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Remembering the Great Soybean War

How the Deep State tried, and failed, to crush an American farmer

By CHRIS BENNETT
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Under the nose of U.S. marshals and FBI agents, Wayne Cryts stole 32,000 bushels of his own soybeans, and then faced the wrath of a judiciary hellbent on his imprisonment. Staring at 20 years behind bars, Cryts was acquitted by three separate juries.

“It’s called lawfare,” he says, “but there was always one thing the government didn’t understand. When they took everything I had, there was nothing left for me to lose.”

Judas farmers, kangaroo courts, bucket brigades, gun grabs, crooked politicians, sacks of cash, crazy Cubans, tractor-cades, and The Dukes of Hazzard: Welcome to the saga of Wayne Cryts, the farmer who charged hell with ice water.

An Old Flame

In 1946, a stone’s throw north of the Missouri Bootheel in Stoddard County, Cryts was born to corn and cotton 12 miles west of Crowley’s Ridge. The fourth-generation, teen-aged Missouri grower fell to the charms of

Sandy Hyten, and the pair wed in 1964, living in a bare-bones, tin-roof shack, grateful for a crude outhouse and a kitchen sink with no drain.

A decade later, pennies pinched and dollars stretched, on winding gravel outside the tiny town of Puxico, the couple built a small, ranch-style house—the home where they remain today. Simple. Private.

By the late 1970s, Cryts worked roughly 2,700 dryland acres (1,400 owned) of corn, milo, and soybeans. He stored a portion of the grain roughly 45 miles southeast in New Madrid County at the Ristine Elevator.

“Ristine. Ristine. Ristine,” Cryts, 78, slowly repeats, as if conjuring the name of an old flame. His words slide out in the crawl of a heavy drawl—a sonorous voice registered between backwoods and Southern. “If Ristine hadn’t happened, you’d have never heard of me.”

Lizards and Levi’s

Farm country was on the boil in the late 1970s. A deep market rut and high interest rates pushed many farmers toward a dire fork—pathetic commodity prices to the left and foreclosure to the right.

In 1977, five farmers in Campo, Colo., seeded the American Agriculture Movement (AAM), sparking an explosion of



TAKING A STAND: Then and now, Wayne Cryts: “The government knows where to find me,” he says. “Come get me.” Cryts’ actions

helped change elevator bankruptcy laws and exposed the extremes of government bureaucracy. (Photo courtesy of AAM & Farm Journal)

When Wayne Cryts stole his own soybeans from a bankrupt elevator, he triggered the wrath of the government hellbent on his imprisonment.

grassroots meetings across the U.S. with participation from 1.5 million producers. AAM’s dual pillars rested on a call for parity (a crop price to cover production costs and enable a survivable living) and country of origin (COOL) changes.

Cryts heard the AAM gospel and caught the fire. He stood in the conversation pit at scores of meetings, rallied the faithful, and joined tractor caravan protests. “I was the guy that took no interest in anything beyond my own rows, but I finally woke up to the trouble all farmers were in.” (Cryts drove in the epic AAM 5,000-tractor army to Washington, D.C. and was part of the McAllen

Bridge war in Texas.)

“Wayne was a workaholic and never took off for nothing, but he took to AAM naturally,” Sandy echoes. “One day he wasn’t a coffee shop farmer; then suddenly he was.”

In 1979, as Cryts felt populism’s pull, he averaged 35 bushel-per-acre soybeans, and held back part of the crop, hoping to catch a market wave. He deposited 32,331 bushels in three 1950s vaulted Quonset huts at the 23-acre Ristine Elevator facility—owned by the James Brothers Co. of Corning, Ark. The price for storage? One-twelfth of a penny per bushel per day.

Cryts was the single largest

holder of soybeans at Ristine. He had a Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) loan on the soybeans at \$4.54 per bushel; \$146,778. The December 1979 market price was \$10.86; \$351,103.80.

“I was holding tight,” he recalls. “Beans had climbed over \$10 per bushel and I was looking to nail that crest. Interest rates were at 18% and I needed every penny from those beans. They were my family’s future.”

In August 1980, with his present year’s soybeans burning in the rows due to severe drought and his previous year’s soybeans still in the Ristine bin, Cryts hit the Big Apple. Alongside Texas producer David Senter (future AAM director) and Nebraska producer Corky Jones, Cryts hauled a Ford tractor to New Jersey,

See CRYTS, page 3

New Missouri packing plant celebrates opening

America’s Heartland Packing, a division of American Foods Group LLC, began operations April 10 at its new 1 million-square-foot packing facility in Wright City, Missouri.

The greenfield project includes a harvest floor, carcass chillers, fabrication area, rendering, further processing area, storage coolers, freezers, and loading docks. Once it reaches full production, it is projected to employ 1,300 people and process more than 2,400 cattle per day. The \$800 million state-of-the-art mixed cattle facility broke ground in 2022. In January, the company said the hiring process for the new facility is “well underway, with significant local interest.” Hundreds of applicants have attended job fairs, resulting in the hiring of approximately 400 employees to date, with most skilled hires being local residents.

“America’s Heartland Packing is a game changer for Missouri agriculture,” said Missouri Department of Agriculture Director Chris Chinn. “The impact of this plant not only reaches producers, but also feed stores, farm supply stores and veterinary clinics in towns across

the area as producers retain cattle for processing. We welcome American Foods Group and thank them for bringing this family-owned business to Missouri.”

A key component of the project is a new wastewater treatment facility in Wright City. The \$140 million project, funded and built by AFG in collaboration with Missouri Public Water Supply District No. 2, replaces the current lagoon system with a modern facility that expands capacity from 500,000 to 3.5 million gallons per day. This upgrade not only supports the new beef processing facility, but also benefits the broader PWSD2 community, paving the way for sustainable growth.

“From the state to the county, the cattlemen to the local community organizations, the support we’ve received has been remarkable,” said Steve Van Lannen, president and COO of American Foods Group. “As a community-focused company, we are grateful to call Warren County, Missouri home. We remain dedicated to a seamless start to operations and eagerly anticipate coming online. While tours are currently paused to prioritize our startup efforts, we plan to host an open house for our



partners and supporters this fall.”

By bringing beef processing closer to cattle production, AFG is reducing costs and energy usage, benefiting both Missouri cattle producers and consumers.

American Foods Group is a family-owned, U.S.-based beef processing company headquartered in Green Bay, Wisconsin, with operations across the Midwest. The company is committed to long-term growth in the cattle business and to the partners it serves.

– High Plains Journal

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Tuesday, Nov. 18 – Regular Sale
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– Justin Angell
F&T Field Representative

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CRYTS from page 1

hopped into the open-cab seat, and drove across the George Washington Bridge to crash the Democratic National Convention at Madison Square Garden. "I was a yellow dog Dem," he recalls, wearing a wide grin. "I couldn't be more opposite now, but things were sure as hell different then."

Loosed on the streets of NYC, Cryts was transformed into a 5' 10" concrete cowboy, and the sight of a Missouri farmer atop a tractor decked in AAM flags rolling down cosmopolitan streets was a genuine spectacle. "We went through Harlem and the south Bronx and got stopped under an overpass surrounded by hookers and homeless," he describes. "I honestly don't think they'd seen anything like us in their lives. The police sent a vice squad over to make the hookers leave us alone."

Rumbling down the final stretch of Seventh Avenue wearing a jean jacket, high-rise AAM trucker hat, ever-present Levi's, and a Case knife on his hip, Cryts pulled directly in front of Madison Square Garden, turned off the engine, and stepped onto the sidewalk in lizard-skin Justin boots, surrounded by a circus of activity: suits-and-ties hollering in thick NYC accents; environmental protestors in sandwich boards alarmed over acid rain, purple-haired gay rights activists, and a host of characters screaming for peace in the Middle East.

Cryts split the throng and bee-

lined to a payphone to assure his wife of a safe arrival. Standing in a booth outside the Garden, over 1,000 miles from Bootheel dirt, Cryts heard words that changed his life when Sandy picked up the horn: "Wayne, the Ristine Elevator went bankrupt."

Flash to bang, Cryts was hurtling toward history.

A Bureaucrat Scorned

James Brothers Co. (Corning, Ark.) had pledged 11 grain facilities in Arkansas and Missouri against a \$3 million loan from the First Tennessee Bank of Memphis. The bank called the loan; James Brothers nosedived.

A federal bankruptcy judge in Little Rock, Charles Baker (born and raised in Missouri), stepped into the fray, and took control of the elevators, including Ristine.

Baker determined that stored grain was an asset of James Brothers to be sold free and clear of liens to pay off elevator debts.

Concern creeping, Cryts dialed Tom Hopkins, director of the Division of Grain Inspection and Warehousing at the Missouri Department of Agriculture. "The James Brothers told the Ristine manager to 'take a vacation' because he wouldn't let them sneak out the stored grain," Cryts explains. "The manager blew the whistle to Tom, who put padlocks on the elevator. Tom assured me all the grain was accounted for and that I'd have access in a month after the red tape was cut."

"Ristine was the same old story," Cryts continues. "Bankruptcy comes in; lawyers appear who play a game of receipts; a trustee is appointed

who is paid by percent and drags it out five years; judges lord over the whole business; and farmers eat a crap sandwich. It's called a gravy train and everyone gets a seat, except the farmer."

"I knew how these bankruptcies worked," Cryts adds. "The elevator's bills get paid, with farmers last in line. Then they tell

everyone farmers got paid 100%. Hell yes, farmers sure do get paid 100%, but only of whatever was left in the pool at the end. From 1974 to 1982, there was something close to 140 elevators in 20-plus states that went under. Most of those farmers got 5 cents to 59

See CRYTS, page 11

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From the Publisher... Jon Angell

The make-up of this October issue will be a little different than past issues. We had several items go longer than normal, while at the same time we had several additional advertisers.

This isn't a terrible thing, it will just read a little different, and some things we might normally run were held out.

For one thing, there will be a lot less of the small news and notes, but we'll get that fixed by next month.

One of the stories going long is our feature on the front. We are running a historical story from the 70s and 80s.

I was young when most of the events in the story happened and remember little about it. I found the story interesting to read.

It was a vastly different time that seems far removed from agriculture today. Those of you who lived through the struggles of that past era might enjoy thinking back. Those of you who are far younger might find the story hard to understand, or even believe.

Keep in mind that these strange tough times happened once and could happen again.

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Also, going a little longer is brother Justin's thoughts, starting on page 6. I condensed two of his columns into one. I had to throw out his vacation stories (to maybe run next month) as we were just out of room.



Last month, we ran an interview with former APHIS administrator, Kevin Shea, that was critical of the new Trump Administration's efforts to generally "drain the swamp" and shrink government, in this case specifically downsize the USDA.

It was suggested that the story was very lopsided, and we should give the other side of that issue. I agreed, and we will be giving a unique perspective in the form of a Letter to the Editor beginning on page 21.

This letter runs a little longer... I would venture to say that no other publication besides The Cattleman's Advocate would ever print a letter to the editor of this length. But, since I thought the letter was written well and carried a lot of useful information, we will be running it in its entirety.

Besides that, I find a few of the unorthodox things we can do appealing about our publication.

It's been a theme of mine that there is a right and wrong way to do an obituary. On page 19, we have an example of doing an obit right. Of course, the subject of the obituary has a lot to do with allowing for a proper obituary. Fred had a good run in life, and his obituary was a good one. Salute.

This issue is full, plan on spending a some time in the pages. Thanks for reading and your continued support.

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FARM & FOOD FILE

'Climate is a test; if we pass, we get to keep Earth'

By ALAN GUEBERT
For The Cattleman's Advocate

A recent change in climate policy by the Trump Administration threatens to change everything on earth—from the fast-warming planet itself to all the life on it.

On July 29, Lee Zeldin, the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, announced "the largest deregulatory action in the history of the United States." The White House, reported the New York Times, planned to "erase limits on greenhouse gas emissions from cars and trucks on the nation's roads."

The action, the Times continued, "...flatly denies the overwhelming scientific evidence of climate change."

The decision dovetails with earlier Trump Administration choices to "scrap restrictions on pollution from power plants, halt key measurements of greenhouse gases," and since July, cancel most federal "wind and solar energy projects..."

In essence, the people who want to Make America Great Again also want to Make the World Hot Again. (The last time the earth was this hot was 120,000 years ago.) If they do, climate chaos will be the rule by the end of this century.

That's what the facts point to. For example:

—According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the atmospheric concentration of CO₂ prior to the Industrial Revolution was, for almost 6,000 years, a steady 280 parts per million (ppm).

—Then came the age of coal

"We need to start treating the limited land we've got as our most precious resource," he explains, "because it needs to produce much more food to sustain us and absorb much more carbon to save us."

and oil and by 1925 the CO₂ content was 305 ppm and climbing fast. Today, 100 years and 1.5 trillion tons of atmospheric CO₂ later, it's an even faster-climbing 425 ppm.

—If we, like the Trump Administration, deny "the overwhelming scientific evidence of climate change," atmospheric CO₂ will soar to between an off-the-charts 670 and 700 ppm by the year 2100.

In his new book, *We Are Eating the Earth*, Michael Grunwald puts those numbers into context. For example, "The earth hasn't heated up this quickly in 485 million years" and "...the last 10 years were the 10 hottest years ever recorded."

Worse, "We've emitted more heat-trapping greenhouse gases" since the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, the first international agreement to limit CO₂ in the atmosphere, than "we emitted in all human history before Kyoto."

Grunwald says all these facts point to our growing "land problem."

"We need to start treating the limited land we've got as our most precious resource," he explains, "because it needs to produce much more food to sustain us and absorb much more carbon to save us."

Instead, we're doing the opposite. "Our agricultural footprint is already the size of all of Asia plus all of Europe, and the more it expands, the more nature's footprint shrinks, expelling the

carbon stored in its soils and vegetation into our overheated atmosphere."

In short, we are eating the earth: the more we expand today's meat-rich, biofuel-focused agriculture, the more we doom coming generations to climate failure or worse.

"If current trends hold," he writes, "the world's farmers will need to clear at least a dozen more Californias' worth of land to fill nearly 10 billion bellies by 2050. That would wipe out the Amazon rainforest and other natural carbon storehouses that are... our best defense against climate change."

We can change that trajectory, he explains, and, no, it doesn't involve recent food flops like "vertical farming," and lab-made meat or too-slow regenerative agriculture. (More on these solutions in the future.)

One thing we cannot do is what the Trump Administration is now doing: declare climate change a hoax and simply walk away. It's not a hoax.

In fact, "The climate is a test," Grunwald explains, paraphrasing a former environmental clairvoyant; "if we pass, we may get to keep the planet."

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December issue . . . **Ad deadline: November 17**
January issue **Ad deadline: December 15**

Environmental groups sue EPA over slaughterhouse pollution rules rollback

A coalition of 10 organizations filed suit in federal court this week challenging the Trump administration's decision to abandon new Environmental Protection Agency rules that would have restricted pollution from slaughterhouses and meat processing plants.

The petition, filed Sept. 10 in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, followed the EPA's Aug. 28 announcement that it would not implement limits on phosphorus and nitrogen discharges from 126 plants that release waste directly into waterways. The Biden Administration had proposed the standards in 2024 under a consent decree, projecting the rules would reduce releases by at least 8 million pounds of phosphorus and 9 million pounds of nitrogen annually.

Environmental groups said the rollback allows slaughterhouses to continue dumping millions of pounds of pollutants, including blood fecal bacteria and grease, into rivers and streams that supply drinking water to millions of Americans. Advocates argued the decision ignores EPA's own findings that modern pollution controls are both feasible and cost-effective.

"The Trump administration has decided to allow multinational meat corporations to continue fouling our waterways with blood, phosphorus and other slaughterhouse waste rather than

require them to clean up their messes," said Dani Replogle, staff attorney at Food & Water Watch.

Jen Duggan, executive director of the Environmental Integrity Project, called the move "a shameful betrayal of communities across the U.S.," while Alexis Andiman, senior attorney at Earthjustice, said EPA chose "to prioritize corporate profits over clean water and public health."

The case was brought by the Environmental Integrity Project and Earthjustice on behalf of groups including Cape Fear River Watch, Waterkeeper Alliance, Humane World Alliance, Food & Water Watch, Environment America, the Center for Biological Diversity, and the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

Industry representatives including the National Pork Producers Council, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, National Chicken Council, U.S. Poultry & Egg Association, and the National Turkey Federation praised the decision as critical to keeping small and mid-sized processors viable. The Meat Institute said the action would preserve jobs and protect consumers from higher food prices.

EPA said it reached its decision after reviewing public comments and concluding that existing Clean Water Act standards remain sufficient.

— Meatingplace.com

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Thoughts From Justin's Side of the Fence

By JUSTIN ANGELL

Rolling into the fall, the calf market is also rolling, setting record prices for sellers. We all know that what we really need is for a 4-inch rain to roll through Missouri, and Illinois. Most calves are currently worth \$4 to \$5 per pound with ultralights approaching \$6 per pound.

This week, the cash calf market withstood a limit lower day on futures caused by President Trump's off-handed comment that he was going to "fix beef prices" like he had accomplished by lowering egg prices. The fed cattle market has definitely paused and taken a step back with the lower trade still occurring at the unbelievable \$2.40 price. Last week average carcass weight was 952 pounds, showing that 1500 pound fed cattle are now the average rather than the price discounted exception of years past. The most encouraging sign of a sustained elevated beef/cattle price is one major Packers offer to forward contract next spring's fed cattle at \$2.42 with no specs and trucking paid. I infer that particular packer believes next April the market will be higher than that.

I'm perpetually asked the loaded question, "when should I sell my calves?"

Some producers are legitimately looking for advice, but a few are looking for someone to blame. I realized this once hearing someone say, "I missed this high cattle market because Justin told me to sell my calves" or was it "I missed the high market because Justin told me not to sell my calves". The reality is everybody's situation and program are different and no matter when you sell your calves, the only mistake is not having anything to sell. I can remember years ago during a time of market uncertainty, Francis Meyer, a wise old cattleman advised, "when you make a plan most of the time it's best to stick with it."

This fall I'm seeing producers who have consistently weaned, vaccinated, and grown their calves altering their normal marketing and selling calves early right off the cow. Last week, a long-time customer/friend called me to ask what I thought about selling half his calf crop without weaning. I told him that I was generally not an advocate of that kind of marketing, especially in the fall. However, as high as calves are, I was sure not going to tell anyone not to sell them. All his calves exceeded four dollars per pound, with the light end reaching a memorable personal record for him at five dollars per pound.

After Jay's calves were sold, I was standing next to a high volume calf buyer and he commented that selling a lot of these calves early right off the cow will work until it doesn't. He explained that a high volume of un-weaned calves will rapidly fill backgrounding facilities and then a little tough weather will bog down the system, making the calf market a lot cheaper. They are too high to buy if

they're going to die.

If you decide to stick with the weaning plan, the reward is the value of the gain. With a lot of cheap plentiful feed, the cost of gain should be at or under a dollar per pound while the value of that gained pound will probably exceed \$3.50. That \$2.50 difference means a calf gaining 2 pounds a day during the backgrounding phase is literally net profiting \$5 per head per day. It doesn't take a lot of cattle or many days for that to be real money.

What does take some real money, and I'm talking about real big money, is buying cattle to feed. On my trip home from vacation, I came through Nebraska. I was able to spend several hours with my friend Alan Janzen at Circle Five Feedyard in Henderson, Nebraska. At one point, we discussed that a big load of yearlings now cost \$200,000. To capitalize on economies of scale, most feed yards have mostly two load pens, so it takes \$400,000 to

fill a pen. A relatively small feedyard could have 50 of these pens so staying full would take \$20 million just to own the cattle. Then, adding feed, equipment, interest and margin call funds on top of that, you could get to \$40 million pretty quick.

When you look across the corn belt, I believe this may become a financial challenge for many small farmer/family cattle feeders. If a feedlot isn't full, it loses its economies of scale and at some point, it loses profitability. In the past week, I talked to three different small cattle feeders, all of them had room and all of them wanted cattle. One was going to tolerate empty pens until they sold some fed cattle. Two were both trying to borrow more money, one by slightly expanding a line of credit, the other by mortgaging paid for land. The irony now is that well financed corporate cattle feeders probably tied to a packer may be able to gain more control of the cattle feeding segment of our business due to excessively high



cattle prices.

In closing, I would like to point out that this is a year like no other. With prices above what most of us could've ever imagined, our business will still be pushed and pulled, swayed and influenced by seasonal market trends, the weather, political events, and all those things that happen every year. The example we are facing now is weather variations this time of year generally have a negative effect on the cattle market because it has a negative effect on calf health. It was 99° yesterday and I've seen blizzards roll into Missouri the first week of November. The

flood of calves after the third week of September, always pulls down the market for calves, both weaned and especially unweaned. The good news is the market is so high, even if it is pulled down by weather or a giant calf run, prices this year will still be the highest calves you've ever sold in your life.

This past Saturday, I was fortunate enough to be included in the tour group through the new American Foods beef plant located in Warren County. The facility and related projects to

See MY SIDE OF THE FENCE, page 8

47th Annual

Sydenstricker Production Sale

Saturday, November 22 ■ 10:00 a.m. ■ at the Farm

Sydenstricker Genetics has a long history of combining genetic diversity with balanced trait superiority to produce breeding stock that will go out and work in the real world. We are diligent in performance testing, and believe in supplying our customers all the information all the time. Whether selling calves at weaning or developing replacement heifers, we'll have a good selection of sires to choose from.



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Plan to be with us on the 21st for our pre-sale party, then for our Missouri Country Breakfast the morning of the 22nd. Cattle may be previewed any time prior to sale day, at your convenience.

27th Annual

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Thursday, December 4 ■ 6:00 p.m.

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It's The Pitts...

4 legged puzzles

By LEE PITTS
For The Cattleman's Advocate

Back when I was a road agent driving 55,000 miles per year my favorite thing to do on long boring stretches of asphalt was to figure out what all the personalized license plates I passed meant. Some were easy like IMRICH, 4GETIT, ILVBEER, ILLSUE, U MAD, IOU, GOODOG and HAVAPUG (with a pug hanging out the window). But the ones I liked were the harder ones to figure out like SHE WON on a Mercedes obviously referring to a divorce settlement, THXELON on a Tesla, AUDIIOS on an Audi and GONA B L8 on an old clunker pickup. On a Ferrari I saw a plate that said STOLEN and on two different Corvettes I saw plates that read ZRO KIDZ and JUST-TRY.

In Illinois, which has the largest number of personalized license plates, I saw a black hearse that said EXPIRED.

On the wall of my home office is my favorite plate of all. I found it nailed to the wall of a mechanic's shop and it would have been totally apropos on the bumper of all the Oldsmobiles I wore out going to cattle sales. It reads MY OFISS.

Just for fun can you figure out the following personalized plates? SO4CHN8, NEEDQB, HATCARPLS, GOELEC, UM FRYS, and one that should raise the hackles on every rancher: BEVGN. I better stop now because the spell checker on my computer is blowin' steam and makin' screechy noises.

The reason I bring up the subject of personalized plates is

A lot of brands are totally unrelated to the people who own the cattle. For example, I know a fellow who owns a Lazy A brand and he is the hardest working person I know. There's not a lazy bone in his body. And his first and last name don't contain a single A.

because reading them is very similar to reading brands, another thing I enjoy doing. I think I'd have made a good brand inspector even though it's much harder with cattle than with cars because the brands can be found on six different locations and can be rocking, rolling, standing, walking, tumbling, running, flying, swinging, slashed, broken and can even be crazy. They can also be lazy, hooked, forked or may only consist only of dots like the Two Dot and the Four Dot.

A lot of brands are totally unrelated to the people who own the cattle. For example, I know a fellow who owns a Lazy A brand and he is the hardest working person I know. There's not a lazy bone in his body. And his first and last name don't contain a single A. Ditto for the brand Crooked L that also belongs to a friend who is the most honest person you'd ever want to deal with.

My favorite type of brands are artistic picture brands like a four leaf clover, a cow's head, scissors, hash knife, milliron, turkey track and wineglass. I collect branding irons and among my favorites are the pick and shovel (belonging to Alex Madonna), the Tejon which is the cross and the crescent which represents two religions and is believed to be the oldest brand ever found. I also have a Diamond A branding

iron that I cherish. I even have an iron with three crosses on it. I don't know who it belongs to now but Hernan Cortez, the Spanish conquistador who is best known for conquering the Aztecs and claiming Mexico on behalf of Spain in the 1500's used to own it. I'm afraid the iron I have is not quite that old by about 500 years.

The holy grail for me would be to have an iron from the 101 Ranch, the MC, ZX, Four Sixes (6666), a runnin' W from the KIng Ranch and, of course, the XIT. Most of you probably know the XIT belonged to the Farwell Brothers in Texas who built the state capitol in exchange for millions of acres in the Texas panhandle. XIT is an abbreviation for ten in Texas which was supposedly how many counties the XIT covered. However, it's a little known fact that the XIT only received land in nine counties.

The brand that belongs to my wife and I in California is the US on the right hip. Such a brand makes people believe we are very patriotic, which we are, but what it really stands for is us, as in my wife and I. The United States also owns a US brand that it has always used to brand its mules. It too has a double meaning. Some insist it stands for the United States while others believe it stands for UnSafe at either end.

- www.LeePittsbooks.com

Beef packer margins rebound to record levels

U.S. beef packer margins turned positive during the first week after Labor Day as strong demand lifted wholesale prices to record highs, according to the Beef Profit Tracker from Drovers.

For the week ending Sept. 6, the Comprehensive Cutout averaged \$409.20/cwt, up \$5 from the prior week and the highest on record. With cattle priced at \$244.44/cwt the previous week, packer margins averaged an estimated \$38.05/head, compared to a \$9.50/head loss the week before.

Feedlots also saw stronger profits. Average 5-Area Direct Steers traded at \$242.62/cwt against an estimated breakeven of \$192.35, leaving calculated feeding margins at \$703.74/head. That compared with \$662.03 a week earlier and just \$90.42 the same week a year ago.

Despite lower cattle slaughter — 487,000 head compared to 565,000 the prior week — margins improved as higher beef prices offset reduced production. Fed plant capacity utilization dropped to 67.8% from 78.6% a week earlier, while cow plant utilization fell to 53%. The data highlighted both tighter production and firm consumer demand, suggesting continued profitability for packers and feeders heading into fall.

- Meatingplace.com

MU Extension names new Missouri 4-H director

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Tim Tanner has been appointed the new director of the University of Missouri Extension 4-H Center for Youth Development, effective Sept. 15, 2025.

“Dr. Tanner’s extensive experience in youth development and leadership in 4-H programming makes him ideally suited to guide Missouri 4-H into the future,” said Chad Higgins, vice chancellor for extension and engagement at the University of Missouri. “Under his leadership, Missouri 4-H will continue to provide life-changing opportunities for young people across the state.”

Tanner brings 23 years of experience in youth develop-

ment, including 17 years in county and state extension and 4-H roles in Ohio and South Dakota.

For the past six years, he has served as the state 4-H program director with South Dakota State University Extension. He holds a doctorate in Educational Sciences (Leadership) from the University of Kentucky.

MU Extension also expressed gratitude to Lupita Fabregas for her leadership of Missouri 4-H during the last six years.

Each year, 56,000 youths participate in 4-H programs across Missouri, supported by 8,000 volunteers and community partners.

Trade issues still hampering U.S. beef exports to China

China’s decision to block the import of beef from most U.S. processing facilities after permits expired in March continue to severely limit what formerly involved more than 2.84 million metric tons of beef imported in 2024.

Beef from U.S. producers sent to China plunged by 94% this summer compared with the same period in 2024 and were down 8% in volume in July and 7.5% below in value, according to USDA data. Additionally,

China has suspended access to 11 U.S. beef facilities and announced an extension of an investigation of beef imports that now will run until late November. That probe could also eventually affect beef supplied to China from Argentina, Australia and Brazil as trade issues continue to be investigated by the commerce ministry in Beijing.

U.S. beef producers lost an estimated \$4 billion in the wake

of the limits imposed by China, according to estimates from the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF). U.S. beef products, however, remain in demand in other Asian markets, especially Japan and South Korea, in addition to U.S. neighbors Canada and Mexico. The shift, however, is covering only a small overall amount of U.S. beef exports to those areas without China in the mix.

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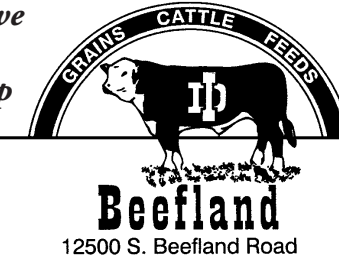
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MY SIDE OF THE FENCE from page 6

support the facility cost almost \$1 billion. The sheer size of the building was impressive, but the real jaw dropper was the technology that has been included in this project. The facility is processing approximately 800 Head per day now and is in the process of hiring 1400 more employees, hoping to eventually reach a maximum capacity of 2400 animals a day.

One other encouraging theme was the emphasis on employee well-being. The American Foods Group employees that were there were very gracious, well-spoken, and seemed to be very proud of where they were employed.

I would like to thank those employees for making the day such a success for both myself and the friends/customers that accompanied me.

As regular readers probably expect, I'm gonna go ahead and get something off my chest. The assassination of Charlie Kirk is possibly one of the greatest losses this century for not only this country, but for Christianity and humanity.

Many of you know from her writing here, my youngest daughter, Schyler, who recently married a fine young man, whose thoughts I'm about to share. Like many Americans, I've known of Charlie Kirk for years, but never really got to know him. The irony of this tragedy is although the violent Left hoped killing him would stop His message, it has in fact exponentially amplified his message. I had a friend from high school that I have been very patient and tolerant of her views until now. Less than a day after Charlie's murder, my friend began her Facebook post by saying "violence is never the answer", but then proceeded to trash and smear his name and his legacy. I am done being polite and I'm done being tolerant of the intolerant. One thing I have learned from Charlie Kirk is the truth is the truth and if we are silent, then we are complicit. I am not advocating violence, I am not advocating rudeness, but I am advocating that now is the time for thousands of Charlie's supporters to rise up and make their voices heard. These are the voices like Schyler and Jacob. I pray for Charlie and his family, for the Christian community, and the young people that he loved as well as this country.

I was not capable of responding to the smears from my former friend (she immediately blocked me) and I asked Schyler and Jacob how do I respond to this? This was their response:

"Well for one, it's really sad so many people saw Charlie Kirk that way. I listened to him nearly every day and I can tell you 95% is wrong. And the other 5% is either easily justified by elaboration, or, by no surprise, were just knit-picked terms the Left took out of context to dehumanize him. The public saw Charlie Kirk as a political activist. But that's not at all who he was at the core.

"First and foremost, he was a follower of Jesus Christ, completely rooted in the canonical scriptures. Meaning every belief and value he had was backed and defended by scripture. Which also means he obviously saw the Conservative's ideology to align with that much more than the Left's. He was never hostile towards a single person. But he believed in freedom of speech and using it as a tool to share ideas and confront issues in a civil way to build a better society.

"All he wanted to do was create a movement that pointed Americans back to following the values of God, which is the very thing the nation's founding fathers did when they founded the now greatest country in the world. And those men were absolutely rooted in faith. Charlie Kirk believed in the greatness of the Constitution, he loved this nation, he loved his family, and he loved the youth. He also believed in bringing the family back in America, which is why he was a foe to so many cultural issues that are effecting the family. He believed marriage and family were designed by God and had a true significance in the foundation of a strong western society.

"When it comes down to it, all he did was share truth and try to bring America back to its roots where we love God, and love our neighbor as ourselves. Because he saw a country falling in a hole they call modernity and progressiveness, which is really just a new name for forms of paganism. He also very much believed that the church should stand up politically. We don't need to be a people who separate political lives from religious beliefs. That's how false theology and cults are created. It also keeps our worldview more con-

sistent when we maintain the same values and beliefs in all aspects of our lives. But Charlie Kirk definitely still agreed with freedom of religion because he loved freedom in America."

– Jacob and Schyler Marley

Obviously, I've felt passionate about this. But now that you have me going, I'll sum my thoughts up with this. Christ taught that the world will hate the truth. Jesus is the only true Messiah. Though it was prophet-

ic and had to be filled, he spoke the truth and was killed publicly for it, by the government.

Charlie Kirk spoke the truth, and the whole world watched the horrific video of him die, and they call it political violence. He was no messiah, but he was def-

initely a servant of the Messiah, and used as an example.

Final thought for this month is recycled, but worthy, redundant press. It's time to end CRP.

I think that's all for this month. Come see me at the auction!

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

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Livestock News & Notes.....

MU Extension 'What the Hay?' webinar series focuses on forages

WARSAW, Mo. – University of Missouri Extension offers a new program, “On My Own,” primarily aimed at empowering women who are first-time sole operators of farms.

The program’s “What the Hay?” series focus on forage, fertilizer, fixes and funds, says MU Extension agricultural business specialist Amie Breshears. It runs 12:15-12:45 p.m. Thursdays from Oct. 2 to Nov. 6.

Breshears and agronomists Travis Harper and Valerie Tate teach the four-part online class. Participants have the option to attend part or all the series.

Dates and topics

Oct. 2 – Forage selection. Select the right forage species for hay.

Oct. 9 – Fertilizer strategies to boost productivity.

Oct. 30 – Weed control for hayfields and pastures.

Nov. 6 – Managing hay costs and how to make feeding decisions for livestock.

The “On My Own” workshops are informal, interactive and provide attendees with valuable information and resources they can take home, says Breshears. “They also offer an excellent opportunity for networking and building connections with other participants in similar roles. While the programs are geared toward women producers, anyone may attend.”

You can register at tinyurl.com/37xberk4. For more information, contact Amie Breshears at 660-438-5012 or abreshears@missouri.edu.

Loss of legal foreign workers ‘damaging’ to meat industry: Union

Federal efforts to revoke the legal status of large groups of foreign workers are inhumane and destructive, the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW) said after an appeals court allowed removal efforts to proceed.

The recent ruling allowed the Trump administration to go forward with the cancellation of a program that granted temporary legal status to an estimated 430,000 people from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, known as CHNV parole. The program is similar to Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for people allowed into the United States to escape natural disasters or political violence and unrest, which the government is also trying to cancel.

“We all depend on meatpacking workers, no matter where they’re from,” Mark Lauritsen, director of UFCW’s Food Processing, Packing and Manufacturing Division, said in a statement to Meatingplace. “Our contracts have protections that provide job security if someone’s immigration status has to be adjusted or corrected, and UFCW will stand with all of our members

impacted by this court decision.”

He emphasized that people under CHNV parole have been living and working in the country illegally.

“Many of them have become essential to feeding America by working in meatpacking plants across the country. Communities, local economies, and the entire food supply chain rely on them,” Lauritsen said.

The revocation by the Department of Homeland Security ends the program earlier than the two-year legal status people from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela were initially granted.

“The inhumane efforts to revoke CHNV parole will have damaging ripple effects across the country,” Lauritsen said. “With grocery prices rising again, actions like these will only make the cost-of-living crisis worse for families. There will be a heavier load and a higher risk of injury for meatpacking workers trying to meet production demands.”

Food industry labor steady, amidst farm jobs decline

Expanding economies don’t simply shift workers from farms to factories, but much of the movement occurs within the food system itself, according to new research published in Nature.

The study, spanning nearly three decades and 189 countries, found that while traditional farm jobs decline as nations grow wealthier, labor in the food industry — from processing plants to restaurants — remains steady in response to consumer demand for value-added foods.

“As incomes rise, people demand more convenience, safety and diversity in their diets,” said Chris Barrett, an economics professor at Cornell University and the study’s lead author. “That creates a huge pull for workers into food processing, retail, restaurants and transportation — not just into manufactur-

ing.”

Food industry jobs offer better wages, but also, as the research showed, deepening gender pay gaps. While women in agrarian economies tend to do the same work as men, their transitions into higher paying food industry jobs differ: Men tend to file into midstream jobs like logistics and processing, and women enter service-sector positions in restaurants and retail, Barrett explained.

The study found that as economies transition from poor to rich, the ratio of women’s to men’s average earnings in the food system falls from near pari-

ty to about 94 cents on the dollar.

The findings give policymakers something to mull over, as calls to bring more young people “back to the farm” conflict with today’s economic realities.

Co-authors included researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the International Food Policy Research Institute. Funding for this research was provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agri-food Systems Targeted Applied Research (ASTAR).

Many of the preceding items were taken from Meatingplace.com

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Special Cow Sale with Hay Auction
Tuesday, Oct. 28 @ 12:30 a.m.
Hay Sale @ 11:30

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Mexico to launch \$34.8 million meat processing program to bolster industry

The Mexican government is preparing to invest an additional \$34.8 million to support plans to address the beef industry's challenges in light of New World Screwworm (NWS) outbreaks in cattle.

Mexico will launch a High-Quality

Major U.S grass-fed player expands in Nebraska

American Farmers Network (AFN), the largest domestic supplier of premium grass-fed and organic beef, has announced it has acquired Gordon, Neb., beef processor Open Range Beef (ORB). Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

The acquisition expands AFN's vertically integrated footprint while solidifying U.S.-based processing capacity for grass-

Integrated Meat Production Center that aims to allow the nation's beef producers to export beef products instead of live cattle, which USDA banned from entering the United States because of NWS beginning in May. The governors of three states met with

fed and organic programs for retail, food-service, institutional and e-commerce partners, the company said. The combined business now employs more than 500 people spanning two U.S. processing facilities, boosting throughput, shift flexibility and geographic diversification that will reduce bottlenecks and import exposure while optimizing fill rates and lead times.

President Claudia Sheinbaum to discuss opportunities to expand domestic cattle finishing and beef production to cover both domestic and export markets, according to a report in Mexico Business.

Mexico's Beef Production Association estimated that the ban has cost the nation's ranchers \$30 million per month since the import of cattle north of the border was cut off. The government announced plans last month to provide financial relief to produc-

ers in states of Coahuila, Durango and Sonora, including \$34.8 million, \$37.6 million and \$44.3 million to the regions, respectively. USDA also resumed conducting field visits in various regions in Mexico last month and local officials believe cattle trade could resume later this month if results from six delegations of inspectors indicate that the NWS threat is mitigated, the report added.

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Hopewell Farms

21 Black cows consisting of 11 two-and-three-year-olds, 7 four-and-five-year-olds and 3 six-years-old black cows. All bred to reg. Angus bulls due to start calving Feb 1.

Korsmeyer

35 - There will be 25 big black first calf heifers bred to Show-Me Select Qualified Angus bulls due Oct 25. Also, 10 big black first calf heifers with 400 pound black calves by their side bred back to Angus bulls.

Groose

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CRYTS from page 3

cents on the dollar. In my case, I was supposed sit back, be quiet, risk getting pennies on the dollar, and like it."

Days later, eating breakfast over television with Sandy, Cryts watched a reporter announce the reopening of the Ristine Elevator the following day at 8 a.m. Was his grain was about to pour out of Ristine?

Cryts called New Madrid producer N.J. Howell, the second largest holder of soybeans at Ristine—25,000 bushels and delivered the news. "Wayne, what should we do?" responded Howell.

At sunrise, starting in nearby Kewanee, Cryts hooked a disk to a 1586 International, and drove to Ristine with Howell (also on a tractor and disk). They parked and unfolded on opposite ends of the elevator scales. No grain in; no grain out.

"I had to keep the grain from getting away," Cryts says. "As long as the beans were in the bin, I had a chance. Once they were turned into money, it was all over because I sure wasn't going to rob a bank."

Two-hundred and fifty miles southwest, Judge Baker was taking notes. Hell hath no fury like a bureaucrat scorned.

A monumental showdown brewed, pitting farmer against government, and state against federal authority, all over who owned a Bootheel bean crop.

Baker ordered federal seizure of the Ristine Elevator. Arriving in sedans, decked in suits and badges, U.S. marshals, led by George Welch, set up shop at Ristine on Sept. 16, establishing a control center inside the elevator office.

Cryts held tight to his warehouse receipts. "The grain was not leaving. I would go to court and prove my case, but I would not let them take my beans."

After marshals put additional padlocks on the elevators, Cryts and his fellow farmers responded with their own padlocks, resulting in ludicrous soybean security: three separate sets of locks on the bins.

Cryts and company kept eyeballs on the elevator. All day, all night. "We slept in the parking lot, or on cots inside the office, watching every minute over the grain. We knew there was grain moving out of other elevators involved in the bankruptcy, like in Piggott, Arkansas, and we made sure Ristine didn't follow."

"The marshals were highly sympathetic to us and were just doing their job," Cryts notes. "We agreed to move our machinery, with assurance that grain could go in, but not out. But guess how many farmers delivered grain? None. Who in the hell would risk delivery to such a place? In fact, the trustee, Robert Lindsey, sued 20 farmers for failure to deliver grain. You couldn't make up how crazy it was getting."

Cryts' phone rang off the hook with producers providing advice and warnings about nightmare experiences in elevator crashes. As media picked up the story, support swelled for Cryts across farm country.

Support also flowed from the governor's office: Judge Baker's claims of federal authority ruffled feathers in Jefferson City. Backing Cryts, Missouri Gov. Joseph Teasdale and Secretary of Agriculture Jack Runyan declared Ristine within their state jurisdiction. Teasdale obtained a temporary injunction in the Missouri Circuit Court of New Madrid County, along with an order to use force if necessary to control Ristine.

However, when Baker called the bluff, firing back with contempt of court charges and the potential arrest of Teasdale, the governor washed his hands of Cryts. The constitutional jam ended with a whimper. Teasdale and the Missouri Department of Agriculture walked away, leaving Cryts, 35 years young, holding the bag.

"It was a gut punch when Teasdale backed off," Cryts recalls. "Suddenly, there was nothing standing between me and the federal government."

The Great Soybean War was on: Farmer versus feds.

Damn Farmer

Refusing to close a pocketknife he didn't open, Cryts attended a drumbeat of hearings, stretched across months, over grain ownership in Little Rock, all while overseeing a 24-7 vigil at Ristine. The steady drip of courthouse trips was maddening for Cryts: He listened as sticky-fingered attorneys argued over his soybeans.

"That's how they bleed a man," he says. "We had to be at each hearing so we didn't

lose our claim. I'm talking about endless court dates and postponements and gavels and collection of bills, only for Judge Baker to deny, deny, deny."

"The fix was in and everyone knew it," Cryts contends. "The notorious Rose Law Firm was involved and it's no coincidence that Baker was hired by the Rose Law Firm shortly after my case. Baker called me a 'damn farmer' behind closed doors. I don't know where his personal hate came from,

but it was very real."

In January 1981, the month of Ronald Reagan's inauguration, Cryts caught advice from a Minnesota farmer, urging Cryts to ask freshly arrived USDA staff to pay the difference between market price and loan, an out used in several prior elevator crashes. Alongside Missouri Rep. Bill Burlison, Cryts flew to Washington, D.C., and met

See CRYTS, page 16



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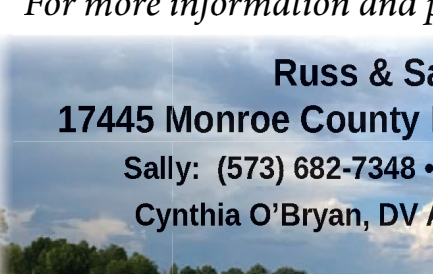
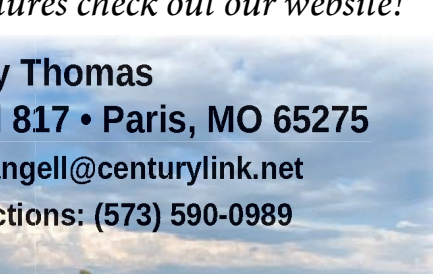
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BARNs OF PIKE COUNTY

Remaining barn stands near site of long gone Buffalo Fort, built in 1811

By CAROLYN ALLEN
Special to The Advocate

This big barn as well as a large granite monument near the road are familiar sights to anyone driving Pike County's Hwy D to or from Louisiana. They stand on what an article in the 1940 Louisiana Press Journal called "sacred ground."

The farm was known as the old Isgrigg place. Ironically, however, the Isgriggs didn't build the old house, the monument or this barn.

According to Mrs. Henry Higginbotham the old brick farmhouse that once sat high on the hill was built in 1820 by her great-great-grandfather, Alexander Allison, when he owned the farm.

The monument was raised almost 100 years later and the barn came along even later than that.

Alexander Allison came to Pike from the Carolinas with the Jordans, Watsons and a handful of other early Pike pioneers around 1810. They settled near Buffalo Creek - building Buffalo Fort in 1811 for protection from the Indians as tensions increased before the War of 1812.

The 1883 History of Pike County reported that the fort was built on Alexander Allison's land - although it is now believed that the fort was probably not at the exact location of the monument. Regardless, a tribute to those settlers and that fort now stands on this farm.

The Allison's burned bricks in the yard to build the 2-story home that stood on the site some 180 years. I'm sure they built a barn as well, but it is long gone as well as any information about it.

Thomas Isgrigg bought the farm from the Allison's and owned it until his death in 1891. He left the farm to wife Mary in his will, and she continued to live there until at least 1907 when it was sold to William E.



FORMER FORT SITE: Above, the last remaining barn is still in use on the Pike County farm owned in order by the Allison, Isgrigg, Page, Wight and Pitzer families. At right, a monument commemorates the long gone Buffalo Fort which once helped protect the residents of the area. (Photos by Carolyn Allen)



Page for \$109.25/acre. Newspapers called it a fine farm.

There were many notes in newspapers of the day about W. E. (Billy) Page being the first to harvest wheat, buying hogs and winning 1st place awards for the wonderful horses he raised. In fact, the 1903 Pike County News reported that "Mr. Page is coming to be one of the best horse and mule men in Pike County." He certainly had a barn or two with all the livestock he raised, but I don't believe this barn was there yet.

In 1917, there was apparently much discussion about a monument to recognize Buffalo Fort. Owning at least part of the old Allison farm, W. E. Page donated land along Highway D for the Daughters of the American Revolution monument and plaque to commemorate the fort. A story in the 1917 Bowling Green Times reported that the large red granite rock that was used in the monument was dug up out of the middle of the road somewhere near Eolia. No one knew how it had gotten there, but Sam Smith and son Russell had dug it up - using 3 teams of horses - and brought it to the Page farm for the monument. The article also said that the rock probably weighed about 4 or 5 tons, which explains the 3 teams of horses!

The monument was dedicated on July 22, 1917, and brought a large crowd to the Page farm. Despite overcast skies, the Citizens' Band played as well as the new fife and drum corps from Louisiana. Descendants of the fort's occupants attended along with interested citizens and local dignitaries. Mr. Page presented the land to the Pike County chapter of the D. A. R., but the celebration came to an abrupt end shortly after that. According to the Louisiana Press Journal, the skies opened up during Senator D. A. Ball's welcoming address - sending guests scurrying to their cars and buggies. The plaque reads:

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St. Louisan Ira E. Wight's purchase of the land brought another large crowd to the farm. The July, 1934 Louisiana Press Journal reported that a large barn on the Page farm had recently been completed by owner Ira Wight. It went on to say that it would be christened with a barn dance. The paper later reported that around 500 people had attended the dance. The newspaper also noted that the dancers went through 57 gallons of lemonade!

Unfortunately, it is unclear exactly which barn they were christening because there was a second barn on the farm at one time. It was torn down sometime after 2000 to make room for a large machine shed. The two barns, however, are thought to have been built around the same time.

Walter Pitzer bought the farm from Ira Wight in 1948. Oey Pitzer Spears (Walter's daughter) believes that both barns were there when her father bought the

farm. Walter's son, Jim, said that he'd always heard the barns were built near the same time by neighbor and builder L. T. Blackmore. (The date is apparently carved into the concrete of the remaining barn, but I have yet to find it!) Oey Pitzer Spears remembers square dances - called by neighbor Ed Luck - being held in the barn that is gone now, so the 1934 barn dance was just the first of many on the farm!

The farm is no longer known as the Allison, Isgrigg or Page farm. It is now known as the Pitzer farm (as it should be after 77 years!), and it remains in the Jim Pitzer family. They use the 90-year-old barn for equipment and hay storage.

Although the old house and the other barn have been gone around 25 years now - the barn that remains and the monument that honors Buffalo Fort serve as both landmarks and reminders of the county's past and the people who built it.

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Calf prices double since 2022 as industry faces margin crunch: Peel

This article first appeared in the Cow/Calf Corner Newsletter and is republished with the author's permission.

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

Cattle and beef markets

Cattle and beef markets started a strong run-up about three years ago in late 2022. Price increases at various levels of the markets have had differing impacts across the industry.

Calf and feeder prices

Combined Oklahoma auction prices for 500-pound steers (M/L, No. 1) pushed higher for the eleventh consecutive week last week, averaging \$471.51/cwt, or \$2,358/head. The current price is up 55.4% year over year and up 135.6% since the same period in 2022. Prices for 800-pound steers (M/L, No. 1) averaged \$369.71/cwt last week, or \$2,958/head, up 52.1% from the same week last year and up 107.4% since 2022.

Fed prices

The 5-Area fed price averaged \$242.90/cwt last week, with an average weight of 1,500 pounds and a value of \$3,644/head. The price was up 34.1% year over year and up 70.0% from the same week in 2022.

Boxed beef prices

Choice boxed beef averaged \$413.60/cwt last week, up 33.1% from one year ago and up 59.2% since 2022. The monthly retail

Incredible U.S. demand for beef lifts Australia's entire economy

Beef products in Melbourne, Australia. (Photo by Asanka Ratnayake/Getty Images)

How high is the U.S. demand for Australian beef? So high that it's benefitting the entire economy Down Under.

According to a new analysis from Oxford Economics Australia, the country's overall economic growth this year has been boosted from 1.7% to 2.1%, with strong agricultural exports playing a central role.

Through July, the USDA's Economic Research Service calculated that the U.S. has imported 719,415 pounds of beef from Australia (carcass weight, 1,000 pounds), a 34.77% increase over the same period in 2024. Additionally, Australian processors enjoyed record goat meat exports to the U.S. in 2024.

Currently, the U.S. tariff on Australian goods is 10%, and Australia removed its biosecurity restrictions to allow imports of U.S. beef, though actual shipments in that direction are expected to be negligible. Meanwhile, a 50% tariff on Brazilian goods has shifted the meat trade from that country, and Mexico has now surpassed the U.S. as Brazil's second-largest beef export destination, behind China.

— Meatingplace.com

all-fresh beef price in July was \$8.90/lb., up 9.2% year over year and up 21.3% since July 2022.

Margin squeeze

The price changes reported above illustrate what happens when tight supplies drive cattle and beef markets. Higher calf prices do eventually get passed on to consumers, but only partially. All the margin levels in between also share in the squeeze. Since 2022, calf prices have increased by 135.6%; feeder cattle prices are up 107.4%; fed prices have risen 70.0%; boxed beef prices are up 59.2%; and retail prices have increased 21.3%. For stockers, feedlots, packers and retailers, the cost of inputs has increased more — and faster — than the value of outputs.

The timing of adjustments across market sectors is complex. Not all margins shift by the same

amount or at the same pace. Up to this point, packers have faced most of the pressure from weak buy-sell margins. Feedlots have avoided much of the squeeze so far, aided by an up-trending market, longer days on feed, and a sharp drop in feed costs. Feedlot cost of gain is down more than 28% since its peak in early 2023. Stocker producers are being pinched from both sides, with high calf prices raising purchase costs and feedlots competing aggressively for limited feeder supplies.

Retailers have felt less pressure so far, supported by strong consumer demand and ample beef supplies. But with beef production now declining more rapidly, retailers are expected to face greater challenges in the months ahead.

Margins across the cattle and beef supply chain will continue to

adjust, with the general squeeze likely to persist until several months after heifer retention begins — a trend not yet in sight. Cow-calf producers will remain in the strongest position, support-

ed by high calf prices that encourage herd rebuilding. Those higher prices will keep working their way through the industry and ultimately to consumers, reshaping margins across every sector.

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Why beef prices keep climbing

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

For four decades, while the U.S. cattle industry continually underproduced for the U.S. market, Washington let a handful of multinational meatpackers monopolize America's cattle markets. Competition was replaced with corporate control. At the same time, the government opened the U.S. market to unlimited imports of cheaper foreign cattle and beef. These imports are undifferentiated, direct substitutes for American cattle and beef. Multinational meatpackers control both exports and imports in an industry that does not produce enough beef to meet domestic consumption. This has given the packers power to manage America's beef supply – to shrink the domestic cow herd, drive ranchers out of business, and leave both ranchers and consumers at the mercy of a dysfunctional market. Since 1980, American beef consumption grew by more than 21%. This should have triggered a bonanza for domestic ranchers. But, instead, hundreds of thousands of U.S. cattle farms and ranches disappeared, and with them millions of head of breeding cows. America lost more than half its cattle farms and ranches and nearly a quarter of its breeding cows in just over a generation. Consequently, domestic beef production from U.S.-born and -raised cattle couldn't keep up with consumption and multinational packers made up the difference with increased, undifferentiated imports. Today, imports make up more than 22% of U.S. beef consumption – more than double what it was just over a generation ago. Conventional theory suggests that America's increased reliance on cheaper beef and cattle imports would lower consumer prices and provide more choices. But this theory fails in a market where imports and domestic products are undifferentiated as to origin. Here, undifferentiated imports are priced the same as domestic products and beef is beef regardless of where, by whom, or how it was produced. Thus, multinational meatpackers in America's under-producing market are regulating the available beef supply by increasing or decreasing import and export volumes in proportions that maximize their profits while pricing beef at whatever the market will bear. And when, as it is now, demand is incredibly strong, beef prices can hit extremes never seen in a fair, competitive market. For example, last year's production of beef from U.S. cattle was ~3.2 B lbs. below domestic consumption. Yet, packers diverted ~3 B lbs. of beef into the export market and compensated for the domestic supply shortage by importing a record ~6.3 B lbs. of beef from foreign-born cattle. This import-export mix netted a record all-fresh beef price of \$8.01 per pound while displacing opportunities for domestic ranchers to breed and raise an additional ~3.8 million head of cattle. Drought is not to blame for the cattle indus-

try's crisis, though it accentuated the effects of the industry's chronic decline. The root cause is policy choices that handed control of our beef supply to corporate monopolies and foreign sources. The consequences are that national security is weakened as America loses self-reliance in beef production, ranchers are forced to exit the industry, consumers pay more than a competitive market would decide, and rural America is hollowed out. The Solutions: -Put American Consumers and American Producers First -Require mandatory country of origin labels on all beef sold in America. Restore Competition -Enforce antitrust laws that protect competition. -Implement and enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act that

protects both individuals and the market from abuse. -End packer procurement practices that limit price discovery. -Manage Imports -Set tariff-rate quotas to give U.S. ranchers room to rebuild. -Impose tariffs to counter subsidies, currency manipulation, and weak foreign standards. -Free Ranchers to Compete -Reform the mandatory beef checkoff. -End the electronic identification (EID) eartag mandate. Doing nothing, or relying on even more imports, will accelerate the collapse of America's cattle industry and leave the U.S. dangerously dependent on foreign beef and cattle. Congress and the Administration must act now to rebuild the domestic herd, restore competition, and secure America's food supply.

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

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CRYTS from page 11

with two newly appointed USDA undersecretaries: An agreement was reached. Finally, relief.

“All of a sudden, this career USDA bureaucrat, Arnold Grunden, walks in the room,” Cryts recalls. “He was an unelected lifer, in position regardless of who was president. He said, ‘No. I’m legal counsel here and we’re not doing it.’ Congressman Burlison smacked both hands down on the table in disgust, but it was over. That was a moment I understood the second, third, and fourth layer of bureaucrats. That was a moment I understood who controlled government. I flew back to Missouri—emptyhanded.”

The time was nearing for Cryts to steal his own grain—and he didn’t care if it harelipped the judge.

No More Talk

No secrets. Cryts announced his intention to raid Ristine. On Jan. 15, 1981, an American farmer proclaimed open defiance of the federal judiciary.

In a conference room at the Ramada Inn in Sikeston, assisted by KSIM’s radio man Bill Anderson, Cryts held a press conference with flash bulbs galore: newspaper and television reporters from Memphis, St. Louis, Jonesboro, and more. Additionally, the FBI and U.S. Marshals attended, along with a large contingent of AAM farmers.

Cryts promised he would remove his grain from Ristine on Feb. 16, George Washington’s birthday, at 10 a.m. on a Monday. “I told them there was going to be no sneaking or hiding. I was going right through the front door to get my beans before I financially bled to death. Shoot me, beat me, lock me up—it’s happening.”

Cryts had the full support of his wife, Sandy: Return with your shield or on it.

“Everyone in farming knew Wayne was going to Ristine to get our grain or get arrested. He had given his word and he would back up his word,” Sandy says. “Talking was over.”

Pillow of Doubt

Ristine’s fuse burned shorter by the day. Against a backdrop of barrel-roof bins, the 23 acres of elevator grounds were packed with federal marshals, FBI agents, Judas farmers—government moles dressed in ill-fitting overalls and trucker hats, Pinkerton Detectives, Missouri state troopers, television reporters, newspaper writers, Cryts’ contingent of Bootheelers, and a steadily increasing flow of farmers from across the nation.

Twenty-plus state flags, each representing a block of on-site farmer support, along with countless AAM slogans, signs, and banners, adorned the elevator. And still they came.

“As we got closer to Feb. 16, there was about 3,000 farmers piled in, including a few fake farmer plants working for the feds who tried to blend in the crowd,” Cryts says. “The pressure was building on me because I had no clue what might happen. There was going to be no violence on my part, but that grain was com-

ing out.”

The night of Feb. 15, Cryts held a rally and called for calm. “Farmers were talking rough. Hell, everybody back then had a shotgun and rifle in their back window. And all the government officers certainly were armed. But I declared there would be no violence no matter what on our part, and I told the marshals that if anyone in our farmer group acted out, then they should be arrested accordingly.”

Sidestepping potential congestion, Cryts’ farmer army parked 70 trucks on the gravel shoulder beside Ristine, with an additional 10 trucks parked at the Ramada Inn in Sikeston. Inside one of the trucks, in case of emergency, were stacks of 5-gallon pails—enough to arm a bucket brigade. If by no other means, Cryts was ready to hand-scoop 32,331 bushels of soybeans.

As Sunday, Feb. 15 wrapped, Cryts laid his head on a pillow of doubt. The swirling dynamic was bizarre. Farmers watched the grain; marshals watched the farmers; news media watched the marshals; and Judge Baker watched them all.

The Dukes of Hazzard

Cryts woke to a deep-holler fog. Wrapped in a peculiarly heavy, early-morning mist blanketing the level land around Sikeston, Cryts took a phone call from a constitutional lawyer with a last-minute legal pointer. Cryts scratched down the incoming advice on a napkin and stuffed the paper in a front pocket. He walked toward a white Ford bob-truck, and ushered his daughter, Paula, into the cab, alongside Sandy. His son, Terry, climbed into the bed, and stood at the ready beside a dozen Bootheel farmers. Fifteen miles from hotel to elevator.

At Ristine, Cryts approached Ristine like Bootheel Moses, fronting a bewildering cavalcade of several thousand farmers driving pickups, bob trucks, and 10-wheelers, cabooseed by an elderly Oklahoma farmer pushing a wheelbarrow mounted with Old Glory.

At 9:50 a.m., Cryts waited in his cab, nervously chewing over the final 10 minutes. In all the details and rabbit trails of preparation, he had made a glaring omission. A thick logging chain ran across the driveway—a simple, but effective deterrent. Into the gap stepped Herman Linville, a Hatfield & McCoy type farmer from Stoddard County, cloaked in a long-hanging Levi’s jacket atop bib overalls. Often mistaken for Cryts’ shadow, Linville had stood with Cryts during the McAllen Bridge melee. Wielding heavy-duty bolt-cutters, Linville waltzed in plain view of authorities and dropped the chain.

At 10 a.m. on the dial, Cryts exited his truck and walked up to big and tall Howard Safir, the U.S. marshal lead. Safir produced a court order and read aloud, forbidding Cryts from grain removal. Cryts stood his ground, fumbled in his pocket, pulled out the breakfast napkin, and responded in kind, toe to toe: Your court order was written under equity

law. I am a sovereign individual and a citizen of the State of Missouri operating under common law; therefore, your court order has no weight of law against me, nor does it have jurisdiction over me.

Safir handed Cryts the court order, and in a surreal, impromptu diplomatic response, Cryts presented Safir with the napkin. Cryts then proceeded down the line and shook hands with each marshal, before climbing back in the cab, putting the Ford in granny low, and easing forward, unsure if the marshals and agents would pull sidearms.

“I had no backup plan in that moment,” Cryts admits. “If they’d have refused to move, I wasn’t going to run anybody over. Maybe we would have cranked up the bucket brigade—by any peaceful means necessary.”

As Cryts rolled forward, Safir and his subordinates parted. Cryts pulled onto the scales and an open-air heist began, with Homer Evans, a Bunge elevator manager and farmer from Ulysses, Kan., and Corky Jones, an elevator operator and farmer from Brownsville, Neb., handling the scales, running a probe, and sampling for trash.

The grain removal centered on three of Ristine’s five Quonset huts: Peel off a sheet metal section with a railroad pinch bar, drop in a vacuum pipe, and fill each vehicle. By 5:30 p.m., with 50-plus trucks loaded, Cryts shuttered the operation until the next day, and returned to his Sikeston motel room. (The infamous pinch bar, dubbed the “Ristine Key,” was auctioned by AAM members and sold for \$4,000 to a group of Texas farmers.)

The following morning, Cryts proceeded at Ristine. At 1:30 p.m., with loading completed, the FBI, commanded by Glenn Young, requested a final meeting with Cryts in the elevator office.

“They told me I was going to get people killed, get people arrested, get people in trouble, and it’d all be my fault,” Cryts says. “Glenn Young was playing the good cop, with his arm around me, gently telling me to stop for the good of my family, and that if I’d leave today, no arrests would be made.”

Leaning in close, Young delivered an ultimatum: “This is it, Wayne. You’ve gone as far as you’re gonna go. It’s over.”

Cryts paused. For one year he’d eaten stress by the spoonful while holding meaningless warehouse receipts, attending countless court hearings, maintaining elevator vigils, and watching crops burn in the field—all while the Ristine grain dangled in limbo and loans loomed. He was worn to the bone. The FBI agents surrounding Cryts could smell weakness.

Three days running with no sleep, hand across temples, he spoke softly to Young: “Could you please leave the room? Just give me a minute and take everyone out. Guard the door and don’t let nobody in.”

Spotting a crack in the levee, Young cleared the office room and left Cryts in silence.

Unraveling like chewed twine,

Cryts fought back tears and replayed the events of past months. “No one but me and the Lord ever knew how close I came to giving up. I stayed alone in that room for what seemed like 20 minutes or more, weighing it out. I didn’t want anyone hurt or in jail. I asked myself one last time if I was willing to pay the price.”

Composure regained, Cryts knocked against the door to recall the FBI personnel.

Entering the room, Young patted Cryts on the back, and asked, “Wayne, what are you going to do?”

“Glenn, have you ever seen The Dukes of Hazzard?”

Young smashed his fist on the desk, roiled by the reference to General Lee in flight from the law: “Is that your final answer?”

“Final,” Cryts answered, walking out of the office. “And I’m going right now.”

A massive crowd of farmers, 77 trucks and 1 wheelbarrow, all loaded, awaited Cryts.

The Pledge of Allegiance rang out across the elevator grounds, led by Colorado producer Alvin Jenkins, an original founder of AAM. Sheet metal repair, sealing, and repainting was in the sure hands of Clarence Banfield, an 80-year-old Kansas farmer who road to Stoddard County on a Greyhound bus. Stan DeBoer, a Nebraska grower, oversaw road grating and cleanup—down to the last cigarette butt. As noted in a subsequent FBI report, Cryts and company left the Ristine Elevator in better condition than prior to their arrival.

“The people helping me were a bunch of regular Americans from across the country that had enough of government,” Cryts says. “They put their farms in jeopardy. They willingly walked into the federal crosshairs. I was acting out of desperation for my livelihood, but they had nothing to gain but upholding their own beliefs about freedom. They were the heroes.”

The FBI made no arrests. As the convoy departed Ristine, every farmer signed a scale ticket, and every farmer was photographed and plated by the FBI—including the wheelbarrow pusher.

Destination? Twenty-five miles west to the MFA Elevator in Bernie, Mo., and a high-wire game of cat-and-mouse played with soybeans.

Get Cryts

In late afternoon of Feb. 17, under clear skies and warm sunshine stroking 60 degrees, Cryts’ soybean convoy chugged into Bernie, where mayor R.B. Woods moved engines out of the firehouse and provided snacks, coffee, and shelter, along with meals from local restaurants.

The next morning, 8 a.m., with a convoy yet to unload, Cryts felt a one-two punch combo. The fix was in.

Cryts called the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) office, explaining his intention to sell grain to the MFA Elevator, exchange checks at the bank for cash, and deliver the cash to ASCS toward his Commodity Credit Corporation

(CCC) loan.

ASCS’ response was simple and succinct: “No.”

ASCS officials declined Cryts’ payment attempt with check or cash, citing direct orders from Washington, D.C. Additionally, CCC threatened to pull MFA’s license if the grain facility accepted Cryts’ soybeans. Judge Baker piled on, threatening impounding and conspiracy charges for any elevator accepting Cryts’ grain.

Cryts was reeling. “How could I pay off my loan? Where could I put all these beans?”

Despite the setup, Cryts slipped the noose when the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis made an emergency ruling, ordering MFA to take the grain until determination of ownership.

However, Cryts was slipping into legal hell. “That’s when I truly realized my fight with the government was only just beginning.”

FBI top agent Glenn Young, genuinely concerned after reading the tea leaves, offered sage advice on the sly, according to Cryts. “This is just starting,” Young warned. “Take everything out of your name and Sandy’s name or you will lose it. Everything. The government is going to take everything you have, Wayne. They’re coming for you.”

Get Cryts.

Bat Outta Hell

An arrest warrant was issued for Cryts three weeks after the Ristine raid. On March 6, 1981, he was arraigned in St. Louis by U.S. Magistrate William Bond on felony charges of interfering with the duties of U.S. marshals, a crime punishable by six years in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

A grand jury was convened. The panel refused to indict. The judge dismissed all charges. Cryts was safe—in the short term.

Four months later, in the anvil heat of July, Cryts’ mailbox clinked with a letter from the CCC, calling in the loan: Pay up now or forfeit grain. Translated: Adios, amigo.

Almost cornered, Cryts weighed options. ASCS refused cash or check, but the technical language of the letter allowed for payment via commodity. “I was infuriated by how crazy the whole thing was,” he continues, “but at least I had a lifeline.”

Cryts called Eric Thompson, elevator manager at MFA Bernie, and asked for his soybeans. Thompson was in a pickle. Give Cryts access to the soybeans and face conspiracy charges, or refuse access and watch Cryts go under?

Thompson’s solution came with a heavy wink. He told Cryts that MFA would stand aside if Cryts threatened “use of force.” Following the feint, Cryts told Thompson, “Yessir, I’m willing to force my way in.”

Instantly absolved from legal responsibility, Thompson gave Cryts the green light to load soybeans—77 trucks all over again. Beans in hand, Cryts drove like a bat outta hell to the ASCS office in Bloomfield: “I’m here to pay my loan with grain. Where do you’uns want it?”

Stockmanship and stewardship unite producers with purpose in Springfield

By ALLY CRICK
Manager of Industry Relations
Missouri Beef Industry Council

Stockmanship & Stewardship was held September 5th and 6th at Missouri State University’s Darr College of Agriculture in Springfield, MO. The event brought together more than 180 cattle producers, students, and industry professionals for two days of education, demonstrations, and networking. Co-hosted by the Missouri Beef Industry Council, Missouri State University, Missouri Cattlemen’s Association, and National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA), the program was a resounding success.

The event was built on the principles of the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program, underscoring the commitment of U.S. cattle producers to animal care, consumer trust, and continuous improvement across the beef industry.

The program opened with Secure Beef Supply (SBS) training led by Dr. Julia Herman, Dr. Sarah Reinkenmeyer, Dr. Craig Payne, and Dr. Tonya Collop.

This critical session prepared producers for potential foreign animal disease outbreaks, emphasizing biosecurity planning, continuity of business measures, and coordination with animal health officials.

From there, the agenda featured a wide-ranging lineup of sessions:

- Dr. Linda Lackman, USDA: Update on the potential threat of New World Screwworm in the U.S., including signs to watch for and prevention strategies.
- Jack Ward, American Hereford Association: The economic benefits of heterosis and how crossbreeding can enhance herd performance.
- Dr. Daniel Clark, Certified Angus Beef®: Beef fabrication demonstration illustrating how BQA principles directly translate to carcass quality, value, and consumer satisfaction.
- Colin Woodall, NCBA CEO: Keynote on producer leadership, policy engagement, and consumer trust in shaping the future of the beef industry.
- Jordan Thomas, University of Missouri: Breeding strategies for improved reproductive success.

- Dr. Dave Lalman, Oklahoma State University, with Curtis Bryant, Neogen: Matching cow size to stocking potential as a key factor in breeding and culling decisions.
- Dr. Eric Bailey, University of Missouri: Maximizing nutrients through native forage management.
- Dr. Ron Gill, Texas A&M Extension, and Curt Pate, livestock handling professional: Low-stress cattle handling demonstration horseback and on foot, reflecting Missouri’s common working conditions.
- Jason Duggin, University of Georgia, with the Sargent Michael McClure, Missouri State Highway Patrol: Pre-trip livestock hauling inspections, accident response, and preventing foreign materials in meat.
- Dr. Julia Herman, NCBA Beef Cattle Veterinarian, with Dr. Craig Payne, University of Missouri Extension: Proper medication handling, injection site precautions, implant safety, and preventing violative residues.

Meals and Sponsors

Hospitality and sponsorship played a vital role in making the Springfield event memorable and impactful.

Friday Dinner: Sponsored by Certified Angus Beef’s Raised with Respect™ program, featuring premium Certified Angus Beef® filets.

Saturday Lunch: Sponsored and provided by the Southwest County Cattlemen’s Association.

Event Sponsors: Neogen, Ameren Missouri, FCS Financial, Missouri Electric Cooperatives, Kodiak Trailers, Superior Steel Sales, The Midwest Cattlemen, and Witt Print Shop.

These contributions ensured that attendees enjoyed quality meals, seamless demonstrations, and the overall hospitality that made the program stand out.

Tradeshow Vendors

Participants also had access to a robust tradeshow featuring: Neogen, Missouri Dairy, Natural Resources Conservation Services, Worthington Angus, Hills Feed and Seed, ShowMe Genetics, Joplin Regional Stockyards, Biozyme/Vitaferm, STgenetics, The Midwest

Cattlemen, Vitalix, United States Department of Agriculture, Missouri Department of Agriculture, MFA Inc., and Lincoln University.

States and province represented included Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Texas, Wisconsin, Wyoming, and Saskatchewan, Canada.

Segments of the industry represented included Cow/Calf, Allied Industry, Backgrounder/Stock, Dairy, Veterinarian, Government, Student, Calf Raiser, Feedyard, Seedstock, Extension.

With more than 180 registered participants, the Springfield event exceeded expectations. Attendees represented a wide cross-section of the beef industry—from seasoned ranchers to students preparing to enter the field.

The program struck a balance between research-based learning and practical application, ensuring that every participant walked away with skills they could implement immediately. Networking among producers, students, and industry representatives added another layer of value, strengthening connections within Missouri’s beef community and beyond.

“From a leadership perspective, Stockmanship & Stewardship demonstrated the value of bringing producers together for hands-on education and industry insight,” said Tammy Bartholomew, Missouri Beef Industry Council secretary. “The success of this event reflects the dedication of Missouri’s cattle producers to advancing best practices, strengthening consumer trust, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the beef industry.”

Grounded in BQA principles and paired with cutting-edge science, Stockmanship &

Stewardship equipped producers to enhance animal welfare, improve efficiency, and meet consumer expectations. As challenges continue to evolve, BQA remains a cornerstone of producer education. The 2025 Springfield event celebrated the strength of the cattle community and provided attendees with the knowledge, tools, and confidence needed to thrive in the years ahead.

—Meatingplace.com

The Cattleman’s Advocate is available free at the following area locations: Area livestock markets

- Callaway Livestock Center
Fulton, MO
- Eastern Missouri Commission Co.
Bowling Green, MO
- F&T Livestock Market
Palmyra, MO
- Scotland County Livestock
Memphis, MO
- Carthage Livestock
Carthage, MO
- Edina Livestock Sales
Edina, MO
- Fairview Sale Barn
Fairview, MO
- Greenville Livestock Auction
Centralia, IL
- Jones Brothers Livestock Auction
Marshall, MO
- Kingsville Livestock Auction
Kingsville, MO
- Kirksville Livestock Market
Kirksville, MO
- Lolli Brothers Livestock Auction
Macon, MO
- Mid-Missouri Stockyards
Lebanon, MO
- New Cambria Livestock Auction
New Cambria, MO
- North Missouri Livestock Auction
Milan, MO
- Olean Livestock Market
Eldon, MO
- South Central Regional Stockyard
Vienna, MO
- Unionville Livestock Market
Unionville, MO
- United Producers, Inc.
Shelbyville, MO
- Wheeler Livestock Auction
Osceola, MO
- Windsor Livestock Auction
Windsor, MO

Other locations

- A&S Printing
Monroe City, MO
- Abel’s/McDonald’s
Bowling Green, MO
- Agriservices of Brunswick
Brunswick, MO
- American Bank of Missouri
Wellsville, MO
Middletown, MO
Montgomery City, MO
- Angell’s Western Wear
Centralia, MO
- Bank of Montgomery County
Montgomery City, MO
- Bowling Green Tractor
Bowling Green, MO
- Bowling Green Veterinary Clinic
Bowling Green, MO
- Central Elevator
Silex, MO
- C & S Grocery
Harrisburg, MO
- Dawson’s Store
Thompson, MO
- Dearwester Grain Services
Mt. Sterling, IL
Golden, IL
Carthage, IL
- Eastern Missouri Commission Co.
Bowling Green, MO
- Farmers Cooperative
Ewing, MO
- Farmers Cooperative Services
New London, MO
- Farmers Cooperative Services
Palmyra, MO
- Farmer’s Elevator & Exchange
Monroe City, MO
- FCS Financial
Columbia, MO
Hannibal, MO
- Feeders Grain, Inc.
Bowling Green, MO
- Fish Hook Market
Baylis, IL
- Grotjan Conoco Station
New Franklin
- Hank Hedges
O’Fallon, MO
- Hannibal Tractor
Hannibal, MO
- Hatton Vermeer Sales
Auxvasse, MO
- Hilty’s Meats
Bowling Green, MO
- HNB Bank
Bowling Green, MO
Hannibal, MO
Monroe City, MO
Perry, MO
- Jones Brothers AgriServices
La Monte, MO
- Jonesburg Grain Co.
Jonesburg, MO
- Josephville Meat Processing
Wentzville, MO
- Kingdom Feed
Fulton, MO
- Kyle Hendricks
Buffalo, MO
- L & S Equipment
Hermann, MO
- Lehenbauer Farm Repair
Auxvasse, MO
- Liberty Feed Mill
Liberty, IL
- Lincoln County Farmers Co-op
Troy, MO
- Littrell Feed & Seed
Thompson, MO
- Martinsburg Farmers Elevator
Martinsburg, MO
- Mellor Trailers
Boonville, MO
- Meyer Implement
Bowling Green, MO
Monroe City, MO
- MFA Home Office
Columbia, MO
- MFA Agri Services
Boonville, MO
Canton, MO
Centralia, MO
Columbia, MO
Elsberry, MO
Fayette, MO
Fulton, MO
Glascow, MO
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Hannibal, MO
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- Montgomery City Grain
Montgomery City, MO
- Moscow Feed and Grain
Moscow Mills, MO
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- Quinn Farm Supply
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- Shetler Feed
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- State Farm Insurance
Centralia, MO
Vandalia, MO
- Straatmann Feed
New Melle, MO
- Strattmann Feed and Transfer
Labadie, MO
- Twillman Feed
Fulton, MO
Mexico, MO
- USA Market News Office
Country Club, MO
- Windmill Ridge
Shelbyville, MO

Tyson adjusting recipes on branded foods

Tyson Foods Inc. has announced a goal of ending the use of high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) and other specific ingredients in its branded food lines by the end of 2025.

The protein giant plans to replace the sweetener in its products, as well as reformulating to remove the artificial sweetener Sucralose, preservatives BHA/BHT and the food coloring agent titanium dioxide, Tyson said in a news release. The affected brands include Tyson, Jimmy Dean, Hillshire Farm, State Fair and Wright, among others, the

company said. The move is part of a voluntary effort that follows the removal of petroleum-based synthetic dyes from Tyson’s domestic branded products earlier this year. All of the targeted ingredients have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and are considered safe to use in food products, Tyson noted.

“We continuously review and assess our product portfolio to ensure the highest quality prod-

ucts that meet the needs of consumers,” Tyson President and CEO Donnie King said.

Tyson joins Kraft Heinz and other companies that announced the elimination of synthetic food dyes, as suggested by Trump administration officials as part of the “Make America Healthy Again” initiative, launched this year by the Department of Health and Human Services.

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

CRYTS from page 16

ASCS reps, strings pulled from on high, denied delivery: “We’ve been instructed not to receive your grain.”

Further stymied by a ruling from Baker deeming any purchasing elevator as part of the conspiracy, Cryts pressed the nuclear option: Bean by bean, scatter the grain to the wind. Sell, baby, sell, and pay whatever is owed to whoever will accept cash on the barrelhead.

How so? Cryts’ cohort of AAM farmers took the truckloads of soybeans and disappeared. “I told them all, ‘Boys, just go sell wherever you can and get me the money whenever you can.’”

However, Cryts’ instructions for Harley Sentell, a close farming brother in Butler County, Missouri, were precise and included a direct jab at Judge Baker via the grain elevator at Corning, Ark.—part of the bankruptcy and technically owned by Baker.

“I told Harley, ‘Sell two loads of beans to the James Brothers headquarters in Corning. The guys there won’t know me from Shinola, so put my name on the ticket. That purchase will make Baker’s own elevator part of the conspiracy and therefore he’ll hesitate before he charges any other elevator.’”

“Harley sold Corning the grain and they never knew what hit’em,” Cryts adds. “That was just one more reason for Baker to hate me.”

Seeds of Sedition

The Ristine boomerang hit Cryts on Feb. 9, 1982. Called to appear before Judge Baker, Cryts was granted immunity and ordered to provide the names of all farmers who helped steal the Ristine soybeans. It was political chess: The government already possessed the identity of each farmer involved (photos and signed scale tickets) and didn’t need Cryts’ attestation.

Nonetheless, Cryts declined to allow the judge to hang the wrong horse thief: “No way would I give him a name—not even one.”

Frustrated by Cryts’ refusal to play canary, Baker tossed a pencil across the courtroom and threatened civil contempt of court.

Cryts responded with disdain: “... I am so sick and tired of this forced mockery of justice and those thieving, money hungry lawyers that come into a bankrupt elevator like a bunch of vultures and milk every dollar out of the escrow account. And by the time they are finished, the farms are left with nothing. They take the assets of honest, hardworking people and get rich off them. Your Honor, I think this circus has gone on for long enough. You do whatever you have to do and let’s get on with it.”

Baker chose to lock up Cryts until the Bootheel farmer broke. On April 28, 1982, Cryts was processed at the Pope County Jail in Russellville, Ark., with Baker promising freedom upon testimony: “Cryts can be released from jail by telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth ... Cryts has planted the seeds of sedition and must harvest the bittersweet bounty of his own folly by staying in jail.”

However, Baker’s heavy hand ignited media coverage and kicked an anthill in farm country. In southeast Missouri, pickup trucks sported a common bumper sticker: “Free Wayne, Jail The Judge.”

Jailhouse phone lines were jammed. “Donations for my defense came pouring in, AAM hired the famous attorney F. Lee Bailey to represent me, and the news went crazy because people started realizing what the government was doing,” Cryts says. “The mayor of Russellville brought me the key to the city; high school groups came into jail to hear me speak; and all of it made Baker’s blood boil because he created a circus he couldn’t control.”

“Bill Clinton showed up at jail to visit with me, and that tells you how deep corruption ran in the bureaucracy. After this case was all over, Judge Baker suddenly got a sweet job with the Rose Law Firm. Please don’t tell me that was a coincidence.”

In early May, Sen. Bob Dole of Kansas requested Cryts’ testimony in Washington, D.C., at a Senate bankruptcy hearing. Baker refused to let his prisoner go. (Cryts also received significant

support from Iowa Sen. Charles Grassley, who offered to serve a portion of Cryts’ time and petitioned Reagan for a pardon. “Hell no,” Cryts says. “I told Grassley I would never take a pardon. I didn’t do anything.”

When Baker balked at Dole’s request, DOJ provided additional encouragement. “DOJ threatened Baker and told him they were going to find him in contempt and put him in jail with me. I reckon we’d have been great cellmates. Anyhow, the judge suddenly let me go to Washington.”

Given a furlough, Cryts flew to D.C. and told the Ristine tale. Four days later, he was back behind bars in Arkansas, while a whirlwind of pressure circled Baker. On June 2, after 30-plus days in jail, Cryts was released, but Baker was not finished, recommending criminal prosecution for Cryts: “It is obvious to this court that Mr. Cryts envisions himself to be some sort of folk hero who has been called on from on high to right the wrongs inflicted upon farmers when grain elevators fail. His refusal to cooperate should be deemed criminal...”

Additionally, Baker levied a fine of \$287,000 and went after Cryts’ finances, assets, and bank accounts.

“There was nothing left in our name for him to get,” Cryts reflects. “Baker even tried to seize my farm equipment, but my neighbors got there first and hid all my machinery on their ground.”

For almost two years, Cryts had walked a high wire above ruin. “The whole time, I thought proving the facts would set things straight. Turns out, the government only cared that I had dared to break its rules—truth be damned. And for that, I had to pay.”

Cargill Blinks

Paper sacks, rubber bands, and greenbacks.

As Cryts’ farming brethren sold his grain at the four corners, money flooded in, spurring Cryts to stash the cash in safety deposit boxes rented by a friend. “Guys literally walked up and handed me sandwich bags filled with bills, no questions asked. I started paying

off all the people I owed. I sure as hell didn’t want to use that system, but my hand was forced.”

In response, Baker issued an order to over 100 Bootheel banks to confiscate any money deposited by Cryts. The Internal Revenue Service knocked next in a sequence of curious timing, demanding payment for overdue taxes.

Cryts drove to the IRS office in St. Louis and asked if he could pay via asset seizure.

“I’m sitting there with this IRS agent, and I asked him if I could pay in beans. He says, ‘I think so. Just let me make certain with my supervisor.’”

“The supervisor comes in, and I explained the situation all over again. All of a sudden, the supervisor sat up in his chair: ‘Wait. Wait,’ he said, as everything dawned on him. ‘You’re that soybean guy? You’re that Cryts guy? No way. We’re not doing it.’”

“That’s the level of government collusion I was up against,” Cryts says. “Courts, agencies, departments, and career bureaucrats were madder than hell, all because their lifetime power was threatened.”

In the fall of 1982, in legal limbo, Cryts began harvesting and hauling grain to Cargill in New Madrid. Baker issued a grain confiscation order to Cargill.

Cryts went on-site to Cargill’s concrete elevators and spoke plainly, warning of a Ristine repeat. “Give me back my grain or give me cash. It’ll be tough busting in one of your elevators, and I don’t know right now how to do it, but I’ll get my grain out. I promise to do the least amount of damage I can, and I’ll pay for repairs when I’m done.”

Cargill blinked. However, the New Madrid facility was barge-only and had no load-out for trucks. “They told me I could go inland and get my grain from another elevator. I went to Dexter and got my grain, and then drove it to MFA Bernie and sold it. That marked the event where the government gave up on confiscations.”

The feds may have grown tired of chasing Cryts’ grain, but the government exchanged its grip on Cryts’ soybeans for a better han-

dle on his collar. As in, a 20-year stay in the penitentiary. “Guilt or innocence was out the window,” Cryts exclaims. “They weren’t turning loose of me no matter what.”

Rat on a Cheeto.

A Cold Day In Hell

The home phone rang at all hours with calls from farmers, agriculture organizations, and mayors across the nation, asking for a Cryts appearance or speech. “It became a way of saying thanks and I never asked or wanted a penny in return,” Cryts describes. “Sometimes my expenses were paid; sometimes not. I made it to every event possible out of gratitude.”

In August 1982, Cryts took a call from the northwest corner of Arkansas and the tiny town of Gravette, just under the state line, roughly an hour south of Springfield, Mo. On the horn was Bob Pigott, chamber of commerce president, asking Cryts to speak at the Eighty-Ninth Annual Gravette Day Celebration and serve as grand marshal of the parade.

Bud Shell, owner of the Ford dealership in Dexter, Mo., stepped up and provided Cryts with a blue travel van, a repeat gesture by Shell. On the morning prior to the Gravette festivities, as Cryts sat in Pigott’s clothing store, the office phone rattled with a call from a familiar and trusted voice—U.S. marshal George Welch, a highly-respected presence at the Ristine affair.

“Wayne, they’re coming for you,” Welch stated. “This is a setup. There is a federal marshal tracking you and they’re going to find a way to arrest you. I know this because they tried to get me to do it and I told them to go to hell.”

Welch was preaching gospel. At 9 a.m. the following day, as Cryst again sat inside Pigott’s store, a team of U.S. marshals surrounded the building. Chuck Papachio, a U.S. marshal from Brooklyn, NYC, entered the premises and handed Pigott a writ garnishing any payment planned for Cryts. (However, the Chamber did not pay Cryts.)

See CRYTS, page 21



Eastern Missouri Commission Company, Bowling Green
Market Report for Friday, September 12, 2025
Receipts: 1,780 Two weeks ago: 643 Year ago: 1,487

Compared to the last special three weeks ago, a very limited comparison with this week's much larger offering, especially of yearlings and a much larger consignment of unweaned calves. Overall the undertone is lower especially on yearling steers and calves, but a consignment of 100 hd of 1071 lb heifers sold with very good demand. The market held up very well despite the Feeder Cattle contracts ending the week on Friday in a free fall with the front 4 months down 4.82 to 7.32, after Tuesday's limit down move of 9.25. Front end quality calves are still sought after as are yearlings. Several consignments of unweaned calves overall were good quality but the variance of quality, planier kinds, flesh, vaccination programs all play in the demand for them. Stick out sale included the 100 hd of 1071 lb heifers at 273.00 and 45 hd of lighter sisters weighing 941 lbs at 291.50. Slaughter cows sold 3.00-8.00 lower with slaughter steers and heifers trading with a lower undertone on a light offering.

Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1 – Pkg 326 lbs 545.00; lot unweaned 394 lbs 470.00; pkg unweaned 492 lbs 431.50;

Market Reports

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lot unweaned 536 lbs 426.00, 550-600 lbs 417.00-434.00, pkg unweaned 596 lbs 373.00; 615-620 lbs unweaned 393.00-405.50, 650-700 lbs 380.00-391.75; 700-715 lbs 379.50-387.00, lot unweaned 721 lbs 367.00, 750-800 lbs 366.00-390.00; 800-850 lbs 339.50-352.00, 59 hd 885 lbs 337.25; 40 hd 918 lbs 331.25.

Medium and Large 1-2 – Pkg 376 lbs 452.50; 400-475 lbs 410.00-437.50; 500-575 lbs 386.00-394.50; 600-700 lbs 362.50-392.00; 700-760 lbs 355.00-373.00; 880-900 lbs 320.00-329.00.

Feeder Heifers: Medium and Large 1 – 450-500 lbs 407.50-427.50, unweaned 376.00-401.00; lot unweaned 534 lbs 402.50, lot 530 lbs 401.00, 550-600 lbs 369.00-377.50, lot unweaned 585 lbs 358.00; 600-615 lbs 355.00-363.00; 700-760 lbs 334.25-345.00.

Large 1 – 100 hd 1071 lbs 273.00, few 1000-1026 lbs 280.00-284.00, lot 45 hd 941 lbs 291.50.

Medium and Large 1-2 – 350-400 lbs 404.00-425.00; 400-500 lbs 371.00-400.00; 550-600 lbs 351.00-367.00; 600-700 lbs 336.00-352.50.

Medium and Large 2 – Pkg 532 lbs 359.00; pkg 635 lbs 305.00; pkg 730 lbs 306.00.

Feeder Bulls: Medium and Large 1 – Lot unweaned 22 hd 525 lbs 388.00.

Medium and Large 1-2 – 420-450 lbs 415.00-425.00; 500-600 lbs 368.00-374.00; 706-712 lbs 306.00-312.00; pkg 834 lbs 295.00; 942-989 lbs 264.00-265.00.

Slaughter Cows: Premium White (65-70% lean) Average dressing, 159.00-162.50. Breakers (70-80% lean) Average dressing, 164.00-171.00; high dressing, 172.00-177.00; and low dressing, 153.00-161.00. Boners (80-85% lean) Average dressing, 163.00-171.50; high dressing, 172.50-178.00; and low dressing, 152.00-162.00. Lean (85-90% lean) Average dressing, 139.00-150.00; high dressing, 165.00-173.00; and low dressing, 125.00-137.00. Shelly 102.00-120.00.

Slaughter Bulls: Yield Grade 1-2 – 1300-2400 lbs 195.00-205.00 209.00-221.00 170.00.

Slaughter Steers and Heifers: (40 hd) Choice 2-3 few 1400-1450 lbs 237.00-238.00; Select and Choice 1-3 1100-1350 lbs 232.00-235.00.

Source: MO Dept of Ag-USDA Market News Service, Bowling Green, MO, Greg Harrison, Market Reporter 573-751-5618. 24 hour recorded report 1-573-522-9244 www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/JC_LSI56.txt

Longtime Armstrong-area producer/farmer Fred Stroupe, 99, passes away

Fred Stroupe
Feb. 1, 1926 - Aug. 31, 2025

How do you measure a man's life when he dies? Where to start.

Harold Frederick Stroupe (Fred) was born February 1, 1926, in a hospital in Milwaukee Wisconsin.

He was the eldest of 6 children. Siblings (Philip Stroupe, Dawn Hilt, Del Stroupe, Doris Kieselberg, and David Stroupe) Growing up as the eldest, he led his siblings in playing farm. He possessed 7 red clay bricks, and his siblings fewer, so he was always the one building the 7 bricker barn.

Fred died August 31, 2025 at the age of 99 1/2.

His life witnessed nearly one third of our nation's presidents, most of whom would never garnish his vote.

At age 21 with borrowed money, he jumped into renting and then buying a farm and milking cows, day and night, for 32 years. Most of that time he owned a milk truck and between his daily milkings he hauled his and his neighbor's milk to processing plants near and far.

Only weighing 130 lbs. Fred spent this part of his day throwing 80 lb. containers of milk up into his truck. He toughed through a year of sciatic nerve pain, all while keeping food on the family table and the mortgage paid.

Four years younger, Willie Hagen the "Love of His Life" entered Fred's world when he was a senior in high school. She loved Fred taking her to the movies but she always had to wake him up when the movie was over.

They were married 71 years, until Willie's death in 2019.

They raised 4 children, Sam (Kathleen) Stroupe of Armstrong Mo., Vickie (Mark) Gassman of Roanoke Mo., Penny (Pete) Brown of Glasgow Mo., Tami (Bill) Verner of Armstrong Mo., and a year-old son Freddie who died of heart complications. Willie's youngest sister Ardyth Albertson (Roy) was like another daughter in Fred and Willie's family.

Over the years, a dozen kids found food, beds, and a safe place under Fred and Willie's roof, for both short and often extended times. Fred employed many young men on the dairy farm. The local sheriff occasionally told a student heading for trouble you can go to jail or go



live with Fred and Wille Stroupe and work on the farm. The first option really wasn't a choice.

In younger years, he and Willie went out square dancing nearly every Saturday night. Once a year they'd vacation overnight in a motel on a lake with a few other couples, and a quick fishing event as the sun came up. Then back to work for them all.

Fred's mind was always working. Raising 5 acres of tobacco in Wisconsin paid the farm mortgage. He heard about free stall housing for milk cows. In a 4' by 8' dry bedded stall, the cows could relax and sleep.

Fred built the 2nd free stall cattle building in the nation, now the standard cattle housing method in the inclement climate zones.

He was an early user of AI on cattle. That's Artificial Insemination, not Artificial Intelligence.

Fred was among one of the first in Wisconsin to put in contour strip cropping to minimize soil erosion. Early on he was putting alfalfa, oats, peas, as well as corn and milo into cement silos and long plastic tubes.

He was among the small handful of farmers to begin no tillage cropping in 1966 and early on began terracing his crop land to minimize erosion.

And yes, in the mid 60s, he dumped out cow's milk on the ground in protest of low milk prices.

He and other NFO (National Farmer's Organization) members were struggling to achieve parity prices for farmers nationwide. Heard tell of farmers putting sugar cubes in the gas tanks of farm trucks being used for hauling cattle to market during the NFO holding action. Surely my dad was not involved in that.

At age 40, Fred joined the migration of Northern Farmers to Missouri in pursuit of lower

land prices and milder winters. In the early 80s, he quit milking cows and went to beef cows and over the road trucking. He retired from trucking in 2000 at the age of 74.

Fred continued caring for the cow herd until age 92, while also working as a jailor under Howard County Sheriff Charles Polson.

In addition, Fred served as Mayor of Armstrong, Missouri for 4 years until 2004, having the same responsibilities as big town Mayors of street care, water and sewer systems, policing and pit bull problems. But of course, no pay.

As Armstrong Mayor, Fred began the repaving of all the town's streets and construction of the new city hall/community center. He treated all citizens with respect but if some had complaints about services that could not be solved, they were reminded they were free to live elsewhere.

He was a founding member of Sharon Bible Church and the Howard County Progressives. Figure that one out.

In the 70s, he revitalized Howard County's NFO and with

them built a hog collection and marketing facility.

Seems like over half the county's farmers worked together on this attempt to gain fair prices for America's food producers.

Fred chose to live his last 6 years at Ashbury Heights in Fayette where he loved and was loved by the staff there. Reading was a huge part of his life since childhood and he filled his last years with extensive reading and keeping up with local and national news.

Also filling his time was a flow of visits from his 4 children, 15 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

Two regrets. He would have loved to have seen his 100th birthday, but 99 1/2 is not bad, and he would have loved to see a woman president.

Fred died of complications from diabetes and a bone infection.

Rest in peace, old man, you remained firm in your faith. You loved and were loved. A well measured man, an example for all of us that you and Willie spawned. In your century of life, you crossed paths with thou-

sands, and those who lingered in that crossing were blessed.

A memorial service for Mr. Stroupe was on Sunday, September 7, 2025, at Friemonth-Freese Funeral Home in Fayette. Private inurnment is at Sharon Cemetery in Armstrong, MO.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions are suggested to Coyote Hill or Sharon Cemetery, c/o Friemonth-Freese Funeral Service, 174 Hwy. 5 & 240 N., Fayette, MO 65248.

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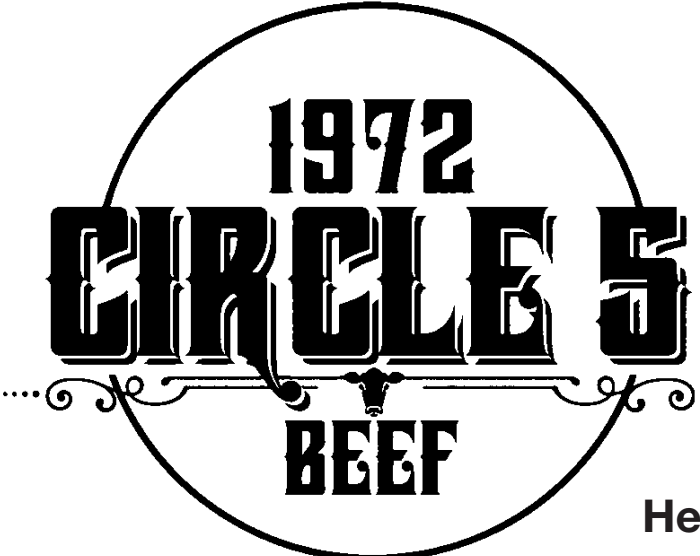
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Monthly Sheep & Goat Market Reports

Sponsored by The Bank of Missouri

Montgomery County Livestock Auction, Montgomery City Market Report for Sheep & Goat Auction Thursday, September 11, 2025
Receipts: 1,200 Last month: 1,005 Year ago: 890

Montgomery County Livestock held their Sheep and Goat sale Thursday evening Sept 11, with a large offering of lambs. Slaughter lambs weighing mostly 60-90 lbs sold 10.00-15.00 higherr, spots 20.00 higher than last month. Feeder Lambs traded steady to firm on a nice offering as did slaughter ewes. Kid goats traded steady to firm. Also in the offering was a consignment of replacement ewes 3yrs to solid mouth to lamb in October. Demand was moderate to good on a large offer-

ing. 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 60-90 lbs 245.00-270.00.
Choice 1-2 60-90 lbs 230.00-245.00..
Feeder Lambs: Small and Medium 1-2 - 30-47 lbs 260.00-275.00.
Slaughter Ewes: Utility and Good 1-2 - 90-145 lbs 115.00-130.00; Utility 1-2 85-125 lbs 105.00-125.00.
Replacement Ewes: Consignment 3yrs to solid mouth 113-

130 lbs lamb in October 190.00-200.00 per head.

GOATS: (prices per hundred weight)
Kid Goats: Selection 1 - 45-62 lbs 335.00-355.00; Selection 1-2 40-60 lbs 305.00-325.00.
Feeder Kids: Selection 1-2 - Few 30-40 lbs 275.00-325.00.
Nannies: Selection 1-2 - 75-90 lbs few 160.00-165.00 cwt.
Nannies/Does: Selection 1-2 - Replacement 75-90 lbs 175.00-210.00 cwt.

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

Free pesticide disposal event set for October 4 in Chillicothe

CHILLICOTHE, Mo. – Missourians will have an opportunity to safely dispose of pesticides 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, Oct. 4, at the Litton Agri-Science Learning Center in Chillicothe. Sam Polly, University of Missouri Extension pesticide

safety education program coordinator, said Missouri Department of Natural Resources representatives will accept up to 8,000 pounds of all pesticides from noncommercial sources at no charge. These include herbicides,

insecticides, rodenticides, dewormers, fly tags and fertilizer containing pesticides, Polly said. However, rinsate will not be accepted. “This is a great opportunity to safely dispose of pesticides to avoid harm to people and the

environment,” he said. “We strongly encourage people to participate to improve on-farm safety for humans, animals, birds, fish, beneficial insects and nontargeted plants.”

You can preregister for drop off at pesticidecollectionregistration@dnr.mo.gov. For questions, visit the Missouri Pesticide Collection Program webpage or call 573-526-3910.

Polly suggests wearing nitrile or chemical-resistant gloves when transporting pesticides.

Avoid smoking and bringing children and pets with you. Keep waste pesticides in their original containers, and don't mix pesticides with other materials, says Polly. Label materials that are not in the original containers, and make sure lids are tightly sealed. If the container leaks, put it in a larger container with a nonflammable absorbent such as clay-based cat box filler. Also, safely secure pesticides upright in the back of the vehicle or in the trunk.

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As a service to our readers, The Cattleman's Advocate is offering a FREE one-month classified ad. To place an ad of up to 20 words for the next issue, simply email your ad to: cattlemans@virtualimages.us; or fill out the form below, clip it out and mail to:

Cattleman's Advocate, P.O. Box 26, Paris, MO 65275

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Or clip & mail to: **Cattleman's Advocate, P.O. Box 26, Paris, MO 65275**
Classified ads must be received by the 25th of the month for the next month's issue.
The publishers reserve the right, at their discretion to decline advertisements deemed in conflict with the publication's goals or those of our other interest – commercial cattle marketing.

CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale

For Sale: 5 bar and 6 bar continuous panels, posts, free standing panels, corral panels etc. @ Joni E Yoder's, 2665 Audrain Rd 154 Clark MO. You will like the products and the competitive prices. Neighbors phone, 573-397-1092.

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.

Heeler puppies, ready November 1. Sire: "Lefty blue heeler. Dam: red heeler. 660-651-6266.

For Sale

Reclaimed barn wood, lumber and tin salvaged from vintage barns. Various lengths, weathered red/gray and white. Priced to move. Salt River Salvage Co., Paris, MO. 573-721-1111.

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CRYTS from page 18

Papachio turned to Cryts: "Do you have any valuables on you?"

"I've got my watch, wedding ring, boots, and about \$150 in cash," Cryts answered.

Papachio requested turnover of said valuables. Cryts refused.

During the verbal exchange, Papachio's men were covering the rear exit, pistols drawn. Cryts only found out about Papachio's backdoor coverage at trial, months later. "When I heard during testimony that the government was locked and loaded that day, I have to ask if they were hoping I'd resist. I'll always wonder if I'd have run out the back door whether they were going to shoot me dead. It shows you an outrageous level of government overkill."

As the confrontation continued between Papachio and Cryts, a bystander hollered, "Wayne, the marshals are outside taking your van."

Cryts raced to the street and stepped off the curb, blocking a tow truck from van access. Papachio warned Cryts to move or face arrest. "I can accept being arrested," Cryts answered, "but I can't accept you stealing this van."

Cryts maintained calm and told Papachio. "I'm not going to be a problem. Just let me be the

grand marshal and as soon as the parade ends, do your thing if you want to arrest me that bad."

Fearing an unruly Gravette citizenry, Papachio acquiesced, but his hesitation almost went sideways. After the parade concluded, Papachio cuffed Cryts and placed him in a county patrol vehicle. The crowd erupted, tearing off the antennae and kicking in the doors before the car picked up speed. "It got wild," Cryts remembers. "People were rocking the car back and forth, and the officers were bad shook up."

Processed at the Sebastian County jailhouse in Fort Smith, Cryts traded his jean jacket and Levi's for blue-and-white stripes. He was fingerprinted, photographed for a mugshot, issued a tin cup, and deposited in a cell with eight Cubans. "These were genuine criminals dumped by Castro in his 1980 prison cleanout, and I was scared to death. I had no options but to act tough and be ready to fight, bite, whatever it took. Helluva night: I ended up killing 280 cockroaches."

Two days later, Cryts posted bond and was released until trial. "My van," he recalls. "They kept my damn van."

In October 1982, in Fayetteville, Ark., Cryts' trial

process began on charges of interference with a federal marshal, with a potential sentence of 20 years in federal prison. His attorney, Bill Wilson, pushed for a guilty plea, Cryts recalls.

"Wayne, plead or you're looking at a couple decades of hard time in maximum security. Baker issued you a court order not to remove the grain, and you violated that order, but the marshals and FBI officers refused to back Baker and stop you. Basically, you stripped Baker naked of his power and you're a threat to the entire system. They're going to make an example of you one way or another. Plead guilty now."

Undaunted, Cryts insisted on a jury trial.

Federal Magistrate Judge Franklin McWaters presided in Fayetteville.

"The prosecutor spouted all kinds of crap to the jury," Cryts contends. "He said, 'Ladies and gentlemen, don't get on a cruise ship with Wayne Cryts. He'll take the lifeboats and leave the women and children behind. He wants notoriety. He wants fame. He wants power.'"

Cryts took the stand, looking as guilty as the boy who burned down the barn. "I told them I did it. I hid nothing. The prosecution said I refused a direct order from

a federal marshal, and I told the jury that was true."

After Cryts exited the stand, Bill Wilson put head to hands and whispered, "Wayne, you're the best witness the prosecution has had."

After closing statements, Judge McWaters put a thumb on the scales: I want to tell the ladies and gentlemen of the jury one thing. If you come back with anything other than a guilty verdict, we might as well throw our laws out the window, everybody strap on a six-gun, and go down the street shooting.

"Can you imagine how that felt," Cryts says. "I'm up for 20 years and the judge tells the jury they sure as hell better find me guilty. Literally, those were the last words heard by the jury."

Seated at the defense table, Cryts was lost, unable to read blank expressions worn by the jury as they shuffled out. No smiles. No frowns.

Retreating to a hallway, Cryts collapsed on the floor, and waited for the inevitable. Three hours later, the jury returned, again filing in with faces set in stone.

The bailiff handed the decision to Judge McWaters, who read in silence, then peered down at the jury: "Is this unanimous?"

McWaters then tossed the

decision on the courtroom floor. The bailiff picked up the paperwork and read aloud: "Not guilty."

The prosecutor scrambled out of his chair and demanded a jury poll. Each juror rose, stated a name, and sounded off.

McWaters rapped the gavel. Court dismissed. Knees to jelly and adrenaline gone, Cryts wept.

As McWaters exited the room in a fury, Bill Wilson hollered out: "Your honor, what about Mr. Cryts' van? Your honor?"

McWaters turned about for one final pause: "It'll be a cold day in hell when I release that van."

Mysterious Corn Cob

Double jeopardy? Triple jeopardy? The government took another bite at the Cryts apple.

"They were going to change up the charges and put me on trial until they got their guilty verdict," Cryts insists. "When Ristine didn't work, they just tried something else."

In June 1983, throwing in the towel on Ristine, federal judge Thomas Eisele rang up Cryts on charges of criminal contempt for removing his soybeans from the MFA Elevator at Bernie.

Mirroring his previous trial,

See CRYTS, page 23

Letter to the Editor

Government should be operating more like a business

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following Letter to the Editor was submitted by John Turner of Paris, Mo., who worked for more than 38 years for USDA-SCS (later NRCS) in nine locations in the state of Missouri.

I would like to offer a point of view on the Trump administration's handling of efforts to improve efficiency in the U.S. Department of Agriculture—USDA. My point of view differs from that of Kevin Shea, former administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service—USDA-APHIS.

In any commentary it is critical to understand perspective—what is the writer's, or in this case interviewee's perspective? What is that person's experience with the subject matter, and what is that person's reaction to specific circumstances connected to that subject matter. Administrator Shea is focused the negative impacts of the administration's actions on the ability of one agency—APHIS—to do its job. I will not attempt to get into the details of APHIS mission and management even though a close family member with whom I talk regularly is an employee of APHIS Veterinary Services Branch. Based on those conversations I am certain that APHIS-Veterinary Services, like nearly all institutions, has plenty of low-hanging fruit as regards inefficiency and "dead wood"—employees who don't do their share of the work or don't do it well.

Now let me tell you where I'm coming from (bad grammar, I know). I worked for USDA-

SCS (later NRCS) for over 38 years between 1970 and 2011—a tenure quite similar to Administrator Shea. Except for a two month detail to the Washington, DC, National Office my entire career was spent at nine locations scattered around the State of Missouri, 25 years in five field offices and 13 years in Area and State offices. Let me elaborate—that's 25 years in actual service delivery and 13 years in "support" positions. In addition, over the last 13 years I have done a fair amount of technical instruction for or on behalf of NRCS on a contract basis or as a volunteer. Unlike Mr. Shea I do not claim to be widely respected or recognized, and, even though I got a number of awards over the years, there were no presidential decorations. The Washington experience was interesting and eye-opening, but it's a bubble. Working there is kind of intoxicating—you get to thinking that the world revolves around that place and what you do is really important. Some people have spent too much time in the bubble.

I am absolutely appalled at the U.S. National debt—as of Friday, September 15, it was \$37.47 trillion and increasing at a rate of \$420 billion per month—and our elected representatives' refusal to put us on a track to reducing that debt—STARTING TODAY! Every man woman and child owes just shy of \$108 thousand. I have five grandchildren and a great grandson who is 5 months old; the six of them owe nearly \$648 thousand. My wife and I won't live long enough to pay our \$216

thousand share, so most of our debt will be passed down to them. I assert that this is unfair, unethical and immoral. It amounts to my generation living an extravagant lifestyle that we cannot afford and sending our grandchildren the bill.

Getting this huge ship on a right course will take time and a ton of belt-tightening. As a personal parallel, if I have month left at the end of the money then something has to change—the country club membership, the frequent restaurant meals and the daily visit to Starbucks have got to go! The same, and more, has to happen at the Federal level. The Federal government MUST reduce expenditures through eliminating non-essential services and making the provision of vital, essential services more efficient. Congress has vividly shown their inability/unwillingness to make even a half-hearted attempt at dealing with the problem. The "Big, Beautiful Bill" was overloaded with that evidence—necessary, unfortunately, to get enough votes for passage. Nobody likes belt-tightening. Personally, most of us will ignore warning signs and admonitions to change our lifestyle until the doctor says, "You have to change or you're gonna die!" This nation is on an imminent collision course with that reality. Radical change is necessary.

The administration, if willing to stop kicking the ever-growing can down the road, must do what they can. Payroll is, for most government agencies, the largest single expense. Any serious attempt to reduce costs has to start there. It's just a fact. If they're going to reduce payroll

they have to reduce numbers of employees. Attrition—simply not replacing employees that retire, quit or die—will take decades or more to make even a dent in the budget. Can they fire the poor performing employees? Sounds good, but there's reality. Since the establishment of the Civil Service in 1883 numerous provisions have been added in the name of worker protection. Lobbying by unions has resulted in the passing of many of these provisions. Non-union employees enjoy essentially the same protections. You can fairly easily terminate an employee convicted of a felony; to my knowledge there has been one such termination in the last 50 years. There was one career employee who was fired in the early 1970s for cause; it literally took years of court battles to get that done. To my knowledge there have been none since for two reasons: 1) it is literally cheaper for the agency to continue to pay the salary than it is to get them fired and 2) the process results in bad press so firing an employee is viewed by high-level administrators as a failure of management which can result in directed reassignment to the American equivalent of Siberia. Managers will create a do-nothing, out-of-sight position for a poor performing employee rather than trying to fire them.

I hear news outlets frequently referring to "public sector unions" and their role in making it difficult to fire a Federal government employee. I never met a Federal employee union member...until I worked in the Washington, DC, National Office. I never believed in the

"your job-my job" distinction. To this day my belief is that if a job needs to be done and you can do it, just do it and don't worry about whose job it is or who gets credit for doing it. At least one occupational series of employees in the National Office is unionized. I got off on the wrong foot the first week by unknowingly doing something that was "their job." I was informed that I WAS NOT to do anything that was "their job." Now I will not criticize the quality of their work; they just didn't do much of it.

Then there are probationary and career conditional employees. New employees are subject to a one-year probationary period; their appointment is temporary and they enjoy few rights as to process or appeal—they can be terminated by written notice as simple as, "We won't need you after today." Career conditional appointments, the two years following the probationary period, are considered permanent, enjoying limited process and appeal rights but less than career employees. They can be terminated easily for cause. The "cause" can be general without specifics, hence the universal dismissal for "poor performance" of many USDA employees in the career conditional category. This "cause" was, understandably, considered an insult to many good career employees but was within the prerogative of the government.

There is one VERY important but unreported fact related to those summary dismissals: at the discretion of the agencies, NRCS

See GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, page 22

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES from page 21

and APHIS in Missouri in particular. Many of the best career conditional employees and some probationary employees who were terminated have been hired back. Public perception notwithstanding, firing them all then hiring back the best ones was the quickest and cleanest way of keeping the good ones.

Mr. Shea was quite critical of the deferred resignation program (DRP) approach because he believes that his agency (and others) lost a lot of experience and institutional knowledge of veteran employees. That is almost certainly true. Career employees were offered the opportunity to quit working but continue to receive their salary and insurance through the end of September. There were two "rounds:" January 28-February 6 and early April-April 30. Two groups, primarily, jumped on this offer: employees who were eligible (or soon to be) to retire and employees who were scared of the prospect of a formal Reduction In Force (RIF). Unfortunately some agencies engaged in scare tactics to generate sympathetic coverage. My opinion on this point will be held by a minority, I'm afraid. I was raised to believe that "you don't deserve a day's pay until you've done a day's work." That's absolutely biblical by the way. I would like to believe that I would decline the DRP offer on ethical and moral grounds. Yes, a lot of experience and institutional knowledge was lost, but we also got rid of some who were just marking time until retirement, and an employee who will accept pay they didn't earn—is that an ethic we want in government? If any agencies lost good employees because they employed "scare tactics" in an attempt to generate favorable press, shame on them

Mr. Shea mentioned that George W. Bush sought to reduce the size of the Federal workforce by contracting with the private sector for certain services using a "reasoned, analytical process" (Mr. Shea's words). This is true. During the spring of 2004 I was the Missouri NRCS representative on a team consisting of several Midwestern states using this "reasoned, analytical process." Our job was to determine if USDA could save money by contracting for the services of two occupational series: Soil Conservation Technicians and Civil Engineering Technicians. These employees are the ones who stake and design soil and water conservation practices that involve earthmoving, e.g. ponds, structures, terraces, waterways, etc. Our conclusion was that the work these technicians do is quite specialized and out of the mainstream of the civil engineering profession so that it is more efficient for the work to be done by government employees. So the whole effort, you might say, was for naught. My point in mentioning it is that it occurred three and a half years after Bush 43 took office—it took that long for the government to get around to even thinking about cutting costs.

The next thing I'd like to discuss is the evolution of the culture of Federal employment. It's changed a lot in the last 55 years, even more in the last 80 years. Did you

know that prior to WWII Federal USDA employees "enjoyed" a six-day work week? In 1970 the Missouri State Office of SCS was in the basement of Parkade Plaza Shopping Center in Columbia; if it rained much water off the parking lot would pour into the office. In the field office where I started to work the SCS and FmHA offices were on the second floor of a Main Street business building. The ASCS office was on the street level, and a tavern was in the basement. After a long day in the field the stairway to the second floor looked like it was 100 yards long (Note: this was prior to the Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA). There was no janitorial service; we three SCS employees did that ourselves (including the toilet); there was no clerical help; we SCS employees did that too. There was one noisy window air conditioner that (sort of) cooled the whole three rooms of the office; we shut it off at night and weekends. We had two trucks, both short bed, step side models with no radio, power steering or air conditioning. The only "option" was a four-speed transmission. What has this to do with efficiency and the cost of government? Austerity. It was not considered appropriate for the government to have anything like extravagance in office space or transportation. I'm not saying that USDA is particularly extravagant now, but the offices are lots nicer (his and hers bathrooms), no long stairways, and janitorial service. The crew cab, four wheel drive vehicles they drive now are way nicer too. All these improvements in office space and transportation come at a cost.

Now to operational efficiency: I haven't always been this way, but as a product of my experience I THINK EFFICIENCY about everything from the moment I get out of bed. What is the most efficient way to go about making the bed (my wife gets up really early), getting dressed, fixing my breakfast, packing my lunch and getting to work? And that's just the start of the day. I look at the way things are done at work, always trying to find a better, quicker, or less expensive way to do things. I went about my job with USDA the same way, and I welcomed

input from coworkers, superiors, and even clients on ways to be more efficient. And we accomplished some good things: streamlining processes, developing new tools, fitting task assignments to individual strengths, utilizing volunteer and contracted help, minimizing road time, and so on. Now I know that not everybody in business or in the workplace has that mindset, but they should, and the public has every right to expect that of their government. I never had a bad boss; a few of them were bad examples, but none were bad bosses. I've heard said that if you want to have a good boss you must first be a good employee; there's a lot to that. I had 10 different bosses over the 38 years and only two of them ever emphasized and encouraged efficiency. In government it's just not a priority. The eleventh commandment of bureaucracy is, "Thou shalt not fail to spend the money!" That mindset pervades all levels of management. Service and meeting customer expectations take a back seat to spending the money. Agencies perennially ask for more responsibility to justify more people and more money—to spend the money. I have noticed over recent years more and more employees are being told their job is to spend the money.

Mr. Shea asserts that it is okay if government doesn't operate like a business "because the government's supposed to be a democracy in balancing all the people's interests." I don't even know what that means, but I want my government, at all levels, to adhere to sound business principles in operation. Let me explain: in business if a widget costs more to produce than its value you must either find a way to make the widget less expensive to produce or stop making the widget. If you are a business that provides a service and the cost of providing that service exceeds the market value of that service you must either find a way to provide that service at less expense or cease to provide that service. The military enjoys some

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Made and reviewed
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For The Advocate

Jon's Critique: I enjoyed this recipe and believe it would make an excellent appetizer or tail gating snack. It looks easy enough to make. The knife cuts helps to load the sauce and adds visual interest. I'd sure be interested in having this one again.

Hasselback Sausage Bites
*Kimberly Holland,
Southern Living, October 2024*

1 lb. hickory-smoked sausage (such as Conecuh, Moser's, Mexico, MO)
1 ½ Tbsp., plus 1 tsp. peach preserves, divided
2 Tbsp. whole-grain mustard,

divided
2 Tbsp. mayonnaise
1 ½ Tbsp. sliced pepperoncini salad peppers, finely chopped
¼ tsp. Kosher salt

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil.

Slice sausage crosswise into ¼-inch intervals, cutting to within ¼ inch of the bottom of sausage. (Do not cut all the way through sausage.)

Slice sausage crosswise again into 16 pieces. Arrange on prepared baking sheet. Stir together 1 ½ tablespoons each of the peach preserves and mustard in a small bowl.

Spoon half of mustard mixture over sausage, making sure sauce gets into crevices. Bake sausage in

preheated oven until browned and glazy, 17 to 20 minutes.

While sausage bakes, stir together mayonnaise, pepperoncini, salt, and remaining 1 teaspoon peach preserves and 1 ½ teaspoons mustard in a small bowl. Remove sausage from oven, and brush with remaining mustard mixture. Serve sausage bites with mayonnaise mixture and Comeback sauce (recipe follows).

Comeback Sauce

1 cup mayonnaise, ¼ cup chili sauce, 2 Tbsp. ketchup, 1 Tbsp. lemon juice, 1 tsp. smoked paprika, 2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce, 1 tsp. hot sauce, ½ tsp. each kosher salt, garlic powder, onion powder, dry mustard, ¼ tsp. black pepper. Stir together above ingredients, cover, and chill for 30 minutes.



GOVERNMENT from page 22

exceptions, but civilian government should be bound to those same basic business principles. Employees at all levels should cooperate to see that happens; it doesn't now. I could give specific examples, but that gets pretty deep into the weeds. I'll stick with generalities: The academics, scientists and upper level administrators can never have enough data provided by the field. These people develop inventory and reporting processes that are ridiculously detailed and time consuming to use. They don't ask for what they NEED; they require what they WANT with no regard to whether the production cost of the information exceeds its value. I worked on a nation-wide team working with academics and scientists whose thirst for data was, as is typical, insatiable. Our most frustrating effort was trying to get the developers of the protocol to back off their time-costly processes. Inventory, documentation, and reporting protocols are cumbersome and eat up a lot of staff time that should be focused on serving the public.

Now to my last, most frustrating and disappointing subject: operational customs. As I said earlier I had two supervisors early in my career that taught me a lot about efficiency of operations and are probably to blame for how I view everything I do today. I've been fortunate over the last 20 years to be in many of the county offices—field offices—in Missouri. I have observed how they go about doing what they do. I have observed as many as three employees with a truck, a trailer and a utility vehicle (side-by-side) doing what one person should do

on foot. I have observed multiple employees abusing lunch privilege by driving from the job to the office or a restaurant, spending a half our eating lunch and then driving back to the job—their tour of duty specifies a half hour lunch. That means 30 minutes from the time they stop doing productive work until they resume doing productive work. Up to an hour spent driving over and above the eating time is costly in both salary and vehicle cost. Many field offices do not schedule field technical assistance appointments; you are put on a waiting list. The client doesn't know when (even if) the agency will get around to providing the service they need. This is not at all business-like and is no way to treat clients. I made an appointment with a doctor on September 12; the first available date that I could accommodate is November 12. That's a long time to wait, and I'm disappointed, but I have an appointment. No business or profession, only the government would be as inconsiderate as to put a client on a waiting list. From an efficiency standpoint the waiting list "system" removes all sense of urgency to complete a task. The inevitable result is less work accomplished and dissatisfied clients.

In summary, with all due respect for Mr. Shea, I'm sorry DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency) and Elon Musk are off the front page. We would all be better off if he was still on the job exposing ridiculous, even criminal, expenditures of our money and, hopefully, easing the debt burden that my grandchildren and great grandchildren are due to inherit.

CRYTS from page 21

Cryts refused to plead guilty, and a jury was seated in a Little Rock courtroom.

Prosecutors subpoenaed Cryts' father, William, but the move backfired on the witness stand. William claimed a mysteriously cloudy recall of the grain removal at MFA due to his perpetually poor memory sustained in a farm accident as a child after a fall from a loft when struck by a "wet corn cob."

The jury deliberated for 30 minutes, voting unanimously for acquittal. Eisele was incensed.

"He cussed and criticized the jury. He openly told them he disagreed with their decision," Cryts explains.

"Since the jury acquitted me, Eisele did what he could to make my life miserable. He charged with me with civil contempt and fined me \$341,000. To this day, I reckon it's compounded to millions of dollars. I never paid."

In less than two years, Cryts had faced a grand jury that refused to indict, and two trial juries that voted not guilty. Yet, the government was not finished.

"That's how the bureaucracy and deep state work in unison," he says. "Make no mistake: There were going to keep trying me, but the story had caught too much media attention, and they couldn't sneak it past the American people. Instead, they came for my guns."

Hands Down

With federal fines sitting on Cryts' shoulder, his assets were at risk. The courts grabbed his guns.

"I didn't have hardly anything in my name they could get, so they sent me notice of gun confiscation."

Cryts didn't cotton to dead lion status. "I'd come too far," he says. "I fought over beans, but I wasn't going to fight over guns because I knew how this episode would have ended, and I didn't want it to turn into a Ruby Ridge situation like we saw some years later. The government would have eventually taken my guns by force."

He broke down his rifles, shotguns, and pistols, placed the parts in the backseat and floorboards of the family sedan, and drove the firearms to law enforcement.

On the steps of the Cape

Girardeau courthouse, Cryts' guns were auctioned by the government. Significantly, there were no bids beyond the raised hands of Cryts' neighbors. Excluding Cryts' farming brethren, the crowd was silent. "Like so many other times, the people around me were the heroes," he says. "I got my guns back, bought and returned to me by my neighbors."

Ristine Dreams

Forty-three years past Ristine, Cryts is a satisfied man, grateful for a quiet life in a modest home perched on a rise off gravel, surrounded by corn, cotton, rice, and soybeans in every direction.

Looking backward at the Ristine raid, would Cryts do it again?

"I have many regrets in life. I wish I'd have married Sandy earlier; 60 years is not enough with her. I wish I'd have not been short with my words with people many times; I'd take back speaking harshly at different points. Those are genuine regrets. But Ristine? I'd do it all again in a heartbeat."

"In the end, Ristine drew attention to major problems in elevator bankruptcies, and some states

changes made real changes in their laws—some didn't."

Beyond bankruptcy law changes, Cryts contends Ristine exposed the extremes of the bureaucracy. Process was punishment.

"You may or may not agree with what I did, or how I did it. I understand. But if you'll look at how the government came after me, with charge after charge, just to get something—anything—to stick, then you can see what laws the bureaucracy is willing to abuse once the ball gets rolling and how they work in unison. I call it the deep state."

Two years shy of 80, almost 55 years removed from the Great Soybean Raid, Cryts often vividly dreams of Ristine, surrounded by hundreds of farmers loading grain in truck after truck. "It wasn't years ago," he says. "It was yesterday. I'll die with a debt for those farmers who stood with me."

"I'm so blessed today," he adds. "I don't have much, but I have all the things I truly need. Here I am in Puxico, Missouri. The government knows where to find me. Come get me."



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