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Marketing meat from top to bottom

Meats by Linz gets real

By PETER THOMAS RICCI
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With an absolute commitment to both quality and continuous learning, Meats by Linz thrives in the middle market.

Even in an industry like meat processing, where companies' humble beginnings are routinely celebrated, one still marvels at the growth of Meats by Linz. The family-owned processor counted five employees in the mid-80s; now, from a state-of-the-art facility in Hammond, Ind., it employs more than 400 and processes upwards of 900,000 pounds of meat per week for more than 3,000 customers across the U.S., Caribbean Islands, Mexico, and Asia. Add to that the processor's 1,500 head of cattle at a Byars, Okla., genetics facility and the 10,000 head at a Colorado feedlot, and you have a commanding presence in the industry's sparse middle market.

The company's ethos of learning and perfecting, explains President/CEO Fred Linz, has been central to its success.

"It takes a lot of time — time, mistakes, no fear of failure," he explains. "You're not scared to take chances. I always want to separate ourselves from the norm. I don't want to be like every other meat cutter or distributor in the business. We need to be different."

And the way Meats by Linz has distinguished itself, Fred continues, is by creating "a story that's real from beginning to end, [one] that we have complete control over." Now, customers not only visit the Hammond facility and admire the company's custom cutters and dry aging, but additionally, they visit the ranch and experience all its unique sensorial details. That complete experience creates a unique sense of pride.

"When an individual has the opportunity to see all the effort, time, money that we put into trying to create the perfect steak, they have a much better appreciation for what we do," Fred says. "They take a sense of pride in it as well as we do, and when a customer asks them where the product comes from, they're very excited to say, 'I know exactly where it comes from. I was there. I've seen it. I smelled it. I touched it. I lived it. It's the real deal.'"

Chad Stine, Meats by Linz's former executive vice president, says Fred's total commitment to vertical integration — in an era when "vertical coordination" is more the aspiration — is unique among U.S. processors.

"It takes a commitment from the top," says Stine, now presi-

See LINZ, page 11

FROM BEGINNING TO END: Above, as part of the company's commitment to vertical integration, Meats by Linz has a new dry-age room, which contains roughly 24,000 muscles of beef. Below at right, Fred Linz, the president and CEO of Meats by Linz, is the processor's third-generation leader. (Photography by Lyndon French)

White House beef talk disrupting markets, rancher group says

A rancher group warned Friday, October 17 that Trump administration comments dangling possible federal action to address high beef prices can trigger volatility in markets for live and feeder cattle, hurting producers.

"When policymakers hint at intervention or suggest quick fixes, they can shake the market's foundation and directly impact the livelihoods of ranchers who depend on stable, transparent pricing," U.S. Cattlemen's Association (USCA) President Justin Tupper said. "Sudden price moves make it harder for independent producers to plan, invest, and keep their operations running."

On Thursday, October 16 at the White House, President Donald Trump made claims about grocery and gasoline prices that contracted government and private data, while alluding to the USDA's promise to issue plans to "rebuild" the shrunken U.S. cattle herd. "I think we have a deal on beef … and that's going to be coming down pretty soon too," he said.

Last month, Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins appeared to rule out payments to beef producers. No date has been set to announce USDA's beef supply policy.

In a statement, USCA asserted that most cattle producers receive "little or no" direct federal subsidies and blamed production costs for the 75-year low in herd size and high retail beef prices.

"Recent comments from the White House — promising action to address beef costs in response to consumer concerns — risk obscuring the real story: America's ranchers have weathered years of rising input costs, drought, and market shifts with unwavering resilience," USCA said.

Tupper called for efforts to help consumers to "consider the economic realities on the ground and ensure the voices of independent ranchers lead the discussion." He emphasized transparency and market integrity over "mandates or panic interventions."

Supermarket prices for beef — based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics' August Consumer Price Index, the last month available due to the ongoing federal shutdown — are up 14% from a year earlier.

"Ranchers are facing historic highs for feed, fuel, labor and land — and those costs have risen far faster than beef prices on grocery shelves," Tupper said.

USCA, based in Billings, Mont., cited time prices — the time needed for an average worker to buy a good — showing that a pound of ground beef is 12 minutes of pay, comparable to the time required 40 years ago.

– Meatingplace.com

Beyond Meat shares plunge after latest announcement

Beyond Meat shares lost nearly half their value in October 13 trading, after the company announced an early settlement of its debt exchange offer, which will issue new shares and notes to reduce its $1.3 billion debt load.

The stock closed October 13 at 1.035, down 97.5 cents, or 48.5%. Afternoon trading saw losses trimmed about 15 cents from a huge morning setback, which followed news that nearly 97% of bondholders agreed to swap their old debt for new 7% convertible notes due 2030 and about 316 million shares of common stock.

The maker of plant-based meat alternatives launched the exchange offer on September 29 in an effort to cut more than $800 million in debt, sending shares down 36% at the time. Beyond Meat said the early settlement is expected on Wednesday after surpassing the minimum participation threshold of 85%.

The company's once high-flying stock, which peaked at $239.71 in July 2019 after its blockbuster IPO, has since fallen sharply amid weakening consumer demand for plant-based products. Annual revenue is projected to decline nearly 14% to $281.6 million this fiscal year.

According to LSEG data, Beyond Meat has one of the most heavily shorted stocks on the market, with short interest at 51.6% of its free float. Shares are down about 46% so far this year.

As of its last close, Beyond Meat had 76.65 million outstanding shares, but the new issuance will substantially increase that number and further dilute existing shareholders.

– Meatingplace.com

UPCOMING SALES

Tuesday, Nov. 4 – High Noon Cow Sale
Tuesday, Nov. 11 – Feeder Special
Tuesday, Nov. 18 – Regular Sale
Tuesday, Nov. 25 – Feeder Special
Tuesday, Dec. 2 – High Noon Cow Sale
Tuesday, Dec. 9 – Feeder Special
Saturday, Dec. 13 – Show-Me-Select Sale
Tuesday, Dec. 16 – Feeder Special
Tuesday, Dec. 23 – NO SALE
Tuesday, Dec. 30 – NO SALE

Cattle Receiving Hours
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Monday: 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday: All Day Sale Day

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We have some good sales coming up this fall

Almost all of F&T cattle customers are farmers first, so with harvest in full swing, October is historically the least active month at F&T. This all begins to change starting with our October 28 special. This will be followed November 3 with the high noon cow sale. We are accepting consignments for that November 3 sale now. Our first truly post harvest special will be November 11, with many hundreds of cattle already consigned for that sale.

If you have bred cows, calves or yearlings to sell, please give Al or one of us on the F&T team a call and we will help you successfully market your cattle.

– Justin Angell
F&T Field Representative

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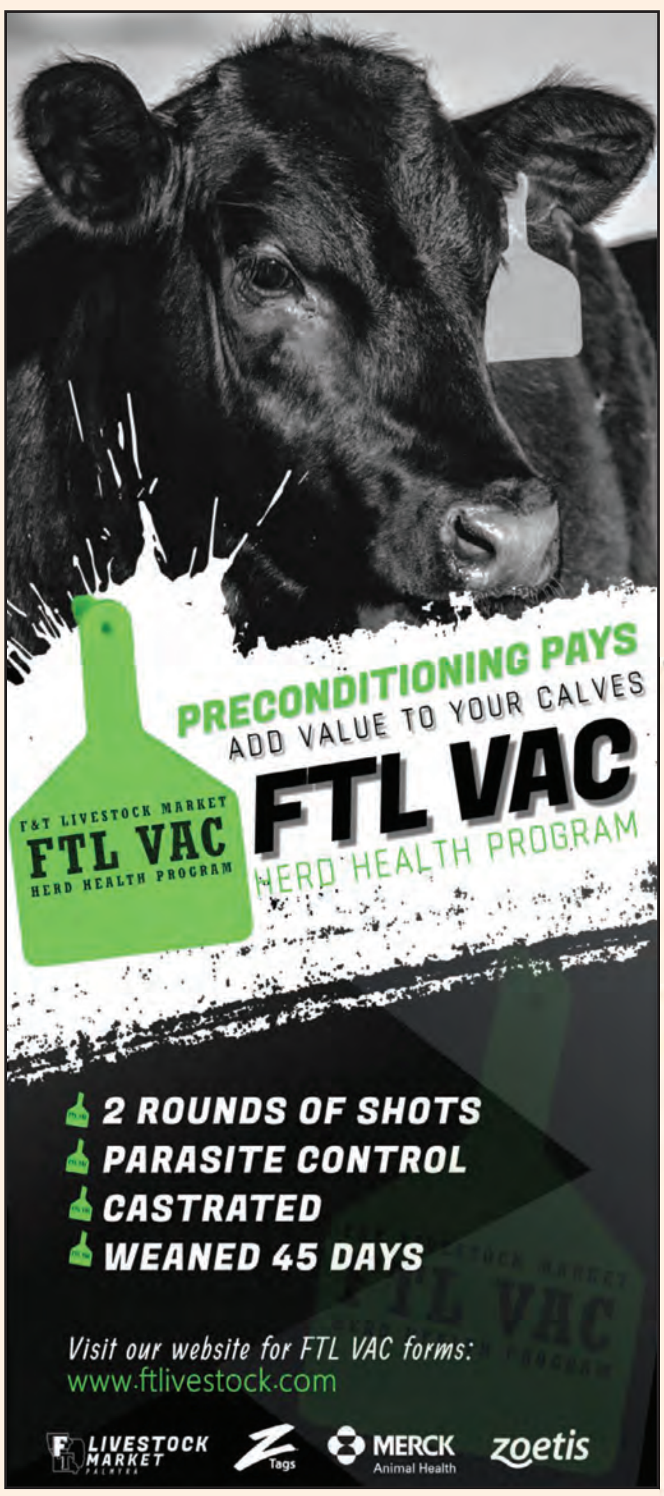

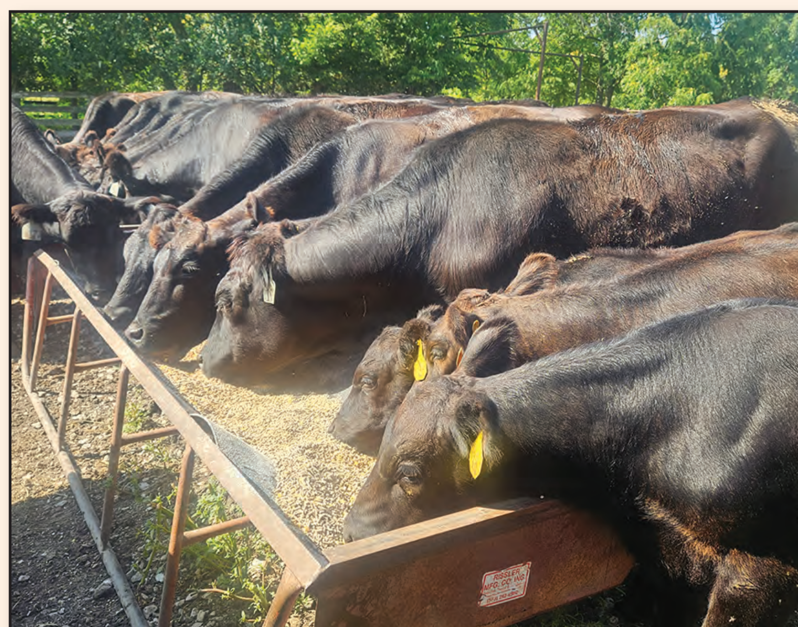

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From the Publisher... *Jon Angell*

First off, let me mention last month's issue. I was nervous about running such a long feature. It turned out that there was a lot of interest in the Wayne Cryts' Great Soybean War story. I have had as much feedback on that story as we have had in a long time. It turns out that several readers have mentioned that they remembered personally parts of the story from the time it was going on.

A common theme from the responses was that they appreciated seeing all the events, people, and facets of the story compiled into one historical narrative.

Up front for this issue is a story involving a "middle market" processor that I came across from a few months ago. These medium size outfits are becoming rare. Finding a safe space to do business that the big guys won't crush you is a trick.

The Linz program is largely vertically integrated, so for our reading cattle producers any direct benefit is limited. One benefit for all of us is a little extra knowledge of how the beef industry is working downstream (or is that upstream?).

However, for those readers who are building a business from gate to plate on a small scale, I thought the article would maybe stimulate some ideas.

Also, on the front I would point out that Beyond Meat, the plant-based "meat" manufacturer has made a good bit of negative business press. Hard times and less than impressive product reception is running its course.

The buzz around the introduction of the company's stock a little over five years ago was pretty discouraging. The mainstream media was all about promoting real meat substitutes. However, traditional livestock agriculture is winning many public relations battles. The demand from high protein diet trends is really helping our cause.

I am now well past discouragement and well into encouraged for our industry going forward.

That brings me to the latest political explosion – President Trump's comments on beef and high beef prices. He made comments suggesting that he wanted a trade deal with Argentina to inport more beef to help bring down the price of beef for the average voter (oops, I meant to say consumer). Then, that later developed into a social media post that seemed to have a sharp point directed towards cattlemen as reactions started to swell.

This story is still rolling as we are working to print this issue of our paper. It's been a long time since I have seen such outrage and controversy that is sparking reactions from every direction. My own social media accounts were all over the place. I loved how friends and acquaintances from different political leanings were gleeful in jabbing me that I was "getting what I voted for."

I believe everyone is overreacting. Everyone, remain calm. By the time you are reading this article, I'm going to guess that everything has either worked out successfully or well on its way. Keep things in context. Most of this is short-sighted thinking. Cooler heads and long game players will fix most of this rub.

A trade deal with Argentina on beef will have far more to do with supporting Javier Milei of Argentina financially and politically against domestic socialist and Chinese influences. Argentina and the beef they can provide are minor players and will likely remain such.

Rumor has it that President Trump was meeting with several "establishment beef" representatives who went into the meeting with "guns blazing." It was even said these beef representatives had even gone as far as giving the President some "ultimatums" in the meeting. This of course didn't go well. That was the spark that started the conflagration.

Some unsolicited advice is in order here that I received as a youth. Don't pick a fight you can't win. I don't know who thought it a good idea to pick a fight with DJT, but someone didn't think that one through.

For the most part, the cattle markets, media, and everyone else is overreacting. I plan on relaxing and watching it play out… odds are easily in favor of it working out fine in the end.

We have another great issue for you this month. Page 8 has some very good information on managing incoming calves.

Carolyn Allen has another interesting barn history on page 13.

One regular column I rarely highlight should not be missed, Milo Yield's column on page 21 is particularly interesting this month. His description and thoughts on "original wealth" is very engaging.

Thanksgiving comes later in the month and let us all recognize we all have a lot to be thankful of… I know I do.

Thank you, for reading and your continued support.

Letters, Letters.....

Last issue was outstanding

Dear Jon,

Thank you so much for publishing The Cattleman's Advocate. The last issue was outstanding. I'm 93 and I remember the Wayne Cryts news, but never knew the whole story. Also, Mr. Turner's letter is very interesting.

I have missed the articles written by your nieces but enjoyed the recent one. I've tried and enjoyed several of your wife's recipes too - Boston brown bread a favorite.

Sincerely,
Mary Lou Sonwalt
Rush Hill, MO

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FARM & FOOD FILE

U.S. Labor Department: Less pay means more farm employees – no, really

Americans have made it abundantly clear for decades they have no interest in farm work. That means the U.S. needs more "legal" foreign farmworkers.

By ALAN GUEBERT
For The Cattleman's Advocate

Earlier this year, the Congressional Research Service (CRS), the Senate and House's self-described "exclusive" research and analysis group, "estimated 680,000 farmworkers are illegal immigrants and make up 35% of the [U.S.] agricultural workforce."

That group is a "larger percentage than U.S. citizens (27%), foreign guest workers (16%) or non-citizens with authorization to work in the U.S. (22%)." It's also the ag employee group hardest hit by the White House's immigration enforcement.

In fact, according to the Washington Post, the U.S. Department of Labor recently noted that the crackdown and its "near total cessation of the inflow of illegal aliens' is threatening 'the stability of domestic food production and prices for U.S. consumers.'"

Moreover, it added, "'Unless the Department acts immediately to provide a source of stable and lawful labor, this threat will grow'" due to the recent "increased funding for immigration enforcement…"

What "source of stable and lawful labor" can the Labor Department "provide"?

Earlier this year, Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins cheerfully predicted that the Trump immigration policy would soon remake the U.S. farm workforce into "100 percent American."

Not a chance, Labor recently explained. "Americans are not willing to step into farm work," and "lack the skills to fill agricultural jobs that undocumented immigrants are abandoning."

As such, "The Department concludes that qualified and eligible U.S. workers will not make themselves available in sufficient numbers…"

Americans have made it abundantly clear for decades they have no interest in farm work. That means the U.S. needs more "legal" foreign farmworkers.

Exactly, explained Michael Marsh of the National Council of Agricultural Employers in the Oct. 16 Capital Press, but "It's unrealistic to think illegal immigrants could be replaced by simply letting in more foreign farmworkers."

The reason, he said, is simple: "The Labor Department doesn't have the capacity to process that many applicants for workers."

There's a simple reason for that, too: Twenty percent, or nearly 3,000, Labor employees were eliminated by DOGE or agreed to the Administration's early retirement program.

Other Administration moves are about to bite into farmworker numbers, too.

According to the Post, a "new [Labor] rule that took effect Oct. 2 effectively lowers pay for seasonal migrants working in agriculture under the H-2A program," the program whereby U.S. employers legally hire seasonal foreign workers when they can't secure enough American workers.

The pay cut "will save H-2A employers," noted one press report, "$2.46 billion per year… [across] roughly 22,000 farms that hire… approximately 371,000 or so immigrant workers, based on 2024 figures…"

That projected $2.46 billion in "savings" is, of course, a $2.46 billion pay cut to seasonal farmworkers legally in the U.S. to do the hard, dirty work Americans won't.

Somehow, though, the pay cut "will lead farmers to hire more H-2A workers." Indeed, "The Labor Department estimates farmers will hire approximately 119,000 additional H-2A workers as a result."

Labor doesn't explain how a pay cut will lead more people–not less–to travel to another country to work for lower wages in a seasonal job no one else will do.

Nor will it. The Farm Labor Survey, the USDA report that monitors ag employment, was recently discontinued because, according to the department, farm groups argued "it unfairly drove increases in wages."

So, according to the Administration, cutting farm wages, eliminating the ability to screen "legal" farmworkers, not monitoring farm employees, and continuing harsh immigrant enforcement will reduce today's threat to "the stability of domestic food production and prices for U.S. consumers."

In what world is any of this true?

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

Retail ground beef sales up $1.7 billion in August

Citing the latest Circana numbers, the CoBank Quarterly stated that dollar sales of ground beef at retail were up 13% year-over-year in August, a growth of $1.7 billion.

"While beef prices remain elevated on tight cattle supplies, persistent demand boosted overall sales, and volume kept pace," CoBank stated.

CoBank also reiterated market trends that are familiar to meat industry players: record-high cattle prices in the third quarter, strong returns for ranchers, but weak margins for packers that limit production growth to meet demand.

One aspect of the beef market that has risen to meet demand, however, is the dairy beef segment. "Beef's contribution to the [dairy] bottom line has moved from $1 to $4 per cwt. over the past four years," CoBank reported, adding that the dairy herd is now at its highest level in more than 30 years as farmers capitalize on the revenue for beef-on-dairy calves.

The U.S. broiler segment, meanwhile, "capitalized on [high beef prices] to provide consumers a value offering this summer," CoBank stated, with white meat values in August rising both at retail and foodservice. Quick-service restaurants, especially, unveiled new flavors and chicken strip products. CoBank expects broiler production to "remain elevated" through the end of this year, although "softening" values may "crimp margins" for processors.

Uncertainties at the government level

CoBank Quarterly also dwelled on the government shutdown and congressional gridlock, which "are contributing to widespread political and economic uncertainty."

In addition to the shutdown halting federal statistical programs, CoBank also argued that agricultural commodities are now a "liability" for U.S. farmers, given that tariffs "have ultimately shut out American commodities to many countries." CoBank anticipates between $10 billion and $15 billion of USDA aid to go to farmers, but the shutdown may delay its distribution.

– Meatingplace.com

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

December issue	***Ad deadline: November 17***
January issue	***Ad deadline: December 15***
February issue	***Ad deadline: January 19***
March issue	***Ad deadline: February 16***
April issue	***Ad deadline: March 16***
May issue	***Ad deadline: April 13***

Thoughts From Justin's Side of the Fence

By JUSTIN ANGELL

Is beef too high? This is the question I've been repeatedly asked this week. Like everything else, beef in the stores costs substantially more than it has for the last five years. A small supply and a big demand is the reason plain and simple. In addition to the inflation, consumers' perception of much higher beef prices today is compounded by the fact that for the previous five years we liquidated so many cows that beef was inordinately abundant, therefore cheaper than it would normally have been.

The pendulum swings back and now beef appears to be higher than it actually is.

So again, is beef too high? The principle of substitution would say that it is not. As long as consumers keep buying beef, basic capitalism says that it is not. It's not like beef is absolutely an essential life dependent protein, there are cheaper options.

One final way to answer the question is beef too high is through comparison. Ground beef at $7 per pound has a great deal more nutritional value than a seven-dollar latte. A pound of seven-dollar ground beef is still a lot cheaper than whatever a bag of potato chips costs per pound. Or let's compare this; I received a call from a reader recently who reminisced that in 1974 he sold seven fed steers and took that check to town and bought a new pickup.

We could obviously go on forever, but I think everyone gets the point. So after reading this, what is your answer to the question, "Is beef too high?"

President Trump, love him or hate him, is an oversized influence on everything. Recently, his comments concerning government efforts to reduce the price of beef, have roiled the futures markets and paused the price appreciation of yearlings heading to the feedyard, but the always optimistic backgrounders added $5 to $25 cwt to the live calf prices.

Normally calf prices fall off this time of year due to overwhelming volume and pending winter weather, but so far this fall calf markets have been on a steady increase bucking that lower seasonal trend. In today's market, it's not uncommon for lighter calves to bring over five dollars per pound with peewee flyweights at $6.00.

The big yearlings, although a little bit cheaper, will still garner prices near $4 per pound.

Bred middle age and younger cows are generally priced from $4000 up. Interestingly, these cows are actually cheaper historically in relation to calf prices. The old rule of thumb was the value of two 500 pound calves should pay for a good bred cow. What's today's calf market? It's not unusual for those calves to be worth $2250-$2500, so accordingly, a bred cow under $4500 is a bargain.

Going back to President Trump efforts, I agree with the premise that the middle class is under pressure and any actions the government can take to decrease expenses for these families is based with good intentions. When it comes to our huge beef industry, Donald Trump's team needs to tread carefully, because we all know no government program has ever functioned where there weren't unintended consequences.

Importing beef from all over the world is like feeding a man for a day… it's temporary.

If you want to feed that man for a lifetime, besides teaching him to fish, let's change government policies with executive orders, opening up CRP ground in the Midwest and BLM ground in the West for grazing. The only way to permanently address beef supplies is to increase the number of cows.

The only way we can increase the number of cows is if we've got someplace to put them.

If you happen to have President Trump's phone number, text him and let him know the unofficial ***Cattleman's Advocate*** policy position.

My bottom line is this. Importing beef from Argentina ,although the optics look bad and the messaging out of the White House has been very poor, I don't believe Argentine beef imports will significantly hurt American beef producers and here's why. Argentina, an American ally, will primarily be replacing lean beef that previously has been sourced from Brazil, a Chinese ally, and one of the founding members of the BRICS organization.

Because of the Trump tariffs this Brazilian source of lean beef has been curtailed by tariffs.

As a matter of fact, imported cheap lean beef is actually good for both consumers and producers of American beef. Currently our overfed, huge carcasses actually have a significant amount of very low value excess fat being trimmed off every carcass. Cheap, imported lean beef blended with the excess low value fat significantly increases the value of the excess fat by producing hamburger — an American family staple. So yes, ironically, the imported lean beef increases the value of overfed American beef carcasses by taking very low value fat and turning it into a high value burger product.

Cutting it a little short this month. With harvest running full-bore, there's not a lot of marketing action locally to comment on. This all changes soon. That's all for this month. Come see me at the auction.

It's The Pitts...

I'm a Sticker

By LEE PITTS
For The Cattleman's Advocate

Stickers are loyal. We buy the same brands of food we ate when we were kids, use the same old tools, and buy the same gas.

I belong to that fraternity of people known as "stickers" so named because we tend to stay put and do the same old thing in the same old way. Whereas the average American homeowner stays in their house 11.8 years my wife and I have lived in a house we had built 40 years ago.

Ranchers and farmers know what I'm talking about. Practically every rancher I know is the third, fourth or fifth generation to live on the same ranch. I've known two ranchers who were born and died in the same bed.

While my wife and I can't make that claim, I am a fifth generation Californian and the last of my family to live here. I know it's the trend and we should leave California like the smart people are doing but we're just not built that way. I'm a little angry at the Californians who are giving up and leaving so they can go mess up some other state instead of staying here and putting up a good fight against the communists and socialists who have ruined my once golden state. That was before we were overrun by illegal aliens, lefty professors, government bureaucrats, the homeless, whack-job Hollywood types and rich nerds who sit at computers all day drinking Five Hour Energy drinks and Mountain Dew who've made their pile of dough, bought their yacht and pulled up the ladder behind them.

I can't help it, I get attached to things, like my wife. Last year we celebrated 50 years of marriage and we commemorated the occasion by going to the same Mexican restaurant we always do. Our last truck we owned for 25 years and our current car, a Buick Lucerne, is the best car we've ever owned. It's 18 years old now, has never had a major mechanical problem, has 70,000 miles on its speedometer and when washed and waxed looks brand new. Since my stroke five years ago I can't drive so we tend to stay home and we're satisfied. That's a word you don't hear much any more... satisfied.

It used to be that the only person who liked change was a wet baby but now it seems our society can't change fast enough. Look around and you'll see dying downtowns replaced by big box stores and Amazon. In my younger years a family could have a nice house, a nice car and a nice life with only one wage earner but now it takes two people working multiple jobs just to stay afloat. They're only one injury or sickness away from bankruptcy. And this we call progress?

While the parents are working their sons are home playing war games on their computers and getting indoctrinated by dangerous people. When I went to school we never had to worry about some sicko bringing an AR-15 to school to slaughter his fellow classmates. My wife and I couldn't have kids and when I look around today I think maybe it was a blessing.

When my wife and I got married we were broke but hard work quickly corrected that. Stickers tend to be savers. We still bank at a real bank, I don't know how Bitcoin or an ATM works, we have one credit card, pay it off every month and we have zero debt. We started out with nothing and were able to buy our first home at 24 years of age and paid it off within five years with both of us working. Today we find kids still living at home at twenty-six, unemployed with a huge student loan to pay off. They are sad and mad and they rebel by assassinating good people who are just trying to help.

Stickers are loyal. We buy the same brands of food we ate when we were kids, use the same old tools, and buy the same gas. Some might look at my wife and I in our old, comfortable and familiar clothes and call us misers or dinosaurs but we're not opposed to change, but only if it's a change for the better. You can get hurt out there on the cutting edge.

And you know what? We love our happy home and the way we live. It may not be perfect but it's home and we have no intention of ever leaving except in a hearse or a body bag.

– www.LeePittsbooks.com

Tyson, Cargill agree to $87.5M settlement in beef price-fixing case

Tyson Foods and Cargill have agreed to pay a combined $87.5 million to settle a federal class-action lawsuit alleging they conspired to inflate U.S. beef prices by limiting supply.

According to court filings Monday in the U.S. District Court for Minnesota, Tyson will pay $55 million and Cargill $32.5 million under preliminary settlements that still require a judge's approval. The agreements mark the first consumer settlements in the beef price-fixing litigation, which began in 2019.

Plaintiffs' attorneys estimate the class includes about 36 million consumers across 26 states and the District of Columbia who indirectly purchased beef products — such as chuck, loin and ribs — between August 2014 and December 2019 from retailers including Walmart and Costco. The retailers are not defendants in the case.

Under the settlement terms, Tyson and Cargill agreed to cooperate with consumers pursuing claims against the remaining defendants, JBS USA and National Beef Packing, which have denied wrongdoing. An expert for the plaintiffs estimated total consumer damages at $1.9 billion.

The beef settlement follows Tyson's separate $85 million deal last week resolving similar allegations in the pork industry. Tyson, Cargill, and JBS have each denied participating in price-fixing schemes.

– Meatingplace.com

Amazon launches new private label brand, Amazon Grocery

Amazon launched a new private label brand, Amazon Grocery, featuring more than 1,000 food items rated 4 stars or above on its platform – including meat products.

Amazon Grocery integrates Amazon Fresh and Happy Belly brands into one grocery collection, with most items priced under $5 and sold through Amazon.com and Amazon Fresh stores.

The move comes as customers bought 15% more private-brand products in 2024 compared with 2023 across Amazon.com, Whole Foods Market, and Amazon Fresh.

The Amazon Grocery assortment includes, amongst a spectrum of products, ground beef, oven roasted turkey breast, and Caesar salad with chicken. New items to be launched under the brand in the coming months will include deli meats.

Amazon Grocery products are available now online at Amazon.com and Amazon Fresh online and in stores across the country.

– Meatingplace.com

Thriving Australian meat processors set new records

The good news keeps coming for Australia's meat processors.

According to the "State of the Industry Report" from Meat & Livestock Australia, the 2024 market was a record-setting one for the country, with Australian processors exporting not only the most sheep and goat meat in the world, but also the second-most beef (behind No. 1 Brazil).

Per the report, Australia's beef exports were up 24% to 1.34 million tons, while lamb exports (359,299 tons) and mutton (255,090 tons) were up 10% and 21.6%, respectively. Meanwhile, goat meat exports were up 51.9% to 51,489 tons.

Julie Collins, Australia's minister for agriculture, fisheries and forestry, credited the country's "strong partnership with industry," for the continued export growth, adding "we've continued to maintain and expand market access for red meat to several markets, including the United States, China, Indonesia, Peru, Malaysia and Vietnam. This has resulted in a record-breaking year for red meat exports."

Collins continued, "We will continue strengthening areas of existing advantage, in terms of trade and biosecurity, while also positioning the industry to capitalize on the increasing market expectations around sustainability and greenhouse gas emissions."

Indeed, recent reports have shown Australia's exports have grown further in 2025. Meat & Livestock Australia expects another record year for beef exports, especially as the U.S./China trade war opens new market opportunities for Australian meat. And U.S. demand for Australian meat, meanwhile, has been so strong it has lifted the entire Aussie economy this year.

– Meatingplace.com

Here are best practices for managing newly received feeder calves

Tips to make the transition from calf origin into the feedlot or backgrounding yard as seamless as possible

By JESSICA SPERBER
Nebraska Extension
Feedlot Specialist

As we near the fall run, and cattle are newly received into the feedlot, there are key considerations to keep in mind to achieve best cattle performance.

The goal of a receiving strategy is to make the transition from calf origin into the feedlot or backgrounding yard as seamless as possible. The first 14 days upon feedlot arrival are critical in calf development and set the performance trajectory of the calf for the remainder of the feeding period. The main goal at receiving is to help with any bovine respiratory disease (BRD) concerns and improve upon the health of the calf.

Goal upon feedlot arrival

Get cattle to consume feed and to drink water.

Consuming feed

Offer calves familiar feedstuffs in the first seven days to "bunk break" cattle.

Long-stem grass hay. High-quality forages are essential to get adequate energy into the animal while their intakes are depressed.

A natural protein source that is adequate in rumen undegradable protein (RUP) content to support calf protein requirements. The most likely source (and presumably cheapest) is distillers' grains, which are approximately 30% protein, with 65% of that protein as RUP. RUP is required most in rapidly gaining, young animals.

Target 16-18 inches (in.) of bunk space per head.

Low intakes on newly received calves are common and generally improve in the weeks following receiving.

In Week 1, cattle will generally consume 1.0% to 1.5% of body weight (BW) on a dry-matter (DM) basis. Stressed calves may consume less than 1.0% of BW and exhibit signs of anorexia.

Target intake to reach 1.5% of BW (DM basis) by Day 14 to reduce morbidity/mortality.

By Week 3, calves should be consuming 2% to 2.5% of BW on a DM basis.

A 21- to 28-day transition, or "step-up," period is often required to get cattle to consume greater than 1.5% BW and to transition calves from a high-forage to a high-grain diet. A low-energy-density diet (high-forage diet) improves rumen health early in the feeding period.

Water intake

Water intake drives feed dry-matter intake.

Target 1-2 in. of linear water space per head. This recommendation assumes no heat stress at time of receiving.

Calves may need to be oriented to where the water tank is located. For example, allow the water tank to run over for a short period of time to attract calves to the water source.

Newly received cattle will walk the perimeter of their pen, so a common thought is that cattle will find the water tank if placed around perimeter. Consider placing additional water tanks around the perimeter to encourage drinking if the pen waterer is in the center of the pen.

Ensure water tanks remain free from algal growth and feed residue.

Initial processing

Allow cattle 12 to 24 hours after delivery before processing. Some operations have adopted days of interval between delivery and processing if the cattle are considered low-risk.

Processing may include vaccination, parasite control, identification (feedyard tag), implantation, weighing (to determine initial BW) and initial sort.

Vaccination protocols are critical and should be discussed with your veterinarian. Veterinarians will consider what is appropriate to each operation and will determine whether and when to administer five-way viral, seven-way clostridial, and a dewormer.

Although sorting cattle improves uniformity in the pen, keeping cattle from similar origins together for the first few weeks on feed may reduce disruption of hierarchy in the pen and reduce health challenges from commingling.

Additional considerations

Low intakes coupled with feed and water deprivation during sale and transport compromise the immune system, resulting in reduced performance and greater risk of illness and death.

Offering an initial receiving ration that has higher energy density (more grain) and lower roughage inclusion may improve performance, but at the expense of increased morbidity rate.

Preconditioned calves have improved feedlot performance. Preconditioning refers to cattle that arrive at a feedyard having previously been processed/handled including one or more of the following procedures:

- weaned;
- adapted to eating from a feedbunk;
- possibly implanted; and
- vaccinated.

Research results show preconditioned calves have a lower percentage of treatments and improved growth performance compared to nonconditioned calves.

Control for coccidiosis upon arrival is advised, which can include feeding an ionophore (e.g., Rumensin® or Bovatec®), Deccox®, or in severe cases, treating with Corid®.

Assessing risk of the newly received calves

Animal origin and perceived risk of cattle affect the way in which feeder calves are received. It is important to feed and manage cattle according to their risk, whether they are classified as high-, moderate- or low-risk.

Geographical source of cattle, hours spent on a truck for transportation, knowledge of cattle history, and preconditioning should drive receiving strategy.

It is a misconception that all early-weaned calves that are light weight (350 to 400 lb.) are high-risk. Early weaning is likely lower stress on receiving than conventional weaning, but interestingly, many calves still appear challenged at approximately 7 months of age.

Having a standard operating procedure for checking calves, and any BRD (or other ailment) treatment plans clearly outlined for animal health crews is essential.

Editor's note: Jessica Sperber is a feedlot specialist for Nebraska Extension. This article is reprinted with permission from the BeefWatch newsletter. Subscribe at http://go.unl.edu/Beefwatch_subscribe.

Kentucky processor expands production/distribution center

Family-owned Kentucky processor Critchfield Meats recently completed a renovation and expansion of a processing and distribution center designed to better meet customer needs.

The new 53,000-square-foot center represents a milestone beyond the company's origins 56 years ago as a local butcher shop.

Critchfield supplies fresh beef, poultry, pork, dairy, eggs, frozen foods and other products to grocery stores, restaurants and universities across five states, including customers in its home state of Kentucky. The project already prompted the hiring of eight new employees and is expected to create more jobs as the company determines the most efficient ways to make and distribute its products.

The new plant is expected to enable Critchfield Meats to double its production capacity, though company President Mark Critchfield noted that it will not solve the recent price increases for beef products. Those prices are mostly influenced by other economic factors, including decreased herd levels and higher demand among a significantly broader consumer population, he told WLEX-TV.

Overall, beef prices are 11.6% higher this year than in 2024, and ground beef reached a record $6.31 per pound in August and is 14% higher since the start of 2025, according to USDA. The average price for uncooked steak reached an all-time high of $11.88 per pound in July and were 16.6% higher in August compared with 2024 levels, the agency noted.

– Meatingplace.com

Livestock News & Notes.............

Economist says USDA herd rebuilding plan faces market, land and time constraints

With U.S. beef prices still near record highs and cattle supplies at historic lows, economists say the federal government's forthcoming herd rebuilding plan will face long odds in meaningfully boosting production anytime soon.

The USDA is expected to announce details in the coming weeks on its plan to encourage cattle herd expansion after Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins recently pledged to "expand access to working lands" and "develop risk mitigation tools" rather than offer direct payments to ranchers.

Texas A&M University agricultural economist David Anderson told Meatingplace any such plan will likely have limited short-term impact, because cattle production operates on long biological and market timelines.

"If I held back a heifer calf that was born in the spring of 2025, she's not going to have her first calf until the spring of 2027," Anderson said. "That calf wouldn't reach a meatpacker until late 2029. That's just how long the cattle cycle is."

Anderson said while current high cattle prices should, in theory, encourage herd expansion, a mix of drought, high input costs and producer caution are slowing that response. Many ranchers remain wary after the last expansion cycle a decade ago, when record prices led to over-expansion and a subsequent price collapse.

"Producers remember buying expensive heifers to grow their herds and then seeing prices fall fast," Anderson said. "That makes people cautious about jumping in too quickly again."

He added that record-high calf and feeder prices also make it difficult for ranchers to hold back females for breeding. "Selling that heifer for astronomical prices today is often worth more than the future earnings she might bring," he said.

USDA measures

Anderson said the most likely USDA measures will center on easing land access and expanding risk management programs rather than offering financial incentives.

"There may be talk about decreasing the regulatory burden or expanding grazing access on public land," he said, though he questioned how much those steps would move the needle given drought conditions across much of the West.

Other possible approaches include expanded haying and grazing opportunities on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land and low-interest loan programs for new and beginning ranchers. But even those, he said, face practical hurdles — from land readiness to fencing and water access — and would offer limited immediate relief without new farm bill authorization.

USDA's plan may also highlight the department's ongoing efforts to expand livestock insurance and other risk-mitigation tools, which Anderson said can help producers manage price swings but "don't necessarily drive herd expansion."

Anderson cautioned that government efforts to speed expansion could backfire if they distort market signals. "If you pay people to expand, you create a much faster expansion and crater cattle prices much faster," he said. "That's just how markets work."

Instead, he expects USDA to take a lighter touch, working within the market's natural cycle. "Everyone wants lower beef prices as consumers, but lower prices up the line mean lower prices for producers too," he said. "We have a market that's largely working. High prices tell producers to produce more and consumers to buy less."

Challenges

Still, structural challenges remain. Urban development continues to erode working lands, and the ongoing shutdown of imports of Mexican feeder cattle due to screwworm restrictions may tighten domestic supplies even further.

Even without a major federal intervention, Anderson said the industry may already be nearing the early stages of herd rebuilding, particularly if weather improves and profitability stabilizes.

"There's a bunch of reasons for slow expansion," he said. "But we may actually be to the point where profits on the production side get the ball rolling."

The USDA's plan, he added, will likely focus on helping that process along rather than trying to accelerate it.

"Markets work," he said. "The goal should be to help them work a little smoother, not to push them faster than they're ready to go."

Mexico detects new case of screwworm in state bordering U.S.

Mexico's agriculture ministry said Monday, October 13 it discovered a new case of New World screwworm (NWS) in Nuevo León, a state bordering the United Sates.

The ministry said in a statement the calf was one of 85 cattle originating from the south-southeast of the country intercepted at a checkpoint in Montemorelos, Nuevo León. Technicians found no other cases among the other 84 animals.

The statement noted the larvae, which infest and can kill livestock if not treated, discovered in the new case were dead or dying due to mandatory treatments including antiparasitic ivermectin.

Groundbreaking scheduled for new JBS plant in Iowa

JBS USA is preparing to break ground this week for its new sausage manufacturing plant that eventually is expected to create 500 jobs in Perry, Iowa.

The Greeley, Colo.-based U.S. subsidiary of Brazil's JBS S.A. revealed the project this spring, expecting to invest $135 million to build the state-of-the-art processing facility. The plant is projected to make 130 million pounds of sausage annually and process about 500,000 hogs each year once it is fully operational sometime in 2026. About 250 people will work at the facility initially with more jobs added as operations continue to ramp up, according to JBS.

The groundbreaking ceremony Tuesday morning in Perry is open to the public and will include elected officials, local leaders and community members in addition to a brief program from JBS USA, a company spokesperson told Meatingplace in an email.

The processing giant is also in the process of converting a plant in Ankeny, Iowa, which was formerly owned by the supermarket chain Hy-Vee, into a plant to produce ready-to-eat sausage and bacon starting next year. JBS is spending $100 million on the conversion of the facility, which will become the processor's largest producer of fully cooked bacon and sausage. That plant is expected to be operational by mid-2026 and will bring 400 jobs to the area when the construction is completed, JBS said in a news release.

Many of the preceding items were taken from Meatingplace.com

Seeding cover crops aerially earlier can boost grazing potential for producers

Stored hay can be a livestock producer's best insurance, says University of Missouri Extension plant science specialist Caleb O'Neal, who is also a cattle producer. It provides flexibility for cattlemen to rest pastures in the event of drought and is often the feed of choice for winter herd maintenance. O'Neal's goals for his own herd include being able to actively graze high-quality forage most of the year, but he relies on hay as a backup option "when grazing pickings are slim."

High-quality hay can be made with favorable weather and good management. "But in many cases, the hay that we as producers make is cut too late in the season and has poor feed value," he says.

For a longer grazing season, many producers either manage their established forages differently or plant specific forage species that grow during times of the year that traditionally have limited forage availability. Many of these species are popular in cover crop seed mixtures. Cover crops can provide an excellent opportunity for livestock producers to extend their grazing season, O'Neal says.

"Planting cover crops between cash crops like corn and soybeans is a widely adopted practice across the state, and while these annual cover crop species are frequently planted for the benefit they provide to the soil, their planting also opens the door to outstanding opportunities for graziers who are willing to think outside the box," he says.

Many cover crops that are planted to maintain soil structure during the off-season can also provide unparalleled forage quality for livestock producers at a time of year that aligns very well with the forage base relied upon by most cattle producers in the state, he says.

Many producers are familiar with the excellent forage that cereals like wheat and rye can provide in early spring. But, historically, it's difficult to achieve a grazeable cover crop in the fall on the same ground you're using for cash crops because the cash crop grows late into the season. By the time it is harvested, there is little time to get a cover crop established and growing strong enough to tolerate fall grazing.

However, modern technology like utility drones can help producers "double dip" by establishing cover crops earlier in the season and achieve both fall and spring grazing from the same piece of ground, says O'Neal.

Aerially seeded cover crops can be seeded earlier in the season–late August through September–while the cash crop of corn or beans is still standing in late maturity. Cover crop seeds flown over the cash crop canopy will work down to the soil and slowly emerge in the protected space provided by the standing crop of corn or beans.

"The magic happens when the cash crop is harvested and the dense canopy is removed, allowing sunlight to be captured by the already established young cover crop below," says O'Neal. The cover crop that has been seeded and growing for several weeks wastes no time in being productive. With adequate fall moisture, it will likely be ready to graze in late October through November.

Grazing cover crops in the fall lets livestock producers rest cool-season pastures to accumulate winter stockpile fescue, which holds forage quality well and can then be grazed in the dead of winter.

Common cover crop mixes for aerial seeding include small-seeded brassicas like turnips and radishes, but there are also few plants that can put on as much growth for fall grazing as a spring oat, O'Neal says. Forage species like this when paired together make for exceptional fall and early-winter grazing.

For fall and spring grazing from the cover crop mix, be sure to select the correct forage species to aerially seed. Most species of oats will winter-kill, so throwing a winter-hardy cereal like rye or triticale and a legume like crimson clover in the mix can help ensure there is high-quality forage available to graze in March and April the following year.

"Aerially seeding cover crops can be an excellent way to extend the grazing season and make the most of every acre. With land prices climbing, maximizing the productivity of the ground we already have just makes sense, says O'Neal. "If we plan ahead, we can establish high-quality forage that not only supports the nutritional needs of our herds but also reduces our reliance on costly stored feed. When implemented correctly, grazing cover crops in the spring and fall is a win for the livestock, the land and our bottom line," he says. "With the right forage species and adequate moisture, aerial seeding can help producers reduce feed costs, improve herd health and get more value from every acre."

LINZ from page 1

dent of Seattle Fish Company and Lombardi Brothers Meats. "You do not have another company with this scalable brand that can deliver from what we start with in the live side of business to the partners that feature our steaks on the menu. That's the beauty of Meats by Linz — nobody else can make that same claim today."

Stine adds, "You get guys in this business where there comes a point when the grind just wears them out, so you see guys cash out and sell. If you really look at independents that are of size and scale, Meats by Linz is one of the last guys."

And expanded operational capabilities, a booming grind business, growing distribution, and youth ensures a lasting success.

Developing an identity

When Fred Linz joined the family business full time in 1985 (after working part time through his high school years), the company had already been processing meat on Chicago's South Side for two decades, although a significant market shift was underway. Previously a processor for retail clients, Linz was unable to supply the large retail chains that were opening in the region, specifically because those operations — with their thousands of SKUs and products — had no interest in using meat cases as their loss leader to attract customers.

That was when Fred's father decided to change course and focus instead on foodservice processing, although the company did not immediately aspire to premium products. Those initial steps came in the mid-90s, when Linz — after being rejected by one company for a licensing proposal — decided to develop its own branded program of steakhouse preferred Angus.

"It helped us get some identity in the marketplace," Fred says.

Things developed further in 2011, when the company created its own USDA-certified Linz Heritage Angus program, one with its own unique criteria and cattle procured from a facility in Hastings, Neb. In 2012, Linz procured its own cattle with a seedstock herd, and after beginning with 10 first-calf heifers, the herd grew to the 1,600 head of registered Angus cattle that now roam the Blue Branch ranch in Oklahoma; additionally, there are now more than 800 cows that are part of a genetic development program, and 1,000 new calves (half bulls, half heifers) born each year.

Amidst those developments, Fred's 32-year-old son Zac — now the company's COO and fourth generation of Linz leadership — was gradually learning his way through the business.

"My father makes everybody earn their spot — nothing's given," Zac explains. "He told me, 'If you're going to come work for me, you better be the first one to show up, and you'll be the last one to leave for your shift.' So that's how I learned."

At the age of 15, Zac's first job was a midnight shift before production began at 3 a.m. "I was handed an ice pick and a broom, and was told to remove the ice off the freezer walls and trucks," he says. From there, Zac graduated to making boxes, and then all matters of packaging, shipping, receiving, and warehousing; once he mastered those, he began learning meat cutting and production, along with loading and deliveries.

"Every holiday, every holiday, every break, every summer, I was here at the plant learning the insights of every department, every job," Zac says.

It didn't come easily. Zac recalls chiding from the company's most experienced cutters as he learned the intricacies of grades, sizing and marbling. But he

BIGGER IS BETTER: A new grinding operation has quickly doubled Meats by Linz's ground beef business. (Photography by Lyndon French)

stresses that those experiences were critical to earning the workers' respect.

"They have that much more respect for me than just coming over them because I carry the last name," he explains. "They thought I was making $16-$17 an hour, when it was actually $7.25. My first raise was when minimum wage went up!"

And critically, Zac's tenacity eventually earned the respect of his father.

"We've developed a really good partnership over the years, and we work well together; but it took me about six to seven years to gain his respect in the business, and when my opinion actually started to matter."

That respect — and the soundness of Zac's opinions — proved essential in his two-year management of the new Hammond facility's construction.

'Every footstep matters'

Because Zac devoted so many years to learning every one of Meats by Linz's departments, he knew "exactly what they need to do on a day-to-day basis" when it came to a new facility, along with "what they need from an efficiency standpoint."

"One of the best things I learned in college is every footstep matters," Zac explains. "Learning and knowing all the jobs — from what it takes to bring in materials, to receive it, to put it up in warehouse, to bring it to production for grinding, dry aging, or going into the main cutting facility — [I looked] at all aspects to make sure the employee has the tools they need."

Or put a different way: "At the old facility, I knew how things shouldn't work; so how do we make it work?"

For starters, there was the dramatic increase in square footage: Production space more than doubled to 80,000 square feet, as did the entire building from 56,000 to 120,000. Within that larger area, Zac's team implemented an open floor plan that greatly enhanced not only worker visibility and flow, but also productivity.

"Our cutters are paid highly, and I want to keep them at their cut table as much as possible, and keep those pounds-produced-per-man-hour up," Zac says. "That's how I built that room out — taking a look at how we get our raw materials and how that gets to the table."

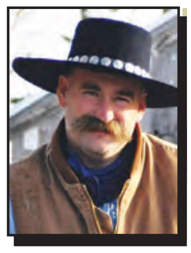
Packaging was another careful consideration. A constant struggle in the old Linz facility, Zac explains, was packaging's location in a room separate from cutting, a gap that required numerous feed trays and carts. By contrast, the new facility utilizes conveyer belts that transport the portioned product straight to the pack, and do not require the workers to leave their station; furthermore, additional packaging machines eliminated the complications of certain mold systems not cooperating with certain cuts (and the packaging waste that often resulted from those change overs).

Such considerations, Stine explains, were critical to maintaining Meats by Linz's quality standards.

See LINZ, page 18

Ask why the cheese is free

Loos Tales



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

I suppose it is not the first time that soybeans have been piled on the ground, but on Saturday Oct 4, 2025, I saw the largest outdoor pile of soybeans I have ever witnessed anywhere right here in Nebraska. Piling corn is a thing every year, but this soybean pile really got my attention. Is it because of the predicted huge corn/soybean yield this year or is it because we have not pursued marketing our crop overseas in lieu of playing tariff games? I contend that it is likely all of those and more.

For the past 30 days, Ag Secretary Brooke Rollins of the USDA has been spouting off about how bad the farm economy is. While that is the most truthful statement she has ever made, maybe she should go on to discuss how the USDA is one of leading causes of the farm disaster that is upon us.

I have written before about how we have a USDA that has created incentives for farm products used as fuel instead of food. That blame can't be fairly assessed to this administration, but the current USDA has done nothing about the problem except provide lip service. And they are about to write big checks to farmers to assist with the tough times. Show me one legitimate economist who says the path to profitability is through farm payments.

My real problem with Brooke Rollins is that the rhetoric she sends from DC doesn't match what is happening on the ground. When this Trump team came into office, it was projected that the US agricultural trade deficit for 2025 would be at $52 billion. How in the world can the United States import $1 more in ag products than we export, let alone $52 billion. Despite what we were hoping, Trump has only made it worse.

In Feb. 2025, Rollins announced the import of millions of eggs from Turkey and South Korea to offset the stupid flock-destroying policy that Trump continues today for poultry that may have seen H5N1 fly overhead. In the past 60 days, the USDA has killed 435,000 turkeys in South Dakota and Minnesota. I have news for you all: migratory birds are not responsible for these outbreaks, yet USDA is sticking to this narrative.

In April 2025, Rollins announced a Lawfare Portal that any farmer can use for assistance if they are being harassed by a government agency. If you let them know, they will fix it. As of Oct. 2025, I have not had one farmer or rancher that has submitted a complaint into the portal tell me they have even gotten a response much less resolution. Hank Vogler, my friend in Nevada, currently has FIVE government agencies trying to shut down his sheep operation and it has been crickets from the Rollins team.

On Aug. 19 of this year, Rollins hosted a special press conference in Tennessee for this press announcement:

Yesterday U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins alongside Tennessee Governor Bill Lee, Senator Marsha Blackburn, Senator Bill Hagerty, Representative John Rose, and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Deputy Secretary Stephen Vaden, announced USDA will no longer fund taxpayer dollars for solar panels on productive farmland or allow solar panels manufactured by foreign adversaries to be used in USDA projects. Subsidized solar farms have made it more difficult for farmers to access farmland by making it more expensive and less available.

"We are no longer allowing businesses to use your taxpayer dollars to fund solar projects on prime American farmland, and we will no longer allow solar panels manufactured by foreign adversaries to be used in our USDA-funded projects."

Since that announcement, I have had no less than five phone calls a week about NEW proposed solar or wind developments that will consume farmland including one in Perkins County, NE where I plan to attend the meeting of the County Commission this evening.

Let's not forget that the 2025 USDA Scientific Dietary Committee (that was not assembled under Trump) has as an advisory member in Dr. Chris Gardner from Stanford University who is taking money from the fake protein crowd and is a vegan activist. In Sept. 2025, Rollins announced the addition of Dr. Ben Carson to the team. While I happen to think he is good guy, his religious dietary choices do not reflect those of us in rural America. He recently indicated that he is back to eating a small amount of meat, but his wife continues to be a strict vegetarian.

I don't even have enough column inches to discuss the yo-yo decisions made by USDA surrounding the New World Screw Worm and the $750 million sterile fly facility taxpayers are funding in Texas, when a simple ivermectin strategy would solve the problem.

USDA and the Trump administration have a problem and it is that their rhetoric doesn't match their action. At some point, more people are going to realize we are being led to slaughter ourselves. Just like Hank Vogler points out regularly, "The mouse doesn't ask why the cheese is free until it is too late." What government cheese are you enjoying now and what do you think that trap will look like?

Editor's note: Trent Loos is a sixth generation United States farmer, host of the daily radio show, Loos Tales, and founder of Faces of Agriculture, a non-profit organization putting the human element back into the production of food.

Get more information at www.LoosTales.com, or email Trent at trentloos@gmail.com.

USCA responds to President Trump's remarks regarding beef prices and proposed imports from Argentina

WASHINGTON, D.C. — United States Cattlemen's Association (USCA) President Justin Tupper issued the following statement in response to recent public remarks by President Trump suggesting action to lower beef prices through expanded imports from Argentina:

"USCA commented on Friday, October 17 regarding potential steps by the Administration to address beef prices, and we will reiterate our position today: government intervention is not needed in an industry that is already correcting in response to years of market pressure."Today's comments alone triggered an immediate reaction in the markets—cattle futures dropped significantly. It's important to underscore: the current price of beef on grocery store shelves reflects the true, inflation-adjusted cost of raising cattle in America today. "Already this year, the U.S. has imported more than 1.26 million metric tons of beef, primarily from Australia, Canada, Brazil, Mexico, and New Zealand. Increasing imports under current rules ultimately benefits foreign suppliers and multinational packers, while putting U.S. ranchers on the losing end and depriving American consumers of honest transparency at the meat counter.

"USCA supports affordable food prices for American families. But we do oppose policies or loopholes that manipulate the market to address a solution that will be solved through natural market behavior. This approach weakens our industry's foundation and undermines rural America.

"We have appreciated President Trump's 'America First' priorities, which have consistently highlighted the importance of supporting U.S. producers and reinforcing national food security. This moment presents an excellent opportunity to show genuine American-first leadership by prioritizing strong domestic production, and fair, transparent markets for both ranchers and consumers."

BARNS OF PIKE COUNTY

Uncle Jimmie Wright's graceful century-old barn is still in use

By CAROLYN ALLEN
Special to The Advocate


STILL IN USE: This eye-pleasing barn in far western Pike County has a long history dating back to the early 1900s and still serves as a home base during deer season by the current owners. (Photos by Carolyn Allen)

This graceful old barn sits in the far western part of Pike County near the Audrain County line. It was built on what was once the James H. Wright farm.

James's father, John F. Wright, was a Pike County pioneer who came to Missouri from Virginia by way of Kentucky in 1830 at the age of 22 with virtually nothing. According to the 1883 History of Pike County, John Wright worked splitting rails until he earned $50. He used that money to purchase 40 acres of government land where he built a log house and raised a family. He continued working hard and buying land until his death in 1878. At that time, he owned around 1,700 acres and was reportedly the richest man in Indian Township. The article noted that he was a man of energy and perseverance while an old newspaper reported that "Grandfather Wright" had split 100 rails on his 70th birthday!" He must've passed along that energy to his son James H. or "Uncle Jimmie" - as he was often called in newspapers of the time.

J. H. Wright was a farmer and stock raiser and John F. Wright's oldest son. The 1919 Vandalia Leader reported that Jimmie, like his father before him, had played a "most important part in building up this section of MO both in farming and fine stock." He raised horses, cattle, mules and hogs on his large farm, but he specialized in mules. Old newspapers are full of Wright mules winning awards and ribbons.

The love of good mules must've been a family trait because newspapers reported that Jimmie took "Old Sal" – his father's 29-year-old mule – to the family reunion in 1905. They noted that Old Sal was in good shape – fat and sassy – and the family even included him in the pictures!

The 1919 Vandalia Leader said, "the Wright mule had helped in no inconsiderable measure in giving Missouri her prestige for these famous hybrids." For that reason, I like to believe that this barn was originally built as a mule barn. A possible clue to the barn's beginnings is in the 1910 Bowling Green Times which mentioned that Uncle Jimmie Wright was improving his farm by putting up new buildings for stock and grain. The 1914 Vandalia Mail noted that E. G. Collins was building a barn on Uncle Jimmie Wright's farm. With as much land as he owned, however, I'm sure he had several barns, and it is impossible to know exactly which barns the articles describe. Additionally, this barn appears to have extensions on the sides that were probably built later.

Uncle Jimmie must've been quite a character! As well as bringing Old Sal to the reunion, the 1917 Vandalia Leader reported that he came to Vandalia early one Monday morning in his Hupmobile so he could catch the 8:45 train to Louisiana. He bought 3 fine driving horses there and told the newspaper editor on his return that he would drive them to town so the editor could see a real horse! The paper noted, however, that Mr. Wright wouldn't tell what he had paid for the 3 thoroughbreds.

Uncle Jimmie moved to Montgomery City for a time in 1917, and Vandalia newspapers chided him for not moving to their city. After all, he was president of the Vandalia Banking Association for years. A tidbit in the 1920 Vandalia Mail, however, reported that the family was moving back to the farm. It went on to say, "You can't make a city dude out of Uncle Jimmie."

Newspapers also noted that J. H. was very active and the type of man who helped out whenever he could. Unfortunately, however, that might've contributed to his death in 1924 when – at almost 86 years old - he climbed up into the hay loft of one of his barns to assist the crew in fixing a hay knife that wasn't working properly. He fell and hit his head and never regained consciousness. His obituary in the Vandalia Leader described him as the community's most honored citizen. It ended by saying, "No man could aspire to a higher or more beautiful ideal than to have it said of him that he lived as Uncle Jimmie did."

By at least 1930 the farm was owned by Jimmie's daughter Bird and husband Edgar C. McCarroll. Although they lived in Vandalia, they were active on the farm raising Hereford cattle, horses, sheep, hogs and champion Rhode Island Reds. According to old newspapers the farm was known as Mac's Red Top Farm at that time. E. C. McCarroll organized and sponsored the Corn and Poultry Show in Vandalia and was named superintendent of the poultry exhibit for the Missouri Fair Commission. I doubt, however, that he kept his Rhode Island Reds in this barn. With all the other livestock, the barn would have been busy enough!

The McCarrolls sold the farm in 1942 to George Reading, and the Vandalia Leader described the farm as well improved and maintained. According to neighbors, there used to be a second barn near this one, but the wind took it down a few years ago.

The current owners use the barn mainly for machinery storage as well as a home base during deer season. With deer season rapidly approaching, the old barn will be busy once again. Somehow, I think that would make Uncle Jimmie very happy!

The sky's the limit for drones on the farm

The technology has moved from novelty to necessity on many farms and ranches

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Enthusiasm for drone use in agriculture is growing quickly, says Caleb O'Neal, University of Missouri Extension field specialist in plant science.

O'Neal teaches classes about drones across the state. He's seen interest from farmers, commercial sprayers, cow-calf operators, real estate professionals and some who are just curious about new technology. According to the American Spray Drone Coalition, acres sprayed in the United States increased from 4 million to 10.3 million from 2023 to 2024.

Drones are much like the ATVs in the 1980s

O'Neal likens increased drone usage to what happened decades ago with all-terrain and utility task vehicles. "Back in the 1980s, it would have been rare to see a UTV being used on a farm," he says. "Visiting farms today, I'm hard-pressed to find an operation larger than 20 acres that doesn't have some type of UTV that they utilize on a regular basis."

This likely will be the case of drones on the farm as more farmers and ranchers see what an incredible tool they are, he says. "Drones have progressed from being a neat toy we might get our kids for Christmas to becoming a necessity for many agricultural operations."

Drones save time and money

Drones with high-resolution cameras can reduce the need for ground-based field inspections, O'Neal says. They can help row crop farmers identify nutrient deficiencies, locate areas of poor soil health, scout for insects and disease and make crop stand assessments.

Livestock producers can monitor fences and availability of water and can make sure animals are where they should be without even opening a gate. Drone technology lets cattlemen quickly check estrus indication patches for optimized breeding timing, monitor cows during calving season, look for hidden newborn calves and look out for potential predators.

"Time is one of a farmer's most valuable and limited resources, so the more of it we can save while still completing the task, the better," O'Neal says.

Drones in precision ag

But precision agriculture is where drones truly shine, he says. "Using data-driven insights, drones can enable farmers to apply site-specific fertilizers, pesticides and other inputs to maximize return on investment," he says.

"A pasture with a rash of blackberry weeds in isolated areas has great potential for a prescription herbicide application where only the problematic areas receive treatment via a spray drone, as opposed to a broadcast application where the entirety of the field is treated whether it needs it or not. A targeted spray application like this minimizes waste, reduces negative environmental impact and often can leave more dollars in the wallet of the landowner due to reduced chemical costs."

Drones provide accessibility

Drones also provide access to hard-to-reach areas of the farm, turning unproductive acreage into a moneymaker.

"In my neck of the woods in southwestern Missouri, the topography can be quite unforgiving, with some areas too harsh to allow access by ground spray rig or even ATV," O'Neal says. "With an aerial piece of equipment like a utility drone, landowners can now get herbicide applications on these problematic areas and put them into useful forage production. With current land values reaching for the heavens, it can be difficult to justify buying more acreage as we try to expand our farming operations.

NEWEST FARM TOOL: Use of drones in agriculture is increasing as row crop and livestock producers find new ways to improve efficiency and productivity. (Photo courtesy of Caleb O'Neal)

It may be a more prudent investment to ensure every acre of land we already own is highly productive. If we can reclaim a quarter acre here and a half acre there on property we already own, it can add up quickly and make sense from an investment perspective."

Training required

While drones are a wonderful asset in modern farming, there are inherent risks, as well as state and federal licensing requirements, says O'Neal.

Training programs hosted by MU Extension equip farmers and applicators with many tools for determining flight parameters different spray applications. Through research, MU Extension specialists have also found that there are times when conventional equipment such as a ground spray rig is a better option for an effective application.

"Drones are another tool available to modern farmers, and as most farmers will agree, you can never have too many tools," says O'Neal. "As drone technology continues to advance, its potential uses in agriculture grow as well. On many farms, drones are saving producers time, reducing input costs and bringing new levels of productivity to their land. Drones are no longer futuristic machines; they are transforming agriculture today, and they are tools that can enable farmers to optimize every acre and ensure their operational success."

Pioneering small processor in OKC closes after 115 years

A family-owned meat processor that served the Oklahoma City area for more than a century recently closed its doors due to what the owners described on the company website as "ongoing health issues."

Bill Kamp's Meat Market became the first local meat supplier to open an outlet nestled inside of a grocery store decades ago, according to company officials. The now-shuttered independent store offered customers bologna, beef brisket, sausages, custom-cut steaks, pork ribs, chops, shoulders, poultry and other meats and sides from its store in an Oklahoma City shopping complex.

Founded in 1910, the operation drew thousands of loyal customers before it shut down Oct. 3.

– Meatingplace.com

Has the beef market failed?

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

Market failure is an economic term. It occurs when what should be a freely functioning market fails to reach an efficient and equitable allocation of resources. Now consider the domestic beef market. The only ingredient in beef is cattle, so you would expect there to be a close, synchronous connection between the price of cattle and the price of beef.

Indeed, that's the relationship we experienced between the cattle and beef markets for over two decades leading up to the end of 2014 – when beef prices declined in the mid-90s, cattle prices followed them downward, and when beef prices increased in the 2000s, cattle prices followed them upward. It was just as we would expect – a close synchronous relationship between cattle prices and beef prices for over two decades.

But just a decade ago, in 2014, America found itself in a similar circumstance as we find ourselves in today – cattle supplies were then at a historical low, following the drought that lasted from 2010 to early 2013, and beef demand was incredibly strong. As a result of the supply-demand imbalance, beef prices were heading skyward, and so too were cattle prices.

The synchronous relationship between cattle prices and beef prices continued and government and private analysts alike predicted that cattle ranchers would continue receiving high cattle prices for the next three years. This prediction, of course, was due to the long biological cycle of cattle as it would take about three years to hold back breeding cattle, breed them, and then raise a slaughter-ready animal.

The other similarity was that imports were at near historical highs in 2014 and 2015.

But instead of domestic cattle prices remaining strong, beginning in 2015 cattle prices collapsed, and they collapsed further and faster than anytime in history and they continued their collapse until the fall of 2016. Now during the cattle price collapse, beef prices expectedly fell too, but they didn't fall as far as cattle prices. Instead, when beef prices turned around in early 2017 and resumed their upward climb, the spread between the value of cattle and the price of beef was the widest in history.

And that marked the disconnect between cattle prices and beef prices. For the next four years there was no longer a synchronous relationship between cattle prices and beef prices as beef prices continued reaching skyward and cattle prices trended downward.

This complete disconnect between beef prices and its only ingredient – cattle, is clear and convincing evidence of acute market failure in America's beef market.

There was no competitive reason for beef prices to climb as they did while leaving cattle prices in the dust. The market was exploiting ranchers at the beginning of the beef supply chain and beef consumers at its end.

Now one can say that the next drought that came along, that being the latest one that began around 2021, saved the U.S. cattle industry from complete ruin. What happened was that the drought-induced herd liquidation brought domestic cattle supplies to such an extremely low level that even the record imports of 2023 and 2024 weren't sufficient to satisfy America's incredibly strong demand for beef.

And so, the forces that were holding cattle prices down for those several years while beef prices were skyrocketing lost their grip, and cattle prices began marching upward to meet beef prices.

But cattle prices couldn't match the escalation in beef prices. In fact, from 2015 through 2024, All-Fresh beef prices increased nearly $2 per pound (a 32% increase) while cattle prices increased less than $0.40 per pound (only a 25% increase).

And this means that today's beef prices are not being determined by competitive market forces. It means beef consumers are paying inflated prices while they and cattle ranchers are still being exploited by the broken market. Sadly, neither consumers nor ranchers can fix this without the government's help.

The reason market failure pervades the beef market is that the government has not enforced our antitrust laws and our fair competition laws like the Packers and Stockyards Act; it has not protected the market from excessive direct product substitutes sourced from abroad that displace domestic production and disincentivize domestic cattle herd expansion; and it relegates retail beef to nothing but a substitutable commodity as there is no law requiring U.S.-produced beef to be differentiated from foreign beef with a country of origin label.

Now we can fix these things if we all work to impress upon our elected officials the critical need to restore competition to our beef market so both ranchers and consumers can benefit from a properly functioning beef market that protects national security by reducing our dependence on foreign countries for such an important staple as beef.

Cattleman's group sets $38.1M budget plan for FY2026

A beef cow eats grain-based rations at a ranch in Texas, U.S. Daniel Acker/Bloomberg (Getty Images)

Beef promotion, consumer information, foreign marketing, producer communication and research will be among the top fiscal priorities for the Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) in fiscal 2026.

The organization that also manages the Beef Checkoff program is committing a total of $38.1 million to support the industry through a plan that also includes funding for 14 grant proposals, the group announced. The 2026 fiscal plan also includes: $25.1 million to the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, $7.9 million to the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) and $1.8 million to the Cattlemen's Beef Board.

"We continue to be impressed by the quality and creativity of the proposals our contractors bring forward each year, which makes funding decisions especially tough," said Ryan Moorhouse, chair of the Cattlemen's Beef Board and the Beef Promotion Operating Committee. "While we receive many outstanding proposals, our limited resources mean we can't fund everything we'd like," he added.

The CBB's fiscal 2026 budget for the fiscal year that started Oct. 1 remains subject to USDA approval.

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Trade relations between U.S., China take serious turns with tariff announcements

The ongoing trade issues between the United States and China are heating up as recent tariff announcements move closer to implementation.

President Trump says he may end some trade relationships with China in light of the trading partner's refusal to buy soybeans from U.S. farmers. "We are considering terminating business with China having to do with cooking oil and other elements of trade as retribution," he wrote in a Truth Social post. "As an example, we can easily produce cooking oil ourselves, we don't need to purchase it from China," the post added.

China is the world's largest importer of soybeans, but recently cut its purchase of U.S. soybeans after the imposition of 100% tariffs on Chinese-made goods on Nov. 1 or sooner.

Tariffs on foreign wood products and furniture (ranging from 10% to 50%) went into effect this week, and the Trump administration also began imposing fees on Chinese-owned ships docked at American ports. China said it may impose similar retaliatory fees on American vessels at Chinese ports in response, and has threatened restricting its U.S.-bound exports of rare earths (which are critical components to numerous areas of manufacturing, including defense and semiconductors).

Government officials in Beijing announced that China does not want a tariff war, but is not afraid of one; they and are urging the White House to resolve disagreements on trade via negotiations instead of threats. The trade dispute between the two superpowers have been strained since this spring after China did not renew operational permits of U.S. beef processing facilities, which have severely hampered shipments of U.S. beef products into China.

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The slow cattle cycle timeline of rebuilding

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

Increasingly, cattle producers, consumers and policymakers are asking how high cattle prices will go; when will they reach a peak; and what happens after the peak. Questions about the cyclical peak in cattle prices and the trajectory of prices past the peak depend on factors that are still unknown at this time.

We do not yet have any definitive indication of a cyclical bottom in cattle inventories — let alone the path of herd rebuilding to follow. The timeline of prices to the top has yet to be established and therefore speculation about the path of prices after the peak is widely variable at this point.

Three-quarters of 2025 have passed with no solid indication of heifer retention. The only direct data was the mid-year Cattle report, which showed the lowest beef replacement heifer inventory in the history of that particular data set. The 2025 U.S. calf crop is projected to be the lowest since 1941, leading to the July estimate of feeder cattle supplies outside of feedlots that is the lowest ever for that data set.

Industry response to rising cattle prices has been uncharacteristically slow to this point. The sharp decrease in beef cow slaughter — down roughly 40% since 2022 — is enough to stabilize the cow herd at the current low level. The beef cow inventory could be fractionally larger in 2026.

However, the small beef replacement heifer inventory — down about 27% from the cyclical peak in 2017 — means that prospects for herd growth in 2026 are very limited. Unless heifer retention accelerates late in 2025, herd growth in 2027 will also be limited.

The beef cattle industry appears to be on a slow path of rebuilding. Prices are expected to peak some months after heifer retention begins and, at this point, are projected to move higher into 2026, depending on the pace of heifer retention, and perhaps beyond. A sharp peak followed by a pronounced drop seems unlikely at this point. Prices are likely to remain elevated for much of the remainder of the decade with a gentle peak somewhere along the way. However, the front end of the process has not yet started so the path is subject to change and must be monitored for new developments.

Despite some anecdotal indications of heifer retention, there is no data yet to confirm that producers are collectively retaining enough heifers to initiate herd rebuilding. Beef cow slaughter has dropped enough in 2025, in addition to decreases in the previous two years, to likely show a slight increase in beef cow inventories going into 2026. While that would make 2025 the cyclical low in inventory, the lack of heifer retention thus far means that no significant herd growth is possible in 2026.

Unless data from the final quarter shows significant heifer retention, the prospects for herd growth in 2027 will likewise be limited. Without heifer retention, the clock does not start on the timeline to anticipate the peak in prices and the duration of elevated prices. It looks increasingly like that peak is being pushed into the last part of the decade.

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

Weight loss drugs help fuel U.S. protein craze: JBS

The rise of GLP-1 weight loss drugs could be helping drive a protein craze in America that has the nation needing to import more meat to meet demand.

So said Wesley Batista, co-controlling shareholder of global meatpacking giant JBS S.A., at the Rothchild & Co. Consumer Conference in London, according to a report by the Financial Times (FT).

"No one knows exactly what is the impact of these new drugs, Ozempic or Mounjaro … but something is happening because protein overall became [a trend]," Batista is quoted as saying. "In the past … the doctor said you should not eat too [many] eggs, you should not eat too much protein. Now it's the other way around."

Separately, a study by Cargill found that 61% of consumers reported increasing their overall protein intake in 2024, well above 48% in 2019.

Even with record-high beef prices in the US, consumers continue to buy, and so the country will need to import "more and more" product to meet the demand, Batista said at the conference, the FT reported.

Those record-high prices are largely the result of a US cattle herd liquidation that reduced cattle numbers to their lowest levels since the 1970s. The agency revised its projection for 2025 beef imports to 5.364 billion pounds, up 1.7% from the August estimate but almost 16% lower on the year.

– Meatingplace.com

Transforming rural healthcare

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

Rural hospitals are a lifeline for our communities. In many cases, not traveling an extra distance after an accident can make the difference between life and death. Yet, their survival, and rural medicine in general, has been in jeopardy.

I've been fighting for many years to ensure they survive, but that shouldn't be the only goal. We should be working towards a better path forward that helps more rural Missourians access patient-centered healthcare.

When we passed the working families tax cut earlier this year, it didn't just help put more money in folks' pockets; it also created a fund to transform rural healthcare. The Rural Healthcare Transformation (RHT) program allocates $50 billion over the next five years to help rural hospitals, clinics, and healthcare providers transform the delivery of healthcare to our rural communities.

These reforms are designed to be long-term, not a short-term band-aid. We can throw money at the problem all day long just to keep the doors open, but if we aren't addressing the root causes of the problems we face in rural healthcare, we'll never stem the tide of declining rural healthcare.

This new program is designed to support rural health innovations that promote preventative health. It enables our rural providers to partner, sharing technology, care, and emergency services. Finding and supporting a quality workforce is difficult anywhere, but bringing trained doctors and nurses into a small town in the middle of a corn field isn't always the easiest sell. We've made great progress in partnership with our rural medical schools, but there's an opportunity to do even more now with this funding. Finally, utilizing and accessing technology can help doctors deliver care more efficiently for patients. Our rural facilities have been working hard to do just that, but it's not quick, cheap, or easy.

I joined several members of Missouri's Congressional Delegation this week in sending a letter to Governor Kehoe, the Department of Health and Senior Services, and the Department of Social Services, encouraging them to submit the strongest possible application to the federal government so they can take full advantage of the RHT program. Funding from this program must reach our truly rural hospitals, which actually need the help, instead of consultants and others who shouldn't qualify for the money.

We have some of the best folks working in rural healthcare in North Missouri. They are committed to ensuring our communities have the best care possible. Yet, if we don't enable them to adjust for the 21st century, utilizing innovation, efficiency, and technology to improve, they can never hope to succeed. With the new Rural Healthcare Transformation program, I'm confident that we can improve care for folks across rural America.

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

Prop 12 has ag supporters, believe it or not

By STEVE DITTMER
Executive Vice President
Agribusiness Freedom Foundation

We've been in and around the livestock business for many decades. There's a lot the industry does differently than it did in the '60s, for example.

There's always been differences in philosophies and processes, partially because producers have different theories, operate in different climates, have different available resources and prefer different ways of arriving at -- roughly -- the same result.

But doing things differently is not the same as mandating what your neighbors do by law. Differentiation of one's product or service is not the same as denigration of someone else's methods. We have always supported producers having different methods but opposed them denigrating the beef produced by the most common production methods of the day.

The safety of the product and the humane methods used to produce it are assumed to be scrupulously applied.

Then there is the Commerce Clause of the Constitution.

The Commerce Clause, found in Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution, grants Congress the power to regulate commerce with foreign nations, among the states and with Indian tribes.

This clause was designed to create a unified national economy and prevent states from enacting protectionist measures that could hinder interstate commerce. It also removed barriers to foreign trade, as before, varying state conditions, treaties with foreign countries could not be struck due to differing requirements and standards of different states.

A Supreme Court case, Wickard v. Filburn (1942) held that even personal cultivation of crops intended for personal use could be regulated if it had a substantial effect on interstate commerce.

So the free market capitalists among livestock producers thought they were on solid ground in opposing HSUS' attempts to fight that group's efforts to regulate animal production management across the whole country by regulating it in one state and then imposing those standards on every state that wanted to sell products in their regulated state.

In the precursor atmosphere of later "woke" thinking, voters in California -- a population used being restricted and mandated -- thought the "feelings" of animals were more important than the science of modern animal production. Never mind that animals thrived in modern production methods, the only objective measure of animal health and sense of well-being. That was a "survey" method, as it were, since we couldn't "interview" dumb animals.

Being told by non-farm voters in one liberal state how they had to raise their animals elicited immediate objections from most livestock producers.

But they were not California voters, swayed by the sentiment propagated by HSUS, nor judges at appellate levels or even the Supreme Court. Some Justices there were open to Congress prohibiting one state from specifying production methods rendering products ineligible for sale in one state.

What is "natural" animal husbandry has evolved substantially since man first "tamed" animals, considered them their own and began attempts to improve the comfort, care, availability and production from domesticated animals. The "selection" of male breeding animals was accomplished in nature by the strongest studs or bulls or roosters driving off other suitors. People eventually started stockpiling feed to keep animals through the winter, kept them close by to collect the eggs or milk or meat they wanted.

They didn't use artificial insemination, cloning, advanced nutrition, vaccines and antibiotics, weights and measures for selection or a myriad of other things we do to make animals healthier, more productive, their products safe and nutritious, taste and look better or fresher or tender through aging or preservation methods.

So many producers feel one's definition of "natural" can vary and still be valid. But what we used to call "busy bodies" can't be satisfied with what is basically pleasing to eat, safe and wholesome and produced by animals -- which by definition are animals, not humans -- because they feel compelled to specify and legislate methods to satisfy their standards, not necessarily all peoples' standards.

That is an over simplified tracing of how we ended up where we are. Except that those livestock producers who insist upon claiming differentiation by denigration have sensed an opening. Those who insist only their methods are right and whose production methods dovetail well with California voters' perception of what animal husbandry is, are actually coming out to support Prop 12 restrictions.

We've mentioned House Agriculture Committee Chairman Glenn Thompson's support of a provision in the next Farm Bill to prohibit one state from forcing compliance with another state's production regulations in order to sell products in that state.

Last time, we listed the Republican politicians opposing such a provision in the bill.

We naively talked about "fixing" the Prop 12 problem. Not only are there politicians opposing changes to the major problems caused by Prop 12, there are also livestock producers who think it's just fine for one state to tell all the other states how they must manage their livestock to have access to their market.

On Wednesday, October 8 a group of producers, meat marketers are scheduled to meet at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. to show support for Prop 12 and Massachusett's similar Question 3. They also intend to lobby members of Congress about their position.

The only firms mentioned in the story in Meat+Poultry were Perdue Farms, True Story and Butcher Box. Perdue has pork brands Niman Ranch and Coleman All Natural Meat. The Coleman site doesn't mention beef, but if it's the same outfit, we sparred with Mel Coleman years ago about promoting products by denigrating mainstream products ("Meat Businesses, Hog Farms Go To Washington For Support of Prop 12," 10/07/25).

Not that there aren't several beef outfits using the same marketing methods on television right now.

According to a relatively anonymous release, there are "thousands of family farmers" viewing Prop 12 "as a lifeline."

"If Congress were to wipe out humane farming standards, it would devastate family farmers who have invested in crate-free systems, while stripping states' ability to pass their own agricultural laws."

First off, there have been humane animal care standards for many, many years. No one is planning to "wipe out humane farming standards."

Secondly, no one is prohibiting states from passing their own agricultural laws. What is different about Prop 12 is coercing farmers in other states to adhere to one state's laws -- no matter how restrictive -- in order to enter into interstate commerce into that state. That is something that we don't think the courts have grasped. Neither the major cost and management protocols nor the submission of producers' processes to non-producers' perception of animal mental or physical health has really filtered through the decisions.

Of course, they are casting this issue as small farmers vs. bigger producers. A Missouri farmer said that rolling back Prop 12 would be a "move against family farmers." The fact that the overwhelming number of farms and ranches in the U.S. are family farms is something they figure members of Congress and the public doesn't know.

LINZ from page 11

"If operationally we cannot execute, it doesn't matter how great we can sell," he says. "We don't have the easiest road in front of us. Distributing to as many customers as we do from Chicago, domestically or even internationally, we have a tremendous amount of product that goes outside the state of Illinois, and we have to be able to execute on that — to deliver on that promise to customers."

And for Zac, all those considerations included the workforce's transition to the new facility — one that was so seamless that clients did not even know the change had happened. On multiple occasions, Zac's team bused the workers to the new facility and provided extensive instruction on all matters of production, including: the locations of cuttings lines, knives, boxes, packaging machines, and the sanitation room; how all matters of shipping would operate, right down to the location of clipboards; how locker assignments and hair/beard nets would be administered; and finally, how workers would adjust to to the new dry aging room, which doubled in square footage (to 4,800) and raised the shelving from three levels to five.

The dry aging room, Zac stresses, was the "biggest struggle on maintaining quality," starting with the fact that a new facility — with its new equipment and shelving — lacked the smells and seasoning that had developed in the old facility's space over the many years. From there, Zac explains, the questions mounted.

"How many fans do I need? What type of lighting? Where is the lighting going to be placed? Is our dehumidification system going to work accordingly? Is the humification system going to work? What's the humidity going to run at?"

For a period of four months, Zac and his team meticulously adjusted the number and location of fans, the placement of lighting, and humidity calibrations. A COVID-era revelation provided the critical final step: Because the old facility only had a dehumidifier (and not a complementing humidifier), levels would run low and product dry out too fast; thus, adding a dedicated humidifier to the new space maintains humidity levels with a 1% margin.

"That room is completely controlled," Zac says.

'We have youth'

One product the new facility has allowed Meats by Linz to embrace is grinds, something Fred says they weren't able to do in the past due to insufficient space.

Indeed, the implementation of a grinding operation initially worried Zac, what with all the complexities involved in mixing times, temperature, grind heads and the coarseness of the desired grind. However, a unique investment from one of Linz's customers (combined with the processor's own considerable investment) allowed the processor to install cutting-edge equipment and up its grind capacity from 1,200 pounds per hour to more than 13,000; in short order, the processor doubled its total grind business, and Zac aims to double it again by 2026.

"We're ready to take on the world with that," Fred says about the grinding operation.

Additionally, Meats by Linz has committed to expanding its distribution networks throughout the Southeast, and has invested in an Atlanta-based distribution facility to handle not only that metro area, but also the Carolinas and Florida. Alongside partners that will handle last-mile distribution and deliveries, the company manages Meats by Linz trucks that provide direct delivery in select markets.

The company's decision making, Stine says, boils down to a simple concept: "Where are we adding customers, and where do we add the resources to service those customers?"

Those resources encompass vehicles and drivers, dedicated routes, warehouse personnel and equipment, the installation or leasing of refrigeration space — anything that satisfies those needs while also instilling confidence for future growth. As Stine puts it, "the support to allow sales to have the comfort to go out there and add customers, and not worry about missteps we're going to make operationally."

MEAT MASTERS: The cutters at Meats by Linz undergo a "complete training program" that teaches them all the facets of butchering. (Photography by Lyndon French)

Labor, Zac details, is another way the leadership supports future growth. Describing meat cutting as an "old-school art," Zac reiterates a current mantra in the industry: With the pronounced shortage of trained butchers, one must innovate to attract talent. Thus, Meats by Linz developed a new training program in 2021 with several notable features: Trainees begin at $16 an hour, and as long as they work hard and progress through the program, they receive wage increases every three months; after acquiring initial knife experience with byproducts, the cutters progress to more exacting and expensive cuts, from portioning, to trimming whole strip loins, to rib and boneless meats; the most skilled cutters, then, earn a space with Linz's prized filet cuts. And throughout the training, the job is one of dynamism and variety, rather than the monotony that, for a time, tarnished certain sectors of meat plant work.

"It's a complete training program, even if you've never worked a knife in your life," Zac explains. "There's no meat cutters out there, so you've got to make meat cutters."

Such restless innovation and experimentation is part of the Linz identity, and Fred expects that to continue as his two younger sons gradually join the business.

"It's a family business, and we want to keep it that way," Fred says. "The business continues to grow at a rapid pace, and we're very thankful for our customers and partners that believe in us, and show loyalty in our programs. Without them, we wouldn't be where we are today."

And that multi-generational dynamic, Stine concludes, is perhaps Meats by Linz's greatest advantage.

"We have one thing in this business that not a lot of companies have — we have youth," he says. "You don't have 32-year-old Zac Linzes who are seeking to run steak-cutting or packing facilities. Most of them who are doing it are 65- or 70-year-old guys who have been doing it forever. And so, when everybody talks about Fred and they say, 'You're doing so good! Why don't you sell it?' My thing is, 'Fred, we have a long runway — we've got youth that is going to propel us into the next generation of Linz. And what a beautiful thing to have these great, young guys who are taking on the responsibilities."

Whole Foods sees beef tallow atop the 2026 consumer meat product trends

Consumers want chili crisp and other flavors to elevate their meals, according to Whole Foods. Photo by Getty.

Whole Foods Market's "Top Food Trend Predictions for 2026" includes a number of trends concerning meat and protein production.

Skyrocketing demand for beef tallow was Whole Foods' No. 1 trend.

"Tallow is being rediscovered by consumers … for customers supporting 'nose to tail' use of the animal, these brands provide a usage for fat that is normally discarded."

One of the brands that Whole Foods spotlighted was South Chicago Packing, whose parent company — Miniat Holdings — Meatingplace profiled in 2023, including details about the tallow product's popularity.

Additionally, Whole Foods identified new consumer preferences for flavors, preparation and nutritional profiles that have multiple bearings on development of value-added and ready-to-eat meat products.

Fiber, for instance, is "gaining traction as consumers seek gut health, holistic digestive wellness and natural ways to feel fuller longer," and consumers are also increasingly seeking vinegar flavors in foods. "We're witnessing vinegar's modern renaissance, with consumers seeking out premium, small-batch options, bold new flavors," the report said.

The frozen food aisle is becoming a spot for "high-quality ingredients with globally inspired flavors" that "taste just like they're coming out of a fancy restaurant kitchen," while "instant" meals are also innovating with dynamic ingredients like bone broths and chili crisps.

– Meatingplace.com

Market Reports

Sponsored by Prairie Queen Transportation, LLC

EASTERN MISSOURI COMMISSION COMPANY BOWLING GREEN, MO

Eastern Missouri Commission Company, Bowling Green
Market Report for Friday, October 10, 2025
Receipts: 905 Week ago: 1,069 Year ago: 422

Compared to the last special two weeks ago, steer calves under 550 lbs on a light offering sold with a firm to higher undertone, with 550-600 lbs steers trading 5.00-10.00 higher with 6 weight steers fully steady. Heifer calves were lightly tested and sold mostly steady on a light offering with 95 hd 1002 heifers selling with a higher undertone. Demand was good on a moderate offering with calves selling mostly in small groups and packages but overall quality was good. The stick out sale of the day was the 95 heifers weighing 1002 lbs dropped the gavel at 306.50. Slaughter steers and heifers and slaughter cows all sold steady to firm.

Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1 – Pkg 310 lbs 585.00, pkg 358 lbs 535.00; pkg 408 lbs 510.00, pkg Fancy 459 lbs 533.00, pkg 491 lbs 475.00; 500-550 lbs few 442.50-468.00, 550-600 lbs 440.00-455.00, unweaned 415.00-418.00; 600-700 lbs 388.00-416.00; part load 716 lbs 389.25; pkg 812 lbs 362.50.

Medium and Large 1-2 – 350-400 lbs 375-400 lbs 495.00-500.00; 400-475 lbs 440.00-467.50; 500-600 lbs 395.00-411.00; pkg 608 lbs 375.00, few unweaned 650-700 lbs 335.00-336.00; pkg 708 lbs 365.00; pkg 905 lbs 323.00.

Feeder Heifers: Medium and Large 1 – 450-500 lbs 399.00-435.00; 550-600 lbs few 377.00-383.00; pkg unweaned 600 lbs 333.00, lot 666 lbs 366.00; 95 hd 1002 lbs 306.50.

Medium and Large 1-2 – 350-400 lbs 420.00-431.00; 400-450 lbs few 420.00, 450-500 lbs 367.50-392.50; pkg 525 lbs 385.00, 550-600 lbs 330.00-338.00; 600-650 lbs 333.00-337.50, pkg unweaned 692 lbs 309.00; 700-725 lbs 328.00-335.00; pkg 844 lbs 298.00.

Medium and Large 2 – Pkg 300 lbs 407.00; pkg 532 lbs 350.00.

Feeder Bulls: Medium and Large 1 – Pkg 353 lbs 485.00; 400-40 lbs 460.00-470.00; pkg 500 lbs 402.00, 530-585 lbs unweaned 366.00-393.00; pkg 828 lbs 287.50.

Slaughter Cows: Premium White (65-70% lean) Average dressing, 174.50.

Breakers (70-80% lean) Average dressing, 157.00-166.50; high dressing, 168.00-177.50; and low dressing, 152.00-153.00.

Boners (80-85% lean) Average dressing, 158.00-167.00; high dressing, 168.00-176.50; and low dressing, 143.00-154.00. Ind 179.00.

Lean (85-90% lean) Average dressing, 142.00-155.00; high dressing, 157.00-163.50; and low dressing, 127.00-139.00. Shelly 100.00-112.50.

Slaughter Bulls: Yield Grade 1-2 – 1300-2400 lbs, 191.00; 207.00; 164.00-182.00.

Slaughter Steers and Heifers: (45 hd) Choice 2-3 – 1165-1415 lbs, 226.00-229.00; Select and Choice 1-3 – 1240-1345 lbs 224.00-225.50.

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

EASTERN MISSOURI COMMISSION COMPANY BOWLING GREEN, MO

New Missouri State Fair queen is an active advocate for agriculture

Bailey Schneider of Warrenton is a 4-H alum and a junior in the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources.

COLUMBIA, Mo. – You might say that 2025 Missouri State Fair Queen Bailey Schneider has royal blood: Three of her cousins were also state fair queens.

Yet it still came as a shock when she heard that the crown would go to her. "Going into the competition, I wasn't expecting anything. I just wanted to have fun, meet new girls, and enjoy the state fair."

Bailey's grounded approach carried her through the multiday competition, which required contestants to win at their county fair before advancing to interviews, a speech or talent presentation and an evening gown competition.

Her winning speech drew on the fair's theme, "Step on In," encouraging others to step into opportunities for advocacy.

"I've always said that your platform has a purpose," Bailey said. "No matter where you are in life, you can use that point to speak about what you're passionate about. You can be a fair queen, a community service volunteer, or just a student—you can use your platform for good."

Rooted in agriculture

She grew up on her family's generational farm near Warrenton, Mo., where her grandfather raised crossbred Angus cattle and her father raised row crops and show pigs.

"I was always around agriculture," she said. As a 4-H'er, she exhibited beef and pigs and participated in a range of other projects, from cake decorating to shooting sports. She also participated in 4-H leadership experiences such as the Public Speaking Institute and Teen Conference. "Those were leadership opportunities that really helped me develop the skills to help me become the woman I am today."

At Mizzou, Bailey found a natural fit in agricultural education with an emphasis on communications and leadership.

"I'm scared of math and science," she said. "I wanted a degree where I could focus on communication and storytelling. I loved that I could tailor my classes—taking everything from political science to food science to floral design—and be a jack of all trades."

This past summer, Bailey interned as a policy intern with the Missouri Soybean Association, where no two days were alike. "I wrote policy briefs to help farmers understand new legislation, attended campaign events, even traveled to Washington, D.C.," she said. "Every day was different, and I loved it. It really deepened my interest in agricultural policy and advocacy."

A legacy of queens — and mentors

Though she entered the competition, she didn't expect to follow in the footsteps of her cousins who had worn the crown—Ashley Bauer (2012), Hannah Keene (2013) and Chloe Mumford (2019) all held the title before her.

"I saw my cousins as so cool, so beautiful, and thought, 'I could never do that,'" she said. "Now, I get to live in the moment and hopefully inspire other girls to do the same."

Her parents' influence is never far from her mind.

"My mom and dad are my best friends, but they believe in tough love," Bailey said. "They're not afraid to tell me where I need to work on some things, and I love their honesty. It's created a great bond between us."

At CAFNR, Bailey found more mentors who shaped her path. "These professors really want you to succeed, and they'll actively help you get there," she said. "When you do succeed, they make sure you feel celebrated. That's what I love most about CAFNR—it's a family."

"I appreciate Bailey's professionalism and her ability to think critically about complex issues," says Rebecca Mott, CAFNR assistant professor in the Department of Applied Social Sciences. "She sets high expectations for herself and works hard to meet them – and she often exceeds them. I look forward to seeing how and where Bailey will contribute to agriculture when she completes her degree here at MU."

As queen, Bailey has traveled, toured businesses in her county, participated in interviews, and was even recognized by the Missouri House of Representatives.

"There are no set duties. It's just who wants me to show up," she said. "It's been an absolute blast and something I'll never forget."

One event close to her heart is the No Limits Pig Show, where children with special needs have the chance to show pigs during the state fair.

"It puts your life into perspective and reminds you not to take anything for granted," Bailey said. "It's heartwarming and emotional, and it brings me so much joy to see those kids have opportunities they might not otherwise have."

Away from the crown, Bailey describes herself as a "girly-tomboy" with a love for football, NASCAR, hunting, fishing and hiking.

"People see the pageant queen in a sparkly dress and crown and probably don't picture me out in the mud on the farm—but that's just as much who I am," she said.

She is already looking ahead to the 2026 Missouri State Fair, which will celebrate America's 250th birthday, and she's eager to crown her successor. She also hopes more people will support youth programs like 4-H and FFA.

"I'm passionate about helping people understand agriculture—how we feed, clothe, and fuel the world," she said. "There are a lot of misconceptions out there, and I want to help people find good information and feel confident about how they feed their families."

For Bailey, the crown is more than a symbol of achievement. It's a reminder to keep stepping into opportunities to advocate for agriculture—and to inspire the next generation to do the same.

Walmart touts new beef plant in its U.S. manufacturing push

Walmart U.S. CEO John Furner is citing the company's new beef 3.processing facility in Olathe, Kan., as an example of the retail giant's growing investments in domestic manufacturing.

"It's a big investment, and having quality products that are sourced in a more sustainable way that can deliver to customers is really important," Furner said last week at the Invest in America Forum, an event sponsored by CNBC.

The 300,000-square-foot plant, with more than 600 Walmart jobs in Olathe, processes fresh Angus beef into case-ready cuts that are shipped to distribution centers serving stores throughout the Midwest. Walmart celebrated the opening of the facility in July.

The plant sources meat from Walmart's partner, Nebraska-based Sustainable Beef LLC, which the retailer invested in in 2022. The largest retail of groceries in the United States, Walmart says the vertically integrated approach will ensure quality and consistency while boosting regional supply chain resilience.

Investments in U.S.-made products and U.S. suppliers are a strategic priority for Walmart, Furner said. Overall, the retailer sources more than three-fifths of its products with U.S. production or assembly.

"It's a big investment," Furner said, "and having quality products that are sourced in a more sustainable way that can deliver to customers is really important."

– Meatingplace.com

Monthly Sheep & Goat Market Reports

Sponsored by The Bank of Missouri

Montgomery County Livestock Auction, Montgomery City Market Report for Sheep & Goat Auction
Thursday, October 9, 2025
Receipts: 926 Last month: 1,200 Year ago: 890

Montgomery County Livestock held their Sheep and Goat sale Thursday evening Oct 09, with a moderate to large offering of lambs. Slaughter lambs weighing mostly 50-70 lbs sold steady to firm with last month. Feeder Lambs traded steady to firm on a lighter offering and weighing mostly 35-50 lbs. Kid goats traded with a lower undertone. Demand was moderate to good on a large offering. Montgomery County holds their Sheep and Goat sale the 2nd Thursday of each month. All prices are per CWT unless otherwise noted.

SHEEP (prices per hundredweight)
Slaughter Lambs: Choice-few Prime 1-3 – Mostly hair lambs 50-70 lbs 255.00-270.00, couple groups 65-66 lbs 275.00-285.00, 70-90 lbs 230.00-245.00, lot 105 lbs 255.00. Choice 1-2 – 50-70 lbs 220.00-245.00.
Feeder Lambs: Small and Medium 1-2 – 30-35 lbs few 290.00-315.00, 40-50 lbs 255.00-290.00.
Slaughter Ewes: Utility and Good 1-2 100-125 lbs few 130.00-140.00; Utility 1-2 90-125 lbs 105.00-115.00, thin 100.00.
Replacement Ewes: Consignment 3yrs to 5 yrs 95-112 lbs exposed 175.00-195.00 per head, 5 yrs to solid mouth 90-125 lbs 130.00-165.00 per head.

GOATS: (prices per hundred weight)
Kid Goats: Selection 1 – 50-65 lbs 310.00-340.00; Sel. 1-2 – 55-72 lbs 290.00-295.00; Sel. 2 – 50-98 lbs 265.00-275.00.
Feeder Kids: Selection 1 – 30-45 lbs 305.00-350.00; Selection 1-2 – Few 40-45 lbs 290.00; Selection 2 – 30-38 lbs 245.00-255.00.
Nannies: Selection 1-2 – Scarce.
Nannies/Does: Selection 1-2 – Replacement young 105-115 lbs exposed 170.00-177.50 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

California seeks to end DOJ lawsuit challenging Proposition 12

California is asking a federal judge to dismiss the U.S. Department of Justice's lawsuit targeting portions of Proposition 12, arguing the federal government's case misapplies egg inspection law and threatens to undermine states' authority to set animal welfare standards.

In a motion for summary judgment filed Monday, California said the Egg Products Inspection Act (EPIA) does not preempt its voter-approved Prop 12 or related laws that require pork, veal and eggs sold in the state to meet minimum animal-housing standards. The state argued the EPIA governs only the processing, grading and labeling of egg products, not the confinement conditions of hens or the production of shell eggs.

The lawsuit, which was filed in July, came just days after the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear a separate challenge to Prop 12, leaving in place rulings that upheld its constitutionality under the Commerce Clause. The DOJ's case marked a shift in strategy by focusing on preemption under federal egg law rather than interstate commerce arguments.

California's motion accuses the DOJ of reversing its long-held position. In 2018, the U.S. Solicitor General advised the Supreme Court that California's egg laws "are not preempted by the EPIA" because federal grading standards "do not address confinement conditions for egg-laying hens." Since then, California said, egg and pork producers nationwide have invested heavily in cage-free and crate-free systems to comply with Prop 12 and similar state laws.

The Department of Justice, backed by the Trump administration, argued that California's rules "effectively prevent farmers across the country from using common production methods" and contribute to higher food prices.

– Meatingplace.com

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

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☐ Wanted to Buy ☐ Acreage ☐ Livestock ☐ ____________

Email your ad to: **cattlemans@virtualimages.us;** fax to: **660.327.1109;**
Or clip & mail to: **Cattleman's Advocate, P.O. Box 26, Paris, MO 65275**

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Services

Winter cattle feeding, we provide the hay and the labor. Available through March 30 or 2 weeks before calving. 60 head capacity. Located at Cairo, MO. 660-651-2941

Contract Cattle Services. AI, order buying, marketing cattle and equipment, gather & sort. JD Vernon, Russellville, MO. 918-207-6382. jdvernon333@gmail.com

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.

For Sale

About 100 sheets of locally salvaged vintage 5-V tin ranging in size from 7' up to 11'. Some with patina, all good shape. 24" wide. $1.25 a running foot. Located in Paris, MO. Chuck Herron, 573-721-1111. Will help load and/or deliver within local area.

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or Chuck Herron at 660-327-1009 • Email: cattlemans@virtualimages.us

Laugh Tracks in the Dust...............................

Let's discuss original wealth

By MILO YIELD
Special to The Advocate

Last week I learned that I'm a pseudonymuncle. What's that, you say? Well, a pseudonymuncle is defined as "an insignificant person writing under a pseudonym -- which means a "fake" name. That fits me to a T because I'm about as insignificant as a person can be and I've been writing this column under the "Milo Yield" pseudonym for more than 51 years.

So, in this column I'm taking the liberty as a pseudonymuncle to go off the deep end and discuss "Original Wealth" -- as compared to just plain ol' "Monetary" wealth or "Add-On" wealth -- and why agriculture plays an indispensable role in the discussion. So, if I've got the leeway to lead this impromptu discussion, insignificantly, then you've got the freedom to believe all, none, or just parts of it.

Let's begin with my definition of "original wealth." It's something with intrinsic value that is created, but hasn't yet entered the realm of economics because it hasn't been priced. By its very definition, "original wealth" has an origin. That origin is firmly rooted in Our Mother Earth.

Humans had no role in the creation of the most basic free forms of original wealth. They didn't create the air we breathe. They didn't create the water we drink. They didn't create the living, fertile soil. They didn't create the untold trillions of microbes in the soil, in digestive systems, or the plankton in oceans that work for free for themselves and for mankind every moment in time.

Yet, mankind does bring forth "original wealth" from the Good Earth, predominantly through farming, ranching, mining, drilling, logging and fishing. Everything in the economy -- from sewing needles to space needles, from toothpicks to nuclear reactors, from a rasher of bacon to every single computer chip, from the myriad of plastics, to fuels, to a can of green beans -- is original wealth thats originates from Our Good Earth. Everything that happens to original wealth, after it is priced, as it moves through the economy becomes some level of "add-on" or "monetary" wealth.

Benjamin Franklin, one of our nation's most astute founding fathers understood the role of agriculture in original wealth creation. Here's his famous quote on the subject: :

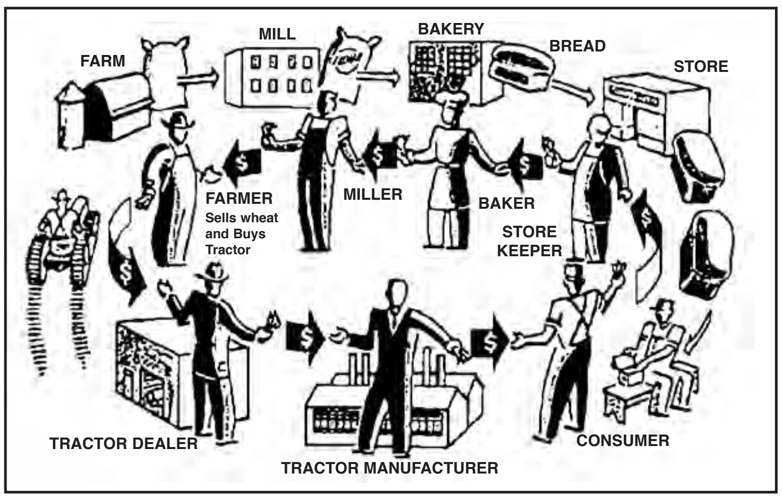
"There seem to be but three ways for a nation to acquire wealth. The first is by war. This is robbery. The second by commerce, which is generally cheating. The third by agriculture, the only honest way, wherein man receives a real increase of the seed thrown into the ground, in a kind of continual miracle ..."

Extrapolating Franklin's quote to real life, I can think of no clearer example than a simple ear of corn. A Google search reports that the number of kernels on an ear of corn ranges from 400-800 -- so the average is 600. Original wealth is created when a farmer plants a single kernel of corn and five months later at harvest that single kernel yields 600 kernels. Eureka! A 600-fold increase -- and every kernel represents original wealth. But, it's monetary value hasn't been determined yet. That value is determined by the price that mankind places on it. That is mankind's biggest failure.

Now's the time to introduce two other important terms when it comes to a discussion about original wealth. Both, sadly, have fallen out of favor in current day economics and in education. First is the "trade turn." It is the number of times that a unit of priced original wealth moves through the economy -- or trades hands -- until it's influence runs out. The trade turn for agricultural commodities has long been considered as five or higher. (Note: 70% of annual original wealth used is food and fiber.)

The "distribution cycle" no longer is discussed in classrooms nor printed in texts or references. But it still exists and it clearly illustrates how the "trade turn" works -- influenced by both production units and price per unit. The "distribution cycle" is pictured. It is the economic mechanism that provides all the "add-on" wealth or "monetary" wealth to our capitalist economy.

The U.S. is in the midst of a bumper food and fiber harvest of original wealth this fall. Sadly, it's also on the cusp of a re-run of the farm crisis of the 1980s, complete with bankruptcies, auctions, and bank crises.



A bountiful harvest should be a boon. Yet, the media is filled with predictions of gloom and doom about the "burden on prices" of a bountiful harvest. My question: How can you have too much "food original wealth" in a hungry and debt-ridden world? You can't.

So, now this discussion comes down to policy. In my opinion, the U.S. errs is even having "farm policy," because farm policy is more correctly monetary policy. National policy should concentrate on "original wealth policy." In short, U.S.

See ORIGINAL WEALTH, page 22

ORIGINAL WEALTH from page 21

economic policy should laser focus in how best to "monetize" it's bounty of annually produced "original wealth" brought forth from farming, mining, drilling, logging, and fishing.

Watch that original wealth corn move through the distribution cycle and the trade turn. It's final "monetary" or "add-on" wealth creation is dependent on both total production and price per unit. As both go up, astounding sums of tens of billions of dollars of "add-on" or "monetary" wealth is created. All that wealth can be more equitably distributed in the economy, but at present it isn't.

So, why doesn't the U.S. have a mechanism to properly price "edible and fiber" commodities so that disposable income from every productive acre of Mother Earth is maximized? I see both political parties equally guilty of prioritizing "corporate" capitalism over "people's" capitalism. The first is a drive to find "cheapest of everything" and ends up accumulating monetary wealth to a relatively few. The second more equitably rewards the actual producers of "original wealth" and distributes the "monetary" wealth from top to bottom of society.

The secret to monetizing "original wealth" is no secret. It's an intentionally buried historical fact -- buried by powerful financial and educational interests. The solution? Simply return to the successful economic policy enacted in the U.S. during the 1940s in the aftermath of WWII. It was called the Steagall Amendment. It worked through a mechanism of a non-recourse loan.

After harvest, an "original wealth" creator (farmer or rancher) was advanced (paid for his production at a rate at par with the rest of the economy) a sum of money by the government -- in the form of a non-recourse loan. That advance effectively optimized the disposable income (profit) per acre. That simple action monetized the "original wealth." The farmer then repaid the loan when he sold his "original wealth" back into the economy. The program had minimal cost to the government. As an additional benefit, any real surplus served as a national food reserve to use when annual production lagged -- or as a source for charitable global food aid.

The Steagall amendment, in effect, served as a "cost of living adjustment" for producers of original wealth. It worked to perfection for everyone but powerful financial interests and free global trade advocates. It proved the existence of a "natural law of economics."

After the amendment got the post-war economy back on its feet and thriving, those special interests -- who don't prosper when Average Joe is living with earned income and doesn't need to acquire debt -- exercised their political influence and the Steagall Amendment went the way of the wooly mammoth and the free traders got their way.

The U.S. economy has been headed for a crash down the debt highway in all the ensuing decades. The nation and Average Joe has been squeezed and has replaced earned income with debt. The evidence is as plain as the $37-trillion of national debt and a record level of credit card and personal debt in the U.S.

In concluding this "original wealth" discussion, it's interesting that the natural laws of physics, or math are universally accepted, but no one believes there could be a natural law of economics. Why? History shows that properly monetizing original wealth and letting it move through the distribution cycle and the trade turn is both natural and sustainable and creates across-the-board prosperity.

I'll close with this thought: "The relentless drive for cheapness leads to debt, which leads to poverty, which spreads malnutrition, inability to think, faulty economics and social policy failure. Pursuing a 'free lunch' will ruin civilization. Guaranteed!"

By now I may have proved that I'm not only a pseudonymuncle, but possibly a monkey's uncle, too. Have a good 'un.

Texas A&M AgriLife partners with federal agency to develop safer screwworm control technology

Texas A&M AgriLife is partnering with the National Nuclear Security Administration's Office of Radiological Security (ORS) to advance a national initiative aimed at combating the New World screwworm, a destructive pest threatening U.S. livestock near the southern border.

The collaboration will use electron beam, or eBeam, technology to sterilize screwworm flies, providing a safer alternative to cobalt-60 gamma radiation. The approach supports the sterile insect technique (SIT), which halts pest reproduction by releasing sterilized males into the environment.

"This collaboration demonstrates how research and innovation can drive solutions to protect human and animal health," said Phillip Kaufman, Ph.D., head of Texas A&M's Department of Entomology. "We must continue advancing critical science so we are prepared not only for the New World screwworm but for other invasive arthropods that will challenge us in the future."

The effort will be led by Texas A&M's National Center for Electron Beam Research, which has developed eBeam sterilization protocols for invasive species. "This collaboration with NNSA enables Texas A&M AgriLife to contribute innovative agriculture research that is essential to our nation's food security," said Suresh Pillai, Ph.D., the center's director.

The USDA has identified the U.S.-Mexico border as a critical area in preventing the pest's spread, following reports of screwworm detection within 70 miles of the border. ORS Director Kristin Hirsch said the partnership reflects the federal government's commitment to advancing safe, non-radioactive pest control methods while strengthening national food security.

– Meatingplace.com

Stuffed peppers look good on the plate and taste great too

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

Jon's Critique:

On this recipe, the cook opted for the black beans over the rice. That was a good call.

I have had stuffed peppers with rice many times, but I think I probably prefer beans. Also, I'm a fan of cheddar cheese to start, and like so many recently, I have become concerned with too many heavily processed foods in my diet. As a result, I'm resistant to the Velveeta option, as it is my impression that it was fake cheese. Go for the real thing when possible.

Lastly I'd say that Italian sausage is about like using bacon in a recipe… It always tastes good and makes whatever you use it in better.

Give this one a try, it looks great on the plate… and tastes great as well.

Stuffed Bell Peppers

From Deep South Dish Homestyle Southern Recipes

Sauce ingredients

1 tablespoon Butter
¼ cup each: chopped onion, celery, and bell pepper
2 (8-ounce) cans of tomato sauce

Stuffed Peppers ingredients

4 large green, red, or yellow bell peppers
2 tablespoons finely minced onion
½ tablespoon olive oil
1-2 links Italian Sausage, casing removed
1 pound ground beef
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 cup cooked rice or 1 can of black beans, drained and rinsed
½ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper
½ cup water
1 (10-ounce) can diced tomatoes and green chiles, drained
1-2 tablespoons breadcrumbs (optional)
Freshly shredded Cheddar cheese or thin slices of Velveeta

Preparing sauce:

Melt butter in skillet; add onion, celery, add bell pepper, and sauté over medium heat until tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in tomato sauce; simmer for 15 minutes. Remove and set aside.

Preparing stuffed peppers:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Slice peppers lengthwise, stem to bottom; scrape out seeds and ribs. Parboil pepper halves 5 minutes in boiling water. Drain; set aside.

Sauté onion in olive oil until tender; add sausage and beef; brown. Drain; add garlic and cook 1 minute.

Stir in ½ cup Sauce; cook 5 minutes. Stir in rice (or beans), salt, and pepper.

Pour ½ cup water into 9x13-inch baking dish, place peppers in dish. Scoop beef mixture evenly into each pepper half.

Mix tomatoes with remaining Sauce; spoon evenly over filled peppers; sprinkle with breadcrumbs, if using.

Bake, uncovered, 30-40 minutes, until tender and heated through.

Add cheese to top and return to oven until cheese melts.

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Digging Deeper….

By JUSTIN ANGELL

I guess with the advent of cell phones, it's easier to make a quick phone call than it is to write a letter to the editor. One such call came to me from a longtime friend and customer who read Savannah's article about Theileria. According to Jerry, he says there's only two ways to kill ticks. You either have to burn them or drown them. Jerry claims he has no problem with ticks on his cows all summer because they have access to a big pond where they spend time daily.

I admit at first this sounded a little bit out in left field, but maybe he is on to something? Is it possible that beginning before domestication, cows used the ponds and streams for parasite control rather than just to dissipate heat? This concept is interesting to me and really quite plausible mostly because that's as good of a theory as I've heard since there is very little knowledge about the longhorn Asian tick and Theileria. I hope that changes soon.

Another random incident I found interesting and potentially quite significant is the September 30 European Union seizing Nexperia, a Chinese computer chip manufacturer in the Netherlands. Seizing this asset could be considered an act of war by the Chinese.

I don't really have a fervent opinion on this. However, this could set a very dangerous precedent.

Think about the value of all the American and European assets in China! The last time something similar to this happened was after the invasion of Ukraine, the EU/Biden administration seized $300 billion of Russian capital held in United States bonds/treasuries.

Like tipping the first domino, this was the beginning of the end. Foreign central banks, private investors, sovereign wealth funds etc… have for decades been buying American debt and therefore funding deficit spending of the American government. We all know the U.S. government is printing billions/trillions of dollars just to pay bills, interest and obligations.

Unbridled printing/creating money digitally by governments is the true source of inflation.

After this incident, United States treasuries, once considered the safest investment in the world, was overnight proven to be an unreliable store of value. That kicked off the Gold Rush that we continue to see today as foreign countries both friend and foe are all dumping treasuries, and re-investing in physical, gold and silver.

Gold is signaling a trust problem not just of the dollar, but of the entire western financial system which is based on the dollar being the world, reserve currency.

Unfortunately, I believe gold and silver prices are predicting chaos in the world of economics. Even if we were all "long" gold, I'm not sure we want to live in a world with $5,000 gold.

Geez, take my soapbox away. Even though I lay out a problem without also providing the solution, I just want to emphasize to readers this is a really big issue. If I don't shine light and explain issues as best that I can, there's no one else that does for our people.

Finally, the last item of interest is the indictments coming out of the justice department after investigations of wrongdoing by government officials — mostly from previous administration. I know indictments are different than convictions, but indictments are also the first step on the road to conviction. Boy, I hope they put some of these SOBs in prison that did so many illegal things that hurt this country the last 10 years.

That's all for this month. I'll see you at the auction!