The Cattleman's Advocate

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Saving the Ranch

Couple donates 38,000-acre, $21 million cattle ranch to keep it a ranch

By DAVID MADISON
Cowboy State Daily

Dale Veseth is trying to adapt as best he can to all the changes and pressures impacting cattle ranchers.

That includes using remote-controlled collars to move his cattle up to 170 times a year across his 38,300-acre ranch in southern Phillips County, Montana.

At 63, he's been refining his rotational grazing system for 35 years, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather before him as a legacy Western cattle operation.

He's also learned to adapt to the changing market for ranch land.

Competing interests now vie to buy ranches and acquire grazing acreage on Montana's high northern plains, where this landscape was once a place families fled.

It's now populated with a mix of conservationists and family ranches who largely work toward the same goals of preserving wildlife, open prairie and the local livestock industry.

As ranch communities in Wyoming know well, it's harder than ever for younger generations of ranch families — and anyone else interested in running sheep and cattle — to break into the business.

"The capitalization to get in and maintain a ranching business was out of the reach of most Americans," Veseth told Cowboy State Daily, recalling how he first started looking for solutions to central problems faced by ranching communities two decades ago.

"Land is just one aspect. You have cattle. You have equipment, you have labor," he said. "And (everything) to make all these things go. We thought it

See RANCH, page 3

PRESERVING FAMILY RANCHING: Dale and Janet Veseth of Phillips County, Montana, made history recently by donating their $21.6 million ranch to a nonprofit they helped found in the name of preserving family ranching on the great northern plains. (Photos courtesy of Ranchers Stewardship Alliance)

Trump administration drops 'global' tariffs on imported beef

The Trump administration has cancelled its 10% "global" tariff on all imports of beef and a variety of other foods, effective immediately.

In an executive order late Friday, President Donald Trump declared a "necessary and appropriate" modification to his April 2 order after he "determined that certain agricultural products shall not be subject to the reciprocal tariff."

Amid tight cattle supplies, record beef prices and a heightened focus on broader consumer inflation, the action could especially impact ground beef. The bulk of U.S. beef imports are lean trimmings for ground beef blends.

A White House document listed 39 subheadings of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTSUS), under headings 0201, 0202, 0206 and 0210, related to beef: fresh, chilled, frozen, boneless, bone-in, variety meats and bovine carcasses.

"We just did a little bit of a rollback with some foods like coffee, as an example, where the prices of coffee have really been high," Trump told reporters later. "Now they'll be on the low side in a very short period of time. We're very good at this."

Trump, who has insisted that tariffs are paid by foreigners — importers actually pay tariffs before goods are released by U.S. Customs — conceded that the tariffs had raised prices "in some cases." He did not mention the beef tariff reduction, after repeatedly commenting on rancher profits while launching an investigation of beef packers.

"For the most part, the foods, when we cut back a little bit on those tariffs, we'll get the price down," he said. "But they're not competitive in this country, like tomatoes and bananas and things, we don't make them in this country. So there's no protection of our industries or our products."

U.S. beef imports have risen incrementally every year since 2018, but the pace of growth picked up in 2023 when volume rose 8.4% as the U.S. herd contracted. Imports jumped 25% last year to 1.67 million metric tons, worth $11.7 billion, and have soared another 27% this year through July, the most recent month available from USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FSA).

Despite the elimination of the 10% global tariff, most beef imports face a tariff of 26.4% on quantities beyond the annual tariff-rate quota granted to each country.

Most prominently, Brazil has a 65,005 mt quota, which was filled in January. Through July, beef imports from Brazil were nearly 220,000 mt. In addition to the 26.4%, Brazilian beef still faces an additional 40% quota that Trump applied to the country's goods in August, through Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira said last week that a preliminary U.S. trade framework deal is nearing completion.

Through the first seven months of 2025, Brazil ranks third as an exporter to the U.S. behind Australia 256,000 mt out of a quota of 378,214,000 and Canada at 202,000 mt. Mexico, which is fourth at 145,000 mt, and Canada are the only major sources of beef imports without tariff-rate quotas under the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

The Trump administration said last month it will increase Argentina's quota from 20,000 mt to 80,000 mt, which drew the ire of the U.S. cattle sector. The country ranks eighth this year among beef exporters at 24,000 mt exported to the U.S. through July.

– Meatingplace.com

Walmart beef processing plan clears another hurdle

Recent passage of a $257-million financial incentive package by the Olathe, Kan., City Council will open the door for Walmart to continue to move forward with additional operations at its first fully owned beef processing plant near Kansas City.

The industrial revenue bond program will support the case-ready beef facility, which was first announced in 2023 and is intended to manage processing and packing sub-primal cuts into beef cuts and other products ready for retail at Walmart stores.

The municipal committee unanimously approved the previously announced $257-million incentive package in addition to a property tax abatement that will

See WALMART BEEF PLANT, page 11

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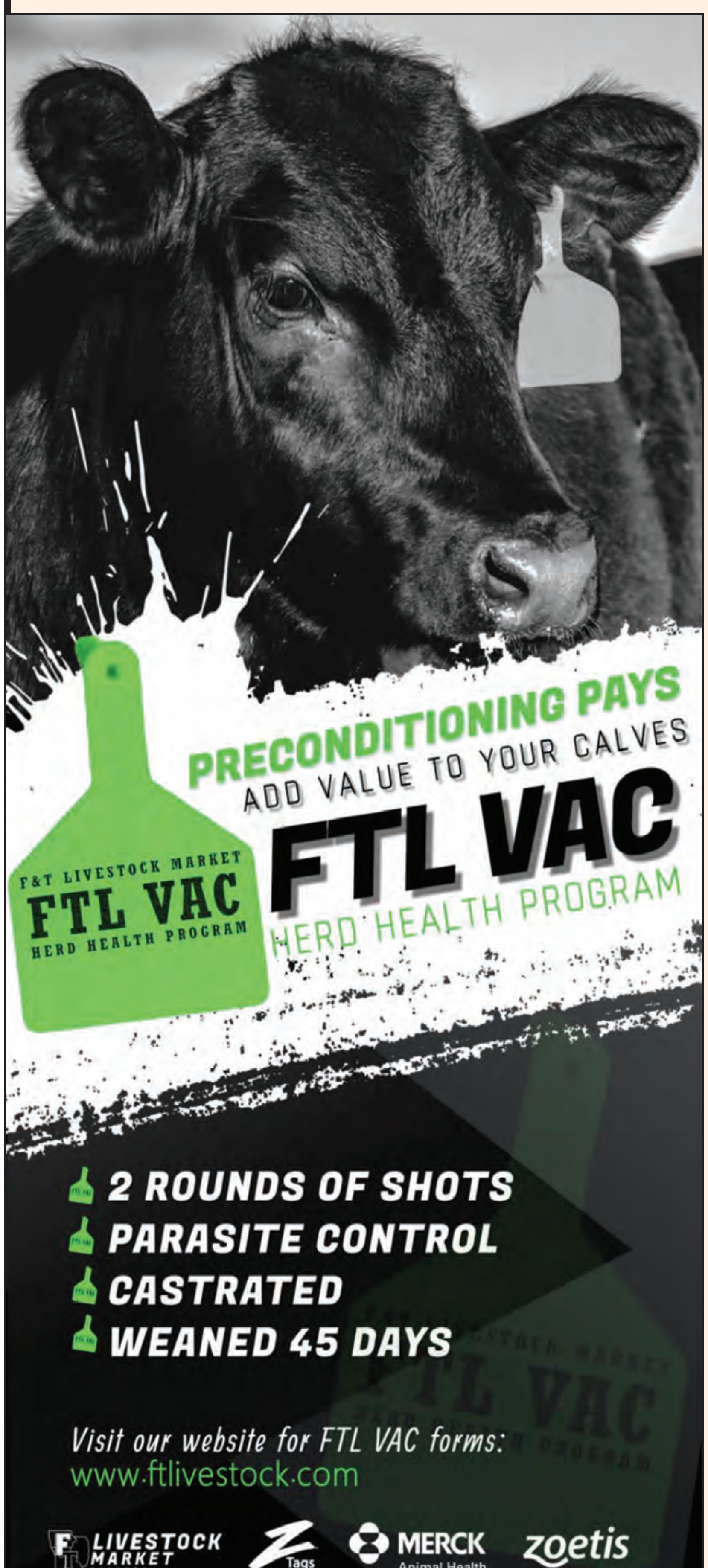

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RANCH from page 1

was pretty hard to recruit the next generation of people who produced our food."

In October, Veseth and his wife Janet announced what they hope will become part of the solution.

They are gifting their entire ranch valued at $21.6 million to the Ranchers Stewardship Alliance (RSA), a rancher-founded nonprofit Veseth helped establish 22 years ago.

While the couple will continue managing the ranch throughout their lives, they believe the donation ensures it will remain a working cattle operation supporting local ranchers rather than being sold off or converted to other uses.

The gift represents the largest recorded working ranch donation in Montana history, according to RSA.

It also points to fundamental questions facing ranch families across Montana, Wyoming and the Mountain West.

A Landscape Emptied Out

Veseth's ranch tells the story of rural depopulation across Montana's northern plains. The land he now oversees once supported far more families than it does today.

"If you just break down the homesteads that are in the ranch, we have at least 76," Veseth explained, referring to homestead claims now incorporated into his deeded acres. Including Bureau of Land Management lands his operation uses, he estimates about 100 families once worked the land that encompasses his ranch now.

"They all had dreams and interests," Veseth said.

Some succeeded in unexpected ways.

He recounted how in 1926, a struggling neighbor approached his grandfather, saying "maybe if I lease my place to you that between us we can make it."

The neighbor's family eventually got into the air conditioning business in Southern California and did well, expanding into Hawaii, but never returning to work the ranch.

Today, Veseth's ranch supports just three families, he said, explaining how property costs make it hard to justify an investment in ranching. The cost of land is sky high, while a rancher's wages remain low.

"For people to go out and pay $20 million to have an average job, that probably isn't going to work," he said.

Building An Alternative

The Ranchers Stewardship Alliance emerged in 2003 from concerns about outside interests acquiring ranch land in Phillips County and across northern Montana.

Angel DeVries, RSA's executive director, told Cowboy State Daily the organization formed when "ranchers started to stand up a little bit more to say, 'Hey, we've been the ones stewarding the land."

"People who were not on the ground were saying what needed to be done or changed in this landscape," DeVries added.

GREAT DEBATE: With the donation of a ranch worth more than $20 million, Montana's great northern plains remains the center of a debate about how to best conserve wild, scenic landscapes, native wildlife and local ranching communities. (Photo courtesy of American Prairie, Gib Myers)

"And that's really where the RSA, the Rancher Stewardship Alliance, was born out of."

Veseth, a founding member, helped pioneer collaborative approaches like the Matador Grass Bank with The Nature Conservancy.

During a severe drought, he approached TNC about leasing portions of their Matador Ranch to struggling local ranchers who were facing liquidation of their herds. That model has now operated successfully for 20 years.

RSA Communications Director Haylie Shipp explained the organization's core mission: "What can we do for ranchers so that they never have to sell their ranches out of production agriculture?"

The nonprofit provides conservation cost-share programs, helping producers with projects that benefit both ranching operations and wildlife habitat — from wildlife-friendly fencing to reseeding native grasses on old cropland.

Since receiving its first National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant in 2017, RSA has been able to hire staff and bring conservation dollars directly to ranchers. It also has emerged as a counterweight to another conservation group in the region.

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See AMERICAN PRAIRIE, page 11

From the Publisher... *Jon Angell*

Our feature this month tells a truly unique story. Not many of us are in line to donate the ranch to a nonprofit when we are done with this life. But for this ranch couple, it is their way of preserving the land, ranch, and support their local community.

For as long as I can remember, especially in the West, land use and preservation efforts have been a constant consideration. Competing interests and ideas have ebbed and flowed for as long as I can remember.

I remember preservations groups buying up farms and ranches and promoting the idea of a buffalo common across much of Kansas. I remember concerns of Ted Turner and Bill Gates buying and consolidating large swaths of land.

The popularity of the television drama "Yellowstone" exemplifies how prevalent competing visions of how to progress forward in the West, and specifically how ranchers are struggling to preserve the ranching culture and lifestyle. This story of donating the ranch seems to be the polar opposite what I remember from the Yellowstone drama storyline.

Also, on the front page, it looks like the Trump administration is very active in utilizing tariff and quotas as tools for reshaping world trade. He is now lowering tariffs on imported beef and some other agricultural products. He has raised quotas for beef from Argentina. He has made mention that he wants the justice department to look into the cattle markets and specifically the influence of the four big packers in the cattle/beef markets.

I will be interested in seeing if he is able to achieve some of the benefits he is seeking. At the very least, I would suggest that since last month's issue when the President was making loose comments about the high price of beef, he and his people have come to study the complexity of the beef and cattle business and how the markets work or in some cases don't work as they should.

Is there a need for anti-trust action? Probably. The last time the government got involved in breaking up meat packers, the big four controlled something over 60 percent of the beef market. Now the big four control over 80 percent, and two of those four are no longer domestically owned.

My guess is that the Trump administration will certainly take a deep anti-trust look, but who knows what they will uncover, but more importantly what evidence can prove.

The only thing reassuring to me is that you have an administration that isn't adverse in the least to action and the disruption of the status quo.

Closer to home, I am having a very good fall. The weather has been mild and the calves I have purchased have remained very healthy and growing nicely. The price of cattle has moderated from some historically high levels. Although those of you with cattle to sell now may not agree with me, but, the prices for feeder cattle had gotten unhealthy high. Of course, that opinion comes from the perspective of someone who needs to buy and rebuild a cattle inventory.

Every few years, the MU Extension does a survey of custom rates. I have utilized the information in these surveys many times and find it a valuable tool. If you do some custom farm work, I'd encourage you to spend a minute on the survey. The larger the pool of sampling the better the information. See the story below.

This being the December issue, it is appropriate to wish everyone a Merry Christmas. We have been blessed with a good year and hope to finish it good and strong to set a high bar for 2026. Thanks for reading and your continued support of our publication.

MU Extension 2026 Missouri Custom Rates Survey

COLUMBIA, MO. – Farmers and agricultural service providers across Missouri are invited to participate in the University of Missouri Extension's statewide Custom Rates Survey.

This Tri-annual survey helps shed light on the costs associated with custom farming operations—such as tillage, planting, spraying, harvesting, land management work and machinery rental—offering valuable insights for both those who hire services and those who provide them.

"Whether you're a farmer trying to budget for next season or a service provider looking to stay competitive, the information from the custom rates survey helps bring transparency to the marketplace," said Drew Kientzy, MU Extension research analyst and survey coordinator. "The more responses we receive, the more useful the results will be for farmers, custom applicators, earthmoving contractors, and many others."

The survey is designed to be quick, taking just 5–10 minutes to complete. It covers a wide range of custom services and aims to reflect real-world pricing across different regions and farm sizes. The survey results from 2023 can be found at muext.us/customrates.

Why participate?

• Farmers gain an understanding of what others are paying for custom work.

• Service providers can benchmark their rates against averages.

• Everyone benefits from more informed decision-making and fairer pricing.

How to respond:

Three convenient ways to respond to the survey are available. A digital survey is available at muext.us/customagrates, your county extension office can provide you with a paper copy of the survey, or you can request a printable survey by contacting Survey Coordinator, Drew Kientzy, at dkientzy@missouri.edu.

Don't miss your chance to help build a more transparent and competitive custom farm services market in Missouri. Respond to the 2026 Custom Rates for Farm Services Survey today!

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FARM & FOOD FILE

One more time: Farmers and ranchers are major SNAP beneficiaries, too

By ALAN GUEBERT
For The Cattleman's Advocate

As the White House fought not to pay Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to 42 million Americans, it already had ordered the U.S. Department of Agriculture to reopen nearly 2,100 Farm Service Agency (FSA) county offices to pay farmers and ranchers $3 billion in federal "aid from existing programs."

Just think about that for a one shutdown minute.

The White House ordered thousands of employees to turn the lights on at almost every county FSA across the country to distribute $3 billion to maybe a million or so landowners and farmers even as it fought tooth-and-nail not to pay the legally obligated $8 billion in monthly SNAP benefits to 42 million qualified recipients.

Equally compelling, not one major farm group stood up or spoke out for the SNAP millions while most of their members collected taxpayer billions.

Did farm and ranch leaders forget the enormous impact SNAP spending has on rural America's bottom line?

If so, here are the facts: According to USDA's Economic Research Service, American food buyers spent 24.3 cents of every food dollar for "at-home consumption," in short, for local food, in 2023. SNAP recipients "have similar purchasing habits."

That means that farmers and ranchers, on average, receive a huge economic kick–maybe up to 25 percent–of SNAP dollars spent locally, according to Dawn Thilmany, a Colorado State University ag economist.

Moreover, she recently told PolitiFact when it sought to confirm that estimate, the percentage "may be even slightly conservative when accounting for SNAP dollars spent at farmers' markets or food retailers that source locally."

Before the government shutdown, SNAP was on track to spend $100 billion nationwide in 2025. As such, farmers and ranchers and rural communities across the country would have seen $20 to $25 billion or so of it spent locally.

That's eight times the economic impact–without one cent of FSA overhead–than the $3 billion in direct farm aid recently handed out to farmers.

So why the silence?

It's not ignorance. Farmers have long known that SNAP and other USDA food assistance deliver crucial urban votes needed to pass every Farm Bill in the last 60 years. In fact, without the votes of food aid advocates in Congress, there would be no Farm Bill.

Misinformation, however, on federal food aid programs plays an enormous role in America's beliefs about it. Recently, President Donald Trump said "SNAP benefits… were given to anybody that would ask" because "Biden went totally crazy" and "gave it to people who were able-bodied…"

The Nov. 8 New York Times checked those alternative facts and noted that "None of Mr. Trump's numbers are accurate."

First, "(T)he vast majority of recipients, nearly 90 percent are native-born Americans." Second, the "legislation [that] temporarily and partly suspended longstanding work requirements… occurred in March 2020, under the Trump Administration…" And, finally, "monthly participation was the highest under Mr. Trump, at more than 46 million people in October 2017," not Joe Biden.

Recently, the conservative network Newsmax reported that "59 percent of all illegal aliens are collecting food stamps, meaning that most of the people getting food stamps from the U.S. government and the U.S. taxpayer are not even Americans."

Again, Grade A baloney, says Times fact checkers: 96 percent of all SNAP recipients are U.S. citizens, according to the "latest data" from USDA. That means there's zero chance that "most people getting food stamps… are not even Americans."

None of these facts, however, explain why farmers and ranchers largely remained silent in the latest SNAP fight. But we do know, in politics, silence often means complicity.

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

U.S. dropping tariff on Argentine beef after trade deal: Report

The White House announced trade framework arrangements late Thursday, November 13 with Argentina and three other Latin American countries.

The Argentina deal calls for the country to allow market access for U.S. poultry within one year.

The joint statement makes no mention of the tariff-rate quota on beef from Argentina, which the White House had recently planned to increase dramatically.

News outlet Politico reported late Thursday that an unnamed White House official said that the current 10% tariff on goods from Argentina was expected to be dropped on beef from the country. "In the near term, I think we're just going to let the market figure out how much beef it needs," the official was quoted as saying.

The Argentina tariff-rate quota applies an additional 26.4% tariff on beef imports beyond 20,000 metric tons (mt) per year.

The White House had reportedly planned to increase the quota to 80,000 mt after President Donald Trump suggested imports from Argentina to address high beef prices, but no change appears to have been implemented.

The joint statement said that Argentina will allow imports of U.S. live cattle and will simplify product registration for U.S. beef and pork. As a major meat exporter, Argentina is an unlikely export target.

A finalized text for the agreement is planned.

Similar trade framework joint statements were issued with El Salvador, Guatemala and Ecuador, including concessions on market access for U.S. agricultural products but with no details.

– Meatingplace.om

Thoughts From Justin's Side of the Fence

By JUSTIN ANGELL

The last week of October with the cattle future's market in Chicago was locked limit down, the cattle market was horribly disappointing and our sale at F&T on Tuesday the 28th was set up to be a disaster because of the futures and uncertain market direction. I'm not attempting to explain why this happened. I'm here to tell a stockyard story from the back of the barn outside of most people's view.

I'm pretty sure that most customers wouldn't ever give it a thought or much less know how some market owners step up in a big way when it's needed. I say some, because there are many that don't. I believe everyone should know what I saw when no one else was looking.

I think Al Dames is one of the finest young men in the livestock auction industry, but one of the worst self-promoters I've ever seen. I believe in giving credit where credit is due. Al deserves credit, but he is too unassuming and too modest at times.

Before the sale, I met Al behind the auctioneer's block. He was flanked by 1100 nice cattle, mostly good quality calves weaned with two rounds of shots, on a normal day these would be easy to sell. Al Dames is always laid-back, but today with the futures locked limit lower, with many corporates pulling out of the market completely; I could tell there was a little bit of stress.

He asked me if I could get an order for heifer calves. I guess since I've been around sale barn people my whole life, I've seen this done before, so I told him, "Al there's no way in hell with the board locked limit lower again that we can call anybody to get an order for anything. Nobody knows what to do. What we need to do is buy the cattle like we would wanna own them. And then, after the sale, we can call customers and say this is what they weigh, this is what they look like, and this is what they cost… If we can do that, we've got a chance."

Al agreed and said, "why don't you buy the heifers and after the sale see how many you can sell". I told Al that would be great, but if I couldn't get them sold, I didn't have any money to pay for anything, my line of credit is tapped out.

Unbeknownst to Al on the way to the bleachers, I got a phone call from a farmer friend in Illinois wanting to buy a few heifer calves. A few minutes after the sale started, I got a phone call from his uncle. He also wanted to buy a little bit bigger heifers. Making sure I wasn't talking to two people about one order, I was able to work out and confirm the details.

I bought several good heifer calves, one load for each of them. Later in the sale we got into some #2 dairy cross and Brangus big feeding heifers… I bought those also. After the sale describing a load of big, ugly number two heifers weight and price… Sold with one call. I also bought 12 little red, white and yellow steers for myself and two odd big steers. 230 head total.

Beside what I had done for Al, he had also put the floor under and caught 220 head from the auction block, mostly steers. If you're doing the math 450 head that probably averaged $2200, comes up to around $990,000.

About 20 minutes after the sale ended, I was able to work my way back behind the block where the morning had begun. I handed my buyer cards to Al and said," OK so sorry Al, I can't sell any of these."

Then for the first time in my life I saw the guy take a deep gasping breath… I laughed hard and said I'm just kidding, I've got them all sold but two big steers. That was a little ornery but very fun.

Al had also been on the phone and was sorting and weighing cattle to send out as I left for the evening. By the next day, 80% of the cattle were sold, leaving about 90 head for Al to put in his grow yards.

I believe this is a long, but important, story. I want our customers to understand what happened behind the curtain. For the sake of his customers, Al Dames stepped up and put $990,000 of his own money at risk to support the market. He didn't do it for himself. He did it for every customer that sold cattle there to that day.

I guarantee you there were a lot of sales in the country that week where that didn't happen and it never will. Some owners reject any risk to their own balance sheets while some auctions are simply unable to backstop cattle at their auction because they're simply way too many cattle at the sale. The biggest livestock auction might not be the best sale for you. It doesn't matter if you're a small producer or a big producer, I think it's very important to do business at a place that takes care of the customers in every way when the sun is shining and I also on rainy days.

I know I'm not the only one that feels this way. Corbitt Wall has a good quote from the feeder flash podcast on 10/28/25 @ 25 minute mark. "If you're taking your cattle to a sale barn and they don't have any market support… find a different one. Your owners and operator should be working orders and trying to get the best market for your cattle…"

My old dad used to tell me, "Anybody can sell cattle when they're high". On Tuesday, October 28, we had a dress rehearsal of the way business will be run at F&T when things get tougher. I would encourage people not to wait until the cattle cycle turns lower before building a relationship with a good market operator – there are a lot of them out there.

In case you were wondering about the hundred cattle that Al kept after the sale... he wanted them. Another very important component of the backstop is you obviously have to have someplace to go with the catch cattle.

To be effective, I believe an auction owner should also be a cattle feeder.

Just an FYI for those concerned about cattle feeders after such a hard break in the market... I've heard that a week before the fed cattle market broke, Al hedged all his cattle on feed for somewhere around $2.40 with the April's at $246.75. The F&T backstop is bulletproof for at least six months.

I hope everyone who reads this can now appreciate the value of the market backstop. If you found this article of interest and you would like to talk more on this, please give me a call. If you would like to do business someplace where you and your business is appreciated give me a call. If you just wanna shoot the bull, give me a call on that too. If you have a complaint or think I'm just full of [bologna]… Call Jon.

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

McDonald's warns of 'challenging environment'

Hamburger giant McDonald's reported level earnings this week but cautioned that lower-income consumers have been pulling back from quick-service restaurant spending.

The company's third-quarter net income was $2.28 billion, little changed from $2.26 billion in the same period a year ago, McDonald's reported Wednesday. Revenue for the quarter was $7.08 billion, up 3%. The results fell narrowly short of Wall Street expectations.

Chief executive Chris Kempczinski said that the sales performance, including a U.S. same-store increase of 2.4%, was "a testament to our ability to deliver sustainable growth even in a challenging environment."

Kempczinski said that fast-food traffic from higher-income consumers rose strongly in the quarter but warned of a "bifurcated consumer base" overall. Lower-income customer traffic fell "nearly double digits in the third quarter, a trend that's persisted for nearly two years," he said during an earnings call with stock analysts.

– Meatingplace.com

It's The Pitts...

Green thieves

By LEE PITTS
For The Cattleman's Advocate

It's these fake- meat veg-heads who are stealing our terms like steak and burger to describe their plant-based and lab-concocted vegetarian and vegan products that they can't sell on their own merits.

Normally I'm a pretty peaceful guy but you want to know what really makes me mad? It's these fake- meat veg-heads who are stealing our terms like steak and burger to describe their plant-based and lab-concocted vegetarian and vegan products that they can't sell on their own merits. To get people to buy their rubbish they are trying to pull the wool over the consumer's eyes and trying to trick them into buying their inferior fare. And with several of these fake meat companies going broke and Beyond Meat teetering on the edge of bankruptcy, the veg-heads are getting really desperate.

We don't have to guess how this can get out of hand in a hurry unless we nip it in the bud. Take milk for example. We've gone from cow, goat and sheep milk to oat milk, soy milk, almond milk, coconut milk, cashew milk, pea milk, macadamia milk, rice milk, hazelnut milk, flaxseed milk, pistachio milk, banana milk, walnut milk, potato milk, sesame milk, peanut milk and even hemp milk. What's next asparagus milk? Or how does a refreshing arugula milkshake sound? And all of them brag they're better than cow's milk despite the fact that many of these so-called "milks" lack essential amino acids found in real milk and may contain inflammatory seeds and oils that can play havoc with the human digestive system. Not to mention that most of these new "milks" lack the calcium and vitamin A that are found in real milk. And many are too high in starch. Pimply faced teenagers might also be interested to know that some fake milks have been found to cause acne.

Poultry growers should also be foaming at the beak that some veggies have coopted their names too like eggplant, drumstick and even a vegetable called fat hen! That alone should be grounds for a defamation lawsuit! Horse people should be infuriated that there are vegetables called Horse gram, horseradish and sorrel. And there's no doubt that sheepherders have less money in their purse because of an inferior vegetable called shepherds purse. Not to mention lamb's lettuce. The veg-heads have even managed to insult pig growers, which I thought was impossible, by naming a vegetable pignut. What's next, ham of yam I am? (This is starting to sound like a Dr. Seuss story.)

If I was from Switzerland I'd be furious that there's a vegetable called Swiss chard which is extremely bitter. I'd be annoyed by the implication if I was Swiss. There's not a more lovable animal on the planet than elephants and the veg-heads had the nerve to ride on the pachyderm's good reputation by naming one vegetable elephant garlic and another elephant foot yam. I'm told that it tastes an awful lot like elephant foot toe jam.

I'm telling you if we don't stop this madness of veg-heads riding on our good name it won't be too long before we end up with ribeye of beet, rump of tofu, brisket of turnip and Porterhouse butter nut squash. There will be Brussel sprout filet mignon, turnip green London broil and Lima bean steak. YUCK! On one hand you have the worst tasting foodstuff in the Lima bean and the best tasting food on the planet in steak.

In the future I can envision walking into a grocery store and seeing carrot ribs, tenderloin of potato, tomato top sirloin, collared greens ground round, fluted pumpkin flank, celery shanks, cucumber skirt steak, lettuce stroganoff, T bone of cabbage, back-rib bell peppers, loin of spinach, stew meat soybeans and the vegetable that needs our good name the most: zucchini chateaubriand.

The veg-heads will continue to steal other words usually associated with meat like barbecued Bok choy, aged radicchio and chickweed Quarter Pounders. I ask you, where and when will it all end?

It's bad enough that vegetables and fruits have to be identified as to what country they were grown in, an advantage not granted to meat. To take advantage of their protection from foreign imports perhaps we should take a page out of the veg-head's book and start calling beef "second generation corn," which would be as devious as the veg-heads using our words. Only in this case it would be entirely true. Cattle eat the corn and people eat the cattle.

– www.LeePittsbooks.com

Close to 'the Bottom of the Trough' in cattle supplies: JBS CEO

JBS Foods USA is looking ahead to improvements in the extremely tight cattle supplies plaguing the company's beef business, CEO Wesley Batista Filho said Friday, November 14.

"We're getting very close here to the bottom of the trough of this cattle supply shortage," he told Wall Street analysts in an earnings call.

"We think 2026 will still be a challenging year from a supply perspective. And then probably from there it starts getting gradually better. It's not gonna be overnight, you know, get completely better, but it's gonna be a gradual improvement from '27 forward."

Investments in JBS' U.S. beef capacity, which are intended to achieve gains in volume, efficiency and value-added, will not be in place next year, but will be coming on line "into 2027, which is when things should be starting to look better, at least better than '26," Batista Filho said. "And then from then on get better, so actually the timing there couldn't have been better."

Beef demand has remained robust despite record high retail prices. In Thursday's JBS earnings report, the U.S. beef division reported third-quarter net sales jumped 14.8% to $7.25 billion, a robust jump that still could not keep pace with cost of sales, which surged 18.5% to $7.08 billion due to tight cattle supplies.

"I think it's a big testament to the demand of beef to see even entry level beef items like ground beef being at the price levels where they are, and there's still strong demand for it," Batista Filho said. "So it's just a big testament for the quality of the product and just the structural demand that there is for all those products."

Consumer beef prices are fueling spillover into JBS' pork and chicken businesses, too.

"There is some, obviously, substitution between the three proteins," Batista Filho said, "when beef is expensive and, you know, pork and chicken are good options for somebody who's trying to find a more affordable option than beef."

The company described a mixed outlook for the fourth quarter, with the cost of cattle in the United States continuing to be a bottom line challenge.

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cattlemans@virtualimages.us

Wall Street analysts upbeat after JBS 3rd quarter report

Stock market analysts reacted favorably Monday, November 17 to JBS' third-quarter report.

Stephens Inc. analyst Pooran Sharma credited the global meat giant's outperformance of expectations last week to the U.S. beef segment delivering better-than-expected results in the face of unprofitably high prices for live cattle. He noted that the company expects continued good results from its Pilgrims portfolio as the U.S. chicken sector benefits from continued consumer demand for protein alternatives to high beef prices.

"While U.S. beef will continue to be a headwind, the company has offsets from Brazil and Australian cattle, and is expecting incremental growth in 2027 from some of its Prepared Foods investments," Sharma wrote in a note to investors. "We think fundamentals will likely stay challenged in the coming quarters, but still remain buyers of JBS on relative valuation."

Stephens maintained its overweight recommendation for JBS shares.

BMO Capital Markets agribusiness and protein analyst Andrew Strelzik rated JBS to outperform. He credited the company's "diverse global model" with helping it weather losses in the North American beef segment and disease-related trade turbulence in its Brazilian poultry business.

"JBS is our favorite protein idea, and we believe it remains significantly underappreciated at current discounted multiple," Strelzik wrote.

– Meatingplace.com

New WOTUS proposal could reduce red tape for farmers and ranchers

By TYNE MORGAN
& KERRY HALLADAY
Farm Journal

EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers unveiled a revised rule on Monday, November 17, aimed at clearer permitting and fewer regulatory surprises, such as narrowing which water features fall under federal oversight and confirming exclusions.

Farmers and ranchers could soon face fewer regulatory hurdles when working near waterways, as EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers released a new proposal on Nov. 17 to redefine "Waters of the United States" (WOTUS). The agencies say the proposed rule is designed to bring long-requested clarity to what features fall under federal jurisdiction potentially reducing permitting uncertainty for agriculture, landowners and rural businesses.

The proposed rule will soon be published in the Federal Register, according to EPA. Once posted, the public will have the opportunity to comment through the Federal Register or via Regulations.gov.

The definition of WOTUS determines when producers must secure permits for projects that could affect surface water quality, including common activities such as building terraces, installing drainage or expanding livestock operations. EPA officials say the new proposal aims to align fully with the Supreme Court's Sackett decision and prevent farmers from needing lawyers or consultants simply to determine whether a water feature on their land is federally regulated.

The proposal follows EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin's promise in March to launch the biggest deregulatory action in history and a series of listening sessions in April and May that asked states, tribes, industry and agriculture to weigh in on WOTUS needs.

Clearer Definition After Years of Confusion

Zeldin and Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Adam Telle emphasize the rule is designed to be clear, durable and commonsense.

Key elements include:

Defined terms such as relatively permanent, continuous surface connection, and tributary to outline which waters qualify under the Clean Water Act.

A requirement that jurisdictional tributaries must have predictable, consistent flow to traditional navigable waters.

Wetlands protections are limited to wetlands that physically touch and are indistinguishable from regulated waters for a consistent duration each year.

Reaffirmed exclusions important to agriculture, including prior converted cropland, certain ditches and waste treatment systems.

A new exclusion for groundwater

Locally-familiar terminology, such as "wet season," to help determine whether water features meet regulatory thresholds.

EPA says these changes are intended to reduce uncertainty that has stemmed from years of shifting definitions across administrations.

Impact of WOTUS Proposal on Agriculture

For producers, the proposal could simplify compliance by narrowing which water features fall under federal oversight and confirming exclusions that many farm groups have long advocated.

Zeldin says the aim is "protecting the nation's navigable waters from pollution" while preventing unnecessary burdens on farmers and ranchers. He criticizes past Democratic administrations for broad interpretations that, in his view, extended federal reach to features that did not warrant regulation.

Farm groups have argued for years that unclear or overly broad definitions can lead to significant costs, delays and legal risks when planning conservation work, drainage projects or infrastructure improvements. A more consistent rule could reduce project backlogs and limit case-by-case determinations that often slow progress during planting, construction or livestock expansion.

"We've seen WOTUS definitions, guidance and legal arguments change with each administration," said Garrett Hawkins, president of the Missouri Farm Bureau, during the May 1 EPA listening session for agriculture. He adds: "farmers, land owners and small businesses are the ones who suffer the most when we don't have clear rules."

Several of those who gave testimony and public comment during the ag listening session argued that farmers and ranchers, who already struggle with unpredictable markets and tight margins, shouldn't have to hire experts to identify elements of their own land.

"A practical WOTUS definition will allow the average landowner — not an engineer, not an attorney, not a wetland specialist — to walk out on their property, see a water feature and make, at minimum, a preliminary determination about whether a feature is federally jurisdictional," says Kim Brackett, vice president of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, who also gave testimony in May.

Alignment With the Sackett Decision

After the Supreme Court's 2023 Sackett v. EPA ruling, which restricted federal authority over many wetlands, the agencies say the previous WOTUS definition no longer aligned with the law. EPA already issued a memo earlier this year clarifying limits on jurisdiction over adjacent wetlands. The newly proposed rule is the next step in that process.

The proposed rule focuses on relatively permanent bodies of water — streams, rivers, lakes and oceans — and wetlands that are physically connected to those waters. Seasonal and regional variations are incorporated, including waters that flow consistently during the wetter months.

The current situation is a regulatory patchwork. Due to litigation that followed the January 2023 WOTUS rule, which was considered in the Sackett decision, different states are following different rules. Currently, 24 states, mostly the coastal and Great Lakes states, are operating on the 2023 rule, while the other 26 states, mostly those in center and in the Southeast, are operating on pre-2015 WOTUS rule.

Oversight Rests With State and Tribes

A major theme of the proposal is cooperative federalism, giving more authority to states and tribes to manage local land and water resources. EPA says the rule preserves necessary federal protections while recognizing states and tribal governments are best positioned to oversee many smaller or isolated water features.

Sections 101b and 510 of the CWA are key structural examples of the concept of cooperative federalism. The sections give states and tribes the right to set standards and issue permits for federal activities that could discharge pollutants into a water of the U.S. within the state or territory. The most common example of this are 404 dredge and fill permits.

This focus on cooperative federalism was the main chorus of the EPA's listening session for states, held April 29, especially as it concerns wetlands.

"If more wetlands are excluded from WOTUS, then certain federal projects would not require a section 401 water quality certification by the states," noted Jennifer Congdon, director of federal affairs for New York Department of Environmental Conservation, during the states' listening session. She argues that such a situation could impair water quality within a state, thus violating states' rights under the CWA.

What Happens Next

The proposed rule will soon be published in the Federal Register, kicking off a 45-day public comment period. EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers will hold two hybrid public meetings, and details for submitting comments or registering to speak will be available on EPA's website.

After the comment period, the agencies plan to move quickly toward a final rule.

"Once the rule is finalized, it typically takes effect 60 days after publication in the Federal Register pursuant to Congressional Review Act requirements," the EPA press office told The Packer earlier this summer.

Based on these potential timelines, a new — potentially final — WOTUS rule could take effect as early as late February.

'Break up Big Ag': Sen. Warren praises Trump's beefpacker probe

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) said she welcomed President Donald Trump's call for a federal investigation into the nation's largest beef processors, adding that she hopes the announcement leads to more than political rhetoric.

Trump last week said he asked the Department of Justice to investigate whether the "Big Four" beef packers — Tyson Foods, Cargill, National Beef and JBS USA — engaged in "illicit collusion, price fixing and price manipulation."

Warren, who has long pressed for stricter oversight of meatpacking consolidation, said Trump's shift was notable but must be matched with substantive policy.

"I'm glad Donald Trump is on board with my years-long bipartisan push to investigate and crack down on anticompetitive practices in the beef-packing industry," Warren said in an exclusive statement to Meatingplace. "While Americans are struggling with sky-high grocery prices that only keep going up, I hope Trump plans to follow up his Truth Social posts with real action to cut costs for families, support American cattle ranchers, and break up Big Ag."

– Meatingplace.com

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

Tyson spots 'regional disparity' in heifer retention

Beef processors are scouring data for signs of the U.S. beef herd rebuilding, and Tyson Foods executives described a complicated picture, even as they search for ways to respond to tight supplies.

After reporting a more than $1.1 billion operating loss for the company's 2025 fiscal year, Tyson President Donnie King this week described "potential signs" of heifer retention.

"What is a little bit different, as we have a little bit better picture, is we see regional disparity," he said in a call with Wall Street analysts. "For example, out West, we're not seeing anything meaningful. In the South, you know, nothing there. But in the North, Upper Midwest, we're seeing some retention."

Sustainable retention will be indicated by lower heifer harvest numbers, resulting in even less beef "in the near term," King said. In some cases, the current availability of affordable grain means some retention is only for longer feeding to capitalize on higher weights rather than breeding.

"Herd rebuilding, which we're all looking for, means supply of market ready cattle will fall before it increases in future years," King said.

The USDA is projecting a 2% decline in domestic beef production next year, and Tyson forecasts an adjusted operating loss in its beef segment of $400 million to $600 million.

Devin Cole, who was named Tyson chief operating officer in September said that management is implementing efficiencies in the beef division in the face of unused capacity due to the tight cattle supplies.

"Despite continued headwinds, we are focused on the pieces we can control like shifting further processing volumes back into our harvest facilities," he said.

Trade war casualty: Beef exports hit 5-year low in August

U.S. beef exporters have a $600 million trade war wound caused almost entirely by China's retaliation to U.S. tariffs, new government data showed.

Delayed more than a month by the federal budget shutdown, beef exports for August were 83,388 metric tons (mt), a drop of 19% from a year ago. It was the lowest beef export volume since June 2020, according U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) analysis of government trade statistics. By value, the $695.5 million in beef shipped abroad was the lowest since February 2021.

For January-August, U.S. beef exports are off 9.5% to 775,188 mt. By value, the global decline is 9% to $613.5 million. Exports to China so far this year are down 52% to just 61,000 mt.

After the imposition of U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods starting in February, Beijing in March declared all U.S. meat establishment's export registrations expired. Pork and poultry facilities received renewed registrations within the month, but beef establishments remain suspended.

USMEF describes the Chinese market as effectively closed to U.S. beef, with only a few small plants still technically able to export. In August U.S. beef exports to China were down 94% from August 2024 by volume and and 97.43% by value.

The loss of Chinese demand is costing the industry at least $150 a head, Erin Borror, USMEF vice president for economic analysis, told Meatingplace.

"There is no replacement for the China market," she said. "Fortunately in our tight beef supply situation, the beef is still sold to other export destinations like Korea, but not at the prices that should be received."

A trade arrangement announced in late October between the U.S. and China is supposed to lower tariffs, but it remains unclear when beef exports might resume. USMEF estimates the loss of sales to China will exceed $800 million with the market still blocked through October and November.

HPAI roundup: First human case since February; Indiana outbreaks explode

Outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) soared last week in Indiana, as the virus continues its autumn rampage through the Midwest.

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) confirmed H5N1 in 25 flocks since Nov. 10, including 14 in a small area of northern Indiana.

LaGrange County, which has already had numerous outbreaks in the last several weeks in both commercial ducks and other species, lost nine more duck flocks last week with a combined 50,000 birds. Meanwhile, four farms with a combined 89,100 birds of other species were struck, too.

The virus was also confirmed in a commercial flock of 7,100 ducks in neighboring Elkhart County.

In nearby southwestern Michigan, three turkey farms were struck in Ottawa County with a combined 120,200 birds. Another 35,600 turkeys were lost on a farm in neighboring Allegan County.

Backyard single flocks were infected in St. Clair County, Mich., McLeod County, Minn., Rockingham, N.H., Kent County, Del., Harris County, Texas, El Dorado County, Calif., and Deschutes County, Ore.

The toll nationwide in the last 30 days is 1.67 million birds from 35 commercial operations and 37 backyard flocks, according to APHIS data.

Awaiting confirmation of human H5N1 in Washington state

Washington state public health authorities are awaiting laboratory confirmation of a patient with a preliminary positive test result for avian influenza.

Potential exposures are being investigated for the patient, described as an older adult with underlying health conditions, who was hospitalized in early November with high fever, confusion and respiratory.

The case is the first known human infection in the United States since February. Federal public health authorities have tallied 70 human H5N1 cases, including one fatality, since the start of 2024, with most infections found in poultry and dairy workers.

Many of the preceding items were taken from Meatingplace.com

Why AI, cameras and cloud data are becoming essential for meat processors

By PETER THOMAS RICCI
Managing Editor
Meatingplace Magazinet

Large commercial meat plants like Cargill operate at such a high rate of speed that graders are presented with a new beef carcass to grade in a matter of seconds — a situation reminiscent of the "I Love Lucy" chocolate factory episode, minus the zaniness.

"It's an overwhelming number to evaluate, when you think of the number of decisions that a grader has to make when considering the value of a carcass," says Nick Hardcastle, meat grading and technical specialist of Cargill protein headquarters in Wichita, Kan.

Fortunately for Cargill, those days are in the past. The company has used instrument-assisted grading, also known as camera-based technology, to enhance the grading process since about 2009, when the industry started to adopt it.

"Camera-based technology allows you to take a quick, real-time analysis of individual carcasses and deliver it in a standard format to the USDA, CBGA (Canadian Beef Grading Agency) or whichever grading agency you're working with," explains Hardcastle. The data derived from it details predictive attributes for each carcass, such as beef marbling score, color, ribeye area and back fat thickness. "It provides an accurate, repeatable assessment of value for suppliers and ensures product quality for customers," Hardcastle notes.

Improving meat quality, food safety and yield are among the myriad ways large and small processors are benefiting from data driven decision-making. After all, data does not lie or sugarcoat reality. The truth is in the numbers. Why not let the data reveal what is going right within your operations and where improvement is needed?

Boost quality

Over the years, Glen Dolezal witnessed data collection improve meat grading results. "In 1999, the U.S. beef industry graded only 55% of beef in the upper two quality grades — US Prime and US Choice," recalls Dolezal, a retired Cargill AVP and Oklahoma State University meat science professor. "The other 45% was US Select Standard, little to no marbling, bottom-of-the-barrel quality, sold at a discount. National Beef Quality Audits conducted during that time cited one out of four beef steaks did not eat well or meet consumer expectations."

Fast forward to today, 83% to 88% of beef in the US is Prime- and Choice-quality graded — the highest quality it has ever been in Dolezal's lifetime.

"The big improvement that has led to this is data collection and analysis in various areas," Dolezal says, namely advancements in genetics and emphasizing cattle with the ability to deposit more marbling for high-quality grades.

"Marbling in a cooked beef steak or roast is like boosting the flavor of popcorn or a baked potato by adding butter," he explains. "Marbling provides richness of flavor and aids in maintaining juiciness."

Increase bottom-line results

Using data as a guide throughout the supply chain can pay off. In feedlots, Dolezal says, more than 80% of cattle are sold on a carcass merit grid (payment back to producers is based on carcass weight, quality category and red meat yield). The data is used to refine high energy diets, increase time on feed, and monitor cattle health and welfare — all to produce more consistent and higher quality beef. In this case, data helps prevent feed yards from turning out cattle that are discounted for being too heavy, too fat or marketed before they reach their genetic potential to deposit marbling, Dolezal explains.

While the industry is facing a shortage of cattle due to previous droughts, the cattle that are being produced are very high quality, Dolezal adds, and that makes a difference. "The price of beef at retail and foodservice is at an all-time high compared to competing proteins pork and poultry," he says. "But beef is still moving at these high prices because it's delivering on tenderness, juiciness and flavor."

Data-driven decision-making has also led to innovation. In the last five plus years, crossing dairy cows with beef genetics has produced more Prime Choice and Premium brands like Certified Angus Beef prior, Dolezal says. "Prior to this cross breeding, purebred dairy cattle were ineligible for most premium brands. So, that was all accomplished through data collection and analysis to determine where they fit and where they made a contribution."

Evolution of beef grading

Practices for assessing beef cattle began in the 1920's with graders quickly assessing carcasses on or off a production line and giving them a USDA grade based on appearances, Hardcastle recalls.

But as the beef industry grew and commercial processing became more efficient, the industry looked at alternative practices. In the early 2000's, the USDA, in conjunction with industry leaders like Cargill, started to invest in camera technology to evaluate beef carcasses. Numerous trials

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AMERICAN PRAIRIE from page 3

directly to ranchers. It has also emerged as a counterweight to another conservation group in the region.

As American Prairie buys family ranches and converts them into bison habitat, a contingent of locals in the area worry the group is driving longstanding families from ranching.

"Nothing could be further from the truth," insisted Geddes. "We've done, like, 53 land deals. Only one family ever left that region."

At the same time, American Prairie has 15 people with families and children living in Phillips County.

"They're part of that community going forward," he said.

Free Market Approach

American Prairie pays market prices for ranches, then converts them to bison habitat with some opportunities for local cattle ranchers to lease grazing allotments.

"I come from a free market environmental background, and I was always criticizing environmentalists for using the power of the state to get what they want," said Geddes, who joined American Prairie in 2011. "And I was like, 'If you want it, raise the money and buy it.'"

That's what American Prairie continues to do, attracting criticism from politicians in Montana who are otherwise outspoken supporters of free-market thinking.

In September, Montana Gov. Greg Gianforte — a former software entrepreneur from New Jersey — joined Montana's entire congressional delegation in writing to Interior Secretary Doug Burgum about APR's grazing permit applications.

The letter warned that American Prairie is "dedicated to 're-wilded,' free-roaming bison and converting Montana's historic farms and ranches into the largest wildlife refuge in the continental United States."

The officials argued this would "remove immense swaths of land from production agriculture with far reaching implications" and "undermine the proud heritage of these small, agriculture-focused communities."

VALUES: For Dale Veseth, the decision to donate rather than sell reflects practical realities and deeper values about maintaining Montana's ranching heritage. (Photo courtesy of Ranchers Stewardship Alliance)

"Once the damage is done, and these generational farms and ranches are gone, they cannot be brought back," the Montana leaders wrote.

Geddes pushed back against these characterizations, saying Montana's high northern plains have long been the scene of agricultural downsizing.

"It's like, what, 2% of Americans, maybe less than that, work in ag," he said, "There are cows up there now, or at least as many as when we started. Maybe slightly fewer people, but not a precipitous decline.

"We're just a convenient scapegoat, I think"

Meanwhile, In Wyoming

While Montana grapples with this high-profile debate over the future of ranching and conservation, Wyoming hasn't seen the establishment of groups exactly like American Prairie or the RSA.

Dave Pellatz, executive director of the Thunder Basin Grasslands Prairie Ecosystem Association in Douglas, told Cowboy State Daily he's not aware of anything comparable happening in Wyoming.

"Ranching succession has been an issue for a long time," Pellatz said. "And as land prices continue to go higher, how do you pass that on generationally becomes more and more of an issue."

He explained the fundamental challenge facing many ag operations: "You've got multiple children. So it's difficult to leave the ranch to one because that's generally the assets of the ranching family. And what do you do with the rest of the kids?"

While Wyoming ranch families are choosing conservation easements and exploring various succession strategies, Pellatz said he hasn't seen anything quite like the Veseth donation.

"Everyone's situation obviously is different. And for some folks, this might be a good solution," he said, though he noted that donation means "you're not getting money for it."

Looking Forward

For Dale Veseth, the decision to donate rather than sell reflects practical realities and deeper values about maintaining Montana's ranching heritage.

With the average age of ranchers now at 60 and full-time ranchers under 35 representing just 12% of the agricultural population, he sees his gift as creating opportunities for the next generation.

The ranch will eventually offer access programs through RSA, providing aspiring ranchers who don't have "$20 million to buy a ranch and then several more million to equip it" a chance to enter the business through education and carefully structured leasing arrangements.

As debates continue over whether organizations like American Prairie or RSA offer better models for conservation and rural sustainability, Veseth remains focused on preserving what he sees as essential: keeping the land in agricultural production and maintaining rural communities.

"RSA is going to have a forum," Veseth said. "They will have an avenue for people that have spent their life on the land and want other people to have that opportunity, raise food, and be the backbone of these rural local communities.

"I'm extremely happy I'm a rancher. I think I had one of the few opportunities that most people will never have."

David Madison can be reached at

WALMART BEEF PLANT from page 1

allow Walmart to pay half of the annual tax rate for 10 years. The 320-square-foot facility will bring Angus beef products directly to Walmart stores throughout the Midwest, providing more transparency in the food supply chain and offering fresher, higher-quality beef to local stores, the company has noted.

The plant officially opened in July and already has hired more than 150 workers, a figure that eventually is expected to grow to about 600 employees when fully operational.

Walmart is shipping the Angus beef from Sustainable Beef LLC in North Platte, Neb., which officially began its own slaughter operations in May.

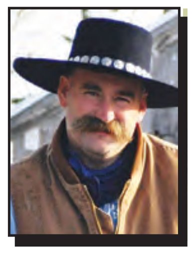
– Meatingplace.com

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

cattlemans@virtualimages.us

Time to increase the discussion about rebuilding cow numbers

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



With correct searching you can still find a tremendous amount of research that indicates that all animal derived products are great for gut health, cardiovascular and mental health.

So much has been said about the increased importing of beef from Argentina to decrease the price of beef in the retail case.

I think a good number of people have done an excellent job comparing the nutrient dense beef cost compared to other food items that can't hold a candle to the value beef is even at $7 per pound for ground beef. I have been as upset as anyone else about the opening up ships to haul Argentinian beef into our country, but it was Steve Stratford who said calmly, "there is not one more pound of beef in the market around the world as a result of this announcement." He is correct and I suggest we shift the discussion right away.

So the truth is that beef demand has been increasing. Some of it driven by the carnivore craze that is taking place, but in searching some information for this discussion, I found some very troubling data. I thought we are over the hump on all of the negative messages that exist with beef consumption and nothing could be further from the truth.

The number of "new" studies that seem to be regurgitating the same old rhetoric about fat and weight gain have not died. In fact some cancer centers seem to be trying to take on the narrative in attempt to remove beef from our diet period. Quite honestly the movement seems to be strong that moving people away from animal products is still afoot.

With correct searching you can still find a tremendous amount of research that indicates that all animal derived products are great for gut health, cardiovascular and mental health. In fact, I have identified two that I wanted to share here.

In 2023, this analysis showed that the more rigorous the study, the more positive and consistent the relation between meat consumption and better mental health. The current body of evidence precludes causal and temporal inferences.

Meat and mental health: A meta-analysis of meat consumption, depression, and anxiety.
– PubMed

In 2020, this report indicated the majority of studies— especially the higher quality studies— showed that those who avoided meat consumption had significantly higher rates or risk of depression, anxiety, and/or self-harm behaviors. There was mixed evidence for temporal relations, but the study design had a lack of rigor precluded for inferences of causal relations. The study does not support meat avoidance as a strategy to benefit psychological health.

Meat and mental health: a systematic review of meat abstention and depression, anxiety, and related phenomena.
– PubMed

While I do not see the logic in anyway shape or form to encourage another country to increase beef imports into the United States, I take issue with the premise that drought is the sole reason that the cow herd here is at a historical low.

If you follow what is happening around the world the inventory of beef cattle if troubling. We need to increase the discussion about rebuilding beef cow numbers and explain how essential beef consumption is to human and planet health.

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.

Why beef prices may continue to skyrocket

Consumer beef prices will get worse before they get better, Omaha Steaks President and chief executive Nate Rempe said in a recent television interview.

Rempe told Fox Business channel host Maria Bartiromo that the heifer retention needed to rebuild the U.S. herd is "a double-edged sword," because it would only make beef supplies tighter in the early years of the cycle.

"We've started to see good signals that that's happening, but that means that the supply is gonna continue to shrink as fewer cattle are going to market," Rempe said. "So we are headed for what I'm calling, Maria, the $10 a pound reality. By third quarter of '26, families are gonna see $10 a pound ground beef in the grocery store."

He expects no "meaningful" reduction in prices before 2027.

Government data showed the price of ground beef averaging more than $6.30 per pound in September.

Rempe forecast that peak beef prices could still be nearly a year away. "I think that'll hit us around Q3 '26, and it's gonna be tough on families. I mean, that's gonna be quite a shock," he said.

– Meatingplace.com

Report: DOJ closed multi-year beef probe just before Trump ordered new investigation

One of the central mysteries behind the DOJ's newly ordered investigation of beef packer concentration has now been solved.

On Nov. 7, when President Trump ordered an investigation of the nation's largest beef processors, the status of an earlier Department of Justice probe originally announced in 2020 was unclear. According to a new report from Bloomberg, that five-year-old case was closed just weeks before Trump's announcement, though the DOJ did not issue any statement about its closure.

First announced in June 2020, the DOJ's earlier meatpacking antitrust probe began under the first Trump administration and continued through the Biden administration. In the years that followed, Attorneys General William Barr and Merrick Garland did not comment on the inquiry, though numerous members of Congress publicly appealed for updates about how the investigation was developing.

According to Bloomberg's report, National Beef confirmed the 2020 probe's closure with no findings, and that the company has received no word from the DOJ about the new investigation.

Last week, Tyson, JBS and National Beef reported earnings amid news of the latest investigation, and all reported substantial losses in their beef business. For Tyson, beef losses tripled in the fiscal year to $1.1 billion, while for JBS Beef North America, gross profit fell from $341 million in Q3 2024 to $170 million in Q3 2025. Meanwhile, for MBRF-owned National Beef, Q3 gross profit fell 10.2% to $130 million.

– Meatingplace,com

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Barns of Pike County

Though miles apart, Caverly Brothers' barns share 'family resemblance'

By CAROLYN ALLEN
Special to The Advocate

CAVERLY BARNS: Two of the writer's favorite Pike County, Mo., barns were built more than a century ago by the Caverly brothers. Above left, the William Caverly barn in Peno Township, and above right, the Nelson Caverly barn in Buffalo Township. (Photos by Carolyn Allen)

In keeping with all the family get-togethers that December brings, I thought it would be appropriate to recognize a couple of barns built by brothers. These two beautiful old Pike County barns – though miles apart and in different townships – were both built by the Caverly family over 100 years ago and both are still standing as of November 2025.

Nelson H. Caverly built the red barn on the original Caverly homestead in the Grassy Creek neighborhood in 1902, while older brother William L. Caverly built the other barn in the Haw Creek neighborhood in the 1880's or 90's. Both Nelson and William were sons of Phillip Caverly.

Ancestry.com indicates that Philip Caverly was born in 1814 in New York and came to Missouri sometime before 1840. He married Nancy Elizabeth Parks in Pike County in 1840. Her family was from New York by way of Ohio, and she had come to Pike with her father William Parks in 1838. By the 1850 census Phillip and Nancy were living on the farm on Grassy Creek where they raised their children and lived until Phillip's death during the cholera epidemic of 1873.

When Phillip died, his oldest son William had already married and bought his own farm, so his second son Nelson H. took over running the family farm. He married Cornelia Yeater in 1876, and they settled on the old homestead.

There was a barn on the farm at the time, but the Louisiana Press Journal of Aug1902 had a short article about the barn of N. H. Caverly on Frankford Road burning. It went on to say that the loss was extensive: 5 tons of hay; 300 bushels of corn and 160 bushels of wheat. He didn't wait long to rebuild, however, because a note in the October 1902 Louisiana Press Journal reported that Nelson Caverly had begun work on a new barn. The article went on to say that it was being rapidly constructed.

That brings us to William L. Caverly's barn up in the Haw Creek neighborhood. William was the oldest of Philip and Nancy's sons and was born on the old homestead on Grassy Creek. He married Mary E. Smith and settled on the farm in Peno Township around 1880. According to his descendants, he built the home and barn around that time, and the farm stayed in the family over 100 years. The Pike County Chronicle of Mar24, 1893, however, reported that William Caverly had begun painting his new barn, so the barn might have been built slightly after the house or perhaps he waited to paint it or even built another barn.

William's barn is a bit older than Nelson's, but the limestone brick foundations give the barns a slight "family resemblance." It makes you wonder if the brothers shared ideas or if they both borrowed traits from the original Phillip Caverly barn on the old homestead. Both barns still have the old wood siding, but it runs horizontally on William's and vertically on Nelson's. Nelson's barn is a bank barn and does not have the open alleyway in back that William's does.

Although scattered around Pike County and beyond, the Caverly family apparently stayed close. There are many articles and tidbits in the old newspapers about reunions and birthday parties enjoyed by the family. In fact, when Nelson Caverly's barn burned he was away from the farm visiting relatives. Nelson and wife Cornelia, whose only daughter died young, even provided a home for nieces and nephews from time to time.

After William's death in 1917, son William H. (Harve) Caverly lived on and operated the Haw Creek farm. Harve's obituary noted that he'd spent his entire life farming the land on which he was born. He owned the farm until his death in 1966, and then the farm was owned by his daughter Virginia and her husband Charles Unsell. It remained in the Caverly/Unsell family until recently.

Nelson Caverly and his wife Cornelia moved to town around 1906. He died in 1923, but the farm stayed in the family until his wife's death in 1934. Their nephew, James Caverly, (son of Ed Caverly and grandson of Philip Caverly) lived on the old homestead until Cornelia's death. Later that year a sheriff's partition sale of all of Nelson Caverly's property including the farm was held. B. A. Stiers of St. Louis bought the farm which was then owned by his son-in-law Pearl Hufford. The farm later belonged to the Love family until just recently when it was sold at auction.

The new owners of both barns have cleared out the brush that had grown up around them. Unfortunately, removing the brush exposed a large hole in the back wall of the William Caverly barn which seems to be growing larger. The rest of the barn appears to be in good shape for its age! If there is damage in the Nelson Caverly barn it isn't visible from the front.

Cornelia Caverly's obituary referred to the family as Pike County pioneers. The 1925 Louisiana Press Journal said, "The name Caverly is an honored one in Pike annals…" I know I'm grateful for the two beautiful barns the brothers left us. They're two of my favorites!

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

Tyson ends 'climate-friendly' beef claims in greenwashing settlement

Tyson Foods agreed to stop promoting its beef as "climate friendly" and will no longer claim it plans to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, settling a lawsuit that accused the company of misleading consumers about its environmental impact.

The Environmental Working Group, which filed the 2024 lawsuit, alleged Tyson created a false impression that its beef products were "climate-smart" despite lacking a detailed plan to meet its net-zero goals. The group said marketing around Tyson's Brazen Beef brand particularly misled consumers. Tyson had promoted Brazen Beef as the first product to receive USDA approval for a "climate-friendly" label, citing a 10% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions during production compared to other beef.

Under the settlement, Tyson will refrain from making similar claims for five years unless independently verified by an expert agreed by both parties. The company denied wrongdoing and said it settled only to avoid the cost and distraction of litigation. Tyson noted it has invested more than $65 million to reduce emissions tied to its beef operations.

The case adds to a wave of challenges over alleged corporate "greenwashing." In early November, New York Attorney General Letitia James announced that JBS USA agreed to pay $1.1 million to settle similar claims tied to its own net-zero pledge.

Rollins says beef packer concentration is '100%' a problem

Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins said in a television interview that concentration in the beefpacking industry needs to be addressed, called Brazilian ownership a "major issue" in the sector and suggested smaller processors produce "healthier" food.

In a Fox News appearance Monday, starting after four minutes, she discussed issues of ground beef prices, imports and U.S. herd size. "Is there something that needs to be done about the processors?" host Will Cain asked in a followup question.

"One hundred percent, yes, when you have four major processors, two owned by the Brazilians," Rollins replied, holding up two fingers in a V, "so half of that is not even American owned. You have a major issue when they are processing 85% of the beef in America. We have to decentralize, deregulate, invest in and incentivize smaller processors. Instead of processing 800 head a day, they could process 800 head a year, and … you have more locally produced, healthier food."

She did not mention the beef industry plan presented last week by the USDA, which contained grants and inspection fee reductions to encourage smaller processors, as well as loan and subsidized insurance premiums for newer or beginning ranchers.

Pilgrim's Pride Corp., owned since 2009 by Brazil-based JBS, was the top corporate donor to President Donald Trump's inauguration organizing committee, giving $5 million, according to filings with the Federal Election Commission. JBS held its long-awaited U.S. initial public offering in June, becoming a listed company on the New York Stock Exchange.

In April, the Department of Justice proposed closing its antitrust field offices in Chicago and San Francisco. The proposal drew criticism from a bipartisan group of senators, citing concerns about weakening enforcement in the agriculture and tech sectors.

In August, President Donald Trump signed an Executive Order rescinding "Promoting Competition in the American Economy," an earlier order by President Joe Biden in July 2021. The move marked a rollback of one of Biden's signature economic policy initiatives, which had targeted consolidation in sectors such as meatpacking, rail and broadband and had sought to strengthen antitrust enforcement.

The Biden directive had instructed federal agencies to take a wide range of actions aimed at boosting competition across industries, including agriculture, technology, and labor markets. In his order, Trump did not outline new directives to replace the 2021 policy but specified that the revocation does not alter any legal authorities of federal agencies or the Office of Management and Budget.

Updates to Livestock Risk Protection insurance give producers more flexibility

FORSYTH, Mo. – Livestock producers now have more flexibility under recent updates to USDA's Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) program, which helps safeguard against unexpected price declines in feeder cattle, fed cattle and swine markets, says Jacob Hefley, University of Missouri Extension field specialist in agricultural business.

LRP is a federally administered insurance program that allows producers to establish a price floor for their livestock while still benefiting from potential market gains. Policies are sold year-round through approved insurance agents and are designed to provide peace of mind in volatile markets.

Examples of the new changes include expanded eligibility for forward-contracted animals, new coverage options for cull dairy cows marketed for beef and a drought hardship exemption that allows feeder cattle sold early to remain eligible for indemnity when qualifying drought conditions occur. These updates expand how LRP can be used and make coverage more applicable to a wider range of production situations.

MU Extension has updated its publication "Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) Insurance" to reflect the most recent program changes. The revised guide walks through how LRP works, outlines current coverage details and provides step-by-step examples of how premiums and indemnities are calculated.

"The goal of the guide is to make complicated program easier to understand," says Hefley. "It's a resource for producers who want to better understand how LRP coverage works and how to evaluate it as part of their marketing decisions."

The updated "Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) Insurance" guide is available free online at https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/g459. For questions, contact Hefley at jhefley@missouri.edu.

Missouri 4-H'ers take top awards at American Royal Livestock Contest

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Missouri 4-H was well-represented at the 2025 American Royal 4-H Livestock Judging Contest on Oct. 19. The team from Clinton County included Shanna Aughdinbaugh, Cass Kleeman, Reagan Rodgers and Dylan Swindler and was coached by Cody Sloan and Shane Bedwell. The team of four competed against individuals from 19 states, placing seventh during the awards ceremony that evening.

The highlight of the evening came when Cass Kleeman and Reagan Rodgers were named High and Reserve High Individuals Overall, respectively, said Kelsey Fuller, University of Missouri Extension state 4-H agriculture educator.

The awards were a cherry on top for the hard work and determination put in through the summer and fall, she said.

The team from Clinton County placed second at the State Livestock Judging Contest in June 2025, which qualified them to compete on the national level. This team also competed at the Aksarben Livestock Judging Contest in September, with the addition of Mackenzie Hill, placing second as a team. The American Royal Contest comprised four cattle classes, two goat classes, two swine classes and two sheep classes for live evaluation, alongside six sets of reasons.

"This team certainly has put in the time and effort to deserve awards such as these and more," Fuller said. "We look forward to watching these four youth continue to grow and develop their skills in the years to come."

Also taking top spots at the American Royal Livestock Judging Contest were past Missouri 4-H members Ben Brubaker, Braydon Cull, Beau Graves and Carman Woodworth. The team represented Missouri FFA in the contest.

A legacy of antitrust enforcement in the U.S. beef industry

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

That America is now aware that concentration in the beef packing industry has distorted the ranchers' cattle market and the consumers' beef market was firmly established by President Trump's directive to the U.S. Department of Justice to launch an investigation into beef packer price-fixing, price manipulation, and illicit collusion.

While we let that settle in, we must ask how we got here. Afterall, there's been complaints about the monopoly control over the United States' beef supply chain for decades, with no meaningful government enforcement of our U.S. antitrust laws or the Packers and Stockyards Act (which specifically prohibits anticompetitive conduct in livestock markets) – but with one very important exception.

We must go back about 18 years, to early 2008 when we learned that Brazilian-owned JBS wanted to purchase our nation's fourth largest beef packer, National Beef Packing Company, along with Smithfield Beef Group, and the then largest U.S. feedlot, Five Rivers Ranch Cattle Feeding. We immediately requested the U.S. Attorney General block the mergers, we asked the U.S. Senate Judiciary committee to launch an investigation, and we filed a private lawsuit to enforce our U.S. antitrust laws.

By early 2009, after the DOJ had filed an antitrust enforcement action, JBS withdrew one of its proposed acquisitions, the purchase of National Beef Packing Company. That was our first antitrust victory, albeit a partial one, and it was the first meaningful antitrust enforcement action filed by the DOJ in decades on behalf of our industry.

Although the DOJ's action slowed the formation of our monopolized beef supply chain, it didn't stop it and our industry continued to shrink while monopoly-structured cattle and beef markets persisted.

So, we formally requested a second investigation. We asked USDA's Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration to investigate the beef packers' cattle procurement practices. That investigation took several years, and a report was issued in 2014 stating that the packers use of alternative marketing arrangements (AMAs) has a negative price effect on fed cattle, but no enforcement action was taken.

While we were waiting for this disappointing outcome, in 2013 the South Dakota Law Review published my antitrust article titled, "Under Siege: The U.S. Live Cattle Industry," which helped focus the legal profession's attention to antitrust concerns in the beef supply chain.

But after cattle prices started their inexplicable collapse in 2015, even while beef prices were at record levels, we filed our third formal request for an investigation. This time asking the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee to determine why cattle prices collapsed and why there was intense volatility in the Live Cattle futures market. This resulted in yet another government investigative report that came out in 2018, but the report stated that investigators did not review internal packer documents. And, again, no enforcement action was taken.

Undeterred, in late 2018 we made our fourth request for a government investigation, this one to the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission, in which we asked for an investigation into packer-related or packer-directed trading activities. But there was still no government action beyond the investigation.

By 2019, it was clear the government was disinterested in launching a thorough, probing investigation that would reform the monopolistic structure of the beef supply chain.

And so, in 2019 we filed a national class action antitrust lawsuit alleging the four largest beef packers unlawfully colluded to suppress cattle prices while inflating beef prices.

After we filed our lawsuit and after the National Farmers Union joined with us, many other segments of the beef supply chain filed companion lawsuits, including consumers and retailers, which has attracted even more attention to antitrust concerns in the beef packing industry.

Just months after we filed our antitrust lawsuit, Tyson had a fire in its Holcomb, KS, plant that caused market anomalies no one could explain – rising beef prices and falling cattle prices, and the USDA launched an investigation into the beef packers' possible role. Then during the 2020 COVID pandemic, beef shelves in some grocery stores went empty and President Trump called upon the DOJ to investigate the beef packers' possible role.

Now we see the aftermath of years of neglect – cattle prices were recently falling while consumer beef prices were reaching new highs. And, President Trump is intervening by again calling for an investigation, and this time alleging unlawful conduct on the part of the monopolistic beef packers.

This is welcome news for both ranchers and consumers. We hope it results in the elimination of monopoly control over our cattle and beef markets so ranchers and consumers can receive the benefits of a competitive market, not one controlled by monopolies.

OSU livestock specialist outlines potential impacts of the Mexican border reopening

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

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

Cattle markets have been nervously reacting to rumors and speculation that the Mexican border may reopen at any time to cattle imports into the U.S.

Many questions are swirling about when the border might open, how many cattle are backlogged in Mexico and how fast cattle might cross into the U.S. Some background and recent events are helpful to sort out what to expect if the border reopens.

For 20 years from 2004-23, U.S. imports of Mexican cattle have averaged 1.17 million head, ranging from 0.703 to 1.47 million head per year. On average, Mexican cattle imports are equal to 3.3% of the U.S. calf crop. Mexican cattle imports include steers and spayed heifers, with heifers accounting for an average of 15.6% of total cattle imports.

Severe drought in Mexico, especially in 2023 and 2024, significantly impacted exports of cattle to the U.S. In 2023, a total of 1.25 million head of Mexican cattle were imported, including 28.4% spayed heifers. In 2024, a total of 1.25 million head of Mexican cattle were imported prior to the border closure in late November. Given the typical seasonal pattern of imports, total Mexican cattle imports in 2024 were on pace to reach a record or near-record level of 1.45 million to 2 million head.

Total imports prior to the border closure included 37.1% spayed heifers, a record level of heifers in the import total. Total steers in the import mix both years were below average levels. Drought conditions, combined with rising U.S. cattle prices, were major factors in the increase in Mexican cattle exports to the U.S. and especially for the increase in spayed heifer exports. Mexican cattle exports in 2023 and 2024 were most likely not sustainable and indicated cattle liquidation.

What would have happened in 2025 if the border had not been closed? No one knows, of course, but the events of the previous two years likely mean that less cattle would have been available for export. It appears that 2025 cattle exports to the U.S. would have likely totaled perhaps 950,000 to 1 million head with an open border. A total of 229,055 head did cross in the brief periods that the border was open earlier in the year.

The big question is how many potential cattle exports have been reabsorbed into the domestic Mexican market. There are indications that Mexican feedlots have been placing Mexican cattle, which are substantially devalued relative to the U.S. market, in lieu of Central American cattle that typically backfill the Mexican cattle supply.

Improved drought conditions in Mexico do allow more flexibility for Mexican cattle producers to hold cattle. For example, the October 12-month moving average of rainfall in Chihuahua was at the highest level since July 2023. However, with little prospects of the border opening until recently, and only rumors now, many Mexican cattle may have already been marketed back into the domestic market.

Certainly, there are no prospects for spayed heifer imports into the U.S. The limited time frame for spayed heifers to be exported combined with the uncertainty of the border — even if it is opened — makes it risky and unlikely that heifers would be scheduled for export. There may also be more heifer retention now in northern Mexico. On net, it seems likely that perhaps 200,000-400,000 head of Mexican cattle may currently be available for export.

When the border opens it will take time for cattle exports to begin, and they will likely start slowly. Border facilities have to be restaffed, and producers have to prepare cattle and paperwork for export. All of that plus extra inspections and protocols likely means that very few cattle would cross before the end of the year. It will be a trickle rather than a flood when it happens.

Texas A&M System launches 2 major meat-related projects

The Texas A&M University System recently announced plans to build a major meat science center in addition to adding a research feedlot complex at its West Texas-based affiliated academic institution.

The System's Board of Regents approved construction of a new Meat Science and Technology Center that will offer modern laboratories, classrooms and a meet processing floor to provide hands-on learning opportunities for Texas A&M-RELLIS students. Ground will be broken on the $114.6-million project early next year and plans include outdoor space to support animal evaluation and handling along with the state-of-the-art laboratories and educational spaces, the university said in a news release.

Funding for the project is being provided by several donors, including Texas A&M AgriLife Research, Texas A&M University, the Texas A&M University System in addition to several other individual donors. The 75,000-square-foot facility is expected to open in the spring of 2028 and is expected to accelerate innovation in meat production and enhance the understanding of the science that can result in sustainable and efficient meat production, school officials noted in the release.

Meanwhile, West Texas A&M University broke ground this month to launch construction of a $15-million research feedlot complex near WT's Canyon, Texas, campus. Plans include developing opportunities for WT students to learn both how and why meeting increasing demand for protein is vital at schools that focus on beef cattle feeding and meat production. Funding for the project involved a USDA grant in addition to individual donors affiliated with the school, which has been part of the Texas A&M University System since 1990, according to a news release announcing the groundbreaking.

– Meatingplace.com

Historic government shutdown ends

The US House of Representatives late Wednesday, Nov. 12 voted to pass, and President Trump signed into law, a funding bill that ended the longest government shutdown in history.

H.R. 5371, the "Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act," makes continuing appropriations and extensions for fiscal year 2026. It also extends provisions of the 2018 farm bill.

The continuing resolution follows a 43-day stalemate that saw furloughed and unpaid federal workers, food assistance frozen, snarled air travel and a pause on market reporting, among other effects.

Quick to praise the largely partisan 222-209 vote was the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

"American cattle producers need the federal government running at full capacity to provide critical services and market data," said Ethan Lane, NCBA's senior vice president of government affairs, in a statement. "… While we're grateful to the Trump administration for easing the burden of the shutdown on producers, it still caused widespread disruptions, and we are glad it is now resolved."

– Meatingplace.com

A highway bill for the future

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

Government does two things well: nothing and overreact.

The first is a big part of the reason why our infrastructure is crumbling. You can't hardly drive anywhere without slamming a bone-shattering pothole, getting stuck in awful traffic, or creeping across a weight-restricted bridge. How is it that we live in the wealthiest, most powerful country in the world, but the roads we take to work, to school, or anywhere else are crumbling and not keeping up with our growing communities or innovation?

The Highway Trust Fund and the gas tax were based on a fair and commonsense principle—if you use our roads, you should pay to maintain them. One of the problems is that, in recent years, millions of electric vehicles have taken to the road in the US, while paying nothing into the federal highway trust fund to maintain our roads. As a result, states and communities are getting fewer dollars to fix roads and bridges.

The other part of the problem, of course, is the overreacting. Instead of passing commonsense guidelines to ensure road and bridge projects put communities' best interests in mind, we got an incoherent mess of bureaucratic red tape that causes unnecessary delays. That's why, today, it takes an average of 7 years (and often longer) to complete a major highway project, and even then, these projects usually have worse environmental outcomes than those seen in other countries.

It is absolute insanity. If you hit traffic taking your kid to preschool, we should be able to fix it before your kid graduates from college. These delays aren't just incredibly frustrating for folks who want to see these projects get done, but also cost us billions, meaning the limited highway dollars we have don't go nearly as far—and the can gets kicked down the road on countless other important projects.

So how do we fix this?

We have to get back to the basics. If you use our roads, you should pay your fair share to fix and maintain them. Most of us have already been doing that for decades, there's no reason electric vehicle (EV) users, including major corporations like Amazon, which already has some 25,000 EVs on the roads and is expecting to hit 100,000 in the next five years, shouldn't have to pay their fair share too. They are making a bunch of money delivering packages to our home each day, but getting a free ride while doing it. We've also got to make sure our tax dollars are going as far as possible. To that end, we've got to cut through the red tape and give states more flexibility to fix the most critical road and bridge challenges they're facing.

If we want to break the cycle of doing nothing and overreacting, we have to pass a highway bill that anticipates and contemplates fixing the problems of the next 20 years, not overreacting to the last 10 years.

The border situation that has not been resolved

By STEVE DITTMER
Executive Vice President
Agribusiness Freedom Foundation

Ed. Note: It was announced Friday, November 14, that, subsequent to new information and recommendations from officials monitoring conditions, President Trump has removed tariffs from beef, coffee, bananas and cacao beans and other food products. That should make supplemental lean beef for grinding that has been sourced from Brazil the last couple of years available at more competitive prices again.

It's rare that the beef industry has to explain high prices to anyone -- but that's where we are now. The reasons are really quite simple and obvious, having to do with drought, increased operating costs, taxes and regulations -- all causes of a reduced cattle supply. Supply and demand does still work.

There are some things that government can do to help. Congress and President Trump have done yeoman's work on taxes and deregulation, which have not really had time to kick in yet. Fuel costs are going down, which will help all the way through the whole economy, from pasture and field to trucking and processing to the plate.

Some other ideas floated about aren't really practical, could damage American cattle producers and are forwarded from well-intentioned people who don't understand cattle or beef production -- especially ground beef production.

One help would be boosting the supply of feeder cattle and there are hundreds of thousands of feeder cattle south of the border that could help ease the pressure in relatively short order.

The people we've talked to who have examined the NWS inspection and treatment protocol of cattle at the border have confidence that it is properly designed and effective. There are steps that are taken at the Mexican source, multiple steps at the border points on the Mexican side of the border and more steps on the U.S. side of the border. Attention to detail and using the right procedures and products should keep those animals from being the problem.

As we've written here before, the likelihood of the new world screwworm coming across the border is much higher from migrating birds, wolves and coyotes, deer and other wildlife. The ranchers on our side of the border will have to take major surveillance responsibility for their operations and for the rest of the country.

USDA has met with Mexican officials; stationed USDA surveillance teams in Mexico; worked on jump starting the renovation of a fruit fly production plant to produce sterile screw worm flies in Mexico; is retrofitting an old plant at Moore Air Base in Texas to serve as a distribution station; has added NWS surveillance to the cattle fever tick rider patrols' duties and has committed to constructing a new production plant in Texas. USDA has also announced the opening of a new distribution facility at Tampico, Mexico that will allow more efficient aerial distribution of sterile flies in northern Mexico. These steps are built on the only way science has found to impede the spread of flies northward in numbers.

USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins told Reuters Nov. 4 that there have been 11 detections in Mexican states bordering the U.S. recently but they have all been contained and treated. She also said Mexico has been taking the whole problem very seriously and has really upped their efforts in recent months. She met with Mexican officials in Mexico City recently and said the agriculture departments of both countries are working together better than ever before.

That brings us back to the realities involving the cattle industry on both sides of the border. If cattle can be inspected and eliminated as a possible source of NWS, and the reduced cattle supply is the primary short term problem for retail prices the Administration is concerned with, then it seems logical that the government needs to continue to accelerate its efforts at the source of NWS and let the industry on both sides of the border deal with the cattle supply problem. There are cattlemen, indeed whole communities -- on both sides of the border suffering major losses and it's time, now that we've had time to assess the situation, to get some things moving.

Texas has put together efforts to deal with the fly there and many of those feedyards and associated parts of the production chain are needing action, as well as wildlife ranches. New Mexico's ports of entry are in the same situation. But Arizona has not been getting as much attention and the lack of cattle that normally cross through ports there are hurting the production chain there, too.

Not only are American feedyards losing millions of dollars in lost revenue, they are losing Mexican customer relationships built up over decades. Cattle industry companies whose business model for years has been built on having Mexican feeder cattle are in danger of collapsing and disappearing.

And longer term, Mexican cattlemen and organizations are evaluating building up their feeding industry, which would permanently displace the flow of hundreds of thousands of needed feeder cattle to U.S. feedyards.

Foreign animal diseases are not to be trifled with. But there needs to be sensible, intelligent steps taken to manage them, when U.S. businesses, commercial and diplomatic relationships with neighboring countries and a center of the plate food item is involved.

And it's not just direct effect on cattle operations. We've seen the signatures of literally hundreds of business owners from both sides of the border asking for the ports to be reopened.

From what we've seen, Arizona would love to be the pilot program for getting the border open, especially since its border state of Sonora has very strict protocols in place and a livestock tracing system in place. Sonora inspects any livestock and other animals entering into the state from other Mexican states and only Sonoran born and raised cattle are eligible for exporting to the U.S.

We saw one petition sent to Secretary Rollins hand signed by ranchers, businessmen, cowboys and others involved in the cattle trade plus homemakers on both sides of the border containing nearly 120 signatures. An online petition from change.org had over 1,000 signatures.

Those petitions were particularly concerned with the possibility of USDA permanently closing the Nogales, Az. port of entry, a key cog in Arizona's cattle industry. The folks that had been using the Nogales port of entry are requesting the USDA reopen the current facilities for now and construct new shipping facilities at Nogales. It used to be the primary conduit for cattle going into feedyards in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona before its deteriorating condition has reduced traffic in recent years. Nogales is located on I-19 and is the highest volume port of entry for all goods in the Southwest and fourth-largest for livestock.

To help evaluate the situation, the Arizona Cattle Feeders and the Sonoran Cattleman's Association have invited Sec. Rollins and her team to visit the ports of entry and the cattle industry in Sonora to appraise the surveillance and monitoring systems in place. Sonora already uses traceability tags to track cattle movement in Sonora and has 400 inspectors across the state to watch for any NWS incursions. The state also has dispersed NWS traps.

Everyone understands that USDA has had a lot on its plate with the hard pace the Trump Administration has been keeping, including foreign trade from throughout the world and then the government shutdown and the difficulties with SNAP and other nutrition programs. But getting more feeder cattle into the U.S. under strict safety protocols would be a relatively quick way to ease beef supply problems and demonstrate measured, careful response by the Administration to both consumer and cattlemen's needs. The cattlemen in the region are also requesting more frequent updates on the status of monitoring in Mexico and the status of port re-openings.

The Cattleman's Advocate is available free at the following area locations:

Area livestock markets

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

Other locations

- **A&S Printing**
  Monroe City, MO
- **Abel's/McDonald's**
  Bowling Green, MO
- **Agriservices of Brunswick**
  Brunswick, MO
- **American Bank of Missouri**
  Wellsville, MO
  Middletown, MO
  Montgomery City, MO
- **Angell's Western Wear**
  Centralia, MO
- **Bank of Montgomery County**
  Montgomery City, MO
- **Bowling Green Tractor**
  Bowling Green, MO
- **Bowling Green Veterinary Clinic**
  Bowling Green, MO
- **Central Elevator**
  Silex, MO
- **C & S Grocery**
  Harrisburg, MO
- **Dawson's Store**
  Thompson, MO
- **Dearwester Grain Services**
  Mt. Sterling, IL
  Golden, IL
  Carthage, IL
- **Eastern Missouri Commission Co.**
  Bowling Green, MO
- **Farmers Cooperative**
  Ewing, MO
- **Farmers Cooperative Services**
  New London, MO
- **Farmers Cooperative Services**
  Palmyra, MO
- **Farmer's Elevator & Exchange**
  Monroe City, MO
- **FCS Financial**
  Columbia, MO
  Hannibal, MO
- **Feeders Grain, Inc.**
  Bowling Green, MO
- **Fish Hook Market**
  Baylis, IL
- **Grotjan Conoco Station**
  New Franklin
- **Hank Hedges**
  O'Fallon, MO
- **Hannibal Tractor**
  Hannibal, MO
- **Hatton Vermeer Sales**
  Auxvasse, MO
- **Hilty's Meats**
  Bowling Green, MO
- **HNB Bank**
  Bowling Green, MO
  Hannibal, MO
  Monroe City, MO
  Perry, MO
- **Jones Brothers AgriServices**
  La Monte, MO
- **Jonesburg Grain Co.**
  Jonesburg, MO
- **Josephville Meat Processing**
  Wentzville, MO
- **Kingdom Feed**
  Fulton, MO
- **Kyle Hendricks**
  Buffalo, MO
- **L & S Equipment**
  Hermann, MO
- **Lehenbauer Farm Repair**
  Auxvasse, MO
- **Liberty Feed Mill**
  Liberty, IL
- **Lincoln County Farmers Co-op**
  Troy, MO
- **Littrell Feed & Seed**
  Thompson, MO
- **Martinsburg Farmers Elevator**
  Martinsburg, MO
- **Mellor Trailers**
  Boonville, MO
- **Meyer Implement**
  Bowling Green, MO
  Monroe City, MO
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  Columbia, MO
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  Perryville, MO
  Shelbina, MO
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  Washington, MO
  Wentzville, MO
- **Missouri Cattleman's Association**
  Columbia, MO
- **Missouri Valley MFA**
  Alma, MO
  Higginsville, MO
- **Monroe County Abstract & Title**
  Paris, MO
- **Monroe County Co-op**
  Paris, MO
- **Montgomery City Grain**
  Montgomery City, MO
- **Moscow Feed and Grain**
  Moscow Mills, MO
- **New Haven Farm & Feed**
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  Hermann, MO
  Montgomery City, MO
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- **Pike Feeds**
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- **Prairie Home Coop**
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- **Shetler Feed**
  Clark, MO
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- **Strattmann Feed and Transfer**
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  Fulton, MO
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- **USA Market News Office**
  Country Club, MO
- **Windmill Ridge**
  Shelbyville, MO

Digging Deeper....

By JUSTIN ANGELL

I am constantly amazed at the information we have accessible through smart phones. Some of the most interesting information I find comes from outside this country. Many long-time readers know that I am a sound money, silver and gold bug with a currently unhealthy interest in bitcoin. All of this stems from my belief that global de-dollarization is an unstoppable trend. (I'm currently researching stable coins so that opinion may change) This month's article is primarily based on a November 15 podcast from "market Velgulu" which I believe is out of India.

I enjoyed this podcast because it summarized succinctly the corrupt manipulation of the global silver markets and pending possible collapse of the LBMA in London and perhaps the COMEX here in the United States. These trends and events explain why I believe silver is set to truly spike much higher soon.

The first thing to understand is that silver is unique because it has both industrial use value and monetary value. With silver trading approximately $50 an ounce, it's hard to imagine a substantially higher price. It's well known however that some entity (leading speculative candidate is the US government or an affiliate), for unknown reasons, has manipulated silver prices lower for decades.

What makes things different now is it appears there is a massive oversupply of "printed" paper silver; so large it can't be hidden by the exchanges any longer. Historically monetary metals exchanges used overwhelming naked shorting to depress the silver market, then depended on cash settlement to discourage long contract holders from taking delivery of physical silver. But now a perfect storm is happening, trapping the short sellers in a potentially catastrophic position. This is because the silver contracts issued by the exchanges at expiration can either be cash settled or the holder/silver long can request delivery of physical silver. This year there has been an almost universal shift from cash settlement to standing for physical delivery, which is resulting in the draining of physical silver reserves from the LBMA and Comex vaults in London and New York.

This perfect storm is result of three major factors. First is silver production or more accurately, the lack of production. For the last five years, due to low prices and under investment in the silver mining industry, we have consumed much more silver than we have produced.

Estimated silver shortfall per year:
2021 - 250 million oz
2022 - 280 million oz
2023 - 315 million oz
2024 - 345 million oz
2025 - 375 million oz

The second contributor to this perfect storm is this production shortfall comes at a time when industrial use of silver is rapidly increasing. Solar panels, electric vehicles, sensitive electrical components all consume silver. For example, there is 500 ounces of silver in every Tomahawk missile.

Finally, de-dollarization also known as the debasement trade, which began with gold accumulation by global central banks, has now extended to silver for some central banks, ETFs, sovereign wealth funds, etc. Increased demand as a monetary metal following five years of below industrial consumption production.

There's the old saying that when you're in a hole, the first thing you need to do is stop digging. Well it looks to me, like whoever is holding all the short positions and has sold paper silver; would have to be in a world of hurt. The first half of November the silver market began to surge, blowing past the previous high of $50 heading towards $55. This was the market working. More demand and less product equals higher prices. However, someone very powerful apparently needed to squelch the bull run before it could pass $55. So on November 13, there was 160,000 silver contracts sold in one day. That is the equivalent of 800,000,000 ounces of silver, that's more silver than is mined in a year.

It has been estimated that silver contracts issued by the COMEX ratio to the physical silver the COMEX has to deliver on those contracts is 400 to 1. That's like 400 people playing musical chairs except there's only one chair. The reality is that for every 400 ounces being requested for delivery, there is only one ounce of physical silver available to cover that request.

Also on November 13, there were tens of thousands of December contracts rolled into March at multiple exchanges all over the world. This allows whoever is holding those short contracts 60 days before they need to cash settle or provide the silver to be delivered to those holding the long position.

India is now the largest silver importer in the world. Much of the silver being delivered on the LBMA is flowing to India. A sign of stress being caused by delivery requests at the LBMA has imposed a 30 day delay for delivering physical silver to settle the contracts. Another sign of market tension is called "backwardation". Backwardation is where spot silver is higher than deferred silver contract prices, at the MCX in India spot silver is more than a dollar an ounce higher than futures contracts.

None of what I've told you is a secret, traders at India's MCX exchange are anticipating a violent move higher and are piling on, buying thousands of silver contracts expecting to stand for delivery.

If you're in the hole, you stop digging. The problem I see is this isn't a small hole, but a hole that's been dug over decades extending to markets across the globe. But, if you're the LBMA and COMEX, it looks like you have three options. Bite the bullet and buy back the short positions. Secondly, change the rules, then be prepared to cash settle. Or finally, prepare for a temporary shutdown of the exchange until enough physical silver can be acquired to settle contracts.

The Hunt Brothers found out the hard way in 1980 that if you get the LBMA and COMEX in a corner, they will change the rules to get out.

I find it interesting after watching the silver market for 30 years that something is about to break or change. I understand that topics like this have a very narrow interest group among readers. Just wanted to bring the situation to light and have it written down in case Indian's Market Velugu's prophecy comes true that we will have $600 silver before the end of 2026.

I think way before that happens; they change the rules and cheat us all.

Bessent blames immigration for beef prices while Rollins foresees 2026 relief

A pair of interviews with Trump cabinet members provided differing perspectives on the administration's approach to beef prices.

On Sunday, Maria Bartiromo of Fox News interviewed Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, and after referencing an earlier interview with Omaha Steaks CEO Nate Rempe — who said ground beef prices may reach $10/pound next year — Bartiromo asked Bessent about the issue.

Bessent's response connected South American immigration to the rise of New World screwworm (NWS) in Mexico, which has mostly closed the U.S. border to livestock imports for the last year.

"The beef market is a very specialized market," Bessent began. "It goes in long cycles, and this is the perfect storm again — something we inherited. And there's also, because of the mass immigration, a disease that we've been rid of in North America made its way through South America as these migrants brought some of their cattle with them. Part of the problem is we've had to shut the border to Mexican beef because of this disease called the Screwworm. We're not gonna let that get our supply chain."

According to Daily Livestock Report, the U.S. imported 1.25 million cattle from Mexico in 2024, and since 2000, cattle imports from both Mexico and Canada have accounted for about 6% of U.S. commercial cattle slaughter, with a 2014 peak at nearly 8%.

Rollins: "The president is hyper, hyper-focused"

The next day, Bartiromo asked Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins about Rempe's statement, and after stating "I do believe that his forecast is not going to be correct," Rollins detailed new projections for beef prices next year.

After blaming Biden-era climate policies for causing the decline in the U.S. beef herd, Rollins mentioned the combination of drought and strong demand, and stated that pending dietary guidelines from HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., will likely further reinforce demand for beef products.

"The Trump administration has released a new plan," Rollins then said. "We are moving toward opening up 5 million acres of grazing land … and the president is hyper, hyper-focused on this. So our numbers and our formulas are showing that prices will start coming down as soon as next spring, and certainly by summer and fall of next year."

Rollins concluded with a brief update on NWS, and said USDA was getting the disease under control and looking to reopen the Mexican border to cattle imports.

– Meatingplace.com

Market Reports

Sponsored by Prairie Queen Transportation, LLC

Eastern Missouri Commission Company, Bowling Green
Market Report for Friday, November 14, 2025
Receipts: 1,659 Week ago: 671 Year ago: 829

Compared to the last special three weeks ago, steer and heifers calves under 650 lbs sold with a lower undertone with the best test on 550-600 lb and 650-700 lb steers trading 12.00-15.00 lower with yearlings not well tested on the same weight groups but selling with a lower undertone. Much of the calf offering was made up of small packages and singles with demand moderate to good. The largest offering of the day was 109 heifers weighing 1025 lbs at 273.50 and a pot load of 951 lb steers at 310.75. CME Cattle futures opened Monday limit up but that faded as on Thursday it was limit down keeping volatility in the markets very fluid with lack of stability in the markets is putting pressure on the feeder prices. Slaughter steers and heifers sold steady to 1.00 lower with slaughter cows trading steady with last week.

Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1 – Few 340-365 lbs 487.50-497.50; few 400-450 lbs 436.00-446.00; 500-550 lbs few 397.50-403.00; 600-650 lbs 375.00-378.00, 650-700 lbs 351.00-358.00; 700-750 lbs 336.50-350.00; lot 803 lbs 344.00; pot load 951 lbs 310.75.
Medium and Large 1-2 – 320-400 lbs 445.00-465.50; 400-500 lbs 391.00-417.50, unweaned 370.00-387.50; 500-600 lbs 362.50-392.00; pkg 634 lbs 364.00, 650-700 lbs 345.00-346.00; 700-760 lbs 322.00-340.00; 800-875 lbs 307.00-329.00; pkg 982 lbs 293.00; lot 1021 lbs 268.00, lot 2267 lbs 221.00.
Medium and Large 2 – pkg 458 lbs 377.00; 500-550 lbs 335.00-367.00.
Feeder Heifers: Medium and Large 1 – Pkg 369 lbs unweaned 420.00; 500-550 lbs 349.00-376.00, 550-600 lbs 325.50-330.00; 650-700 lbs 320.00-322.00; 750-800 lbs 316.00-318.00; 109 hd
Large 1 – 1025 lbs 273.50.
Medium and Large 1-2 – 350-400 lbs 417.50; 400-500 lbs 355.00-385.00, unweaned/short weaned 350.00-366.00; 500-600 lbs 320.00-347.00; 600-650 lbs 310.00-322.00; pkg 950 lbs fleshy 245.00; pkg 1066 lbs 227.00.
Medium and Large 2 – Pkg 438 lbs 368.00; 450-500 lbs 325.00-330.00; 500-560 lbs 304.00-311.00; 640-660 lbs 280.00-290.00.
Feeder Bulls: Medium and Large 1 – Pkg 381 lbs 457.50; 400-425 lbs unweaned 410.00-429.00; 500-550 lbs unweaned/short weaned 360.00-381.00; 600-650 lbs 325.00-331.00, 650-700 lbs 309.00-311.00; pkg 710 lbs 272.00.
Medium and Large 1-2 – Pkg 495 lbs 360.00; 500-560 lbs 340.00-350.00.
Slaughter Cows: Premium White (65-70% lean) Average dressing, 158.00-164.50; and low dressing, 149.00-152.00.
Breakers (70-80% lean) Average dressing, 148.00-157.00; high dressing, 160.00-171.50; and low dressing, 140.00-146.00.
Boners (80-85% lean) Average dressing, 147.00-158.00; high dressing, 160.00-170.00; and low dressing, 136.00-145.00.
Lean (85-90% lean) Average dressing, 141.00-153.00; and low dressing, 121.00-136.00. Shelly 100.00-117.50.
Slaughter Bulls: Yield Grade 1-2 – 1300-2400 lbs, 189.00-194.00; 202.00; 160.00-181.00.
Slaughter Steers and Heifers: (90 hd) Choice 2-3 – 1280-1565 lbs 219.50-223.25; Select and Choice 1-3 – 1150-1605 lbs 215.00-219.00..

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

BEEF DATA from page 10

took place, and by about 2009 the industry started to adopt grading cameras that could be put on the line in a beef processing facility to help USDA graders make decisions. Information derived from the technology — the expected grade — will get you the more accurate yield, Hardcastle explains.

Since those early trials, Hardcastle says, camera technology has continued to advance in both the quality and accuracy of the data it collects. Today the format is easier to use regardless of plant size. Large processors may have room for big beef grading cameras, Hardcastle says, but small processors can use cell phones to collect grading data and present it to USDA graders at chain speed.

"With advancement in technology, even a small processor can use a camera to grade beef carcasses and get an accurate and precise measurement to give to the USDA grader who makes the final decision," Hardcastle says. "It's giving them predictive information to help them work more efficiently." It can also help beef processors and USDA explore alternative grading systems to overcome current labor and supply chain obstacles.

"You need to objectively obtain data and collect score cards and track trends," Dolezal adds. "Data collection is not going away. It's going to increase our understanding of the industry even more."

– Nick Hardcastle, meat grading and technical specialist of Cargill protein headquarters in Wichita, Kan.

Data as a guide to food safety

The poultry industry embraces data-driven decision-making. Due to ease of collecting quantitative data through new lab technologies, there is a marked increase in data collection for food safety throughout the vertically integrated poultry chain, explains Bill Potter, extension specialist in poultry food safety and processing, and co-director of the online MS degree in food safety at the University of Arkansas. The trend is looking at Salmonella in a presence/absence analysis, with an increased emphasis on quantitative Salmonella loads at live operations, pre-processing, bird processing and further processing.

"Managing data for real-time decision making frequently means ongoing electronic data entry, and then going into databases where food safety measures can be compared to pre-established baselines and control limits," Potter says. Data is collected before and after interventions are implemented. Then it's used to look for outliers — such as farms, shifts or lines that have microbial loads outside the norm — and to manage the plan-do-check-act cycle of continuous improvement.

"By having ongoing data collection, we're now able to do quick analysis of the data for decision-making," Potter asserts. For example, maintenance software is used to predict when belts need to be changed, he says, to prevent breaking and foreign material issues. Automated monitoring of machinery allows for ongoing adjustments to be made throughout the day to manage variables, such as temperatures, accuracy of evisceration equipment and other control points. Moreover, extensive monitoring with automation graphics and visualization frequently leads to operators being able to see problems before they become critical.

What's more, artificial intelligence is beginning to be considered for use in food processing facilities to look for small nuances in the data, like repeatedly high microbial counts on certain days, Potter explains. Such nuances may, otherwise, go undetected. "In food safety, we want to consider data our friend," Potter says. "It's better to find and address food safety problems beforehand than when they become a major issue."

Storing data

Where does all the data live? Some poultry companies are beginning to see the value of cloud-based repositories for data management that can be accessed remotely or by cell phone, Potter adds, making the process more transparent.

Hardcastle suggests developing tools like online dashboards or virtual reports to provide an in-depth understanding of the data that's easy to evaluate and base decisions on. Otherwise, you can get lost in the weeds, he says, and not be able to assess or attack any issues.

"You need to objectively obtain data and collect score cards and track trends," Dolezal adds. "Data collection is not going away. It's going to increase our understanding of the industry even more."

An industrywide collaboration

With fewer resources and a smaller herd, modernized beef production practices have resulted in heavier cattle and enhanced quality of beef, Hardcastle assures. Therefore, the industry needs a modernized assessment — there have been very few minor changes in grading since the 1960's — "to pay full respect to cattle in the supply chain today."

Hardcastle sits on two industry advisory committees of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association in partnership with the USDA. One is piloting camera-based technology for beef grading to get everyone across the industry on the same page. The other is exploring alternatives like CT scans, 3D modeling and AI for determining beef yield.

"Whenever we start using technology, it allows us to have more standardized data throughout the supply chain," he says. "But it gives the producer the highest opportunity to have an accurate assessment of value after all the time and effort put into each animal."

Inside the Big Four: Beef packers stay in the red while under federal scrutiny

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) recently confirmed President Donald Trump's announcement of an antitrust investigation targeting major U.S. beef packers, just as three of the "Big Four" companies were reporting quarterly earnings.

Trump last week accused meat packing companies of "Illicit Collusion, Price Fixing, and Price Manipulation," particularly targeting "Foreign Owned Meat Packers, who artificially inflate prices."

JBS and National Beef, both Brazilian-owned, reported earnings this week, as did Tyson Foods. Cargill is the largest privately held U.S. company by revenue with no public earnings report.

The four companies combined slaughter more than 80% of U.S. cattle. They have been silent on the DOJ investigation. The Meat Institute, which represents industry, pointed out that beef packers "have been losing money on every steer and cow slaughtered for more than a year" because of historically low availability of live cattle, with "catastrophic losses" expected to continue into next year.

Consumer beef prices are at record highs, amid a years-long contraction of the U.S. herd size. The USDA is projecting a 2% decline in domestic beef production next year.

This week's Beef Profit Tracker from Sterling Marketing found packer margins improved sharply last week but remained in the red. Sterling estimated packer margins at -$44.53 per head, a significant improvement from -$170.25 per head the prior week.

Tyson Foods

Tyson Foods' beef division, for the company's just-ended fiscal year, booked an operating loss of $1.1 billion, nearly triple the loss a year ago, with an operating margin in the red widening from 1.9% to 5.2%. The company forecasts an adjusted operating loss in its beef segment of $400 million to $600 million next year.

CEO Donnie King emphasized that herd growth would first require even worse cattle shortages when ranchers retain more heifers for breeding instead of selling them to market. "Herd rebuilding, which we're all looking for, means supply of market-ready cattle will fall before it increases in future years," he told Wall Street analysts.

JBS

JBS Beef North America reported record sales in the third quarter but still saw gross profit cut in half from a year ago, according to the meat giant's earnings report. The U.S. beef segment reported gross profit for the three months through Sept. 30 of $170 million, down from $341 million for the third quarter of 2024. Net sales jumped 14.8% to $7.25 billion amid strong U.S. demand, but cost of sales surged 18.5% to $7.08 billion due to tight cattle supplies. The company described a mixed outlook for the fourth quarter, with the cost of cattle in the United States continuing to be a bottom line challenge.

"We think 2026 will still be a challenging year from a supply perspective, and then probably from there it starts getting gradually better," JBS Foods USA CEO Wesley Batista Filho said. "It's not gonna be overnight, you know, get completely better, but it's gonna be a gradual improvement from '27 forward."

National Beef

Brazilian meat giant MBRF reported a 10.2% decline in third-quarter gross profit to $130 million for its North American segment — Kansas City-based National Beef — citing the high cost of live cattle. The North American segment's margin declined from 4.5% in the year ago quarter to 3.6%. The decline was a result of tight cattle supplies, which was not fully offset by higher beef prices.

Total sales by volume in MBRF's North America operation were 476,000 tons, down 6.3% decrease from the third quarter of 2024. North American net revenue was $3.64 billion, up 12.2% from a year ago. Beef sales averaged $7.64 per kilogram, up nearly 20%. The cost of goods sold jumped 13.2% in the third quarter to $3.51 billion due to higher raw material costs.

– 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, November 13, 2025
Receipts: 800 Last month: 900 Year ago: 890

Montgomery County Livestock held their Sheep and Goat sale Thursday evening Nov 13, with a nice offering of lambs weighing mostly 50-80 lbs and selling mostly 40.00-60.00 higher than last month's auction. Feeder Lambs traded with a sharply higher on a light test. Kid goats traded 5.00-15.00 higher. Demand was moderate to good on a moderate to 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 305.00-350.00.
Choice 1-2 – 50-70 lbs 265.00-295.00.
Feeder Lambs: Small and Medium 1-2 – 30-55 lbs 350.00-370.00.
Slaughter Ewes: Utility and Good 1-2 – 75-180 lbs few 110.00-125.00, Utility 1-2 75-100 lbs 95.00-105.00.
Replacement Ewes: Consignmens of young mostly 3 yrs of age 95-130 lbs exposed 185.00-215.00 per head, pkg 4-6 yrs exposed 130 lbs 155.00 per head. Several groups young ewes going back to country thin 70-90 lbs 140.00-175.00 per lb.

GOATS: (prices per hundred weight)
Kid Goats: Selection 1 – 40-75 lbs 315.00-360.00.
Feeder Kids: Selection 1 – Pkg 26 lbs 60.00 per head; Selection 1-2 22-28 lbs 40.00-50.00 per head.
Nannies: Selection 1 – Few 85-105 lbs 170.00-185.00 per lb.
Nannies/Does: Selection 1-2 – Replacement young young pkg 118 lbs bred 220.00 per head.

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

Learn how to improve soil health at Missouri Crop Management Conference

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Longtime University of Missouri researcher Tim Reinbott will speak on soil health and its increasingly important role during drought at the 2025 Missouri Crop Management Conference, Dec. 9-10 in Columbia.

The conference is Missouri's premier agricultural conference for farmers and agricultural industry professionals, says MU Extension weed scientist Kevin Bradley, who organizes the conference.

Reinbott's presentation will focus on how cover crops can contribute to good soil health in conventional soybean and corn rotation systems. The practice of planting cover crops is not new, but recent extreme weather conditions and new technology such as drones have renewed interest in the practice.

He'll share how cover crops can provide potential economic benefits while improving the soil for generations to come.

Reinbott is director of communications and construction services for the Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, a statewide network of research farms operated by the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources.

"Reinbott's popular monthly podcast, 'Tim's Take,' offers practical advice to farmers on Spotify, Apple and others," Bradley says. "He has shared his research and that of other faculty members through science nights, festivals, guest lectures and popular public events surrounding tomatoes, pumpkins and sunflowers."

The Missouri Crop Management Conference is Dec. 9-10 at the Stoney Creek Hotel in Columbia. Registration deadline is Nov. 28.

Find details and registration at https://mizzou.us/CMC. For more information, contact Heather Bowden at 573-882-4303 or Nicholshn@missouri.edu.

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

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Or clip & mail to: **Cattleman's Advocate, P.O. Box 26, Paris, MO 65275**

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

Unusual farm purchase

By MILO YIELD
Special to The Advocate

Within our group of old geezers who gather twice a day to convene a gabfest and guzzle coffee, the topics of conversations run the gamut -- from popcorn to politics, from history to hair-balls, from sports to shooting the bull, from old cars and trucks to old, achy knees.

Well, recently the conversation one afternoon turned to the price of farmland changing hands across the U.S. Several guys pointed to recent farmland sales that were in the stratosphere compared to the land's ability to turn a production profit.

That's when one conversationalist broke in and said, "Yep, it's a far cry from a farm sale that happened in our family way back in the Great Depression."

He went on to say that this farm land sale happened near Waynoka, Okla., sometime in the 1930s. There wuz a quarter-section of land that the far-distant relative wanted badly to own.

But, as was the norm in the Great Depression, cash money wuz hard to come by and bartering for many necessities wuz a common practice. So, after considerable hassling over the barter detail between the two parties, they reached a barter deal agreeable to both.

The kinsman gave the landowner a wagon load of alfalfa seed, the wagon it was in, and a team of nice mules to pull it. The landowner handed over the deed to the quarter-section.

Since that time, that farm has been handed down through several generations. And, the story has been retained and retold within the family for the same amount of time.

At first glance, that farm barter seemed to not have much value. But, then our group considered how much time and effort it took in the 1930s to combine a wagon-load of alfalfa seed and the value of a good team of work mules.

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Statistics reveal that farming and ranching are always close to the top as the most dangerous of ways to working for a living. And, just looking at elderly agriculturists will show a sad number of them are missing a body part or living with a maimed one. And, we don't see the ones that a fatal farm accident took from us.

But, the counter side of those high farm accident statistics is that many lucky agriculturists live severe-accident-free for all their long and productive lives.

The following is a supposedly true story about a one of the luckiest of those long-lived farmers. He long ago joined the "Big Farm" in the sky.

His name wuz ol' S. Kipp deFahls, or just plain "Skip" to his friends. He wuz mainly a grain farmer, but he had a side bizness of doing earth-moving and tree-clearing jobs with his caterpillar.

Ol' Skip wuz the hard-driving, type-A personality. He worked hard, but at the same time never missed an opportunity to work smarter, too -- even it it meant taking a personal risk.

The following wuz a prime example of his calculated risk-taking. If Skip needed to move both his caterpillar and his pickup to another location on a big parcel of relatively level land he wuz working on, here's how he did it in one trip.

First, he aimed the caterpillar toward the location he wanted to move. Then he put the caterpillar into a low gear and throttled the motor down to just a crawl. Then, as soon as the caterpillar started to move, Skip nimbly stepped off onto its moving track and hopped to ground.

Then he trotted back to his pickup and followed close behind the caterpillar as it crawled across the land. Then, when the two-vehicles got close to his desired destination, Skip shut the pickup off, quickly got out and trotted up to the rear of the still-moving caterpillar. Then he expertly put a foot on a rotating cleat of the caterpillar track and rode it up to the cab and hopped into the cab and shut the rig down. It wuz a time-saving trick that worked safely for Skip all his life.

However, the accident stats indicate that Skip might have been luckier than smart.

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My 2025 gardening came to an end with the first late frost. All in all, I'd rank this year's gardening results as among the best ever. For the first time in my life, I ate fresh-picked peas and new tomatoes in November. I'm still eating vine-ripened tomatoes. All the dried beans are shelled and vacuum packed. The pantry and freezer have lots of canned and frozen veggies in them.

All the frosted vegetation is now in my compost pile. All that's left to do is put away the hoses and stash the tomato cages for the winter. Hope I'm healthy enuf to do it all again next year.

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Last week I ended my column with three "Debbie Downer" depressing limericks about "problems" I see in American life. Well, pessimism ain't really my bag. I prefer optimism.

So, for my column's "wise words" this week, here are the upbeat lyrics to a song my beloved maternal grandmother, Anna Johanna, wrote back in the 1950s. It's title is "Happy Go-Lucky Me."

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Happy Go-Lucky me.
I go around a'singing.
Happy Go-Lucky me.
Don't know what tomorrow is bringing.
I can see happiness
Once more at my door.
It just came a'knocking
Like it did before.
When I thought that I was down and out,
I still kept my head up.
Didn't know what it was all about.
At times I was quite fed up.
With troubles. Then double troubles.
But then the sun came shining through.
Never let yourself down.
Wear a smile, not a frown.
It's the best thing to do.

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Have a good 'un.

Bees, blooms and bloodhounds

The buzz on how MU Extension helped a veteran grow her business

By LINDA WHELAN GEIST
University of Missouri Extension

STOVER, Mo. – Jessica Johnson's experiences with University of Missouri Extension have been as golden as the honey she sells.

Johnson, the owner of Ladybird's Bee Yard, participates in MU Extension's Missouri Heroes to Hives program for U.S. military veterans, which aims to improve financial and personal wellness through free professional training and community development centered around beekeeping.

A Marine Corps veteran, Johnson was introduced to Heroes to Hives in 2024 by MU Extension natural resources specialist Joni Harper, also a beekeeper.

CENTURY FARM. Jessica and Cory Johnson and their three daughters and bloodhound Ladybird live on a Missouri Century Farm that has been in Cory's family since 1885. Missouri Century Farm is an MU Extension program that recognizes farms that have been in the same family for 100 years or more. (Photo by Ashley Black of Red One Photography)

Johnson learned about bees from her grandfather, Alton Gilmore, a U.S. Army Korean War-era veteran and beekeeper. The hum of home was never far away, even when she lived halfway across the country from her grandfather. When Jessica and her husband, Cory, packed up their Texas farm to move to Cory's family farm in Stover, Mo., her grandfather set the young couple up with their own hive.

After her grandfather's death, she obtained his hives and honey-processing equipment.

Jessica, Cory and their children live on a Missouri Century Farm that has been in Cory's family since 1885. The process obtaining a Century Farm designation was her introduction to the local MU Extension center, which led her to explore Heroes to Hives and MU's Missouri Agriculture, Food and Forestry Innovation Center (MAFFIC).

The idea for a small family-run business began with the bees and honey but soon grew to include value-added products like beeswax candles, lotion bars, fresh-cut garden flowers and more.

Harper showed Johnson how to use the MAFFIC website to find help to scale her business dreams.

As part of the business-building process, MU agribusiness counselor Whitney Schmidt guided Johnson through developing a customized enterprise budget, an essential tool for understanding startup and operating costs while rightsizing her business for long-term feasibility.

Together, they explored potential markets and demographic trends in her area using the Ag Intel Market Intelligence tool, layering that information with Johnson's own observations to ground her plans in real-world opportunities. Schmidt also introduced the Break Even Pricing tool, helping Johnson see how thoughtful pricing can sustain and grow a business over time.

During the slow season, when the bees stay close to their queen in their hive, the plan is to draw on all the data collected from Jessica's first year of sales to craft financial projections, explore possibilities for enterprise stacking with cattle and refine pricing strategies across different market channels. "Our goal is always to ensure resources are aligned with both profitability and purpose, and I'm confident that Jessica has the grit it takes to persevere," says Schmidt.

Throughout, Johnson continued to tap into MU Extension programs, including Missouri Beginning Farmers, Master Pollinator Steward, the Pearls of Production livestock program for women and 4-H. She also serves on the MU Extension Council in Morgan County.

She frequently checks the county extension page and MAFFIC's website and uses MU Extension enterprise budgets. Harper's office in the Morgan County Courthouse is a frequent source of information.

"Jessica has done an excellent job utilizing the resources that extension offers and putting them into progressive action," says Schmidt.

Johnson's latest adventure is writing a series of children's books. The first, "Ladybird's Bee Yard," focuses on Ladybird, "a beloved bloodhound," one of six family dogs. The book tells the story of when Ladybird mysteriously grows flowers from under her doghouse and then grows an actual garden. She takes the flowers to market and follows the path to becoming an Extension Master Gardener.

Johnson says MU Extension programs complement her military training to build a balanced home and work life.

"The Marine Corps taught me resilience and self-discipline, and that has stayed with me as a valued resource. I carry those values into my current life as a farm wife and a stay-at-home mom of three wonderful daughters, whom I homeschool. Parenting, like military service, requires adaptability, leadership and strength. Those skills now show up in everything, from how I run our household to how I run our business."

Johnson, her husband and three daughters are intentional about sourcing supplies locally from produce and flower auctions, farmers markets and other small businesses. Through MAFFIC and Heroes to Hives, they've learned the importance

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WORKING WITH BEES: Jessica Johnson learned about beekeeping from her grandfather, a Korean War veteran, and has developed a business centered about bees and honey with the help of MU's Missouri Agriculture, Food and Forestry Innovation Center. The small family-run business has grown to include value-added products like beeswax candles, lotion bars, fresh cut garden flowers and more. (Photo by Ashley Black of Red One Photography)

Short ribs recipe is quick and easy

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

Jon's Critique: The original plan for supper was much different, but we ran out of time and the cook wasn't inspired to create anything too involved… The clock has "fallen back" and it seems to get dark so early, it is easy to understand how inspiration turns toward comfort food with little fuss. This was a quick and easily prepared meal the cook put together with little notice and supplies on hand.

It was great… I had a generous second helping.

Sheet Pan Short Ribs and Kraut

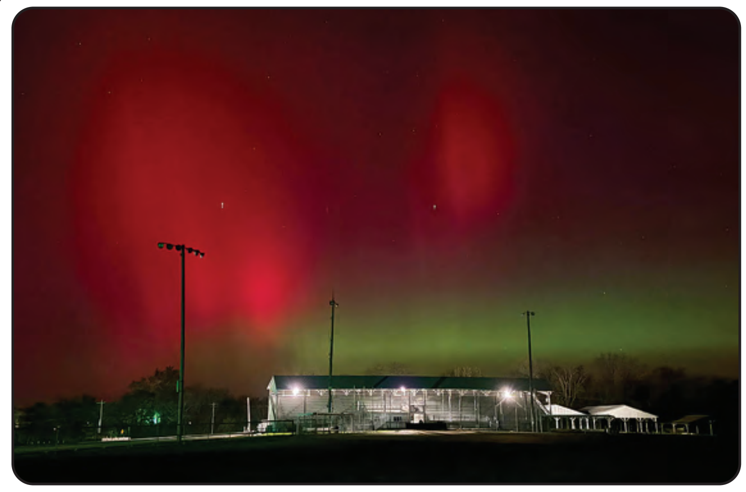
3-4 pounds Korean Style Short Ribs
2-3 cans Kraut
2 carrots sliced on a diagonal
4-5 Tbsp. Olive oil
Salt and Pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 350-375 degrees. Season the ribs with salt and pepper on both sides.

Heat the olive oil 1-2 tbsps., in a large skillet (add more if needed during frying). Place 2-3 seasoned short ribs in your hot skillet, careful not to over crowd. Brown ribs on both sides then set aside.

Using a sheet pan spread half of the kraut and carrots to cover the bottom then place half of the ribs on top. Repeat with remaining kraut, carrots and topping with remaining short ribs.

Place sheet pan with ribs in the oven and bake for 30 to 45 minutes. Serve with your favorite side dish.



NORTHERN LIGHTS: In a rare display for Missouri, the northern lights lit up the sky for several nights in mid-November, providing a unique opportunity for photographers. Above, Tony Miller of Paris captured an amazing sight of the northern lights behind the historic Paris fairgrounds and posted the image on Facebook as part of a series of great pictures.

U.S. trade rep: 'We have an imperative' to reset world trade

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A key figure in U.S. trade negotiations detailed the machinations of the Trump administration's "America First" trade policies during an address at the 70th Annual National Chicken Council Conference.

Julie Callahan, assistant U.S. trade representative for agriculture and commodity policy in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), described the Trump administration as "an administration of action," adding "we have the imperative to really reset our trade relationships wholesale."

"Our president likes to see action," Callahan said, acknowledging some of the dramatic changes of 2025 may make some business leaders "nervous." Callahan then argued, though, that the 2025 "reset" is "really an extension of the first Trump administration," citing the first Trump administration's work on NAFTA and trade agreements with countries like Japan.

Callahan further argued that while "there may not be an obvious thread" to the current trade strategy, she sees one from Trump's inaugural executive order for an "America First" trade policy, to an examination of worldwide tariff rates, to the "swift action" of Trump's "Liberation Day" tariffs. Callahan argued that those policies made countries "suddenly very motivated" to renegotiated their trade agreements with the United States.

Trade with China

Callahan was critical of the Chinese government and its trade policies. Stating that China is "weaponizing agriculture" in the trade war with the United States, Callahan said there have been cabinet-level meetings about the two countries' trade, with additional such meetings planned this weekend.

The goal, Callahan said, is to reach a point where trade with China is "transactional and predictable," adding, "[We are] trying to get back to a place where we can have a straightforward trade relationship where agricultural trade is not used as a leverage point."

Furthermore, Callahan said there are efforts to diversify U.S. trade so it is not as dependent on the Chinese market.

Callahan concluded with details about successes in Angola and the Dominican Republic — where trade access for poultry exports was renewed — and ongoing trade negotiations with India, whose goods Trump slapped a 50% tariff against in August.

"We are fully in lock step with the president on removing unjustified barriers, making sure the U.S. is not treated unfairly," Callahan said.

– Meatingplace.com

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of value-added products to boost revenues. They've also tapped into advice and mentoring from friends, relatives and neighbors.

"Starting and growing this enterprise has been a journey of lifelong learning, and the University of Missouri Extension has been an essential partner every step of the way," says Johnson. She credits Harper and Schmidt with supporting her and bringing the reliable, unbiased research of MU to her rural area.

"I wouldn't have pushed beyond my comfort zone without the encouragement of MU Extension specialists like Whitney Schmidt and Joni Harper," she says. "They cheered me on when I was ready to give up and saw promise where I saw a mess. They helped bring my dreams to life."

She appreciates the acquaintances and experiences she's had through the early days of her business and hopes she can eventually help other young entrepreneurs. "My biggest piece of advice for anyone starting out is this: Never stop learning. Dive deep into books on your passion, attend local and even distant meetings about beekeeping," she says.

"Seek out every bit of knowledge you can. There's always something new to learn. I'm constantly amazed by the abundance of knowledge housed within our extension office, and I encourage everyone to begin exploring it."