delivered to such Trump administration officials as USTR Jamieson Greer, USDA head Brooke Rollins and a dozen U.S. legislators who have direct ties to U.S. laws on agriculture operations and opportunities.

Judge allows some discrimination claims to proceed against JBS Souderton

A Pennsylvania federal judge granted in part and denied in part a motion by JBS Souderton to dismiss racial discrimination, harassment and retaliation claims brought by nine black current and former employees of the Pennsylvania beef plant.

JBS sought to strike the lawsuit’s class action allegations, arguing they were not sufficiently defined or common. The court rejected that argument, saying such a challenge was premature before discovery.

The plaintiffs alleged violations under Section 1981 of the Civil Rights Act of 1866, including hostile work environment, disparate treatment, unequal wages, retaliation and other claims. Two plaintiffs also brought claims under the Family and Medical Leave Act.

In the order issued Tuesday, the court allowed several claims to proceed, including those related to alleged wage disparities, overtime denial, discriminatory

demotion and termination and failure to rehire.

However, the judge dismissed with prejudice several claims, including most of the plaintiffs’ failure to promote allegations, one plaintiff’s termination claim, and a range of retaliation and FMLA claims.

The proposed class includes Black workers allegedly denied employment, promotions or equal pay between May 2015 and May 2019.

Tyson Demo Day 2025 spotlights new AI innovations

Tyson Ventures, the venture capital arm of Tyson Foods, assessed the latest innovations in artificial intelligence at its fourth annual pitch event, Tyson Demo Day.

In total, 11 companies pitched the processor on new AI-related innovations at the July 9 event. Tyson chose six to “engage in continued conversations within the business, paving the way for further high-impact opportunities,” according to a release from the processor.

Among the companies Tyson chose, the pitches involves such technologies as: “bridging the gap between campaign performance and brand awareness”; automation that enables “enter-

prise teams to reclaim their time and focus on creating value at scale”; and the design of antimicrobial proteins that protect foods and remove “undesired preservatives and increasing shelf life.”

Tyson Ventures was founded in 2016, and since then, it has invested more than \$100 million in emerging proteins and new technologies.

“It’s inspiring to see so much strategic potential all in one place,” said Doug Kulka, chief information and technology officer for Tyson Foods. “When AI-driven solutions enhance our connection with customers and consumers, we can unlock new ways to innovate and deliver exceptional experiences.”

USMEF focuses on market intel, new business in Colombia red meat push

The U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) is expanding its training programs in Colombia, shifting from traditional product handling education to a broader focus on market intelligence and business development for U.S. red meat.

Working with importers, USMEF has launched a Meat Merchandisers Program aimed at

identifying new retail and food-service opportunities for U.S. beef and pork. Four merchandisers now cover key markets in Bogotá, Medellín, Cali and the Atlantic Coast, gathering commercial insights and connecting potential customers with importers.

“Importers see the results of these operational training programs for their customers,” USMEF

Colombia Representative Maria Isabel Ruiz said. “Now that we are focusing more on developing new business in retail and food-service, importers are encouraging current customers to meet with us about how to profitably increase their purchases of U.S. pork and beef.”

The program recently scored a major win by partnering with Andres Carne de Res, one of Colombia’s top restaurant groups. The chain will launch a new menu in July 2025 featuring three U.S. pork loin cuts, with an initial order of 4.5 metric tons.

The restaurant also agreed to switch from local top round to U.S. beef picanha, ordering 4 metric tons.

The initiative is backed by USDA’s Regional Agricultural Promotion Program.

Many of the preceding items were taken from Meatingplace.com

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The path to Wire Works success took many twists and turns

By SCHYLER MARLEY
Special to The Advocate

Ask any successful business owner to describe how they got where they are and you’re likely to get a surprising answer. The route is rarely a direct one, and often includes detours along the way. Such is the case with Wire Works, an Afton, Oklahoma-based company that specializes in custom made wire art jewelry.



The Wire Works legacy begins with Jim Thompson

Jim Thompson graduated from high school in 1955. He was witty, small in stature, and from Coffeerville, Kansas. He loved motorcycles, but didn’t weigh enough to start his own, which led to his frustrations and eventually to the creation of what is now known as a go-kart. As a natural businessman, Jim decided to start making go-karts to sell, the only problem was that he needed some cash to get started. In hopes of purchasing a bulk order of tires, Jim went to get a loan from the bank. He didn’t have any ponies to offer the banker as collateral, so he suggested that he had a lot of tools and invited the banker to his shop. After taking a look, the banker approved the tools for the use of loan collateral. What the banker didn’t know, however, was that Jim’s father owned the tools. With an even greater need for profit, to avoid severe consequences from his father, Jim became successful, and eventually sold his business and moved to California where he started

another successful go-kart business to sell before deciding to return to Coffeerville, Kansas. With the entrepreneurial itch, Jim later moved to Florida and bought an apartment complex. He quickly learned that he didn’t make a good landlord, sold the apartment complex, and bought a boat to live on, on land. One night at the bar, Jim met some sailors who were interested in traveling to the Caribbean Islands. Jim had a boat, but his Kansas upbringing had not provided him with the opportunity to practice sailing. So, the group took sail together, mutually benefiting from Jim’s boat and the sailors’ experience. The group sailed from island to island for six years. One of Jim’s crewmates carried a satchel in his suit pocket, which earned him the nickname of “Wire John.” When the boat stopped at an island, this man would take out his satchel, and begin bending and shaping wire into hat pins with customers’ names. One name at a time, he made a living, and he taught Jim to do the same.

After their ocean voyage, the crew decided to return to the United States. Coincidentally, the World’s Fair was going on in New York City at that time in 1964. Jim sailed to the harbor in hopes of being an exhibitor at the fair. Upon his arrival, nobody

knew who he was or what he had to offer, which resulted in his quick denial to being an exhibitor, but before he could leave, Jim resiliently asked, “How much rent are you getting for that trash can? That’s all the space I need.” Upon agreeing, Jim paid his

rent, set up a card table, and began selling wire names and jewelry. The next year, Jim continued his work at the events hosted on the fairgrounds of the Seattle World’s Fair. In 1968, he traveled to the

See WIRE WORKS, page 19



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Making hay to reduce ergot infestation can prevent livestock losses

COLUMBIA, Mo. – University of Missouri livestock and forage specialists are reporting ergot infestations that can cause major losses in livestock, said MU Extension state specialist in veterinary toxicology and animal health Tim Evans.

Ergot is a toxic fungus that infects the seed heads of many grasses and some cereal grains. It can cause severe illness and even death in livestock, especially cattle, and possibly horses, Evans says.

“You take a hot day and combine ergot, it’s likely going to be a problem for animals,” he says.

MU Extension state forage and grazing specialist Harley Naumann points out that cool-season grasses that have already produced a first cutting of hay will no longer

Registration open for Missouri Master Gardener online course

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Registration is open for the fall online University of Missouri Extension Master Gardener course. The 15-week class begins on Aug. 10 and ends in December.

Gardening is an activity with many rewards, says MU Extension horticulture specialist Debi Kelly. One of those rewards is “the satisfaction of sharing your plant knowledge with others,” she says. The Extension Master Gardener program provides in-depth horticultural training to individuals who then help others learn about gardening and the environment.

Participants will learn about the mission of the Master Gardener program and gain a working knowledge of the fundamentals of gardening and its terminology, she says. The course provides a foundation in plant structure and function, soils and plant nutrition, plant propagation, fruits and vegetables, herbaceous and woody plants, entomology, plant pathology, landscape design, lawns and pesticides usage.

Core training is the first step toward Extension Master Gardener certification. After core training, participants complete a minimum of 30 hours of volunteer service. Local coordinators help online trainees find volunteer opportunities to meet the volunteer service requirement.

Since its inception in 2013, more than 3,000 individuals have gone through MU Extension online Master Gardener training. Extension Master Gardener programs are offered in every U.S. state and most Canadian provinces.

Participants will receive a copy of the Missouri Master Gardener Core Manual as part of the registration fee, says Kelly.

State Master Gardener coordinators are Kelly and Sarah Denkler, MU Extension regional director for southeastern Missouri. Kelly, Denkler and horticulturist David Trinklein teach the course.

Register online, or contact Kelly at kellyd@missouri.edu with questions. Learn more at <https://mg.missouri.edu>.

produce seed heads and are not susceptible to infection by ergot. “It’s easy to forget that one reason for making hay earlier in the season is to eliminate the chance of it being infected by ergot,” Naumann says.

Subsequent growth of these grasses will remain in the vegetative state and not produce seed heads.

Plentiful first-cutting of hay and rain delays may lower demand in the hay market in non-drought years, but that should not deter forage producers from mowing remaining pastures of cool-season grasses that have not experienced a first cutting yet, because of an already ample supply of first-cutting hay and the likely poorer quality of hay produced at this time.

“In predominantly tall fescue pastures which have not been previously mowed, make hay anyway, leaving it at least 3 to 4 inches tall,” says Evans. “Clipping seed heads forces most of the ergot to drop to the ground. Baling also reduces the number of seed heads.”

Depending on the stage of its life cycle, early signs of plant infection by ergot may include yellow syrup drops called honeydew in flowering seed heads. Honeydew hardens and turns into dark ergot bodies, which look like mouse droppings and are up to 10 times the size of the grain.

Early symptoms of ergot poisoning include lameness, hair loss, reddening of the tops of hooves eventually leading to sloughing of hooves or parts of limbs, as well as loss

of tail switches, closely resembling fescue foot from exposure to toxic endophyte-infected tall fescue, which generally only occurs when it is cold.

Other common signs may resemble severe cases of “summer slump,” which is typically associated with fescue toxicosis in cattle. Like cattle exposed to toxic fescue, cattle exposed to ergot will eat less and spend more time in the shade or in ponds as they try to cool off. However, clinical signs of extreme heat stress, including rapid breathing and panting, staggering and occasional seizures and death, are much more likely with ergotism.

“You will also see when they are experiencing heat stress caused by ergot poisoning,” says Evans. “When you see cattle losing their tails or hooves during the summer, it’s usually associated with ergot.”

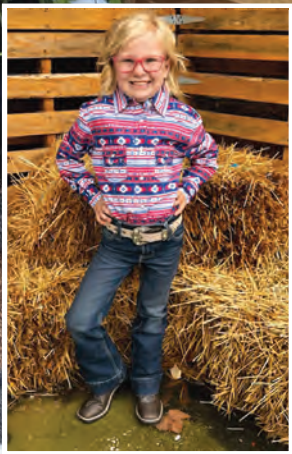
If you see signs of ergot in a pasture, immediately remove livestock from infected pastures until they can be mowed. Do not feed hay containing obvious ergot bodies. Check pastures thoroughly, as ergot does not appear uniformly throughout a pasture, and remember that ergot can infect a wide variety of grasses.

Grasses may be infected in some areas but not others, says Evans.

If in doubt, you may have pasture and hay samples analyzed at the MU Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory for toxins associated with fescue toxicosis or ergotism.

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

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced the phased-in opening of the Mexican border to allow cattle, bison and equine to again enter the United States.

On July 7, the first opening was at Douglas, Arizona, to be followed by Columbus and Santa Teresa, both in New Mexico, to open in July and Del Rio, Texas, and Laredo, Texas, in August and September.

We all agree that we do not want New World screwworm back in the United States. Although I am not going to dive into that as much today as I am into yet another concerning USDA policy.

For 60 years, the USDA has been participating in what is called SIT: Sterile Insect Technique. This is a mass production in lab conditions where the male fruit fly is exposed to X-rays and irradiation to sterilize the fly. Then, by the millions, these sterile male flies have been released into the wild with the theory that the wild female will mate with the sterile male and thus control the population.

Here is the problem: the wild fruit fly that lays the larvae that become the New World screwworm is attracted to the biggest male she can find. Extensive studies on this "birds and bees" situation shows that some species of female fruit flies don't care but most prefer to mate with the big boys.

This opens up another can of flies as the National Institute of Health has published many related studies on the topic.

From NIH in 2003:

These results support the hypothesis that intense sexual signalling indicates longer life span. We discuss the importance of age-specific behavioural studies for understanding the evolution of male life histories.

Studies suggest that factors



In short, if you are like the rest of the world and have fallen prey to the convenience of having everything wireless, you are exposed to grave danger.

related to the sterile male, such as reduced seminal fluid or genetic differences from wild males, may increase a female's propensity to remate.

The fruit fly has a life span of 60 days. In that short time on earth, the female lays 2,000 eggs. The challenge to long-term control of the screwworm at any level is not going away any time soon.

In what appears to be unrelated news but I believe it is all tied together, Joe Esposito and Kenwon Fulsom from Owasso, Oklahoma, recently stopped by the house. They have both suffered health damage from radiation and electrical magnetic fields that surround us all.

In fact, I went looking for the details of how the male fruit flies are sterilized because it dawned on me that we are told human males are losing sperm quality.

Have you ever had an EMF meter run through your vehicle or house to see what you are exposed to on a daily basis? Well, we have now.

It was actually quite alarming and Esposito, a Marine veteran who spent most of his military life working with radar, has suffered from that exposure. The health problems he incurred inspired him to help others by showing up to test the radiation we are all exposed to a daily basis.

In short, if you are like the rest of the world and have fallen prey to the convenience of hav-

ing everything wireless, you are exposed to grave danger.

During this conversation with Fulsom, it occurred to me that we call these devices that we pack with us at all times a "cell phone."

Actually, much like the lack of evidence supporting the re-opening of the border to Mexican cattle, in my opinion, the evidence to show that the wireless world we live in is not causing serious human health issues is not very common.

I urge you to dig deeper into this topic and start looking at ways to make your life less wireless and your health better.

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.

Federal judge denies Burford's request to back out of Cargill settlement

A federal judge denied an attempt by two investment firms to opt out late from a class-action antitrust settlement involving turkey producer Cargill.

Carina Ventures LLC and Amory Investments LLC, which hold assigned claims from turkey purchasers, missed the court-ordered April 21 deadline to formally opt out of the Direct Purchaser Plaintiffs' (DPP) \$32 million settlement with Cargill. They submitted an email one day late, stating their intention to be excluded, according to court records.

The court rejected the request, ruling the firms failed to follow explicit opt-out procedures despite having 81 days to do so. The judge cited precedents from the Seventh Circuit, including the Navistar and Broiler Chicken antitrust cases, which held that filing separate lawsuits or expressing general objections does not substitute for complying with formal opt-out rules.

The judge also noted that both firms had previously opted out of similar settlements and were active in the ongoing litigation, undermining their claims of confusion.

While the judge acknowledged the firms acted in good faith, he emphasized the importance of enforcing deadlines in complex, multi-year class actions.

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BARNs OF PIKE COUNTY

From apples to turkeys – these 3 Pike County barns have seen it all

By CAROLYN ALLEN
Special to The Advocate

It's rare to find three big barns still together on one farm like these in Pike County's Hartford Township. Each is a little worse for wear but technically still standing. According to the November 1917 Vandalia Leader, at least one of these big old barns was built that year by Benjamin D. "Doug" Hamilton. He was a farmer, stockman and nurseryman who often advertised apples – particularly York Imperials – in the local newspapers.

Hamilton Orchard was apparently quite extensive and productive at one time. The September 1935 Vandalia Leader mentioned the large barns B. D. Hamilton had to store his sizeable apple crop, and his 1939 obituary noted that his large white barns were emblematic of the purity of life and conduct of the man who established them. The Hamiltons owned the farm from around 1882 to 1943, and the Pike County Assessor's office as well as old newspapers have him building the house in 1928, so at least one of the barns predated the house.

It appears that the apple barns didn't totally transition to turkey barns until 1946 when J. N. Belot took over the farm. Although, to be fair, Mrs. Hamilton had raised some poultry on the farm prior to that time. A note in the 1912 Vandalia Leader reported that Mrs. B. D. Hamilton had received "six wee chicks" by express mail that year. And foreshadowing the turkeys to come, a 1934 article in the same newspaper reported that Mrs. Doug Hamilton and her daughter had about 200 turkeys that they had hatched and raised successfully on the farm.

According to the Bowling Green Times, John Belot bought the farm in 1946 and used it to raise and feed turkeys and chick-



VERSATILE BARNs: These 3 historic Pike County barns have sheltered everything from apples to turkeys for close to a century. (Photos by Carolyn Allen)



ens. He raised 2,000 – 2,500 turkeys every year on each of his two farms. Before turning to turkeys, J. N. Belot and his father Joe had raised Poland China hogs on his 3-generation Middletown farm. The Belots, however, apparently had quite a bit of experience in the poultry industry as well because the 1932 Vandalia Leader mentioned that their flock of White Leghorns had won second place in a commercial flock contest and they often advertised Leghorn chicks for sale.

By 1939, however, the Belots were specializing in turkeys, and by 1941 the Vandalia Mail called John one of the most successful turkey raisers in this part of the country. He bought the Hamilton farm to expand the turkey operation which was truly a family affair. Mr. Belot credited his wife with understanding turkeys and their habits, and the Belots' son Floyd channeled some of that turkey wisdom into running the farm near Gazette.

According to a 1948 article in the Mexico Weekly Ledger, Floyd installed a radio in his turkey brooder house in 1947. The article said that many people laughed, but it explained that

fright is the chief reason for loss in turkey farming.

It noted that a car backfiring or a lawnmower was a turkey farmer's worst nightmare!

At the end of 1947 - after the radio experiment - Floyd had not lost a single turkey due to fright or stampede. Apparently, having the radio playing day and night from the time the turkeys were hatched helped them combat strange noises and avoid fright.

Although the article did not specify the type of music the turkeys preferred, it did include other turkey facts. Belot said his turkeys consumed 10 bushels of wheat, 500 lbs. of concentrate, 20 bushels of oats, 40 gallons of buttermilk, 50 lbs. of grits and 800 gallons of water each day!

It went on to say that he marketed all his turkeys on the St. Louis market and his largest turkeys averaged 40 lbs. They figured the cost of each turkey at

marketing time in 1948 to be around \$7.00. Each year they would save 60 – 100 birds for the next season's breeding stock.

The September 1946 Vandalia Leader noted that John Belot was starting the foundation of an incubator house. That would have been shortly after the Belots purchased the farm. A 1960 black and white farm picture in the Vandalia Leader showed all three barns, and the white barn had flat roofed extensions or pens coming off the south side at that time.

That was probably the barn the Belots built for their turkeys and/or chickens. After all, white is listed as the best exterior color for a turkey house!

Although there are no longer any visible signs of apples or turkeys nor any "turkey music" wafting from the barns, they have had a rich history. Unfortunately, just this winter the roof of the now red barn collapsed on its frame. It might have been one of the Hamilton

apple barns or stock barns. (It did not have the shed extension in the 1960 picture.) The barn hiding in the trees could be the barn that B. D. Hamilton built in 1917 while the white one (which looks like the newest of the three) was probably the Belot's poultry barn – minus the side extensions.

In addition to turkeys, the grandson of a former neighbor remembers the Belots raising broilers. He said that once a year people in the community would gather at the farm to pluck, cut up and package around 300 chickens.

Who knows, they might've even cooked and eaten a few in the shade of the three barns.

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Here are 20 phrases every farmer actually mutters over rain

By TAYLOR LEACH
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of Farm I Journal Ag Web

If there's one topic that unites farmers across all sectors of ag, it's rain. It's more than just weather on the farm, it determines your profits, your schedule and your mood all wrapped into one frustrating package. And it doesn't matter if it's planting season, mid-summer or the final push before harvest, our entire lives revolve around what's happening in the sky.

If two or more farmers are talking, you can bet rain will come up in the conversation within the first five minutes. Here's a look at some of the most common phrases you'll hear when farmers start talking about rain:

- "We could use some rain."
- This is the go-to phrase farmers have said since the beginning of time. It's a simple, familiar line heard everywhere from church parking lots to town meetings, starting at planting and sticking around through the end of harvest.
- "It would be nice if it stopped raining."
- Ah, the full-circle moment. Just two weeks ago we were begging for a slight shower. Now it's been raining cats and dogs for four straight days.
- "How much rain did you get?"

This is more than small talk; it's actually a competition between farmers, and there is a winner and a loser.

- "How much rain did so-and-so get?"
- Because we all know that one farmer magically got all the rain, again.
- "Did you see the forecast for the week?"

This is a question that leads farmers to check five weather apps that all have five different answers.

- "That cloud is looking pretty dark."
- If this phrase is said on any farm, everyone will turn to look and offer their opinion on if it's actually going to rain or not.

- "It always seems to miss us."
- Every time the radar shows a line of storms, somehow it splits, shifts or drifts just enough to leave you high and dry.

- "We needed that."
- This is often said with a kind of relief that comes after waiting days or weeks, when even a small rain feels like a lifeline.

- "It was just enough to settle the dust."

This is farmer speak for: it looked better than it was, but we'll still take it.

- "The radar made it look like we'd get rain, but we didn't get a drop."

All the signs pointed to a down-pour, but somehow the sky held back.

- "It split and went north again."

Of course it did. It always does. It never rains where it's supposed to.

- "The neighbor got an inch, and we got nothing."

This can go one of two ways: You're ticked that you didn't get the rain, or you're thankful that you didn't get more of it.

- "It's too wet to get anything

done now."

Welcome to farming: Nothing goes according to plan, and every drought seems to end with a downpour.

- "Hopefully it holds off 'til we get this hay in."

A tempting statement that all but guarantees a pop-up thunderstorm. Mother Nature never checks your schedule.

- "At least we get a break."

This is said when the rain slows work down but gives everyone a moment to catch their breath.

- "We're overdue."

This is usually muttered out of practicality and frustration, recognizing that the dry spell has gone on longer than expected and

something has to give soon.

- "It was just enough to green things up."

It wasn't a drought-buster, but it was good enough to make everything look better.

- "How long do you think this dry stretch will last?"

Asked like someone might have insider info. Nobody does, but that won't stop the theories, calendar comparisons or 2012 references.

- "You could see the rain line from here."

Another version of "we missed it," but with more drama and eyewitness testimony.

- "I could be a meteorologist."

Said when the forecast flips

unexpectedly, reminding everyone that sometimes even the experts are just guessing.

Whether it's not enough, way too much or the perfect amount, rain brings out every emotion in a

farmer's toolkit — hope, stress, gratitude, frustration, envy and relief. And no matter what the forecast says, one thing is always true: If you're a farmer, you'll never stop talking about rain.

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It's still too early to resume Mexican cattle imports

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

R-CALF USA supports Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins and we want to continue supporting her.

Within just months of her confirmation, she took decisive action to end the nightmarish criminal charges the U.S. Department of Agriculture had leveled against the Maude family in South Dakota, and she closed the Mexican border to cattle, bison, and equine imports when the New World Screwworm, previously detected in southern Mexico was detected about 700 miles south of the U.S. border.

We breathed a sigh of relief believing Secretary Rollins was going to work to strengthen the family farm system of agriculture in the United States. In other words, we believed Secretary Rollins would cease the decades-long practices of her predecessors to side with big agribusinesses whenever there was a conflict between Big Ag and independent farmers and ranchers.

Here are some examples: Big Ag wanted to import beef from Brazil and Paraguay, countries not free of foot-and-mouth disease. Independent producers said no. The previous Ag Secretary's analysis concluded that not only would importing beef from these countries increase the then current risk of introducing FMD into the United States; but also, the expected imports were forecasted to lower domestic cattle prices, with Brazilian imports causing independent cattle producers to incur a loss of over \$216 million and Paraguayan imports causing them to incur up to \$24 million in losses.

In both cases, the previous Ag Secretary sided with Big Ag and approved the importation of beef from Brazil and Paraguay, despite the increased risk of FMD and despite the economic harm the decision was known to inflict on family-scale farmers and ranchers.

Another example is the recent electronic identification eartag mandate. Big Ag wanted it, but

While we applaud the U.S. for helping Mexico eradicate the New World Screwworm, we don't understand why the Secretary is exposing the U.S. cattle herd to this unnecessary and avoidable risk by reopening the U.S. border to Mexican cattle before it completely eradicates this dangerous pest.

independent cattle producers did not. The Ag Secretary estimated the mandate would cost Big Ag nothing as all the costs - \$26.1 million worth of them, were to be borne by cattle producers.

Again the Ag Secretary sided with Big Agribusinesses. And now, despite our hopes and expectations that our new Ag Secretary would begin shifting the USDA's helping hand away from Big Ag and toward independent cattle producers, it appears it's déjà vu all over again.

Ag Secretary Brooke Rollins recently announced the U.S. would resume imports of live cattle from Mexico as early as July 7 through an Arizona port, with four more ports scheduled to reopen between July 14 and September 15.

Mexico has not yet eradicated the New World Screwworm. In fact, the Secretary's news release clearly indicates that Mexico is still experiencing outbreaks stating, "We have not seen a notable increase in reported NWS cases in Mexico. . . over the past eight weeks."

For reasons the Secretary does not explain, there was an explosion of New World Screwworm outbreaks in Panama in 2023, with detections increasing from 25 cases per year to more than 6,500 cases in one year.

And just one-year later, in 2024, the New World Screwworm made its way into Mexico. We don't yet know what caused that explosive increase just two short years ago.

While we applaud the U.S. for helping Mexico eradicate the New World Screwworm, we don't understand why the Secretary is exposing the U.S. cattle herd to this unnecessary and avoidable risk by reopening the U.S. border

to Mexican cattle before it completely eradicates this dangerous pest.

If the mitigation measures currently deployed are as effective as the Secretary says, then Mexico should be able to eradicate the pest in short order. We see no justifiable reason that our domestic cattle herd should be exposed to any

additional risk until we know definitively that the pest can, in fact, be eradicated in Mexico.

At the very least, the Secretary should issue a proposed rule and provide all its research and findings regarding why she believes the border should be reopened so quickly. This will give independent cattle producers an opportunity to carefully consider the Secretary's position and to provide thoughtful comments before this action is taken.

A big part of the push to reopen the Mexican border is coming from Big Ag, who wants to achieve trade continuity, also known as trade normalization, which would enable them to

regain access to lower cost Mexican cattle despite the higher risk.

But waiting until the risk is completely neutralized is a better option, one that would incentivize the rebuilding of our U.S. cattle herd and encourage new entrants into our industry. This will only happen if the price point for cattle remains at a level that provides domestic producers with the opportunity to be profitable.

We must sever our nation's dependency on foreign supply chains for our food, and by prioritizing the health of our U.S. cattle herd, the marketplace will help us rebuild and strengthen our domestic beef supply chain.

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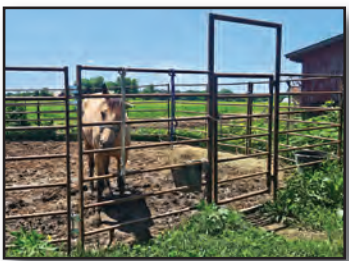
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Rural America is facing a mounting labor crisis from immigration changes

A shrinking labor pool is already having an impact, and ag experts say it's only going to get tougher

By TAYLOR LEACH
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of Farm Journal Ag Web

The American labor market is reaching a critical turning point that could tighten labor availability in rural industries and slow growth across the U.S. economy. A new quarterly report from CoBank's Knowledge Exchange warns that demographic shifts and recent policy changes may start impacting businesses as soon as late 2025.

From livestock and crop operations to food processors and rural cooperatives, this labor shortage is becoming especially noticeable in the heart of America's farmland. Many producers are already struggling to fill roles, and the challenge is expected to intensify in the coming months.

"Barring an unforeseen change in labor force participation rates or immigration policies, the pool of available workers is set to shrink sharply in the next few years," says Rob Fox, director of

USDA trims 2025 red meat outlook

The USDA lowered its 2025 red meat and poultry production forecast in July's World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates, citing reduced beef and turkey production that outweighed slight gains in pork and broilers.

Beef output was revised down on slower slaughter rates and lighter dressed weights, while turkey and egg production were lowered on recent hatchery data. Broiler and pork production were increased slightly due to heavier weights and stronger slaughter in the second half of the year.

Looking ahead to 2026, beef production is projected higher on stronger feedlot placements, though the forecast assumes the ongoing ban on cattle imports from Mexico due to New World Screwworm remains in place. Pork production is also raised based on larger expected pig crops. Broiler, turkey and egg forecasts are unchanged for 2026.

Beef import estimates were raised for both years, with trade volumes expected to remain elevated through 2026. Beef and pork exports were revised upward for 2025 based on recent data, though broiler exports were cut due to increased international competition. Turkey export forecasts remain unchanged.

Cattle prices were lowered slightly for 2025 based on second-quarter data, while hog and turkey price forecasts were raised on tighter supplies and recent market strength. The broiler price forecast was raised for Q3 2025, but held steady for 2026.

— Meatingplace.com

CoBank's Knowledge Exchange. "The problem will be even more serious in states with slower population growth in the Upper Midwest, Corn Belt and Central Plains."

Demographic pressures mount

Fox says the warning signs have been building for years. Labor force participation has steadily declined, birth rates have dropped and immigration policy has become more restrictive.

Between 2022 and 2024, nearly 9 million immigrants arrived in the U.S., driven by global humanitarian crises and relaxed federal rules. While that influx temporarily eased labor constraints, Fox says it only masked deeper, long-term trends.

U.S. fertility rates have fallen from 2.12 children per woman in 2007 to 1.62 in 2023, meaning fewer young people are entering the workforce just as the last of the baby boomers retire. In addition, labor force participation has slipped from a peak of 67% in 2000 to 62% today. Nearly 2.5 million working-age Americans have left the labor force in the past eight months alone.

"There is no single reason people are stepping away," Fox explains. "It's a combination of rising caregiving responsibilities, job skill mismatches, mental health challenges and higher disability rates. These are complex issues that won't be resolved overnight."

Shrinking workforce hits agriculture hard

The effects are already being felt across rural America. Farms, food processors, equipment dealers and cooperatives are struggling to find and keep the workers they need to maintain daily operations. Seasonal labor has become harder to find and full-time positions, especially those requiring specialized skills or long hours, are increasingly difficult to fill.

In regions with slower population growth, such as the upper Midwest and central Plains, the challenge is even more acute. These areas often lack the population inflows that help offset workforce losses elsewhere in the country.

While labor has been tight for several years, Fox warns that conditions are poised to deteriorate further.

"What we are facing is not just a cyclical labor issue; it's a structural one," he says.

Border encounters have dropped sharply since August 2024, signaling a steep decline in immigration. Combined with rising political pressure to increase deportations, the agricultural labor pool could shrink even more in the months ahead.

"Immigration has long been a key pillar supporting the rural workforce," Fox notes. "Without a steady flow of new workers, farms and agribusinesses will have to get creative, either by increasing wages, automating tasks or changing how they manage production."

Technology offers a path forward

In response, more agricultural

businesses are turning to technology to help offset the labor gap.

"The key to addressing labor scarcity always lies in innovation," Fox says. "AI and robotics are no longer limited to the factory floor. They are increasingly being used in fields, dairies and food plants."

A recent Gallup poll found that nearly one in five workers already uses artificial intelligence in some form each week. At the same time, the cost of robotics has dropped by nearly half in the past decade, making automation more accessible for a

broader range of farms and agribusinesses.

CoBank's report notes that many farm supply customers are using new tools to increase efficiency, improve decision-making and free up time for employees to focus on higher-value responsibilities.

Planning for what comes next

As producers look toward 2026, a combination of labor constraints, volatile input costs and shifting policy landscapes will continue to shape decision-making. Fox thinks adaptability will be essential.

"Technology will be critical to agriculture's future," he says. "AI and robotics can help farmers do more with fewer workers, boosting efficiency and margins. But investment decisions must be made carefully, especially in this uncertain economic environment."

Until clearer policies emerge on trade, labor and energy, rural America will need to prepare for continued pressure.

"This is a pivotal moment," Fox concludes. "Farms that plan ahead, embrace innovation and stay flexible will be best positioned to succeed."

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RFK Jr. may set record straight yet

By STEVE DITTMER
Executive Vice President
Agribusiness Freedom Foundation



Yes, even in the car you may catch us monitoring Fox News or Fox Business via satellite radio. But when we heard Dr. Marty Makary -- the new FDA chief -- yesterday giving a news conference about a blue food coloring, we weren’t sure we heard what we thought we heard when he answered a question from a reporter about saturated fat.

We thought he said something about Ancel Keys and misguided advice since the ‘70s about saturated fats. But it couldn’t be. That would be too good to be true. We must have misheard him.

We searched FDA’s website when we got home and... nothing.

Then this morning, up pops on my phone -- technology can sometimes be great -- up pops a video clip of Makary. Here’s what he said, in answer to a question from Kristina Peterson of Bloomberg about saturated fat mentions from HHS Secretary RFK Jr. and Makary on the evolving science. Here is Makary’s answer verbatim:

“Look, since Ancel Keys in the 1960s decided to demonize saturated fats with a hypothesis that was supported with data that was incomplete and methodologically flawed in his seven-country study, the medical establishment started with a robust debate in the New England Journal of Medicine and among academics and the National Academy.

"But that debate ended in the 1970s, because there was group think. The medical establishment locked arms and walked off a cliff together, insisting that the reason for heart disease in the United States was that people were not eating skim milk and no fat and low fat foods, ignoring the role of refined carbohydrates and so many other things that drive general body inflammation that is the precursor of fat deposits in arteries.

“Well that dogma still lives large and you still see remnants

of it in the food guidelines that we are now revising. So we are going to make sure new guidelines are based on science and not medical dogma.”

“Thank you for that question.” Yes, thanks to Ms Peterson for that question. We’ve been looking for that answer promising real science since we began following the question since the early ‘70s. It may not have been the answer she was looking for but it was music to our ears.

When we got our copy of Nina Teicholz’s book, “The Big Fat Surprise,” the first name we looked for in the index was Dr. Raymond Reiser. As we remember, he tested mice in the lab, having them swim in cold water in the dark to simulate stress. He found that the mice that were fed high fat, high cholesterol diets handled the stress better than mice fed low fat, low cholesterol diets.

The implication was that cholesterol could be a reaction, a substance serving as a coping mechanism for stress, like white blood cells found plentiful around a wound.

And yes, Nina’s research was so thorough that his study was in her book.

We asked Nina about Makary’s statement yesterday.

"For the record, "Removing the cap on saturated fat is the single most important reform this administration could make in the upcoming U.S. Dietary Guidelines. It would finally give Americans the confidence to eat steak and serve their kids whole milk—without the fear of causing heart disease.

"The belief that saturated fat causes heart disease was never built on strong science. That idea has now been thoroughly dis-

credited—but only this administration has had the courage to stand up to groupthink and acknowledge the truth."

That, from someone who has followed the many twists and turns the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee has woven to confuse, distort and obscure the real science about animal products in the diet for decades.

To be sure, this isn’t finished yet. There will be more twists and turns in this saga, as a draft of the new Guidelines have already been submitted to the Secretaries of Agriculture and HHS. But they are not final. Makary’s statement is a good sign that there is a good chance USDA’s Brooke Rollins and HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. will not allow a 2025 Dietary Guidelines report go out that recommends not eating beef or drastically cutting back on red meat consumption.

It is thanks to livestock groups like NCBA and nutrition experts that Teicholz helped organize who stood for advice based on real objective, current science that red meat was still allowed in past guidelines.

AFF has covered those twists and turns for many years. And Keys research was the foundation for the Senate Select Committee’s Report on Nutrition and Human Needs in 1977 that we personally started battling way back then.

We had a hint from RFK Jr.’s blessing of tallow for French fries that he could finally let science prevail. Let’s hope the trend continues.

Nina Teicholz also publishes an e-newsletter called "Unsettled Science," from the group "The Nutrition Coalition."

Ex-Tyson, McDonald’s exec to lead FSIS

Justin Ransom, Tyson Foods’ senior director of sustainable food strategy since 2017, will take the helm as administrator of the USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) on July 14.

Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins also named Denise Eblen, who has been interim administrator since December, to stay on as FSIS deputy administrator.

Ransom, who holds a PhD in animal science from Colorado State University, previously was senior director of U.S. supply

chain management at McDonald's Corp. He had earlier experience at OSI Group and began his career in USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service. He has a bachelor’s degree in agriculture communications from Texas Tech University and a master’s in animal science from Michigan State University.

Other recent USDA appointments by the Trump administration include:

Michelle Bekkering, a former congressional staffer, as deputy under secretary for trade and foreign agricultural affairs.

Peter Laudeman, whose experience includes working for commodity groups, as senior policy advisor for trade and foreign agricultural affairs.

Jacqueline Thomas, a former lobbyist who worked in the first Trump administration, as director of external communications for USDA’s farm production and conservation mission area.

John Greene, an engineer with private-sector executive experience, as chief operating officer for the Rural Development Business Center.

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www.cattlemansadvocate.com

Digging Deeper.....

By JUSTIN ANGELL

Several months ago, I focused this column on energy. Energy is life, energy is prosperity. Just a quick update.

The Artificial Intelligence (AI) revolution is very energy dependent to say the least. The powers that be have determined that the electrical grid cannot sustain AI demands and probably can’t even be updated quickly enough to meet the needs of the AI industry.

Interestingly, I believe the trend is developing to take the data centers to the energy rather than trying to bring the energy/electricity to data centers. Put another way, replace the transportation of electrons with the transportation of bits. I believe in the future we may be seeing data centers being built next to nuclear facilities where the energy can be produced, but the public electric grid is not responsible for transporting the energy to the data center.

Another interesting solution is natural gas. The shale revolution has delivered copious amounts of very cheap natural gas with an energy (BTU) equivalent price compared to oil of only \$11 per barrel. Natural gas turbines are relatively easy to produce, and can be built between gas, production sites and AI centers.

Also interestingly, 50% of the energy used by data center is for cooling the processors so it’s reasonable to believe data centers would be most efficient built in Arctic locations with natural gas accessibility.

Artificial Intelligence will change our lives in ways we cannot imagine now. I’ve read that if someone has some type of disease if they can hang on for 10 more years, AI will make it possible to cure many diseases that have previously been fatal.

How many of you remember the cartoon: The Jetsons? Maybe that type of life is not as far away as we would’ve thought three years ago. Tesla just launched their driverless taxi fleet in Austin, Texas with apparently great success. There is now a bionic leg that is connected to the nerves of the amputee where it becomes possible for signals from the brain to activate and move the prosthetic leg. “My, don’t we live in interesting times?”

Something else interesting that I have seen percolating in Washington, D.C. concerns

I believe the trend is developing to take the data centers to the energy rather than trying to bring the energy/electricity to data centers.

Jeffrey Epstein.

I believe one of the best sources of truth in today’s media landscape is Tucker Carlson. In a speech at the Turning Point USA gathering, he points out his belief that Jeffrey Epstein has been protected for almost 25 years by Washington, D.C. bureaucrats and politicians. He goes on to say that Jeffrey Epstein was probably an agent collecting information on the world’s elites that could be leveraged by a foreign government. Saying the truth out loud is rare, but Tucker says that he believes Jeffrey Epstein was an agent of Israel.

Also, this week it has been reported there is a serious rift between Dan Bongino and Pam Bondi at the justice department over the Epstein case. What I gathered is Dan Bongino is upset because Pam Bondi, at the behest of probably Trump, is withholding Epstein information.

We can’t forget a ranting Elon Musk spouting the reason the Epstein files have not been released is because Trump is in them. Elon eventually did walk back his allegations and apologized. But, it’s still out there.

It is possible the Epstein information has not been released because the Trump administration has turned some of that evidence into leverage against politicians, foreign and domestic, to help usher in Trump policies domestically and globally.

Then again, it is feasible that Trump may be leveraged by Israel. One certainly has to admit he has done Israel a tremendous number of favors. The media constantly drones on and on telling us Israel is such a great ally of ours. I have a hard time accepting that bait hook, line and sinker.

During the 1967 war, the USS Liberty was attacked in the Mediterranean Sea for two hours by Israeli Air Force planes, killing 34 American sailors and wounding 171, others damaging the ship so badly it could not be repaired.

After the 2 hour attack, the Israelis thinking the ship had sunk, spun the story that their Arab neighbors had attacked the ship trying to pull the United States into the conflict. Although

Israelis later apologized saying they had misidentified the ship, I’ve been left with the understanding that Israel will do absolutely anything it takes to protect and prosper Israel.... Conceivably even trafficking a few hundred underaged girls to wealthy and elite politicians.

At some point, probably relatively soon, I believe we will see a rapid appreciation in the value of Bitcoin and some related stable coins. Bitcoin has moved from \$105,000 last month to approximately \$120,000 this month. It will be interesting to see what next month brings.

In closing, I will say the article that I have received most comments, and support was the article about ending CRP. I believe that article struck a nerve, and I believe overwhelmingly the agriculture community would support any effort to end CRP.

If I was a politician, I would take notes and somehow, I would own this issue because being on the right side of 80/20 issues can get a political career way down the road.

I think that’s about enough for this issue. Call with questions and comments.

Summer sequel: President Trump releases ‘Liberation Day’ reboot

President Donald Trump has declared new tariffs taking effect Aug. 1 on imports from 14 countries, approximating his “Liberation Day” tariffs that crashed global stock markets in April.

His July 7 announcement included blanket tariffs on goods imported from wealthy U.S. allies Japan and South Korea. The measure appears to violate the U.S.-South Korea Free Trade Agreement.

Levies announced later July 7 targeted another dozen developing countries and emerging markets, ranging from 25% to 40%, generally similar to the tariffs announced and then “paused” in April. At the time, the White House said that the delayed implementation, now due this week, was meant to allow time to negotiate scores of bilateral trade deals, but so far only two handshake arrangements with few details have been announced with Vietnam and the United Kingdom.

The April 2 tariffs put a 10% global tariff on nearly all countries, which remains in place, as well as additional tariffs on about 90 countries.

Trump revealed his nearly identical letters to the 14 governments via social media, with the texts complaining about U.S. trade deficits and threatening commensurate hikes in response to any retaliatory duties.

Among the 12 later countries, Indonesia, Thailand, Bangladesh, South Africa, Malaysia and Kazakhstan are relatively large economies. Laos, Myanmar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Tunisia, Serbia and Cambodia were also notified of Aug. 1 tariffs.

South Korea was the top buyer of U.S. beef in 2024 at more than \$2.2 billion dollars and fifth for U.S. pork at \$728 million. The annual volume of beef sales into South Korea has nearly doubled since the FTA took effect in 2012, gradually cutting tariffs on U.S. beef to 2.6% this year and zero starting in 2026. The U.S. last year supplied more than half of Korea’s imported beef.

Japan ranked second by value last year as a market for both U.S. beef at nearly 1.9 billion dollars and for pork at \$1.4 billion.

– Meatingplace.com

U.S. launches trade war with Brazil

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva promised “reciprocity” in response a U.S. announcement of a 50% tariff on goods from Brazil, effective Aug. 1.

President Donald Trump released a letter to Lula citing falsely “unsustainable Trade Deficits against the United States,” as well as Brazil’s prosecution of former president Jair Bolsonaro for his role in an alleged plot to stay in power after losing reelection in 2022. He wrote that a 50% tariff is “far less than what is needed to have the Level Playing Field we must have” with Brazil.

Data from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative shows that U.S. goods exports to Brazil rose 11% in 2024 to were \$49.7 billion. Imports from Brazil were up 8% to

\$42.3 billion, giving the U.S. a goods trade surplus that widened last year to \$7.4 billion. The United States also holds an overwhelming surplus in services trade with Brazil, which is one of the world’s leading exporters of raw materials including meat and other agricultural products.

On social media, Lula said that the country’s Judicial Branch holds exclusive jurisdiction over proceedings in the alleged coup, without “any interference or threats that could compromise the independence of national institutions.” He called Trump’s trade deficit claims “inaccurate,” vowing that “any unilateral tariff increases will be addressed in accordance with Brazil’s Economic Reciprocity Law.”

The tariff announcement fol-

low’s last month Wall Street debut for Brazilian protein giant JBS, which is now dual-listed on the New York Stock Exchange and the B3 exchange in Sao Paulo.

Last month, Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins touted USDA’s action for “expanded access to Brazil,” after a regulatory body in Brasilia lifted the suspension on imports from a U.S. whey protein factory.

Trump has notified some 20 countries of planned Aug. 1 tariff hikes.

– 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



Eastern Missouri Commission Company, Bowling Green
Market Report for Friday, July 11, 2025
Receipts: 1,284 Two weeks ago: 741 Year ago: 1,271

Compared to two weeks ago, feeder steers and heifers traded with a sharply higher undertone compared to the light receipts of feeders from two weeks ago. Feeder futures have once again made new all-time highs this week and cash prices have followed right along. Slaughter steers and heifers sold steady with slaughter cows 5.00-8.00 higher.

Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1 – 500-600 lbs 386.00-414.00; 600-650 lbs 382.00-402.50, 650-700 lbs 347.00-380.00; 700-750 lbs 331.00-344.00.
Medium and Large 1-2 – Pkg 624 lbs 349.00; 745-800 lbs

323.50-329.75; lot 836 lbs 311.000.
Feeder Heifers: Medium and Large 1 – Pkg 390 lbs 415.00; pkg 411 lbs 380.00; 450-500 lbs 398.00-420.00; 500-550 lbs 388.00-390.00; 600-650 lbs 344.00-368.00, 650-700 lbs 330.00-358.00; pot load 727 lbs 322.00.
Medium and Large 1-2 – 500-570 lbs 350.00-374.00; 600-675 lbs 316.00-330.00; lot 706 lbs 305.00.
Feeder Bulls: Medium and Large 1-2 – 450-500 lbs 362.50-419.00; 500-550 lbs 372.00-391.00; lot 652 lbs 335.00; lot 737 lbs 308.00.
Slaughter Cows: Premium White (65-70% lean) Average dressing, 165.50-174.50.
Breakers (70-80% lean) Average dressing, 165.00-170.00; high dressing, 174.50-185.00; and low dressing, 150.00-161.00.

Boners (80-85% lean) Average dressing, 150.00-158.50; high dressing, 173.00-183.50; and low dressing, 152.00-163.00.
Lean (85-90% lean) Average dressing, 151.00-161.50; high dressing, 160.00-168.00; and low dressing, 124.00-150.00. Shelly 95.00-108.00.
Slaughter Bulls: Yield Grade 1-2 – 1300-2400 lbs, 184.00-208.00; 212.00; 170.00.
Slaughter Steers and Heifers: (100 head) Choice 2-3 – 1200-1615 lbs, 230.00-237.50.

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_LSI56.txt



WIRE WORKS from page 10

San Antonio World's Fair, but the event was unfortunately too hot for a good clientele. Jim was forced to get a second job as a door caller, calling people into a restaurant. Jim would call in customers and make wire names while he did so.

During one of his shifts, a customer suggested that he attend the local rodeo. Jim had no interest in rodeos, only the crowd. Without much to lose, Jim decided to attend the rodeo, where he secured a booth with a conversation and a handshake. Jim had a flamboyant personality making it seem like he had never met a stranger, even among a rodeo crowd.

During one night of the rodeo, he made more money than he could during an entire World's Fair. That year, Jim started on the rodeo and stock show circuit, which is how the business is still operating, almost 60 years later!

Craig's Start in the Business

Craig Kime grew up in Oklahoma City in a family of "rockhounds" that traveled on rock-hunting vacations. He has a rich family history as a citizen of the Potawatomi tribe and spent weekends on his family's cattle ranch in Billings, Oklahoma.

At a young age, Craig became interested in the trade of lapidary — skilled gemstone work. He knew how to cut the stones, but was limited to what he could do with the stones.

Naturally independent, He wanted to be a silversmith around the age of 15, but his parents discouraged him from using a torch when they were not home. He pivoted to wire wrapping because it only required four pairs of pliers.

Craig became certain that that was what he wanted to do for a career. His parents encouraged him to get a "real job," but he felt confident about what he wanted.

His dad worked at a radio station, so growing up, Craig would go with his family to set up and tear down the radio station booth. As a teenager, Craig crossed paths with Jim at the Oklahoma State Fair. Craig was responsible for passing out bumper stickers from the radio station booth, but after meeting Jim, he had his sights set on things other than talking with those passing by the booth.

"During the fair, I would do my two hours of handing out bumper stickers and then I would get to run around the fairgrounds. I would go straight to Jim's booth to show him the jewelry I made." At first, Jim would respond by saying, "Oh yeah, this is nice kid, now move along," but as Craig got older and became more talented, he started saying, "Oh, this is nice" with more interest."

With Craig's persistence, he eventually began spending the fair day helping Jim sell jewelry from behind the booth, unknowingly foreshadowing his future.

Around this time, Craig did two years of VoTech, had a welding certificate, a welding truck, and plans to go to Alaska for the pipeline. All he was waiting for was a high school diploma. But just six months before he could begin his career,

the pipeline went dry.

Craig began selling his jewelry at junior rodeos and a few years later had a storefront in the mall. Jim also had a storefront in this mall and the two would help one another when needed.

Craig discovered that having a brick-and-mortar felt more like a waiting game, and decided he was not much for waiting around. In a store, the customer must already know what they want before they come into the door, but at livestock shows and rodeos, the customer comes to the event to have a good time and stops at the booth and finds something to make their experience even better along the way.

The Partnership

In 1990, Craig went to the Houston rodeo to deliver some jewelry to his customers. Jim and Craig saw one another and Jim asked him on the spot to stay and help work the booth. He stayed, and the next year, Craig began helping Jim more and more often.

One day, Jim tasked Craig with helping build some new showcases for jewelry. When they had finished, Jim stepped back and said, "Man these look good. We need to build another set. Do you have time?" So, Craig helped him build another set.

When they were finished, Jim asked Craig to go and get his trailer. Craig was ready to load up the scrap lumber, but to his surprise, Jim said, "Load these showcases up, these are yours." Craig expressed his concern as he would not be able to afford to buy them, but Jim said, "I didn't ask for anything. You have earned them, go out and make a name for yourself."

The two went to load the gift onto Craig's trailer, and they didn't fit. So they went down the road, bought a new trailer, and went their separate ways for about a year before Jim asked Craig for some more help. After making some arrangements, they partnered up and worked together for the following show season and then for the next 35 years.

Jim taught Craig the finesse needed for wiring names and brands, and Craig taught Jim how to do stonework. The two became a dynamic duo, and although they had known one another for a decade before becoming partners, their shared time on the road strengthened their relationship significantly.

Jim did not have children of his own, and with their wide age gap, Jim naturally became a father figure to Craig. This worked out well since most customers assumed the jewelry was a family affair regardless, calling them father and son.

Craig put it simply saying, "We had similar personalities. We had a lot of fun, we liked the same people, and we both enjoyed traveling."

When times were tight

Sometimes along the event circuit, money would get tight, especially if rodeos along the way were canceled. Craig recalls nights when he only had enough money to buy one beer from the bar. Jim was no stranger to this experi-

ence himself and passed down a unique strategy to Craig. He'd order a beer, which was the only thing he could afford, and find the darkest corner of the room to sit in. When the waitress would make her rounds to the darkest corner, Craig didn't have enough money to leave a tip, so he'd instead make a name pin for her. As the waitress would make her way back around the bar, and the pin would catch the attention of many people, who also wanted a pin. When asked, Craig would hesitantly reply saying, he would probably have time to make a few. He didn't want to seem too desperate or too available, and sure enough, as the night went on, Craig would sit in the corner working on his list of names to create.

One name pin at a time, he'd leave the bar with hundreds more in cash than he'd walked in with.

"It's a passion of love over dollars. I'm comfortable today, but at the beginning that was not the case," said Craig.

Although Craig doesn't recall those days proudly because of his poor financial state, he does recognize that it challenged him to focus on the showmanship and entertainment of the customer's experience while buying jewelry, which has

customers coming back year after year.

Craig has made jewelry for couples while they were dating, then for their kids, and then for their grandkids. It's not uncommon for him to have a past customer walk up to him, proudly showing off a custom piece saying, "Look, you made me this here 25 years ago!"

Family

As Jim and Craig grew their business over the years, Craig's family had also been growing, despite living on the road.

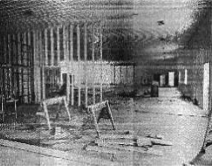
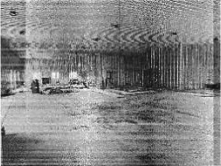
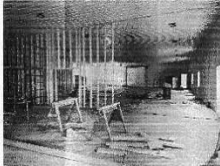
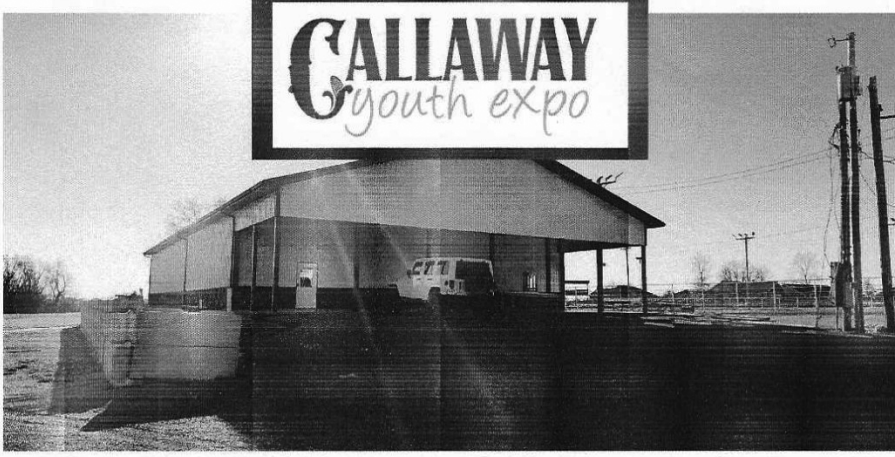
Through all his adventures, Craig's first wife, Kelly, was by his side. They were childhood sweethearts and married at the young age of 17. Together they had three kids and traveled as a family.

In the '90s, homeschooling was not what it is today, so Craig and Kelly searched high and low for curriculum, and at times struggled to balance being business owners, parents, and teachers to their children.

"It wasn't always easy," Craig said as he reflected on that season of life.

Together they made it work. After over three decades of marriage, Kelly became

See WIRE WORKS, page 22



SIDE BY SIDE RAFFLE

This raffle is to help with the cost of finishing this building. The new building will house the home arts projects for 4-H and FFA projects. It will also have the new concession stand for events on the grounds.

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Monthly Sheep & Goat Market Reports

Sponsored by The Bank of Missouri

Montgomery County Livestock Auction, Montgomery City
Market Report for Sheep & Goat Auction
Thursday, July 10, 2025
Receipts: 797 Last month: 1,035 Year ago: 705

Montgomery County Livestock held their Sheep and Goat sale Thursday evening July 10, with a nice offering of lambs. Slaughter lambs sold weighing mostly 50-90 lbs sold steady to 5.00 higher than last month's auction. Feeder lambs sold mostly steady to firm, Kid goats were lightly tested with a firm undertone. Demand was moderate on a large offering. Montgomery County holds their Sheep and Goat sale the 2nd

Thursday of each month. All prices are per CWT unless otherwise noted.

SHEEP (prices per hundredweight)
Slaughter Lambs: Choice-few Prime 1-3 – Mostly hair lambs 50-90 lbs 236.00-245.00. Choice 1-2 – 50-80 lbs 225.00-235.00.
Feeder Lambs: Small and Medium 1-2 – 25-50 lbs 240.00-270.00, few 25-35 lbs 280.00.
Slaughter Ewes: Utility and Good 1-2 – 75-150 lbs 110.00-130.00.
Replacement Ewes: Mostly 4-6 yrs exposed turn out ewes

100-120 lbs 120.00-150.00 cwt with lot 27 hd 120 lbs 280.00 cwt.
GOATS: (prices per hundred weight)
Kid Goats: Selection 1 – 50-70 lbs 330.00-370.00.
Feeder Kids: Selection 1 – Scarce.
Nannies: Selection 1-2 – Scarce

Source: MO Dept of Ag-USDA Market News Service, Montgomery City, MO, Greg Harrison, Market Reporter, 573-751-5618. 24 hour recorded report 573-522-9244

Iowa mayor says visa revoked for 200 JBS workers at Ottumwa plant

The JBS pork harvesting plant in Ottumwa, Iowa, is losing 200 previously legal workers whose visas have been revoked, the local mayor said in mid July.

During a city council meeting, Mayor Rick Johnson asked Ottumwa residents to keep those workers in their thoughts as they

make arrangements to leave the country.

"JBS has been issuing 200 notices to people from Haiti, Cuba, Guatemala and Nicaragua," Johnson said Tuesday.

JBS did not respond to a Meetingplace request for comment by midday July 17.

In May, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed the Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem to proceed with the revocation of past administrations' grant of temporary legal status for more than 500,000 immigrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela, based on political repression, vio-

lence or natural disasters in those countries. Some people losing temporary legal status may be able to apply for political asylum.

Johnson said that "employment at JBS is terminated immediately, and they have to get out of the country immediately. I believe they're giving people \$1,000 assistance to help with self-deportation out of the United States back to their home country."

Johnson said he did not know if more workers in Ottumwa would be affected by the revocation of temporary legal status, which the Trump administration has extended to people legally in

the United States from a number of other countries.

"But this is the first group, these 200 people. We'll keep those people in our prayers, and hope that they can get arrangements made," he said. "Because a lot of these people are trying to buy homes, and they have to leave all of a sudden. What do you do with your home and all your household belongings and all that? It's a very complicated process to get people to up and leave the United States all of a sudden."

Johnson's comments were first reported by the Ottumwa Courier.

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For Sale

FOR SALE: About 100 sheets of locally salvaged vintage 5-V tin ranging in size from 7' up to 11'. Some with patina, all good shape. 24" wide. Asking \$1.25 a running foot. Located in Paris, MO. Chuck Herron, 573-721-1111.

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Laugh Tracks in the Dust.....

The elusive five-spot

By MILO YIELD
Special to The Advocate

Playful practical jokes can enlighten our lives and offset some of the negatives that are thrown at us way too often. Hurtful practical jokes have no place in our lives. But, the playful ones can bring a grin, chuckle, smile or a hearty belly-laugh. Hopefully, the playful joke described below prompts some kind of humorous effect.

The scene of the practical joke is the Dew Drop In Country Bar & Grill in the heart of rural America. It serves as a social gathering place where long-time rural folks interact with newly-arrived folks from urban areas seeking the rural good life.

A small clique of young local cowboys and farmers and their wives concocted this playful practical joke. On occasions they would gather in the Dew Drop after dark and position themselves in several booths on either side of the aisle leading from the entry door to the bar.

Then someone would produce a \$5. Someone else would produce a spool of black sewing thread and a needle. Then the thread wuz carefully attached to an end of the five-spot.

Then, the \$5 bill would be strategically placed on the floor not far from the entry door and the black thread strung out camouflaged along the edge of the booths and some enterprising joker would keep one hand on the thread and one eye on the door. The "trap" wuz set to spring.

Soon, an unsuspecting and gullible "newbie mark" would enter the bar and spy the five-spot laying unattended on the floor. Most of the marks would do the obvious. They would quickly bend down to capture the largess that had luckily fallen their way.

But, as they bent over and prepared to pick up the five-spot, the bill would jump away from their grasping fingers by a few inches because the joker holding the black thread would give it a little jerk like the wind had moved it. Many times the mark would re-adjust and grab again, and yet again -- with the same effect.

Soon, the mark understood the joke and realized he'd been hoodwinked. When he stood up, embarrassed, that's when the laughter at his expense came. Most were good natured about the joke and laughed themselves.

And, sometimes the mark would react differently when he spied the five-spot on the floor. This kind of mark would casually step on the bill, then scratch his chin and nonchalantly bend down like he wuz going to scratch his leg.

But, when he lifted his shoe from the five-spot to pick it, it once again flitted out of his reach. And, that's when he became the embarrassed recipient of a round of good-natured laughter.

No one ever got hurt with this practical joke and it did serve in a small way to build camaraderie amongst the rural-urban folks in the small rural community.

.....

While I'm on the subject of practical jokes, I admit to pulling a few and being the recipient of few. I once got pranked by my friend Albie Kirkie who wrote me a nasty letter from the federal tax folks questioning my legitimate tax deductions for my kennel of Brittany bird dogs. I bit on it hook, line and sinker.

Then once Albie and I teamed up on a friend who wuz on vacation the week after Christmas.

We put an ad in the local paper that this friend wanted "used" Christmas trees delivered to his home. When he arrived after vacation, he had a literal "lot full" of tinsel-laden trees to dispose of.

Once I posed as a radio personality giving away free cans of Campbell soup to folks who could sing the Campbell soup advertising song. The wife of a good friend lustily sang the ad song to me and requested her gift soup to be Campbell chicken noodle. Needless to say, she's received several gift cans of chicken noodle soup from me over several decades.

My sheep-shearing buddy from Iowa, ol' Nick deHyde, and I exchanged practical jokes many times during the years we were Iowa neighbors. He hated birthday celebrations, so I had the local radio station announce

his birthday on an early-morning show. Another time, I hung birthday banners on the front of his sheep barn. Still another time, after I moved back on Kansas, I had a bunch of my friends, unknown to Nick, call him on his cell phone and wish him a happy birthday.

Nick practical joked me in return. One time he dressed up a dead ewe in freezing weather and propped her up in my small barn where she "stood" for several freezing weeks.

Another time, he dressed up a live ewe and presented her to me as a potential "friend." And, still another time, he tied up my black Tennessee walking horse to the bumper of my truck in my garage. That liked to scared me to death, and the horse, too, when I opened my garage door.

But, like I said in the beginning of this column, no one got

hurt in these practical jokes. Everyone got some immediate good laughs.

And in the end, we all got fond memories and I got some column material.

.....

I recently saw a cartoon that showed a farmer at the entry to the pearly gates. St. Peter was telling him, "You would have made it except for your language when working on your truck."

I emailed that message to Nick deHyde, and he replied to me, "My sheep shearing mentor once told me, 'If you're gonna shear sheep, they're gonna make you mad, and then you've got two choices -- beat 'em or cuss 'em. You'll get more repeat business if you just cuss 'em.'"

Those words will serve as the wise ones for this week. Have a good 'un.

.....

The Cattleman's Advocate

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	12 months \$96
1/4 page:	1 month \$220
	6 months \$198
	12 months \$176
Super 1/4:	1 month \$310
	6 months \$279
	12 months \$248
1/2 page:	1 month \$380
	6 months \$342
	12 months \$304
Jr. page:	1 month \$470
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Enjoy reading The Advocate? Get a full year of home delivery for just \$20. See page 6 for details.

WIRE WORKS from page 19

sick for several years and Craig embraced the responsibilities of being the caretaker to his wife, parenting, maintaining the home, and managing the business before her passing.

As with any story, there is heartache and loss, and Craig’s story is no different. Upon reflecting on life and business, Craig states, “Nobody should feel sorry for me because I have gotten to live life the way I wanted to live it. Like any life, there have been ups and downs, and tragedies, but overall, I have gotten to do it my way, and I can’t ask for much more. Where will things take us tomorrow? That is anybody’s guess...”

The Business Today

The current business revolves around 11 major shows a year and one stationary booth at the Lazy E arena in Guthrie, Oklahoma. The jewelry booths are on display across the country for around 132 days a year, not counting travel, set-up, and tear-down days.

The year starts at the National Western Stock Show in Denver, Colorado, then goes to the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo before a break to work at the Lazy E arena. Next is a rodeo lineup of the Greeley Stampede and the National Little Britches Rodeo in Colorado, and Cheyenne Frontier Days in Wyoming, straight into a fair season with the Missouri State Fair and the Tulsa State Fair before heading home to the Lazy E arena and prepping for the final and largest event of the year, the National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The business has changed throughout the years, especially since Craig met Cheryl, and gained a life and business partner after their marriage in 2014.

Craig and Cheryl met through mutual friends at a booth selling boots. They sat next to one another at an event and immediately hit it off, but it wasn’t until Craig was driving across Kansas that he decided to give Cheryl a call as he crossed through the monotonous and straight stretch of land.

Craig recalls the conversation saying, “For whatever reason I said, ‘If you fly into Denver, I’ll take you out for a steak dinner.’ I thought that was pretty safe. She was in California, and I was in Denver. I didn’t think she’d fly out. A few days later, she called and said, ‘Well, you can pick me up around 3 o’clock.’ My mouth liked to have hit the floor.”

When it was time for the promised steak dinner, all the restaurants were closed because they were working late in the jewelry booth. After a few days, Cheryl returned home to California, and later for her birthday, Craig gifted her a round-trip ticket to San Antonio for the rodeo. Before the trip, Craig asked what she thought about not using the return flight ticket and instead traveling around the country with him to see what it was like living on the road.

After some deliberation, she made sure he was serious before



WIRE WORKS: Craig and Cheryl with their custom brands of jewelry displayed at the Missouri State Fair.

packing an extra bag. Cheryl called her adult children and made sure it was okay. They encouraged her to go, assuring her she would always be able to return if it didn’t work out.

Needless to say, it did and Cheryl returned to California only to pack the rest of her belongings and move her home and her horse from California to Oklahoma. Together the two work as a team, each with their unique roles.

Cheryl is a talented jeweler, making earrings, necklaces, and bracelets from authentic Navajo pearls. Cheryl also has an integral role in the business and has taken on a lot of the burden of being a business owner by managing the crucial and tedious tasks of marketing, mail orders, and customer inquiries. This has allowed Craig to have greater mental capacity for creating products.

While the two spend hours on the road together, they often have a notebook to write out ideas and big goals that they discuss as they travel from show to show. Their combined passion and determination ensure the constant improvement of their business.

Unusual Customers

Through the years, the business has had some notable customers including John Michael Montgomery, Sammy Kershaw, Michael Martin Murphey, and ZZ Top.

The jewelry even made a TV debut as it was featured around the neck of Sarah Jessica Parker in the series Sex in the City.

On another occasion, while Craig was taking inventory in Austin, Texas, a man walked up wearing Air Jordan sneakers, a hat backward, and sweatpants. Craig assumed this passerby was a stageman since the event was closed to the public and only available to those involved in the pre-concert sound check.

The man took a look and asked, “Do you make all these?” Craig answered and had the man draw out the brand he would like to have made. It was a simple “GA.”

Craig curiously asked, “What’s that stand for?” to which the man said, “Garry Allan.” Craig replied, “Oh, do you know him?” and he said, “Yes, I think I’ll get it for him.”

A couple of hours later, Craig delivered the hatpin to the police where he was asked to drop it off. The police escorted him to a bus where Garry Allan met Craig and asked him to place the GA letters on his hat. Much to Craig’s surprise, Garry had been out with his kids and was wearing a disguise. Garry gave Craig a signed album, which he still has in addition to the ticket with the “GA” brand drawn on it from that day.

A Visit to the Missouri State Fair

Together, Craig and Cheryl



PROPOSAL: Getting engaged in front of the Wire Works booth at the Missouri State Fair. Craig, pictured on the far left corner, and his wife, Cheryl, were both in on the plan. (Sophia Fornero Photo)

continue to travel the country, creating and selling uniquely handmade pieces.

I met Craig and Cheryl during one of their stops on the circuit at the Missouri State Fair. It was the summer of 2022 after my freshman year of college, and I was interning at the fair for a business. Each day of the 14-day Missouri State Fair, I would use my lunch break to grab a quick sandwich before spending the rest of my allotted time at the Wire Works Custom Jewelry booth.

As a frequent visitor to the booth, I got to know Craig and Cheryl quite well by the end of the fair. They offered me the opportunity to attend the National Finals Rodeo with them to sell jewelry. It was a thrilling opportunity, especially coming from two people I had just met.

Unfortunately, I had to decline the offer due to a big course load that semester, but when the fair rolled around the next year and I saw Craig and Cheryl, they had new jewelry to try on and a new opportunity—the chance to travel with them to the National Western Livestock Show in Denver, Colorado.

My sister Selestia and I spent 17 days together working with Craig and Cheryl. I learned the names of the stones, how to take inventory, and how to make a sale. With 12-hour work days, we usually had plenty of time for conversation and storytelling. The more time I spent with them, the more I appreciated the complexity of the trade and the history of the business. Each day the stories kept my interest, and finally, I asked Craig and Cheryl if they’d be willing to do a series of interviews in the evenings after we finished the work day. The stories I heard in between

jewelry sales were too good not to be on paper!

At this time, I didn’t know the great story that would lie ahead with Craig and Cheryl for me personally. Summers later, Jacob, my now husband, proposed to me in front of the Wire Works booth, a non-traditional, yet meaningful place to say “yes!” in front of hidden friends and family.

On our wedding day this May, Jacob and I wore coordinating and hand-crafted rings made by Craig. After all, the Missouri State Fair has always been one of my favorite places in the world, and it’s because of people like Craig and Cheryl and the stories we weave together.

My own story with Craig and Cheryl is one that I cherish, but there is an even greater story that lies in the history and hard work behind Wire Works Custom jewelry.

For the readers here who enjoy the Missouri State Fair as much as I do, stop by the Wire Works booth and say hello to Craig and Cheryl. They love to make a deal as much as the next entrepreneur does and if you let them know that you read their story in the Cattleman’s Advocate, it might be your lucky fair day!

What I have been able to include in this article is only a fraction of the entertaining stories I’ve heard from the couple. Craig has used over 100 miles of wire through the years of his jewelry creations, and I am confident there will be many more used in the future.

If you do get the chance to stop by their booth, I have no doubt you’ll be able to hear a few more entertaining stories while you find something you can’t live without!

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

Add this wonderful squash recipe to your summer meal rotation

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

Jon's Critique: The Cattleman's Advocate Sassy Alabamian Cook is not only skilled in the kitchen, but she also often shines in the garden too! She loves growing her own tomatoes. She may enjoy growing a little yellow squash even more. When the squash are in season, cream squash is on the menu, over and over, again and again.

To my good fortune, this recipe was added to the summer rotation. I like this recipe over creamed squash, although both are good. After saying all this, this is where I should plead that the cook not break my plate. Try this wonderful squash recipe in your summer squash rotation.

Cheesy Squash Gratin
1 ½ cups heavy cream
1-3 cloves garlic, pressed
1 sprig fresh thyme
Pinch of nutmeg
2 pounds squash, cut into ¼ inch thick slices
Kosher salt and freshly ground

black pepper, to taste
9 tablespoons shredded Gruyere cheese, divided
½ cup French's Crispy Fried Onions, I used more to taste

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Lightly oil a 9-inch pie plate (or casserole) or coat with nonstick spray.
In a medium saucepan, combine heavy cream, garlic, thyme and nutmeg over medium heat until heated through, about 1-2 minutes.
Add a layer of squash to the

prepared baking dish in an overlapping pattern; season with salt and pepper, to taste. Pour 1/3 cup cream mixture over squash; sprinkle with 3 tablespoons Gruyere. Repeat with the remaining squash slices, cream mixture and Gruyere to create 2 more layers.
Place into oven and bake until bubbly and browned, about 20-25 minutes.
Top with French's Crispy Fried Onions. Place into oven and bake for an additional 5-10 minutes, or until onions are golden.
Serve immediately.



USDA unveils new food safety plan, opens modern lab in Missouri

USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins on July 16 announced a sweeping plan to reduce foodborne illness while opening the USDA's newly modernized Midwestern Food Safety Laboratory in Normandy, Mo. The plan outlines five key strategies for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), including enhanced microbiological testing, updated inspector training, a new approach to Salmonella in poultry, stronger state partnerships and increased

enforcement actions. "President Trump is committed to ensuring American consumers have the safest, most abundant, and affordable food supply in the world," Rollins said. "USDA is charting a bold new course in giving consumers confidence their meat, poultry and egg products meet our best-in-class food safety standards." The 70,000-square-foot lab replaces an "outdated" facility in St. Louis and will support FSIS testing of foodborne pathogens

and chemical residues, the department said. USDA said it has already conducted more than 23,000 Listeria tests in 2025, a 200% increase over last year, and completed 440 Food Safety Assessments, up 52% year-over-year. The agency withdrew the Biden-era Salmonella Framework in April and will begin listening sessions to develop a new, industry-supported strategy. The National Chicken Council praised the move, calling the previous

proposal flawed and burdensome. Ashley Peterson, NCC senior vice president of scientific and regulatory affairs, said the industry supports "a science-based approach" and welcomed the department's pivot "to finding a more effective and achievable plan." Other 2025 initiatives include \$14.5 million in added funding for state meat inspection programs and a 36% increase in FSIS enforcement actions.
- Meatingplace.com

Beef on beef: Burger King brings brisket to the table

With other fast-food giants adding chicken to their menus to contain costs, Burger King is piling beef even higher. The burger chain, with more than 19,000 locations worldwide, is starting off its "Whopper by You" platform with a BBQ Brisket Whopper, putting slow-cooked BBQ brisket, crispy onions, American cheese and sweet & golden BBQ sauce, on top of its signature quarter-pound, flame-grilled beef patty with lettuce, tomato and creamy mayo. The sandwich is also available as a Whopper Jr. The "Whopper by You" platform lets customers help shape the BK menu by suggesting their own Whopper creations.
- Meatingplace.com

Former Tyson exec named Creekstone COO

Angus beef and all-natural pork processor Creekstone Farms promoted Andrew Baltz, its current senior vice president and general manager, to the post of chief operating officer (COO). Baltz is expected to direct productivity and automation programs across Creekstone Farms' processing plant operations with a focus on value-added products and future protein offerings, the company said. Before joining the Arkansas City, Kan.-based processor in 1984, Baltz held several leadership positions at Tyson Foods Inc., including director of engineering and director of automation.
- Meatingplace.com



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- Friday, August 29Regular Friday sale



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We would like to thank all our customers. If anyone needs anything, please give one of us a call.

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