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Vol 22, Issue 5

May 2026

Legendary Dude Ranch

Triangle X Ranch at 100: Fourth generation heads legendary Wyoming dude ranch

By ZAKARY SONNTAG
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This year marks the 100th anniversary of the legendary Triangle X Ranch in Grand Teton National Park, now led by a fourth generation of the Turner family. John Turner grew up there in a cabin with no electricity. "If it was 20 below outside, it was 20 below in here." Now the family is entering a moment they just never get used to: renegotiating the lease with the Park Service.

John Turner grew up in a cabin built of felled timber. There was no electricity, and winter temperatures in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, were merciless.

"I was never too excited about going to bed at night, because the bedrooms were ambient temperature," he said, standing in his childhood bedroom. "If it was 20 below outside, it was 20 below in here."

When it got bad enough, he'd drag one of the ranch dogs under the covers for extra warmth, even if he knew his mother would scold him over laundry.

Turner stood quietly in the room for a beat. It felt like he was about to say something profound regarding the old days.

He didn't.

"Sorry to desert you here, but I gotta go," he said, padding out of the room, the century-old floorboards creaking beneath his feet.

The past stays present here, but so does the work.

Turner's childhood home is part of the Triangle X Ranch inside Grand Teton National Park (GTNP), which has been home to five generations of Turners who this year mark the ranch's 100th anniversary.

The family is also entering a moment they never quite get used to: the renegotiation of its operating lease with the National Park Service. The process that will help determine whether Triangle X endures as it has, or if it's compelled to change like so many dude ranch operations around it.

See **DUDE RANCH**, page 11



FIFTH GENERATION RANCH:

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the legendary Triangle X Ranch in Grand Teton National Park, now being worked by a fifth generation of the Turner family. Above, John Turner grew up there in a cabin with no electricity during merciless Jackson Hole winters. (Top photo by Zakary Sonntag, Cowboy State Daily, photo at right, courtesy of Triangle X Ranch)



New Thomas Foods plant slated to start grinding in late 2026

Work to renovate and convert a Jacksonville, Fla., plant meat plant for processing imported beef should be completed by late 2026, according to Thomas Foods International USA chief executive Michael Forrest.

The facility "makeover" including the plant and equipment is an investment of about \$40 million in a 50-year-old site. An estimated 12 months of work began around November.

"Fourth quarter this year we plan to be operational," Forrest told Meatingplace. "When we decided to push the button and move ahead, some of the refrigeration equipment and some other bits and pieces have a 12-month lead time, which is effectively what's slowing us down."

Despite its age, the layout of the former Tyson Foods facility from its previous further-processing use remains an advantage, Forrest said. "The general

The facility "makeover" including the plant and equipment is an investment of about \$40 million in a 50-year-old site. Expected output to start will be 500,000 pounds weekly on one shift, with plans to institute a second shift within 12 months of opening.

layout will remain the same, but we are renovating the facility from the ground up," he said.

Second US facility

The Jacksonville plant will be Thomas Foods' second facility in the United States. The site was chosen for several factors including "the availability of a facility that had been involved in reprocessing that had some of the attributes that we required," Forrest said, "and then, you know, our customer base and the growth of some of our major customers in the South and the Southeast, plus

some geographic diversity from our existing plant in southern New Jersey."

The Jacksonville plant is meant to process both organic and grass-fed beef and lamb, "but primarily beef," Forrest said.

Expected output to start will be 500,000 pounds weekly on one shift, with plans to institute a second shift within 12 months of opening.

"We like to run our assets as hard as we can, so our goal will be to double shift that plant as quickly as we can," Forrest said.

Ground beef makes up more

than 60% of the company's process volume. The company sells under its Thomas Farms brand, as well as doing private label processing for both retail and food service.

"Jacksonville is going to be a high-efficiency plant, so we're investing in robotics and some other state of the art equipment to reduce the labor footprint and the cost to operate that plant. We expect, fully operational, we'll have in excess of 60 employees on that site."

Headquartered in Adelaide, Thomas Foods operates five harvest plants in Australia: three for mostly lamb, one for goat and a dedicated beef slaughter facility that Forrest called "probably the newest beef processing facility in the southern hemisphere."

"Own the supply chain"

"The goal of the company has been to own the supply chain," he said. "We say we

don't want to be farmers and we don't want to be retailers, but we want to own everything in between."

The Jacksonville plant will have on-site cold storage, with ample additional cold storage in the area if needed. The site is about 5 miles from the Port of Jacksonville, with the Port of Savannah about 130 miles north.

"We can ship frozen raw material direct to the port of Jacksonville, which is very close by, or we can go to Savannah, Ga.," Forrest said. "So we have good access for imported raw material."

In addition to new floors and some interior reconfiguration, the plant's refrigeration system is being fully refreshed with a blast freezer, tempering room, cooler and freezer space. The finished facility will be fully automated post deboning with robotic pack off.

— Meatingplace.com

UPCOMING SALES

- Tuesday, April 28 – Feeder Special
- Tuesday, May 5 – High Noon Cow Sale
- Tuesday, May 12 – Feeder Special
- Saturday, May 16 – Horse Sale
- Tuesday, May 19 – Feeder Special
- Tuesday, May 26 – NO CATTLE SALE
- Tuesday, June 2 – High Noon Cow Sale
- Saturday, June 6 – Show-Me-Select Sale
- Tuesday, June 9 – Feeder Special

Cattle Receiving Hours

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



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High Noon Cow Sale

Tuesday, May 5, 2026 • Noon

F&T Livestock Auction, Palmyra, MO

Early Consignments

May 5

Angell Livestock – 46- F1 black whiteface heifer pairs originating from SD as 811 pound calves, grazed in the creek bottoms east of Centralia, Missouri and bred to either 2 Black Angus or 2 Black Simmental calving ease bulls.

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.

Jason Hedrick – Dispersing 12 young black cows/pairs that have been running with a black bull. These are hotwire broke and very gentle and easy to handle.

Special calf and yearling sales will be held April 28, May 12 and May 19. Saturday May 23 will be our Tri-State Select Horse Sale! Mark your calendar and join us at any or all of these sales.

For more information go to the website at ftlivestock.com. If you want to do business where both you and your business is appreciated, call Al, Katie or one of the field reps listed above.

www.ftlivestock.com

Market report from April 14

Compared to the auction from three weeks ago, steer calves under 600 lbs steady, with feeder steers over 600 lbs and all weights of heifers trading firm to 10.00 higher. Once again an active market on all weights with some fantastic dollars per head. More fleshier cattle in the offering, but discounts seem less severe than what is usual for this time of year. Feeder receipts 1542.

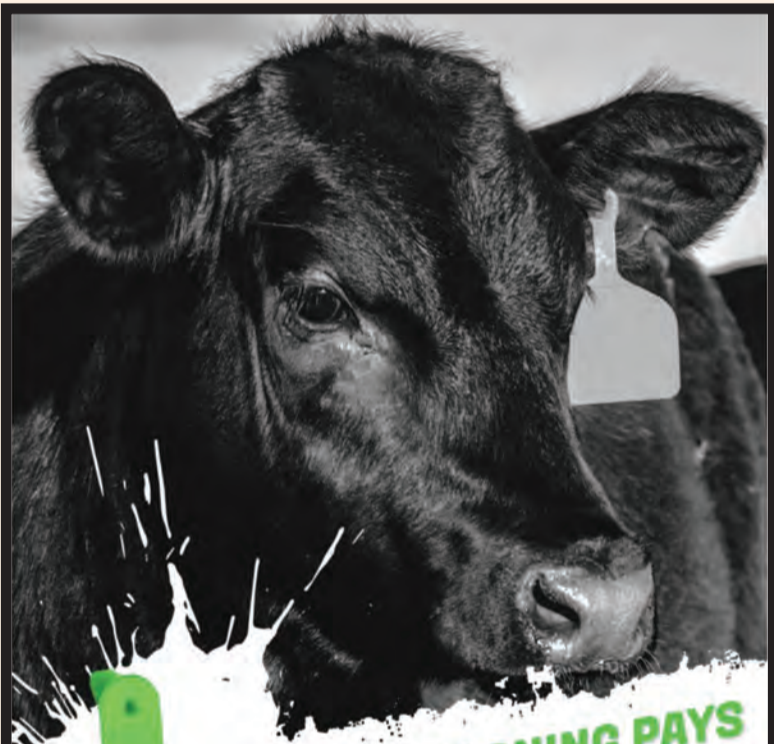
FEEDER STEERS				FEEDER HEIFERS			
Range	Avg. Weight	Avg. Price	High Price	Range	Avg. Weight	Avg. Price	High Price
300-399	355	577.50	645.00	300-399	363	566.67	640.00
400-499	456	509.73	597.50	400-499	452	487.37	550.00
500-599	548	466.71	540.00	500-599	543	433.31	486.00
600-699	651	411.61	465.00	600-699	650	386.64	469.00
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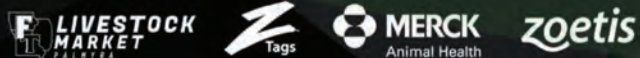


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DUDE RANCH from page 1

On top of all that, John Turner is expecting company.

"The neighbors are coming over. My wife's going to kill me if I'm not there to help," he said, keeping a brisk pace on his way out the door.

Still, there's one thing that'll always slow him down. On the cabin porch, he stopped to take in the view. The day's last light ramped off the Tetons into a colorful dusk.

"We think it's the best view in Jackson Hole," he said.

Shaped By Place

The view is part of what shaped the Turners. So is everything the valley demanded of them, including a growing season of only six weeks.

John Turner is a meat eater. He eats deer, moose, bear, and especially elk.

His diet was shaped by circumstance in a valley that offered few alternatives. What began as necessity became preference. By now, he's eaten more elk meat than a cougar.

"His diet was always very heavy meat. It was what they lived on," said his daughter, Kathryn. "He's that way to this day."

Necessity still sets the terms here.

The next morning, Bodie Turner, 19, stood by the corrals, watching the horses nose the rails and drift apart.

He's been riding these animals into the backcountry since he was 12 — not as an extracurricular activity, but as a worker on pack trips.

By 16, he was the most experienced person on the crew, leading clients who were initially stunned to learn their guide didn't yet have facial hair.

By 19, that responsibility meant making life-and-death decisions deep in the Teton wilderness, none more difficult than the day his lead mule sank into a hidden bog.

Bodie was leading a string of seven animals into the South Fork of the Buffalo River, and less than halfway into the 12-mile trip to camp, the trail was coming apart. Enormous pines lay crisscrossed over the path and the ground was slick with spring melt.

On a narrow stretch between a rock cliff and the rushing river, Bodie attempted to go around a fallen tree. Then the earth gave way, and his horse was up to its belly in bog.

Bodie's horse fought its way out, but his lead mule, Trixie, fell

John H. Turner, fourth generation, sees ranch life as a springboard to wider success. Turners have become private pilots and real estate mavens and lawyers.

deeper in, and the mule behind came down on Trixie's back.

"She's laying in the mud up to her neck, with another huge mule laying on top of her, and they both have 140-pound pack loads on them," he said. "It's almost like quicksand, it's just getting deeper and deeper."

After two hours of wrestling, the top mule was pulled out. But as evening settled and a storm rolled in, Bodie made one of the hardest decisions of his life.

He sent the group ahead, then put Trixie down.



PACK STRING: This year marks the 100th anniversary of the legendary Triangle X Ranch in Grand Teton National Park, now led by a fifth generation of the Turner family. (Photo courtesy of Triangle X Ranch)

He shuddered while describing the "worst part."

For fear of attracting predators, he took his hand axe, quartered the mule, then pulled her out piece by piece and buried her nearby.

"She was my lead mule for six years, the one that was always right there directly behind me," he said, sounding nauseous. "It was a brutal experience. It was awful."

"It can get Western pretty quickly out here."

Bodie's story isn't singular. Across generations at the Triangle X, responsibility arrived early and danger was never abstract.

There's one threat every generation of Turner has learned to respect early: grizzly bears.

Lucas Turner, fourth generation, has had more bear encounters than he can count, but one stands out.

His client had killed an elk deep in the backcountry too late in the day to pack the meat out safely. When Lucas returned the next morning, a giant grizzly had

claimed the carcass and was guarding it.

Lucas rode in yelling, trying to drive it off. Instead, the bear drove him off.

"The bear shot off the mound and ran straight at us. Our horses turned around and we hauled ass the other direction," he said.

He tried twice more. Each time, the bear chased him farther. Then a second grizzly appeared and made a run at the carcass. The first bear responded in full force.

"You've never seen an NFL



RIGHT AT HOME: This year marks the 100th anniversary of the legendary Triangle X Ranch in Grand Teton National Park, now led by a fifth generation of the Turner family, like John H. Turner, fourth generation. (Zakary Sonntag, Cowboy State Daily)

cram in a drum kit and band instruments.

"The whole school would file into this bus and make art all afternoon, and when we were done, we'd file out and it would roll down the road to the next outlying school," Kathryn said, explaining that she didn't realize until later in life how unconventional her education had been.

That experience was among the inspirations that put her on a path to becoming a professional painter. Today, she's among Wyoming's best-known fine artists with a studio in Jackson.

John H. Turner, fourth generation, sees ranch life as a springboard to wider success. Turners have become private pilots and real estate mavens and lawyers.

"I think that growing up on this ranch has really created in all of us a generation of overachievers," said John H., fourth generation, who attributes their ambition in part to an ingrained sense of independence and freedom. "We really only had two rules — be there for breakfast, and be there for dinner."

See **COWBOY**, page 11



Farmer's Livestock Sales Coatsburg, Illinois

Sale report for April 11 Sale

With yet again a packed house, the feedlot buyers came hungry. We had a nice offering of 577 head cattle. We primarily offered 400# cattle and 600# cattle with a yearling appearance. Demand was high and buyers refused to checkout until the sale concluded. As predicted, all 4-5-6-7 weight cattle were sharply higher with steer cattle showing their demand over heifers for obvious reasons. We are still seeing weaned out bull calves showing very little discount.

Standout sales from the April 11 sale

- 461# Steers @ \$570.00
- 405# Heifers @ \$531.00
- 608# Steers @ \$474.00
- 1433# Fats @ \$246.50
- Slaughter cows as high as \$192.00

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We'd love to have your business, our next feeder sale is 4/25.

For more information contact:

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HAULING THE TREE: This year marks the 100th anniversary of the legendary Triangle X Ranch in Grand Teton National Park, now led by a fifth generation of the Turner family, who has never been afraid of hard work. (Photo courtesy of Triangle X Ranch)

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From the Publisher... Jon Angell



Have you ever experienced a Western dude ranch? The feature this month highlights one such ranch similar to the one I experienced.

The story tells of a small family run operation and explains what we think of as traditional dude ranches are fading away.

Like so many things that are consolidating and changing, it almost sounds like this is one of those experiences we should check off the bucket list sooner rather than later. Later it may not be there, or at the least only an artificial substitute of what it could have been.

In our current situation with limited domestic cattle supply and strong demand for beef, I find interesting the developments that it drives. Of course you have the traditional response of a trend to retain heifers to grow the herd, but what is your response as a retailer or beef supply chain participant? Processing efficiency and substitution will rise to the top of options.

Pressure to close old inefficient processing plants and investing in new will continue to be the response. I find these changes interesting and it often causes me to wonder what other effects will develop.

The new Thomas Foods (story bottom page 1) plant in Jacksonville Fla. talks about a half million pounds of hamburger per week with one shift, with a goal of adding a second shift as soon as possible.

The plant will utilize robotics and is all about efficiency, and I am mostly sure labor expenses and problems are vastly minimized compared to what we normally think of in food processing.

Then you go on to its access to two major ports and Thomas Foods home office in Adelaide, Australia, I am sure isn't about advancing domestically raised beef.

In advancing domestic efficiency, there is a story on page 5 about Emperical. It is touted as "one of the most technologically advanced food plants in the world."

Once again, this new facility is all about efficiency. This plant's efforts are focused on squeezing more value out of domestic cattle industry. In the heart of the cattle feeding belt.

These two examples highlight how our beef supply chains are rapidly changing. Between the two, my feeling is that the Emperical plant opening is a very positive development that could benefit domestic cattle producers now, and even down the road when things are not near as profitable for us.

The Thomas plant is one of more concern. This plant makes substitution of domestic sources for for-

eign protein sources very practical now and I suspect an ongoing problem of domestic production later.

I find all these things interesting. I know that things don't happen in a vacuum, change has a way of causing chain reactions far removed from the initial starting point. I enjoy watching, anticipating, and speculating how things will evolve. This all plays into some of my news/story choices.

Another theme in my story selection this issue has to do with the war we are waging against the occupational forces and political regime in Iran. Did you catch all of those loaded words and phrases? This war will be filled with chain reactions and consequences to energy, trade, and security/political interests.

The impact on energy and fertilizer prices is already making big moves. The world is so connected now, and prices are subject to far flung supply and demand forces with volatility hitting right away.

It will be hard to keep on top of the wholesale changes the war and its effects will make.

I'm reading where a lot of the ships bound in out of the Straights of Hormuz are being diverted to alternate locations, such as United States ports. If we must suffer rising energy prices, at the very least, the United States will derive some benefits from being one of the suppliers of energy.

Thank goodness in recent years we have moved away from offshoring energy exploration, production and refining.

In fact, the idea of world trade with little consideration of long-term national interests and national security has proven to be a failed experiment or at least a dangerous policy.

In some recent reader feedback, one reader commented, "I think you are too supportive of Trump." I can understand those who don't care for DJT, but I can't imagine how sunk we would have been with the leadership of the alternatives offered.

It is easy to understand why many of us might not like his personality, his tactics, and general style, but I sure do like the results he is delivering.

I agree with most of his policy ideas. Keep in mind he is one of the few political figures that plainly campaigned and followed through on his promises.

I like that.

We are living through a time when all around us we are seeing extreme change in the way the world is going to work going forward. There will be a mixture of good things and of horribly bad things we are facing, but changes are being forcefully made.

There is an old saying paraphrased: "if there is to be hard times and war, let it be in my time so that my chil-

dren and grandchildren can live in peace and prosperity."

I think too many of our leaders and ourselves have been too supportive of kicking our self-created problems for our children and grandchildren

to deal with and suffer through. I find that unwise and am supportive of those among us willing to take on problems now while we can deal with them.

On page 6, MU Extension announces the release of its most recent custom rate survey. This is one of the most valuable reports that Extension does. I think it is very helpful for benchmarking costs. I have downloaded and enjoyed looking through the range in prices.

If you plan on using this report over the next few years, I would suggest reading the commentary from the report authors on the website. They do a good job of explaining how the rate guide was created and giving suggestions on how to interpret the report.

This is a prime example as to how context matters. Don't get yourself in trouble by not understanding the report in context.

Once again, I think you will find an eclectic mix of reading in this issue that you will enjoy. Don't keep us a secret, share us and tell your friends and neighbors about us.

Thanks for taking us along with you and taking the time to read – supporting us and our advertisers.

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F&T Livestock Market	page 2
Farmer's Livestock Sales	page 3
Larry Clementz Real Estate	page 3
Hopewell Farms	page 5
Hatton Vermeer Sales	page 5
Eastern Mo. Cowboy Church	page 6
Bowling Green Vet Clinic	page 7
Beefland	page 8
The Bank of Missouri	page 8
Scotland Co. Livestock Auction	page 9
Callaway Livestock Center	page 10
Meyers Truck Service	page 10
Meyer Implement	page 11
Girod Construction	page 11
Angell's Western Wear	pages 11, 14, 23
Miller Brothers Lumber	page 12
Missouri Beef Industry Council	page 12
Ridgway Seed & Soil	page 12
Sam Sudbrock	page 12
Zuroweste Welding	page 13
Audrain Building Supplies	page 13
Purina	page 14
Circle 5 Beef	page 15
Girod & Sons Construction	page 15
Angell Livestock	page 17
EMCC market report	page 18
Sheep & Goat market report	page 19
Farmers Livestock Auction	page 19
Angell-Thomas Charolais	page 20
Angell's Western Wear	page 20
Albert's Shoe Repair	page 20
Cary Livestock	page 20
Mark Robertson	page 20
Savannah's Farm Fresh	page 20
Shannon Farms	page 20
SHek Boutique	page 20
Cattleman's Advocate ad rates	page 21
Cow Patty Greenhouse	page 23
Central Mo. Feed & Supply	page 23
Eastern Mo. Commission. Co.	page 24

THE Cattleman's Advocate
A monthly livestock magazine serving Eastern Missouri & Western Illinois

is a publication of
Jon & Charlotte Angell

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FARM & FOOD FILE

The ages-old dilemma: guns or butter

By ALAN GUEBERT
For The Cattleman's Advocate

In its program-slashing, 2027 Department of Agriculture budget plan, the White House hoped to head off sure-to-come complaints by tying spending cuts to that handy whipping boy, big bad government.

"The President's Budget focuses on the needs of American farmers and ranchers, which is predominantly to get the Federal Government out of their business while supporting the great American food supply," the proposal explains.

While that sounds great to city-raised budget hawks, it's not accurate. Like most Americans, farmers and ranchers do want to be left alone – until, of course, they don't.

For example, farmers never hesitate to ask "the Federal Government" – you and me – to fund crucial food programs like crop insurance, the Conservation Reserve, port upgrades, river locks and dams, federal meat inspection, plant and animal research, foreign export aid, public school lunches, and on and on.

That's not a fault of farmers or the feds. In fact, it's a feature because every government's central purpose is to meet the needs of its collective citizenry, and few things are more vital to any nation than a safe, accessible food supply.

And, of course, farm leaders are completely sincere when they say they "don't want government checks" to provide a living. Still, no farm leader worthy of their title would ever tell their members to not take every penny of federal aid offered by



The 2027 White House budget plan for USDA does is a uniquely bleak document that tackles none of today's plain-to-see problems: soaring input costs, rising export competition, undone trade deals, weakened farm prices, and endless tariff threats.

lawmakers.

But that's not what the 2027 White House budget plan for USDA does. It is a uniquely bleak document that tackles none of today's plain-to-see problems: soaring input costs, rising export competition, undone trade deals, weakened farm prices, and endless tariff threats.

In fact, the plan is a dissertation on disassociation; it's more about political bogeymen than the actual hardworking people whose skill and sweat grow and deliver the food and fiber our freedom depends upon.

For example, the White House opened its defense of today's flat farm incomes and rising farm costs not by offering any market-stabilizing plan or income-boosting program. Instead, it proposed an agency-shattering 19 percent cut to USDA's 2027 discretionary budget.

The reason for the cuts? The "budget eliminates programming that does not serve a core mission such as radical transgender and Green New Scam ideologies and brings the agency's resources closer to the rural Americans it serves."

To ensure that message came across loud and clear, the White House repeated it loudly and clearly. A lot.

The entire "92-page top-line plan," according to DTN's Chris Clayton "...mentions 'rural' 12 times across all departments and agencies, but mentions 'woke' 34 times and 'New Green Scam' 21 times. Diversity, equity, and

inclusion are also mentioned 26 times while 'transgender' is mentioned 16 times."

For those counting at home, that's 97 mentions—more than one per page of the summary plan—of politically-loaded, idea-empty rhetoric that has little to do with any American farm, ranch, or rural community.

Despite all this constant cultural hectoring, the White House does get around to its USDA spending cuts. The biggest to suffer is the Food for Peace program, clipped for \$1.2 billion, and the McGovern-Dole Food for Education effort, hacked by \$240 million.

The Administration also targets two of its least favorite programs, SNAP and WIC, again and plans to slice another \$510 million from USDA's research budget. It also hopes to wipe out numerous programs focused on conservation, small farms, beginning farmers, and farmers' markets.

The steep cuts, according to Capitol Hill handicappers, are to aid the Administration's effort in boosting Pentagon spending by nearly 50 percent, from \$1 trillion today to \$1.5 trillion in 2027.

That will be a hard sell even in ruby-red rural America where they make butter, not guns.

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

Empirical opens Garden City, Kan. beef plant

Empirical recently celebrated the opening of its new state-of-the-art facility in Garden City, Kan., beginning the company's next chapter in production of lean ground beef and beef products.

The plant's process — first unveiled in a Meatingplace exclusive video, a photo tour and a company profile — reduces food loss by capturing lean beef and tallow from packer trimmings otherwise lost. The 280,000-square-foot facility comes online as record-low cattle numbers drive record-high beef prices, and as consumers make more trips to the grocery store to prevent food waste.

One of the most technological advanced food plants in the world, the Garden City plant will initially help Empirical boost production of lean ground beef by 50%, with the ability to expand significantly in the future. Efficiencies created by patented processes and automation produces a consistent, cost-effective product that generates affordability throughout the value chain.

Empirical also will increase production of high-quality tallow used in cooking oils, cosmetics, renewable fuels, and consumer products — making it one of America's largest producers of tallow. These expanded capabilities build on the company's portfolio, which includes Noble Valley ground beef, Two Rivers boxed

beef and pork, Dos Rios taco meat and Jen's Beef Bolognese and Sloppy Joe at its operations in South Sioux City, Neb.

The new plant will create over 250 new skilled and semi-skilled jobs led by Empirical's technical team with support from its partnership with the Garden City Community College, and supplement production operations at South Sioux City.

"This facility reflects a belief that efficiency is one of the most effective tools the industry has to strengthen domestic supply," Empirical Foods President Craig Letch said in a news release. "Increasing the availability of beef without increasing cattle numbers supports resilience across the system — from producers through consumers."

The Garden City facility was designed using decades of operational learning. Food safety is engineered directly into the system through equipment design, layouts, and workflows, the company noted.

"This is more than a ceremonial opening of a new facility," said Nick Roth, President, Empirical Technology & Empirical Innovations. "This facility is the culmination of five decades of innovation, and sets a new bar for food safety, efficiency and work environment for the next 50 years."

— Meatingplace.com

Here are the scheduled advertising deadlines for The Cattleman's Advocate through July 2026:
June issue Ad deadline: May 13
July issue Ad deadline: June 15

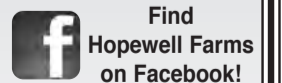


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Thoughts From Justin's Side of the Fence

By JUSTIN ANGELL

Buongiorno from Sorrento, Italy. Kelly and I arrived in the evening and there was a beautiful bright light on the western horizon.

I thought it was a sunset originally, but I think it may have actually been all the sale barns in North America on fire. Just when you think the market can't get any higher, Fat Cattle run up to \$2.50 and feeder cattle prices take another big step up at the time of the year when they ought to be taking a step down.

The feeder cattle market has been way out front for a long time, ahead of both fed cattle and bred cows and pairs. The rally in fed cattle is high enough to at least provide cattle bought five months ago a chance to break even.

What I am encouraged about is the fact that ranchers are finally trusting this market enough to go out and really give what bred females and pairs are worth, compared to what calves and yearlings have been bringing for many months.

For example, the rule of

thumb was a third period young cow or heifer should bring what two 500 pound calves would bring. At over \$2500 to \$2800 per head that makes all good bred females worth at least \$5000 to \$5600.

Until recently, even though we all see the highlight reels and hear about market tops, nationwide there's been plenty females bring less.

I will take this opportunity to remind everyone of the May F&T High Noon Cow Sale. If you're looking for pairs to turn out on grass, we should have several pairs at that sale. Never been a better time to be in the cow business.

Assuming you can graze a good pair for \$2 per day on a \$5 per pound calf market, a calf gaining 2.5 pounds a day at a cost of \$.80 per pound of gain makes \$8 per head per day for 6 months.

2.5lb x 180d + 90lb birth = 540 lb @ only \$5 is \$2700

Pays for a \$5400 pair in 24 months.

Look at the cow sale ad for

F&T Livestock and the others in this *Cattlemen's Advocate*.

One note of caution/opportunity I'd like to point out concerns the rate of herd expansion. Although USDA numbers do not show much herd building with heifer retention, I believe there may be stealth heifer retention skewing cattle on feed statistics caused by beef on dairy heifers being included in

the cattle on feed numbers. The beef on dairy heifers on feed inflates the on-feed numbers making it appear there's no heifer retention. I believe there's a great deal of heifer retention (which we need, but next spring there may be more heifers bred in this country than there is cowboys to calve them.

In theory, especially if the weather is bad, bred heifer prices might take a step down in price November through February, while pairs in April and May will still bring prices compared to what we have now. I could be wrong, but if I'm right, it will be a big opportunity for some young people wanting to work.

The next big jump up in price will come with breeding bulls. Most pound bulls now

bring more than what they originally cost.

At the top, everybody gets to take a turn, and we will all be making plenty of money until we don't. I too have come to trust this market and expect to continue for the foreseeable future and beyond.

The exception is I do not trust geopolitical instability, and the instability in our economy. Just seems like there's a lot of inevitable circumstances and conditions that someday we will have to reconcile.

Until then, don't let anyone steal your joy and enjoy every moment of this fantastic Market.

That's all I got for this month, I look forward to seeing everyone at the May 5 High Noon Cow Sale. Caio!



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MU Extension updates custom rates for Missouri farm services

COLUMBIA, Mo. – University of Missouri Extension has updated its Custom Rates for Farm Services in Missouri guide, which provides current estimates of charges and payments for common custom farming activities across the state.

The updated guide is based on a statewide survey conducted in fall 2025 through winter 2026, said MU Extension senior research analyst Drew Kientzy. Farmers, agribusiness firms and land improvement contractors were asked to report the rates they charged or paid in 2025 for custom services, excluding the cost of materials such as seed, fertilizer or chemicals. A total of 953 combined responses for all activities were received.

The guide reports average and median custom rates, the range of responses and the number of reports for each activity. Together, this information builds a picture of the variability and reliability of the rates charged across the state, Kientzy said. Services covered include full-service custom farming, tillage, planting, fertilizer and chemical application, harvesting and haul-

ing, haymaking, earthmoving and other commonly requested farm services.

Kientzy emphasized that the rates in the guide are intended to serve as benchmarks rather than fixed prices. Producers and custom operators are encouraged to calculate their own costs carefully and discuss job details before entering into agreements, he said.

"Custom Rates for Farm Services in Missouri" is available for free download at <https://muext.us/customrates>.

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It's The Pitts...

Stay in your lane

By LEE PITTS
For The Cattleman's Advocate

I admit I am prejudiced and don't believe in intergenerational marriage. For example, I don't believe a Baby Boomer should EVER consider marrying a member of Generation Alpha, who are currently 1 to 14 years old. Don't laugh, In 1880, 37 states set the legal marrying age at 10 years with parental consent, and in Delaware you could marry at 7 years of age! These days you can legally get married at 16 in many states.

If you're like me you are having trouble knowing who's who when it comes to the generations. Currently there are members of eight generations living at the same time and they include: The Greatest Generation, The Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Y and Z, Generation Alpha and Generation Beta. That's how in America today we can have a 100 year old bereaved widow who can remember her husband's first kiss who has a monogomously-challenged great-granddaughter who can't remember her third husband's last name.

Baby Boomers were born between 1946 and 1964 and currently there are 73 million of us but we're dying like flies. The only reason a member of the X, Y and Z generations should EVER consider marrying a Baby Boomer is for resource extraction purposes only as Boomers are the wealthiest generation on the planet. If you see a human standing in line at the bank it's probably a Boomer because all the other younger generations either have no money to put in the bank, or they bank online.

Baby Boomers have their own

For example, I don't believe a Baby Boomer should EVER consider marrying a member of Generation Alpha, who are currently 1 to 14 years old. Don't laugh, In 1880, 37 states set the legal marrying age at 10 years with parental consent, and in Delaware you could marry at 7 years of age!

way of talking which younger generations don't understand. We use words like far out man, bumper and groovy while Gen Zer's, also called Zoomers, use words like rad, wazzup and awesome. Members of Generation Alpha say things like "mad lit" and "mad drip" which I have no idea what they mean. How would an intergenerational couple even communicate?

Generally speaking, Boomers are self-centered and spoiled. We still read newspapers and magazines while millennials and all the rest only read their phones. Boomers have old fashioned names like Leland, Farnsworth and Winston while millennials are called things like Moon Unit, Cyanide, Phelony, Jacquell and Zooey. Can you imagine the fight an intergenerational couple would have in naming their children?

Members of Generation X are often referred to as the MTV Generation or Latchkey Kids because they largely raised themselves because both parents were working. Currently they are broke but interestingly, they are the highest spending of any Generation, spending 15 TRILLION dollars a year! On average they're \$142,000 in the hole, most of it student debt. A member of Generation X should never even consider marrying a member of Generation Z because they are financially conservative. Can you imagine the fights they'd have over money?

The Millennials, also called Generation Y are currently 45 to 60 years old and are licking their

chops because it's estimated they'll inherit 68 trillion dollars which is why many of them are still living at home and have never had a job. It's been said (not by me) that Millennials are lazy, entitled, delusional, narcissistic, unreliable and financially insecure. They are also referred to as Generation Me and Echo Boomers. The men of this generation wear their hair in a bun, are covered with tattoos and have more piercings than a seamstress' fingers. They have no kids and no place to live other than with their parents. They cut the cord, don't watch much TV, are addicted to their phones, have no brand loyalty, no patience and have never been inside a bank except to rob one. Females be warned... many males of this generation NEVER reach a marital age. Sounds like a real catch matrimonially speaking don't they?

Members of Gen Z got their first smart phone at age 8 which means they don't have to think and they spend four to five hours on social media. They carry no cash and pay for everything with their phone.

The Alpha and Beta Generations are below the legal age for marrying and we wouldn't touch them with a ten foot pole and neither should you. Our number one rule is you should never marry anyone who is younger than your oldest daughter.

One final piece of advice when it comes to matters of matrimony: STAY IN YOUR OWN LANE!

— www.LeePittsbooks.com

Packer's sudden closure sparks WARN investigation

An Idaho meatpacker is under fire after abruptly shutting down without the legally required time of notice to the 150 employees put out of work.

Intermountain Packing's sudden closure on April 3 quickly prompted a class-action legal investigation. The company's WARN notice to the state is dated April 6. Federal law requires employers with 100 or more employees to provide a 60-day notice of significant layoffs or plant closings.

In a letter to Idaho's Department of Labor, Intermountain explained, "The company experienced an abrupt and unforeseeable financial crisis, resulting in an immediate inability to meet payroll obligations. Because these circumstances were not reasonably predictable, we were unable to provide the standard 60-day notice. We are providing this notification as soon as practicable."

It's a rocky end, for now, to a

facility with a rocky history, which effectively began in late 2020 after the COVID pandemic and major packer supply chain disruptions inspired a rush of local processing interest and government grant money to back it.

Intermountain opened its \$20 million, 66,000-square-foot cattle and bison plant in Idaho Falls — first proposed in August 2020 — in January 2022, not with some of the billions in federal grants availed in response to the pandemic but with some \$126,000 in city incentives.

By December 2023, the company laid off 100 employees, according to local media reports. Its website indicates staffing, at least at one point, was 240.

In January 2024, residents began to complain about foul odors emanating from the facility, which reportedly was storing solid waste for days at a time because it didn't have approval

to dump within county limits. The company responded in December 2024 announcing steps to mitigate the issue.

Around the same time, Intermountain was being sued by three dairies for failing to pay more than \$2 million for livestock. The company admitted to "delivery of post-dated checks per the agreement of the parties for certain deliveries" but denied all other allegations related to breaching contracts and failing to pay for cattle.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service announced in February 2025 it had filed a complaint against Intermountain in December 2024 for Packers & Stockyards Act violations, after finding the company failed to pay nearly \$3.9 million for 2,884 head of livestock.

Seattle-based American Farmers Network bought Intermountain in July 2025.

— Meatingplace.com

JBS, UFCW reach deal to end Greeley strike

JBS USA said it reached a new collective bargaining agreement with United Food and Commercial Workers Local 7, allowing its Greeley, Colo., beef plant to return to normal operations after a weekslong strike.

The agreement runs through April 2028 and follows a labor dispute that idled operations at one of the nation's largest beef processing facilities. JBS said the deal remains within the economic framework of its previously proposed "last, best and final" offer, which it said did not change during negotiations.

As part of the agreement, workers will receive base wage increases of 70 cents at ratification, followed by 40-cent increases in July 2026 and July 2027. The contract also includes a \$750 one-time payment at ratification and a \$500 payment in April 2027 for eligible employees.

The agreement does not include a pension, instead continuing the company's existing 401(k) plan. JBS said UFCW Local 7 opted to redirect funds that had been allocated for a pension into wage increases.

The company said Local 7 also agreed to withdraw seven alleged unfair labor practice charges as part of the deal.

JBS expressed disappointment over the removal of a pension benefit that had been included in a broader national agreement negotiated with UFCW International at other company facilities. The company said it believes the pension was intended to strengthen long-term retirement security.

Operations at the Greeley facility, which employs about 3,800 workers, are expected to stabilize as employees return to work and production ramps back up.

JBS said it remains committed to investing in the plant and supporting its workforce following the resolution of the labor dispute.

— Meatingplace.com

IMF raises the alarm: 'All roads now lead to higher prices'

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is the latest institution to warn about the escalating global economic impact of the U.S. war with Iran.

According to Reuters and other outlets, initial IMF projections anticipated world economic growth of 3.3% this year and 3.2% next year; however, with the Strait of Hormuz closed and oil, gas and manufacturing markets in disarray, the institution is downgrading that assessment ahead of its April 14 World Economic Outlook update and spring meetings in Washington.

"All roads now lead to higher prices and slower growth" IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said, adding that even an immediate end to the conflict would still have lasting impacts on the world's economies.

Specifically, Georgieva said the strait's closure has already reduced global oil supply by 13%, and 72 energy facilities have been damaged, one-third of them significantly, from missiles

and drones, creating havoc in petrochemical markets.

Developing economies in Asia and Africa are particularly vulnerable to those disruptions, while in the United States, average gasoline prices through March rose 42%, and diesel and jet fuel respectively rose 54.3% and 115.1%. Those increases have resulted in immediate and additional costs to meat processors for packaging and transport.

Georgieva said that some countries have already asked the IMF for funds to help with rising energy costs, and the institution is coordinating with the International Energy Agency, World Bank and others to address economic disruptions and food shortages in developing countries and emerging markets.

— Meatingplace.com

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Meatpacker consolidation back in Washington's crosshairs

By CHRIS MOORE
Meatingplace.com

Efforts to scrutinize consolidation in the U.S. meat industry are gaining new momentum in Washington, as lawmakers from both parties increasingly target large packers amid persistently high beef prices.

In recent months, Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer has floated legislation aimed at restructuring the industry, while President Donald Trump has ordered the Department of Justice to investigate major beef packers for potential antitrust violations.

The unusual bipartisan convergence reflects mounting political pressure to address food affordability, even as economists and industry leaders say the fundamental driver of high beef prices lies elsewhere.

"The basic math is supply," Julie Anna Potts, president and CEO of the Meat Institute, said in an interview with Meatingplace. "On the beef side, people are losing money."

Bipartisan scrutiny

The renewed focus on meatpacker consolidation follows years of debate over the market dominance of the so-called "Big Four" beef packers (JBS, Tyson Foods, Cargill and National Beef), which together handle roughly 80% of U.S. cattle slaughter.

Trump last fall directed the DOJ to investigate whether large packers engaged in "Illicit Collusion, Price Fixing, and Price Manipulation," while several Republican lawmakers voiced support for stronger antitrust enforcement.

At the same time, Schumer and other Democrats are preparing legislation that would attempt to curb consolidation across the food system, including potentially forcing meat companies to focus on a single protein.

The proposal has drawn sharp criticism from industry groups, who argue it misunderstands how meat markets function.

"All the economists have said this will take efficiency out of the system and therefore raise prices for consumers," Potts said.

The cattle cycle

Many economists say the current price environment has more to do with cattle supply than industry structure.

U.S. cattle inventories remain near their lowest levels in decades following years of drought and herd liquidation.

Cattle, herd, cow, beef

James MacDonald, a long-time agricultural economist and former branch chief at USDA's Economic Research Service, told Meatingplace those cyclical dynamics often drive political reactions.

"I think people call for investigations whenever beef prices are high," MacDonald said. "And because beef prices tend to cycle a lot, by the time the investigation is over, beef prices will

be coming down."

"Cattle prices are high because there was a drought a few years ago and we have record low cattle inventories," he added.

That tight supply has pushed live cattle prices higher while raising costs for packers.

Major beef companies have reported substantial losses in recent quarters, despite record retail beef prices.

Tyson Foods reported more than \$1 billion in losses in its beef segment last year, while JBS and National Beef also reported shrinking margins as cattle costs surged.

"It would be really weird to have market concentration and price manipulation and then still lose money," Potts said.

The U.S. cattle herd has been shrinking for several years following widespread drought across major cattle-producing regions. Ranchers reduced herd sizes as pasture conditions deteriorated and feed costs rose, sending cattle inventories to their lowest levels in decades.

Rebuilding the national herd is a slow process that can take several years, as producers retain heifers for breeding instead of sending them to feedlots. That dynamic typically tightens cattle supplies even further in the short term before production eventually increases.

The role of consolidation

Still, concerns about concentration have persisted for decades.

Large slaughter plants require significant capital investment, and the industry began seeing more consolidation in the 1980s as companies sought efficiencies of scale.

"The reason we are able to keep prices down for consumers as much as we do is because of efficiencies of scale," Potts said.

MacDonald's research has also found that concentration alone does not necessarily lead to higher consumer prices.

In a USDA analysis tracking beef price spreads between farm and wholesale markets, MacDonald found little long-term evidence of increased packer margins despite rising industry concentration.

From the mid-1980s through roughly 2015, the spread between wholesale beef prices and cattle prices showed little

upward trend.

But that relationship shifted temporarily after 2015 when slaughter capacity tightened.

"When there's excess capacity, firms bid aggressively for cattle," MacDonald said. "When that excess capacity disappears, they have weaker incentives to bid aggressively."

In recent years, however, that dynamic appears to have reversed.

Shrinking cattle supplies have created excess slaughter capacity, forcing packers to compete more aggressively for animals and pushing margins lower.

Poultry vs beef

Antitrust concerns have historically been more prominent in poultry than in beef.

Several high-profile lawsuits have accused poultry processors of coordinating production to influence prices.

"You can tell a story in poultry where firms could possibly coordinate by varying placements of chicks," MacDonald said. "But beef packers don't really have that opportunity."

Unlike poultry production, which is vertically integrated, beef processors rely on independent ranchers and feedlots for cattle supply.

That structure limits the ability of packers to directly control production levels.

Radical policy proposals

Some economists say portions of the Democratic proposal would represent sweeping structural changes.

One provision would reportedly restrict feedlots from selling more than 10% of their cattle to any single plant.

"That would be a really radical change," MacDonald said.

"My guess is most commercial feedlots are selling to three different plants."

"The feedlot part strikes me as even crazier than breaking up the firms," he added.

Industry groups say forcing companies to divest certain operations or limit protein diversification could also destabilize meat markets.

"You cannot address what is a long-term recovery of the cattle herd by forcing a company to pick a protein," Potts said.

Large meat companies often rely on diversified operations across beef, pork and poultry to

manage volatility in individual markets.

"Diversification is a way to create stability," Potts said. "That's business 101."

Changing industry structure

Despite concerns about consolidation, the meatpacking industry has also seen new entrants in recent years.

Retailers and producer groups have begun investing directly in processing capacity.

Walmart has partnered with producer cooperatives in beef, while Costco has built its own poultry complex in Nebraska.

"These are indications that people downstream in the supply chain aren't happy with existing arrangements," MacDonald said.

Federal funding has also supported smaller regional packing plants in an effort to expand processing capacity.

Packer margins narrow as feedlots see big improvement

Feedlot margins moved narrowly into the black last week, while packer margins lost ground but remained profitable, according to data from Sterling Marketing published by Drovers.

Packer margins were estimated at \$67.03 per head for the week of April 4, a drop of 23% from the week before but continuing the reprieve since February for beef processors from the recurring wide losses of the last two years. A year ago, packer margins were \$170.19 in the red.

Strikers were still off the job last week at the JBS beef harvest facility in Greeley, Colo., but returned to work this week without a contract, which could increase cattle demand and significantly alter estimated margins going forward.

Fed plant capacity utilization rose last week to 82.1%, up from 80.6% the week before and 75.6% a month ago. Year-ago utilization was 82.5%, despite both the JBS strike and the clo-

Whether those projects ultimately reshape the industry remains uncertain.

Politics and affordability

The broader debate over meatpacker concentration reflects the political salience of grocery prices.

With food affordability a top concern for voters, both parties have increasingly sought ways to demonstrate action.

But economists caution that policy changes may have limited impact on near-term beef prices.

Herd rebuilding takes years, meaning tight cattle supplies — and elevated beef prices — could persist well into the decade.

For industry leaders, the concern is that political rhetoric could distort public understanding of how meat markets work.

"Politicizing food is bad for everyone," Potts said.

sure since January of Tyson's Lexington, Neb., plant and second-shift elimination in Amarillo, Texas.

Choice Steer prices rose last week to \$244.85/cwt, up \$9.50 from the week before and \$33 from a year ago. Beef cutout values narrowed slightly to \$394.86/cwt., down \$2.63 from the week before but \$58.58 higher than a year ago. For feedlots, which had lost an estimated \$106.58 per head the previous week, margins rebounded into positive territory by \$3.26 per head.

Cattle slaughter last week was 533,000 head, 10,000 above the previous week but more than 53,000 head below the year-ago level. Beef production rose 10.1 million pounds to 480.4 million pounds, 2.1% ahead of the previous week but 6.4% less than the same week a year ago. Carcass weights rose 2 pounds to 903 pounds, 26 pounds or 3% higher than a year ago.

— Meatingplace.com

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Livestock News & Notes.....

Wildfires burn Nebraska's beef herd rebuilding efforts

It's been difficult enough to move producers to rebuild the nation's historically low cattle inventory in current conditions. Natural disasters, as the wildfires in Nebraska demonstrate, are adding another hurdle.

Home to the nation's fourth-largest inventory of beef cows and some of the nation's largest beef packing plants, Nebraska suffered its worst wildfire in history in March. Grazing land losses have been estimated to be as high as 900,000 acres, and about 50,000 cows were displaced.

Mark McHargue, president of the Nebraska Farm Bureau, told Meatingplace the number of cows displaced is "probably not a lot" in "the grand scheme of things," and actual cattle losses were "miraculously" minimal.

But the loss of so much grazing land — and of hay reserves — could push rebuilding efforts back by a good year, he said.

"And before these fires, I had mentioned to people, 'The best way to incentivize growth is profitability,' McHargue said. "And so there's profitability certainly in the cow-calf sector, but now you throw this wrinkle in there and the availability of grass is going to be very, very limited because those 50,000 cows are either going to go to [slaughter] or they're going to have to find new grass."

Unlike other regions of the country, where they can burn every year and a month later put cows on pasture, the grasses in Nebraska's sensitive sand hills take far longer to regrow. It could be anywhere from a year to two years, McHargue said.

Nebraska's herd already is down 20% (381,000 cows) since 2019. The wildfires are one impediment to rebuilding, but drought in Nebraska and throughout the nation's key beef-producing states could compound the problem.

"And that just puts pressure on anybody that's wanting to build their herd," he said. "It just makes it a lot more difficult because it's just less grass in the state. It's going to be competitive to get it. And then some of those cows aren't going to be visible because they're going to get sold probably to slaughter. I think there's probably going to be a real hard look at [any cattle] that has any age on them, any problems. They're going to be culling those cows pretty hard."

The toll will possibly extend to calves, as well. Trauma so early in life, including smoke inhalation, could manifest in health issues, especially as the heat of summer arrives, and possibly death. That's why federal indemnity funds are available to producers. Trauma to the farmers themselves, meanwhile, could result in mental health issues that McHargue said needs close attention.

For its part, NFB has set up a disaster relief fund to help farmers recover. Fellow farmers, meanwhile, are rallying with hay donations, which "has been pretty incredible," McHargue said, though he adds the perspective that it would take 500 semi loads of hay to feed 50,000 cows for just one month.

McHargue is confident there'll be cows going back on those Nebraska grasslands sometime "down the road," but the current situation isn't exactly inspiring to those new to the game nor those nearing retirement.

"Maybe someone on the really young side of the scale, they're just trying to get started and they lose everything, or you have those folks getting that close to retirement and they're like, 'You know what, I'm thinking about selling in the next couple years and I don't have any grass now, so I think we'll just sell them now.'"

Agri Stats sees improved odds of settling DOJ antitrust case

An attorney for Agri Stats told a federal judge the company is increasingly optimistic about reaching a settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice in its

antitrust case ahead of a scheduled trial, according to reporting from Law360.

During proceedings in Minnesota, counsel for the data firm said negotiations with the DOJ have been "intensive" and that prospects for resolving the case have improved, though no agreement has been finalized.

The case, brought by the DOJ in 2023, alleges Agri Stats facilitated anticompetitive behavior by sharing detailed benchmarking data among meat processors, potentially allowing companies to coordinate production and pricing strategies.

A trial in the case is currently set to begin in early May, but both sides indicated discussions are ongoing as that date approaches.

Agri Stats has denied wrongdoing, maintaining its reports provide lawful benchmarking services that help improve efficiency and reduce costs in the protein industry.

The company has already reached settlements in related private litigation, including agreements that required changes to its reporting practices, such as limiting certain data fields in its benchmarking reports.

A potential resolution with the DOJ could have broader implications for how processors

use industry data, particularly as the government continues to scrutinize information-sharing practices across the meat sector.

Refunds with interest for overturned IEEPA tariffs to start

U.S. Customs and Border Protection said it is developing a new system to streamline refunds of duties imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, with an initial rollout scheduled for April 20. The new functionality, known as Consolidated Administration and Processing of Entries, or CAPE, will operate within the agency's Automated Commercial Environment platform. The system is designed to consolidate refunds of IEEPA duties, including interest, rather than processing them on an entry-by-entry basis.

Meatingplace research suggests that beef importers may have paid close to \$1.2 billion last year under the White House's IEEPA assertions of both a "global" 10% tariff and a much higher country tariff on Brazil. Additional IEEPA tariffs may have been paid by importers on meat processing equipment and other supplies used in the industry.

CBP said the refund rollout will occur in phases, with the first phase limited to certain unliquidated entries and entries within 80 days of liquidation. Under the process, importers of record and authorized customs brokers must submit refund requests through the ACE Secure Data Portal using a CAPE Declaration. Filers will upload a comma-separated values file listing eligible entries, with each submission capped at 9,999 entries. Multiple declarations can be filed as needed.

Once a declaration is accepted, the system will update entry records by removing applicable IEEPA tariff provisions and duties. CBP will then review the entries before issuing consolidated refunds based on importer, designated recipient and liquidation date.

The agency said valid refunds are generally expected to be issued within 60 to 90 days after a CAPE Declaration is accepted, unless additional review is required.

CBP noted that more complex scenarios, including entries under review or suspension, will be addressed in later phases of the system's development.

Many of the preceding items were taken from Meatingplace.com



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Smithfield filing acknowledges 'risks' from trade, immigration policies

Smithfield's fourth quarter sales may have exceeded analyst expectations, but those strong results came despite notable challenges to the processor's bottom line.

In an SEC filing, Smithfield detailed how two cornerstone policies of the Trump administration — tariffs and immigration enforcement — complicate important aspects of the company's processing business, among other market challenges.

Trade and tariffs

Smithfield stated that more than 30 countries import its pork products, and that for fiscal year 2025, exports accounted for 11% of its total sales. "Because of the growing market share of U.S. pork products in the international markets, U.S. exporters are increasingly being affected by measures taken by importing

countries to protect local producers," the filing stated.

Smithfield continued: "The U.S. has recently implemented significant changes to its trade policy, including renegotiating or terminating existing trade agreements and threatening and/or imposing new or additional tariffs." Retaliatory tariffs in China, the processor added, ranged from 25% to 47% at the end of 2025, and "if China were to significantly increase the tariff rates imposed on our products, whether in response to similar action by the U.S. or otherwise, we may have to reduce or even cease selling our products in China."

Amid last year's trade war, total U.S. pork export volume to China fell 21%, or about 100,000 metric tons, work more than \$250 million to exporters.

Smithfield cautioned that

JBS restores operations at Moberly facility after FSIS Suspension

Following an FSIS notice of suspension, JBS Foods has restored full operations Monday at its bacon facility in Moberly, Mo.

According to local media reports from ABC 17 and Columbia Today, FSIS served the notice of suspension on April 4, and the processor halted one of its production lines in response; the agency did not specify to media the reason, and told ABC 17 it filed the notice "after identifying sanitation conditions that did not meet federal regulatory requirements."

In a statement to Meatingplace, a JBS spokesperson said the notice stemmed from an "isolated issue" on the

line, and "Out of an abundance of caution, operations at the facility were temporarily paused while we complete engineering improvements."

JBS continued, "We remained in continuous communication with the USDA Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) and implemented immediate corrective actions. This situation did not involve a Listeria outbreak, and there was no product recall associated with the paused operations. ... The facility is open and operating today."

The \$68-million facility opened nearly five years ago, and employs approximately 400 workers.

- Meatingplace.com

"anti-American sentiment" could "materially affect our business, financial condition and results of operations." In Canada, for example, a stream of provocative statements from the White House prompted consumer boycotts north of the border against products like liquor and meat, and by the end of the year U.S. pork exports were

down 14%, or about 30,000 metric tons, worth nearly \$100 million.

"Negative consequences relating to these risks and uncertainties could jeopardize or limit our ability to export our products to one or more of those markets and could adversely affect our business, financial condition and results of operations," the

processor concluded.

Immigration and employment

Smithfield employs approximately 32,000 employees, and its SEC filing detailed how the Trump administration's immigration policies could "adversely affect our business, financial

See SMITHFIELD, page 14

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COWBOY from page 3

Songs On The Trail

More surprising is not what they achieved beyond the ranch, but the way they've held the Triangle X in continuity. As most family businesses dissolve by the third generation, the Turners are holding strong in the fifth.

They've managed to grow the business while still offering experiences just like those their ancestors had, and their clients have the sore butts to prove it.

"There's always someone on the first day who says, 'I've had enough.' Eight hours in the saddle and they're like, 'I can't believe we're paying money to put up with this!'" said John H., sitting beneath a century-old antler mount at the ranch.

"But by the time we get back six days later, they jump off their horse and say, 'I can't believe it's over already. I can't believe I

These experiences weren't just adventurous — they're formative. Even among Wyoming's ranch families, the Turners' upbringings stand out.

enjoyed it so much!"

They've even resisted the pressure to put Wi-Fi in guest cabins.

But who needs an internet connection when you've got a crooner like John Turner dishing up campfire classics. After half a century serenading guests with a nylon-string guitar, the old balladeer's voice still carries.

"The man loves to play guitar and sing at cookouts. And not just



5TH GENERATION: The legendary Triangle X Ranch in Grand Teton National Park, now led by a fifth generation of the Turner family, like Bodie Turner, fifth generation. (Zakary Sonntag, Cowboy State Daily)

sing — sing loud," said Grace Turner, fifth generation, who manages books for Triangle X. "I wish everyone could witness it."

George H.W. Bush got to witness it. He must have been impressed. He later tapped Turner to lead the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Will The Legacy Last?

Traditions like these stand apart in an era when most family-run concessions in the National Parks system have given way to uniform modern offerings.

In the late 1990s, Congress overhauled the rules around concessionaire contracts in a way designed to increase competition. Yet those reforms have also seen contracts increasingly flow to a small handful of large hospitality companies.

"Prior to '98, when you stopped at a gas station or a cafe in Yellowstone or any national park, it was owned by a different family and it all had a little bit different flair, a little piece of Americana," said Robert Turner, general manager of Triangle X.

"Now it's cookie cutter. You go to a restaurant in Mammoth and it's the same damn menu you



DUDE RANCH: This year marks the 100th anniversary of the legendary Triangle X Ranch in Grand Teton National Park. (National Park Service)

find at the Grand Canyon," he said.

For now, the Turners are granted special protections under the GTNP Act of 1950, which recognizes the Triangle X Ranch as a specially protected lessee. But that won't be the case forever.

"The future is not a given, and we're aware that in many ways we are at the mercy of the government," said Kathryn.

Changes in the parks are mirrored elsewhere around Jackson Hole.

Teton County has gone from

See COWBOY, page 18



5TH GENERATION: The legendary Triangle X Ranch in Grand Teton National Park, now led by a fifth generation of the Turner family, like Grace Turner, fifth generation. (Zakary Sonntag, Cowboy State Daily)



4TH GENERATION: The legendary Triangle X Ranch in Grand Teton National Park, is now led by a fifth generation of the Turner family, like Lucas Turner, fourth generation. (Zakary Sonntag, Cowboy State Daily)



BUSY CORRAL: This year marks the 100th anniversary of the legendary Triangle X Ranch in Grand Teton National Park, now led by a fifth generation of the Turner family. (Deborah Brown via Alamy)

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6th Annual Grandpa always said

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



I can certainly make an argument in today's times that far too many kids grow up without the influence of their grandparents. The legacy of our family is centered around passing life experiences from one generation to the next.

I sure catch myself starting a lot of sentences with "Grandpa always said" and I think that is a great thing. I can certainly make an argument in today's times that far too many kids grow up without the influence of their grandparents. The legacy of our family is centered around passing life experiences from one generation to the next. That will NEVER be replaced by artificial intelligence; we need more Grandparent' wisdom in real life. I am on this thought process today because I just finished planting my 2026 potato crop.

Grandpa always told us to plant potatoes on Good Friday. I missed that day and it was Easter Sunday before I got the job done so I am already behind the 8-ball. I did learn something about Good Friday planting because, instead of just relying on family wisdom, I looked it up and learned there is also a spiritual component.

It has everything to do with the movement from Darkness to Light. Jesus was crucified on Good Friday and the earth was a Dark place. On the 3rd day, He rose and brought eternal life to us all. Planting potatoes on Good Friday goes way beyond the sign of the moon and if it didn't work well, we would not be doing it.

For the last three years, I have been just laying the potatoes on the ground and covering them with 8 inches of "enriched straw." This year we decided to till the garden then I created a lit-

tle row and covered them with maybe an inch of soil before putting my straw bed on top of that. The thing about burying them in straw is that you must be patient. It takes that green stem a good bit to pop up through all the cover, but the straw holds the moisture and assists in weed control. Once they pop through, I keep coffee grounds handy to sprinkle on the leaves for repelling bugs.

All of this is really just part of the bigger picture: life. My sense is that those of us that have been growing things our entire life often take for granted what we do. I don't believe there is a bigger task here on earth than utilizing the resources that God has granted us to create and sustain life.

Years ago, while staying at a friend's place in Indiana, I spotted a wall hanging that said "It takes a great degree of faith to plant a seed and expect it to yield a harvest." I couldn't agree more. But here is the thing, it is highly likely that some seed is going to occupy every space but without your stewardship that seed may yield something that is not beneficial to mankind.

While fall and the harvest have always been my favorite

time of the year, no harvest happens without spring planting. One concept I would like to continue to explore is soil health. As my friend from New Zealand said on a broadcast this week, "we need the bacteria in the soil to be communicating a big way." That came from the discussion about whether nitrogen generated from natural gas has same effect in the soil as animal manure.

It would appear to me that nitrogen derived from natural gas does a good job of feeding the plant but may not be the best at building soil health. Understanding that world of soil biology is key to continuing to grow more without depleting the organic matter in the soil. I did not just say that nitrogen-based fertilizers are depleting soil health. What I said was that for me to get a better understanding of soil biology, I am going to spend more time studying that space.

At the end of the day, I will come back to where I started. Grandpa would have said there is nothing better than animal manure at building better soil. To that I agree but that means we need a whole lot more animals on earth, and to that I am sure my Grandpa would agree.

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

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

actively working to drill a new well and restore full production operations as swiftly as possible. Gibbon Packing employees have been retained, and supporting the team remains a top priority," a spokesperson said.

The company did not say how long production might be interrupted.

The plant is about 50 miles east of the Tyson beef slaughter facility that closed in January.

- Meatingplace.com

Mishap during well maintenance halts beef plant's production

Nebraska beef processor Gibbon Packing was out of action recently after the plant's water well collapsed, the company said.

No injuries were reported when the well collapsed during maintenance work.

Production at the plant in Gibbon, an American Foods Group facility about 35 miles west of Grand Island, Neb., was "temporarily paused," the company said.

"The engineering team is

Progress continues on new \$135M sausage facility in Texas

According to updates from the Greater Dallas County Development Alliance, steel beams are currently being set for the \$135-million facility.

Announced nearly a year ago, the JBS plant will produce 130 million pounds of sausage and process 500,000 sows annually. It will immediately employ 250 workers, with 250 more hired as capacity expands.

News of the facility followed the 2024 closure of Tyson's pork

facility in Perry, which terminated more than 1,200 jobs.

Rachel Wacker of the Greater Dallas County Development Alliance told Newsradio 1040: "This is such a great, sustainable way for a community like Perry to recover from that loss ... When a community suffers a major loss, or a major employer loss, it's kind of few and far between when we see a recovery like this at this pace."

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BARNs OF PIKE COUNTY

This big Pike County barn near Ashley is still a beauty!

By CAROLYN ALLEN
Special to The Advocate

According to 2024 real estate information, this big old barn measures 36' X 60'. As you will see later, those measurements are important. Standing next to it, however, the barn feels much bigger than that. It was built as a bank barn, and standing on the lower side looking up at the top made me feel very small! This big barn along with the smaller one pictured sit on the old Michael Haught farm which the Louisiana Press Journal described as being 5 miles southwest of St. Clement and 5 1/2 miles southeast of Cyrene. As a result, the farm's owners are sometimes identified as being from near Cyrene, sometimes from near St. Clement and other times even Ashley. I will use Ashley because the farm is in Ashley Township.

The Pike County Assessor lists the house as being built in 1880. That means it was built by Michael and Matilda (Moore) Haught who came to Missouri with other family members around 1865. They married in Tyler County, Virginia in 1858. (Tyler County later became part of West Virginia.) Michael fought in the Virginia Infantry for 4 years during the Civil War before being severely wounded in the hand and discharged. Incidentally, the Haughts were no strangers to military service because People Places and Pikers says that Michael's father fought in the War of 1812 and his grandfather fought in the American Revolution!

After Michael's discharge the Haughts packed up and moved to Missouri. People Places and Pikers states that they bought the farm in Ashley Township from John Henton in 1865. The same source goes on to say that Henton received the government land grant on June 1, 1829. The 1883 History of Pike County called the farm "good land under a high



BIG BARN: The big bank barn (left) and the smaller barn (right) were believed to have been built in the late 1890s near Ashley.. (Photos by Carolyn Allen)

state of cultivation." It went on to say that Michael was engaged quite extensively in stock-raising, and his farm was well suited to that purpose. Michael and Matilda apparently prospered and accumulated more acreage in addition to the original farm.

As stock raisers, the Haughts would have needed a good barn. I first thought that they built the big barn pictured in 1897 because a note in that year's Pike County News said that LaCrosse Lumber had sold a bill of lumber to Mrs. Haught for a new barn. The newspaper also reported that Thomas P. Kelch (a relative of the Haughts) would do the work. Michael died the next year - in 1898 - and an ad in the 12 Jan 1899 Bowling Green Times regarding the sale of the farm included that there was a large barn on the home place. I thought I had hit pay dirt, and this was the 1897 barn. I have since found evidence, however, that a later owner built this barn. Perhaps the little barn was built by Mr. Kelch in 1897.

Joe Tapley bought the Haught home place in 1899 but sold it to John W. Gillum by 1901. In ads in the 1903, 1904 and 1905 Bowling Green Times, J. W. Gillum advertised 2 horses and a jack that would make the seasons at his barn on the Haught farm. In 1905 John W. Gillum sold the farm to Ben Gibson. A note in the 1905 Pike County News announcing the farm's sale noted that Ben Gibson had just recently returned from Indian Territory

and that Mr. Gillum would be moving to Arkansas.

Along with a team of ponies that Gibson apparently brought back from Oklahoma, he raised a little bit of everything. Old newspapers reported him buying cattle to feed, losing goats to lightning, selling lambs and sheep as well as buying mules. With all the livestock coming and going, he needed a good barn. To that end, I believe he built this one in 1909. The Bowling Green Times that

year reported that Ben Gibson of near Cyrene had just built a very up-to-date barn on his farm. The Times listed the measurements as being 36' X 60'. Those are the same measurements as listed in the 2024 real estate information, and I believe that this is the big barn currently on the farm. The newspaper noted that it was a beauty, and I heartily agree!

Ben Gibson sold the farm in 1920 to Arthur J. Hueffner, and at that point the farm had come full circle. It was back in the Haught family because Art Hueffner's wife (Ora Lee Boston) was the granddaughter of Michael and Matilda Haught.

The Hueffners called the farm Walbridge Farm and put the relatively new barn to work raising Shorthorn cattle and Montadale sheep. Old newspaper articles and pictures show the Hueffners showing and winning prizes with Shorthorn bulls and cattle. Mr. Hueffner even served as president

of the Pike County Shorthorn Breeders Association for a time.

After the Hueffners, Jim Eisenbath bought and expanded the farm sometime in the 1970's. It was primarily a cattle farm with the Eisenbaths sometimes having over 300 head of cattle. Although raising mainly Limousin cattle rather than Shorthorns like the Hueffners, Jim Eisenbath was also very active in the MO Cattleman's Association. He was director of the Pike-Lincoln County chapter for a time and was even named Cattle Producer of the Year in 2009. That would have kept the barn a busy place during the Eisenbath years as well.

The farm was sold again in 2024, but the barns on the old "Haught place" remain. The big barn has seen a lot of livestock in its 117 years, and it shows some wear and tear, but to paraphrase the 1909 Bowling Green Times - it's still a beauty!

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Value-added agriculture can strengthen Missouri farms for the future

Column by Rob Jones, director of Integrated Marketing Communications, University of Missouri Extension; Jennifer Lutes, agricultural business specialist, MU Extension; Mallory Rahe, education director, agricultural business and policy, MU Extension; Kantha Channaiah, state specialist in food processing, MU Extension.

Across Missouri, farm families are navigating a complicated economic landscape.

Margins are tight. Input costs remain elevated. Commodity markets fluctuate. Expanding acreage is expensive, and adding scale is not always realistic. At the same time, many farm operators are wondering how to bring the next generation into the business in a way that makes financial sense.

Value-added agriculture is one practical solution to those challenges.

At its core, value-added agriculture allows producers to capture more income from products they already grow or raise. Instead of selling raw commodities, farmers transform those products into goods that can command higher margins. That may include marketing direct-to-consumer meat cuts, developing specialty dairy products or creating jams, salsas, freeze-dried foods and other shelf-stable items. These prac-

tices help farmers boost profitability while contributing to resilient and sustainable local and regional food systems.

For an existing farm business, this approach can create additional revenue streams without requiring a complete shift in operation. Commodity production can continue to provide scale and consistent market access. A value-added enterprise can operate alongside it, helping diversify income and reduce dependence on a single market channel.

An existing market

There is a market for these products. Consumers are increasingly interested in knowing where their food comes from and how it is produced. Many are willing to purchase locally sourced products or specialty items that meet specific dietary preferences. Producers across Missouri are responding, for example, with grass-fed beef marketed for particular nutritional attributes, sugar-free sauces for niche diet communities, goat dairy products for customers with milk sensitivities and freeze-dried vegetables and soup mixes for convenience and shelf life.

These are not hypothetical opportunities. They are real markets driven by real consumer demand. Producers who identify a clear target customer and tailor products

to that audience are finding room to grow.

Support that reduces risk

Launching a value-added enterprise requires careful planning. Food safety regulations, labeling requirements and licensing standards must be met. Scaling production requires capital and disciplined financial management. Pricing must reflect true costs, especially for small-scale producers who cannot compete on volume alone.

That is where University of Missouri Extension steps in.

Across the state, MU Extension specialists provide training and technical expertise to help producers move from idea to implementation. Programs such as Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) and Better Process Control School trainings prepare producers to meet regulatory requirements. Food processing and safety services help ensure that products are safe and compliant before they reach the market. Specialists offer guidance on labeling, nutritional facts panels and food safety documentation.

MU Extension also provides expertise in business planning, pricing strategies, market research and customer discovery. Producers can work with specialists to develop financial projections, assess breakeven points and evaluate whether a concept is viable before investing significant capi-

tal. These resources reduce uncertainty and help farmers make informed decisions.

Building the next generation of leadership

For many operations, value-added agriculture strengthens the current business model by improving margins and expanding market reach. It also creates something equally important: opportunity for new leadership.

Value-added enterprises often require skills that complement traditional production expertise. Marketing, branding, customer engagement, digital sales platforms and product development become central to success. Younger family members can find meaningful roles in building and leading these ventures.

Because value-added enterprises can begin on a smaller scale, they offer a lower-risk entry point into farm leadership. Younger producers might manage specialty product lines, oversee direct-to-consumer sales or lead branding and marketing efforts. This allows them to build experience, contribute revenue and demonstrate management capacity while the primary operation continues.

In farms where acreage cannot support multiple full-time commodity operators,

See VALUE-ADDED, page 18

SMITHFIELD from page 10

condition or results of operations in the future.”

Specifically, Smithfield explained that new immigration legislation, if enacted, could increase costs of recruitment, training and retention and create a shortage of employees. “Furthermore,” the processor stated, “increased enforcement efforts with respect to existing immigration laws by governmental authorities may disrupt

a portion of our workforce or our operations.”

In June 2025, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raided the Glenn Valley Foods facility in Omaha, Neb., and detained 76 workers. In interviews with Meatingplace, company president Chad Hartmann detailed the raid and how the company responded.

—Meatingplace.com

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*Hubert, J. (2023) Trace Mineral Supplementation in Beef Cattle During Gestation. [Master of Science, NDSU].

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Iran War impact: Perfect storm gathering for beef sector

By FRANK FUHRIG
Meatingplace.com

U.S. beef supplies have been stretched for years, even before the Feb. 28 strike on Iranian leadership that set off the current Mideast conflict.

Amid a historically contracted herd and tight cattle supplies, wholesale beef prices were up 13% in the 12 months through February, while supermarket beef prices jumped more than 14%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Ground beef in grocery stores was up 15%, setting records approaching \$7 a pound.

Now, the impact of the new war — especially the closure and lasting uncertainty about the Strait of Hormuz — is sending shockwaves through markets for petroleum and natural gas, as well as nitrogen and phosphate fertilizers. The resulting impacts could be a perfect storm for the beef industry.

Phil Lempert, a veteran food industry commentator, former food trends editor on NBC's

"Today" show and founder of SupermarketGuru, estimates that a war that ends in April will ultimately add 10 to 15 cents to a pound of ground beef. After that, the impact rises to 25 to 45 cents. A confrontation that keeps the Strait closed or uncertain for at least six months — through August — makes an impact in the range of 75 cents to nearly \$1 a pound.

"Obviously, the fertilizer for the corn that the cows eat. We've got the diesel fuel, which obviously affects everything," he told Meatingplace, rattling off the channels that could impact meat prices. "And when we look at meat in particular, that's brought to our distribution and our supermarkets by refrigerated trucks, which use more diesel than non refrigerated trucks, and then the plastic packaging and everything else."

Imports of beef into the United States have soared in recent years, filling demand especially for lean trimmings to make ground beef blends. The No. 1 source of beef imports last

year, Australia, is among the most vulnerable economies to the Hormuz crisis. Authorities there, as well as ranchers and other business people, are already warning that they could run out of transportation fuels as early as mid-April.

'Cant absorb it'

Lempert said that existing stresses in the U.S. beef industry — climate impacts such as drought and tariffs on producers, shortages of labor for both processing operations and federal inspectors — leave little capacity to absorb the coming supply and price shocks, except at the supermarket checkout.

"The farmers and ranchers, they're making more money than they've ever made, and they're not going to give it back, and the retailer can't absorb it," he said. "We're talking about hundreds of millions if not billions of dollars. It's got to come from somewhere, and it's going to rest on the consumer. ... Not the packers, the processors or the farmers, for different reasons —

but no, I think it's going to all land on the consumer"

In a recent online Forbes article, where Lempert is a columnist, he called beef "a petroleum product layered on top of a corn product layered on top of an energy product."

On the demand side, beef is easily the most vulnerable category to the current crisis with prices already at record highs, agricultural economist Mark Jordan said.

"All the demand metrics say they're due for some down shifting, anyway, because of how cheap the competitors are and how much is available in these other protein sectors," Jordan, executive director of LEAP Market Analytics, told Meatingplace.

'The first line of cuts'

Beef and, to a lesser extent, chicken are the protein categories most exposed to food away from home, which is likely "the first line of cuts" for consumers, he said. Pork and turkey, by comparison, are more retail items.

"I think the restaurant sector could really hurt these next six to 12 months — six months for sure," Jordan said.

"If you think you're shoving more consumers toward grocery stores and away from restaurants, turkey and pork probably benefit," he added. "Certainly, they're the least negatively impacted. Chicken's maybe somewhat negative, but not as negative as beef, but a lot of that's just because of how much they lean on the restaurant space overall."

Lempert suggested that beef at the consumer level could soon see a surge of blends, both with other proteins and with non-meat complements such as mushrooms.

"I think if I had to buy one brand that has a good future, it's Hamburger Helper," he said. "[The thinking is] just, how can we extend it?"

Lempert describes his work as being "in the center of a triangle" of consumers, food manufacturers and retailers: "My job is to understand what each of them want and what each of them are doing, and then communicate it to the other."

"One thing that I'm asked constantly is, ... 'When are prices going to go down?' And my answer is very simple: 'Never.'"

— Meatingplace.com

USDA updates NWS response playbook

The USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) released an updated New World screwworm (NWS) Response Playbook this week to serve as a comprehensive guide for coordinated, science-based action should the parasitic insect reach U.S. territory.

The USDA called NWS a "devastating pest" that can cause serious, and in some cases, deadly infestation to animals and humans.

NWS continues to persist in parts of South America and has recently moved north through Central America and Mexico. It reached southern Mexico in late 2024, prompting an initial closure of the U.S. border to livestock imports. After a brief reopening, the border has been closed continuously since May 2025, removing more than 1 million head of Mexican cattle a year from the U.S. market at a time when the U.S. beef herd is at a 75-year low and beefpackers are struggling with severe cattle shortages.

The scourge was eradicated decades ago from the United States, which remains NWS-free. Nevertheless, agricultural authorities continue to work to keep NWS from crossing the Rio Grande, and to prepare in the

event it does.

USDA is executing its five-pronged plan to keep NWS out of the United States, Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Dudley Hoskins said.

"While we are aggressively safeguarding American agriculture and working with Mexico to prevent further northward spread, we must also ensure that our domestic response plans are ready for immediate activation," he said. "Strong coordination with states, producers, veterinarians, sportsmen and other partners is essential to achieving that goal."

The updated Playbook outlines critical science-based strategies for federal, state, tribal and local responders, including how to coordinate responses, reduce the spread of NWS, manage infested animals and maintain business continuity.

In October, APHIS shared a draft Playbook in order to gather feedback from a spectrum of stakeholders, such as state animal health officials, federal and tribal partners, livestock and wildlife industry groups, veterinary organizations and others.

According to APHIS, the updated Playbook reflects the respondents' expertise and opera-

tional experience and provides field-ready guidance for real-world response scenarios. To ensure continued alignment with state-level plans and industry practices, APHIS has pledged to revise the Playbook as preparedness activities advance and evolve.

The NWS Foreign Animal Disease Preparedness and Response website is www.aphis.usda.gov/animal-emergencies/nws. For more information about USDA's efforts to prevent and prepare for NWS, visit Screwworm.gov.

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Optimism reigns at Joplin Stockyards as cattle prices hit historic highs

By **HALEY BICKELHAUPT**
Reprinted by permission
of Farm Journal Ag Web

Monday is sale day in Carthage, Mo. At the Joplin Stockyards, the air is filled with the rhythmic chant of auctioneers and the shuffling hooves. Among the crowd of buyers, part-owner Jackie Moore watches the ring with a smile, watching a market that is finally paying off for producers.

"Cattle are \$100 higher than they were a year ago," Moore says.

The higher prices and the resulting grins haven't always been the case for the buyers and sellers sitting ringside at the Moore family's business. Moore is an industry veteran, having

started his career at the stockyards back in 1977, long before the operation moved to its current Carthage location.

"It's been a long time since 1977," he reflects.

Moore is grateful many cattlemen today are no longer focused on the years of struggle. Instead, they are seeing cash for their efforts.

"They're in the driver's seat now. They're getting paid for what they're doing. You know we see those people walk up to the window — you sold 20 head of calves, and they get a check for \$50,000. He's got three little kids at home, a trailer house and 80 acres of land. He's the happiest guy in the world, and nobody would be happier for him than I am," Moore says.

Women Landowners Leading Regeneration to host in-person sessions in three states

COLUMBIA, Mo. — The University of Missouri Center for Regenerative Agriculture is bringing together women landowners and will host in-person gatherings in Missouri, Iowa and Kansas this year.

The Women Landowners Leading Regeneration (WLLR) project is a learning community designed for women landowners to connect with other landowners and conservation professionals while acquiring tools to apply regenerative practices to their land, said Kelly Wilson, associate director of the MU Center for Regenerative Agriculture (CRA).

"Women own roughly 25% of U.S. farmland—an estimated 354 million acres—but are often overlooked in traditional conservation outreach," Wilson said. "Many women landowners want to steward their land in ecologically responsible ways but lack access to the information, networks and support they need. This project fills that gap."

The project is a collaboration of MU, the Kansas Soil Health Alliance and E Resources Group to address the unique needs of women who own farmland but do not farm it themselves, she said.

Partners include consultants Jean Eells and Rebecca Christoffel, and Jennifer Simmelink, executive director for the Kansas Soil Health Alliance.

Hybrid gatherings will take place 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Columbia, Mo. (May 5), Manhattan, Kan. (May 12) and Winterset, Iowa (postponed until fall 2026).

Three virtual sessions will

follow, extending opportunities for continued learning and connection, Wilson said.

"WLLR is rooted in the 'Women Caring for the Land' model, which uses a peer-to-peer learning circle approach proven effective in increasing women's knowledge, confidence and ability to advocate for conservation outcomes on rented farmland," she said.

Participants will learn about topics that encourage regenerative farming, such as government-funded cost-share and incentive programs and practices like cover crops and reduced tillage. In-person participants can get into the field and see conservation practices at work.

"This effort is about building bridges between women landowners and the conservation tools available to them," said Wilson. "We're not only seeing increased adoption of practices like cover cropping and reduced tillage, but we're also witnessing women forming lasting networks of support that strengthen rural communities."

Earlier this year, WLLR wrapped up training for conservation professionals in Kansas, Iowa and Missouri who will attend the upcoming gatherings alongside landowners.

"We're connecting women landowners with one another and with resource professionals who respect and understand their goals," said Olivia Caillouet, who leads the project with Wilson. "We want to make sure that everyone has a chance to attend, so fully virtual learning circles will be available starting in 2027."

Visit <http://mizzou.us/WLLR->

Moore is quick to point out the cattle industry is cyclical. While the current environment is prosperous, the question remains: When could the momentum shift? He believes the answer is tied closely to heifer sales and the eventual rebuilding of the national herd. Moore said buyers are purchasing more heifers to breed than they have historically.

"I think we've got a year and a half left of this really, really good market. Maybe then, as we see those heifers calve that they're buying today, that we get enough cattle to satisfy the market," Moore explains.

External factors are also playing a role in the current market dynamics. The suspension of live cattle imports along the

Mexico border has tightened an already record-low cattle inventory. The border has remained closed since last July. While Moore believes a reopening could have an initial impact on the market, he doubts it will significantly alter long-term prices.

"We taught the cartel how to slaughter those cattle, how to feed those cattle, how to make money with those cattle. So consequently, you know, I don't think there's gonna be as big a need for them to export those cattle as there once was," he says.

Midwest Market Solutions president Brian Hoops said there could be a headline risk for algorithm trades when the border opens, but he thinks, realistically, it might not have a large impact because of what has already been priced into the market. He agrees with Moore that processing has changed since the closure.

Moore notes the cattle environment in both Mexico and the U.S. is evolving, even without the steady flow of imports.

"Where this all leads us probably remains to be seen of how long the border is actually closed," he adds.

Hoops says: "They've [Mexico] invested millions and maybe billions of dollars in an infrastructure because the border

being closed. It's kind of a double edged sword where we get a benefit of the border, being closed and having left less cattle here on feed and seeing higher prices, but it's also forced Mexican producers to invest in infrastructure."

Moore adds: "What happens down the road? I don't know. I don't really know. I'm very optimistic, and I'm bullish at the cattle market. All I know to do is just keep playing the game and enjoy the ride."

Consumer Demand

On the consumer side, demand for beef continues to grow and is reaching record levels. Nebraska Farm Bureau reports an index created by the Livestock Marketing Information Center (LMIC) to gauge beef demand reached 138 last year, the highest on record and a 10-point jump from 2024.

Director of LMIC Tyler Cozzens says a similar jump has only happened two other times in the last 25 years. He says since 2019, the index increased 27%.

"Prices are extremely high. You're right about that," Hoops says. "There's still optimism that prices are going to continue to move higher because we're going into the spring grilling season."

Registration for details and registration. Register online or contact Makayla Zimmerman at vorism@missouri.edu.

This project is funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation through the Conservation Partners Program.

Individuals interested in WLLR events can contact Zimmerman at vorism@missouri.edu or 573-952-6498.

Meyer Cattle Performance in the Pasture market report

The cattle market showed its strength on Friday night, April 3 in Bowling Green at the Meyer Cattle Performance in the Pasture sale. A record crowd was in attendance issuing over 175 bidder numbers. The Meyer family offered 70 bulls and 30 cows. The bulls averaged \$9434 and the females averaged \$6456. The cattle sold to cattlemen across Missouri, Oklahoma, Iowa, Nebraska, and Illinois.

Traditionally the aged, advanced bulls at Meyer Cattle average \$1000-\$1500 higher than

yearlings, but this year, that average evened out. One thing is true, the demand for high quality bulls that have calving ease and growth with carcass merit is strong. The Brock Meyer family are commercial cattlemen.

The family feeds all commercial calves, sired by Meyer Cattle bulls in our own feedlot and are paid based on their performance on the rail. Therefore, cattle that grow and feed well are important traits that we breed for.

Additionally, we breed and

calve the cows, so maternal strength and longevity are key components. It is common to find bulls and females in the Meyer operation that have a balanced EPD profile, but cattle that are easy to look at.

We look forward to our next production sale on Friday, April 2, 2027 in Bowling Green where we plan to offer bulls as well as grow the female portion of the sale. Follow us on our social media pages to follow along with our operation.

— **The Brock Meyer Family**

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April is proving eventful: Economic data, theory and fed strategy

By STEVE DITTMER
Executive Vice President
Agribusiness Freedom Foundation

Everyone wants to be a "cowboy" again. Even if they have to purloin airs to do so. We saw a new Chick-fil-A commercial using a ranch theme, that has denim clad dancers -- some with cowboy hats -- line dancing to Hollywood country-like music for a BLT spicy chicken sandwich -- showcasing a breaded chicken filet and bacon. No beef anywhere, of course...except for the inevitable dancing Holstein.

We know there's been major advancement of beef-on-dairy cattle. But this is more like dairy-on-beef or chicken-on-beef without the beef.

There are promising indications coming out that USDA might be considering opening the southern border in a limited fashion, using ports of entry the farthest from the locations of NSW episodes in Mexico.

There has been mention of the fact that President Trump's push for energy dominance is one of the factors enabling the U.S. to weather the shock of the Straits of Hormuz being choked off. Oil is priced by global markets and we can't avoid that but our supply hasn't been pinched because we have our own supply. The oil and gas industry's improvements in technology and efficiency has made a huge difference, with Trump's removal of restrictions adding to the flow.

But we doubt many folks outside the energy patch realize how much progress has been made. Economist Steve Moore recently pointed out that oil production in the '80s was 5 m/ b/d, compared to today's production of an estimated 13.8 m/b/d.

The political left and some financial types continue to wring their hands that oil prices will trigger inflation or worse, a recession. While oil price increases are expected to be short-term, there is another way to regard inflation potential.

While the correlation is not perfect, economist Larry Kudlow pointed out that Federal Reserve data shows that the M2 money supply that was growing at 30 percent in late 2020-2021 when inflation was hot, is now much lower. In 2024, it was 3.2

One thing the political left has never understood are the principles of incentives and disincentives. They are always shocked when cutting tax rates generates more government revenue, for example.

percent, 4th Qtr./4th/Qtr. and 2025 was at 4.1 percent 4th Qtr./4th Qtr. Kudlow said it is just about impossible to get any major pickup of inflation with that small an increase in money supply.

To refresh your memory, M2 is liquid assets, including cash, checking accounts, money market funds, CDs, etc.

Economist E.J. Antoni, Heritage chief economist and senior fellow at the Committee to Unleash Prosperity, reminded us that inflation is a monetary phenomenon -- more money chasing not enough supply. With M2 at the three or four percent increase range, there is not a huge amount of money chasing supply. Major inflation will not happen when money supply is not drastically increasing. He also reminded folks that not all price increases are from inflation.

The new jobs created in March exceeded highest expectations, at 148,000 new jobs, some 100,000 in the private sector. Some of the increase was recovery from the hospital strike ending in NYC. The unemployment rate dropped back to 4.3 percent and wages have increased at 3.5 percent for the first quarter, higher than inflation. Continuing the trend under Trump, government jobs have decreased and private sector jobs have increased.

An interesting conclusion has also been drawn by financial editor of Breitbart's John Carney. As the economy has been going along nicely with less than the 150,000 jobs created on average in most recent months, perhaps the economy doesn't need to create as many jobs with millions of illegal aliens not coming into the country every year. With the new administration, some three million illegals have either been deported or self-deported, with the majority self-deporting to avoid detention or preserving their ability to come back legally later.



For agriculture, there is legislation being readied in Congress that would make some reforms in the H2A program, making it more usable for farmers and ranchers. The program has been expanded in recent years but there is still a need for more ag workers.

One thing the political left has never understood are the principles of incentives and disincentives. They are always shocked when cutting tax rates generates more government revenue, for example. That not seriously prosecuting criminals leads to more crime surprises them. Open your borders and people stream in from all over the world.

So they're probably shocked that small business confidence is trending upward. SBA Administrator Kelly Loeffler said small businesses have gotten back \$220 billion from tax refunds from the One Big Beautiful law so far. That has put them in a better mood, getting an average \$7,000 back from the feds. Some 20 million people have seen their overtime taxes cut back and millions of older people are getting tax credits from Social Security.

We're into April, which means we're getting close to the end of Chairman Jerome Powell's term at the Federal Reserve. President Trump has nominated Kevin Warsh, a solid supply-side economist but no confirmation hearing has been set up yet. Thom Tillis, outgoing North Carolina senator, has been blocking any consideration of Warsh, as long as the DOJ is investigating Powell for allegedly misleading testimony before Congress.

It would seem prudent for President Trump to have D.C. U.S. Attorney Jeanine Piro end

See POWELL, page 19

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Digging Deeper....

By JUSTIN ANGELL

As many of you know, Kelly and I have been checking items off each of our bucket lists with a trip to Italy and Greece. Next week we were supposed to complete a 43-year wait for me by visiting the pyramids in Egypt. However, due to the Persian troubles, that portion of the trip has been canceled.

We first arrived in northern Italy in the world famous city of Venice, where we spent two days. I did not realize that Venice is actually 117 different islands connected by canals and bridges. Highlights there were attending Easter Mass and a demonstration of Venetian glass blowing using techniques centuries old.

From Venice, we moved south to the wonderful city of Florence where we also spent two nights. The first highlight for me was a walking wine tour that culminated in a dinner of Florentine steak. I learned that Florentine steak is a delicacy of grass fed, Chianina beef served very rare. For the art and architecture lovers, Florence is a must see.

The Medici family ruled

Florence for 300 years during the 13th 14th and 15th centuries. The Medici's for decades were wealthy, powerful patrons of the arts. Beginning as a family of butchers, they eventually became wealthy merchants and bankers gravitating to politics and administrative positions in the Florentine government and the Catholic Church, including three different popes picked from their family organization.

Approximately 1500, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci (contemporary, and competitors) were both creating architectural wonders and incredible art in the city.

I was able to see Michaelangelo's world famous marble statue of David along with hundreds of his other sculptures. Having been accumulated for centuries, Italians used marble and gold as building materials like we would use wood and paint. Incredible floors, staircases, sculptured artwork and mosaics are everywhere.

Moving from Florence to Rome, the opulent theme continued with massive Roman Era ruins, including buildings like the

Pantheon and the Colosseum. I could spend a month describing the Coliseum alone, but suffice to say the most stunning statistic was the estimate that over 350 years of "games", 1 million gladiators, Christians and other condemned human beings were killed in that arena for entertainment of the Roman masses.

The true modern glory of Rome the city has occurred in the last 600 years with the expansion and prosperity of Italy the country and the Catholic Church. Much of this expansion occurred during the European conquest and subsequent plundering of the wealth of the New World civilizations. Huge amounts of gold, silver, precious stones etc flowed into Rome mostly through Catholic Spain, resulting in a church and Basilica building spree that lasted 100s of years. I cannot stress enough the opulence and beauty of Basilica architecture and the craftsmanship of the artists that filled every corner of these churches. The ceiling of the Sistine chapel took Michelangelo over four years to paint. For all my Catholic friends, I would encourage you to

make this trip at some point in your life. You will not be disappointed.

My final impressions of Italy concerns not only the beauty of the rugged countryside, but also the Italians are a beautiful people. Tall, lean physiques with dark hair, dark eyes and wonderful skin. They seem to be a very happy, healthy culture and enjoy living every day with incredible cuisine and fantastic wines. There is no bad wine in Italy. There is something special about their diet and their walk everyday lifestyle because the only fat people I saw in Italy were either in the mirror or were American tourists.

Closing, I will say that Italy is

a country that works. Gas is eight dollars a gallon, so people walk and conserve fuel with small, efficient automobiles. The roads are exceptionally good with many of the highways utilizing a network of tunnels, each over 3 miles long to facilitate quick and easy movement of the population. The high-speed train network here is just as good or maybe actually better than flying in our country.

No TSA lines, no two-hour drives to the airport and on the train it's more like sitting in your living room, except you're going 140 miles per hour.

I hope you found this interesting. Tomorrow we leave for Greece.

COWBOY from page 11

the poorest county in Wyoming to the wealthiest in the nation, according to Turner, with new wealth driving living costs up and local residents out.

"There's about 100 in my class at Jackson High School," said Robert. "There's only four of us that are still in the valley. A lot of them would love to come back. They just can't afford it."

'It's Cool To Be A Cowboy'

Not all changes are bad.

Fourth-generation Turners were called country bumpkins and the "morons from Moran" when they first stepped off the bus at Jackson High School.

Fifth-generation Turners are now the coolest kids in town.

"Western-like culture's become so romanticized that now people want to be like us, rather

than want to make fun of us," said Grace. "It's cool to be a cowboy."

For the last remaining third-generation Turner, the most warmly welcomed change is electricity.

"We'd work year-round just to survive winter. The mountains of wood we had to pile," John Turner said.

As for Turner's busy lifestyle, nothing's changed. He just finished restoring a pair of rawhide pine deck chairs, and he's right on to the next project.

"I've got to let you go," he said. "I'm in charge of all the gravel roads in our little subdivision, and I need to figure out where I'm going to put a 24-load dump truck."

Zakary Sonntag can be reached at zakary@cowboystatedaily.com.

Replacement heifers can diversify beef enterprises

COLUMBIA, Mo. – "Beef heifers represent a great opportunity for increasing cowherd numbers and diversifying enterprises," said Eric Bailey, University of Missouri Extension state beef nutrition specialist.

Bailey will talk about this opportunity at the May 5-6 "Retain With Intention: Building a Better Missouri Cow Herd" program at the MU Beef Research and Teaching Farm in Columbia.

His presentation will cover marketing opportunities for replacement heifers, noting that even open heifers remain valuable as freezer-beef prospects. He will outline creative, cost-effective strategies for developing surplus heifers and marketing heavier females to cattle feeders. Bailey will also discuss nutrition before and after breeding to support long-term herd productivity.

Jamie Courter, MU Extension state beef genetics specialist, said

the program will help producers make profit-focused decisions using genetics, nutrition and reproductive management. Extension specialists will provide tools to evaluate genetics, nutrition, fertility and performance data when selecting and developing replacement heifers.

"Participants will leave with a clear, step-by-step framework for choosing heifers that fit their environment, improve longevity and strengthen long-term profitability," Courter said.

By the end of the program, participants will be able to:

- Evaluate replacement heifers using performance records, genomic information and visual appraisal.

- Develop nutrition plans that support proper growth, puberty attainment and first-breeding success.

- Design reproductive management strategies that improve conception rates and long-term

fertility.

- Calculate the economic impact of retaining versus selling heifers at weaning.

- Implement a structured selection framework tailored to environmental, forage and marketing conditions.

Topics

- Defining breeding objectives for replacement females.

- Using EPDs, genomic tools and performance data.

- Ensuring heifers reach puberty and breed early.

- Reproductive benchmarks for first-calf heifers.

- Economic considerations and marketing alternatives.

The program is 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday, May 5, and 7:30 a.m.-noon Wednesday, May 6, at the MU Beef Research and Teaching Farm, 5169 Old Millers Road, Columbia.

Register by April 28 at <https://pears.io/events/mu/5052>.

VALUE-ADDED from page 14

value-added enterprises can finance additional labor and positions within the business. They provide room for creativity and innovation while still grounded in the farm's existing assets.

A path forward for Missouri farms

Missouri agriculture has always evolved in response to changing conditions. Today, tighter margins and generational

transitions are prompting new conversations about how farms remain viable for the long term.

Value-added agriculture offers a path forward. With strong consumer demand and a statewide network of MU Extension resources ready to support producers, farms have practical tools to strengthen profitability, diversify revenue and bring the next generation into leadership in thoughtful, sustainable ways.



Eastern Missouri Commission Company, Bowling Green
Market Report for Friday, April 10, 2026
Receipts: 1505 Week ago: 440 Year ago: 1443

Compared to the last special two weeks ago, the best test on feeder steers were weighing 600-800 lbs trading mostly 10.00-15.00 higher, with steer calves under 600 lbs and yearling steers over 800 lbs all trading with a higher undertone. Feeder heifers weighing under 700 lbs sold mostly 10.00-15.00 higher, with spots 20.00 higher on the 550-600 lb heifers and two pot loads of 930 lb heifers selling with a firm to higher undertone. Demand was good on a moderate offering. Several stick out sales included 59 steers weighing 914 lbs at 353.00 and a 104 hd of 930 lb heifers at 317.50. Slaughter steers and heifers sold with a higher undertone on a nice offering topping out with 9 hd weighing 1562 lbs at 250.50 a record high for the EMC slaughter cattle market. Slaughter cows sold fully steady.

Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1 - Few 400-500 lbs 549.00-575.00; 500-550 lbs 510.00-524.00, 550-600 lbs 467.50-482.50; 600-650 lbs 426.00-457.50, 650-700 lbs 415.00-435.00; 700-750 lbs 392.00-408.85, 750-800 lbs

377.00-388.00; pkg 814 lbs 375.00, lot 889 lbs 349.00; pot load 914 lbs 353.00.

Large 1 Pkg 902 lbs 331.00.

Medium and Large 1-2 - 450-500 lbs few 500.00-507.50; pkg 576 lbs 447.50; 700-800 lbs 355.00-380.00; lot 800 lbs 369.00.

Feeder Heifers: Medium and Large 1- Pkg 388 lbs 580.00; 400-450 lbs 500.00-520.00, 450-500 lbs 470.00-505.00, pkg fancy 467 lbs 520.00; 500-550 lbs 440.00-467.50, pkg fancy 515 lbs 482.50, 550-600 lbs 420.00-455.00, pkg fancy 578 lbs 469.00; 600-650 lbs 420.00-440.00, 650-700 lbs 377.50-382.50; 700-750 lbs 368.00-377.50, lot 715 lb replacement 402.00; lot 816 lbs 332.00; 104 hd 930 lbs 317.50; pkg 951 lbs 310.00.

Medium and Large 1-2 - pkg 298 lbs 620.00; 300-400 lbs 510.00-555.00; 400-500 lbs 452.50-470.00, pkg unweaned 490 lbs 435.00; 500-600 lbs 387.50-420.00; 600-650 lbs 375.00-395.00; lot 700 lbs 365.00.

Feeder Bulls: Medium and Large 1 - Few 300-315 lbs 640.00-670.00; 400-450 lbs unweaned 535.00-557.50, lot 494 lbs unweaned 490.00.

Medium and Large 1-2 - Pkg 453 lbs 500.00; 500-550 lbs 460.00-465.00, 550-600 lbs 410.00-435.00; 625-660 lbs 400.00-402.50; 700-755 lbs 367.00-380.00.

Slaughter Cows: Premium White (65-70% lean) Average dressing, 176.00.

Breakers (70-80% lean) Average dressing, 179.00; high dressing, 180.00-190.00; and low dressing, 150.00-158.00.

Boners (80-85% lean) Average dressing, 176.00; high dressing, 179.00-187.00; and low dressing, 155.00-163.00.

Lean (85-90% lean) Average dressing, 167.00; high dressing, 174.00-184.00; and low dressing, 136.00-150.00. Shelly/Thin 110.00-130.00.

Slaughter Bulls: Yield Grade 1-2 - 1400-2500 lbs, 202.00-213.00; 215.00-235.00; 187.50.

Slaughter Steers and Heifers: (70 hd) High Choice and Prime 2-4 - 1370-1565 lbs 247.75-250.50; Choice 2-3 - 1400-1575 lbs 242.00-246.50; Select and Choice 1-3 - 1085-1485 lbs 238.50-240.50.

Source: MO Dept of Ag-USDA Market News Service, Bowling Green, MO, Greg Harrison, Market Reporter 573-751-5618. 24 hour recorded report 1-573-522-9244



Iran War impact: Diesel price spike pressures meat supply chain

Part of a continuing series of reports covering the Iran War's impact on the meat industry.

Rising diesel prices tied to ongoing conflict in the Middle East are beginning to ripple through the U.S. meat supply chain, increasing transportation costs and adding pressure to already tight margins for processors and distributors.

The surge has been driven in part by disruptions to global energy flows following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a key chokepoint for oil and refined fuel products. While some crude oil has continued to move through alternative routes, refined products such as diesel have faced more severe constraints, contributing to sharper price increases.

Since the start of the year, diesel prices have risen roughly 60%, according to economist Benjamin Shoemith, significantly increasing the cost of moving perishable goods such as meat.

"That 60% then obviously would feed through to the cost of

trucking, transportation of the processed meat going from processor to wholesaler or straight to retail," Shoemith said.

Refrigerated trucking, which is widely used in meat distribution, has been particularly affected. Shoemith estimated that higher diesel prices have increased per-mile transportation costs for refrigerated trucks by about 18%, compared to roughly 13% for standard freight.

Those higher costs are forcing difficult decisions across the supply chain.

"Somebody is going to pay that, whether it's the trucking company, the retailer, consumer," Shoemith said. "You'll either see compressed margins on the side of businesses, or you'll see households spending more to buy the same amount of food."

The impact is already being felt by smaller trucking operators, who have limited ability to pass along higher fuel costs.

"Truckers keep a close eye on diesel prices because fuel is one of

the biggest operational costs," said a spokesperson for the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association. "With freight rates already low, a sharp increase in diesel can quickly eat up what little margin a small trucking business has left."

For meat processors, the pressure extends beyond logistics. Smithfield Foods executives said recently it is too early to determine the full financial impact of the conflict, but flagged fuel, feed and packaging as key areas of exposure.

"There are three main components of our business that this could impact," CFO Mark Hall said in a recent earnings call, noting the company is monitoring a "dynamic geopolitical environment."

Higher fuel costs also have downstream implications for consumer demand. As transportation and production costs rise, companies may be forced to pass those increases along, particularly as margins have already been com-

pressed across much of the retail sector.

A recent survey cited by Shoemith indicated many companies are nearing the limit of how much additional cost they can absorb — and are increasingly prepared to raise prices.

At the same time, broader economic signals suggest consumers may be less able to absorb higher food costs. The University of Michigan's consumer sentiment index recently fell to its lowest level on record, underscoring growing concerns about household purchasing power.

That dynamic could begin to shift demand within the protein complex. While beef demand has remained resilient despite record high prices, even steeper grocery costs could accelerate trade-down behavior, particularly among lower-income consumers.

"You'll see households spending more to buy the same amount of food," Shoemith said. "That would then lead to probably trading down on different types of meat, so certainly from beef to pork and chicken."

Even if geopolitical tensions ease, the effects on diesel prices — and by extension the meat supply chain — are expected to persist. Shoemith noted that supply disruptions and input cost increases can take months to fully work through global markets.

"Even if the strait were to open today, you'd feel those effects for months," he said.

For meat processors, that means higher costs and continued uncertainty, with diesel emerging as a key variable shaping margins, pricing and demand in the months ahead.

— Meatingplace.com

POWELL from page 17

her investigation, as getting a new Fed chair and getting rid of Powell is more important than trying to nail him for foggy testimony. Powell has invented some authority he's claiming allows him to stay on as chairman until a new one is appointed.

We not only need a new Fed chairman, we need one who gets along with the president; understands the huge bureaucracy there; has the knowledge and the will to change the Fed's always-wrong models; will clean out dead wood economists mired in 1950s faulty economic theory and

help keep the economy moving.

With the summit between President's Xi and Trump coming up in May, it will be interesting to see how cutting off China's oil with the war in Iran will affect China's attitude. China has been the customer for 90 percent of Iran's oil output and it and Saudi Arabia's oil has been coming through the Straits of Hormuz. Xi can't be happy about that. But Trump's moves in Venezuela and Iran have got to have some effect on China's level of respect for the USA.

Saudi Arabia rule change opens \$100M beef export opportunity for U.S.

Saudi Arabia has eased its rules for halal beef imports from the United States, opening a potentially lucrative market for U.S. products.

The USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service was notified this month that the Saudi Food & Drug Authority has dropped its requirement for U.S. beef to participate in an Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) export verification (EV) program. Established in 2015, the program certifies that cattle slaughtered for export to Saudi Arabia were fed no animal protein, except fish-meal and milk replacers, at any stage.

Going forward, U.S.-based halal certification bodies approved by Saudi authorities will ensure compliance with halal specifications.

"We know there is tremendous interest in U.S. beef, especially for the booming foodservice industry in that country," Erin Borrer, U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) vice president for economic analysis, told Meatingplace. "The costly, onerous birth-harvest export verification program had severely limited U.S. beef access to Saudi Arabia, and the current changes will drastically increase the eligible supply

of cattle and beef."

U.S. beef exports to Saudi Arabia have fluctuated drastically over several decades. After an early peak of \$25 million in 1982, values were mostly in the single-digit millions for 25 years before hitting a record \$31.4 million in 2011 on 6,579 metric tons (mt) — which would rank as a top 15 destination today — but dropped again to negligible volumes after a Saudi import ban in response to a case of atypical BSE in the United States. Exports grew again in the late 2010s under the AMS export verification program, hitting a recent peak of \$21.4 million, but fell to \$6.2 million in 2024. Values jumped 59% last year to \$9.96 million on a volume of 904 metric tons.

The kingdom has grown rapidly during those decades, from 10 million in 1980 to more than 32 million, with more than half of its people under 25 years old. Saudi bovine meat imports were worth \$1.1 billion last year, mostly water buffalo (carabeef) from India and beef from Brazil, with the U.S. market share at less than 1%. But Australia had \$169 million in beef sales to Saudi Arabia, with Russia shipping another \$56 million of beef, including grain-fed product from both countries, Borrer said.

"USMEF estimates the opportunities for U.S. beef exports to Saudi Arabia are in the \$100 million-\$150 million range in the near to medium term," she said. "Obviously the current timing is challenging, but hopefully there will be a peaceful resolution in Iran soon."

— Meatingplace.com

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Monthly Sheep & Goat Market Reports

Sponsored by The Bank of Missouri

Montgomery County Livestock Auction, Montgomery City Market Report for Sheep & Goat Auction Thursday, April 9, 2026
Receipts: 819 Last month: 400 Year ago: 800

Montgomery County Livestock held their monthly sheep and goat sale Thursday evening April 9, with a nice offering of feeder lambs trading steady to firm with last month. Slaughter lambs weighing 50-60 lbs sold mostly 10.00-15.00 lower and 60-70 lbs traded steady over 70 lbs were not well tested. Kid goats were not well tested on a very light offering. Montgomery County holds their Sheep and Goat sale the 2nd Thursday of each month. All prices are per cwt unless otherwise noted. Supply included: 37% Feeder Sheep/Lambs (100% Hair Lambs); 41% Slaughter Sheep/Lambs (4%

Wooled & Shorn, 65% Hair Breeds, 31% Ewes); 10% Replacement Sheep/Lambs (100% Hair Ewes); 3% Feeder Goats (100% Kids); 6% Slaughter Goats (35% Kids, 65% Nannies/Does); 3% Replacement Goats (100% Nannies/Does)

SHEEP (prices per hundredweight)

Slaughter Lambs: Choice-Prime 1-3 — 50-60 lbs 387.50-395.00; 60-70 lbs 376.00-405.00; pkg fancy 65 lbs 420.00; 70-80 lbs 370.00-395.00, Choice 1-2 — 65-78 lbs 362.50-375.00; lot 90 lbs 272.50.

Feeder Lambs: Small and Medium 1 — 20-25 lbs 415.00-430.00; 30-50 lbs 390.00-415.00 Small and Medium 1-2 — Lot 35 lbs 370.00.

Slaughter Ewes: Utility and Good 1-2 — 75-175 lbs 140.00-

150.00; Utility 1-2 few 75-140 lbs 120.00; Cull and Utility 1-2 — 100-130 lbs 102.00-105.00.

Replacement Ewes: Young mostly 3-5 yrs 100-110 lbs exposed 162.50-172.50 per cwt; 4-6 yrs few 125 lbs exposed 154.00 per cwt.

GOATS: (prices per hundred weight)

Slaughter Goats: Market Kids: Selection 1 — Few 500-55 lbs 397.50-440.00.

Feeder Kids: Selection 1-2 — Scarce.

Slaughter Nannies: Scarce.

Replacement Nannies/Does: Young 75-95 lbs exposed 255.00-275.00 per cw.

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

Special cow sale report from Callaway Livestock Center in Kingdom City, MO

Callaway Livestock Center, Inc. - Kingdom City, MO
April 2, 2026
Receipts: 1,582 head
Reported by Shelby Collard

Pairs - Better Cows
 90 head @ \$4,550 - \$5,900
 1st Calf - Heifer Pairs

67 head @ \$5,200 - \$5,750
 3-6 Yr Old Cows (Baby to 300 lb Calves)
 90 head @ \$4,550 - \$5,900
 6-8 Yr Old Cows (Baby to 300 lb Calves)
 26 head @ \$4,600 - \$5,450
 Short Solid & Aged (Baby to 300 lb Calves)

20 head @ \$4,000 - \$4,800
 Bred Cows 605 head
 Bred Heifers
 50 head @ \$3,900 - \$5,100
 3-6 Yr Old (2nd & 3rd Period)
 275 head @ \$3,800 - \$5,500
 3-6 Yr Old (1st Period)
 78 head @ \$3,100 - \$4,050

Short Solid & Aged
 210 head @ \$2,500 - \$3,500

Breeding Bulls
 40 head @ \$5,400 - \$11,000

Slaughter Bulls
 16 head @ \$2.07 - \$2.31 / lb

Slaughter Cows
 190 head @ \$1.55 - \$1.92 / lb

We appreciate both buyers and sellers for participating in our Monthly Special Cow Sale.

Sponsored by Callaway Livestock Center

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Laugh Tracks in the Dust.....

A deadly natural remedy

By MILO YIELD
Special to The Advocate

A nearing-retirement veterinarian and an intern from the state's vet school made a visit to a horse farm to check up on a horse whose owner thought the hoss wuz suffering from a chronic cough.

After they got through examining and treating the horse, they sat down with the owner to discuss followup treatments for his horse. During their visit, the horse owner broke into a long, convulsing coughing bout.

The old vet, who had known the horse owner for a long time, commented, "Man, that's a nasty sounding cough. You sound worse than your horse. It that cough chronic?"

The horse owner rasped out, "Well, a few months ago I started smoking marijuana to ease the pain from arthritis in my joints. A friend in town said it worked for him and he said it was safe to smoke since it was all natural. At first it worked, but recently I started this cough and can't seem to shake it."

The vet replied, "Friend, just because it's all natural doesn't mean it's safe. I think it's making your cough significantly worse."

The horse owner frowned and shook his head. "But it's herbal," he insisted. "It's natural. How could something natural be bad for you?"

The old vet leaned back slightly, folded his arms, and replied knowingly, "Nature isn't nearly as harmless as people think. Apple seeds contain cyanide. Certain mushrooms can shut down your organs. Poke berries look like wild grapes but they can kill you. Just because something grows in the ground doesn't mean it's safe."

The horse owner looked uncertain and started to make a rebuttal, but the old vet interrupted, "In fact, there's a plant in my own landscape garden in my backyard that would kill you if you sat under it for just five minutes."

That got the horse owner's full attention. He swallowed hard, nodded, and said, "Alright. I understand. I'll stop smoking MJ."

Satisfied, the old vet and the intern said their farewells and headed down the road.

The intern was quiet and seemed to be contemplating something.

When they return to town, the pair head out for lunch. As they're sitting down and opening their menus, the intern paused, looked over at the old vet and said, "What you told that horse owner is weighing on my mind. So, I've got to ask, What's that plant in your garden that kills you if you sit under it for five minutes? I've never heard of such a thing."

The old vet shrugged, smiled and answered, "Oh, the plant is a water lily in my fish pond. Sometimes you've got to get cre-

ative when you're dispensing health and medical advice that the patient will follow..

A wealthy rancher and his wife were approaching their retirement years. They had five children. It concerned the old couple greatly that all of their five children were married, but not a single couple had produced them a grandchild. To date, they had no second generation grandkids as heirs to their land and fortune.

So, the couple had an idea. They invited all their five children and their spouses for a big fancy dinner. After they were all seated around the long table, the old man took it upon himself to deliver the blessing for the meal.

However, before he started the blessing, he told the siblings that he and their mother were disappointed that there were no

grandkids to join them sit at their table and enjoy the feast. "But we haven't given up hope," he droned. "Yesterday we went over to the bank with our lawyer and set up a sizable trust fund to be given to our first-borne grandchild. Now, let's all bow our heads while I say grace."

After he'd finished a lengthy blessing of the food and those who provided it, he and his wife looked up, only to discover they were the only ones left at the table.

The 5-year-old daughter of a young farm couple got all excited when her dad came to the house and told her he'd discovered a new litter of kittens in the farm shop.

Naturally, the energetic child wanted to go see the new kittens immediately, so her dad led her

out to see a new litter.. After she returned to the house, breathless, she panted to her mom, "There are four kittens -- two boy kittens and two girl kittens."

Curiously prompted by her daughter's knowledge of the kittens' sex, she asked, "How do you know that?"

"Well, Daddy picked them up and looked underneath," she replied. "I think it's printed on the bottom."

When I wuz in college at Bea Wilder U., I took a course in principles of animal breeding. The professor, Dr. Gene Netics, spent most of a class hour talking about sex hormones and their roles in animal breeding.

This was back in the 1960s, and human birth control pills were first coming on the market. Well, as the class hour neared its end, one wiseacre student from

New Jersey piped up, "Sir, I'm curious about which sex hormone is the effective one to prevent human conception. Do you know what it is?"

Without blinking an eye, Dr. Netics replied, "Why, yes I can. it's called 'selfdenyitall.'"

Words of wisdom for the week come from some guy named Adam Serwer. He opined, "We have a data economy that thrives on selling products we don't need for problems we don't have, and a public that falls for these ploys—even as we think ourselves much too clever to be fooled." Have a good 'un.

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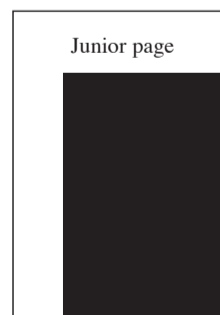
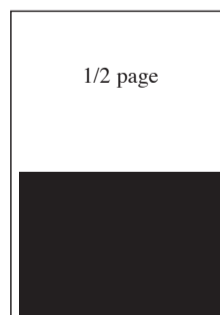
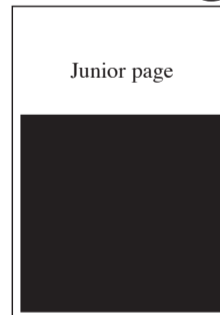
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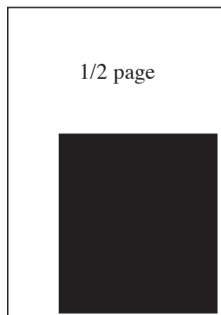
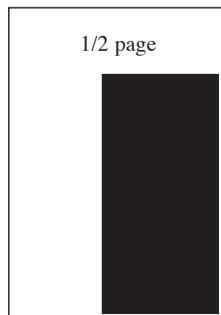
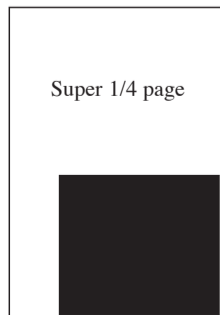
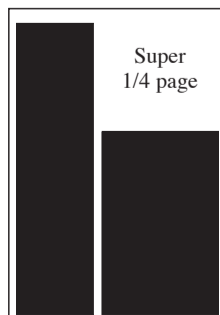
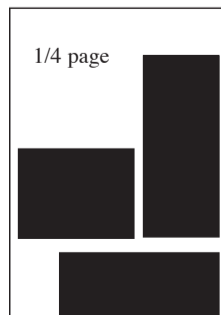
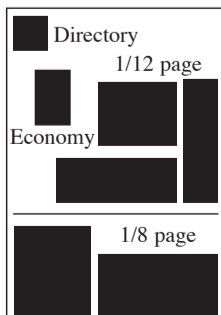
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It's time to talk more about the State of America's Beef Industry

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

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. In Part II we discussed how the government allowed the beef packers to form a tight oligopoly with access to imported beef and cattle from around the world, resulting in fewer opportunities for domestic producers that caused the domestic cattle industry to shrink. We ended with the statement that 15 years ago, the U.S. cow herd shrank to a level too low to allow the cattle industry to withstand even a moderate economic shock.

In late 2010, such a moderate economic shock struck – a widespread drought that occurred while the cattle herd was already in the liquidation phase of the cattle cycle that had started in 2008. The drought accelerated and accentuated America's herd liquidation and by 2014 the U.S. cowherd was the smallest in about 70 years.

While the U.S. cowherd was shrinking, America's appetite for beef was increasing, as was their willingness to pay higher prices for beef. So, during this period, beef supplies were tight and both cattle prices and beef prices were increasing, with beef prices peaking at over \$6 per pound for the first time in history in 2015.

The rising beef and cattle prices signaled to the cattle industry that it should expand, and it was everyone's expectation that cattle prices would remain strong for at least another three years due to the industry's long biological cycle.

But, while the cattle industry was beginning to hold back heifers and expand, the volume of beef and cattle imports exploded in 2014 and 2015, hitting a 13-year high in 2015.

The weight of this surge in undifferentiated imports contributed to the inexplicable collapse in cattle prices, which fell further and faster than any time in history, thwarting the domestic industry's opportunity to rebuild the domestic cowherd in alignment with America's growing beef appetite.

This resulted in an alarming aberration. Our cow herd was expanding while cattle prices were swiftly falling.

And then the unexpected happened. While consumer beef prices initially fell in the face of collapsing cattle prices, they soon resumed their upward climb and continued to climb even while cattle prices were trending downward, creating the widest spread in history between cattle prices and beef prices, and this lasted for about five years.

Without a doubt, beginning around 2017 and continuing until very recently, consumers were paying inflated beef prices while cattle prices were suppressed. This was a classic example of severe market failure. Beef prices and cattle prices could not head in opposite directions for

The cattle crash of 2015 is still on the minds of America's cattle farmers and ranchers and with record volumes of imports and no changes to the structure of the U.S. cattle industry, they are weary of making the investment to expand knowing the marketplace remains fundamentally broken.

such an extended period of time if the market was competitive.

The historical relationship between the price of cattle and the price of beef was severed. Clearly, the tight oligopolistic marketplace was exploiting farmers and ranchers on one end of the supply chain and consumers on the other. The 2022 agriculture census shows that during the period from 2017-2022, over 106,000 beef cattle operations and over 2.5 million mother cows were purged from the U.S. cattle industry.

Oligopolistic power amplified by rising imports created a dysfunctional market that thrust the cowherd back into a liquidation phase. And almost immediately after the cowherd began liquidating, another economic shock struck – a second widespread drought that again accelerated and accentuated the ongoing liquidation of the cowherd from late 2020 through 2022.

All the while the cow herd was liquidating, consumer beef demand was strengthening, and consumers continued demonstrating a willingness to pay more and more for beef. Import volumes exploded, hitting an all-time high in 2023, a new high in 2024, and yet another new high in 2025.

While import volumes were surging, consumer beef prices, which had been hitting year-over-year highs since 2017, continued their year-over-year increases, reaching \$9.55 for all-fresh beef and over 10.00 per pound for Choice beef in December 2025.

Amazingly, despite mounting record-volumes of imports, which have historically driven domestic cattle prices downward, the dangerously low cattle inventory in the face of historically strong beef demand eventually set cattle prices free from the forces that had been suppressing them, and cattle prices began chasing beef prices skyward.

In Part I through III we talked about how, in just over a generation, the U.S. cattle industry had succumbed to an oligopolistic market structure created by global beef packers with unlimited access to lower-cost and undifferentiated imports. This caused the U.S. cattle industry to contract in terms of the number of cattle producers, number of cattle, and number of feedlots, which congregate cattle prior to slaughter. It also caused the distortion of competitive market forces that altered the competitive allocation of the consumers beef dollar along the supply chain, severed the historical relationship between cattle prices and beef prices, and relegated the cattle industry incapable of withstanding even moderate economic shocks.

We ended Part III by explaining that the second economic

shock, the drought that struck in late 2020, occurred as the cattle industry was already liquidating due to five years of depressed cattle prices, which occurred even though beef prices were rising. We then explained that the global beef packers were importing record volumes of beef from around the world to supplement the domestic cattle industry's production shortfall. And, though record imports had historically driven domestic cattle prices downward, the supply of domestic cattle was so incredibly tight that cattle prices broke free from their restraints and began chasing beef prices skyward.

The recent surge in cattle prices reduced the global beef packers long-term, record margins earned from the slaughter of domestic cattle, though their lost margins from cattle slaughter don't reflect the additional revenues they earn from importing record volumes of cheaper imports. We've never faced such extreme conditions in our industry before. Record high beef prices, record high cattle prices, record high imports, and a record low inventory of cows.

These extreme conditions have again changed the allocation of the consumer beef dollar, with the live cattle industry now receiving a 53.5% share, and the beef packers share shrinking considerably from its high in 2021. On all accounts, the U.S. cattle industry should have begun expanding the U.S. cowherd beginning in 2023, when cattle prices first reached what was then an historical high price. But it didn't, and it still hasn't today.

The cattle crash of 2015 is still on the minds of America's cattle farmers and ranchers and with record volumes of imports and no changes to the structure of the U.S. cattle industry, they are weary of making the investment to expand knowing the marketplace remains fundamentally broken. We're facing these extreme conditions today because for decades America shirked responsibility for ensur-

ing that competitive market forces, not monopolistic power augmented with access to cheaper product substitutes, would determine the destiny for an industry that recently had over a million widely dispersed, hard-working and economy-contributing participants, as well as for the hundreds of millions of consumers who deserve and expect an abundant supply of affordable, safe, and wholesome food; in this case beef.

What must be done?

1. We must reconnect the severed relationship between cattle prices and beef prices by countering the debilitating forces of monopolistic market power with competition.

A) Enacting mandatory country of origin labeling for beef will empower consumers to initiate demand signals for beef that is born, raised, and slaughtered in the United States or for beef produced elsewhere. Consumers deserve that choice and American cattle producers deserve the opportunity to realize a demand signal for U.S. cattle each time consumers choose an exclusively domestic beef product.

B) Implementing rules to administer and enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act will rebalance the disparate market

power between the highly concentrated beef packers and widely disaggregated cattle producers and result in increased price transparency within the beef supply chain.

C) Rigorously enforcing antitrust laws will provide opportunities for the establishment of more, and more widely dispersed packing and processing plants and more competition among them.

2. We must realign trade policy with our food security interest of becoming self-reliant in beef production.

A) Establishing worldwide tariff rate quotas at levels that will not impede the domestic cattle cycle's responsiveness to changes in America's demand for domestic beef.

B) Establishing tariffs on imported cattle and beef will offset the disparity in production costs caused by weak currencies, low wage rates, and weaker production and safety standards.

These reforms will cost U.S. taxpayers nothing, but they will rebalance the competitive forces in the marketplace ensuring that American farmers and ranchers can provide American consumers an affordable, safe, and abundant supply of beef for generations to come.

Technology, career development key to attract Gen Z talent

Future employees aren't exactly jumping in line to work in manufacturing. In fact, in a survey of 29,000 Gen Z teens by Tallo Data Insights, only 3.5% indicated they want to join the field.

That's problematic for industries including meat processing, as Jake Hall, self-dubbed the Manufacturing Millennial, told attendees in his keynote presentation at the Food Production Solutions Association (FPSA) FSX conference in March.

In fact, over 2 million jobs could be unfulfilled in the next 10 years due to a skills shortage. Meanwhile, 60% of manufacturing firms say "inability to attract and retain talent" is their biggest challenge, Hall noted.

Then again, as he also noted, 36.6% of them are aiming for careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), indicating an opportuni-

ty for companies that can provide a developmental platform through advanced technologies including robotics, automation and AI.

Hall said robotic integration for the food and consumer goods sector increased 51% year on year in 2025, and that accessible real-time data on equipment was a top three focus. He urged processors to reflect on the extent to which they've integrated automation and, if they haven't, examine what factors are holding them back.

Furthermore, Hall said 54% of manufacturing companies plan on exploring new industry segments in 2026 to diversify, and that 73% of manufacturing companies will explore AI in 2026. He urged processors to consider what new partnerships they can explore with technology or industry/education.

– Meatingplace.com

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Find a new beefy recipe to try for Beef Month

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

Jon's Critique : We all by now have been trained by the Beef Check-Off people that May is Beef Month!

I added a little pressure to the cook to come up with a good beefy recipe that isn't too similar to others that she has done.

This isn't an easy task because she has a whole lot of beef recipe experience wrapped up in her years as the official *Cattleman's Advocate* test kitchen cook.

She did well with this one. I don't like a lot of heat or overly spicy foods. This one had a mild spicy heat just right to enhance the beef flavor of this dish. I really enjoyed this one, mark this one as another good one to put in the preferred menu rotation.

Oven-Braised Beef with Harissa From Smitten Kitchen Keepers

- 3-3 1/2 pound boneless beef chuck roast, tied with a string
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- One 28-ounce can whole tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons prepared harissa
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 cup sliced carrots
- 1 large red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, sliced

Heat the oven to 300 degrees. Place the roast in an oven-proof 4-to-5- quart heavy pot with a lid. Sprinkle the roast with 2 teaspoons kosher salt and many grinds of black pepper. Turn the beef over, and season the second side.

Open the can of tomatoes, and use kitchen shears or very clean scissors to chop them roughly right inside the can. Add the harissa, cumin, coriander, and 2 teaspoons salt to the can, and give it a quick, careful stir. Pour the tomatoes-harissa mixture over and around the beef. Sprinkle the garlic powder over the mixture and cover with the lid.

Braise the beef in the middle of the oven for a total of 3 to 4 hours.

At the 3 hour mark, carefully remove the pot from the oven and add the vegetables, cover again with the lid, and return to the oven for 30 to 90 minutes longer, or until the beef is very tender.

Note: One way to tweak this into a fuller meal is to add 1 cup basmati or another long-grain rice to the pot. Add the rice at the same time as the vegetables, but if your roast takes the full 4 hours the rice might become mushy. This is a judgment call, but well worth the addition.



Additionally, make sure there is enough liquid for the rice. You can add additional water if the liquid in the pot is lacking.

For beef month, why don't you do what we did and find a new beefy recipe to try. It can be this one or another, but celebrate Beef Month by experiencing beef in a new way!

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