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Attention to Detail

Buck Rich took a path he didn't think possible, but happy he did

By COLLEEN SCHREIBER
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of Livestock Weekly

A WILLINGNESS TO LEARN and a desire to build something with family, Buck Rich is making a career with cows by upgrading genetics, focusing first and foremost on efficiency over gain. It's paying off. He sells out of bred heifers quickly, and those he keeps for replacements make good fertile cows and produce calves that perform well on the rail. (Livestock Weekly photo)

OKEMAH, Okla. — A conversation with 34-year-old Buck Rich can range from genetics to cattle diseases and just about everything in between.

You would never guess he didn't grow up on a farm or ranch. Most of what he knows, he learned through trial and error, long hours, and hard work.

When he started in the business full-time, now 12 years ago, he wasn't interested in having something handed to him. He wanted to earn his way, and that meant turning a profit.

"One thing Dad stressed to me is that it's not about what you build from scratch, it's about what you build from where you start," says Rich. "That's one thing that I'm proud of."

In nearly two decades, Rich and his parents have grown what began as a 10-cow hobby herd into an operation with about 2000 quality Anguscross cattle.

His parents, Dale and Deb, were raised in Moville, Iowa, just east of Sioux City. His mom grew up on a farm. The Century Farm is still in the family today. His dad grew up around the industry. After marrying, they both built careers in the oil and gas industry, working overseas for many years before starting their own company and settling in Tulsa to raise a family.

As a young kid, Rich's passion was hunting and fishing. It was something that he and his dad enjoyed doing together.

The original 1200 acres at Okemah, purchased in the late 1990s, was to be their weekend and hunting retreat. Large tracts are rare here because much of the land belonged to the Muskogee (Creek) Nation and was originally divided into 40-acre parcels that, over the years, have been subdivided even further.

Of the 1200 acres, only about 40 acres were able to be grazed. The rest was oak flats and North Canadian River bottom. In fact, the North Canadian split the ranch in half.

A couple of years after his parents bought the 10 bred Angus heifers and a bull, a neighbor decided they needed to be business partners. That led to the purchase of adjoining property. The land was cleared to make more grazable acres. In that way, they began growing cow numbers by buying whatever cattle they could find at the lowest price. They had one of every color, and many were plenty wild.

When they split in 2011, their partner was in his 90s. He had wanted to finish his years with his family, so they divided 50-50. At that point, they were running about 800 cows in total, leaving roughly 400 per partner.

At the time, Rich was at OSU studying mechanical engineering, because when he started his college career, ranching full-time wasn't an option. Initially, he considered vet school, but found he didn't enjoy school all that much. He settled on engineering with plans to follow in his parents' footsteps in the oil and gas industry. However, in 2014, when he graduated, the oil industry was in a downturn, and jobs were hard to come by, so he spent the summer baling hay and

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Meat Institute blasts mandatory labeling, cites $1B hit to economy

The Meat Institute has declared its opposition to a reinstatement of the 2013 Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (mCOOL) regulations for beef and pork products in the U.S.

In a release to media, the Meat Institute cited a new economic analysis by Decision Innovation Solutions that concluded such labeling measures would cost the economy $1 billion via increased expenses to ranchers, processors, retailers and consumers.

Details from the study included the following arguments:

• Compliance costs associated with tracking, record keeping, product segregation, labeling and verification would substantially increase costs throughout the beef and pork value chains.

• Those costs would total $1.02 billion for year one ($721 million in beef and $296 million in pork), and would escalate to $4.8 billion through five years and $10.1 billion through 10 years.

The Meat Institute's strong opposition to mCOOL contrasts sharply with statements from not only rancher groups, but also the USDA and certain members of Congress.

• Costs would be passed to consumers, who would pay $835 million more annually for beef and $284 million more for pork.

• Compliance costs for retailers would be $488 million the first year and $5 billion over 10 years.

• Finally, with ground beef's dependency on imported lean beef, mCOOL compliance costs would range between $202 million and $688 million.

Julie Anna Potts, Meat Institute president and CEO, said the study "proves there are real and significant costs to mCOOL," adding that the regulation "would burden both packers and livestock producers with added costs at a time when beef packers are losing money due to the smallest herd size in 75 years causing record high prices for cattle."

Opposing sides

The Meat Institute's strong opposition to mCOOL contrasts sharply with statements from not only rancher groups, but also the USDA and certain members of Congress.

Last summer, R-CALF reiterated its support of mCOOL and urged Congress to reinstate the regulation in the farm bill. And last fall, three dozen beef producer groups signed an open letter to then-U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai asking for her support to restore mandatory country of origin labeling.

Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins has publicly backed mCOOL's return. On April 1 at an Agri-Pulse event, Rollins said she was a "big supporter" of the regulation, adding it was "a transparency question. … Everyone in America should know where their food is coming from."

Rollins and USDA have pushed processors to adopt the voluntary "Product of USA" labeling program that went into effect at the start of this year, and last week touted 10 significant processors that had joined the initiative. Meatingplace coverage of the announcement included statements from Harris Ranch, FPL Food and American Foods Group.

On Capitol Hill, Senator Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) has been a public supporter of mCOOL, and has fought to includes its reinstatement in the farm bill.

– Meatingplace.com

Tyson chairman's new contract includes $40M cash payment

Tyson Foods has entered into a new employment agreement with Chairman John H. Tyson that includes a $40 million one-time cash incentive and commits him to remain with the company through at least Sept. 30, 2029.

The agreement, disclosed in a recent filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, replaces Tyson's previous employment contract from 2017.

Under the new agreement, Tyson will receive an annual base salary of $3.5 million and remain eligible for the company's incentive programs, includ-

See TYSON, page 11

UPCOMING SALES

Tuesday, Aug. 4 – High Noon Cow Sale
Tuesday, Aug. 11 – Feeder Special
Tuesday, Aug. 18 – Regular Sale
Tuesday, Aug. 25 – Feeder Special
Tuesday, Sept. 1 – NO CATTLE SALE
Tuesday, Sept. 8 – High Noon Cow Sale
Tuesday, Sept. 15 – Feeder Special
Tuesday, Sept. 22 – Regular Sale

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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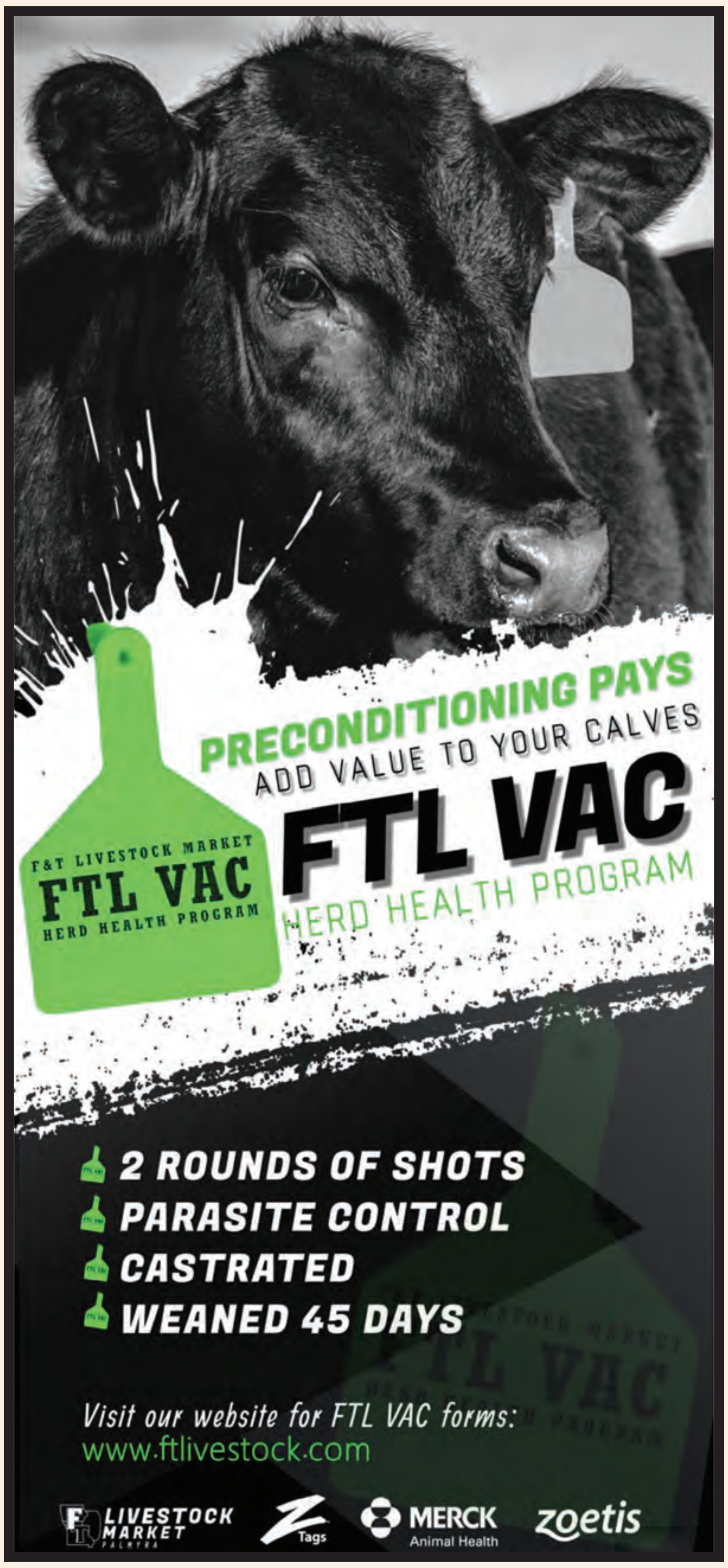

High Noon Cow Sale

Tuesday, August 4, 2026 • Noon

F&T Livestock Auction, Palmyra, MO

The first Tuesday of every month is the High Noon Cow Sale.
Here is a listing of early consignments, we expect more by sale time.

Early Consignments

August 4

Greg McWard – 30 Cows. This will be a complete dispersal of the Fall calving herd. They will be predominantly black with a few red and black whiteface and all home raised. From four years old to middle aged bred to Wheeler Angus bulls to start calving September 10. They have a complete Kent mineral program and a current and complete vaccination program.

Jay Vogt – 7 Cow Calf Pairs. These will be three and four-year-old cows with nice big calves expecting to sell as three in one packages. All these are red and red whiteface sisters that have been running back with a Musgraves Angus bull.

Fort Madison, IA – 22 extremely nice black heifers due to calve in September and October. These heifers were originally born in Western South Dakota and bred in Iowa. These will be 1200 pound or better cow makers. Big framed cowy type heifers bred to Goehring Hereford calving ease bulls. These heifers have had there pre-breeding shots and a complete mineral program.

Carl Thompson – 50 cows. This will disperse Carl's grazing project of mixed cows of various ages that have been running with black bulls to start calving Oct 1.

Special calf and yearling sales are generally the second and fourth Tuesdays. If you have cattle to sell, contact the field representatives listed and go to ftlivestock.com for more schedule information, videos and updates.

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.

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BUCK RICH from page 1

thinking through his options.

By then, his parents had almost doubled the size of the ranch and needed to add even more cows. Midway through the summer, they asked if he might be interested in sticking around full-time.

"That's all I wanted to hear," says Rich.

Rich had always liked the cows, but back then, there wasn't enough money in it to make it a career. When his parents began to make some changes in genetics and management of their herd, that money thing began to change as well. The big changes came in 2012, after they began the AI program, and while trying to build a higher-quality bull battery.

Previously, heifers were sent to Kansas to be preconditioned and AI bred.

"We knew we needed to continue to improve our quality, and we knew the fastest way to get better quality was to use better bulls, but we couldn't justify the really good bulls, so we started doing it through AI."

Rich wanted to learn to AI and how to perform a pregnancy check, so he went to school to learn the trade. He truly enjoys breeding heifers. He AI bred 257 this spring.

Because he retains the AIbred heifers, he's aggressive on birthweight, though he uses high calving ease, low birthweight cover bulls for the heifers he sells to customers.

"An 80 to 85-pound calf does not scare me, because I used to pelvic measure everything religiously," says Rich.

He's done enough pelvic measurements now that it's a pass or fail during the AI process, and heifers that fail get sorted at that time. It saves an extra trip through the chute, since they switched to MGA instead of CIDRs in the setup protocol.

"A guy, a whole lot smarter than me, said if I wasn't pulling 10 to 15 percent of my heifer calves, I wasn't being aggressive enough, that I would be leaving weight on the table at weaning," says Rich. "Now, I may pull 10 percent, but of that 10 percent, I probably jump the gun on 90 percent of them. Our heifers should be able to have that size calf unassisted if she's built right."

He wants a moderate, easy fleshing female with a big pelvic area, a good udder, and good feet, "something that's going to last."

Overall, he prioritizes feed efficiency over gain and carcass quality. That's not to say carcass quality isn't important, because steers are retained all the way to the rail more years than not.

"We primarily raise Angus cattle, so they're going to grade even if we're on the maternal side of the genetics," says Rich.

The goal is to have a 1200-pound cow.

"I really don't want anything with a frame score over a six, and I prefer a five."

For years, they ran a set of Angus cows in one herd and black baldies in another. The Angus cows were larger by about 200 pounds.

> **"We knew we needed to continue to improve our quality, and we knew the fastest way to get better quality was to use better bulls, but we couldn't justify the really good bulls, so we started doing it through AI."**

His mom, a meticulous accountant, has always kept good records. Rich learned the true value of those records, of knowing what they had, when at the end of the year he recognized that he was feeding the bigger Angus cows two pounds more per day to keep them in the same shape as the smaller framed black baldies; seven pounds versus five for the black baldies. The big tell-tale, however, was that on average there never was more than a five-pound difference in weaning weights between the two herds.

"Even with today's prices, that doesn't pay for two extra pounds of range cubes a day," says Rich.

That was an eye opener and a shift in thinking to using more moderate Hereford bulls. The result was some "phenomenal" heifers that performed like their more moderate cows.

"Everyone was saying bigger, bigger, but for us it's about what's more efficient. That switch gave us something we could work with and still be extremely efficient."

Ninety days after the heifers are AI-bred, everything is ultrasounded. The AI breds go in one pen, the cover bull breds in another, and the short breds or opens in a third pen.

He keeps the AI-bred ones for replacements because breed back on second calvers is at about 97 percent on a 90-day bull turnout. In fact, it's been a good many years since it was below 97 percent.

Keeping fertility in genetics is crucial to quicker breed back and conception rates, he notes.

"There are all kinds of things that can go wrong in an AI program, but if she takes AI and calves at 23 months, fertility is in her genetics," says Rich.

The naturally bred females are broken down further by expected due date for marketing to customers. He began offering those for sale on Facebook. Now, his fall heifers are typically all spoken for before he even does preg checks. Most customers are from the regional area, but some heifers have gone as far as Montana.

It wasn't that many years ago, he was selling bred heifers for $1800. Today they're bringing $4500-5000.

"They're not batting an eye," says Rich. "Same with the bulls."

Now that he's closer to achieving his quality goal, he could probably forgo the AI program, but he keeps at it because he simply loves it.

"I really enjoy knowing that one's out of this bull and this one out of that bull and comparing them as they grow. I may give up AI breeding the heifers, but I'm not yet ready to give it up on the purebred cows."

They keep about 150 purebred Angus cows and from them they now raise their own bulls.

"That way we can get the genetics we want, the docility we want, and the bulls in the condition that we want, and also do it affordably," says Rich.

"However, I've made the biggest investment in the genetics of our cows, not the bulls."

Years ago, they ran eared cattle, and eared cattle really fit their climate better – they're more heat and tick-tolerant - but as Rich puts it, they don't fit their workforce.

"The eared cattle were phenomenal cows and easier keeping and even though my parents still work their tails off every day they're getting older and we can't have a rodeo every time we work cows," he explains.

Early on, when they were making the switch, they used some of the gentler cattle with a little ear in their embryo transfer program because they were good mamas, but Rich got tired of finding himself under the side-by-side when tagging calves.

"I got to where we'd drive by, pick the calf up, weigh it, tag it on the fly, and then pitch it back out to its mama on the way back by," says Rich.

For years, they put Hereford bulls back on their black cows, but the last couple of years, they've gone to a Fleckvieh, a red whitefaced Simmental.

They've upgraded their performance somewhat with that cross, but what he really likes is that he's been able to clean up some of the udders.

Spring heifers start calving at 23 months of age, February 1, and cows 14 days later. For the fall herd, heifers calve at two years of age in early October, the same time as the cows.

At branding, the calves get their first round of shots and an ear tag with a number that represents that group of cows. That enables them to keep track of the sire group for that set of cows. Preweaning shots are given approximately four weeks prior to weaning, and weaning day is as low-stress for the cattle as possible.

Typically, they tend to retain a higher percentage of their fall calves all the way to the rail because they're able to "coast" those calves along on grass before going to the feedyard and typically hit the May board coming out of the feedyard.

They've long fed cattle with a farmer-feeder just east of Sioux City and a high school friend of Rich's dad. At first, the Iowa farmer-feeder was hesitant to feed Oklahoma calves.

"He didn't think they'd do all that well, but he agreed to give them a try."

However, the cattle did very well. In fact, they were the most efficient cattle that the Iowan had ever fed.

"He told us that he's had cattle that graded as good or better, but he said where we made the most money was from how much we saved. We fed those cattle for 20 cents cheaper than a lot of the cattle he fed that came out of Montana, and there's some phenomenal cattle up there."

It reinforced that they were on the right track.

"One of the most important things that we have to have here for our bottom line is an efficient cow," Rich reiterates.

Because the market was so good last year, they retained the fall calves and sold all their spring calves. Normally, they'd retain a percentage from both calf crops.

Though they must supplement, they really want their cattle to do it on grass. Their best years are when they're right on the verge of drouth and timely rains come to keep it growing. Last year, they had 72 inches in three months.

They had a record hay crop, but there was no value to it at all, says Rich.

He's not crazy about Bermuda because of the need to fertilize and its shallow root system.

"All this country was put into Bermuda when fertilizer was cheap. It's not cheap anymore."

He also has a love-hate relationship with fescue.

"Fescue causes us a lot of eye and foot problems and a lot of lost tail switches, but it's saved our tail many years. It's been the only thing that saved us a few years," says Rich.

Besides the genetics, what success they've had he attributes to a change in their feeding program. Rich says he really didn't want to mix his own feed, but he got tired of rising feed costs. Now they're making a better-quality product at a lower price.

The corn and beans are sourced out of Nebraska, and the

See BUCK RICH, page 11

From the Publisher... *Jon Angell*

This month, we have another story written by Colleen Schreiber of ***Livestock Weekly***. It features producer Buck Rich, and is a good example of why I like Collen's writing. She covers a lot of ground in her writing and has a knack for holding my attention till the end.

This time she tells Buck Rich's story of building a ranching business mostly from scratch, but also gets into some production practices and many of the hurdles and diseases he went over along the way.

I enjoy this kind of feature, I'd be curious for some feedback from readers; is it too much or do you like the thoroughness?

With the New World Screwworm crossing the border, we will have yet another threat to be concerned with. Our older readers may remember a previous time when screwworms where a burden, but for the majority of us, we have no experience and little knowledge of the pest.

On page 8, you will find a story that give some perspective and history that I found helpful for knowing what we might be up against.

It also illustrates the importance of having a good working relationship with our neighbor Mexico. I'm not too fond of how Mexico is run nor the folks running it, but they will be key to driving NWS back below Panama again and to eventually reopening the border to more normalized trade.

For more thoughts on the Mexican border trade, Trent Loos has some interesting information on page 12, and a story on page 14 discusses new trade negotiations by the Trump Administration.

Before you move past page 8, don't miss the story on China's beef tariffs. Our international beef competition have reached their quotas in China here midway through the year. Will China resume importing American beef in the second half of the year? That would be significant.

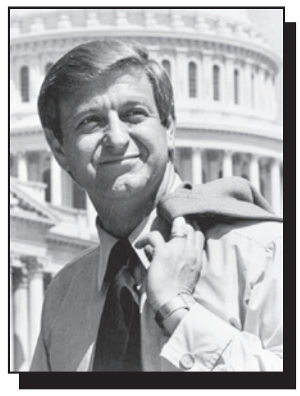
I know several readers have opposing opinions on D.O.G.E. and Trump's drive for efficiency and smaller government.

Page 18 has a story about USDA moving forward with "reorganizing" and pushing much of its smaller labor force out of Washington, D.C. and into the interior. Nearly any meaningful change comes with a certain degree of pain or adjustment before the benefits take hold.

I am glad (thrilled really) we have started the "reorganizing" process for a lot of reasons. The concentration of money, influence and raw power in the District of Columbia and the surrounding counties in the last few decades has been horrible. It will be a process, and adjustments will surely be required, but I look forward to the beneficial results.

Also on page 18, is a press release for a Chillicothe event honoring Jerry Litton's legacy. Many of our young readers will have no idea who Jerry Litton was or why he was an important historic personality who was tragically lost at time when his trajectory was just launching like a rocket on to great things.

I would encourage readers to search out the documentary, "Happy Are Those Who Dream Dreams: The Jerry Litton Story with Walter Conkite (1984). We will put a link to it on our website. Litton was a well-known rancher with a popular television show that was broadcast statewide, and later became a Democratic U.S. Congressman.



When I say popular, I mean he won landslide elections and was widely thought to be a likely Presidential prospect by both Democrats and Republicans. Even national heavyweights such as President Jimmy Carter had publicly expressed belief in Jerry Litton as President.

One childhood memory I have from the Columbia Livestock Auction was the occasion when Jerry Litton made a campaign stop in the middle of the afternoon on a large sale day. He arrived and absolutely everything came to a halt! The help came from the back, and the Bull Pen Café emptied into the auction arena to a packed standing room audience.

The room as I remember was in heightened anticipation, and this man who "stopped the sale" was ushered into the middle of the sale ring, and from the auction block, a microphone was handed out for him to speak.

For those of you familiar with the workings of a livestock market, this just doesn't happen, and when it did, even as I child I knew something special was happening. I wish I could remember what he said, but I remember him speaking and a hush coming over the room to hear what this man had to say. I can honestly say, I haven't ever witnessed anything like it before or since. The man was incredibly charismatic.

The last thing I would tell you about Jerry Litton was my memories of the news of his death. It, too, was absorbed as a significant life changing event. I remember having a sinking feeling of regret and of a future that was set back to be far less than it could have been.

I had similar feelings with the Challenger disaster, the death of Charlie Kirk and others, but maybe slightly more personable because Litton was more local. Jerry was from rural Missouri, a rancher; Jerry Litton was our guy, it just hit differently.

Do you have memories of Jerry Litton? I am happy to hear that after fifty years there are still plenty of people who think of Jerry Litton and are willing to gather, recognize, and celebrate his shortened life even today.

When I saw the announcement coming up in Chillicothe on August 2, I started thinking that might be one I'd really enjoy attending. Any of you think you might go?

I'd point out that we have a couple of new advertisers and several of our ongoing long-term supporting advertisers have stepped up with some neat advertisements. These folks are key to making our paper workable. When the time comes for their products or services, give them a chance to work with you. Maybe while in between your need for what they have to offer, it's great when you mention seeing their ads and maybe a word of encouragement for support to a newspaper you enjoy. It's maybe just a little thing but I can't help but think it makes a difference.

While I'm talking about feedback to advertisers, I would also say I enjoy the feedback from readers. Most of it comes in the form of a short comment or words of encouragement written on subscription renewals. I appreciate these. Occasionally, feedback comes in the form of a phone call, which is often nice. I really enjoy the letters and notecards that occasionally show up; those are the best.

I will need to make a few changes and "restructurings" soon, so now would be a good time to send feedback; that includes what you both like and don't like. I need to fix a few things that being busy with so many things I have kind of let go. Decisions will need to be made, my procrastinations must be addressed (some day) to make improvements. Drop me a note in the mail, and hurry before the rate goes up again!

As always, plan on spending some time in the pages of this issue; one that I think is filled with several interesting and helpful contributors. Thanks again for reading and along with your support of our efforts here.

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FARM & FOOD FILE

Just saying it doesn't make it so

By ALAN GUEBERT
For The Cattleman's Advocate

For example, according to Department of Agriculture data, NFI in the first year of the initial Trump tariffs, 2019, was $82 billion. More than one-fourth of it, or $22.4 billion, came from taxpayers through direct farm program payments.

Too many officials in the Trump Administration and several farm state Capitol Hill leaders believe that just saying something is true makes it true.

For example, on June 24, the White House said it would ask Congress for another $11 billion in "temporary economic assistance" for farmers in 2026. Senate Ag Committee Chairman John Boozman, R-Ark., chimed in to say that he, too, has "been calling for emergency assistance."

With the barn door now wide open, farm groups quickly joined the chorus for more "temporary economic support" because, as the American Soybean Association explained, "it's no secret that farm country is struggling."

No, but it seems to be a secret among GOP ag leaders about why "farm country is struggling" and now needs another $11 billion from taxpayers: the fast-fading effectiveness of today's farm programs and the make-believe world of Trump tariffs.

But, hey, there's virtually no accountability in Congress for anyone, Repub or Dem.

For those keeping score at home, however, the requested billions will balloon today's already promised $44 billion in 2026 federal farm program payments to $55.3 billion, a record for both farmers and any White House.

Spending records for farm programs is, however, not new for this White House. In the final two years of the first Trump term, 2019 and 2020–the period of his first tariff calamity–federal farm program payments totaled $69 billion, $5 billion more than the combined farm payments of the following, four-year Biden Administration.

To prove his tariff stubbornness hadn't changed, the President again imposed broad tariffs in 2025 and 2026 and again they made a hash of U.S. exports markets, especially to China.

Then, no surprise, farm payments–courtesy of both the Farm Bill and ad hoc additions requested by the White House–again blew the doors off federal farm aid: Combined, farm program spending for 2025 and 2026 will be an estimated $86.6 billion.

That means that the last four years of the Trump Administration's management of the Department of Agriculture–2019, 2022, 2025, and 2026–U.S. taxpayers will have paid out $155.6 billion farm subsidies, or about $39 billion each year, and received virtually nothing in return.

Not stronger, more resilient farms. Not stronger, more resilient export markets. And certainly not stronger, more resilient rural communities.

Current trends in net farm income (NFI), the best overall indicator of agriculture's financial health, also confirm this growing dependency on Uncle Sam.

For example, according to Department of Agriculture data, NFI in the first year of the initial Trump tariffs, 2019, was $82 billion. More than one-fourth of it, or $22.4 billion, came from taxpayers through direct farm program payments.

A similar, but worse story occurred in 2020, the second year of Tariffs 1.0, when NFI rose to $99 billion but nearly half, or $45.6 billion, again came from taxpayers.

Today's reprise of tariffs under Trump 2.0 brought a reprise of hefty program payments. In 2025, 17 percent of all NFI was from program payments; in 2026 that number will more than double to 36 percent. Moreover, there's no end in sight.

And, yes, it was different during the Biden Administration. In Biden's first year in office, 2021, NFI hit $146 billion, nearly $50 billion more than the previous year's $99 billion, and farm payments weighed in at $26 billion. The next year, NFI set a record, $182 billion while Uncle Sam's tab was only $15.6 billion.

The biggest difference? No market-fouling tariffs. The numbers–the facts–confirm it.

But don't tell White House or Capitol Hill farm "experts" who seem happy to light your money on fire while watching rural America sink deeper into decline.

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

Kilroy Foods workers vote to join Teamsters

More than 140 production workers at Kilcoy Global Foods' meat processing facility in Mundelein, Ill., voted overwhelmingly to join Teamsters Local 301, the union announced.

Workers approved union representation by a 127-4 vote. The facility processes and packaged meat and other protein products for retailers including Costco and Trader Joe's.

"This is a huge victory for the hardworking men and women at Kilcoy Global Foods," Michael Haffner, secretary-treasurer of Teamsters Local 301, said in a statement.

He said the local is prepared to represent employees as they negotiate their first collective bargaining agreement. The newly organized workers are expected to begin negotiations for an initial contract covering wages, benefits and working conditions.

"Standing your ground against multibillion-dollar companies isn't easy," Jesse Case, director of the Teamsters Food Processing Division, said in a statement. "Workers deserve respect, fair treatment and a real voice on the job — and Teamsters will fight to secure those basic rights."

Employee Clemente Trejo said workers sought a contract that better reflects their contributions to the company's operations.

Teamsters Local 301 represents more than 1,200 workers across northeastern Illinois. Mundelein is about 40 miles north of Chicago.

– Meatingplace.com

Ranch kid ropes man in river

A 14-year-old ranch kid from Big Timber, Montana, had a rope in his hand when cries for help erupted from the Yellowstone River.

Cowboy State Daily's Kolby Fedore reports he sprinted into the water, threw one loop and caught a struggling man around the arm and neck, pulling him safely to shore.

"14-year-old Jory Thomas was visiting his grandparents along the Yellowstone River in Big Timber, Montana, when he heard cries for help coming from the river. Three people had fallen in after their boat struck a rock. Two of the people were able to swim to shore safely. A third man was clinging to a cooler when Thompson waded into the water, rope in hand. He was able to lasso the man and pull him to shore.

"A search and rescue sergeant said that without a doubt, he would not have made it had Thompson not been able to act quickly."

The Thomas family lives on a ranch about a dozen miles outside Big Timber, directly across from a campground where Jory's grandparents had been staying for the week.

To his family, the rescue wasn't entirely surprising. Jase Thomas said his son has always been the first person to help someone else.

– From Cowboy State Daily

Here are the scheduled advertising deadlines for The Cattleman's Advocate through April 2027:

September issue ..... ***Ad deadline: August 17***
October issue ..... ***Ad deadline: September 14***
November issue ..... ***Ad deadline: October 19***
December issue ... ***Ad deadline: November 12***
January issue ..... ***Ad deadline: December 10***
February issue ..... ***Ad deadline: January 18***
March issue .... ***Ad deadline: February 15***
April issue .... ***Ad deadline: March 15***

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Thoughts From Justin's Side of the Fence

By JUSTIN ANGELL

My mother always told me that if I didn't have anything good to say, don't say anything at all. When it comes to the cattle market, this is gonna be a very short article. If you haven't heard, the cattle feeding industry has endured another cascading lower market after several things conspired against our unsinkable market.

Like the unsinkable Titanic, the live fed cattle market sank because primarily the June fed cattle board expired, making the $20 cwt lower August contract the spot month. The extreme heat wave in the upper Corn Belt really prevents cattle feeders from bulling up to fight the sliding market when they know this heat wave could kill hundreds of cattle any given day. Also, a detrimental factor was the closure of three major plants, Fort Morgan, Lexington, and Sauterton Pennsylvania.

We don't really need this shackle space because of our light supply of fed cattle; however, the thousands of program cattle and captive supply cattle previously processed at these three plants have been shifted to others and have reduced the demand for open market cattle that we have available. To put a number on it, the fed cattle market has belly flopped about $25 to $30 per hundred lower. Her high was around $2.65, but now Fat Cattle at $2.40 is a good price with many western Fat Cattle bringing less than $2.40.

This $450 per head less income per fed steer is now reflected in lower feeder and calf market. This lower market is also being influenced by rising grain prices. My commodity guy in Nebraska has told me for months corn is way underpriced. Even though we're a lot lower, for the cow calf producer, calves are still historically very high.

Now the multi-million dollar question is what is next? Will the market bounce and run straight back up this fall into next spring or is this the beginning of a long downturn? My experience has shown me in the past the one thing we absolutely do not want to do as an industry, is hold cattle to try and feed our way out of them by making them gigantic. In this scenario, our one big ace in the hole is a low supply of market ready fed cattle. Hopefully we are approaching a bottom that we can transform into a springboard by this fall. Unfortunately, we won't be able to tell market direction for three more months.

We have had a lot of interest in bred, females and pairs. Look for the listings of various markets in these pages. We have available in Centralia and also our consignments at the F&T Livestock high noon cow sales coming up the first Tuesday of August and the first Tuesday of September.

A special shout out for a good customer. Greg will be getting knee replacements this fall so cannot calve his fall cow herd. August 4th The High Noon Cow sale will feature this 30 head complete disposal and also at least one group of four-year-olds potentially 3-1 red pairs with April and May calves exposed back to an Angus bull.

I've had several people tell me this month they are starting to think bred heifers are gonna get cheap because there's a lot of them. I guess I should be flattered. Monthly readers will know this was an original thought from three months ago. So, I guess I concur, believing there will be a tremendous amount of bred heifers to calve next spring and that bred heifers would temporarily get cheaper this fall, allowing an opportunity for whoever was willing and able to do the work and manage the finances. Assuming we find a bottom in the fed cattle market soon, the good news is I don't think by grass next spring, good pairs will be any cheaper than they are right now. $5000 to $6200 pairs will still be very common next spring.

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Union says USDA should help 'all' processors amid cattle shortage

Direct cash help for beef packers that excludes the "Big Four" companies that slaughter at least 80% of U.S. cattle is a "band-aid" that fails to protect industry jobs, a major union representing meat processing workers said this week.

The USDA last week announced that it is preparing a $500 million aid package for small and medium-sized beef processors with the industry losing money due to a historically small herd and record cattle prices. The program's payouts will go to plants that maintain slaughter volumes above specified levels, and according to Ag Secretary Brooke Rollins will be designed to exclude the four largest U.S. packers: Tyson Foods, JBS, Cargill and National Beef.

"The USDA must help all meat processors during this time by offering a meaningful, long-term solution to herd size, or else more plants will shutter and leave working families without stable union jobs," United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW) President Milton Jones said in a statement.

JBS last month announced the pending August closure of its Souderton, Pa., facility, one of the largest beef slaughter plants in the Eastern United States, which has a UFCW workforce.

The union, which says it represents hundreds of thousands of meatpacking and food processing workers across the U.S. and Canada, signed a national labor agreement with JBS in May 2025 that included plants in Cactus, Texas, Hyrum, Utah, and Grand Island, Neb., among other major beef facilities. UFCW members at the Greeley, Colo., plant, where JBS USA is headquartered, were not part of the national contract, instead reaching a new collective bargaining agreement with the company in April after a weekslong work stoppage.

Economist David P. Anderson, a Texas A&M professor and extension economist, said in a recent Meatingplace webinar that more plant closures are "certainly possible."

According to beef cutout estimates, packer margins have been in the red for most of the last two years due to tight cattle supplies, with losses last week above $300 a head, and little prospect for meaningful herd expansion before 2028. In January, Tyson Foods closed a major non-union beef slaughter plant in Nebraska and dropped the second shift from its Teamsters-represented Amarillo plant.

"The shortage of cattle is being felt across the meatpacking industry by big and small processors alike, and it is costing jobs," Jones said. "Tyson Foods closed its plant in Lexington, Neb., putting hundreds of people out of work and leaving a rural area looking for answers. Offering band-aid solutions to only certain processors ignores the underlying problem of a historic livestock shortage that risks the livelihoods of thousands of workers who rely on union meatpacking jobs in their communities."

– Meatingplace.com

It's The Pitts...

Becoming obsolete

By LEE PITTS
For The Cattleman's Advocate

Just look at our kids today.... wait, you can't because they're locked in their rooms communicating with God knows who.

Call me an old fuddy-duddy for saying this but I think the Internet is one of the worst things to ever happen to this country.

Just look at our kids today.... wait, you can't because they're locked in their rooms communicating with God knows who. The only friends they have are called Siri and Alexa, or they could be an Islamic terrorist trying to convert them or a dirty old man pretending to be a soul mate or a play mate. They sit on their butts for hours playing video war games online instead of playing ball outside. Shooting games are the most popular and then we are surprised when they buy real AR 15's and kill their classmates.

I don't care if you love or hate our President but you should be concerned that there have been three attempts on his life and all the would-be killers were influenced by social media. Do you think Charlie Kirk would be dead today, his wife a widow and his kids fatherless, if it wasn't for the Internet? Both China and Russia have tried to influence our elections, spied on us and propagandized our children all using the Internet. A pro-Palestinian riot on a campus can be organized in mere hours in an online chat room.

Go to a restaurant and observe the patrons who aren't talking to their table-mates but have their eyes glued to their smart phone. And I'm not referring just to kids, it's the entire family. Even Grandma is staring at her I-phone surfing the Internet, texting or reading her e mails which are 99% junk. We have killed off verbal communication and our spelling is atrocious because a computer program fixes our mistakes. A lady lawyer I know got scammed on an Internet deal that ended up costing her nearly half a million dollars.

Downtown used to be a bustling and joyful place where we all window shopped, bought our books, our clothes, kitchen goods and hardware. In a nearby town JC Penney, Sears, Bed Bath and Beyond and many others all closed their doors because we're all shopping online, buying shoes and clothes that don't fit because we couldn't try them on. We purchase housewares and tools that don't look a thing like the photos on Amazon. A good friend of mine was placed in a resthome for the last year of his life where he got bored and shopped for crap online totaling $70,000 before his family could legally get him stopped. Some days he'd get as many as ten packages from Fed Ex, UPS and the Post Office and because they were delivered to his home address he never even saw them, let alone used a single item he bought. When sold at a garage sale the stuff didn't fetch $1,000!

Because of the Internet we don't even know fact from fiction. Information on the Internet is so unreliable as to be useless. "Influence peddlers" put up shocking totally false headlines called "clickbait" hoping to reel you in to their website so they can get paid, or convert you to their cause.

And, my friends, the worst is yet to come. Artificial Intelligence may be all the rage but it promises to make your brain a useless appendage, like your appendix, because you won't have to use it any more. Our cars will drive themselves, Chat GPT will write your kid's essays and accelerated hacking will make your private personal information a commodity to be bartered and sold online. Terrorists will use AI to make the world a far more dangerous place.

To build the infrastructure for the AI revolution will demand huge amounts of electricity and turn nuclear energy into "Green Energy." I remember when greenies marched in the streets in an effort to stop its proliferation.

How can people become so excited about something that will take their job? Recently a banker who laid off thousands of his employees made possible by AI called his former employees "lower value human capital." At graduation ceremonies around the country this year titans of tech gave speeches about all the glorious things AI will do. Invariably they were practically booed off the stage any time they mentioned AI because Gen Z knows that in an already challenging job market the career they have studied for will disappear. AI will make them obsolete.

– www.LeePittsbooks.com

McDonald's announces Hart as new beef chief

Beth Hart will be the new VP, global category lead for beef, at McDonald's.

In an announcement on Hart's LinkedIn account, the executive stated her goal will be "to keep raising the bar on taste, quality, consistency and innovation." A veteran of the UK retail chain Sainsbury's, Hart joined McDonald's nearly eight years ago, and formerly worked as the restaurant chain's chief sustainability and social impact officer.

As the beef category lead, Hart will be intimately involved with McDonald's recent commitments on regenerative agriculture. As the company detailed last fall, $200 million will be invested across seven years to help promote and accelerate regenerative grazing practices, habitat restoration, water and wildlife conservation on cattle ranches spanning 4 million acres across up to 38 states.

Earlier this year, McDonald's CEO Chris Kempczinski acknowledged that the chain's burger products had "probably been one of the most hard-hit areas" because of inflation, and that pivots were being made to chicken items. "Chicken is growing faster globally than beef, and so for us, we're always following what the consumer is wanting," he said.

In a separate report, Kempczinski stated that inflation was also lowering sales from lower-income consumers at McDonald's restaurants, calling it "a challenging environment."

Meatingplace.com

Consumers continue favoring beef despite higher prices, CoBank says

Consumer demand for animal protein remains resilient, but purchasing patterns are creating an unusual dynamic across meat categories, according to CoBank's latest quarterly outlook.

CoBank noted that consumers continue to pay premium prices for beef despite historically tight cattle supplies and elevated retail prices. At the same time, lower-cost protein alternatives such as pork and chicken have not absorbed as much demand as market fundamentals would suggest.

The report said the disconnect highlights the importance of factors beyond price, including taste preferences, perceived quality, convenience, meal habits and foodservice menu offerings. While pork, chicken and eggs often provide a lower cost per gram of protein, consumers have shown a willingness to continue purchasing beef even as prices remain elevated.

According to CoBank, animal protein markets are becoming increasingly out of sync with changing consumer purchasing behavior. Supply responses vary significantly by species, creating different market conditions for beef, pork and poultry producers.

The report suggests that protein purchasing decisions are influenced by a combination of economic and lifestyle factors rather than price alone.

– Meatingplace.com

Decades-long struggle pays off with new rancher-owned USDA facility in Washington

A new rancher-owned USDA-inspected processing facility has opened in southeast Washington after a decade of perseverance.

According to a Capital Press report, Cody and Jen Hoseth raise 1,000 head of cattle on 2,400 acres, and they can now harvest and process their own beef out of a USDA facility in Eltopia. The $700,000 facility employs 25 workers, and the Hoseths anticipate other family ranchers will bring their cattle for processing.

"I would really like other ranchers and farmers to know that we are open to do business with them," Cody said. "This plant has a lot of capacity to support other producers."

Previously, the Hoseths relied on co-packers for harvesting, and sold their meat at farmers markets. They purchased a portion of the Eltopia facility in 2021 and the full plant in 2025.

Cody said USDA inspection required nearly a decade of effort, and this was his ninth attempt at securing it. "I really just failed my way into finally getting a kill floor for almost 10 years. … There were quite a few times and spots where I probably should have quit, and I didn't," Cody said.

To keep costs down, Cody completed all the facility's construction work himself.

– Meatingplace.com

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The never-ending battle against New World Screwworm: Peel

The reemergence of New World screwworm (NWS) in the U.S. has prompted considerable discussion about eradicating the pest once again after the country remained NWS-free for more than 40 years. What is sometimes overlooked or misunderstood is that the battle against NWS never truly stopped. Eradication from a particular region is accomplished by pushing the infestation boundary away from that region and maintaining it through sterile fly releases.

After NWS was eliminated from the U.S. in 1966, the pest remained a threat because the barrier at the U.S.-Mexico border was too long and difficult to maintain. A major outbreak in 1972 spurred greater cooperation between the United States and Mexico with the goal of eliminating NWS from both countries. Figure 1 shows that more than 90,000 NWS cases were reported in Texas alone in 1972. Progress in pushing NWS south through Mexico eventually resulted in the last U.S. case being reported in 1982.

The sterile fly facility in Mission, Texas, was later replaced by a new facility in Tuxtla, Mexico. As the NWS barrier advanced south and approached the 93rd meridian at the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, officials decided to extend eradication efforts through Central America. Mexico was declared NWS-free in 1991. Continued progress through Central America ultimately led to the decision to establish a permanent barrier in Panama against the endemic NWS population in South America.

Eventually, a new sterile fly production facility was established in Panama, replacing the facility in Mexico. The Panama facility (COPEG) has since produced and dispersed trillions of sterile NWS flies. Central and North America north of the Darién region of Panama remained NWS-free from 2004 until recently.

The battle against NWS is fundamentally different from eradication efforts targeting diseases such as brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis, where successful eradication is followed by ongoing surveillance.

In 2023, NWS breached the barrier in Panama and moved rapidly north through Central America, returning to Mexico by November 2024, spreading across Mexico during 2025 and reaching the U.S. again in June 2026. The U.S., Mexico and Central American countries once again face the challenge of pushing NWS south. The history of NWS demonstrates that the battle never ends — it is simply a question of where the front line is located.

The current situation illustrates how quickly NWS can advance when there is even a brief lapse in containment. Changing cattle market dynamics likely contributed to increased livestock movement through areas not fully covered by sterile fly releases. There is little doubt that both legal and illegal transportation of cattle — and possibly horses — contributed to the rapid spread of NWS across Central America. Once the pest reached Mexico, it spread quickly, in part because the Mexican cattle industry has evolved in recent years to involve significantly more cattle movement across the country.

It was worthwhile to establish and maintain the NWS barrier in Panama, and it will be worthwhile to do so again. That means cooperation among the U.S., Mexico and Central American countries will be critical. The battle against NWS is fundamentally different from eradication efforts targeting diseases such as brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis, where successful eradication is followed by ongoing surveillance. With NWS, the fight never ends. The key question is where the front line will be maintained, recognizing that cattle production and marketing systems continue to evolve throughout the region.

– Meatingplace.com

Get a full year of home delivery of The Cattleman's Advocate for just $20. See page 6 for details.

Another key US competitor faces steep China beef tariffs

For the second time in as many weeks, one of the United States' biggest competitors on the international meat scene has faced a big knock to its export business.

According to reports from International Valor and other outlets, Brazil is on the cusp of fulfilling its 2026 quota for beef exports to China, after which tariffs will rocket from 12% all the way to 67%; just last week, Australia fulfilled its own quota and endured a tariff hike.

Established at the start of the year, China's quota system limited Brazil's low-tariff exports to 1.1 million mt – significantly below the 1.33 million mt shipped in the first 11 months of 2025. As a result of the higher tariffs, processors such as Frigol, Better Beef, Iguatemi Beef and Plena Alimentos are suspending slaughter and production operations, and some companies are placing employees on mandatory leave in July.

U.S. exports set to rise?

China's quota on U.S. exports is set at 164,000 mt, and according to the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, from January through April of this year, U.S. processors exported only 3,000 mt worth of product; subsequent months of trade will show if China has pivoted to the U.S., especially after renewing beef export licenses for U.S. companies.

– Meatingplace.com

USDA still set on faster processing line speeds

The Trump administration will pursue faster processing speeds for both poultry and pork, it announced this week in its statement of regulatory priorities for 2026.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), through its Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), will "propose updates allowing establishments under the New Swine Inspection System and New Poultry Inspection System to increase line speeds where process control is maintained, supporting innovation without compromising safety."

Doing so, the USDA says, will "strengthen food safety outcomes, reduce cross-contamination risks, and improve operational efficiency for industry and inspectors alike."

Furthermore, according to the announcement, the FSIS "will also remove outdated inspection procedures—such as the incision of mandibular lymph nodes and palpation of viscera—that research shows are unnecessary and can increase contamination risk."

The issue of increased processing speeds for poultry and pork has been a fraught one that pits increased production numbers against food and worker safety.

The industry argues that current speeds can be increased without diminishing safety standards for either the products or the laborers. Labor unions have argued against increasing speeds, as laborers would theoretically have to work that much harder to meet the proposed processing rates.

In poultry plants, the current line speed cap under the New Poultry Inspection System is generally 140 birds per minute for young chickens. USDA has proposed raising that to 175 birds per minute. Turkey plants would move from 55 birds per minute to 60.

In pork, prior limits stood at 1,106 hogs per hour, or roughly 18 per minute.

Those numbers matter because every incremental increase affects plant throughput, labor demands, equipment utilization and unit costs. In a low-margin commodity business, even modest efficiency gains can translate into millions of dollars annually for large processors.

– Meatingplace.com

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

Yum! Brands to sell Pizza Hut for $2.7B

Louisville, Kentucky-based Yum! Brands, Inc., has announced plans to sell Pizza Hut for approximately $2.7 billion.

Stamford, Conn.-based LongRange Capital will be the new owners of Pizza Hut, excepting Pizza Hut in mainland China, which will be acquired by Yum China Holdings, Inc.

Under the terms of the agreements, Yum! will sell Pizza Hut to LongRange for approximately $1.5 billion, and Pizza Hut China to Yum China for approximately $1.2 billion.

Yum! is a direct corporate descendant of PepsiCo, which acquired Pizza Hut in 1977. The company went on to add big-name fast-food brands Kentucky Fried Chicken and Taco Bell to its tent, along with a host of others. It is one of the largest restaurant conglomerates in the world.

"Under LongRange and Yum China, Pizza Hut will be well positioned for future growth with ownership that brings deep expertise in the restaurant industry," Chris Turner, Chief Executive Officer, Yum! Brands, said in a statement accompanying the deal announcement.

"Pizza Hut is one of the most iconic restaurant brands in the world, and we are proud of the important role it has played in Yum!'s history. Pizza Hut was built by the passion and dedication of our team members, employees and franchisees, and we're excited for the next chapter."

Yum! says it expects to the receive approximately $2.3 billion of net proceeds after taxes and various closing fees. It also says it expects to incur one-time expenses of approximately $85 million in 2026 to facilitate its separation from the Pizza chain.

The transactions are expected to close in the third quarter of 2026.

Wyoming man blows fingers off hand with firework, 4 others hurt

Following a Fourth of July concert at Gillette, Wyoming, a fireworks accident severely injured one man's hand and resulted in minor injuries to four other people.

The explosion happened around midnight early Saturday outside the Otherside Bar & Grill, where a concert raising money for a reproductive health clinic had wrapped up about 30 minutes earlier.

On a Facebook post where he apologized for lighting the firework, Matthew Lynch wrote that he lost all the fingers on his right hand, shattered the bones in his left hand, suffered burns, hearing damage and partial blindness.

Two additional people were taken by ambulance but declined treatment at the hospital, while two others refused transport at the scene.

Surveillance cameras captured the incident, and the video has been turned over to authorities.

Gillette Police Department Interim Chief Brent Wasson said the incident remains under investigation and no tickets or arrests have been made. Whether alcohol played a role remains unknown, he said.

– Information provided by Cowboy State Daily

Trade probe launched over soaring lamb imports

The U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) is investigating whether the increase in lamb imports in this decade has damaged the domestic sheep industry.

The ITC, an independent federal agency, has scheduled hearings and is due to deliver a report to the Trump administration by January, under trade law.

U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Jamieson Greer formally asked the agency to "determine whether lamb meat is being imported into the United States in such increased quantities as to be a substantial cause of serious injury, or the threat thereof, to the domestic industry."

U.S. lamb import volume — nearly all from Australia and New Zealand — jumped 45% from 2021 to 309.3 million pounds in 2024, about 70% of domestic consumption, according to the American Sheep Industry Association. The group, which filed a formal safeguard petition in October to the Office of the USTR, alleged that imported lamb prices average nearly 11% less than domestically produced fresh, chilled and frozen lamb.

American Sheep Industry Association Executive Director Mike Michener praised the Trump administration for "recognizing the serious challenges facing America's sheep producers and taking this important step forward."

The United States formally notified the World Trade Organization last week of the ITC's safeguard investigation on lamb meat.

"Available information suggests that imports resulted in domestic industry lost sales, revenues, and market share as imported lamb meat significantly undersold the domestic like product," Greer told the ITC. "Moreover, recent information suggests that firms have exited the domestic industry entirely, and there have been domestic industry job losses, decreased capacity utilization rates, and struggles to maintain profitability."

As part of collecting both written and oral testimony, the ITC has scheduled a hearing on potential injuries to the U.S. sheep industry for October 16 in Washington, D.C. If the panel finds the volume of imports have damaged domestic producers, a hearing on remedies will be held on December 1.

The agency already found that due to the complicated nature of the investigation, it would only decide the injury question by Nov. 13, with a final report by Jan. 11.

Under Section 201 of U.S. trade law, the president can order temporary relief to U.S. industries through tariffs or other trade barriers against a surge of imported products that have damaged or have the potential to damage domestic producers.

"A healthy U.S. sheep industry supports rural communities, strengthens domestic supply chains, and helps ensure the United States retains the capacity to produce high-quality American lamb here at home," Michener said. "This action also helps protect America's domestic food supply at a time of growing global uncertainty."

U.S. sheep production has followed a similar pattern to the cattle industry, with drought and other production impediments constraining supply despite strong consumer protein demand. Meanwhile, U.S. lamb exports jumped 10% last year to 2,985 metric tons, worth nearly $16 million. Lamb export volume through the first five months of 2026 dipped about 10% from the year-ago pace.

Florida Beef names former American Foods COO as Executive VP

Florida Beef Inc. has appointed Steve Van Lannen as executive vice president, adding a longtime meat industry executive to its leadership team.

In his new role, Van Lannen will lead key initiatives aimed at supporting the company's continued growth and operational development. Van Lannen joins Florida Beef with more than 17 years of experience at American Foods Group, where he most recently served as president and chief operating officer. During his career, he also held executive leadership positions with Coleman Natural Meats and Smithfield Foods.

Florida Beef said Van Lannen's industry experience and leadership background will help support the company's strategic objectives and future expansion efforts.

Many of the preceding items were taken from Meatingplace.com

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Tuesday, August 25 @ 12:30 a.m.
Hay Sale @ 11:30.

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Record beef prices won't budge much, but consumers might

Beef prices will remain near record highs this summer, but they will be more predictable than last summer even as New World screwworm (NWS) and oil prices add wrinkles, Texas A&M ag economists said.

The Texas A&M Food Price Predictor: Summer 2026 Meat Prices report comes as consumers show some resistance to beef prices and concerns around how factors like NWS will exacerbate the issue.

Texas A&M ag economists forecast price stability. The average retail price for ground beef is forecast to ease slightly, from about $6.71 per pound in May to $6.62 by October, they said. Chuck roast and sirloin steak are expected to stay flat or edge lower, and ribeye is projected to ease from around $18.81 per pound to $18.33.

Brisket, they said, is the one beef cut expected to increase, rising from about $5.83 to $5.95 per pound.

Nonetheless, the "biggest wild card" is NWS, which shut off imports of Mexican cattle and, while spreading in the US, has added management input costs that could trickle down to consumers.

"Now with New World screwworm, that's going to cause issues that we haven't seen yet," lead author Dr. Simon Somogyi said. "We could see higher prices without those historically steady imports from Mexico."

Oil prices are another potential wrinkle, with the cost of fertilizer, animal feed and transportation in question as the US-Iran conflict continuing to add uncertainty, the report said.

Meanwhile, another study, Blue Yonder's 2026 Consumer Grocery and Protein Trends survey, found that 55% of US consumers are buying less beef or have stopped entirely amid rising prices and NWS. Seventy-eight percent of more than 1,000 respondents said they are concerned the pest could further affect beef prices or availability.

At the same time, the survey found, one-third of consumers have increased their overall protein purchases in the past six months and are shifting to other proteins, with 44% buying more chicken, pork and seafood; 28% buying more canned or shelf-stable proteins; 22% turning to egg-based proteins; 18% opting for plant-based proteins, and 10% increasing purchases of protein powder substitutes.

The survey also found that 40% of beef buyers say they are purchasing beef less frequently, while others have switched to cheaper cuts (17%), largely stopped buying beef (11%), or completely stopped buying beef (4%) because of rising prices.

– Meatingplace.com

Judge certifies class actions in beef price fixing litigation

A federal judge has certified multiple class-action lawsuits accusing the nation's largest beef packers of conspiring to restrict beef supplies and inflate prices, allowing millions of consumers and thousands of commercial buyers to pursue antitrust claims collectively.

U.S. District Judge John Tunheim in Minnesota granted class certification for consumers, grocers, wholesalers, restaurants and caterers alleging that Cargill, JBS, National Beef and Tyson Foods coordinated to reduce beef supplies and raise prices between 2014 and 2020. The four companies account for more than 80% of U.S. beef sales and have denied any wrongdoing.

Court filings estimate potential damages at $13.79 billion for direct purchasers, $1.89 billion for restaurants and food-service businesses and more than $1.94 billion for consumers. Tunheim appointed Hagens Berman and Lockridge Grindal Nauen to lead the consumer class actions.

The judge declined to certify proposed classes seeking injunctive relief that would have required changes to the companies' business practices. In a separate ruling, he also denied or limited class certification for groups of cattle sellers pursuing related claims against the packers.

The litigation began in 2019 as part of a broader wave of antitrust lawsuits involving the beef, pork, poultry and turkey industries.

Several defendants have already reached settlements covering portions of the litigation. Tyson Foods agreed in January to pay $82.5 million to resolve claims brought by grocers and other commercial purchasers. Tyson also agreed to pay $55 million and Cargill $32.5 million to settle related consumer claims, while both companies denied liability.

– Meatingplace.com

Registration open for Master Gardener online course

Registration is open for the University of Missouri Extension Master Gardener fall 2026 online course. The 15-week class runs Aug. 23 to Dec. 24.

The online core training course is designed to provide in-depth horticultural knowledge, says MU Extension Master Gardener state coordinator Debi Kelly. The course includes presentations and weekly discussion forums.

Kelly and MU Extension Southeast Regional Director Sarah Denkler will teach the course.

To become an Extension Master Gardener, participants must complete the training and volunteer at least 30 hours in the first year and 20 hours per year afterward through MU Extension.

Gardening is an activity with many rewards, Kelly says.

"One of those rewards is the satisfaction of sharing your plant knowledge with others," says Denkler. The Extension Master Gardener program provides in-depth horticultural training to individuals who then help others learn about gardening and the environment, she says.

"The program's motto, 'helping others learn to grow,' emphasizes service to others as the program's main objective," Kelly says.

Participants will learn about the mission of the Extension Master Gardener program and gain a working knowledge of the fundamentals of gardening and its terminology. The course provides a foundation in plant structure and function, soils and plant nutrition, plant propagation, fruits and vegetables, herbaceous and woody plants, insects, plant diseases, landscape design, lawns and safe pesticides use.

Core training is the first step toward Extension Master Gardener certification. Local coordinators help online trainees find volunteer opportunities to meet the service requirement.

Since its inception in 2013, more than 5,000 people have gone through MU Extension online Master Gardener training. Extension Master Gardener programs are offered in every U.S. state and most Canadian provinces.

For details and registration, go to https://muext.us/EMG. Deadline to register is Aug. 23. The instructors ask participants to register using their name as they would like it to appear on the course completion certification. This cannot be changed after registration. Include your email address when registering.

For more information, contact Kelly at kellyd@missouri.edu or Denkler at denklers@missouri.edu.

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Special Monthly Cow Sale

Thursday, August 6 @ 6 p.m.

Early consignments

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Kruger
40 Blk or blkwf hfrs bred to easy Calving mead angus bulls, pelvic measured, hfrs wgh 1050, due to start sept 20 th

Burbank
15 Blk hfrs wgh 1150 1/2 are AI bred to Select Sire bull Compound, due Sept 23rd, half are bred natural to easy calf angus bulls due Oct 1 for 30 days, pelvic measured ready to go

BRED COWS

C-Bar
150 Blk or blkwf cows cows will be bred to Wheeler or Wall Street Angus bulls due to start August 20 th for 45 days, cows will be 3-4 yrs old have had every vaccination possible, LongRange wormer, Anaplasmosis, 2 rounds of tick vac, lepto, IBR, they have it all....

Utterback dispersal
45 Blk or blkwf cows 17 of these will be 3 yrs old and the rest 4-7 cows AI bred to Select Sire Angus bulls due August 30 th then cleaned up with Angus bulls for 45 days. The real deal here!

Turnkey
45 Blk or blkwf cows bred Blk bulls cows 3-5 yrs old due to start Sept 1st

Sherwood
40 Blk or blkwf cows cows bred Blk bulls 3-6 yrs old due to start August 20 th

Fox
40 Blk or blkwf cows cows bred Blk bulls due to start Sept 10 th

Harper
55 Blk or red angus cows cows 3-6 yrs old bred Blk due to start Sept 1 st

G and H
25 Blk or blkwf cows bred Blk bulls 3-4 yrs old due Sept 1

Hoffman
55 Blk or blkwf cows few red cows, they are 8-12 yrs old bred Wall Street Angus bulls due to start Sept. 1

Kemp
12 Blk or blkwf cows cows 8-12 yrs old bred registered Angus bulls due Sept 1

Zook
10 Blk or blkwf cows cows 4-5 yrs with 200 lb Blk calves by side.

These are very early listings, there will be many more by sale day.

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Miles McWhorther 573-263-3759.
Carson Poe 573-550-9133
Tyler Harris 573-220-2766
Craton Blettel 417-650-7688

BUCK RICH from page 3

oat pellets from Iowa. Other byproducts come from a local bakery waste plant. The silage this year is triticale with 10 percent winter peas for a protein bump. He's done sorghum in the past, but triticale does better.

He feeds a TMR (Total Managed Ration) on the north side of the ranch, which has most of the younger and older cattle, and more of a four-way commodity mix on the south side to their middle-aged cow herds.

Rich says his biggest challenge is probably disease. He's always fighting something – pinkeye, foot rot, mastitis, Anaplasmosis, but Theileria has been a huge deal the last five years.

The disease can cause late-term abortions, or it can cause a cow to be just extremely poor or die.

"It mimics Anaplasmosis, but not all the symptoms are identical," he notes.

By the time a cow shows symptoms, it's basically too late, and there are not yet any approved treatments or vaccinations. Some work is being done to get the drugs used in other countries approved in the U.S., but it's slow going.

He first became aware of a potential problem when a customer who had bought bred heifers from him reported abortions. Rich wasn't having any trouble, and more investigation revealed no other heifer customers were having a problem. Still, it worried him.

Because Anaplasmosis is endemic to his area, Rich always gives a vaccine, and anything under two that gets it is immune for life. The next year, he and everyone around him began having the same trouble.

He called in his vet, Tyler Thomas, who happens to be one of his best friends. The two work well together and talk all the time about what they're seeing in the cattle, and Rich trusts him completely.

The young vet went to work to try to solve the mystery. At the same time, a vet student at OSU was researching whether there might be a different strain of

Knowing he had ticks everywhere, Rich allowed the OSU students to come trap for ticks. He was willing to do whatever it took to find an answer and ultimately a treatment because by then he'd lost 15 percent of his cow herd in one year.

Anaplasmosis. They began pulling blood from all their cows that showed symptoms for the vet student to test.

Everything sent in came back regular Anaplasmosis. which is not uncommon since most cows in their area contract the disease at a young age and are carriers.

That left them at a loss until his vet called to say he'd figured it out.

"He said it's Theileria. I told him to spell it and say it slower."

It was a disease that Rich had never even heard of. This was in 2020 and 2021, and at that time, it was still mostly in the East. In fact, experts didn't think it had even yet crossed the Mississippi. Nonetheless, his vet was confident that's what it was. The problem was that he didn't know where he could send a sample for testing.

He eventually learned from his Boehringer rep, via a Kansas Boehringer rep, that Kansas State could run the test. But by then, he'd given all the blood samples to the OSU student, and none of his animals were then showing symptoms. He promised to call if an animal showed any suspicious signs.

A neighbor who had bought a bull out of New Mexico six months earlier called to say he thought he had Anaplasmosis. They got the sample and sent it to the Kansas lab. It was Anaplasmosis negative and Theileria positive. The bull being from a part of the country that Anaplasmosis is rare was a huge advantage to proving the symptoms were related to Theileria given the negative Anaplasmosis result and knowing it was contracted in Oklahoma, says Rich.

The OSU vet school got wind of the diagnosis and wanted to come trap ticks because at that point the Asian Longhorn tick was supposed to be the only carrier. That was why initially no one in Oklahoma believed it was Theileria because the Asian Longhorn was not supposed to be in Oklahoma.

Knowing he had ticks everywhere, Rich allowed the OSU students to come trap for ticks. He was willing to do whatever it took to find an answer and ultimately a treatment because by then he'd lost 15 percent of his cow herd in one year.

With hazmat suits, tick flags, and a cooler for storing the ticks in hand, the students arrived at the ranch and ask to be taken to the nearest place to where the Theileria case was found. He knew they would not find many ticks there because the cattle were treated for ticks. Sure enough, over four hours in, they collected one tick.

They then agreed to try where he'd suggested they go in the first place. They filled every vial they had and never found an Asian Longhorn tick. Nonetheless, Rich kept collecting ticks on his own and sending them in, and still no Asian Longhorns. The conclusion was that Theileria was also being carried by the native ticks.

Asian Longhorn ticks have since been found in Oklahoma, but they've gotten nowhere on a vaccine for cattle. It remains a huge concern for him.

Rich is a believer in technology because, in his mind, advancements must be made or one doesn't get to hang around in this business long. He's in the process of putting EIDs in all his cows because the Bangs tag is now an EID tag, but he's not yet incorporated everything that goes along with reading the tags and the various data logging programs.

He's also very interested in the virtual fencing concept, but he's in a watch-and-learn mode for the time being.

As for his biggest lesson thus far, Rich simply says, "mistakes are expensive, but that's just part of it."

What he loves most about the business depends on the day.

"I love building fence, I love building corrals, I love cleaning out a stock trailer. I like knowing that job is done," says Rich. "It's long hours for sure, but I like the freedom and I enjoy seeing what we've accomplished."

That aside, his absolute favorite part of the day-to-day is having his kids by his side. He and Stephanie have Tate, fi ve, and two-year-old twins, Mary and Lane.

"Yesterday we pulled CIDRs on 67 head, and my five-year-old handed me the heat detector strip and pushed almost every one of them into the chute. He loves it," says Rich."There are days it's work, but most of the time it's enjoyable, but it's always enjoyable when I get to see him have fun. The twins like flagging cows into the chute as well. They're obviously not as efficient as my five-year-old but they really like the idea of it."

A career in ranching is not one he thought he'd have, but one he's thankful for and an opportunity he's definitely not wasting by any means.

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TYSON from page 1

ing an annual bonus target equal to 300% of base salary and long-term incentive awards with an annual target value of $6 million. Half of the long-term incentive award will be granted as performance stock units and half as restricted stock units.

The agreement also provides Tyson with a one-time cash payment of $40 million. A portion of the award would be subject to repayment if Tyson voluntarily resigns without good reason or is terminated for cause before Sept. 30, 2029.

Tyson committed to remain employed by the company through the initial term, which runs through Sept. 30, 2029. The agreement will automatically renew for successive three-year terms unless terminated.

The company will continue providing Tyson with security services, reimbursement for premiums on an existing life insurance policy and annual supplemental retirement benefits of about $175,000. Tyson also will retain access to company aircraft under Tyson Foods' executive travel policy, including 300 hours of annual aircraft use for flights on which he is not a passenger.

If Tyson is terminated without cause or resigns for good reason, he would be eligible for severance benefits that could include cash payments, accelerated vesting of certain equity awards and lifetime company-provided medical coverage, subject to the terms of the agreement.

The contract includes non-compete provisions extending through at least Sept. 30, 2031, along with nonsolicitation and confidentiality requirements.

– Meatingplace.com

Drugs, avocados, beef and cartels

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

The worst part is now unfolding. Even if we opened the border today, the majority of the Mexican feeder cattle would not come back.

Before the U.S. Cattle Drive era, which started in post-Civil War Texas in 1865, our ag economy was driven by pork. Before Chicago became the Meat Packing Capitol of the nation, Cincinnati led the industry and was even referred to as Porkopolis. Then drovers brought 6 million head of cattle north to find feed and ultimately positioned the United States as a great resource producing nation. The trading posts along the trail positioned themselves in businesses as a by-product of the cattle business. Not only cattle owners found a way to make a living; it was the "community level impact" that is often overlooked both then and now.

The railroads hired Joseph McCoy to sell the idea to the cattle owners of Texas to form crews, round up the cattle and head them initially to Abilene, KS. From there they trailed the cattle farther west into Kansas and Nebraska. It required a whole team to make it work but innovators of the day found a way to get cattle from Texas to Chicago for processing where they put them in refrigerated rail cars to ship beef to the emerging population base on the East Coast.

Restrictions on these cross-country trail drives started making an appearance in about 1880. "A border" was created that changed everything for cattlemen, drovers, railroaders, meat packers, consumers and all the trading posts that had been created along the way. That restriction was initially referred to as "The Devils Rope." Today, we know it as Barbed Wire and it brought the free range to a halt. Everything changed for so many. Their first solution was to move the trail west but eventually the trails were entirely shut off.

The change that occurred to meet the needs and opportunities brought on by the fencing of the plains was that markets and packing plants began to go to where the cattle were fed. The first stockyard to open was in Kansas City, KS in 1871. Then Omaha, NE opened in 1884 to be followed in 1890 by the Fort Worth Stockyards and Oklahoma City in 1910. While one can certainly make the argument that trailing cattle 1,000 miles to market was not the most efficient way to do it, you can see that the market goes to where the supply is.

That brings me to the latest beef and border challenge called the New World Screwworm (NWS). In November 2024, Biden's USDA closed the border as the Screwworm had been located in Mexico, just north of the Darien Gap. Briefly, in early 2025, the Trump team opened the border only to implement a hard close in July 2025. With that roadblock in place, we still discovered NWS on June 3, 2026 in Zavala County, TX. As I am writing this, there are 32 cases of NWS - 18 active and 14 inactive, being reported by the USDA. One case is in New Mexico, the rest are in Texas.

The economic impact of the positive cases north of the border will be significant. Although it appears to me that NO ONE is talking about the economic impact that has and will continue to be felt by the "trading posts" along the path.

It is reported that for each Mexican feeder calf that comes into the United States, the local economy feels a $3500/head multiplier effect. We had been importing 1.4 million head of Mexican feeders annually. A quick bit of math tells me there is $5 billion taken out of the economy within the communities that are fortunate to be feeding cattle in the region.

We will also set a record in 2026 for boxed beef coming into the U.S. as the largest beef importer in the world at a cost of $6.1 billion. That breaks down to importing enough beef to offset only 2 months of Mexican feeder cattle. As a little side note, I have talked to multiple cattle owners who used to rent those imported feeders for ropings all over the country. Have you talked to guys organizing ropings or stock dog trials today? They will soon be a thing of the past if you can't get these Mexican feeder cattle.

The worst part is now unfolding. Even if we opened the border today, the majority of the Mexican feeder cattle would not come back. In talking to food companies along the border who are importing beef from Mexico's new and improved beef packing plants, the quality of product is now comparable to anything produced in the U.S. and lower in cost.

My question is this: if packing plants moved to cattle country in pre-1900, what is different now? The meat packers no longer have to import live cattle, hire Hispanics to work in the packing plants and deal with U.S. EPA or Department of Labor. The packers have moved to where the resources are and now we will be dependent on a foreign country for even more of our food!

If the United States wants to maintain the position we have held as the global leader in quality beef production, we need the people in the industry to call the shots not those in DC who are trying to kill our future. Beef will be just like avocados before long – with all the production taking place in Mexico and fully controlled by the cartels!

Editor's note: Trent Loos is a sixth generation United States farmer, host of the daily radio show, Loos Tales, and founder of Faces of Agriculture, a non-profit organization putting the human element back into the production of food. Get more information at www.LoosTales.com, or email Trent at trentloos@gmail.com.

Study: Rebuilding cattle herd critical to lower beef prices

A new study from a farming nonprofit takes a decidedly rancher-centered focus in its recommendations for lowering beef prices in the U.S.

Written by Sarah Carden of Farm Action, the study argues that beef packer consolidation has not only lowered rancher bargaining power and earnings, but moreover, that it heightened the industry's vulnerability to such external shocks as drought, feed/input costs, labor shortages, and supply chain disruptions.

"These pressures accelerated herd liquidation decisions and further reduced domestic cattle capacity," the report states.

With ground beef prices up 70% from six years ago, the report furthers a number of recommendations, including:

- A mandatory country-of-origin label to "ensure that demand for U.S.-raised cattle is reflected throughout the supply chain."
- A temporary federal tax credit program of $500 per retained breeding heifer.
- A temporary pasture restoration program for marginal cropland (and with the intention of cattle grazing, not row-crop planting).
- And an expansion of regional and independent meat processing infrastructure to "improve competition, reduce bottlenecks, increase marketing opportunities for producers, and create more resilient domestic supply chains."

The report is also clear that increasing import quotas from Argentina and other countries will not address the long-term, structural challenges behind current beef prices.

Aspects of the report resemble statements and policies from USDA. In early May, Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche and Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins reiterated their opposition to meat packer consolidation in a press conference that also featured American ranchers; similarly, Secretary Rollins addressed those topics in her January interview with Meatingplace, and also framed foreign ownership of U.S. packing operations as a threat to national security.

– Meatingplace.com

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Barns of Pike County

'Livery stables were big attractions for young boys of early Missouri'

By CAROLYN ALLEN
Special to The Advocate

Livery Stables were once a necessity in early Missouri towns. However, according to a 1945 study by the Historical Society of Missouri, mothers back then apparently warned young boys to stay away from the "evil atmosphere" of the barns! The study examined the influence of livery stables in Missouri, and the headline in the Louisiana Press Journal read, "Livery Stables were Big Attractions for Young Boys of Early Missouri." It also noted that despite – or possibly because of - these warnings, boys often hid in the livery stable hay lofts to check out this "evil atmosphere."

The essay stated that in the early days, livery stables were on a par with local taverns for seeing to the well-being of people and their horses. The barns rented rigs as well as renting and boarding horses, and people depended on the stables for transportation. Many livery stables ran hack and/or mail services between neighboring towns, and they often sold feed and even held livestock auctions at their barns.

Old newspapers indicate that local veterinarians often made rounds and had office hours at different livery stables. In addition, livery barns provided funeral transportation - maintaining hearses for that purpose. The stables also served as meeting places for mares and stallions, and old newspapers were filled with ads about specific stallions making the season at certain livery stables.

Pike County had its share of livery barns. A 1948 Louisiana Press Journal article reported that in 1893 the city had five livery and feed stables all on Third, Fourth and Fifth Streets. It noted that the Thornton Stable at 115 S. Fifth was the furthest from town. The article also pointed out that the current site of the Louisiana Public Library at Third and Tennessee Streets had once been the site of a livery barn. It seems that by 1904 the neighborhood was becoming a fashionable area, and residents did not care for the livery barn being part of their neighborhood. They joined forces to vote the Third St. location in as the new building site for the library, and

LIVERY BARN: This picture of the McDannold Livery Barn is from People Places and Pikers.

the livery stable was bought for $3,000.

Other stables in Louisiana at one time or another were Goodman's Livery and Feed, Stark's Livery Stable, H. Laughry's, City Stables, Star Stables, Guy Richards Livery Barn, Joe Zook's Livery Stable, McCune Brothers Livery and McDannold Livery Barn just to name a few.

The McDannold Livery Barn was on South Third St. and North Carolina where the Pike Medical Clinic now stands. Apparently, it almost burned down in 1910, and the Louisiana Press Journal had an interesting take on the fire. It said, "The election was so hot that it set fire to McDannolds livery barn!" Fortunately, Ernest Sizemore, who lived next door saw the fire and sounded the alarm. The barn, all stock and all rigs were saved. Unfortunately, other livery stables in the county weren't as lucky and fire was a constant threat.

Pike County newspapers reported that the Guy Richards Livery Barn on 4th St. in Louisiana burned in 1922. David Wisdom's livery stable in Cyrene was destroyed by fire in 1889. The R. W. McDannold and A. J. Lattimer barns burned in a fire in Bowling Green in 1882 while Carroll Wisdom lost a livery stable and horses in Bowling Green in 1903. The LaRue Livery barn in Clarksville was destroyed by fire in 1907.

Homer LaRue wrote an article about the LaRue barn in Clarksville for the 1940 Louisiana Press Journal. He noted that the LaRues bought the livery stable in 1904 from W. H.Stark. He said that back then a livery needed about 20 horses to carry on the business successfully. In 1907, they lost the barn to fire but rebuilt the same year and continued in the livery business until 1912 when they began trading horses and mules exclusively. During the war years, he said they sometimes had around 100 horses and mules at the barn, which gives some idea of its size. He sold the property in 1940 to Milton Duvall to build a tourist camp.

Some other livery stables in Clarksville included J. L. Carroll Livery Feed & Sale Stables, Carver and Wisdom, Scholl and Buchanan, and Major, Kissinger & Co. Eolia had the Charles Patterson Stable, Henry Hubbard Livery and Shields Livery Barn at different times. Frankford had Steele's Livery Stable as well as John B. Starks on the street leading to the depot. John D. Brown had a livery stable in Ashley in the 1800's, and M. A. Farmer built a livery barn in Farmer in 1885. A note in the 1891 Bowling Green Times announced a new livery stable being started in Curryville in the old Reuben Hendrix livery stable at the west end of town. The newspaper reminded readers that Curryville already had a livery stable and suggested that two stables in such a small town might not be profitable for either!

Among the livery stables in Bowling Green were Emerson Livery Stable, W.N. Gibbs Livery, A. J. Lattimer Livery Stable, J. R. McAlister's, Tinker Brothers, S. P. Hamlett Livery and the R. W. McDannold Livery Stable. Wisdom & Taylor advertised a livery business in 1913 on Main St. east of the courthouse.

As horses gave way to cars, many of the old barns became garages or car dealerships or were torn down completely in the name of progress. For example, Frank Chappel leased the Wisdom & Taylor barn in Bowling Green for his Ford dealership, which later became Lovell Motor Co. The 1921 Bowling Green Times even reported that the old livery barn in Curryville was being torn down and a building put up to accommodate a "moving picture show!" In a short article entitled, "Exit Old Dobbin" the 1929 Louisiana Press Journal reported that all the horses were gone from the McCune Brothers Livery on S. Third St. by May of 1929.

Livery stables certainly had their place in Pike County's history. The Louisiana Press Journal of 1933 might have said it best when it reported that "sages of the town gathered together to solve the momentous questions of the day" at livery stables. It concluded that if you couldn't remember those times, you had missed something in life.

Mothers back then might disagree!

No renewal: White House forces USMCA talks with neighbors

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The White House followed through recently on a threat to force American agriculture's largest export markets to the table for possible changes to the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

The agreement negotiated in 2020 during President Donald Trump's first term maintained the North American free trade zone and was up for a July 1 joint review renewal for another 16 years.

Broad coalitions of ag industry groups in all three countries advocated for a 16-year renewal leading up to Wednesday's deadline, including the Meat Institute, which called USMCA "the world's gold-standard trade agreement."

Mexico is by far the largest market for U.S. pork and poultry exports and the No. 3 destination for beef last year. Canada was the No. 2 buyer of U.S. poultry in 2025 and ranked fourth for both pork and beef. Combined, the two neighbors bought $8 billion of U.S. meat exports in 2025, more than a third of the $23.3 billion total sold into foreign markets.

The National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) said Wednesday that it would have preferred "immediate renewal" of USMCA, which "provides certainty in those markets and ensures the value of pork exports remains strong."

Amid chronically tight U.S. beef supplies, Canada was also the No. 2 source of beef imports, trailing only Australia and followed by Mexico as the third-largest source of beef. Combined, the USMCA partners sold $5.3 billion worth of beef into the U.S. last year out of $14.3 billion in total imports.

In a virtual meeting Wednesday, the Trump administration notified the Mexican and Canadian governments of the decision.

"The United States did not agree to renew the USMCA in its current form," U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said. "As a result, the USMCA is not renewed. The United States will continue to engage with Mexico and Canada to address the Agreement's shortcomings and our trade deficits with these countries."

The treaty remains in effect for 10 years, with further annual reviews where 16-year renewal or changes can be agreed. Separately, any member can also withdraw on six month's notice.

Trump last month said that he wanted trade surpluses with Canada and Mexico.

Greer said that talks with Mexico are scheduled for late July. Relations with Canada have been especially tense and negotiations stalled.

NPPC commended Greer for "staying at the negotiating table with Mexico and Canada to make sure U.S. pork's market access is preserved."

Total ag exports to Mexico were worth $30.6 billion last year, followed closely by Canada at $28.2 billion. The two neighbors together bought four times more U.S. ag products than the entire European Union, which was a distant third.

"Amidst the many uncertainties that come with pork production, trade has remained a bright spot for U.S. pork producers, whose neighbors to the north and south represent a third of all U.S. pork exports," NPPC said in a media statement. "Ensuring USMCA remains intact is vital to continuing the mutually beneficial trading relationships U.S. pork enjoys with both Canada and Mexico."

– Meatingplace.com

$2M county-owned beef processing facility one step closer to breaking ground

A new processing facility owned by Virginia's Tazewell County reached a critical point in its development.

According to a report from WVVA, the county's board of supervisors approved the $2 million facility for Springville's Bluestone Industrial Park. The plant will employ an estimated 15 workers and is intended to offer local processing capacity for the 27,500 cattle that graze in the county.

"We have a lot of pasture land in Tazewell County, and we have a lot of beef cattle in Tazewell County," County Administrator Eric Young told WVVA. "Right now, they have to go very far away to get processed."

The facility's $2-million construction cost is funded through Virginia Tobacco Commission and Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority grants. Blue Ridge Butchery, which is currently based 56 miles east in Dublin, Va., will lease the 7,500-square-foot facility at a discount, and will relocate full time to Springville to process the livestock.

– Meatingplace.com

Less beef in USDA's 2026-2027 forecast

The July update to the USDA's forecast for meat production lowered the outlook for beef output this year and next while hiking its expectation for the chicken industry by a comparable amount.

The World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) projected 2026 beef output at nearly 25.3 billion pounds, a reduction of 150 million pounds, or 0.6%, compared to last month's forecast. The 2027 outlook was trimmed by 185 million pounds, or 0.7%, to 25.2 billion pounds of beef. Next year's projection would be down 3.1% from 2025, amid relentlessly tight cattle supplies.

In its WASDE analysis, the USDA's Office of the Chief Economist attributed the lower 2026 beef output to "a slower rate of steer and heifer slaughter through the end of the year" along with lighter dressed weights through the spring and summer.

The report predicted this year's pork production at nearly 28 billion pounds, a marginal reduction of 40 million pounds from last month's estimate. USDA trimmed its 2027 forecast by 155 million pounds, or 0.5%, to just over 28.1 billion pounds, based on expected heavier dressed weights despite a smaller pig crop. That would be 2% above 2025 production.

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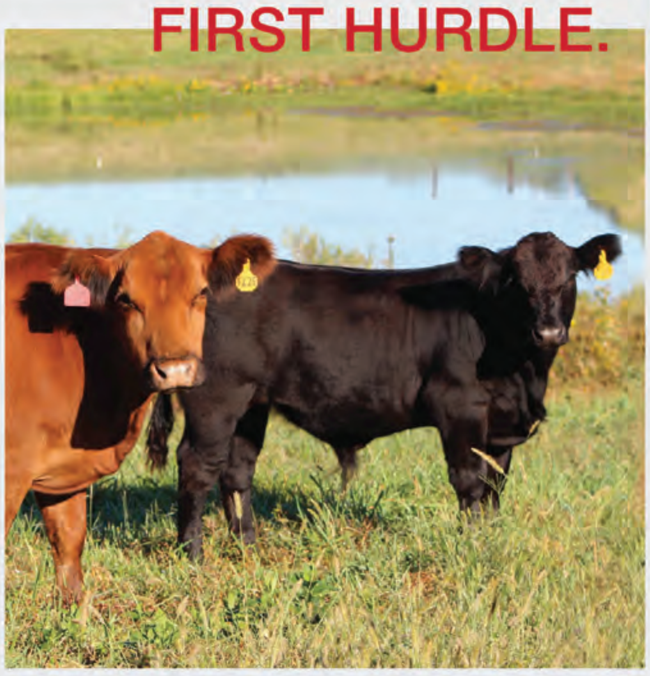

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Livestock News & Notes...............

Mizzou field days set for sites across state

Agricultural producers are invited to save the dates for upcoming events across the state in which extension specialists and researchers from the University of Missouri share the latest findings, highlight best practices and address local emerging issues.

From August through October, these events offer opportunities to see research in action and connect with extension specialists. Field day organizers say these events help bridge the gap between academic research and real-world application by bringing applied research directly to producers and communities.

Events are hosted at Extension and Education Centers, managed by MU Extension, and at Research, Extension and Education Centers, which are administered by the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. Together, these locations showcase research and educational resources that support Missouri agriculture.

In addition, some of the centers will invite local high school students to career exploration/youth ag days in the fall to showcase agricultural careers and research.

2026 field days and festivals

Thursday, Aug. 6 (7 a.m.-1 p.m.): Northern Missouri Research, Extension and Education Center field day at Greenley Memorial Research Farm near Novelty.

Monday, Aug. 10 (7:30 a.m.): Field day at Fisher Delta Research, Extension and Education Center, Portageville.

Tuesday, Aug. 25 (7:30 a.m.): Field day at Graves-Chapple Extension and Education Center, Rock Port.

Thursday, Aug. 27 (4-7 p.m.): Tomato festival at Jefferson Farm & Garden, Columbia. Sample dozens of varieties of tomatoes and peppers, hear from tomato experts and get growing tips to improve your next harvest.

Thursday, Sept. 3: Field day at Hundley-Whaley Extension and Education Center, Albany.

Thursday, Sept. 17: Career exploration and field day at Southwest Research, Extension and Education Center, Mount Vernon.

Saturday, Sept. 26 (10 a.m.-3 p.m.): Showcase at South Farm in Columbia. Visit Mizzou's local outdoor laboratory and learn about programs in the Mizzou College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. Includes tastings, demonstrations, hands-on activities, baby farm animals and more.

Friday, Oct. 2 (9 a.m.-1 p.m.): Producer field day at Wurdack Extension and Education Center, Cook Station. Participants will tour the farm, view demonstrations and engage extension specialists concerning agriculture practices relevant to the Ozarks.

Saturday, Oct. 10 (10 a.m.-3 p.m.): Missouri Chestnut Festival at the Horticulture and Agroforestry Research Farm, New Franklin. Learn about, sample and purchase Missouri specialty crop products like roasted chestnuts; tour the historic 1819 Hickman House; enjoy live music and kids' activities; and learn about agroforestry in the beautiful Missouri river hills.

Get a full year of home delivery of The Advocate for just $20. See page 6 for details.

MU Extension to host grazing systems field day

GRAVOIS MILLS, Mo. – University of Missouri Extension specialists and producers will talk about diversifying grazing systems, silvopasture, native forages and using regenerative practices at a Diversified Grazing Systems Field Day.

The event is 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, Sept. 18, at Land of the Osages Research Farm near Gravois Mills.

Panelists include Margaret Chamas, who operates a flock of dairy goats for grazing pastures at Storm Dancer Farm in Smithville; Kaitlyn Dozer, part of the MU Center for Regenerative Agriculture and a leading expert on grazing collars for livestock; producer Harry Cope of Cope Grass Farm, a fifth-generation diversified farm dedicated to sustainable and regenerative grazing. Cope, a Leopold Conservation Award winner, will walk attendees through the process of going from pasture to timber.

During a wagon tour, attendees will hear from Gina Beebe of the MU Center for Agroforestry, who will talk about warm- and cool-season grass pastures. MU Extension state forage and grazing specialist Harley Naumann will discuss grasses that promote healthy, diversified grazing systems. Elizabeth Hamilton of Hamilton Native Seeds will talk about the benefits of native plants in grass pastures.

Beebe and Olga Romanova, also with the Center for Agroforestry, will talk about ways silvopasture designs can be used to improve grazing systems.

The event ends with lunch and an exhibitor fair.

Register at CenterforAgroforestry.org/2026grazing.

Sometimes nature needs a little help

PORTLAND, Mo. – University of Missouri Extension and several partners invite the public to a forest and wildlife field day Sept. 12 near Portland, Mo. This free workshop will be held on the property of Bill and Margie Haag in Callaway County from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

"The Haag family takes great pride in their woods," says Brian Schweiss, MU Extension sustainable forestry specialist. "Through timber sales, they generate revenue and improve conditions for wildlife. They also actively manage open land for wildlife using prescribed fire and invasive species control."

A driving tour of the Haag property will demonstrate strategies for healthy trees and wildlife. Attendees will see young and old patches of woods and hear about the different wildlife that use them. Professionals from the Missouri Department of Conservation, representatives from conservation organizations and consulting foresters will be available to answer questions and provide insight on management practices such as thinning, prescribed fire and invasive species control.

Schweiss says the tour is a great resource for landowners wanting to see how forests can be managed to benefit wildlife.

The event is free to the public, but registration is required. Register at https://muext.us/BMHFD by Sept. 8. Lunch will be provided.

For questions, contact Brian Schweiss at schweissb@missouri.edu or Tom Westhoff at westhoff@windstream.net.

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Italian ryegrass is new weed to watch in Missouri

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Italian ryegrass is another new weed to watch in Missouri, says University of Missouri Extension state weed scientist Kevin Bradley. Also called annual ryegrass, Australian rye grass or Australian rye, the grass is commonly used for erosion control, as a quick-growing cover crop and as forage.

This quick-growing plant is becoming hard to kill and increasingly resistant to herbicides, Bradley says.

Bradley and colleagues in Mississippi, Kentucky, Tennessee and Arkansas are warning producers about its resistance to products like glyphosate and Group 1 herbicides, including clethodim, quizalofop and others.

It can become invasive, especially in corn, soybean, winter wheat and other small grain crops. It can reduce corn yields by 65%, cotton yields by 85% and soybean yields by 37% in field trials, according to Italian Ryegrass Management in Soybeans, published by the Take Action Herbicide-Resistance Management group.

Italian ryegrass germinates in as little as 6-10 days when daytime temperatures range from 50-86 F. It grows vigorously in winter and early spring, becoming a fierce competitor for nutrients, water and sunlight. It escapes cultivation, growing along roadsides, in lawns and in crops, making control more difficult.

While similar to perennial ryegrass, this species is an annual with seed that can germinate at multiple time points in the spring. It also grows taller – 2 to 3 feet high – in a bunch with numerous long, narrow and stiff leaves near its base. Leaves are glossy and sometimes have a purple tint.

It thrives in dark, rich soils in regions with mild climates. It does not withstand hot, dry weather and severe winters, according to the USDA, but it can tolerate wet soils with good surface drainage.

Weed scientists across the United States have documented Italian ryegrass with resistance to up to six different herbicide modes of action, including glyphosate, glufosinate, paraquat and ACCase inhibitors (Group 1 herbicides). Resistance to two or three modes of action is not uncommon in the U.S., Europe and South America.

Recommended management strategies include:

Crop and herbicide rotation.

Narrow row spacing, which allows crop to develop canopies to slow its growth as a cover crop.

Fall tillage followed by early burndown with at least two effective postemergence herbicide modes of action.

For more information, download "Italian Ryegrass Management" at https://muext.us/MX1128.

Find additional resources at https://growiwm.org/take-action-home.

Hot weather and cattle in ponds and streams increase foot rot risk

"With hot weather in full swing and cattle standing in ponds and streams, producers should watch for foot rot," says Patrick Davis, University of Missouri Extension livestock field specialist.

Foot rot can limit cattle mobility, reduce performance, increase treatment costs and hurt profitability. Davis will discuss foot rot, including prevention and treatment options.

"Fusobacterium necrophorum enters damaged skin and hoof tissue between the claws and works with other bacteria, including Porphyromonas levii, Staphylococcus aureus, Escherichia coli and Trueperella pyogenes, to cause infections that lead to foot rot," says Davis. Prevotella intermedia can also contribute to the disease.

These infections typically cause lameness, along with swelling and redness in the interdigital tissue and nearby coronary band. Necrotic lesions may also develop, often producing a foul odor. If left untreated, the infection can spread, causing swelling around both digits and the hoof hairline and potentially separating the claw. Foot rot can also reduce appetite, milk production and weight gain.

"Factors that contribute to foot rot include moisture, injury, disease and nutrient deficiencies," says Davis. There are preventive steps producers can take to reduce foot rot incidence.

Manage the environment. Limit cattle exposure to manure, mud and wet conditions. Fence cattle out of ponds and streams. Provide shade to reduce heat stress so cattle are less likely to seek out water sources.

Because Missouri cattle herds often face fescue toxicosis, which contributes to heat stress, managing the environment to reduce fescue toxicosis can also reduce cattle's need to cool off in water.

Provide a balanced nutrition program. Trace minerals such as zinc, selenium and copper help maintain skin and hoof wall integrity. Deficiencies may increase the risk of foot rot, so cattle producers should offer a sound nutrition program with free-choice access to these trace minerals.

Proper hoof care. Select structurally sound animals to reduce foot problems. Foot scoring can help evaluate soundness by assessing claw set and foot angle, including pastern and heel length. Both measures are scored from 1 to 9, with an ideal range of 3 to 7.

For more information, see MU Extension guide G2093, Screening Criteria for Show-Me-Select Replacement Heifers. Evaluate the herd regularly, and cull animals that fall outside these guidelines. Also, limit time on abrasive or sharp surfaces such as rocks, gravel and concrete to reduce hoof irritation that can lead to foot rot.

"Have a treatment plan in place if lameness occurs," says Davis. Treat foot rot promptly to reduce hoof damage and performance losses. Veterinarians can help identify symptoms, develop treatment plans and guide implementation. Consider the following when dealing with foot rot:

Treatment. Injectable and feed antibiotics, such as oxytetracyclines, can help treat foot rot. These require veterinary approval, so work with a veterinarian and use as directed. Clean the foot and apply a topical antimicrobial treatment as directed by your veterinarian.

Hoof trimming. In severe cases, hoof trimming may be needed to reshape the hoof and remove necrotic tissue to support healing. A veterinarian or trained professional should perform this procedure.

Isolation and recovery. Isolate the animal in a clean, dry pen to support healing and help prevent disease spread. A veterinarian may recommend pain relief. Improvement should appear within three to four days; if not, consult your veterinarian for further treatment. Animals with recurring foot rot should be culled.

For more information, contact Davis at davismp@missouri.edu or 417-276-3313, or reach out to your local MU Extension livestock field specialist.

Colorado city fears fiscal impacts as Cargill plant closure drags on

City officials in Fort Morgan, Colo., are bracing for budget cuts and job losses as Cargill's local beef packing plant remains idle.

In a council meeting on Tuesday night, as reported by local media, City Manager Brent Nation said the city should prepare for a 15% budget reduction in 2027.

Cargill imposed a lockout in late May after the Teamsters union representing 1,700 workers rejected the company's proposal for a new bargaining agreement.

A spokesperson for Cargill told Meatingplace the company has continued engagement with the union, most recently June 30, but there has been no breakthrough.

Asked about the city's budget planning, the spokesperson offered the following statement:

"We understand this situation is difficult for employees, their families and the broader Fort Morgan community. A lockout was not the outcome Cargill wanted, but after months of bargaining and continued uncertainty around the union's threatened work stoppage, we made the difficult decision to help ensure facility, employee and food safety.

"We remain committed to reaching an agreement that supports employees and protects the long-term future of the Fort Morgan facility. We are open to continued discussions on the different ways to structure the overall economic package and resume operations as soon as possible."

Nation told the City Council to act as though the plant will not reopen and be prepared to make cuts that would absorb the estimated 15% of municipal revenue derived from the facility and its operations. He said the potential budget cuts would likely include city staff layoffs. "I have to anticipate that Cargill may not reopen that facility," he is quoted as saying.

Fort Morgan, population 11,600, is about 80 miles northeast of Denver.

Union-led lawsuit seeks to stop 'illegal' USDA reorganization

A new filing in a lawsuit led by the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) seeks a preliminary injunction to stop USDA's reorganization plan and "mass staff departures" they argue would reduce the agency's ability to fulfill its essential functions.

The supplemental complaint filed in federal court in San Francisco comes in response to recent USDA actions rolling out a plan to relocate more than half of its 4,600 employees out of Washington DC to new "hubs" across the country. In April, for example, USDA announced FSIS would relocate some two-thirds its National Capital Region workforce to "mission-critical" locations, including a new food safety center in Iowa and a science center in Georgia.

This, the coalition of plaintiffs note, despite a lack of approval from Congress, which rejected USDA's bid for authorization through the budget process for fiscal 2026 and directed the agency to not take actions restructuring the agency or downsizing staff without the legislature's approval.

"No administration gets to break the law to dismantle an agency that feeds this nation," AFGE National President Everett Kelley said in a news release.

The lawsuit includes a broad coalition of nationwide labor unions, nonprofit organizations, and cities and counties from across the country. The new complaint adds three additional plaintiffs, bringing the total to 31.

USDA officials contend the moves put decision-making "closer to the farmers, ranchers, and producers" the agency serves, reduces bureaucratic layers and reduces costs.

– Meatingplace.com

Beef country hit hard by loss of manufacturing jobs: report

A new analysis from Creighton University has underscored just how damaging plant closures have been to food manufacturing in Nebraska.

According to the Mid-America Business Conditions Index, which assesses numerous economic metrics in a nine-state region from Minnesota to Arkansas, food processing firms cut 8,000 jobs in the last 12 months — 3.4% of the industry's employment. Such jobs made up more than half of the 15,000 overall manufacturing jobs lost in the region, which also encompasses Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

Nebraska accounted for an outsized share of processing job losses — 48.9% of the total — a fact that is likely no surprise to Meatingplace readers. More than 3,200 workers lost their jobs when Tyson's Lexington, Neb., beef facility closed in January. Late last month, American Foods Group announced the closure of the Skylark Meats facility in Omaha; altogether, University of Nebraska-Lincoln analysis anticipates the Lexington closure to impact 7,000 jobs along the supply chain and cost Nebraska $3.3 billion.

In an interview with Nebraska Public Media, Creighton University Professor Ernie Goss, one of the report's authors, stated that the Trump administration's tariffs have further challenged the region's food manufacturers; indeed, sales through 2026's first quarter were down $200 million from 2025 — $75 million less just to China.

"Some of it, and maybe even a high proportion of it, is due to our retaliation and trade factors," Goss told NPM.

– Meatingplace.com

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Discussing American exceptionalism, NWS issues, USMCA and China trade

By STEVE DITTMER
Executive Vice President
Agribusiness Freedom Foundation

July 4th has gotten to be a "Huge" day in President Trump's second term. Last year it was the signing of the One Big Beautiful bill that has jump started the economy, begun overhauling our tax code and begun reducing regulations.

This year's holiday featured multiple Trump's speeches pointing out American exceptionalism, our economy built on free market capitalism and the flourishing of talent and wealth derived from individual liberty and the freedom of groups in America. It was capped off by easily the biggest, most spectacular 360-degree fireworks display in history. Turns out, even with computer technology, in takes 40 minutes to set off 800,000 plus fireworks.

Never in history has any form of government produced the standard of living that Americans enjoy. That view was bolstered by World Cup visitors from all over the world awed by the bounty in America's supermarkets and shopping malls. Such tremendous success is fact, in the face of the tall tales the Marxist/socialists/communists promise in attracting gullible voters.

It is another stark indictment of our school systems that so many young people seem to have no knowledge of not only the failures of such systems all over the world, but the death and destruction visited upon the people trapped in those systems.

And if that wasn't enough, the Democrats imported millions of illegals actually fleeing such regimes but counting on American bounty to provide them a better life here than the leftist one that has failed them.

On the New World Screwworm (NWS) front, the plant in Mexico that USDA and the Mexican government were working together to convert from a facility breeding fruit flies to producing sterile screwworm flies has begun operating. That will give USDA another source of flies to disperse in Texas to combat the NWS foothold there. The plant is targeting 30 million flies/week by mid-July -- using the new Novo technology that only produces male flies -- and 100 million/week at full operation.

It is another stark indictment of our school systems that so many young people seem to have no knowledge of not only the failures of such systems all over the world, but the death and destruction visited upon the people trapped in those systems.

We haven't heard any speculation -- although next week's NCBA Midyear meeting may provide some -- but since there have been no cattle coming in from Mexico for months, cattle were not the source of the NWS infestation in the U.S. By logic, there would be no reason to continue restricting importation of feeder cattle from Mexico.

For months this spring surveillance fly traps along the border hadn't caught any screw worm flies. That also boosts the position that the flies have come in on wildlife.

As for speculation, there is some regarding how the NWS has moved through Mexico so quickly after decades of barriers keeping it out. Shutting down the border has certainly crimped the business model of the drug cartels. The theory is that they are buying cattle on the cheap in Guatemala -- not concerned with import restrictions from that country with NWS -- feeding and processing the cattle, making some money but more importantly, laundering money from illicit businesses that way. In effect, that moved NWS from Guatemala on through Mexico.

That's doable for now because Mexico can export beef to the U.S. but Mexico has closed the border for U.S. meat coming in to Mexico. So the cartels can now dominate the domestic market in Mexico, too.

The Trump Administration has not shocked anyone by declining the option of renewing the USMCA agreement as is. Anyone knows President Trump is not going to give up a chance to improve upon a deal. There was support from both sides of the political aisle to take the opportunity to improve the agreement. They had planted a feature in the deal that gave them that option, according to USTR Jamieson Greer. The current provisions of the agreement will continue as negotiations are conducted.

Some firms are not happy with the uncertainty any changes in the deal would bring, Greer told Larry Kudlow on his Fox Business TV show. The Administration takes the view that manufacturing in the U.S., sourcing parts from America, using labor from the U.S. and having duty-free access to the American consumer should be sufficient certainty for businesses.

We've seen commentary that the second half of the year might bring much more export interest from China. Our plants have been recertified, so plants will be able to ship to China. But the key is that China has put many countries on import quotas. Many of the key countries supplying China are close to or have filled their quotas for this year, meaning that the only deterrent to U.S. exports will be price.

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Area livestock markets

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

Other locations

- **A&S Printing** Monroe City, MO
- **Abel's/McDonald's** Bowling Green, MO
- **Agriservices of Brunswick** Brunswick, MO
- **American Bank of Missouri** Wellsville, MO; Middletown, MO; Montgomery City, MO
- **Angell's Western Wear** Centralia, MO
- **Bank of Montgomery County** Montgomery City, MO
- **Bowling Green Tractor** Bowling Green, MO
- **Bowling Green Veterinary Clinic** Bowling Green, MO
- **Central Elevator** Silex, MO
- **C & S Grocery** Harrisburg, MO
- **Dawson's Store** Thompson, MO
- **Dearwester Grain Services** Mt. Sterling, IL; Golden, IL; Carthage, IL
- **Eastern Missouri Commission Co.** Bowling Green, MO
- **Farmers Cooperative** Ewing, MO
- **Farmers Cooperative Services** New London, MO
- **Farmers Cooperative Services** Palmyra, MO
- **Farmer's Elevator & Exchange** Monroe City, MO
- **FCS Financial** Columbia, MO; Hannibal, MO
- **Feeders Grain, Inc.** Bowling Green, MO
- **Fish Hook Market** Baylis, IL
- **Grotjan Conoco Station** New Franklin
- **FarmersCo-op** St.Peters, MO
- **Hannibal Tractor** Hannibal, MO
- **Hatton Vermeer Sales** Auxvasse, MO
- **Hilty's Meats** Bowling Green, MO
- **HNB Bank** Bowling Green, MO; Hannibal, MO; Monroe City, MO; Perry, MO
- **Jones Brothers AgriServices** La Monte, MO
- **Jonesburg Grain Co.** Jonesburg, MO
- **Josephville Meat Processing** Wentzville, MO
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- **Liberty Feed Mill** Liberty, IL
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- **Martinsburg Farmers Elevator** Martinsburg, MO
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- **Missouri Cattleman's Association** Columbia, MO
- **Missouri Valley MFA** Alma, MO; Higginsville, MO
- **Monroe County Abstract & Title** Paris, MO
- **Monroe County Co-op** Paris, MO
- **Montgomery City Grain** Montgomery City, MO
- **Moscow Feed and Grain** Moscow Mills, MO
- **New Haven Farm & Feed** New Haven, MO
- **People's Savings Bank** Hermann, MO; Montgomery City, MO; New Florence, MO; New Haven, MO; New Melle, MO; Rhineland, MO
- **Pike Feeds** Pittsfield, IL
- **Prairie Home Coop** Prairie Home, MO
- **Quinn Farm Supply** Monroe City, MO
- **Rickett's Farm Service of Cairo** Cairo, MO
- **Ricketts Farm Service** Salisbury, MO; Shelbina, MO
- **Rural King** Wentzville, MO
- **Ruyle's Angus** Roodhouse, IL
- **Scheidt Bros. LLC** California, MO
- **Shelton Seed** Centralia, MO
- **Shetler Feed** Clark, MO
- **State Farm Insurance** Centralia, MO; Vandalia, MO
- **Straatmann Feed** New Melle, MO
- **Strattmann Feed and Transfer** Labadie, MO
- **Twillman Feed** Fulton, MO; Mexico, MO
- **USA Market News Office** Country Club, MO
- **Windmill Ridge** Shelbyville, MO

Digging Deeper....

By JUSTIN ANGELL

Obviously, it's very much summertime now. The pool is getting plenty of use and we seem to be gathering extra maggots (energetic children) this summer. As far as I'm concerned, the more the merrier.

Summer is also fair season. I've never really enjoyed fair going because I never participated when I was growing up. So, as a result I have no baseline for appreciating the skills and the months of effort involved each of the projects demand for success.

I will tell you that I am now a big advocate of fairs and 4-H. Looking back, I can see where all of my children benefited from 4-H and how Savannah's daughter little Paisley has grown and maturated immensely this summer with the responsibilities of her 4-H projects. Congratulations if you are a 4-H parent. Enjoy!

So apparently the once in a lifetime vacation to Italy is still yielding adventure. It seems that the trip started a series of contributing events which culminated with Miss Kelly ending up in the hospital last week with pulmonary embolism in both lungs and blood clotting in her legs.

I feel bad now because as I walked behind her in Santorini, Italy as we were struggling to get up and down the hundreds of stairs, we walked daily, I would sing a little song about how "the Ol' Gray Mare ain't what she used to be"

Compared to three years ago, I feel great and am blessed by getting stronger. I had an old sale barn guy tell me one time, "if you ain't got your health, you ain't got nothing." I guess the point of the story is the cattle market is struggling right now, but if you have your health, you've got all you need.

I'll keep it short this month. Enjoy the end of the summer. Talk to you again soon. Come see me at the Auction.

Litton's legacy to be celebrated August 2 in Chillicothe, Mo.

The life and legacy of the late Jerry Litton will be celebrated Sunday, Aug. 2, at the Litton Agri-Science Learning Center in Chillicothe, Mo., his hometown.

Planned to coincide with the 50th anniversary of his untimely death on Aug. 3, 1976, the public event will honor Litton for his accomplishments as an innovative cattle producer, passionate political leader and staunch advocate for farmers, rural development and agricultural education. He and his family were killed in a plane crash, just after he won the 1976 Democratic primary for the U.S. Senate. At the time, Litton was serving as a two-term U.S. Congressman from Missouri's Sixth District.

The "Litton Legacy of Dreams" event, planned from 2 to 5 p.m., will also showcase the Litton Agri-Science Learning Center, a multi-purpose campus planned and built by his parents, the late Charley and Mildred Litton, and by the Jerry Litton Family Memorial Foundation.

"Jerry was always ahead of the time, whether it be in the family's Charolais cattle business, the U.S. Congress, and his 'Dialogue with Litton' program, where each month he brought a well-known government leader to the Sixth District of Missouri to discuss national issues," said Ed Turner, president of the Litton Foundation who served as campaign manager and chief of staff in Litton's Congressional campaigns. "It seems fitting that we mark the 50 years since his death with a commemoration of what he accomplished in his brief life and what has been accomplished in his name since then."

The Aug. 2 celebration will include tours of the Chillicothe campus, a look at the Litton memorabilia collection, and a program featuring a video and remarks from special guests. Refreshments will also be served. The event is open to the public, but guests are asked to RSVP online at littonfoundation.com, where more information can be found.

USDA moving forward with massive reorganization, despite pushback

The USDA Rural Development Mission Area recently announced that it is moving forward with its declared intention to move nearly 3,000 members of its workforce out of the Washington DC area in order to "modernize operations, increase accountability, and ensure federal resources are positioned where they can deliver the greatest impact."

This, despite most of the agency's workforce expressing opposition to the move.

The recent plan update comes nearly a year after the Trump Administration first announced the reorganization plan.

In July 2025, Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins said the USDA would move some 2,600 employees in Washington D.C. to five regional hubs in Raleigh, N.C.; Kansas City, Mo., Indianapolis; Fort Collins, Colo.; and Salt Lake City. The aim, as Rollins outlined, was to match USDA's workforce with available financial resources, to bring USDA "closer to its customers," reduce bureaucracy and consolidate redundant support functions.

The USDA's Rural Development wing maintains of the largest field-based presences in the federal government, with more than 400 offices throughout rural America, per the agency.

The new announcement reiterated the goals of the reorg: "aligning workforce size with available resources, relocating resources closer to customers, eliminating excess management layers, and consolidating support functions.

Yet, the plan has met with substantial pushback from the USDA employees' unions, which have lobbied Rollins to reconsider the move.

Indeed, 82% of the public respondents during a comment period viewed the reorganization negatively.

Politico reported that internal documents appeared to show that the intention of the reorganization was primarily to cull the number of its employees. The documents say the agency expected the move to reduce its worker size "by approximately 23,177," which is a 23% overall reduction."

Politico spoke to Collin Bradley, president of the AFSCME Local 3976 union representing Foreign Agricultural Service workers, who said the reorganization was going to "decimate the agency."

Still, USDA says its move is all part of an effort to support "rural America."

"Rural Development is, by name and by function, fully focused on the rural communities we serve," Todd Lindsey, USDA Acting Under Secretary for Rural Development said.

"This reorganization injects new attention to our systems and processes that will eliminate unnecessary layers of bureaucracy, improve our ability to engage with our customers, and conduct responsible oversight of federal investments."

Vanden said USDA has "no choice" but to execute the plan, considering shrinking budgets, increasing cost of living in Washington, and the needs of a department focused on rural America.

"It makes the most sense to get the largest number of our employees to places where they can have the quality of life that they deserve on a government salary," he said. "And we at USDA can take advantage of their expertise for decades in the future and have them in places that are actually closer to the communities we are charged with serving."

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Narrow soybean rows could produce less weeds, more yield

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Narrower row width is one key to reducing weeds in soybean, says University of Missouri Extension weed scientist Kevin Bradley.

In previous research, Bradley reported improved late-season weed control (density and/or biomass) in 64% of case studies (72 out of 113 site-years) in soybean.

Narrow rows allow soybean leaves to shade the ground and prevent weeds from germinating. The canopy keeps late-emerging, herbicide-resistant weeds such as waterhemp from getting a foothold.

When integrated with a traditional herbicide strategy, this practice could provide more effective weed management, he says.

Narrow rows will help to suppress weed numbers in soybean but not completely eradicate weeds. Because soybeans are weak early-season competitors, you must still start with a clean seedbed and use effective pre-emergence residual herbicides. The narrow canopy then takes over to choke out subsequent flushes.

While most Missouri soybean growers choose either 15- or 30-inch row spacing, 15 inches or narrower may have advantages besides weed management.

University of Missouri Extension soybean farming system specialist Andre Reis has also found that 15-inch rows can increase yields by 6-10 bushels per acre compared to 30-inch rows. Reis heads MU's Variety Testing Program.

His research shows that row spacing is the second-strongest predictor of yield, following planting date. Overall, his research shows that 15-inch row spacing yields better than 30-inch rows in most parts of Missouri, except in the southeastern region, where row spacing had no effect.

In addition to improving yields and facilitating weed management, narrow rows can reduce soil erosion, Reis says. With wider rows, it takes longer for the soybean canopy to close over exposed soil between rows, making the soil more prone to erosion.

However, narrow rows can have disadvantages. The switch to narrower rows can pose additional challenges, such as the implementation of surface irrigation.

Additionally, in wet springs, narrow rows can prolong soil moisture after rainfall, making the crop more susceptible to disease.

Follow Reis' Soybean Growth Monitoring Tool, which simulates soybean development and yield across different regions of Missouri.

Got an idea that would make a good story in The Advocate?

Drop us a line and let us know at: cattlemans@virtualimages.us

Explaining the spread between cattle prices and wholesale beef prices

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

During R-CALF USA's 2026 Annual Convention, economist T. Jake Smith of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln presented findings of a recent research paper he co-authored with economist GianCarlo Moschini, Iowa State University, titled Spatial Price Competition and Buyer Power in the U.S. Beef Packing Industry.

The researchers set out to identify the drivers of cattle prices, and price spreads between cattle prices and wholesale beef prices. Smith provided a chart depicting farm-to-wholesale beef price spreads from 2000 to 2025, which he said was deserving of a thorough research study.

The chart showed that from 2000 to 2014, the farm-to-wholesale price spread remained relatively constant at under $0.40 per pound throughout the period. But beginning around 2015, the spread began rising above its long-term average and spiked significantly during the COVID-19 years of 2020-21. And though the spike subsequently subsided, the spread has remained elevated above the pre-2015 period. The average spread from 2015-2025 was nearly $0.80 per pound, twice what it was during the earlier period.

To Smith, this was a puzzle. What could cause such a severe distortion between the price of cattle and the price of wholesale beef, a distortion that clearly benefited the highly concentrated U.S. beef packing industry at the expense of U.S. cattle farmers and ranchers?

Smith theorized the distortion resulted from the packers' exercise of buyer power, so he set out to identify buyer power sources that could explain the price spread increase.

Smith measures buyer power as the gap between the actual value of cattle and the price the packer actually has to pay for the cattle. This measurement, Smith said, is called the markdown. For example, if a packer is willing to pay $244 per cwt for a steer, that is the steer's value. But, if buyer power is exerted, enabling the packer to buy the steer for only $240 per cwt, which is $4 per cwt less than the packer was willing to pay, then $4 per cwt is the markdown: the gap between value and price resulting from the exercise of buyer power.

Smith's economic modeling found that the total markdown resulting from the exercise of packer buyer power was between $3.50 and $4 per cwt.

If cattle are purchased subject to a markdown, meaning they're purchased for less than their value, then this will increase the spread between cattle prices and beef prices.

Smith tested several possible sources of buyer power and identified three that contribute to markdowns that increased the price spread.

The first and most prominent source of packer buying power was the structure of the marketplace itself, with thousands of feedlots widely dispersed across the Central Plains and elsewhere but with only a relatively few packing plants in fixed locations.

He explained it this way: If two plants in different locations are bidding for the same cattle, the plant closest to the cattle need not bid a price it is actually willing to pay as it only needs to bid higher than what the second plant is willing to pay. And due to the cost of transportation, the price the second plant is willing to pay for cattle closest to the first packer is less than it would be willing to pay if the cattle were closest to it.

Smith found that the markdown based on the geographical structure of the industry, which creates a difference between what a packer is willing to pay and what it has to pay given where its competitors are located, contributed 54% to the total markdown.

The next prominent source of buying power was the packers' use of alternative marketing arrangements, or AMAs, that are priced based on a regional spot market price. Smith said AMAs influence the packers' incentives in the spot market, as they know that when they underbid for cattle in the spot market, they'll still have the AMA cattle delivered to them to slaughter but at a lower price because of the way the AMAs are linked to the spot market.

Smith's model reveals that AMAs contribute 40% to the packer buyer power markdown.

The third source of buying power identified by Smith was multi-plant ownership, but the economic modeling found it contributed only 6% to the total markdown.

Smith's study also addressed how capacity constraints influence packers' bids for cattle. He explained that capacity constraints are treated separately from markdowns in their research because they don't change the gap between value and price. Instead, capacity constraints change how the packers actually value cattle. He said capacity disruptions can lead to higher price spreads and lower slaughter volumes.

Smith's study also reveals that as cattle supplies change, the buying power markdown remains constant while capacity constraints drive swings in price spreads.

You can watch Smith's presentation by going to r-calfusa.com and clicking on speaker videos.

The video also is available on The Cattleman's Advocate website for a period of time.

Rollins: Foreign-owned share of beef packing 'unsustainable'

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins took aim again Wednesday at foreign-owned meat processors, one day after announcing a program to give direct financial help to smaller, U.S.-owned beef processors amid record-high cattle prices.

"The fact that we've got two Brazilian-owned companies that are managing or running about half of our processing in the country is just unsustainable. It is unsustainable," she said at the end of a press conference where she announced new spending to support domestic fertilizer production.

"So, we've got to get all of this back to America and get it back very quickly. Now, will this all be done in a year? No, but we're setting up the infrastructure so that for the long term our farmers have what they need at the price that they need, so that they continue to pass down their farms and we can continue to be the world's greatest source and breadbasket of food, fuel, and clothing for the future."

On Tuesday she announced the Strengthening Processing for U.S. Ranchers (SPUR) Program, which is to give up to $500 million to beef packers. Only U.S.-owned companies are eligible, and the so-called Big Four packers are excluded. Tyson Foods, Cargill, and Brazilian-owned JBS and National Beef/Marfrig together control more than 80% of U.S. beef slaughter.

On Wednesday, Rollins announced a separate $500 program to help finance "shovel-ready" fertilizer production or expansion — the Fertilizer Investment & Expansion for Long-Term Domestic Supply (FIELDS) Program — as well as regulatory streamlining to speed development in the industry.

"Understanding the immense pressure that the ag economy and especially row croppers are under right now, as fuel continues to come down, fertilizer continues to come down, labor continues to come down, we are on a really good trajectory," Rollins said. "It's just gonna take a little while to get those inputs down, as we're opening up the markets around the world and we begin to solve for some of these very long-term structural issues."

She said the latest measures are part of "President Trump's vision of putting America first, whether that's reshoring manufacturing, reshoring pharmaceuticals, reshoring all of the above."

Trump last year ordered an investigation of any anti-competitive practices in the beef industry, and the Justice Department recent announced that a criminal probe is underway.

– 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, July 9, 2026
Receipts: 675 Last month: 655

Montgomery County Livestock held their monthly Sheep and Goat Sale Thursday, evening July 09 with a moderate offering of mostly lambs weighing 55-80 lbs. Slaughter lambs sold 25.00-45.00 lower than last month. Feeder lambs traded steady. Kid goats on a light test sold steady to firm. Montgomery County holds their sheep and goat sale the 2nd Thursday of each month. All prices are per cwt unless otherwise noted.

SHEEP (prices per hundredweight)
Slaughter Lambs: Choice-Prime 1-3 – 54-57 lbs 250.00-267.50; 60-72 lbs 240.00-255.00, pkg 83 lbs 237.50. Choice 1-2 – 55-85 lbs 220.00-235.00.

Feeder Lambs: Small and Medium 1-2 – 23-45 lbs 320.00-355.00; Small and Medium 2 – 30-48 lbs 265.00-280.00.

Slaughter Ewes: Utility and Good 1-2 – 90-148 lbs 140.00-160.00; Utility 1-2 – Few 90-130 lbs 125.00-135.00.

Replacement Ewes: 4 yrs to solid mouth 72-107 lbs 180.00-220.00 per lb; pkg 1-2 yrs 72 lbs 245.00 per lb.

GOATS: (prices per hundred weight)
Feeder Kids: Selection 1 – Few 28-34 lbs 405.00-420.00 per lb; Selection 1-2 – 25-42 lbs 360.00-380.00 per lb; Selection 2 – 26-32 lbs 305.00-310.00 per lb.

Market Kids: Slaughter: Selection 1 – Few 45-60 lbs 390.00-420.00 per lb; Selection 1-2 50-60 lbs 355.00-375.00.

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

Conagra Brands steps up push behind meat sticks as 'key growth brands'

Conagra Brands, owner of Slim Jim, Duke's, and Fatty meat stick brands along with a host of prepared food labels, will devote a sizable portion of its sales revenue to marketing those particular sectors of its holdings, the company's CEO said after the company's July earnings report.

"We intend to increase advertising spend to approximately 3% of net sales this year, with a focus on the categories where we have the greatest opportunity to win, particularly frozen meals and meat snacks," John Brase, Conagra's new president and CEO, said in an earnings call.

"This is the first step in moving toward a more sufficient level of marketing support for our key growth brands. It's not a modest adjustment; it's an increase of 14% year-over-year."

"We simply haven't invested enough behind our brands and our supply chain," he added. "That has consequences in consumer relevance, in service reliability, and in our ability to compete. We are going to fix that."

The remarks came as Conagra Brands released its financial results for fiscal year 2026, which ended on May 31.

For the full fiscal year, Conagra reported net sales decreasing 2.9% to $11.3 billion.

The company also said that its gross profit decreased 10.2% to $2.7 billion and adjusted gross profit decreased 9.4% to $2.7 billion.

The company also owns Banquet, Hebrew National Hot Dogs, Healthy Choice and Frontera, among many other household-name brands.

– Meatingplace.com

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

Snarky laws of the Universe

By MILO YIELD
Special to The Advocate

In this world, there are "lawyer laws" and "non-lawyer laws." The first are laws formally drafted, implemented, and expected to be obeyed. The second are simply unwritten, observable laws that evolve out of the mists and midst of living.

Today, I'm going to name and list quite a few non-lawyer laws, I call them "Snarky Laws of the Universe." Most folks have run into them from time to time in their lives. Some are ag related. Some are not.

(1) "Law of Eventual Probability." It states that, "The probability of an event occurring is inversely proportional to its desirability."

(2) "Futility Factor Law." It states that, "No failing experimental piece of farm work is ever a total loss. It can always serve as a bad example, not to be repeated."

(3) "Lament's Law." It says that, "Whenever the first fence post is set crooked, or the first furrow is plowed crooked, anything done to straighten the fence or the furrow only makes it worse."

(4) "Buller's Law." It says that, "When a cattleman winnows down to a choice between two bulls, the majority of the time he will select the one that is infertile."

(5) "Spare Parts Corollary Law." It states that, "The accessibility, during recovery, of a small part that falls from the work bench varies directly with the size of the part, its cost, and its importance to the completion of the work underway."

(6) "Bald's Law." It states that, "In any given set of circumstances, events will combine to provide the maximum amount of inconvenience for the greatest number of people and they'll want to pull their hair out in exasperation."

(7) "Butt's Law." It states that, "The length of a meeting is directly related to the number butts sitting in hard chairs in attendance and the length of the info being spouted by the speaker."

(8) "Homer's Rule." It states that, "Experience varies directly with the amount of equipment ruined and time wasted in job."

(9) "Work's Law of Inanimate Perversity." It states that, "The perversity of any inanimate object, regardless of its composition or configuration, may be expected to perform efficiently at any time or place in an unexpected manner for reasons that are either entirely obscure or completely mysterious."

(10) "Work's Law Corollary." It states that, "An animate object will act the same way as an inanimate object."

(11) "Warranty's Law." It states that, "Anything that has a warranty on it when purchased will break down within five minutes or five miles of the end of the warranty period, whichever comes first."

(12) "Nod's Law." It states that, "You will nod once too often and end up buying an auction item you didn't want, when you only wanted to run up the bid for a friend."

(13) "Buck's Law." It states that, "Your gentlest horse will upend you from the saddle when you least expect it and always in front of a crowd."

(14) "Gate's Law." It states that, "Any new equipment bought will be too wide for at least one gate."

(15) "Law of Inverse Evolution." It states that, "A mongrel bull is always the one that jumps the fence into your cow herd."

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Since we're in the midst of political season, here's a few "Snarky Laws of Politics."

(1) "Photo Fog Law." It states that, "All negative political photos will feature the ugliest candidate photo possible and all positive political photos will make the candidate appear as God-like as possible."

(2) "Promise's Law." It states that, "Any project promised by any candidate will end up costing twice as much, take twice the time to achieve, and accomplish half as much as promised."

(3) "Political Plundering Law." It states that, "All politicians will leave office richer than when they entered.

(4) "Debate's Law." It states that, "The clarity that emerges from any political debate is inversely proportional to its decibel level -- high yields low and low yields high."

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My ol' fishing friend Kastin Flingitt, spent some of his time in the Air Force stationed in California. One morning at coffee the topic turned to tart bumper snickers. He said one day he wuz driving on a California freeway when a car whizzed by him with a bumper snicker that read, "Quit picking your nose. I can see you in my rear view mirror."

He also revealed a recent senior moment. He was looking at some health insurance papers and noticed his name listed as Kastin M. Flingitt. His middle initial is "R." So, he called the company so they could correct the error. The company promised to resolve the issue.

But, when Kastin hung up and reviewed the insurance papers, he saw that the "M" actually was his gender identification. Oops.

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It's time to wrap this week up. So, I'll end up with a couple of "Snarky Milo Observations."

(1) "These days it's easier to stop on a dime than to achieve anything spending it.'

(2) "Life's simpler when you quit when you are behind."

Have a good 'un.

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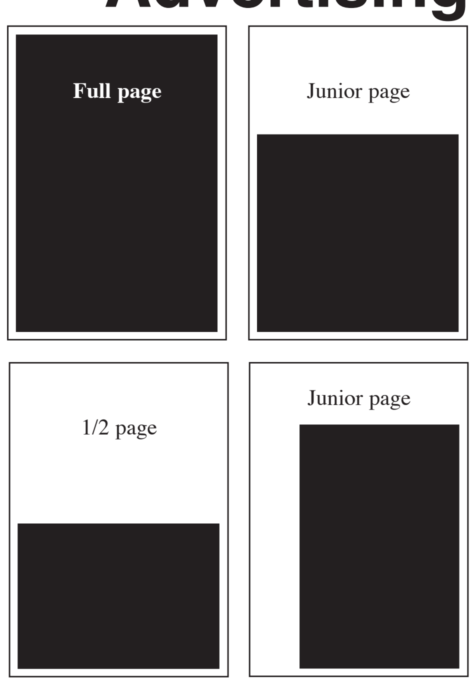

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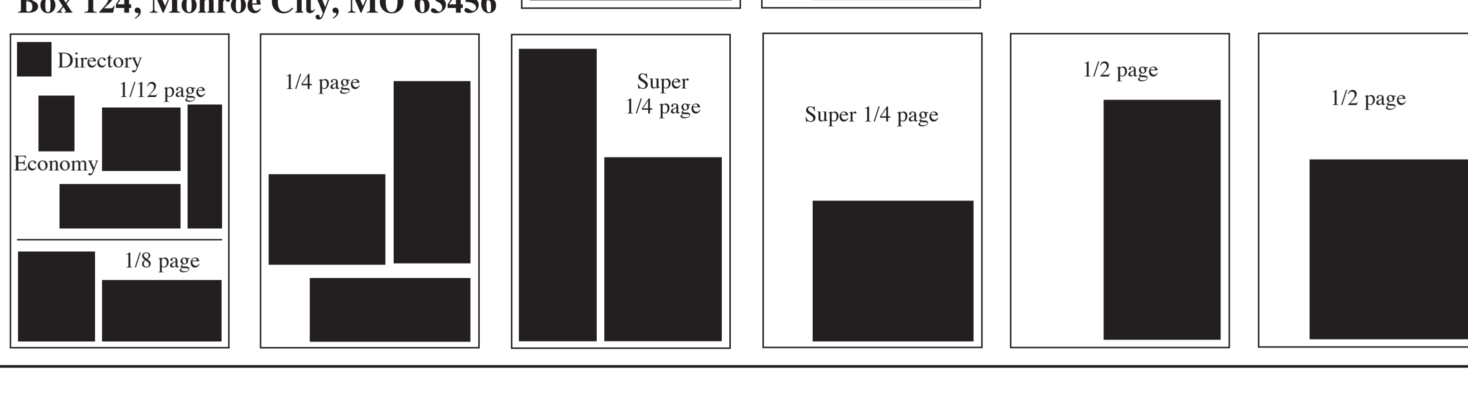

Missouri's youth workforce is shrinking, but more high school grads going straight to work

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Many Missouri employers depend on young workers, but there are fewer of them to hire. A new brief from University of Missouri Extension notes that the state's population of 16- to 24-year-olds has shrunk over the past decade even as a bigger share of young people are entering the workforce right after high school—a trend that highlights the need for training, apprenticeships and other career development opportunities.

The July 13 edition of the Missouri Economy Indicators series, published by MU Extension's Exceed- Regional Economic and Entrepreneurial Development program, reports that Missouri has about 21,000 fewer people ages 16-24 than it did 10 years ago, a decline of 2.8% during that period.

The brief, Young Worker Trends, was authored by Matt Pezold, MU Extension field specialist in labor and workforce development, and Alan Spell, MU assistant extension professor.

"Despite this decline, Missouri youth continue to participate in the labor market at a rate above the national average," Pezold and Spell write.

Employees under 25 make up 16% of Missouri's private-sector workforce. They account for nearly four out of every 10 jobs in leisure and hospitality and one-quarter of jobs in retail. Restaurants alone employ one in four young workers in the state.

Pezold and Spell observe that rural communities rely more heavily on younger workers than metro areas do: Young people account for 18.4% of private-sector employment in nonmetro counties, compared to 15.8% in metro areas. Rural manufacturers and construction firms, in particular, depend more on younger employees.

At the same time, more Missouri students are choosing work over college immediately after graduation. While most high school graduates still enroll in two- or four-year colleges, that share has gradually fallen since 2012. Last year, 30% of high school graduates in metro areas entered the civilian or military workforce shortly after graduation, up from 21% a decade earlier. In nonmetro areas, the share rose from 31% to 39%.

The shift reflects changing economic realities for many young adults. A strong job market and rising college costs have encouraged more graduates to begin earning paychecks right away, according to Pezold and Spell.

For employers, these trends present both an opportunity and a challenge. While more young people are entering the workforce after high school, a shrinking youth population means competition for workers is likely to remain intense.

The brief notes that many of today's in-demand jobs require education or training beyond high school, even if they do not require a traditional four-year degree. Healthcare, maintenance and machinery are among the fields offering opportunities for workers who gain skills through certifications, apprenticeships or on-the-job training.

"While entry-level jobs remain plentiful, a shrinking youth population will make it increasingly important to upskill these workers and provide advancement opportunities," the authors write. Partnerships between employers, schools and training providers can help young Missourians explore career paths while giving businesses a stronger talent pipeline.

The brief draws on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2024 five-year estimates, as well as data from the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center and the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The report, as well as past entries in the Missouri Economy Indicators series, is available at https://muext.us/MEI.

Managing our rivers is critical

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

North Missouri is bordered on the west and south by the Missouri River—on the east, by the Mississippi. We know the power of the river. It's never far from the minds of those who live and work along it. Through countless floods, we've seen what can happen when poor management and bureaucracy meet heavy rain and melting snow.

At the same time, we know the benefits. The same crops we seek to protect from rising floodwaters depend on barges to get to market. The inputs we need arrive the same way. Markets for countless things produced right here would be far more limited without the river.

That's why it's critical that our policies reflect the power and importance of our inland waterways. The Water Resources Development Act, or WRDA, ensures that happens by giving the Corps of Engineers their marching orders as they manage our rivers. As Chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, it's been my priority to pass an updated Water Resources Development Act every two years, as we've done since 2014. I'm happy to say we are on track to do it again this year.

I introduced this year's WRDA bill just a few weeks ago. WRDA 2026 keeps flood control and navigation the priority for river management. It makes commonsense updates to help local communities get infrastructure projects moving and cuts red tape so folks can work with the Corps more easily.

For North Missouri specifically, WRDA 2026 cuts red tape, making it easier for local communities to work with the Corps of Engineers to get flood control projects done. The bill also protects the Missouri River by making sure our water can't be diverted out of the basin to California. It asks the Corps to take on sediment buildup in the Missouri River Reservoir System—an important step for preserving the storage capacity we need to hold water back for flood protection and navigation.

WRDA 2026 also puts local levee districts and communities in the driver's seat on flood control projects along the Lower Missouri River. It gives members of the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee the ability to elect their own chair and helps Mississippi River levee districts avoid costly new requirements until workable solutions are developed.

This bipartisan legislation passed the Transportation Committee this week unanimously. You don't see that too often these days, and I'm proud that we keep getting that done at the Transportation Committee. I remain focused on getting the work done, and I look forward to this important legislation heading to the House floor.

Beef exports from Brazil expected to avoid new tariffs

Beef is expected to remain exempt from a new round of U.S. tariffs targeting Brazilian imports, even as the Trump administration prepares to impose a 25% tax on products from the South American country, according to a report from Reuters.

According to Reuters, the tariffs, expected to be announced Wednesday, could affect more than 4,000 Brazilian products worth an estimated $15 billion in annual trade. However, key products for both consumers and manufacturers are expected to remain exempt, including beef, coffee, rare earth minerals and aircraft parts.

U.S. importers paid about $1.1 billion in new tariffs on imported beef from all trading partners in 2025, according to a Meatingplace estimate. An executive order by President Donald Trump in November halted his tariffs on beef and other food imports under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, which were struck down for all goods in February by the Supreme Court.

The proposed duties follow a Section 301 investigation launched by the U.S. Trade Representative in July 2025. The probe cited concerns over alleged unfair trade practices, including illegal deforestation and Brazil's Pix digital payment system. Brazilian officials have rejected the allegations and described the investigation as arbitrary.

While beef appears poised to avoid the new tariffs, other major Brazilian exports, including pig iron, sugar, ethanol, tobacco and wood moldings, could face higher duties. Brazil's National Confederation of Industry warned the tariffs would harm businesses in both countries.

Brazilian officials indicated the government may consider retaliatory measures once the tariffs take effect. The country faces a separate U.S. trade investigation involving alleged forced labor in global supply chains that could result in additional tariffs later this month.

Trade between the two countries has already softened. Data from the American-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce showed the U.S. accounted for 9.7% of Brazil's total trade in the first half of 2026, down from 12.1% during the same period a year earlier.

Amid extremely tight U.S. cattle supplies and strong consumer demand, imports of Brazilian beef have more than doubled since 2023 to a record 295,000 metric tons last year worth $1.75 billion, despite added Trump tariffs for several months during 2025. 2026 imports through May are near last year's pace. Brazilian beef imports are mostly utilized for grinding.

– Meatingplace.com

USDA to rescind 3 key Biden-era meat regulations

The Trump administration's USDA intends to rescind three of the most significant Biden-era regulations of meat processing in the U.S.

First announced in Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs notices, the rescinded rules are:

• The March 6, 2024, final rule "Inclusive Competition and Market Integrity Under the Packers and Stockyards Act," which would have empowered USDA to "prohibit undue prejudice and unjust discrimination and certain retaliatory and deceptive practices under the Packers and Stockyards Act."

• A proposed rule from Nov. 28, 2023, — "Transparency in Poultry Grower Contracting and Tournaments" — which would have amended Packers/Stockyards powers to "add disclosures and information that live poultry dealers engaged in the production of broilers must furnish to poultry growers with whom dealers make poultry growing arrangements." The rescind notice adds, "The rule also established additional disclosure requirements for live poultry dealers engaged in the production of broilers who use poultry ranking systems to determine settlement payments for broiler growers."

• USDA intends to rescind the Jan. 16, 2025, regulation that would have addressed "certain problematic practices related to poultry grower payment systems and capital improvement programs such as: payment disparities and reductions that are unconnected to commoditized flock performance, and transparency concerns related to additional capital investments in poultry production facilities and equipment." The rule was previously delayed from a July 1, 2026, implementation to Dec. 31, 2027.

The proposed regulations were part of an ambitions effort from the Biden administration, which included Tom Vilsack as agriculture secretary, to overhaul the regulations around meat processors and their business dealings with ranchers and growers.

Despite the rescinded rules, certain aspects of Biden USDA policy — namely financial support for smaller processors and antagonism towards large packers — have remained under Ag Secretary Brooke Rollins' leadership. In just the last week, USDA announced a $500-million direct payment fund to maintain beef capacity at small and medium processors, and Rollins stated that foreign ownership of U.S. meat companies was "unsustainable."

– Meatingplace.com

The Cattleman's Advocate is now available online! You can see each month's new issue or old back issues by going to:

CattlemansAdvocate.com

Easy skillet garden fresh green beans take less than 20 minutes to prepare

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

Jon's Critique: We had a lot going on this spring and didn't plant a garden. This didn't stop the Cattleman's Advocate cook from utilizing fresh ingredients that are locally in season.

The cook loves green beans and cans many every summer to enjoy all year long. This month's recipe however was fresh garden beans from an Amish neighbor.

This recipe we just called up on the internet randomly. It was certainly a fine enough recipe, but frankly nothing special.

Mel's website had several cool recipes, this one just didn't work for me. I don't think my sampling had any of the optional Parmesan cheese, that certainly would have helped.

How do you prepare fresh from the garden green beans?

Easy Skillet Green Beans
From Mel's Kitchen Café
Yield: 4 Servings
Prep Time: 5 minutes • Cook Time: 12 minutess
Total Time: 17 minute

Ingredients

1 teaspoon oil or butter
1 pound fresh green beans, ends trimmed, if needed
¾ cup chicken broth, vegetable broth, or water
¼ teaspoon salt

Instructions

In a 12-inch nonstick skillet, heat the oil or butter over medium heat. Add the green beans and cook for 2-3 minutes, stirring often, to crisp up the edges of the beans just slightly.

Add the broth and salt. Toss to combine.

Bring to a simmer. Cover the skillet and cook 6 to 10 minutes, depending on desired tenderness.

Remove from the heat. Season with additional salt, if needed. Optional: sprinkle lemon zest or Parmesan cheese over cooked green beans. Serve immediately.

Notes

Beans: The beans can be cut into 1- or 2-inch lengths or left whole. Frozen green beans work fine in this recipe if fresh aren't available. Add a minute or so to the cooking time if using frozen green beans (don't thaw before adding to the skillet).

Texas investigating plant odors after neighbors raise stink

The state of Texas is currently investigating an STX Beef Co. processing plant outside Corpus Christi after receiving 94 odor complaints from nearby residents in the last two years, with nearly three dozen in the last six months. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) opened a compliance review of the Annaville, Texas, facility in January 2026, KRIS 6 television news reported. STX paid $200,000 in fines for the same issue at the plant in 2024.

As reported by KRIS 6, the Texas regulators' investigation report said STX Beef was not operating as represented in its permit; its heat exchanger was leaking, and water was observed splashing from the temporary connector; duct work over the blood dryers was also out of service. Overall, the station reports, according to TCEQ records, STX Beef has received nine air-related Notices of Violation as well as nine air-related Notices of Enforcement in the last five years.

In an email to KRIS 6, STX Beef President Mathew Trowbridge said: "STX is a proud member of the community, and we take our responsibilities seriously. STX continues to revitalize the decades-old facility, including millions of dollars to retrofit the plant to mitigate odor. Despite the economic headwinds on the meat packing industry, STX is maintaining workforce and continuing retrofitting of the facility. STX is committed to working with all state and local agencies to ensure compliance."

– Meatingplace.com

At Eastern MIssouri Commission Company, we pride our business through the high quality cattle you produce. We appreciate all your hard work and dedication to our industry for this generation and future generations.

– MIke and Lori VanMaanen, owners since 2000

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July

Friday, July 31 ....Regular Friday sale

August

Friday, August 7..Regular Friday sale
Friday, August 14.............Special feeder sale with regular Friday sale
Friday, August 21 ....Bred cow sale with regular Friday sale
Friday, August 28 ....Special feeder sale with regular Friday sale

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www.emcclivestock.com

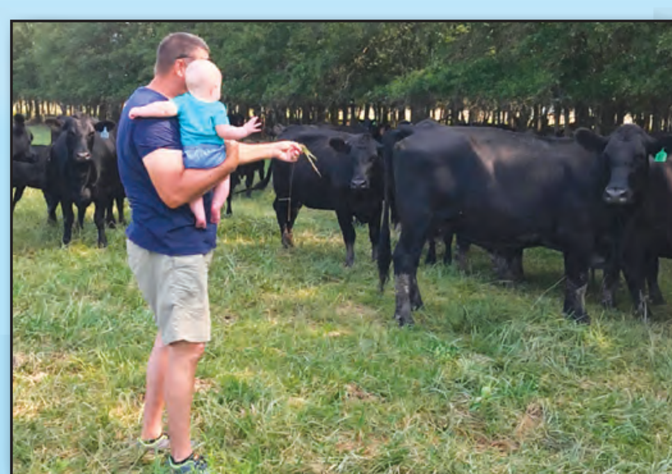
Scan the QR code to visit our website and access updated early listings.

EMCC Friday start times

9:00 a.m. start time for fed cattle & pound cows, followed by bred cows
12:30 p.m. start time with veals, followed by yearlings and calves

Cattle receiving hours
Thursday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Friday starting 6:30 a.m.

We market ALL classes of cattle each week.



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

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