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Vol 22, Issue 4

April 2026

# Flying is the FUTURE

Farmer builds drone company, eyes historic breakthrough in agriculture tech

By CHRIS BENNETT  
Reprinted by permission of Farm Journal/AgWeb

The farm machinery bedrock is shifting. Tractor. Planter. Drone?

“There is historic change coming to agriculture and it’ll occur in every single part of farming,” says North Carolina producer Russell Hedrick. “We’re starting an era where you literally won’t find a farm with a planter that doesn’t also own a drone, because the savings and functions are incredible.”

“Agriculture drones are a key to farm survival, all backed with simple, verifiable numbers that show a giant difference in dollars,” he adds.

Emphasizing a monumental shift, Hedrick has responded with Carolina-based Revolution Drones. “U.S.-made farm drones built by an American farmer who understands the unique needs of other American farmers.”

## Gamechanger

“A lot of people are not paying attention,” Hedrick contends. “Even with the best navigation systems that we’ve ever had in the history of farming, anytime you drive a ground rig in a row crop field, you lose money.”

“On soybeans, with every pass made, university research shows 1.4 to 2.5 bushels per acre lost. For example, if beans are \$10 a bushel, and you lose 1.5 bushels, that’s \$15 an acre gone when you run the rig one time. If it’s 2.5 bushels, that’s \$25 an acre to run that ground rig.”

Therefore, according to Hedrick’s math, if a farmer with 6,000 acres of soybeans runs a ground rig just twice, and loses 1.5 bushels per acre in damage, the cost is \$90,000.

However, Hedrick asks, what if the same farmer spent \$51,000 for a spreader, spray tank, batteries, chargers, controllers, and a drone capable of covering 750 acres per day?

The 6,000 acres would take eight days to cover and conserve \$90,000 in crop damage: “That farmer paid for his drone in eight

See AG DRONES, page 11



**LOOKING UP FOR PROGRESS:** Agriculture is on the cusp of epic technology change, echoing the advances of yesteryear, whether steel plow or mechanization, says Russell Hedrick, (above right). “I understand people don’t have time to learn new things,” Hedrick says. “I also understand the desperate need guys have now to cut costs, and running your own drone is a profitability gamechanger.” (Photos by Revolution Drones)



## What does the JBS Colorado plant strike mean to beef producers?

By ANGIE STUMP DENTON  
FarmJournal AgWeb

Union workers at the JBS packing plant in Greeley, Colo., went on strike Monday morning, March 16. This is the first walk-out at a U.S. beef slaughterhouse since the 1980s.

According to The Colorado Sun and the UFCW Local 7, union workers were picketing early Monday morning. The workers are calling for higher wages, safer working conditions and respect on the job.

According to a union press release, the unfair labor practice (ULP) strike at the JBS-owned Swift Beef plant was set to start at 5:30 a.m. Monday, March 16.

JBS spokesperson Nikki Richardson says, “This morning, many JBS Greeley team members chose to report to work rather than participate in the strike called by UFCW Local 7, and we expect that number to continue increasing in the days ahead. Our team members want

**Thousands of union workers at the JBS Greeley, Colo., plant went on strike Monday, March 16, calling for higher wages, safer working conditions and respect on the job.**

stability, they want to support their families, and they deserved the opportunity to vote on the company’s historic offer — an opportunity the union leadership has denied them. We are paying all team members who come to work, and we are operating the facility to the best of our ability this week.”

The union says workers hoped a recent bargaining session would have led to a breakthrough in negotiations with JBS, but instead JBS sent the workers a clear message that the company is putting profits ahead of its people.

“The Union’s member-led bargaining committee has met more than two dozen times with

the company in an effort to reach a mutually agreeable contract. JBS is failing to listen to the 99% of its workers who authorized a ULP strike,” the union says in the release. “The Company needs to give them an offer that takes life saving safety equipment seriously, provides wages which meet the rising cost of living in Colorado and ensures rising health care costs do not consume workers’ wages. The Company committed numerous Unfair Labor Practices which are preventing an agreement. The Company continues to threaten to withhold both a proposed bonus and lump-sum pension payment if workers strike. The Company

also retaliated against workers who have stood up for their rights and co-workers.”

The union represents 3,800 workers at the plant.

The Greeley plant did not harvest cattle the week of March 9.

“To ensure continuity for our customers and partners, we are temporarily adjusting production across our network as needed,” Richardson explains. “By utilizing available capacity at other JBS facilities, we can maintain supply, protect the long-term stability of the beef chain and minimize disruption for consumers and retailers. Our priority is to keep product moving while we work toward a resolution in Greeley.”

She summarizes, “We remain focused on supporting our team members, and any employee who reports for their scheduled shift will have work available and will be paid. We will continue scaling operations this week as more team members return.”

## Markets Lack Reaction

Live and feeder cattle futures opened higher on Monday morning. Brad Kooima with Kooima Kooima Varilek says there are a couple of reasons why the market ignored the strike and the biggest are the higher equity markets and lower crude oil. However, he says it is also tied to the fact the strike news was already priced into the market.

Don Close, senior animal protein analyst at Terrain Ag, joined Chip Flory on AgriTalk Thursday, summarizing the strike will increase packer leverage and help reduce negative margins.

He says even with Greeley down, the industry still has excess slaughter capacity.

“Even with Greeley, with the limited cattle supply we’re dealing with, we still have excess slaughter capacity,” he stresses.

See STRIKE, page 3

# UPCOMING SALES

- Saturday, March 28** – BCIA Bull Sale
- Tuesday, March 31**– Regular Sale
- Tuesday, April 7** – High Noon Cow Sale
- Tuesday, April 14** – Feeder Special
- Tuesday, April 21** – Regular Sale
- Tuesday, April 28** – Feeder Special
- Tuesday, May 5** – High Noon Cow Sale
- Tuesday, May 12** – Feeder Special
- Saturday, May 16** – Horse Sale

### Cattle Receiving Hours

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- Monday: 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- Tuesday: All Day Sale Day



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**Jason and Kayla Wiczorek** – Offering two registered 3years and 4years old black Hereford bulls.

**May 5**

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**Bryan Evans** – 20 home raised heifer pairs. 7 black and 13 bwf or rwf with mostly February calves at their side. We will have preview videos posted to the F&T Livestock website.

**Justin and Savannah Moore** – 10 pairs of running age cows and 4 third period solid mouth cows with a tick of ear bred to black bulls.

**Joe Crigler** – 24 Black heifer pairs with black calves at their side born from mid-February to March.

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# Mexico cattle industry builds as U.S. industry stumbles

The impending closure of a historic Texas feedlot brings into focus a rebalancing of cattle and beef trade between the United States and Mexico.

Already reeling from historically low U.S. cattle numbers, Lubbock Feeders succumbed to a lack of feeder cattle inventory from Mexico, a market shut off for months now due to that country's screwworm issue.

It's the latest portent of troubles for the U.S. beef industry — which recently saw the closure of Tyson's Lexington, Neb., facility and the termination of a shift at the packer's Amarillo, Texas, plant — and of accelerating changes in the Mexican industry.

Derrell Peel, a professor of

**Mexico has the capacity to process the 1 million-plus head of cattle it historically was exporting to the US, Peel said.**

agricultural economics and extension livestock specialist at Oklahoma State University, told Meatingplace further adjustments in the US feeder and packing segments are likely and indicate a swapping of capacity between the US and Mexico, which already has been building and modernizing its infrastructure already over the last couple decades.

Peel said he doubts the current border impasse has sprung an earnest packing house construction spree in Mexico, but he

notes that SuKarne's beef plant in Durango is likely the largest facility built in either country, outside of Sustainable Beef's facility in North Platte, Neb., in recent years, and reflects its evolution into a boxed beef market. Mexico's largest packer has invested heavily in packing infrastructure as a result, and new builds are possible if the border impasse is more prolonged, he noted.

Either way, Mexico has the capacity to process the 1 million-plus head of cattle it historically

was exporting to the US, he said.

"They can utilize those cattle pretty readily, and of course the border closure creates a big economic edge in value between [the US] and [Mexico], but those will equalize over time," Peel said.

The question is how long the border will remain closed; the longer the closure, ostensibly the less dependent Mexico will be on exports to the US.

"Even 25 years ago, you could see their market developing and, that at some point, they wouldn't have to rely on exporting cattle," Peel said. "This just precipitates that change down there, potentially."

Peel said he isn't suggesting that the two countries would no

longer trade cattle, something they have done since the Civil War or even earlier, but the current situation prompts Mexico to have a different perspective from its historical export-centric mindset.

"This could represent a somewhat more fundamental change in that," he said.

— Meatingplace.com

## \$150M expansion underway at JBS beef plant in Texas

Construction is underway on a \$150 million expansion of JBS USA's Cactus, Texas, beef plant, with a new fabrication floor and ground beef room expansion planned for completion by early next year.

JBS USA chief executive Wesley Batista Filho called the project "an exciting moment" for the company, its more than 3,600 workers at the Panhandle facility, and the ranchers who supply the plant.

"The investment reflects our long-term commitment to the U.S. beef industry and the rural communities where we live and work," he said during a Friday groundbreaking. "By modernizing and expanding our Cactus facility, we are ensuring that our business, and the thousands of families who depend on it, remain positioned for success now and in the future."

The company recently

announced a \$50 million investment for a new distribution center at its Greeley, Colo., beef plant.

With major beef packers incurring losses due to tight cattle supplies, some have pursued major maintenance projects or upgrades that temporarily reduce capacity. Tyson Foods has

trimmed capacity with the permanent closure of a major slaughter facility in Nebraska and cutting its second shift at a beef plant in Amarillo, Texas.

JBS described the planned new fabrication floor in Cactus as "state-of-the-art," bolstering the "long-term competitiveness" of one of its largest beef process-

ing facilities. The plant annually buys cattle worth \$3.3 billion.

Texas State Rep. Caroline Fairly called the Cactus investment a "transformational project sends a clear message that they believe in the Texas Panhandle, in our workforce, and in the long-term future of this area."

— Meatingplace.com

## Registration open for 2026 USDA grazing schools

GALENA, Mo. — Registration is open for 2026 grazing schools offered by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and University of Missouri Extension.

These three-day schools help livestock producers learn the art and science of grazing cattle through a combination of classroom instruction and on-farm visits, said University of Missouri Extension agronomy specialist Tim Schnakenberg.

Missouri's \$93 billion agriculture industry relies heavily on well-managed forage operations, Schnakenberg said.

This year, 21 grazing schools will be held across the state taught by NRCS personnel and MU Extension specialists.

Classes cover grazing economics, soils, plant growth and quality, animal nutrition, and designing management-intensive grazing systems.

Since 1990, more than 22,000

grazers have completed the program with support from Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Missouri Forage and Grassland Council's Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, with participants seeing a net return of \$40 to \$60 per acre, Schnakenberg said.

The schools run April 15 through Oct. 8. Details and registration are available at [www.MissouriFGC.org/grazing-schools](http://www.MissouriFGC.org/grazing-schools).

## STRIKE from page 1

"It's going to give way more leverage to the packers, but it will help them shore up their negative margins."

Close adds the biggest headache to the industry will be additional freight and added shrink from the extra haul to a different plant.

Glynn Tonsor, Kansas State University professor of agricultural economics, agrees with Close. "Any disruption in labor availability has largest impacts on producers operating closest to involved plants. In aggregate, I do not expect large fed cattle price impacts as the industry is operating with excess physical capacity, relative to available cattle supplies."

From an industrywide standpoint, Close downplays the potential disruption to supply.

"From the industry as a whole, the supply of product going out to meet our demand side of the market should be fine," he says.

John Nalivka, Sterling Marketing Inc. president, says it is hard to predict the impact on the market.

"We have had Tyson's closure of Lexington [in Nebraska] and a shift taken off the Amarillo plant

[in Texas], tariffs, the current Iran situation and oil back to \$100/barrel with little to no impact on the market," he summarizes. "Supplies are tight and demand is strong. These are the overriding factors impacting this beef market. I would not be comfortable with predicting the impact of an impending strike."

Hyrum Egbert, Riverbend Meats vice president of strategy, sales, accounting, HR, FSQA, logistics, purchasing and warehousing — who authors the biweekly The Big Bad Beef Packer newsletter, which takes a look at packinghouse truths, trends and tough questions — predicts if Greeley goes dark, even temporarily, the immediate reaction is cattle backup fear.

"A potential strike at JBS Greeley is loud ... but it's not automatically structural," he says. "Yes, it's a big plant. But in 2026, cattle availability is the governor, and packers have already been living in 'under-utilized capacity' land for a while."

Egbert summarizes, "This is likely more of a pricing/psychology event than a true supply collapse ... unless it turns into a long, messy, multi-plant labor domino."



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# From the Publisher... Jon Angell



**It looks like spring is coming early.** As ready as I am to welcome in spring weather, my list of chores and projects has ballooned because of it. Even with the conflicts, war, market disruptions, and hectic rush all around, the optimism and new beginnings in Spring makes it easily my favorite season.

**Drones have been around for a short bit,** and they are steadily gaining more significance. As a child, cartoons and popular science magazines promoted a future that made artificial intelligence, flying cars, robots and drones a part of everyday life. Could it be that we are well on our way to making this imagined future a reality today? From my perspective, it seems yes, and it is coming faster all the time.

For our feature article this month we have a story involving agriculture drones. Russell Hedrick has some unique insights on how he sees drones evolving. As I pre-read this article before deciding to run it as a feature, there were some key thoughts that I latched on.

These key thoughts include that drones can easily be financially justified in numerous applications. We often see farms take up new technology very quickly when we can "pencil it out." The use of auto steer and GPS were examples where "pencil it out" led to rapid adaption.

Another key that Hedrick points out is that drones are about to become engineered and further refined specifically for agriculture use and, in a way that appeals to an American market. We are fast getting past the novelty of a cheap general use Chinese toy. Hedrick and others are about to Americanize drones.

Hedrick suggests that farms have various tractors for different uses and sees much the same thing coming for drones. This makes a whole lot of sense to me. Scout/observation drones, spray drones, or even heavy lift drones.

The thought of a heavy lift drone is strangely appealing. I can certainly imagine a drone that might air drop a round bale in a ring in the middle of a muddy lot! Wouldn't that be nice!

**We have JBS on strike in Colorado.** The effects of this for cattle producers is muted. Cattle are shifting to other plants or processors. The abundance of harvest capacity and limited cattle have made this a relatively minor event currently, where in some years past, it would have had disastrous implications to all producers.

**Throughout this issue** are stories of how the cattle and beef industry is trying to adjust. On page 11, Lubbock Feeders explains how the lack of domestic cattle and the closure of the Mexican border destroyed their way of doing business. Page 3 has a story about how the Mexicans are building up their processing and

beef infrastructure due to the border closure. Several politicians are calling for new legislation or enforcement actions. Companies are looking to recoup tariff money. You'll find plenty of opinions and dispersed views in this issue.

**Argentine beef has been an ongoing topic** the last few months. We came across an article on page 15 that goes into a little depth about Argentina's meat industry. I think many of our readers will find it good information about a country with the ability to both partner and complement the United States, or potentially be very competitive with us.

**For this month, we did something different** with Bill Bullard's column on page 22. On the RCALF USA youtube.com channel, Bill produced a four-part video commentary on America's beef industry. Like usual, I thought Bill did a good job, and I wanted to share it with our readers, but didn't want to drag it out over four months. So, this month even though it will be a bit long for some of you, we have combined the first two in the series and hopefully will include the last two next month.

I know Bill can be controversial, but he cites plenty of statistics and history in his commentary that are useful. I know the NCBA and the AFF folks often take issues with the RCALF USA and Bill's conclusions and recommendations for remedies, but I think the discussions are healthy.

**Speaking of Agribusiness Freedom Foundation (AFF),** on page 17, Steve Dittmer goes into some details about the current system of packing and processing, along with some commentary and opinions of Sen. Schumer's thoughts on government intervention. Like Bullard, Dittmer presents some good information and does a good job in his writing. But between Bullard and Dittmer, their conclusions are most often on opposing ends of the spectrum.

If you regularly read these two columns, it becomes easily apparent how diverse opinions and opinions can run in the cattle/beef industry. By reading both regularly, you will be very informed on most of these issues and why finding "common ground" is so hard.

**I read where the Livestock Marketing Association** has a "Common Ground" initiative to bring together several stakeholders and leaders to work together on several policy priorities across several organizations in search of forming coalitions to move things forward. They are focusing on issues like tax policy, transportation, labor, risk management and on youth.

They will be holding four regional "Common Ground Summit" events this summer. I'm curious to see what they are able to accomplish. We'll be hopeful to be able to bring you some positive developments

originating from this coalition this summer and beyond.

**The cow calf producers** of the cattle industry are experiencing outstanding profitability. If you need a few more cows, check out our advertisers, as there are several sales and opportunities to procure cows in these pages. Producers selling calf crops continue to be pleased with the proceeds.

**The cattle market for other participants** is a huge challenge, as buying stockers for grass is extremely painful. The total dollars involved in stocking the same grass or fill the same feedlot pens has produced mountains of stress. These times are made for adrenaline junkies and risk seeking plungers.

For those who are risk-averse, pens and pastures will certainly see reduced numbers, while many others will go unfilled.

The number of people I know who are lost as to how to proceed in this environment is as high as I have ever seen it. What are you doing?

**Finally, although the springtime is filled** with activities and plenty of work to do, I would encourage you to take *The Cattleman's Advocate* along with you to read in between activities. As good as it is to read in the easy chair at night, *The Cattleman's Advocate* reads well in the fields, in the barn, or elsewhere too! Thanks for reading and your continued support.

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**A monthly livestock magazine serving Eastern Missouri & Western Illinois**

is a publication of  
**Jon & Charlotte Angell**

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**The Cattleman's Advocate**  
**P.O. Box C • Centralia, MO 65240**  
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# FARM & FOOD FILE

## All chickens come home to roost

By ALAN GUEBERT  
For The Cattleman's Advocate

If you grew up on a farm, you know that milk cows show up to be milked, horses return to the barn to be fed and, like clockwork, chickens return to roost every night.



In fact, chickens are so certain to return each evening that we've recast this commendable habit into a common admonition: "The chickens are coming home to roost," we say when the consequences of a past mistake show up.

Well, here come the chickens as Republicans on the House Ag Committee push their subsidy-heavy, SNAP-lite Farm Bill through Congress. Combined with other costly changes they added to last July's budget bill, the "2.0" bill now holds more chickens than your average KFC freezer.

But don't be fooled by any talk of cost savings or budget cutting. Despite huge cuts to food assistance, nothing in the bill will save money if the ag economy stays in the freezer.

The reason, as noted here last November, isn't spending; it's policy.

"If payments were the answer," as I then quoted ag policy experts Jonathan Coppess of the University of Illinois and Otto Doering of Purdue University, "then the problems should be solved by now."

But the problems have only ballooned—as have federal payments.

"Since 2018," when the current Farm Bill was enacted (again quoting the pair), "USDA and/or Congress have paid nearly \$176 billion (real 2025) in inflation-

**Well, here come the chickens as Republicans on the House Ag Committee push their subsidy-heavy, SNAP-lite Farm Bill through Congress. Combined with other costly changes they added to last July's budget bill, the "2.0" bill now holds more chickens than your average KFC freezer.**

adjusted economic assistance to farmers."

These payments, on average, consisted of about "\$6.5 billion per year from commodities subsidy programs and an astounding \$15.5 billion per year in ad hoc payments."

And there's talk of even more payments this spring.

Now stir in an unpredictable, still-widening Middle East war. Its only certainty is that the cost of the mundane to the sacred—from the price of fertilizer and fuel to that of futures and lives—will climb.

Now throw in today's destabilized ag export markets, more White House tariffs, a Department of Agriculture whose data integrity is being questioned, and the certain impact of more climate change.

That's a lot of chickens coming home to roost in 2026.

Or, as our two ag policy experts noted last year, "Ultimately, federal taxpayer-funded payments are not a match for the tough reality of lost demand or damaged markets."

Those are two elements no one saw coming when GOP Farm Bill writers in 1995—like today—sought to finish a law that would become known as Freedom to Farm, or F2F. Its key tenet, that farm program payments would be keyed to land, or "base" acres, not crops, redirected farm policy from "supply management" to "market oriented."

It quickly became a financial

flop, however. What was designed to be a seven-year, \$47 billion farm program ended up costing more than \$100 billion in just six years.

It was predicted by me and others. In the Sept. 10, 1995 Farm and Food File I wrote that the proposed changes would prove very costly to taxpayers and even more so to farmers.

I came to that conclusion through simple math: I totaled the federal farm program payments key crops like wheat, corn, and cotton had received under the previous five-year Farm Bill. The sums were eye watering.

For example, from 1991 through 1995, wheat farmers received, on average, 26 percent of the annual wheat income through federal payments. For corn, the average was 18 percent and cotton, 16 percent.

Can these farmers, I asked, give up these annual "crop receipts and survive?"

"Some can, but many cannot," I noted and—no surprise—some did but many did not. The reason, however, wasn't government spending; it was government policy.

And that chicken is headed for the roost, too.

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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](http://farmandfoodfile.com)*

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

May issue ..... Ad deadline: April 13  
June issue ..... Ad deadline: May 13

## Beyond Meat threatened with NASDAQ delisting

Beyond Meat, the once leading light of the plant-based protein business world, is in danger of being delisted from the NASDAQ stock exchange because its stock price has remained under \$1.00 for more than 30 days.

The company, which is in the process of removing the word "meat" from its brand moniker, received a letter of warning from NASDAQ on March 4. It has 180 calendar days — actually until August 31 — to remedy the situation or face delisting. Its closing bid price must remain at \$1.00 or higher for 10 days in order to be in compliance.

The company said it is exploring its options to remain in compliance, including a possible reverse stock split.

Beyond Meat went public in 2019 and at one point was valued at \$14 billion. Its peak stock price was \$234.90 in July 2019.

However, sales have not been

what was hoped for, with the 2025 Q3 earnings report showing a 13.3% loss in net revenue year over year, \$70.2 million versus \$81.0 million in 2024. The company said the revenue shortfall "was primarily driven by a 10.3% decrease in products sold, and a 3.5% decrease in net revenue per pound."

Furthermore, the firm is hobbled by more than \$1 billion in debt. Its October 2025 decision to issue more shares to address that debt caused the Beyond Meat's stock to plummet to half its value.

Q4 earnings are expected to be reported by the end of this month.

The company is in the process of changing its brand name to Beyond the Plant Protein Company, or just "Beyond," and is expanding its offerings to include such products as protein-based fizzy drinks.

— [Meatingplace.com](http://Meatingplace.com)

## Residents vent about plan for TIF money for new Smithfield plant

According to an Argus Leader report of the March 9 meeting, more than 100 residents of the Crooks, S.D., community attended the meeting, as did the town's mayor, Sioux Falls officials and Smithfield representatives.

Community members, according to the Argus Leader, were skeptical about the announcement of the facility, and whether or not local officials had been keeping them in the dark about discussions involving the proposed state-of-the-art pork plant.

Additional resident concerns included: the planned location

for the facility; if the local approval process was progressing too quickly; if the area could manage the expected rise in truck traffic; if local drivers and pedestrians would be safe, amidst plant activity; odor and environmental protections; and the \$90-million tax increment financing (TIF) arrangement with Sioux Falls to support the facility's construction and wastewater treatment plant.

On March 17, a final debate was set to take place in the Sioux Falls City Council about the TIF arrangement.

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# Thoughts From Justin's Side of the Fence

By JUSTIN ANGELL

So, this is the month I get to say, "I told you so" ... twice. Last month, I commented that we would start calving March 15 and I was expecting some type of weather event. "Beware the ides of March". The 15th was last Sunday when the temperature dropped overnight into sub-freezing temperatures with brutal windchill. I'm sure many of you spent the night in your pickups. On our little ranch, Savannah is now grafting three calves.

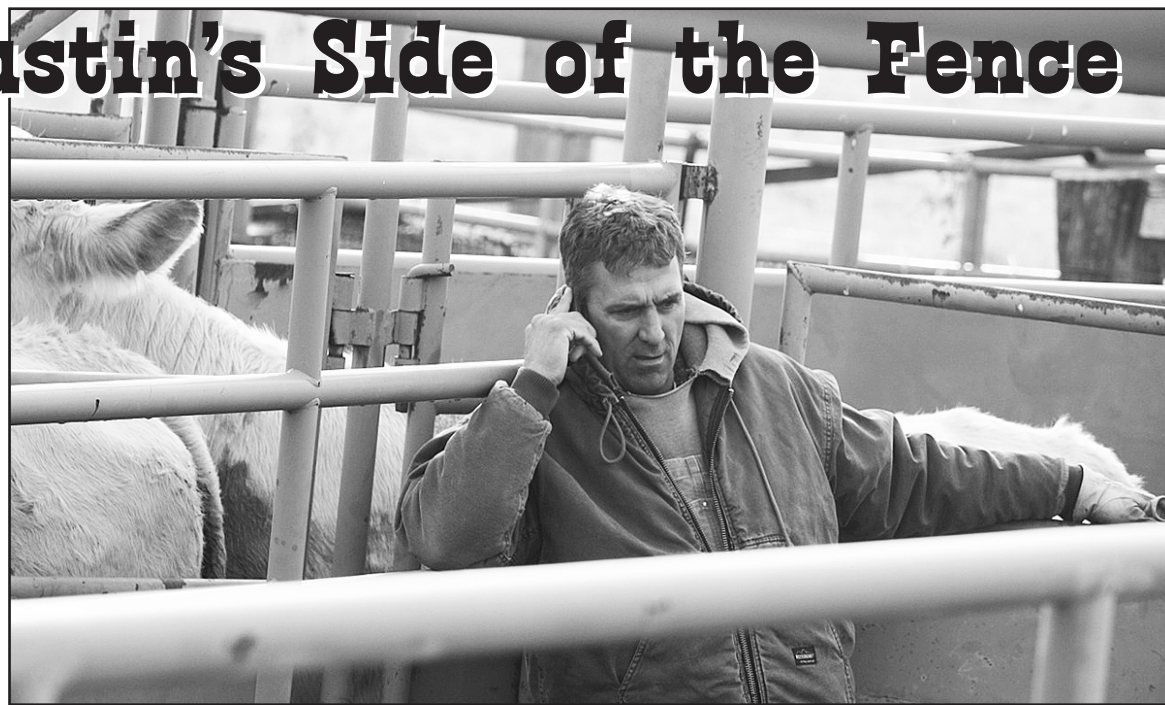
Also, a month ago, I recommended everyone pregnancy test all the cows you sell, even what you consider old worn out pound cows. Two weeks ago, I hauled from the collection point in Centralia four old cows and a bull for my friend Ben, who assured me they were just kill cows. Ben was hoping for a \$10,000 check but when the pregnancy tests came back as four second periods, his cows moved from the kill cow category to become last calf heifers! Ben's net check ended up being \$14,100.

One man's trash is another

man's treasure. Right now, throwaway cows, if they are bred, are cowboy treasure. So keep Dr. Chad and the other stockyard vets employed... keep pregnancy testing.

One of the stories last month was about the devastating wildfires in the Southern Plains. Unfortunately, this month the same wind driven wildfires are popping up, except this time the sandhills of Western Nebraska. Fortunately, two weeks ago I hauled home two loads of three-year-old bred cows that had been wintered south of Brady, Nebraska. My friend Ted told me that the fires would've been less than a mile from where they were grazing on corn stalks, so they probably wouldn't have burned up, but might've singed their hair and given them a little lung damage from the smoke. Also affected by the fires was Brewster, Nebraska. Over the years, if you have ever bought bred heifers with a C5 brand on the hip, they originated from the Circle 5 ranch very near Brewster. Prayers to the Sandhills.

While I am on a roll, I will also respond to one of the most



frequently asked questions. "When should I sell my calves?" Asked differently, but essentially the same question would be, "how big should my calves be when I sell them?"

First of all, there's no wrong answer. The only mistake would be if you didn't have any calves to sell. I can't believe it would be wrong to sell a 400 lb. calf for five dollars or more per pound. However, I also believe bigger cattle make a bigger check. If I

were to make a blanket suggestion for many Palmyra customers, it would be a recommendation to make the calves bigger and especially older.

Making calves older doesn't cost anything, but significantly increases the value. The way things are, instead of selling a \$2000 400 lb. calf at 45 days weaned, it would be better to sell a short yearling weighing 650lb. The extra 250 pounds gain cost is around a dollar per pound and returns four dollars sales price, netting three dollars per hundred, or an additional, amazing \$750 per head.

Another frequently asked question is, "should I sell all my heifers because they are so high or keep a few extra to breed since I can pay my bills by selling fewer animals?"

Looks to me like a lot of people are breeding a lot of heifers. I'm not sure, but next spring about this time, bred heifers might be a little cheaper because I am wondering if there's going to be more bred heifers than there is young, able, and willing people to calve them.

I still believe by grass time in May, pairs will be worth as much or more next year as they are this year. Nothing certain, it is just

something to keep in mind. If I'm right, it could be a big opportunity for those willing to work hard and plan ahead.

As I'm finishing up this article, other questions I'm often asked is about the plant closing in Greeley and the border being closed with old Mexico. Both are "nothing burgers," in my humble opinion. The cattle that would normally go to JBS at Greeley are being absorbed by other plants that were underutilized.

As far as the Mexican cattle are concerned, the southwestern feed lots became dependent on them, and so they are in a crunch. As far as the rest of the country goes, having that border closed is not good for any of us. All we've done is create someone else to compete with.

I've heard that the drug cartels are responsible for keeping the border closed. Some have speculated that they are heavy "in the beef business" and they have no interest in allowing cattle to move North. A glut of cattle in Mexico makes for big beef profits.

I'd say those same cartels are Trump's shortlist of problems to fix in the world.

That's all for this month come see me the Auction.

## FBI arrests Strafford, Mo. man at L.A. airport in cattle fraud scheme

The FBI has announced that a Strafford man listed on the most wanted list was found at the Los Angeles International Airport on Monday, March 9.

According to an FBI social media post from the Dallas, Texas office, Joshua Link was arrested at the airport by Customs and Border Patrol, LAX Airport Police and FBI Task Force officers from the Los Angeles Police Department.

The post states that Link was wanted for a cattle fraud scheme nationwide.

Previous Ozarks First coverage says Link faces 10 counts of wire fraud, one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and two counts of money laundering. This includes wiring more than \$527,000 to purchase real property.

Officials have previously stat-

ed that Tia Link of Smithton, Missouri; Jed Wood of Fort Worth, Texas; Taylor Bang of Kildeer, North Dakota; and Royana Thomas of Arlington, Texas are facing several counts of wire fraud and money laundering in the case.

All the individuals are said to be associated with Agridime LLC, a business headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas, with Joshua Link serving as executive director.

Between January 2021 and December 2023, the group is accused of using funds from investors to buy and raise cattle, and selling the meat for profit and keeping the proceeds.

The defendants are accused of collecting more than \$220 million from over 2,200 victims in the U.S.

- Ozarksfirst.com

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# It's The Pitts...

## Dickerin'

By LEE PITTS  
For The Cattleman's Advocate

My first job out of college was working on a purebred Angus ranch. I knew in advance there was no future in the job because the cattle were as popular as three-week-old sushi. The owner was either in denial or dumber than a branding iron but he considered himself to be a brilliant businessman. He was insistent that he was going to teach me the fine art of dickerin'.

"Today I'm going to teach you how to buy something well below its true value," he said. "We're going to a farm that's been sold and the owner must get rid of everything on the place before the close of escrow. That means he'll be desperate to sell. We need a manure spreader for the ranch and he's got one that will suffice, so just watch how I negotiate the price."

We went to the farm sale, checked out the manure spreader and then my boss told the owner, "I'll not pay a penny more than \$250 for this worn out piece of junk."

At this point I tugged on his jacket to convey to him a very important message. but he rudely swatted me away. "Can't you see we're negotiating a deal and you should just shut up and try to learn something."

The farmer didn't like the way my boss treated me so he said, "I want \$350."

My boss took the deal but when we left I showed my boss a sign on the barn that said, "Yippee, we sold the ranch so everything today is FREE!"

My next lesson came on the

**That evening I conveyed the message to my boss that I didn't get any bulls sold and that Mr. D's top offer was a thousand dollars. "Keeping in mind that you said not take a penny less than \$2,500 we couldn't come to an agreement on price."**

day of a local bull test sale in which my boss had entered six bulls. "Here's \$40," he said buy anyone who looks at our bulls a lunch ticket for the barbecue."

That evening I handed him back his \$40 and said, "Here's your money back, no one looked."

"How much did our bulls sell for?" he asked.

"Well, uh, not a single one of them actually sold. I bought them back at well below slaughter value."

The last "lesson" my boss taught me was how to negotiate a private treaty sale. "There's a big bull buyer coming tomorrow and I won't be here so tell him he's getting first pick of the bulls and you won't take a penny less than \$2,500. I've studied the sale averages of some of the better bull sales and that's what they're averaging. Remember, not a penny less than \$2,500."

It turned out that I'd known this "big bull buyer" for awhile as Mr. D was from my county and was also in the citrus business. Mr. D was a gentle old soul and a sincere, honest gentleman. We caught up on old times and then I showed him the bulls.

"How are they priced?" he asked politely.

"My boss said to tell you he wouldn't take a penny less than \$2,500 because you're getting first pick and that's what the bet-

ter bulls are averaging." I stressed to my friend that it was my boss trying to gyp him, not me.

Mr. D. smirked and said, "Considering the quality of the bulls you tell your boss I couldn't pay more than \$1,000 apiece."

That evening I conveyed the message to my boss that I didn't get any bulls sold and that Mr. D's top offer was a thousand dollars. "Keeping in mind that you said not take a penny less than \$2,500 we couldn't come to an agreement on price."

My boss hit the roof. He was madder than a cow with sore teats and twin calves, but he was not mad at Mr. D., he was mad at me. "You mean to tell me you let \$1,500 stand in the way of a trade?" he asked.

"Well, you being a master negotiator I'm sure if you called him you might be able to work something out," I said.

So my boss called him and they came to terms. When Mr. D came to pick up the bulls I asked him what he paid.

"Nine hundred dollars apiece," said Mr. D, with a big smile on his face.

"But that's a hundred dollars less than you were willing to pay in the first place!"

"I realize that," said Mr. D. "You know Lee, some people ought to learn to quit while they're behind."

- www.LeePittsbooks.com

## Processor seeks refund of tariffs in trade court lawsuit

Hormel Foods sued U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the federal government in the U.S. Court of International Trade, seeking refunds of tariffs it paid under trade measures imposed by President Donald Trump last year.

In a complaint filed Feb. 19, Hormel argued the tariffs were unlawfully imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, or IEEPA, which the company said does not authorize presidents to levy import duties.

Hormel said it paid the duties as an importer of record on merchandise subject to the tariffs and sought a court order declaring the tariffs unlawful and requiring the government to refund all IEEPA duties it has already paid, along with interest.

The Austin, Minnesota-based company said the lawsuit was necessary because it was unclear whether importers would automatically receive refunds even if higher courts ultimately agree the tariffs were unlawful. Hormel

also said entries subject to the duties would soon begin to liquidate, potentially making the tariff payments final without judicial relief. The complaint cited earlier rulings from the Court of International Trade and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in the V.O.S. Selections case, which held that IEEPA did not authorize the tariffs challenged there. Hormel said the tariff measures at issue in its suit were identical in structure and legal basis to those already found unlawful.

Hormel also raised an alternative constitutional argument, say-

ing that if IEEPA were interpreted to allow tariffs, the law would amount to an improper delegation of Congress' taxing power to the president.

The company asked the court to declare the tariffs void as applied to Hormel, bar Customs from collecting them, order reliquidation of affected entries and require repayment of duties already collected.

Hormel identified itself in the complaint as an importer of record that continues to pay IEEPA-related duties on an ongoing basis.

- Meatingplace.com

## DOL awards \$1.67M to aid workers after Tyson beef plant closure

The U.S. Department of Labor has awarded \$1.67 million to Nebraska to help workers affected by the closure of Tyson Foods' beef processing plant in Lexington.

The funding, announced by the department, will support employment and training services for workers laid off when Tyson closed the facility Jan. 20. The shutdown resulted in about 3,200 job losses, a significant economic disruption for the central Nebraska community of roughly 10,500 residents.

Administered through the Labor Department's Employment and Training Administration, the National Dislocated Worker Grant will allow the Nebraska Department of Labor to provide job training, skills development and employment services for eligible workers. Assistance will be available in Buffalo, Custer, Dawson, Frontier, Gosper, Lincoln and Phelps counties.

The grant is funded under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which provides emergency resources to states and local workforce boards responding to major layoffs or economic dislocations that exceed existing workforce support programs.

Tyson announced last year that it would close the Lexington beef processing plant as part of a broader effort to "right size" its beef business. The company also said it would transition its Amarillo, Texas, beef facility to a single full-capacity shift while increasing production at other plants in its network.

Tyson said the restructuring would position its beef segment for long-term success while maintaining supply of beef products. The company also said it planned to help affected workers apply for openings at other Tyson facilities and offer relocation benefits.

The Lexington plant had been the community's largest employer, making the closure one of the most significant workforce disruptions in the region in recent years.

- Meatingplace.com

## US beef rebounds in Columbia

US beef exports to Colombia have made a strong comeback since the Latin American importer lifted restrictions imposed in 2024 due to HPAI detected in US dairy herds.

The US Meat Export Federation (USMEF) notes US beef exports to Colombia last year rose 23% in volume (4,232 metric tons) and 77% in value (\$40.8 million) compared with 2024.

Homero Recio, a Latin America representative for USMEF, said in a USMEF audio report that the Meat Merchandiser Program, a team of experts educating key customers about the unique attributes of US beef, drove the rebound.

Recio explained that Colombia's ban on US beef opened the door for Canadian beef exporters, but the US has been able to regain its 70% market share since it reopened in late 2024.

"And what drove that is our ability to work with the trade and work with them closely to educate

the wait staff on what those differences were and how and why they should be promoting American beef," Recio said of the Meat Merchandiser team, funded by USDA and the Beef Checkoff Program.

Recio said the US-Colombia free trade agreement also played a key role in helping US beef to regain market share in Colombia.

"Because we have a free trade agreement our two governments were able to engage, and we engage very closely with our embassy to provide information to them about what was going on," he said. "But without that free trade agreement, you know, we could have been out of the market a lot longer."

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# Lubbock Feeders in West Texas to close feedyard after 70 years

By EMMA COFFMAN  
EverythingLubbock.com

**LUBBOCK, Texas** — It's the end of an era on the South Plains.

After 70 years of operation, Lubbock Feeders, a cornerstone of the region's agricultural economy since 1955, has announced it will close its doors. The feedyard, which celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2025, has fed well over five million head of cattle during its decades of operation, becoming both an economic engine and a cultural symbol of the South Plains.

Manager and CEO Kyle Williams described the closure as a tough and emotional decision, underscoring the weight of ending a 70-year legacy built by generations of cattle feeders, employees and agricultural partners.

The decision follows a series of economic and regulatory challenges that have significantly impacted operations.

Typically, between 60 and 70 percent of the yard's cattle inventory originated from Mexico. However, since November 2024, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has closed the southern border to live animal imports for biosecurity purposes. The

action was taken in response to the northward movement of the New World screwworm, a parasitic fly whose larvae feed on the living tissue of warm-blooded animals, posing a serious threat to livestock, pets, wildlife and, in rare cases, humans.

Without access to Mexican cattle, Lubbock Feeders lost a critical supply pipeline.

The border closure comes at a time when U.S. cattle inventories are already at historically low levels. Fewer available cattle, combined with sharply rising market prices, have squeezed feedyards across the region. For Lubbock Feeders, the combination of limited supply and escalating costs proved unsustainable.

The Lubbock Feeder partners ultimately determined that closing the business was the only viable path forward.

The impact extends far beyond the feedyard's gates.

Local farmers who depended on feedyard demand to sell corn, silage, and other feed crops now face uncertainty. Truckers, veterinarians, equipment suppliers and countless other businesses tied to the cattle-feeding supply chain will also feel the effects.

For generations of Lubbock

residents, the feedyard was more than a business. It was a landmark, and even a punchline, often referenced by locals who would joke that when you could smell the manure in town, it meant one thing: Money. The feedyard's unmistakable presence became part of the identity of the community, even earning nods in country music culture and appearing in music videos that celebrated the work ethic and pride of rural America.

Williams says the yard will finish feeding out the remaining cattle currently on site before ceasing operations. There is hope that the property itself will remain in agricultural use, preserving at least part of its legacy.

For many on the South Plains, the loss is deeply personal. The feedyard stood as a daily reminder of the region's agricultural backbone, a symbol of hard work, resilience and economic vitality.

As the dust settles, one thing is certain, the closing of Lubbock Feeders marks a significant moment in South Plains history. For 70 years, it helped shape the region's economy, culture and even its scent on a warm West Texas afternoon.

# Bill to create ag education program gets unanimous support from Missouri House

By ANNEISE HANSHAW  
Missouri Independent

Hoping to grow the next generation of farmers, the Missouri House unanimously approved a bill recently to create an optional agriculture education program for elementary schools.

"We need to educate and encourage growth in agriculture and spark that interest, both in rural and in urban areas," the bill's sponsor, state Rep. John Martin, a Republican from Columbia, said in a House debate last week.

The legislation would require the state's education department to work alongside agricultural commodity groups to create instructional models and support schools that opt into the program.

The idea builds on a pilot program that ran from 2020 to 2023, which gave teachers lesson plans and hands-on activities to teach students about growing crops and raising livestock. Groups like Missouri Farmers Care also run agriculture education programs in partnership with public schools.

The bill now heads to the Missouri Senate.

State Rep. Adrian Plank, a Columbia Democrat, has filed the bill since 2024, saying he hopes to get kids from "playing in the dirt" to "growing their own food" someday.

The United States Department of Agriculture ranks Missouri 11th for the value of its agricultural production, between both crops and livestock. But the number of farms in Missouri has

been steadily decreasing from 106,500 in 2008 to 85,700 in 2024, according to a report by the USDA's Economic Research Service Farm Income Team.

Plank said the bill will "combat" the loss of family farms, encouraging more children to take an interest in farming and join groups like 4H and Future Farmers of America.

State Rep. Willard Haley, a Republican from Eldon and former agriculture teacher, said he saw the decline in family farms through his students. At the beginning of his teaching career, "many of the students" had experience on the farm. But toward the end of his time in the classroom, students spoke more about their grandparents' farms.

"With the student not being able to have that firsthand agriculture experience, (agriculture education) is more important

than ever before," he said.

State Rep. Yolanda Young, a Democrat from Kansas City, spoke about teaching kids in the city about growing produce. The children didn't know where carrots came from, she said, so she helped them grow a garden.

"The joy on the faces of the children that actually got their hands in the dirt, planted seeds and saw their food grow," she said. "It was just a wonder to see the kids eyes' open, knowing where their food came from."

The bill's requirements are not subject to appropriation, meaning the state's education department would be obligated to support the program even without state funds directed to it. The state's fiscal note estimates that the program may not require any additional funds but could cost up to \$119,000 annually for teacher training.

# US-China trade talks delayed, beef exports on ice

It looks like U.S. meat processors will need to be a little more patient when it comes to regaining full access to the Chinese market.

According to media reports, President Trump has delayed a much-anticipated March 31 meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping for a month to maintain focus on the war with Iran.

Trump's trip to China was expected to follow a March 15 meeting between Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Chinese Vice Premier He Lifan in Paris that was described as "remarkably stable," "candid," and "constructive" in a Reuters report. Specifically, Lifan expressed "openness" in renewing trade licenses for U.S. exports of beef, which were restricted during the two countries' protracted trade war.

While beef exports have been almost completely halted since March 2025, raw poultry sales have continued but significantly hampered by China's ban on 44 states due to avian flu outbreaks, in violation of China's regionalization commitment. Under the disease regionalization agreement, 20 states including several key producers should be eligible to export raw chicken, the USA Poultry and Egg Export Council (USAPEEC) told Meatingplace. In contrast, heat-treated chicken has been allowed into China from other states, though a larger fraction of shipments are being rejected for other reasons.

According to Foreign Agriculture Service data from USDA, U.S. beef exports to China dropped 69% in 2025; in the second half of 2025, the total value of beef exports to China was only \$48 million, a 95% decline from the \$924 million of 2024's second half.

Meanwhile, poultry exports fell 41% YOY in 2025.

— Meatingplace.com

# SEC reportedly considering proposal to end required quarterly statements

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is preparing a proposal that would allow publicly traded companies to report earnings twice a year instead of quarterly, according to a report from The Wall Street Journal.

The proposal, which could be released as soon as next month, would make quarterly reporting optional rather than eliminate it entirely, the report said, citing people familiar with the matter. Regulators are reportedly in discussions with major stock exchanges about potential rule changes needed to accommodate the shift.

Under the current system, publicly traded companies are required to report financial results every 90 days. The proposed rule would allow companies to publish results every six months instead.

Once the proposal is published, the SEC could vote on the measure following a public comment period, which typically lasts at least 30 days.

The agency declined to comment on the report, and Reuters said it could not independently verify the details.

The potential change follows

renewed calls from President Donald Trump to eliminate mandatory quarterly reporting. Trump first floated the idea during his first term and argued the shift could reduce pressure on companies to focus on short-term results while lowering compliance costs.

SEC Chair Paul Atkins had previously said the agency could release a proposal on the issue by the end of last year or early 2026.

Critics of the idea warn that reducing the frequency of financial disclosures could limit transparency for investors and potentially increase market volatility.

— Meatingplace.com

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# Livestock News & Notes.....

## Women Owning Woodlands offers chainsaw safety workshop

University of Missouri Extension's Women Owning Woodlands program will offer a beginner chainsaw safety workshop at MU Jefferson Farm and Garden in Columbia.

The workshop includes three virtual sessions leading up to an in-person field session, said Sarah Higgins, MU Extension field specialist in natural resources.

Virtual sessions are offered via Zoom from 6:30-7:30 p.m. on April 15, 22 and 29. The field session is 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday, May 2. At the field day, participants will have the opportunity to practice chainsaw maintenance and cutting techniques.

Equipment will be available for use for those who do not own a chainsaw or personal protective equipment. Those who own their own equipment are asked to bring it to the field day for their use.

The in-person training begins at Jefferson Farm and Garden. In the afternoon, participants will move to a location no more than a 30-minute drive from Columbia to practice what they have learned. Participants are asked to bring their own lunch.

Participants will learn about personal protective equipment, field safety, maintenance and techniques for safe chainsaw operation, said Higgins.

Women woodland stewards also will learn how to prevent secondary injuries and tips to improve ergonomic awareness.

Register at <https://pears.io/events/mu/4951>.

For questions or accommodations, contact Sarah Higgins at [sarah.higgins@missouri.edu](mailto:sarah.higgins@missouri.edu) or 636-797-5391.

Zoom sessions will be recorded for the convenience of participants.

Jefferson Farm and Garden is at 4800 E. New Haven Road, Columbia.

The program is partially funded by USDA NIFA Grant 2022-41590-38128.

## Trade deal partners push back on new U.S. 'discrimination' probes

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer signs a framework trade agreement with Ecuadorian Trade Minister Luis Alberto Jaramillo on March 13, one day after launching an investigation of forced labor in 60 countries including Ecuador (USTR photo).

Newly opened U.S. investigations of "structural excess capacity" in 15 countries and the European Union are drawing fire from those governments, most of which have already reached trade deal frameworks with the Trump administration.

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer announced last week that his office (USTR) had launched formal investigations to determine if American commerce

was harmed by possible "unreasonable or discriminatory" practices in China, Singapore, Switzerland, Norway, Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, Bangladesh, Mexico, Japan, India and the EU.

The probes are required under Section 301 of U.S. trade law before tariffs can be imposed. The investigation process requires several months but could give President Donald Trump new power to impose tariffs after the July expiration of the current Section 122 tariffs, which are also facing court challenges.

Trump is due to visit China from March 31-April 2, and U.S. negotiators have been meeting in Paris with a Chinese trade delegation. China on Monday called the Section 301 investigations "extremely unilateral, arbitrary and discriminatory, and a typical protectionist act."

An additional Section 301 investigation was started by USTR on forced labor in 60 countries, targeting the EU and Britain, key meat trading partners including Canada, Mexico, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, as well as China, Brazil, Argentina and a wide range of emerging markets across Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

"The U.S. has once again

abused the 301 investigation process to override domestic law over international rules," a Chinese government spokesperson said.

Taiwan authorities said they did not expect the terms of the country's February agreement with the Trump administration to change due to the probe. Malaysia's trade ministry called the country's framework agreement "null and void."

## Small businesses, 24 states suing to halt Trump's new tariffs

President Donald Trump said on Feb. 20 that refunds for overturned tariffs will "get litigated for the next two years." (Michael M. Santiago/Getty Images News)

Two dozen states and a pair of small businesses have filed lawsuits against the new global 10% tariff issued after the Trump administration's previous import taxes were struck down.

In an executive order within hours of the Feb. 20 decision, President Donald Trump invoked never-before used Section 122 of U.S. trade law to impose a tariff in response to a "balance of payments" crisis.

A lawsuit by Democratic state officials accuses the White House of conflating the U.S. trade deficit

with a balance of payments deficit, which only occurs under fixed currency exchange rates. The United States has operated under floating exchange rates since shortly after Section 122 was passed in 1974.

In the previous tariffs, the U.S. Supreme Court found that Trump illegally claimed unfettered taxing powers under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), which never mentions tariffs.

In the second Section 122 tariff suit, filed this week, the plaintiffs are specialty spice importer Burlap and Barrel and toy company Basic Fun, which holds the rights to childhood brands including Tonka Trucks, Lincoln Logs and Care Bears. They are represented by the Liberty Justice Center, a free-market non-profit law firm that won the IEEPA case, V.O.S. Selections, Inc. v. Trump.

"Section 122 authorizes temporary tariffs for certain economic conditions that do not currently exist; it is not a general license for the President to tax the American people for reasons Congress never intended," said Jeffrey Schwab, litigation director and lead attorney in V.O.S. Selections.

Section 122 allows tariffs for up to five months, so the current levy would expire July 24 unless extended by Congress. The rate is

capped at 15%, and the White House has said for weeks that the rate would be raised but has yet to act.

Trump's Section 122 order maintained exemptions for certain agricultural goods including beef, which he first issued in November for the IEEPA tariffs.

Like the IEEPA case, in which the Supreme Court issued a final ruling within 10 months of the initial filing in the district-level U.S. Court of International Trade, lawsuits over the new tariffs could be given expedited hearings in federal court.

Many of the preceding items were taken from Meatingplace.com

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Regular Cattle Sale with Hay Auction

Tuesday, April 28 @ 12:30 a.m. Hay Sale @ 11:30

# Orion Samuelson, 'the Voice of Agriculture,' dies at 91

**From Chicago and around the globe, legendary farm broadcaster Orion Samuelson championed American agriculture on WGN Radio for six decades.**

One of America's favorite farm broadcasters, Orion Samuelson, has died after a brief illness at his Huntley, Ill., home, with his wife, Gloria, at his side. He was 91.

Samuelson retired from broadcasting in 2020 after a remarkable 60-year career advocating agriculture on the radio, television, and before countless rural and urban audiences.

"All along the way, he became a champion for the American

farmer," said Max Armstrong, who worked for decades full time with Samuelson. "He was an advocate before it became fashionable." When he retired from WGN Radio at the end of 2020 it marked 60 years on WGN. Samuelson also launched the nationally syndicated television programs "U.S. Farm Report" in 1975 and "This Week in AgriBusiness" in 2005.

He interviewed countless secretaries of agriculture and originated broadcasts from all 50 states and 44 countries. But mainly, he told agriculture's story from downtown Chicago, where he became a media icon and a beloved hall of fame broadcaster. His beloved "Samuelson Sez" weekly commentary helped shine a light on the farmer's greatest

challenges. He would often say, "A farmer buys everything retail and sells everything wholesale."

### From farm to Michigan Avenue

Growing up on a Wisconsin dairy farm, Samuelson had a work ethic like no other. He worked at several Wisconsin radio stations before joining WGN. He was 27 years old when he made his way up North Michigan Avenue, striding toward the Tribune Tower. It was Sept. 26, 1960, and as he headed toward his first day on the job at WGN, a singular thought ran through his head.

"I walked into the studio and I thought, 'I'm working with some big names at a big radio station — veterans — and they're going to ignore me!' But they did just the opposite," he said in 2020, reflect-

ing on his career.

Samuelson soon became popular for his ability to explain agribusiness and food production in an understandable way. He and Armstrong would talk about agriculture from a studio in Chicago over hundreds of networked stations. He would explain corn production and beef demand to thousands of suburban housewives, among others. He was named Prairie Farmer Honorary Master Farmer and inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame in 2003.

— Farm Progress



**Orion Samuelson, a giant in farm broadcasting, has passed away.**

## Group calls Schumer meatpacking bill 'absurd'

The Meat Institute sharply criticized legislation proposed by Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, warning the measure would disrupt the meatpacking industry, reduce jobs and raise prices for consumers.

Schumer's proposal, the Family Grocery and Farmer Relief Act, would require meat companies that process multiple species to divest operations and focus on only one species, according to the Meat Institute.

"This proposal is absurd," Meat Institute President and CEO Julie Anna Potts said in a statement. She described the legislation as "reckless election year pandering that threatens to damage a crucial industry at the center of every American meal."

Potts said forcing companies to separate beef, pork and poul-

try operations would create uncertainty across the supply chain, potentially reducing processing capacity and increasing consumer prices.

The proposal assumes new investors would be ready to purchase and operate the divested facilities, an assumption Potts called unrealistic given the capital-intensive nature of meat processing plants.

"These facilities are expensive, hard to run efficiently and safely, and are part of a complex value chain," Potts said. "Who has the capital and industry expertise to buy and operate these facilities?"

Potts also warned the measure could jeopardize jobs for thousands of workers, including union employees, while leaving livestock producers with fewer

processing options for their animals.

The group added that the bill would not address current market pressures in the beef sector, where cattle inventories remain at their lowest level in roughly 75 years.

"Consumer beef prices reflect the short cattle supply and high consumer demand," Potts said. "The Schumer bill cannot wish away the free market fundamentals of supply and demand."

According to the Meat Institute, the U.S. meat and poultry sector contributes \$347.7 billion in value added to the economy, supports more than 3.2 million jobs and generates \$911.7 billion in total economic output annually.

— Meatingplace.com

## Agriculture think tank launches with Meat Institute participation

A new think tank with the goal of strengthening U.S. agriculture launched with meat industry involvement.

Called the Center for American Food Power (CAFP), the think tank aims to advance "a comprehensive national agrifood strategy aligned with national security priorities," with Meat Institute President/CEO Julie Anna Potts and other food industry leaders as part of the founding American Food Power Council.

"The systems and assumptions that served us well in the past are being tested. This moment requires a clear, future-focused strategy that connects agrifood policy, market realities and national security objectives in a far more deliberate way," said Brett Sciotto, founder of the Center for American Food Power and CEO of Idealyst Innovation. "Without well-integrated strategies and policy recommendations, our

industry risks becoming defensive and fragmented, hindering progress and innovation."

CAFP intends to be a "non-partisan platform for strategic analysis, cross-sector coordination, and policy framework development."

— Meatingplace.com

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##### Girod

25 Fancy Blk or BlkWF 1st calf hfrs.

##### Conroe

15 Fancy Blk 1st calf hfrs. Fancy Feb Blk calves.

##### Temmen

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##### Schulte

10 Fancy Blk 1st calf hfrs. Fancy Feb Blk calves.

#### Strotman

10 Fancy Blk 1st calf hfrs. Fancy Blk calves.

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10 Fancy Blk 1st calf hfrs. Fancy Blk calves.

#### COWS

##### Duenke

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##### Turnkey

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##### Turnkey

45 Blk or BlkWF cows (3–4 yr old). Bred Blk due Aug 20.

##### Sherwood

65 Blk or BlkWF cows (3–5 yr old). Bred Blk bulls (2nd–3rd period).

##### C Bar

30 Blk or BlkWF cows (3–4 yr old). Heavy 3rd period.

##### Thompson

25 mixed cows (6–10 yr old). 3rd stage.

##### Swartzenstruber

15 Blk cows (5–8 yr old). Bred Blk due Sept.

##### Girod

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##### Conroe

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# AG DRONES from page 1

days and still had \$39,000 left in savings," Hedrick explains. "This is a gamechanger like nothing else out there and its impact is only just starting to be realized. Every agriculture operation in America is going to own its own drone."

## Simple Economics

In 2021, Hedrick dipped a toe in agriculture drone use. On his Catawba County ground, just outside Hickory, in classic western North Carolina foothill country, he hired a custom applicator to put out fungicide on several corn fields, utilizing check strips to measure efficacy.

In 2022, he hired another custom applicator with a stronger drone for foliar passes in test plots to gauge a return.

In 2023, he bought his own drone, made in China, and learned the ropes. "Having someone custom spray versus owning your own drone is two different universes. I was done with paying and watching someone else. It was time for me to make the learning effort and save major money."

However, Hedrick hit hurdles—repeatedly. "The No. 1 problem I ran into, and it's the No. 1 problem I hear from guys today coast to coast, is drones built in China are built for farmland in China. The fairest statement I can make is, 'They don't know how we farm in America, and don't understand the vastness of our fields and the necessity to cover hundreds or thousands of acres in day in a timely manner.' I pointed out these shortcomings to the companies and asked for help. I always got the same answer: 'We'll take care of it.' But nothing happened. I got fed up waiting."

Hedrick's solution? Build it himself. He started Revolution Drones. "Need a certain type of tractor? Some company builds that. Need a certain type of combine? Some company builds that. Agriculture machinery has always met farmers with what

**"The value of drones on the farm, as high as it is today," says Russell Hedrick, "will soon go up to levels not even imagined yet."**

they need—except for drones. As a farmer, I decided to meet and exceed the needs of my fellow farmers, and at the same time, bring the manufacturing and production to the U.S."

Farm innovator to the core, Hedrick already had access to software production through co-ownership of Soil Regen. He partnered with Gteex Drones in Brazil, another farmer-led business,

"Our goal is going to be to be transparent with our customers. We say that we're made in the U.S., and after that, we say what percentage that is. So, currently, we can build up to 60% of our parts in the U.S. Literally, that means if there's 200 parts to a drone, and I say it's 60%, then 120 of those pieces were built right here with American workers from Illinois to Indiana, to Iowa to North Carolina to Georgia. No selling data and we build all our own software, period."

Drone utilization in agriculture is about to go nuclear, far beyond present use, Hedrick insists. Why? Simple economics.

## "Not Even Imagined"

Custom aerial application rates vary, but often run \$12-\$14 per acre. Likewise, custom drone applications can hit \$14-\$16 per acre.

"I understand people don't have time to learn new things. I also understand the desperate need guys have now to cut costs, and running your own drone is a profitability gamechanger."

The math is undeniable, Hedrick contends. Agriculture, he believes, is at the get-go of historic technology change,

echoing the breakthroughs of yesteryear, whether steel plow or mechanization.

Initially, drones were viewed as a hammer searching for a nail: a single-use tool. However, drones will become a farm's Swiss Army Knife, Hedrick insists, with an ever-increasing capacity to house more blades and tools.

"This is only starting and it's not just about fertilizer and pesticide. We currently have drones with 30-gallon capacities, and much bigger ones are coming. We're able to cover well over 1,000 to 1,500 acres a day with a drone. We even have heavy lift drones to deal with breakdowns in the field. When a pivot tire goes down, a drone will lift and carry a replacement out there to the section. A motor down? It'll carry a motor. A blizzard? A drone will carry hay bales to your cattle."

"Farmer-owned and operated drones are going to be absolutely standard in row crop operations. If a guy has a tractor, he'll have a drone. If a guy has livestock, he'll have a drone."

And autonomy? Drones are tailor-made for AI technology. "You hear about autonomy all over the farm, but a lot of it is theoretical and down the road. Not so with drones. This is coming fast and its concrete. The value of drones on the farm, as high as it is today, will soon go up to levels not even imagined yet."

## Push to Profitability

In 2024, during the deadly and catastrophic impact of Hurricane Helene, Hedrick was on the scene in the worst-hit areas of North Carolina, at the forefront of relief supply delivery to stranded families—via drone.



**EVERY FARM WITH A DRONE:** "We're starting an era where you literally won't find a farm with a planter that doesn't also own a drone," Hedrick contends, "because the savings and functions are incredible." (Photo by Revolution Drones)

"That was another example of how much we learned about the expansion of drones in all areas of life. In farming, that expansion is going to change the future of

all our operations, because drone technology is going to push agriculture to profitability," Hedrick concludes. "That's how dramatic the drone impact will be."

## Group representing ranchers asks court to vacate USDA ear tag rule

A civil rights group representing ranchers has asked the U.S. District Court for the District of South Dakota to vacate USDA's "unlawful rule" requiring electronic identification (EID) ear tags for certain cattle and bison transported over state lines instead of long-used visual tags.

The New Civil Liberties Alliance (NCLA) filed the motion in the ongoing R-CALF USA, et al. vs. USDA case against the rule USDA instituted in 2024.

"The court should end this unauthorized, expensive mandate that USDA instituted in 2024 to replace an already efficient means of cattle identification without explaining why the expensive change is needed nor how it will help reduce animal disease," NCLA said in announcing its motion.

NCLA contends USDA earli-

er agreed visual-only eartags were effective in tracing disease, and allowed producers to choose between visual-only and EIDs, but then imposed an EID mandate "without giving any reasoning or data to support the claim."

Further, they argue, the current rule does not require producers to buy or use electronic eartag readers, so they use EIDs to track cattle the same way they used "far less expensive" visual-only tags.

"This means American ranchers are simply paying more to do what they have done for decades to effectively track and prevent livestock disease," NCLA said.

USDA's rule states EID eartags are necessary to reduce transcription errors in livestock tracking records due to "human error," but it also allows EID eartags to be used the same way visual-only tags are used.

— Meatingplace.com

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# Will AI data centers feed US?

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

Recently I have had a couple of people send me articles about the dire situation of minimal snowfall in the Rocky Mountain region that feeds the Colorado River Basin.

Naturally, these were sent because the articles were attacking the agricultural use, which is 70% of the total, but of course as irrigation for alfalfa and hay production they focused on that to target the "unnecessary cows" in the region. So that sent me down a path of searching for facts on water use from the Colorado River.

Without surprise, I found that most research institutions have blamed climate change for the snow drought because it is likely they can't reduce their efforts spent writing grant applications for government funding long enough to seek factual history of the situation, in my opinion.

First off, let's take a good look at the Colorado River Basin according to your Uncle Sam.

"The Colorado River Basin, located in the southwestern United States, occupies an area of approximately 250,000 square miles. The Colorado River is

approximately 1,400 miles long and originates along the Continental Divide in Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado, and ends where it meets the Gulf of California in Mexico. The Colorado River is a critical resource in the West, because seven basin states (Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming) depend on it for water supply, hydropower production, recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other benefits. Although agricultural uses depend on 70 percent of Colorado River water, between 35 and 40 million people rely on the same water for some, if not all, of their municipal needs. Moreover, the United States also has a delivery obligation to Mexico for some of the Colorado River waters pursuant to a 1944 Treaty with Mexico."

The current news indicates that the snowpack across the entire region as of today is roughly 50% of normal. In fact, in another note from Uncle Sam:

"According to Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) data, Lake Mead's elevation is at 33% capacity and Lake Powell's level is at just about 26%. In just one year, Lake Powell has dropped by about 32 feet."

No one would make the argu-

## Industry group punches back against 'misguided' RFK agenda

After more than a year of relatively private pushback, a powerful trade group is publicly opposing elements of the "Make America Healthy Again" agenda.

Via a printed report, video and discussions with media, the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) — represents 14,000 members including Smithfield Foods and McCormick & Co. — is pushing back against the proposed policies of HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., alleging that proposed regulations of ingredients will increase food costs for consumers.

"Abrupt changes to established pathways for ingredient evaluation, packaging authorization or manufacturing flexibility could slow innovation, drive research and development activity out of the United States and weaken the country's competitive position globally," NAM's report stated. "It is critically important that misguided policy changes are not implemented under the influence of the online global information

environment."

Specifically, the report defends food company's use of the "generally recognized as safe," or GRAS, regulation, which allows companies to add new ingredients to their products without submitting them to the FDA for approval. In a "60 Minutes" segment last month, Kennedy described GRAS as a "loophole" that "was hijacked by the industry," adding, "there is no way for any American to know if a product is safe, if it is ultra processed." The secretary promised HHS "will act" in reevaluating the GRAS system.

Just last week, Kennedy reiterated his opposition to ultra-processed foods at the Annual Meat Conference, calling them "poison" that created "the sickest population in the world." For its part, USDA has advanced a new dietary guideline that is also part of the MAHA agenda and that accentuates animal proteins in Americans' diet.

— Meatingplace.com



ment that we are in good shape. Although research centers tell us how alarming this is for the 25 million residents of the Southwest. Of course, they have to mention that it is all exacerbated by climate change with no mention of the acceleration of water users moving into the region in the past couple of years.

Before I go into that let's just take a look at history. Drought is nothing new.

After one notably severe drought struck the Colorado River Basin near the end of the 13th century, the Ancestral Puebloans, a group who had inhabited the Colorado Plateau for the prior millennium, migrated out of the area into the Rio Grande region.

Even more recently, four years ago WYOFILE was talking about seeking solutions in this Sept 22, 2022 article:

### Water authority to present options for Colorado River Basin water crisis

<https://wyofile.com/water-authority-to-present-options-for-colorado-river-basin-water-crisis/>

There's simply not enough water in the system to fulfill the water allotments divvied among stakeholders by the 1922 Colorado River Compact, and the situation is expected to get worse, according to federal officials.

So just out of curiosity I decided to research the new wave of "development" in the country, the massive water users which are artificial intelligence data centers.

It turns out that Phoenix and Las Vegas, both in this parched watershed, are two of the three largest data center growth areas in the entire nation.

In fact, 40% of the nation's total (currently operating or capacity under construction) is AI data centers in the Colorado watershed. This includes 24 of the hyperscale AI data centers and 397 regular sized units. In fact, near Buckeye, Arizona, a unit covers 2,000 acres.

Yes, the drought may be upon us, and I am not talking about a drought with less measurable precipitation. I am talking about a drought of common sense. Who moves into the arid desert where 40 million people now call home and try to take all the water? Who permits and builds water-hogging facilities like we have an endless

supply and then blames cows that have apparently caused climate change? Only someone who foolishly believes that AI data centers will soon be generating your nutrition.

*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](http://www.LoosTales.com), or email Trent at [trentloos@gmail.com](mailto:trentloos@gmail.com).

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# BEEF INDUSTRY REVIEW

Retail Fresh Meat Sales, 2025	\$ 52 wks Ending 12/28 v. YAGO	Lbs. 52 wks Ending 12/28 v. YAGO		
<b>+9.1%</b>		<b>+12.4%</b>	<b>+4.3%</b>	
\$ sales growth		\$45B v. \$40.1B	6.2B v. 6.0B lbs.	
<b>+3.0%</b>		<b>+6.5%</b>	<b>+3.2%</b>	
Lbs. sales growth		\$20.7B v. \$19.4B	6.5B v. 6.3B lbs.	
		<b>+3.3%</b>	<b>+1.1%</b>	
		\$8.72B v. \$8.5B	2.7B v. 2.64B lbs.	
		<b>-11.1%</b>	<b>-8.8%</b>	
		\$223M v. \$262M	34.3M v. 37.6M lbs.	

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## BARNs OF PIKE COUNTY

# The barn at the 'Scott Place' has certainly seen its share of cows

By CAROLYN ALLEN  
Special to The Advocate

For another month or so - until the trees leaf out again - this old red barn along with a large brick home and a couple of white sheds are visible on a hill-top overlooking Hwy. D in Buffalo Township.

The farm actually sits on Buffalo Lane adjacent to the old Jordan-Buffalo Cemetery - one of the most historic and picturesque cemeteries in Northeast Missouri.

"Old timers" called the farm the Scott Place in honor of owners Andrew Jackson and Annie Templeton Scott. They were early settlers in the area around Buffalo Creek, and although they are probably not the original deed holders, they built the house and most likely the barn.

According to People Places and Pikers, Andrew Jackson (Andy) Scott was born in North Carolina and came with his brothers to Pike County in the early 1800's. He married Annie Templeton around 1840 and according to the Pike County assessor built the stately two-story brick house on the hill around 1860. The house still stands and remains a beautiful and well-maintained home in 2026!

Unfortunately, the barn is a bit harder to pin down. The 1891 Louisiana Press Journal advertised a stock sale at the A. J. Scott farm. They were selling 50 cattle, 65 hogs, 2 yearling colts, 1 brood mare and colt and a lot of hay in stack, so they raised all types of livestock and would have needed a good barn.

Andy Scott lived on the farm until after his wife's death in 1903 when he moved in with his daughter. There was an ad for the Scott farm in the 15 Oct 1903 Louisiana Press Journal. It read:

"270-acre Farm - dwelling house brick structure containing ten rooms and all the outbuildings and improvements are well



**SCOTT BARN:** This Pike County barn sits adjacent to the old Jordon-Buffalo Cemetery — one of the most historic and picturesque cemeteries in NE Missouri. (Photos by Carolyn Allen)

placed and in good condition including 2 good tenant houses of 5 rooms. There is also a good barn and stables conveniently located and arranged. - one of most desirable farms in NE MO."

I believe the good barn mentioned in the ad was this barn. They apparently took bids for the farm, but none was satisfactory, so it was eventually sold privately.

The 1906 Louisiana Press Journal reported that the A. J. Scott farm, 2 mi. south of Louisiana was sold to Fred Naxera and Jesse Conrad for \$22,000, and Jesse Conrad would manage the farm.

The Press Journal seconded the idea put forth in the ad by stating that it was 270 acres of the finest farmland in Pike Co.

Although Fred Naxera and Jesse Conrad might have purchased the farm initially, the Conrad family believes that it was actually Frank Conrad Sr. (Fred Naxera's business partner) behind the purchase of the farm, and son, Frank Jr. who ran it rather than Jesse.

Frank Conrad Sr. was a Louisiana meat market owner/grocer from Bohemia who invested in Pike County farms because of his lack of faith in banks. His son Frank (incidentally, one of triplets along with brothers Jesse and Tony) and sisters Jane, Josephine and Mary (Mrs. Irvine Kelly) lived on the farm south of Louisiana together. Their mother joined

them there after Frank Sr.'s death in 1908.

That is supported by an article in the 1923 Louisiana Press Journal that noted that "Mrs. Mary Conrad, widow of Frank Conrad celebrated her birthday at home on the Andy Scott farm where she lives with son Frank and daughters Mrs. Irvine Kelly and Miss Jennie Conrad."

The farm became known as Conrad and Kelly when Mary Conrad and Irvine Kelly's son Minor Kelly became involved. Conrad and Kelly were heavily invested in the dairy business. They raised Jerseys and Shorthorns, and several sales were advertised in the old newspapers. Their cattle won ribbons at the local fairs, and they participated in the Jersey Day farm tour as reported in the 1926 Clarksville Sentinel.

That article mentioned the barn. It reported that farm visitors were shown a large stall in the barn with 6 beautiful Jersey calves. The newspaper went on to say that the barn was conveniently arranged and that everything was very neat with an abundance of straw for bedding. The reporter also complimented

the fine Jersey ice cream, milk, cottage cheese and cream (to go with strawberries) that they were served in the shade of the big brick house.

The author noted that the "products of the herd" were "enjoyed to the utmost!"

The farm stayed in the Conrad/Kelly family even after Frank's death in 1935.

In 1948, due to ill health, his sister Mary Conrad Kelly held a sale at the farm, but still it remained in the family. It was eventually sold to David and Wanda Hunter in 1969. John Frank Conrad, grandson of Frank Sr, shared family information often with his children and grandchildren but never mentioned that the Conrads built the barn. In fact, he still referred to the farm as the Scott place!

I believe the barn is almost certainly the same barn built by the Scotts and mentioned in the 1903 Press Journal ad.

Current owners have owned the farm now known as "Hunt-R-Be" for close to 60 years. They expanded the acreage, and although it is now a crop farm, they ran cattle on it for many years.

Wanda Hunter still remembers the seemingly huge job of painting the barn alongside husband David. We thank them for helping to preserve it and giving the barn its signature weathered red look.

Like most old barns, this one has had additions made to both sides - probably during the Conrad/Kelly years as machinery got bigger. The weather has been particularly hard on one of those additions, and it's almost gone now.

Although the barn is no longer used for livestock, between the Scotts, Conrads, Kellys and Hunters the old barn has certainly seen its share of cows!

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# An operation built for efficiency

By ADAM BUCKALLEW  
MFA Oil Momentum magazine

Larry Triplett has been around cattle since he was old enough to follow his grandfather through a pasture. That was a long time ago. In the decades since, he has built a career that took him around the world and figured out how to run a ranch almost single-handedly while holding down a travel-intensive corporate job. He's nearly 80 now, with 200 cows and a system so efficient he hardly needs to ask for help. He'll tell you that didn't happen by accident.

The Sarcoxie, Mo., native spent 40 years with Leggett & Platt, rising through the ranks to become vice president of manufacturing before retiring in 2002. It was a career that took him to plants across the country in Kentucky, Indiana, Massachusetts, Florida and Alabama, with occasional trips to Europe and Mexico. He was on the road up to 40 weeks out of the year. But he never gave up the cattle.

"I've always had cattle since I was 20," Triplett says. "Even when I was working and traveling, I kept a small herd."

With so much time spent away from the farm, Triplett did what any good manufacturing man would do: He engineered a solution. Over the years, he designed his operation to run on as little labor as possible. His corrals are fitted with large hay feeders that hold four or five bales at a time. His weaning system requires little manpower, and his small feedlot allows

him to move cattle off grass and back to the pasture again with minimal effort. The whole system, as he describes it, is built for efficiency without sacrificing results.

"My cattle are just as fat as anyone else's," he says with a laugh. "I just don't go buying a bunch of fancy tubs and high-dollar inputs to get there."

Today, Triplett operates 800 acres outside Sarcoxie with a mix of purebred Angus and Charolais crosses grazing on fescue, red clover and about 60 acres of Bermuda grass. He rotates pastures regularly and handles most of the work himself, calling on his sons when he needs an extra set of hands.

Building the operation took decades of patient thinking. Triplett began buying land in the 1970s and 80s, picking up farms at \$317 to \$500 an acre in an era when many people weren't looking at ground as a long-term investment. He developed a straightforward business plan: When cattle prices were strong, he would sell and use the proceeds to buy more land. He would then rebuild his herd and repeat.

"I always disagreed with people who said a farm had to pay for itself right away," he says. "I figured that if I could cover the interest and some of the principal, the land appreciation would handle the rest. I've found that to be true."

For nearly 20 years, Triplett has served as a delegate for MFA Oil, a role he took on at the request of his local plant manager. He buys his diesel fuel, propane and lubricants through the co-op and values it



**EXACTLY WHERE HE WANTS TO BE:** Larry Triplett of Sarcoxie, Mo. built his cattle operation through decades of patient thinking. Today, at nearly 80, Triplett operates 800 acres with a mix of purebred Angus and Charolais crosses

grazing on fescue, red clover and about 60 acres of Bermuda grass. He rotates pastures regularly and handles most of the work himself, calling on his sons when he needs an extra set of hands. (Photo by Katelyn Rogers)

for reasons that go beyond price.

"They've always taken care of my needs," he says. "I've known many of the employees for so long that they are like family to me."

Triplett has been a delegate long enough to know the co-op works best when more farmers choose to be part of the process.

"I'd tell any farmer around here to look into it," he says. "The more people that

use it, the stronger it gets for all of us."

After 62 years of marriage to his wife, Judy, and decades of splitting his time between the road and the ranch, Triplett has ended up exactly where he wants to be. The land is paid for, the herd is healthy, and cattle prices are at or near historic highs.

"The beef business has never been better," he says. "If you've been able to stick with it, it's been great."

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# A sleeping giant — Argentina's meat industry unshackled

By FRANK FUHRIG  
Meatingplace.com

American shoppers complaining about high beef prices prompted the usually protectionist Trump administration to drop its own tariffs on beef and encourage more imports from Argentina.

But when Argentines — who are among the world leaders in beef consumption — have suffered under skyrocketing prices, governments in Buenos Aires have gone much further. Time and again over the last 80 years, interventionist policies have reduced or halted beef exports in the name of domestic affordability.

Historically Argentina's most important sector, agriculture as a whole has faced recurring cycles of caps and even bans on exports, as well as export taxes, "especially for meat, because, you know, the meat price goes up, and you have a revolution," development expert Lilyan Fulginiti, a professor in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Department of Agricultural Economics and Argentine native, told Meatingplace. "Meat is a very sensitive political commodity."

She co-authored a 1990 economics journal article concluding that "government interventions in Argentine agriculture substantially reduced the growth rate of output" from 1940-80.

## Comparable to drought

A period of official export deterrence policies from 2005-10 led to a drop in beef export volumes by more than two thirds. Around the same period, the national cattle herd of 58 million dropped by 10 million head, comparable to the impact of a long-running drought. A later government imposed an outright ban on beef exports for 30 days in 2021.

Bountiful agriculture and burgeoning global trade made Argentina hugely prosperous by the late 1800s, led by iconic beef from the pampas — a grassy, fertile plain twice the size of Texas with more reliable rainfall — and by the early 20th century it was one of the richest per capita countries in the world.

Argentina took a populist turn in 1946 under President Juan Peron, spawning a leftwing nationalist movement that has dominated politics for genera-

**The country's struggles with high inflation and on-and-off export policies present what Kansas State University' agricultural economist Glynn Tonsor called a "unique economic history," yet the country's agricultural sector remains "relevant in both grain and livestock production on**

tions. The country has suffered a parade of economic ills: deficit spending, stagnation, corruption, currency crises, government defaults, recession and bouts of soaring inflation. Outright hyperinflation in 1989-90 — 2,600% annually — set off riots, and a 1998-2002 downturn met the definition of a depression. In the 1960s, Argentines still had higher per capita income than Italians, but today, per capita GDP is half of Italy's, on a level with China and the Dominican Republic.

Finally, frustration boiled over with the late 2023 election of President Javier Milei, whose platform was more dogmatically free-market than perhaps any national leader in the world — despite his own chainsaw-wielding populist aesthetic.

As punitive as the export taxes and other measures were for the meat industry, the uncertainty was just as corrosive. South American entrepreneur Sebastian Victorica said.

## Discouraging long-term investment

"These policies often disrupted international market access and discouraged long-term investment, preventing Argentina from fully realizing its potential as one of the world's most efficient beef producers," Victorica, founder and head of artificial intelligence grading platform UBI Meat, told Meatingplace.

The Milei government has abolished all quotas and volume limits on meat exports. The export tax on variety meats was dropped, while the rate on beef cuts was slashed from 9% to 5%, preserving vital government revenue while reforms of the widely evaded income tax system are underway. Reduced burdens on the meat industry are only one component of reforms to make Argentina's economy freer and its bureaucracy less onerous.

In a March 1 annual address to parliament, Milei promised "nine months of structural reforms" with plans to introduce another

package of legislative proposals monthly to authorize deregulation, more efficient taxation and political changes to bolster rule of law and property rights.

"From the conversations I'm having with producers and industry leaders, there is cautious optimism," Victorica, an Uruguayan native with extensive experience in the region's meat industries, said after attending Expoagro Argentina in early March. "Many feel Argentina has been held back from its full potential for years due to inconsistent policies. If the current reforms continue and investment confidence improves, the country could absolutely increase production and exports significantly."

Argentina is not the only country in South America, much less the world, to labor under chronic misrule and mismanagement. Like fellow meat exporters Brazil and Uruguay, it has endured brutal military juntas; unlike Peru and Colombia, Argentina has not had to overcome decades of civil war. But its century-long slide from wealth to relative poverty has no equal in the modern world.

## 'Unique economic history'

The country's struggles with high inflation and on-and-off export policies present what Kansas State University' agricultural economist Glynn Tonsor called a "unique economic histo-

ry," yet the country's agricultural sector remains "relevant in both grain and livestock production on the global marketplace."

The eighth largest country in the world by land area — only slightly smaller than India — Argentina ranks third in the world in soybean production, with significant output of corn and wheat. In 2025 meat production, the country ranked:

— Fifth in beef production at 3.22 million metric tons (mt), about 5% of world supply, and fifth in exports at an estimated 773,000 mt. Exports were 850,000 mt, also ranked fifth, for a record \$3.7 billion. Per capita consumption of around 112 pounds last year is down about a quarter since 2000. "Despite being one of the world's largest consumers of beef, Argentines in the past decades have been reducing their consumption quite significantly," the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) said in September.

— Around 20th in pork production at 800,000 mt, 0.7% of the global market.

— Ninth in chicken production at 2.53 million mt, 2% of world output. Exports were around 156,000 metric tons, down sharply from a decade ago.

Whether the country's meat industry has underperformed is "hard to say," Tonsor told Meatingplace. If Argentina's output grows in the coming years, it can be seen in a regional context. "Much of South America is gaining in production efficiency as well as logistical efficiency — think ability to get agricultural products from farms to ports, and ultimately to external markets," he said. "This is not unique to Argentina, but they are certainly on the list."

Brazil's beef production has

surged by about two-thirds since 2004, while Argentina's beef output is up only 8% during the same period.

## 'Strong profitability'

FAS' March report on Argentina's beef industry projected a 2% decline in Argentina's 2026 production due to lower slaughter volume, even as weights are rising significantly. High cattle prices and cheap corn are prompting farmers to feed more for longer to maximize weight gain. "Current — and expected — strong profitability is encouraging most cow-calf operations to invest strongly in pastures, genetics, and infrastructure," FAS concluded.

The longer term picture for meat industry investment, despite the recent reforms, still hinges on the fickle winds of politics. Milei's term ends in 2027, when he can seek reelection.

"There is potential there, but you need a little bit more than four years to be confident enough as an investor, to be making a huge investment," Fulginiti said. "I think for big capital investments, especially foreign capital, I think they will need more than one time, one government."

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# Livestock News & Notes.....

## Conviction on NYC chicken tender bribery upheld

A panel of judges in the U.S. Second Circuit of Appeals upheld the conviction of a former New York City school official found to have accepted bribes in exchange for serving students contaminated chicken.

In a 13-page opinion, the judges concluded there was sufficient evidence to show that Eric Goldstein, former CEO of the New York City Department of Education's (NYCDE) Office of School Support Services, participated in a quid pro quo with foodservice vendors and profited from the arrangement.

In June 2023, a federal jury convicted Goldstein on multiple counts of bribery and conspiracy. Goldstein accepted some \$100,000 in bribe payments from co-defendants at Texas-based Somma Foods in exchange for lifting a ban the NYCDE imposed in 2016 on their chicken tenders after finding they were contaminated with foreign matter.

Goldstein appealed for a reversal of the conviction in December 2025, arguing that federal prosecutors failed to prove a quid pro quo or conspiracy took place.

But the judges pointed to evidence of Goldstein pressuring Somma executives Blaine Iler, Michael Turley and Brian Twomey into finalizing their exit from a joint investment in a beef importing business by delaying the elimination of their product ban.

It worked. According to the panel, the Somma execs not only completed the contract, giving Goldstein a far larger share of the beef importing business, but also gave him \$66,670 in cash in that one exchange.

The ruling upholding the convictions means Goldstein must serve his 24-month sentence, and his co-defendants also will serve their shorter sentences.

## Tyson to face most wage claims in federal case

A federal judge in Washington allowed key wage-and-hour claims to proceed against Tyson Foods in a proposed class action filed by a former Wallula plant employee, while dismissing two claims tied to rest breaks and reimbursement for work-related gear.

In a Tuesday order, U.S.

District Judge Thomas O. Rice granted in part and denied in part Tyson's motion to dismiss the suit brought by former employee Aylin Rodriguez, who worked at Tyson's Wallula, Wash., meat processing plant from 2016 through early 2023.

Rodriguez alleged Tyson committed a range of wage-and-hour violations affecting Washington hourly and non-exempt employees, including interrupted meal breaks, unpaid work time, underpaid overtime, sick leave violations and failures to pay all wages due at termination.

The court dismissed Rodriguez's rest-break claim, finding she did not allege enough specific facts showing when or how often she was denied legally required breaks. Rice also dismissed with prejudice her claim that Tyson unlawfully shifted business expenses to workers by requiring them to buy items such as gloves and boots, ruling that Washington's wage rebate law did not provide a cognizable claim for that type of reimbursement.

But the judge allowed several other claims to move forward. Those included allegations that Tyson failed to provide compliant meal breaks, failed to pay minimum wages for all hours worked and failed to properly pay overtime. The court found Rodriguez had plausibly alleged that work-related interruptions during meal periods, combined with automatic meal-break deductions, could support those claims.

The court also let stand claims for failure to pay all wages due at termination and willful refusal to pay wages, finding those claims could proceed because the underlying meal-break, minimum wage and overtime allegations were sufficiently pleaded.

Rice gave Rodriguez 20 days to file a second amended complaint.

## Snack giant PepsiCo jumps into the meat stick business

International juggernaut PepsiCo is making its solo debut in the protein market, this week introducing Good Warrior beef sticks. The sticks, which come in two flavors — jalapeno and original — are made with 100% grass-fed and finished beef, per PepsiCo, and contain 10 grams of protein each with no sugar. Each stick amounts to 100 calories and is gluten free.

In announcing the new prod-

uct, the company said it was responding to "growing consumer demand for protein, with 86% of Americans looking to add more protein to their diets, yet seeking better-tasting, on-the-go options."

"We created Good Warrior because people deserve protein snacks that don't feel like a compromise," Tina Mahal, Marketing Senior Vice President, PepsiCo Foods U.S., said in a statement. "Our goal was simple: make protein snacks people want to eat for busy humans who need something fast."

PepsiCo has previously dabbled in the protein market via its affiliation with Link Snacks, the company behind the Jack Link's brand. The duo have teamed up again this month to introduce Jack Link's Doritos® Nacho Cheese-flavored beef jerky and meat sticks. Doritos are an iconic product of Frito-Lay, which is owned by PepsiCo.

PepsiCo and Link first forged a relationship in 2023. They previously partnered to create Doritos Spicy Sweet Chili, Doritos Sweet & Tangy BBQ, and Flamin' Hot® beef sticks and jerky.

"With this new protein-forward format, we're meeting consumers at the intersection of taste, innovation, and convenience. It's a powerful expression of how great brands can come together to create something entirely new—and unmistakably Doritos," Mahal, said in a written announcement.

In a similar vein, this month Jack Link's announced a new addition to its "Better-For-You" portfolio, through its introduction of air-dried beef slices containing only three ingredients — grass-fed beef, salt and vinegar; a total of 31 grams of protein in each 2-ounce bag.

The company also plans to roll out 3-ingredient sticks and steaks in 2026, as well as antibi-

## Fund Homeland Security

By REP. SAM GRAVES

Congressman, 6th District of Missouri

On Thursday, a terrorist, who immigrated from Sierra Leone and had previously been jailed for conspiring with ISIS, walked into an ROTC classroom at Old Dominion University and shot the professor, who was a decorated war veteran. ROTC students in the class quickly engaged, ending the attack and the attacker's life before anyone else was hurt.

That same day, a Lebanon-born US citizen armed with a rifle rammed a vehicle into a school at a Jewish synagogue. Thankfully, armed guards were able to stop him before any students were hurt. My prayers are with all affected in both attacks.

Those attacks happened in just one day. In light of the conflict in Iran, our homeland is more susceptible than ever to domestic terrorism. Yet, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is currently shut down.

To appease their base, Chuck Schumer and his cronies have refused to fund DHS because of their hatred of ICE, Border Patrol, and the rule of law in this country. These are the same agencies tasked with stopping and getting rid of the terrorists that Joe Biden let across our border unchecked. They're needed now more than ever. Thankfully, ICE and CBP law enforcement agents are being paid with funds from the One Big Beautiful Bill, so this pointless shutdown doesn't actually fully shut down these critical agencies.

The United States Coast Guard protects our maritime borders here at home, and they have folks stationed in Bahrain. They are literally under attack from Iran. While Coast Guard servicemembers paychecks have been covered so far, civilian personnel aren't getting paid. No one serving in the Coast Guard should ever have to worry about whether they will get their next paycheck, especially when they are actively risking their lives.

Many TSA agents across the country are now going unpaid. They already weathered the stress of one pointless shutdown, and now they have to again, while trying to make sure that no terrorist boards a plane. The agency was literally created because terrorists boarded airplanes and carried out attacks.

You've probably never heard of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), but they are also shut down. That's a big problem, because cyberattacks are being used routinely, and now is a really bad time to let our guard down.

There clearly isn't a worse time for Chuck Schumer to pull this stunt than right now. This shutdown of DHS puts our country in an extremely dangerous position. He needs to drop this charade and fund DHS before there's another attack.

otic-free turkey and chicken sticks, turkey jerky by early 2027.

"Consumers are clearly shifting toward simpler nutrition and more transparency," New York Times bestselling author Heidi Skolnik, MS, CDN, FACSM,

said in statement provided by Links. "They're looking for clean-label foods that offer real, functional benefits.

Many of the preceding items were taken from [Meatingplace.com](http://Meatingplace.com)

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# A Master of Disaster looms: Schumer is mulling raising beef prices

By STEVE DITTMER  
Executive Vice President  
Agribusiness Freedom Foundation

Several years ago we wrote about Bill Rupp's breakdown of the cost of processing cattle. Smaller plants -- processing a thousand head/day rather than the big ones processing 5,000 head/day were -- under prices and costs much lower than today -- \$250/head at a disadvantage right out of the gate. That figure is likely double, given the much higher price structure and cost of fed cattle now.

Bill Rupp had worked at several large packing companies, so he whereof he spoke. He was also the initial consultant guiding the creation of the Sustainable Beef plant in Nebraska.

.....  
It's basic economics that retail beef prices are as low as they are because the big packers have lower costs from economies of scale and multiple plants in various locations. There are lots of reasons but the facts are there, as documented in the Mandatory Livestock Reporting data.

Somehow, we doubt Sen. Chuck Schumer has combed through the data in the Mandatory Livestock Reports. Or he doesn't know anyone who has. Or the last thing he would be proposing to lower retail beef prices is breaking up the big packers, making them single species packers and roiling the beef industry's supply chain now. Yet, as ridiculous as it sounds, that is exactly what Schumer is contemplating. Kind of a Master of Disaster, you might say.

He must not be paying any more attention to beef industry economics than he was when someone told him how to grill cheeseburgers. Cheese on top of cold burgers before flipping... well, let's just say he's not smart enough to get an entry-level job as a burger flipper.

He's obviously just as clueless as an economist.

The big packers have been losing hundreds of millions each quarter for some time, because the cost of incoming cattle has ballooned as the number of available fed cattle has shrunk.

**When farmers and ranchers asked their farm, political, and university leaders -- all of whom have seen their ties to Big Ag deepen over the same period -- for answers, most were told that these new "efficiencies" were common to "maturing markets."**

Even at the record prices for beef, they haven't been able to make money.

And as an elite member of the Senate, he obviously had staff or servants combing Washington or New York during the pandemic to make sure he had steaks and hamburger when meat cases were sometimes empty.

If one wanted to increase the price of beef, disrupt the supply of beef, run a bunch of packers out of business and infuriate the many Americans who can't or won't cook every day but eat away from home, Schumer's your man. Schumer might be able to afford 40 or 50 dollar burgers but many Americans cannot.

The beef supply chain is a very complex, relatively delicate balance of several sectors, from the purebred breeders to cow/calf operators to feedlots to processors to retailers, foodservice suppliers, purveyors and restaurants.

It is not often all of those sectors can make a profit at the same time. The big packers can survive, even when losing hundreds of millions of dollars a quarter on the beef business for a while because maybe the pork or poultry business can provide profit until beef gets back on track. Big corporations can survive from that fact plus the cash reserves and borrowing power a big corporation has.

At that, given the reduced supply of cattle, one of the big closed a major plant recently and another shut down an entire shift.

Even a leftist New Yorker ought to be able to find someone who could explain the economic basics to him. We're sure he's been told by many sources to stay away from the grill.

President Trump knows a lot about running a country and reshaping the world. But when he tells "ranchers" to lower the



price they charge meatpackers" as the Wall Street Journal reported, he's out of his depth or listening to the wrong people. Even when cattle were sold for their hides, not meat, 150 years ago, the ranchers had to take what the packers offered, not the other way around. The federal government has investigated the meat packing industry multiple times and they've never found evidence of widespread collusion. And those super smart government lawyers have never figured out how to repeal the laws of supply and demand.

Someone also needs to inform Washington that foreign meat processors bought some American processors when the domestic companies no longer could or had the stomach for the fierce competition, escalating costs or narrow profit margins the harvest sector of the meat business operates under. JBS bought Swift when no one else in the U.S. thought they could survive assuming Swift's debt and operating on 2 or 3 percent margins. Smithfield was integrated from the sow level to the smokehouse, operated geographically over a large section of the country and still sold out when the getting was good.

With the totally revised price structure of the industry, the capital requirements of ranching, feeding and processing in the beef industry today are astounding, compared to a few short years ago. We're lucky to have the members of the supply chain we have still in business, all along the production chain, including packers.

We sure don't need Schumer, Congress or the federal government making things worse for the beef production chain or for our consuming public.

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

### Area livestock markets

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

### Other locations

- A&S Printing  
Monroe City, MO
- Abel's/McDonald's  
Bowling Green, MO
- Agriservices of Brunswick  
Brunswick, MO
- American Bank of Missouri  
Wellsville, MO  
Middletown, MO  
Montgomery City, MO
- Angell's Western Wear  
Centralia, MO
- Bank of Montgomery County  
Montgomery City, MO
- Bowling Green Tractor  
Bowling Green, MO
- Bowling Green Veterinary Clinic  
Bowling Green, MO
- Central Elevator  
Silex, MO
- C & S Grocery  
Harrisburg, MO
- Dawson's Store  
Thompson, MO
- Dearwester Grain Services  
Mt. Sterling, IL  
Golden, IL  
Carthage, IL
- Eastern Missouri Commission Co.  
Bowling Green, MO
- Farmers Cooperative  
Ewing, MO
- Farmers Cooperative Services  
New London, MO
- Farmers Cooperative Services  
Palmyra, MO
- Farmer's Elevator & Exchange  
Monroe City, MO
- FCS Financial  
Columbia, MO  
Hannibal, MO
- Feeders Grain, Inc.  
Bowling Green, MO
- Fish Hook Market  
Baylis, IL
- Grotjan Conoco Station  
New Franklin
- Hank Hedges  
O'Fallon, MO
- Hannibal Tractor  
Hannibal, MO
- Hatton Vermeer Sales  
Auxvasse, MO
- Hilty's Meats  
Bowling Green, MO
- HNB Bank  
Bowling Green, MO  
Hannibal, MO  
Monroe City, MO  
Perry, MO
- Jones Brothers AgriServices  
La Monte, MO
- Jonesburg Grain Co.  
Jonesburg, MO
- Josephville Meat Processing  
Wentzville, MO
- Kingdom Feed  
Fulton, MO
- Kyle Hendricks  
Buffalo, MO
- L & S Equipment  
Hermann, MO
- Lehenbauer Farm Repair  
Auxvasse, MO
- Liberty Feed Mill  
Liberty, IL
- Lincoln County Farmers Co-op  
Troy, MO
- Littrell Feed & Seed  
Thompson, MO
- Martinsburg Farmers Elevator  
Martinsburg, MO
- Mellor Trailers  
Boonville, MO
- Meyer Implement  
Bowling Green, MO  
Monroe City, MO
- MFA Home Office  
Columbia, MO
- MFA Agri Services  
Boonville, MO  
Canton, MO  
Centralia, MO  
Columbia, MO  
Elsberry, MO  
Fayette, MO  
Fulton, MO  
Glascow, MO  
Kahoka, MO  
Hannibal, MO  
Jackson, MO  
Jefferson City, MO  
Kirksville, MO  
La Belle, MO  
Ladonia, MO  
Macon, MO  
Mexico, MO  
Moberly, MO  
Montgomery City, MO  
Owensville, MO  
Perryville, MO  
Shelbina, MO  
Vandalia, MO  
Warrenton, MO  
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  
New Haven, MO
- People's Savings Bank  
Hermann, MO  
Montgomery City, MO  
New Florence, MO  
New Haven, MO  
New Melle, MO  
Rhineland, MO
- Pike Feeds  
Pittsfield, IL
- Prairie Home Coop  
Prairie Home, MO
- Quinn Farm Supply  
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- Rickett's Farm Service of Cairo  
Cairo, MO
- Ricketts Farm Service  
Salisbury, MO  
Shelbina, MO
- Rural King  
Wentzville, MO
- Ruyle's Angus  
Roodhouse, IL
- Scheidt Bros. LLC  
California, MO
- Shelton Seed  
Centralia, MO
- Shetler Feed  
Clark, MO
- State Farm Insurance  
Centralia, MO  
Vandalia, MO
- Straatmann Feed  
New Melle, MO
- Strattmann Feed and Transfer  
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- USA Market News Office  
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- Windmill Ridge  
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## Angell Livestock

Dealers of all classes of cattle • Centralia, Missouri

Cattle procurement is harder than ever, but we are quietly doing it every week.

We help source cows, pairs, heifers, feeders and grazers for our clients and some want us to arrange private treaty sales. We had a very good 2025.

We are looking forward to an even better 2026.

Let's talk about what you're looking for and what we can do for you.



Let's talk about what you're looking for and what we can do for you.

Justin Angell: 573-819-8000 Jon Angell: 573-682-4656

# Digging Deeper....

By JUSTIN ANGELL

After four years of the Ukraine war and now only two weeks into the conflict in Iran, I must admit I already have Iran drama fatigue. Militarily, the conflict is practically over, however economically I believe we will be suffering from currently unknown consequences for quite some time. As a sidenote, it appears Bitcoin functioning independently of all the governments apparently has given the Iranians trying to flee that country the ability to convert Iranian assets into Bitcoin to be retrieved safely outside the country.

The disruption in oil flow globally will have repercussions we cannot yet see. The Biden Administration is the disaster that just keeps on giving.

## Here are tips for grazing during spring greenup

By ELIZABETH PICKING  
Specialist in Livestock,  
University of Missouri Extension  
in Howell County

Seeing the bright green new growth pop up in our pastures signals the end of winter and the transition into spring. As that short green carpet starts to come up, cattle start chasing that short growth and may turn their noses up to hay they were previously eating well. However, allowing cattle to nip off this short regrowth can slow down the pasture growth moving into the spring. Research at the U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center in 2011 suggests that 500 pounds of forage growth per acre is lost when grass is grazed while still short in the spring.

### How short should we graze pastures?

The type of grass in your pasture will determine how short it should be grazed. When grazing most grasses like fescue, orchard grass, Bermuda, timothy and crabgrass, you should leave 3 inches or more so the plant has enough leaf material to regrow in a timely manner. Grazing below 3 inches leads to slower

Policies of the Biden administration bites us again with the U.S. entering this conflict with the strategic oil reserves more than half depleted, having been released as a political stunt by the Biden administration to lower pre-election gas prices. The safety of the country sacrificed purely for political gain.

Has anyone noticed those yelling the loudest about gas prices are the Trump haters? Sure, Trump is the catalyst behind fixing this 50-year-old Iran problem, but I get a chuckle because we are not yet to the gas price level of the previous administration when those people said nothing. Locally, gas rose \$.50 this week in one day. The truth is no matter how bad it gets here, it will be worse everywhere else. We are all lucky to

live where we do.

That statement was directed to mostly Missouri people. My apologies to those of you trapped in Illinois. The good news for F&T customers from Illinois is MFA oil just opened a new fuel station that shares the driveway with F&T Livestock.

Buckle up, because this oil disruption could be the catalyst that pops the everything bubble, we currently live within. There is a good chance for several reasons, we will soon slide into a long overdue global recession.

Stephanie Pomboy, investment manager at Maverick Mavens, says the top 10 companies in the S&P 500 have more cash than the next 400 companies combined. This kind of wealth and power concentration can never be good especially in a

crisis. I do not completely understand what the private credit market is, but there are private equity funds that have loaned money to businesses and companies that would not or could not receive funding from a traditional bank.

Apparently, there may have been a reason they could not attain credit from banks and now many of these multi-billion-dollar funds are experiencing extreme stress. Many of them have legally limited withdrawals, preventing investors from retrieving their money. These funds investments include commercial real estate, and the AI infrastructure build out, among other things.

My point is, as I have said for years, the system we are operating under is unsustainable.

My goal is to encourage situational awareness; it is not to start a panic. Inevitable collapse does not necessarily mean eminent collapse.

Although Bitcoin and other crypto assets have been disappointing to many supporters, a future with crypto payments is still being built. Even though the value of Bitcoin and most cryptocurrencies have faded in the last few months, I still believe some form of digital currencies is in our future. According to the Crypto Nutshell from March 2, even though we are experiencing crypto winter, Morgan Stanley is filing for a government charter to allow Morgan Stanley to hold digital assets. There are countless examples of billions of dollars being invested in a new financial system, it's coming.

Let's change topics. So, here's something I found interesting from a podcast from the Rational Rancher. I've talked often about how the devaluation of the dollar is like owning a melting ice cube and hard assets,

specifically gold, is a much better way to store our wealth than in fiat currencies.

I've been asked if cows are a good way to store wealth. So how do cows compare to gold? Interestingly, in 2026, an ounce of gold at \$5000 is basically the equivalent of a good cow. Going back a little bit, in 2020, gold was approximately \$2500 an ounce, as was one good cow. Going back further, in 1970, gold was at \$200 an ounce, as was the equivalent cow at \$200 per head. Going further back in history, in the early 1800s, a \$20 gold piece, which is 1 ounce of gold, also would buy a cow and even going back to Rome, one ounce of gold would buy a good young cow.

The Rational Rancher concludes that both cows and gold hold value, but have different attributes.

Gold requires no maintenance and protects wealth, but cows although perishable, will grow wealth. Gold is savings; cows are a business. Cows can multiply wealth while gold preserves wealth.

One other random economic point I would like to draw everyone's attention to...

Turns out, so far Hydrograph Clean Power (HGRAF) has turned out to be a very good investment. Don't misunderstand, this is not a get rich quick scheme. The sheer immensity of the products pure graphene can enhance and improve is truly incomprehensible. To integrate graphene into countless industries, I believe it will simply take time. Just guessing, I believe real payoff will come sometime between 2028 & 2030. Do your own research on graphene and let me know what you think.

This of course is not investment advice. I think that's a good place to end this month.

regrowth and potential for root loss under the soil. If grazed short repeatedly, producers can start to see thinning forage stands and more weed encroachment in those pastures.

Where I am in Missouri, most cattle producers are grazing fescue. In addition to plant health concerns, the ergovaline in fescue constricts blood vessels and causes symptoms like heat stress, poor average daily gains, and loss of tail switches, ear-tips, or gangrene of feet. The ergovaline is concentrated in the bottom couple inches of the plant, so maintaining a grazing height of 3 inches or higher limits the ergovaline that cattle consume and reduces some of those animal health concerns.

Many livestock producers have incorporated native warm-season grasses like big bluestem, little bluestem, Indian grass and gama grass into their grazing systems. Those species have a taller growing point and should have 12 inches or higher left behind to regrow.

### How do we avoid overgrazing at the beginning of spring?

Using a sacrifice lot or pas-

ture is an effective way to minimize overgrazing on most of your pastures. Choose a pasture that may be weedy or need to be renovated and congregate your herd there while you feed hay during the winter. This allows you to keep the herd off the rest of the early grass growth until the pastures have grown to at least 6 inches. Unrolling hay bales or moving hay rings across the sacrifice pasture helps to improve soil fertility by distributing manure and organic matter from wasted hay. Each winter, a new sacrifice pasture can be used to incrementally improve your pastures or you can have a designated sacrifice area for convenience if mud is not a major concern in your area.

### What are the ultimate goals?

As spring comes and grass starts to green up, the main consideration is to limit your herd from setting back the pastures for the rest of the growing season by nipping off all the short growth. Using a sacrifice pasture and stored feed and hay lets you protect the rest of your pastures and make soil improvements over time.

**Enjoy reading The Advocate?**

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*See page 6 for details.*



**Eastern Missouri Commission Company, Bowling Green**  
**Market Report for Friday, March 13, 2026**  
**Receipts: 1478 Week ago: 335 Year ago: 3073**

Compared to the last special two weeks ago, feeder steers weighing under 600 lbs sold unevenly steady on a light test, 600-700 lbs sold steady to 10.00 lower with 700-925 lb steers trading steady on comparable weights. Feeder heifers sold mostly steady to firm on comparable sales with two weeks ago. Demand was good on a moderate offering. Overall the feeder cattle market held up very well with all the volatility in the markets as bidders were very active. Slaughter steers and heifers sold with a higher undertone with slaughter cows trading steady to firm. It was an exciting day at EMC with a large crowd on hand, as EMC held their 3rd Border Wars Livestock Auctioneer Contest. The contest was an open contest with 26 contestants entered for the competition. Preliminaries started at 9:00 with contestants competing for the top 10 positions that would compete for the Championship after lunch. Justin Dodson from Oklahoma and sells at Four State Stockyards in Exeter, MO and Coffeyville Stockyards in Coffeyville KS was awarded Champion with Leon Caselman from Buffalo Livestock Market in Buffalo, MO reserve champion and Quest Flesner with F & T Livestock runner-up. Quest Flesner was also chosen as the People's Choice Award voted on by the people to raise money for First Candle, an organization com-

## Market Reports

*Sponsored by Prairie Queen Transportation, LLC*



mitted to the elimination of SIDS as a very generous amount was raised for this good cause.

**Feeder Steers:** Medium and Large 1 – Few 300-350 lbs 605.00-615.00; few 400-500 lbs 517.50-557.50; pkg 502 lbs 502.00, 550-600 lbs 456.00-465.00; 600-650 lbs 420.00-429.00, 650-700 lbs 402.00-409.00; 700-750 lbs 387.50-396.00, 750-800 lbs 357.50-361.00; 800-815 lbs 352.00-362.00, 880-900 lbs 325.00-331.00; lot 913 lbs 333.75.

Large 1 – Lot 1087 lbs 300.50.  
Medium and Large 1-2 – Few 350-400 lbs 565.00-571.00; 400-500 lbs few 485.00-513.00; 500-550 lbs 446.00-480.00, 550-600 lbs 410.00-437.00; 600-650 lbs 405.00-414.00, 650-700 lbs 378.00-386.00; 700-750 lbs 361.00-383.00, 750-800 lbs 347.00-348.00; 900-958 lbs 300.00-315.00.  
Medium and Large 2 – Pkg 545 lbs 400.00; 600-640 lbs 388.00-392.50.  
Large 1-2 – Lot 890 lbs 308.00.

**Feeder Heifers:** Medium and Large 1– 450-500 lbs 462.00-469.00; 500-550 lbs 422.50-457.50, 550-600 lbs 408.00-419.00; 600-650 lbs 400.00-406.00, 650-700 lbs 363.00-390.00; 700-750 lbs 358.00-362.00, 750-800 lbs 336.00-345.00; pot load 860 lbs 318.25, lot 862 lbs 325.00; 900-950 lbs 297.50-305.00.  
Medium and Large 1-2 – Pkg 385 lbs 485.00; 400-450 lbs

465.00-470.00; 500-600 lbs 372.00-390.00; 600-650 lbs 375.00-391.00, pkg 685 lbs 348.00; 700-750 lbs 337.00-350.00.

**Feeder Bulls:** Medium and Large 1/1-2 – Pkg unweaned 444 lbs 475.00; pkg unweaned 585 lbs 400.00; pkg 686 lbs 350.00.

**Slaughter Cows:** Premium White (65-70% lean) Average dressing, 163.00-172.00.  
Breakers (70-80% lean) Average dressing, 162.00-171.00; high dressing, 172.00-182.00; and low dressing, 151.00-158.00.

Boners (80-85% lean) Average dressing, 161.00-171.00; high dressing, 172.00-182.00; and low dressing, 47.00-158.00.  
Lean (85-90% lean) Average dressing, 150.00-157.0; high dressing, 161.00-174.00; and low dressing, 128.00-143.00.  
Shelly 102.00-122.00.

**Slaughter Bulls:** Yield Grade 1-2 – 1300-2400 lbs, 190.00-193.00; 205.00-226.00.

**Slaughter Steers and Heifers:** (45 hd) Choice and Prime 2-4 – Lot 1517 lbs 247.00; Choice 2-3 – 1250-1525 lbs 237.00-243.00.

*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*

# UFCW backs state bills targeting meatpacking vertical integration

The United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW) voiced support for legislation in Minnesota and Iowa aimed at limiting vertical integration in the meatpacking industry, arguing the practice concentrates power among large retailers at the expense of workers, producers and consumers.

The proposals would restrict major grocery retailers from owning or controlling meatpacking operations. In Minnesota, HF 4080, introduced by Rep. Rick Hansen, would prohibit large retailers from holding ownership stakes in meatpacking compa-

**Lawmakers backing the bills said consolidation has squeezed farmers' margins while retail prices remain elevated. The proposed measures aim to increase competition, improve price transparency and strengthen rural economies.**

nies. Companion legislation has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Aric Putnam. In Iowa, lawmakers introduced similar legislation that would ban vertical integration and require retailers to divest existing ownership in production.

UFCW, which represents about 250,000 meatpacking and

food processing workers, said increasing consolidation across the supply chain has weakened competition and reduced bargaining power for workers and livestock producers.

"When grocery retailers vertically integrate, we all suffer — workers, farmers, ranchers and consumers," said Mark

Lauritsen, UFCW international vice president and head of its food processing division. He argued that large retailers are expanding into meatpacking to pressure livestock prices lower, reduce wages and ultimately increase consumer prices.

Lawmakers backing the bills said consolidation has squeezed farmers' margins while retail prices remain elevated. The proposed measures aim to increase competition, improve price transparency and strengthen

rural economies.

Supporters said the legislation would give state attorneys general additional authority to challenge anticompetitive practices and force divestitures where necessary.

The push comes as major retailers expand their role in meat production, including investments in poultry and beef processing, raising concerns about long-term impacts on market structure and labor conditions.

— [Meatingplace.com](https://meatingplace.com)

## Beef costs outstripping burger menu prices, according to survey

Hamburger prices on restaurant menus are 14% higher in the last three years, but beef production costs jumped 32% since January 2023, according to a new report from food industry intelligence firm Datassential.

Burger inflation is roughly in line with broader restaurant prices, despite the effects of chronically tight beef supplies. Food away from home — which approximates all food service including dine-in, takeout and delivery — rose 4% in 2025 and is 13% higher since January 2023, according to the federal government's Consumer Price Index.

The Datassential report pointed out that restaurant pricing strategy can keep prices on popular items in check to avoid hurting turnover, while causing cost burdens to be spread throughout the operation. Burgers in particular are a source of traffic, especially in the quick-service segment.

"Operators can't simply pass every cost increase directly to the consumer," Datassential chief executive Jim Emling said. "The data shows just how care-

fully restaurants are managing pricing on high-visibility items like burgers while balancing costs across the rest of the menu."

Datassential's newly introduced Burger Price Index is meant to track evolving pricing strategies across major U.S. restaurant chains.

The report shows that burger prices rose just 0.4% in 2025, much slower than previous years.

### Burger price inflation slows sharply in 2025

After pronounced price increases throughout 2024, burger price growth cooled dramatically in 2025. By December 2025, burger prices were just 0.4% higher year-over-year, a slowdown compared with earlier inflation cycles.

Burger prices rose faster at limited-service restaurants — 16% since 2023 — while the increase at full-service restaurants was 12%. CPI data showed that overall prices at limited-service restaurants rose slower than full-service restaurants last year.

— [Meatingplace.com](https://meatingplace.com)

## Meat demand 'far more resilient than expected'

**WASHINGTON** — Consumer demand for meat has remained "far more resilient than expected, especially the beef side," Amy Smith of Advanced Economic Solutions said at USDA's 102nd Agricultural Outlook Forum outside Washington DC on Friday. "It's a cool story for the industry," she added.

In a talk entitled "The New Protein Equation: Demand Resilience in a Tight Market," Smith, whose research focuses primarily on end users, noted the steep uptick in consumer protein demand in recent years, marveling at such protein-infused products currently available, such as pop-tarts and bagels.

The trend toward more protein-rich diets began in the last decade with the emergence of

low carb diets and then accelerated by the appearance and ubiquity of GLP-1 weight loss drugs. She noted the recent appearance of the GLP-1 pill, which she dubbed a "gamechanger." Consumers see protein as a vital part of a healthy diet.

But beyond behavioral changes and GLP-1, Smith also suggested that there is a high-income segment of consumers who are "insulated from inflation" and will continue to purchase meat, regardless of price. Lower income consumers too are not shying away from meat, though they tend to be on the lookout for discounts.

What's more, Smith also noted, in recent years, and especially during the Covid crisis, consumers became accustomed

to "good product" in the beef realm, with exposure to a variety of cuts. Additionally, the same consumers became adept at preparing the meat with the help of YouTube and Tik-Tok cooking videos.

And, while chicken demand has indeed increased, it has not supplanted or substituted demand for beef, which remains stable, Smith said.

Indeed, Smith asserted that the overall meat supply is "capacity constrained," and that chicken had not become a "pressure relief valve" to help alleviate consumer protein demand.

"No single protein has the capacity to fix this alone," Smith said.

While pork production is relatively stable, Smith said she hasn't seen a good deal of investment in building new hatcheries to increase chicken capacity.

As for the beef supply — which previous speaker, USDA Agricultural Economist Anthony Fischer, noted was at a 73-year low — Smith said, "we can't rebuild the herd in months" and that any comeback would be "governed by biology" and by those producers who are "willing to expand."

In closing, Smith said that in her view the market is "not waiting for demand to break," rather, the market is "waiting for supply to catch up."

— [Meatingplace.com](https://meatingplace.com)

## MU Extension hosts free ag resources webinar April 9 and 16

**WEST PLAINS, Mo.** — Missouri farmers are invited to attend a free, two-part agricultural resources webinar at noon on April 9 and April 16.

University of Missouri Extension livestock specialist Elizabeth Picking and agronomy specialist Haley Schwantz will lead the sessions, which highlight assistance available through state and federal partners.

Some of the cost-share opportunities participants can learn about include lime, fertilizer, seeding, fencing, watering systems for livestock and stream-bank stabilization.

Session 1: Noon-1 p.m. Thursday, April 9

Elizabeth Picking and Haley Schwantz, MU Extension.

Mark McClain, private lands

conservationist, Missouri Department of Conservation.

Aaron Sandlin, county executive director, USDA Farm Service Agency.

Session 2: Noon-1 p.m. Thursday, April 16

Melisa Myers and Laramie Johnson, district specialists, Ozark County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Tammy Bennett, resource conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The sessions are free, but registration is required. Register at <https://pears.io/events/mu/5372>.

A confirmation email with the Zoom link will be sent to all registrants. Participants are encouraged to install Zoom ahead of time. For assistance, contact your local MU Extension center.

## Farmers Livestock Auction of Coatsburg, Illinois

**We would like to invite all local cattlemen to attend a 400 head feeder special sale at Noon on Saturday, March 28th.**

Although a long time fixture of Western Illinois livestock markets, Farmers Livestock is pleased to announce new management with Robbie Genenbacher now at the helm. Support your local community by supporting your local community livestock market.

For more information contact

Office at 217-455-2505

Robbie at 217-242-8874

# Monthly Sheep & Goat Market Reports

Sponsored by The Bank of Missouri

**Montgomery County Livestock Auction, Montgomery City Market Report for Sheep & Goat Auction Thursday, March 12, 2026**  
Receipts: 400 Last month: 750 Year ago: 700

Montgomery County Livestock held their monthly Sheep and Goat sale Thursday, March 12 with a light offering of lambs weighing mostly 30-55 lbs. Feeder lambs weighing under 50 lbs and lambs weighing 50-60 lbs all sold mostly 10.00-20.00 lower with a light test of lambs over 60 lbs selling with a lower undertone. Kid goats were not tested. Montgomery County Livestock holds their Sheep and Goat sale the 2nd Thursday of each month. All weights are CWT unless other-

wise noted. Supply included: 44% Feeder Sheep/Lambs (100% Hair Lambs); 41% Slaughter Sheep/Lambs (87% Hair Breeds, 13% Ewes); 9% Feeder Goats (100% Kids); 6% Slaughter Goats (100% Kids)

### SHEEP (prices per hundredweight)

**Slaughter Lambs:** Choice-few Prime 1-3 — 50-60 lbs 400.00-422.50, 60-68 lbs few 380.00-400.00; Choice 1-2 — Few 80-92 lbs 305.00-325.00, lot 121 lbs 270.00.

**Feeder Lambs:** Small and Medium 1 — 30-38 lbs 390.00-415.00, 40-48 lbs 405.00-420.00; Small and Medium 1-2 — 20-25 lbs 355.00-365.00, 30-38 lbs 355.00-380.00, 40-45 lbs 365.00-380.00.

**Slaughter Ewes:** Utility and Good 1-2 — Few 100-165 lbs 140.00-165.00; Good 2-3 few 115-135 lbs 180.00-220.00.

**Replacement Ewes:** Scarce

**GOATS: (prices per hundred weight)**

**Slaughter Goats: Market Kids:** Selection 1-2 — Few 50-80 lbs 370.00-380.00..

**Feeder Kids:** Selection 1-2 — Few 25-35 lbs 400.00.

**Nannies:** Selection 1-2 — Scarce.

**Nannies/Does:** Selection 1-2 — Scarce

Source: MO Dept of Ag-USDA Market News Service, Montgomery City, MO, Greg Harrison, Market Reporter

# Wholesale beef prices rise despite market disruptions, demand remains strong

A series of market-moving events, including a strike at a JBS beef plant, geopolitical tensions involving Iran, shifting oil prices and tariff uncertainty, have yet to derail strong beef demand, as wholesale prices continued to climb, according to analysis by Drovers and Sterling Marketing

Profit Tracker.

Union workers at JBS' Greeley, Colo., facility went on strike Monday, raising concerns about processing capacity. The plant handles about 5,400 head per day, roughly 5.5% of weekly fed cattle capacity. Based on recent slaughter levels near

525,000 head, removing that capacity could push utilization from 76% to about 83%, though JBS has said it can shift production to other facilities.

Market fundamentals have shifted in recent weeks. Lower fed cattle prices combined with higher boxed beef values improved pack-

er margins while pressuring feedlots. For the week ending March 14, packer margins were estimated at a loss of \$54.17 per head, narrowing from deeper losses in prior weeks. The beef cutout rose to \$390.66 per cwt.

Feedlot margins turned negative, estimated at a loss of \$48.79 per head. Elevated breakevens

continue to pressure feedlots despite strong demand.

Cattle slaughter totaled 525,000 head, with production at 469.6 million pounds. Despite macro uncertainty, including volatile oil markets and shifting trade policy, beef demand has remained resilient.

- Meatingplace.com

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# Laugh Tracks in the Dust.....

## Unusual town names

By MILO YIELD  
Special to The Advocate

A couple of weeks ago, Nevah and I went on an excursion to Council Grove, Kan. For a change of pace, we decided to return home on less-traveled roads. So, we went northwest to White City and then north through the little town of Skiddy. We chuckled at that town's unusual name.

That got me to thinking about other rural towns that have humorous, weird, or just plain funny-sounding names. Then I thought that it would be column material to search for more unusual town names in the states where most of my column readers live -- Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Colorado, Nebraska, and Wyoming.

So, I went to my trusted internet search engine -- DuckDuckGo -- to find such towns. The towns listed below are the ones I chose to feature. After some of them, I've made a wry comment.

It would be really insightful to know the full story behind the people and circumstances that resulted in these town names. For me, it's fun to guess.

So here are the towns in Kansas: Admire (those folks have pride), Americus (patriotic folks), Athol, Bird City (no other animals?), Coats (always warm in winter), Iuka, Gem (what kind?), Havana (we're not in Cuba), Moscow (we're not in Russia), Netawaka, Ozawkie, Peru (we're not in South America), Severance (got fired no pay), Nickodemus, Protection (safety first), Buttermilk (puckered up folks), Smileyberg (always happy).

Gas (roll your windows down when passing through), Skidmore (slick roads), Holyrood (what kind of rood is holy?), Neutral (non-opinionated folks), Liberal (generous folks), Agenda (town has many things to do), May Day (send help), Niotaze, Climax (always a good ending), Xenia (go ahead, spell with a Z like it's pronounced), Stark (stands out from all other), Dry Wood (lots of fireplaces), Speed (might get a ticket), Hasty (slow down already), Good Intent (that's admirable), Ransom (how much you demanding?), Deerhead (good place to be taxidermist), Red Onion (discrimination against white onions), Swamp Angel (thought angels lived in heaven).

Here are the Missouri Towns: Goodnight (and sleep tight), Halfway (to where?), Misery (lots of unhappy folks), Hale (and hearty, too), Fidelity (low divorce rate), Sleeper (slow going in mornings), Current View (how about the past view?), Grubville (plenty of food), Easyville (life in the slow lane), Hollywood (take that, California), Competition (striving to get ahead), Fertile (good birth rate), Frankenstein (keep an eye out for monsters), Toad

Hollow (no frogs?), Knob Lick (salt for deer), Blue Eye (are brown eyes banned?), Rocky Comfort (doesn't sound comfy), Tightwad (home to penny-pinchers), Baldknob (men with no hair heaven), Cooter (old coots welcome), Devil's Elbow (how about his wrist), Bois D'Arc (hope folks are tough as the tree); Kisse Mills (how about hugs, too?), Conception Junction (another with high birth rate), Bourbon (is scotch legal?), Cuba (not in the Carribean), Mexico (not south of the border), Braggadoccio (no need to brag so loudly), Herculaneum (strong folks live here), Fair Play (everyone has a chance), Clever (always plotting to get ahead).

Here are the Oklahoma towns: 1. Monkey Island (but no zoo?), Bluejacket (did the FFA start there?), Bowlegs (old cowboy town), Bugtussle (why fight

bugs?), Why Not (answer the question), Coweta, Slick (use mud tires here), Bigheart (got troubles? come here), Broken Bow (well, fix it), Talala (tongue twister), Stonewall (not welcome here), Mustang (need a wild horse?), Boley, Redbird (bluebirds not welcome?), Redbird Flat (what if they like hills?), Slaughterville (we'll butcher your critters); Ketchum (with a net?), Oologah (another tongue twister), Tishamingo, Frogville (froglegs anyone?), Cookietown (want an cookie), Non (is still something), Forty-One (why stop there?), Slapout (we will keep you in line), Gene Autry (cowboys must sing, too), Okay (never any arguments), Hooker (hope it refers to fishing), Lone Wolf (do it yourself), Cement (a hard-case town).

Here are the Arkansas towns: Goobertown (we eat peanuts),

Toad Suck (way too weird), Nail (bad place to sell screws), Smackover (smackin' good eat-in'), Flippin (we make hamburgers), Booger Hollow (nose pickers in a valley); Romance, (where to find a mate), Accident (or on purpose), Frog Town (bull frogs or peepers?), Fifty-six (why not seven?), Possum Grape (no persimmons for possums?), Stinking Bay (get some deodorant), Little Rock (get a bigger one), Hope (optimistic folks), Nimrod (lots of firearms here), Paris (no Eiffle Tower), War Eagle (fighting birds), Weiner (hotdogs galore), Evening Shade (what about hot mornings?).

Snowball (all year around?), Ben Hur, (a famous movie site?), Bull Shoals (the cows feel left out), Oil Trough (don't drink here), Greasy Corner (bring your antiacid), Gassville (feeling bloated?), Ash Flat (woodburn-

ers only), Bee Branch (no branch for butterflies?), Bird Eye (hope it's an eagle's eye), Dequeen (What about deKing?), Dog Patch (comic strip name), Gum Springs (sticky place to drink), Little Flock (can only own a few sheep), Quitman (do the women quit, too?), Round Pound (we tenderize tough steaks), Tomato (bring your lettuce and bacon), Whistleville (sports referees welcome).

Here are the Colorado towns: Loveland (honeymoon here), Parachute (smoke jumpers welcome), Spook City, (Halloween is big here), Wondervu (worth a good look); Wideawake (bring your NoDoze), Old Roach (hope it's close to death), Stoner, (pot-head nirvana); Fairplay (everyone's equal), Dinosaur (for really

See LAUGH TRACKS, page 22

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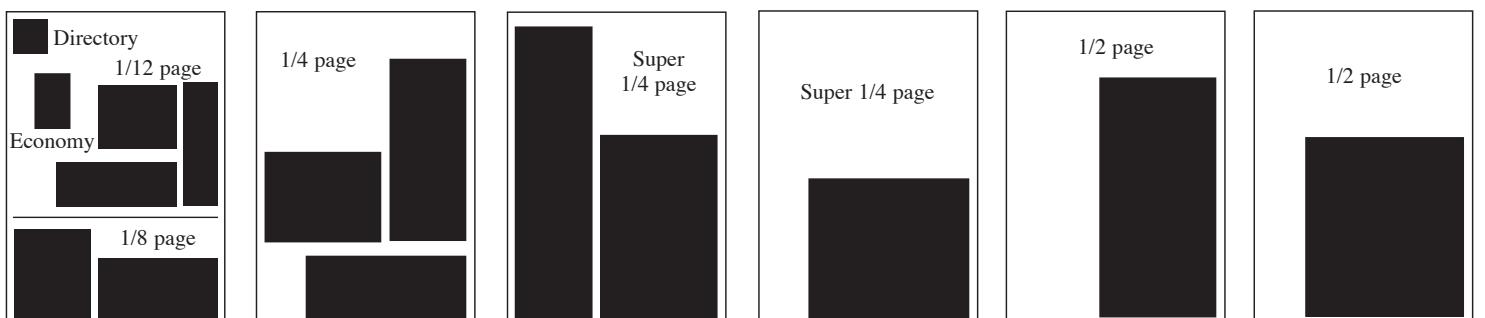
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# It's time to talk about the State of America's Beef Industry

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

Beef is the centerpiece of today's discussion about consumer affordability. You've probably heard that today's high beef prices are the result of a recent widespread drought that reduced the size of the domestic cattle herd, and the recent closure of the Mexican border due to the threat of New World screwworm that deprived the U.S. of previously available foreign cattle supplies.

This combination is said to have reduced overall beef supplies in the face of strong beef demand, resulting in all-time record beef prices. You've probably also heard that this situation materialized without warning; was primarily caused by these two unforeseen but temporary circumstances; and that their effect on beef prices can be mitigated by importing more beef and cattle from around the world. This is incorrect.

Today's extreme beef supply and demand imbalance is the manifestation of decades of failed policies that have dismantled the cattle industry's competitive infrastructure, increased America's dependency on imported food, hollowed out America's rural communities, and threatened our nation's food security.

The recent drought and border closure has merely illuminated the vulnerability of America's food supply chain. Let's take a closer look at what is the single largest segment of American agriculture. It generates roughly \$100 billion in cash receipts annually, provides Americans with life-sustaining protein, and serves as the economic cornerstones for rural communities across the nation. That segment is the U.S. cattle industry.

The cattle industry does not receive government price support, so the production of beef is not influenced by government price incentives as is the production of other major commodities such as corn, soybeans, wheat, and cotton. Instead, the cattle industry relies exclusively on competitive market signals to balance supply with demand through the expansion and contraction of the cowherd. This created what is known as the cattle cycle.

## LAUGH TRACKS from page 21

old folks), Rifle (high power or BB?), Troublesome, (a contentious place), Hygiene (disease free), No Name (yes, you do), Last Chance (better grab at it then), Buckskin Joe (what about Jack?), Yellow Jacket (you can get stung here), Pea Green Corner (better than pee green).

Here are the Nebraska Towns: Funk (easy to get depressed), Magnet (an attractive place), Nenzel, Wynot (because I don't feel like it), Ayr (named after a dairy cow?), Beaver City (no muskrats?), Dix (I guess x is easier than cks), Minatare (is twin city Maxitare?), Ong (OMG, what a name), Ord (shorter than ordinary), Surprise (spur of the

## Now, since the only ingredient in beef is cattle, consumer beef prices likewise fluctuate with the cattle cycle, rising during the expansion phase and falling during liquidation.

When supplies fall short of demand, cattle prices increase and the cowherd enters an expansion phase. But, when supplies meet or exceed demand, cattle prices fall and the cowherd enters the liquidation phase. The cattle cycle has historically lasted 10-12 years, involving 6-7 years of expansion and 3-4 years of liquidation. This cattle cycle is the industry's bellwether indicator of its competitiveness.

Because cattle themselves have the longest biological cycle of any farmed animal, the cattle industry cannot respond quickly to an increase in beef demand – it takes about three years from the time the decision is made to begin expanding the herd before a new animal can be ready for slaughter (hold back females, breed with 9 months gestation, and 15-18 months to grow to slaughter weight).

Now, since the only ingredient in beef is cattle, consumer beef prices likewise fluctuate with the cattle cycle, rising during the expansion phase and falling during liquidation. Thus, consumer beef prices and the cattle farmer and rancher's cattle prices were driven by competitive market forces – at least they were until just over a generation ago.

Let's go back to just over a generation ago, to 1980. Back then the beef packing industry was widely dispersed, and the 4-firm concentration level was 36%, meaning the four largest beef packers controlled 36% of the fed cattle market (fed cattle are cattle raised exclusively for beef production). At that time, we had 1.3 million cattle farmers and ranchers who maintained 37 million mother cows. And back then, competitive market forces allocated each dollar consumers spent on beef to all the participants in the supply chain.

Under the competitive market's allocation, cattle farmers and ranchers received 63 cents of each consumer beef dollar and the packers and retailers together received 37 cents. And for consumers, the spread between the

farm gate price of cattle and the consumer price of beef was about \$0.88 per pound.

Now fast forward through a generation to 2021. The 4-firm concentration jumped to 85%, meaning the four largest beef packers that dominated the fed cattle market were now a tight oligopoly (similar to a monopoly in which one firm control the market, an oligopoly is created when a handful of firms dominate the market, and a tight oligopoly occurs when that handful controls the lion's share of the market).

And our cattle industry had shrunk considerably, losing over half of all cattle farms and ranches and about 9.5 million mother cows. The allocation of the consumer's beef dollar had also changed by 2021. Whereas a generation ago the cattle farmer and rancher was allocated 63 cents and the packer and retailer shared 37 cents, now it was the packer and retailer who shared 63 cents and the cattle farmer and rancher received only 37 cents.

What was once a competitive allocation of each consumer beef dollar had now been flipped on its head. And for the consumer, the spread between the farm gate price of cattle and consumer beef prices jumped from \$0.88 per pound only a generation ago to \$4.58 per pound in 2021.

**In Part I**, we talked about how the concentration in the marketplace exploded from 1980 to 2021, and how that explosion in concentration resulted in a complete reversal of the allocation of the consumers' beef dollar to each participant in the beef supply chain.

The market changes that occurred during the four decades between 1980 and 2021 include:

- 1) Global beef packers captured 85% of the fed cattle market and about 80% of the boxed beef market, creating a tight oligopoly that far exceeds levels known to elicit poor economic performance and anticompetitive behavior.
- 2) Over half, 52%, of all cattle farmers and ranchers were purged from the industry.

3) Over a quarter, 26%, of the mother cowherd was eliminated.

4) The global packers and retailers' share of the consumer beef dollar increased 70% while the cattle farmers and ranchers' share decreased 41%.

5) And for consumers, the markup they paid for beef above the price of the cow increased 420%.

What went wrong? Beginning just over a generation ago, our government began handing control of the largest segment of American agriculture – the U.S. cattle industry, and its downstream beef industry – to a tight oligopoly. It then gave that tight oligopoly unlimited access to imports from around the world, enabling it to substitute domestic cattle and beef with foreign cattle and beef in whatever profit-maximizing ratio it chose.

Our government took a hands-off approach to overseeing the activities of the global beef packers. There was minimal, if not non-existent enforcement of U.S. antitrust laws; the U.S. Department of Agriculture refused to promulgate rules to implement and enforce the over 100-year-old Packers and Stockyards Act that Congress passed to protect independent livestock producers from the abusive market power emanating from the highly concentrated beef packing sector; the government neglected to align trade policies with America's food security needs; and, the global beef packers were not required to disclose the origins of their imported beef to consumers.

For the past four decades, global beef packers have systematically imported larger and larger quantities of foreign beef and cattle from around the world, increasing America's dependency on foreign beef and cattle and relegating what was the largest beef producing country in the world a net beef and cattle importer.

Much of this imported beef came from countries with weaker currencies, weaker livestock production and food safety standards, weaker oversight over veterinary biologics, and lower wage rates.

But, this imported beef was not differentiated from domestic beef because consumers were not afforded a label denoting from which country the beef they were purchasing in their grocery store originated.

As a result, lower-cost beef imports were a perfect substitute for domestic beef and these imports began displacing domestic cattle farmers and ranchers, their cattle, and their production. America's cattle farmers and ranchers had no means of mitigating this subterfuge because U.S. import quotas were too high and tariff rates were too low. And, importantly, there were no labels to distinguish domestic beef from foreign beef in the marketplace. Consequently, consumers could not initiate any demand signals through their purchasing choices for beef based on where it was produced or by whom.

By keeping consumers in the dark as to beef's origin, that important choice as to where beef is sourced was transferred to the global beef packers – they, and they alone could unilaterally choose from where they would source their beef to satisfy what was nothing more than a generic demand for beef.

The non-disclosure of country-of-origin information is a tool the global beef packers use to exert their tremendous buying power in the marketplace to the detriment of cattle producers on one end of the beef supply chain and consumers on the other.

Free from restraints to limit import volumes and requirements to disclose the origins of beef, global beef packers used undifferentiated imports to reduce demand for domestic cattle, reduce opportunities to expand the U.S. cowherd, and to reduce the opportunities to attract new entrants.

And this triggered a long-term downward trend in the number of cattle farmers and ranchers and their cattle, which threatens the security of our beef supply chain. It also distorted the historical cattle cycle by extending the liquidation phases of each of the past four cycles for 7-8 years rather than the normal 3-4 years.

By 2010 (about 15 years ago) the U.S. cattle industry had already shrunk to a dangerously small size - it had shrunk to a level too small to withstand even a moderate economic shock.

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moment parties), Trumbull (might make the president unhappy), Wellfleet (we're healthy and fast, too).

Here's the Wyoming towns: Ten Sleep (what if we have 11?), Chugwater (beer is better), Jay Em (what happened to K and L?), Crowheart (same as a black heart?), West Thumb (no east side of town?), Medicine Bow (sounds like painful treatment), Recluse (we stick to ourselves), Meeteetse (too many e's), Story (we'll tell you about us).

Words of wisdom for the week: "You needn't worry about getting older. You'll still do dumb stuff -- only slower and more often. Have a good 'un."

# Try this carrot cake recipe for a sweet dessert experience

Made and reviewed by CHARLOTTE ANGELL, rated by JON ANGELL For The Advocate

**Jon's Critique:** It's been a while since I have had this much sugar at a setting, since I have been diagnosed with a minor blood sugar issue. This is common these days as many of us advance in years. I have been diligently managing it by "a diet and lifestyle change." Limited to no sugar and very little carbohydrates such as bread, cake and potatoes etc... it has been a significant adjustment.

In the interest of good reporting, I broke my diet and ate the cake. I am pleased to report that this is very sweet and all around very enjoyable, especially paired with a cup of coffee.

I can't help but think my experience has been compromised by my lack of sweets for so long ... but even so, I'm confident most of our readers would enjoy it as well.

## Carrot Cake

Recipe by Margie Hudson, Centralia, MO

### Cake

- 2 cups sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 1/2 cups oil
- 2 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons Cinnamon
- 1 teaspoons salt
- 3 cups raw grated carrots
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

### Cream Cheese Icing (half recipe)

- 4 ounce cream cheese, room temperature
- 1/2 stick butter
- 12 cup chopped nuts
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Powder sugar to make icing creamy to spread (I used 2-3 cups)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly coat a 9 x 13 inch pan.

Sift together flour, soda, and salt (set aside)  
 Beat sugar and eggs well. Add oil and beat again.  
 Add the flour mixture, carrots, vanilla and nuts. When mixed good, pour in the sprayed 9x13 pan.  
 Bake 35 to 45 minutes, or until done (tooth pick insert-

ed into middle of the cake comes out clean). When done, set on a cooling rack until cooled completely.

### Cream Cheese Icing

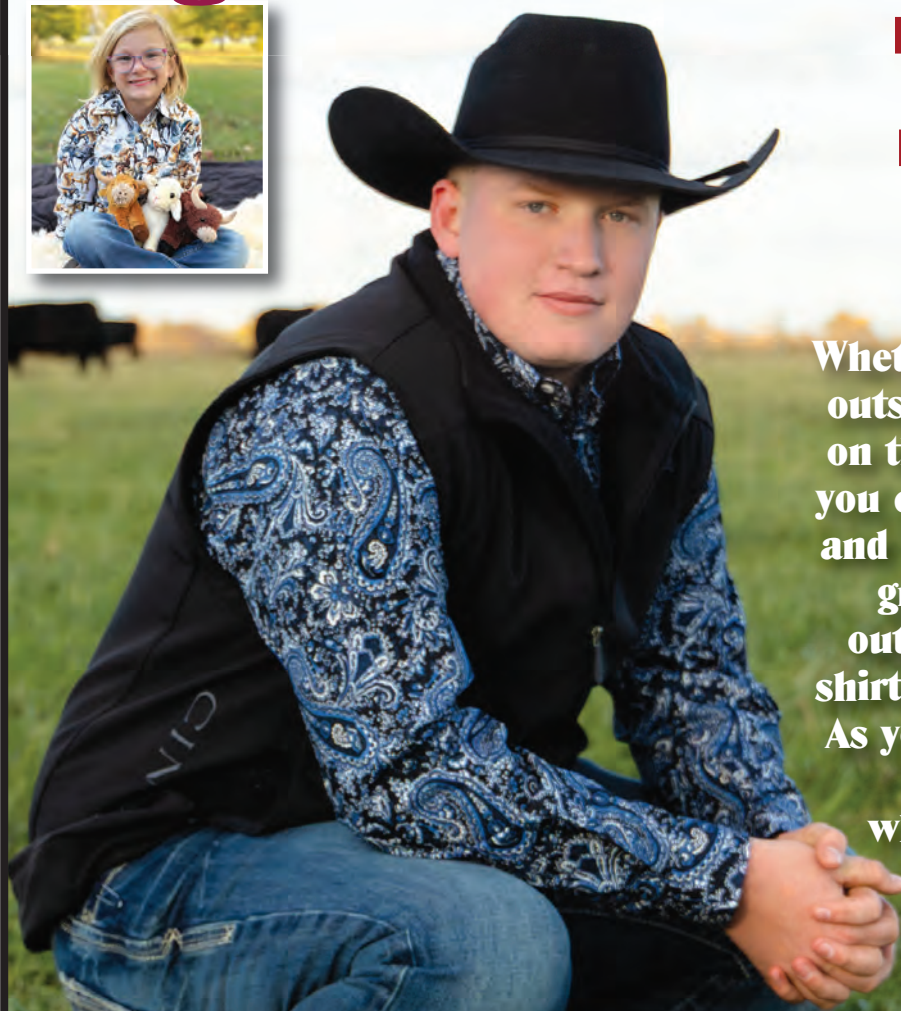
Mix cream cheese and butter until smooth then add vanilla nuts and powdered sugar.

Spread on a cooled cake. Enjoy!



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

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**Congratulations to the winners and thanks to the 26 contestants who participated in our Border Wars Livestock Auctioneer Contest. A big thank you to our consignors, bidders and buyers this week and every week, we appreciate you.**



Champion: Justin Dodson (center); Reserve Champion: Leon Caselman (left); Runner Up: Quest Flesnor (right); People's Choice: Quest Flesnor

# EASTERN MISSOURI

**COMMISSION COMPANY**

North Business Loop 61 • P.O. Box 87  
Bowling Green, MO 63334 • 573-324-2295  
easternmo@gmail.com



Friday auctions can now be viewed in real time online at:  
[www.dvauction.com](http://www.dvauction.com)



**Top 10 contestants in 2026 Border Wars**

## Upcoming Sales at Eastern Missouri Commission Company in Bowling Green

### March

Friday, March 27.....Special feeder sale with regular Friday sale

### April

Friday, April 3.....Regular Friday sale

Friday, April 10.....Special feeder sale with regular Friday sale

Friday, April 17.....Bred cow sale with regular Friday sale

Friday, April 24.....Special feeder sale with regular Friday sale

Please check our website for information on consignments and other updates

[www.emclivestock.com](http://www.emclivestock.com)

### EMCC Friday start times

9:00 a.m. start time for fed cattle & pound cows, followed by bred cows

12:30 p.m. start time with veals, followed by yearlings and calves

### Cattle receiving hours

Thursday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Friday starting 6:30 a.m.



We market ALL classes of cattle each week.

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

Mike VanMaanen 573-881-0402	Lori VanMaanen 573-682-7008	John Sutton 702-336-4713	Terry Syrcle 217-440-8384	Frank Scherder 573-669-5321	Mike Magruder 314-605-1094	Damon Luebrecht 573-470-6150	Cody Hanold 618-781-9810	Mike Bolte 573-470-2988
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