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Free Advice is Still Free

Retired and disabled, Ron Hines was hounded for giving online animal health advice. No one ever complained. Except the state.

By CHRIS BENNETT
Reprinted by permission of Farm Journal/AgWeb

In a glaring abuse of free speech, veterinary Ron Hines was busted for giving online and telephone advice to help sick and wounded animals across a purported 10-year crime spree. He was fined and his license suspended, all with a legal threat of more penalties and a year in jail if he continued to dispense advice.

However, in a historic victory for the First Amendment following 13 years of roller-coaster litigation, Hines prevailed in court, represented by Institute for Justice, preserving the right of pure speech.

In a case marked by remarkable contradiction, the state of

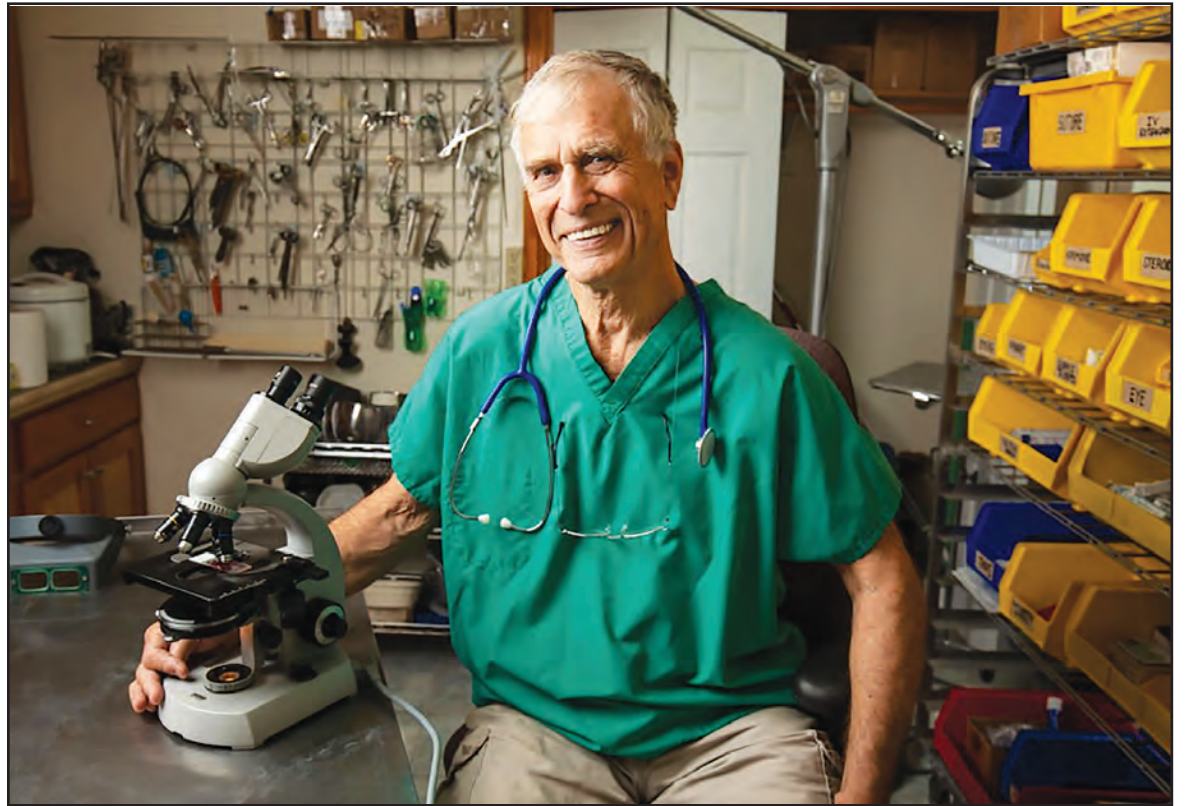
Texas insisted it was legal for medical doctors to give advice to humans by email or telephone, but woe to Hines, who dared to dispense the same with dogs or cows. Telehealth for humans ok; telehealth for animals forbidden.

“There’s so many animals and owners out there that need help, and it’s a crying shame what the big vet organizations and Texas Legislature tried to do, but they didn’t get away with it,” says Hines, 82. “They’re ostriches with their heads in the sand, pretending like the Internet age never arrived.”

Silencing the Good Samaritan

Raised in Brownsville, Texas, along the northern bank of the Rio Grande, Hines, neck-deep in veterinary work since his teens, carries a past almost impossible for fiction. In 1966, with a doctorate in veterinary medicine from Texas A&M University, he enlisted for the Vietnam War.

Instead of Saigon or Da Nang, the U.S. Army recognized Hines’ veterinary training and sent him to Maryland, where he served at the National Institute for Health (NIH). While adjusting machin-



FREE SPEECH?: When veterinarian Ron Hines dared to provide online veterinary advice, often free, the state of Texas attempted to shut him down. Texas dragged Hines – a 10-year outlaw

in the state’s eyes for answering phone calls and emails about sick animals – to the U.S. Supreme Court. (Photo courtesy of IJ)

ery at an NIH station, Hines tumbled into a pit of equipment and crushed multiple vertebrae, severely hampering his mobility for life.

Upon exit, despite his condition, he opened an animal hospital in San Antonio, flourishing 10 years before pulling stakes for Sarasota, Florida—winter home to the shacks and trailers of Ringling Bros. and Barnum &

Bailey Circus. Working on a menagerie of animals from dancing bears to sea lions to monkey troops to pet tigers, all while rubbing elbows with the human cannonball and Flying Wallendas.

Work in the Middle East and Arabia followed. Leopards in Dubai. Camels in Jordan. Breached calves in Bedouin encampments. Clients in South Africa, Australia, and a host of

other countries. Stints at SeaWorld. Animal hospitals in Florida.

“I went wherever I could help animals and people,” Hines describes. “I wasn’t very money-oriented, and if I made enough to buy food with a roof over me, I was pretty happy. Since I was a kid, I always wanted to measure

See HINES, page 3

Tyson closure adds to sweeping reduction in beef slaughter capacity

The closure of Tyson Foods’ Joslin, Ill., beef plant is drawing concern from cattle producers and state officials even as financial analysts say the latest round of industry capacity reductions could help battered beef processor margins recover.

The National Cattlemen’s Beef Association said closure of the Joslin plant, 25 miles east of the Illinois-Iowa Quad Cities region on the Mississippi, would have significant consequences for cattle producers, employees and rural communities across the Midwest. Tyson announced Thursday, August 13, that it would end operations at Joslin and its Eagle Mountain, Utah, case-ready facility while pursuing a sale of its Pasco, Wash., beef plant. Eagle Mountain is 50 miles south of Salt Lake City.

“NCBA is troubled by the closure of the Joslin beef processing facility,” NCBA CEO Colin Woodall said. “For many years, the plant has played a vital role in the Midwest beef supply chain.”

The Joslin closure will eliminate more than 2,500 jobs, according to Illinois State Rep. Ryan Spain, who called the decision “devastating” for workers and the surrounding economy.

Woodall urged Tyson to help cattle suppliers identify alternative marketing opportunities. NCBA was more encouraged by Tyson’s decision to seek a buyer for Pasco rather than close the plant in southeastern Washington.

The Joslin closure will eliminate more than 2,500 jobs, according to Illinois State Rep. Ryan Spain, who called the decision “devastating” for workers and the surrounding economy. Spain called for Tyson and government officials to explore whether the facility could be repurposed to preserve jobs.

Rival protein giant JBS announced this week that its Souderton, Pa., beef plant, which is due to halt slaughter, would be converted to a case-ready facility

with a smaller workforce, instead of full closure.

For beef processors, however, the latest reductions could help bring slaughter capacity closer in line with historically tight cattle supplies and raise utilization rates.

BMO Capital Markets protein analyst Andrew Strelzik estimated Joslin represents about 2.5%-3% of industry slaughter capacity. After Tyson’s closure of its Lexington, Neb., beef plant, its reduction to one shift at Amarillo, Texas, and JBS USA’s elimination of slaughter at Souderton, industry harvest capacity has been reduced by an estimated 11%-12% since January.

That compares with a low-single-digit percentage decline in

cattle supplies, creating the potential for substantially higher utilization at the remaining plants, according to Strelzik.

The restructuring follows persistent losses in Tyson’s beef segment as historically tight cattle supplies drove up livestock costs. Tyson reported an adjusted operating loss of \$100 million in beef during its most recent quarter and expects the segment to post an adjusted operating loss of \$500 million-\$600 million for the fiscal year.

Strelzik said the latest restructuring increased his confidence that industry beef margins could improve as higher plant utilization and reduced competition for available cattle take hold. JBS could also benefit from the industrywide capacity reduction.

Tyson plans to center its beef slaughter operations around Dakota City, Neb.; Holcomb, Kan.; and Amarillo. The company said it eventually intends to restore a second shift at Amarillo as cattle become available,

though Strelzik said he does not expect that to happen until cattle supplies are sufficient to operate the additional capacity at acceptable utilization rates.

The changes represent the latest contraction in the U.S. beef processing footprint. Tyson closed its approximately 4,500-head-per-day Lexington plant in January and reduced Amarillo from two shifts to one. JBS, meanwhile, is ending slaughter at its roughly 2,000-head-per-day Souderton plant this week, though it will invest more than \$30 million to retain the facility as a value-added operation.

NCBA said the mounting plant changes highlight the need to rebuild the U.S. cattle herd while preserving enough processing capacity to maintain competition for producers.

“These decisions underscore the significant challenges that historically low cattle inventories continue to create across the beef cattle industry,” Woodall said.

– Meatingplace.com

UPCOMING SALES

Tuesday, Sept. 1 – High Noon Cow Sale
Tuesday, Sept. 8 – NO CATTLE SALE
Tuesday, Sept. 15 – Feeder Special
Tuesday, Sept. 22 – Regular Sale
Tuesday, Sept. 29 – Feeder Special
Tuesday, Oct. 6 – High Noon Cow Sale
Saturday, Oct. 10 – Horse Sale
Tuesday, Oct. 13 – Feeder Special

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



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High Noon Cow Sale

Tuesday, Sept. 1, 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
September 1

Justin Angell

35 black cows bred black, this was a summer grazing project for excess grass. The majority are 3-5 years with a few 6's imported from Gall Ranch, Bassett NE. They are calving now – 5 pair so far.

Lute Farms

10 fall cows. These cows will be mixed crossbreds running 4-7yrs that are exposed back to a black bull.

Warren Brothers

15-15 blk young pairs

Moore Farms

3-3 brangus pairs. These cows should mouth 7 years old, with good growthy calves at their side. Also 2-2 3&4 yrs angus pairs that originated from the Brian Curless herd. All exposed to very good Diederich Charolais bull.

Angell Livestock

8-8 especially nice black heifer pairs originally from Wayne Wagoner

Pending but probable are 20 fall bred cows...

We have several other consignments pending and expect several others by sale day.

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.

www.ftlivestock.com

F&T provides broad market support

The market is obviously trending lower, which historically negatively impacts small producers the most. Therefore, a livestock market with broad market support benefits smaller producers more. Al Dames and the F&T family has always provided broad market support. If you would like to sell your cattle where you and your cattle are always supported and appreciated, give one of us on the F&T Livestock team a call.

– Justin Angell
F&T Field Representative

HINES from page 1

up to the Good Samaritan. Maybe that's what got me in trouble with the state."

Free Speech be Damned

Age and disability took a heavy toll. In 2002, with most sensation gone below his waist, Hines retired. Forgoing clinic practice, he took up the keyboard. "The internet was still pretty new, at least to me, and I saw a chance to help somebody out there. I never, never imagined, not for one second, that the government would come after me." Hines built a website (2ndchance.info) and filled it with posts on animal health and pet care. "Pretty soon, I started getting emails and telephone calls from around the world and the U.S., with questions from people who were either too poor to go to a vet or didn't have access to a vet for a variety of reasons."

He responded with advice via keyboard or phone. He prescribed no medications; gave no injections; and performed no operations. He did deliver communication—based on his veterinary career—in an exchange of pure speech. "I gave my opinion. I never gave anyone medicine or prescribed medicine and I never offered to treat any animal. They asked me questions, and I answered based on my past. Plain and simple. These were hurting animals and pets across the globe. Name the country and I likely helped some owner or family in that nation."

The number of requests jumped from scores to hundreds to thousands. Collating the volume, Hines began charging a flat fee of \$8.95, later raised to \$58. "I was trying to deal with a flood of emails, and trying to take care of the toughest cases first. Please understand, I wasn't making any real money and I refunded anyone I couldn't help. On top of that, if someone simply couldn't pay, then I did it for free." For a decade, from 2002-2012, Hines answered emails and calls with advice. As noted in court records he never earned over \$2,800 per year from the website. "None of that mattered," he recalls. "Texas came after me. Free speech be damned."

The Poster Child

In 2013, the Texas Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners punished Hines for giving veterinarian advice online. Specifically, he was disciplined for not physically examining animals prior to giving advice. "Think about how irrational it was," Hines says. "In this computer and telephone age, where telemedicine is legal, and radio shows, and call-in shows are legal, Texas came after me for giving advice on how to take care of a sick cat in Scotland. It's way past mind-blowing." There were no complaints from animal or pet owners. There were no allegations he harmed a single animal. Yet, how did he slide into the Texas Board's crosshairs? "We're not certain," says

Institute for Justice attorney Jeff Rowes, "but one of the people Ron Hines was helping was a guy in New Hampshire who had lost both of his legs in an industrial accident and was living on disability insurance. The only thing he had in the world was his dog, but he couldn't afford to take the dog to the vet." "Ron asked the New Hampshire Veterinary Medical Association if someone could provide the guy with free veterinary care," Rowes continues. "We believe one of the associated veterinarians reported Ron to the Texas Board and said that by giving advice to this double amputee, Ron was practicing veterinary medicine in New Hampshire without a license." The Texas Board suspended Hines' license, fined him, and forced him to retake a portion of the licensing exam. (The Texas Board of



PURE SPEECH: Ron Hines prescribed no medications; gave no injections; and performed no operations. He did deliver communication—based on his veterinary career—in an exchange of pure speech. (Photo courtesy of IJ)

Veterinary Medical Examiners did not respond to Agweb interview requests regarding the Hines case.) "The actions of the state of Texas were entirely ridiculous. I

was astonished both as a citizen and as a constitutional lawyer that Texas would order Ron to stop having conversations with grown-ups across the country and around the world just to help their pets. Ron had people in India, for example, emailing and saying, 'I'm trying to help a stray dog that got ran over,' or 'What can I do to help a wild bird injured in my yard?' Texas was telling Ron, 'If you dare to answer those emails and if you keep answering those emails, we're going to take your veterinary license away.' What interest did Texas have in preventing Ron from talking to somebody to help an injured dog in India?" Texas was hellbent on Hines and willing to pursuit him even to the Supreme Court of the United States. But why? The Texas Board was afraid of the internet, Hines contends, and concerned that telecare would impact brick-and-mortar traffic. "I was their poster child of wrongdoing," Hines says. "The Texas Board, backed by the

See HINES, page 11

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From the Publisher... Jon Angell



I've come to realize that I like stories in which a person, or group of people with a good cause takes on the heavy hand of government and prevails.

I've shared several of these stories within these pages, and with this month's feature, I have another with Ron Hines. Besting the State of Texas in the Judicial system isn't an easy accomplishment, but it seems that Ron has. Besides that, he seems to have lived an interesting life despite a serious life changing injury when he was young.

Also on the front page, the abrupt closure of Tyson's Joslin, Ill. plant is big news, affecting many of our readers. If not directly, the ripples of indirect effects will be touching most. Analyst Brad Kooima noted, "If you have fat cattle East of I-35 you are going to notice that Joslin is gone."

This is going to create a soft spot for cash cattle and create a whole bunch more freight requirements. Although the industry has been expecting more closures to shrink overcapacity in processing, Joslin closing caught many by surprise for numerous reasons.

For local cattlemen, Joslin's closing was the second blow in a one-two punch. In August the Agri Star plant in Postville, Iowa caught fire (see story page 12 and page 7).

Agri Star was another influential market to the high quality fed cattle in the area. It specialized in serving the Kosher food market and was consistently a strong bidder for quality fed cattle in many of the livestock markets. The good news is latest news implies that the Postville plant has every intention of building back.

Take heart that we do have some hopes that maybe these setbacks will be softened, as this should spur the new Heartland plant in Missouri to ramp their fed cattle harvest much faster. We don't know if over time the situation will be better or worse; only that it will be different.

The new world screwworm (see page 15) is still in the news. The alarm and dread around it crossing the border into the USA has been overhyped to this point. We are dealing with it, moving to reopen the border to the cattle trade, and it hasn't yet been the disaster many anticipated.

Unfortunately, our friend Alan Guebert on page 5 pens a farewell Farm and Food File column. Way back in the Spring of 2005 when I was doing

my due diligence on how to enter the publishing business, Alan was there. His column appeared in the first issue and every issue till this last one. Always timely, professional, and well written. For your humble publisher, Alan has been very encouraging and helpful in sending me personalized notes or calling and taking calls. Alan was there, and I appreciate it.

His column also gave some needed balance. Alan and I often looked at the same information and drew different conclusions because we had different life experiences and held different perspectives. This was very healthy, not only for newspaper content, but it pushed my own convictions on policies, regulations, and generally many other things.

I know many readers favored Alan's take, while others not so much. I know this because when I asked for reader feedback, Food and Farm File was one of the most mentioned... pro and con.

We are going to miss Alan's contribution.

Losing the Guebert column is part of what I hinted at in making some changes from last month, but there are other things. Looking for other syndicated columns to fill this void is hard, and there are few to choose among. If any of you are writers and have a strong agriculture aptitude, I'd think a syndicated column would be an easy sell.

Alan's slowing down, it wasn't that he couldn't sell his work. Heck, I bet to the right candidate, Alan would hook you up and get you started.

I'm going to try to push for some more original content, which has been difficult in the past few years. I have made contact with a university professor that had some good leads. But, changes aren't limited to content.

Much like everywhere, the expenses have been rising. Distribution and postage is becoming a much bigger hurdle. For those of you opting for home delivery, that price is going to have to rise regardless of if the carrier does a good job or not.

Don't get me started with the government monopoly quality of service. Even your local USPS folks are angry with the grief they get from the decisions and operations upstream.

Besides that, I need to increase revenue to cover these costs. I have wonderful supporting advertisers, and although I have held rates steady for many years, an adjustment consideration must be looked at. But they too have seen increased costs, so I am not sure it makes sense to do much with that.

If you look at our papers over the years and compare to other publications, we have always been

content heavy and paid advertising light.

So, the ratio of advertising to content must rise. We can cut back on the pages printed, or I will have to work harder to sell and place more ads. My preference is to sell more ads. So if you have a business our readers could benefit utilizing, let's get something going!

If you are a customer to a current advertiser, let them know you "appreciate them advertising with us" and you "are a reader and you noticed."

If you are in the market for a product or service and you like our paper, give our advertisers an opportunity to work with you.

I still like snail mail. So, if you have suggestions, leads for stories, leads for content, leads for advertising, or just general comments on what we are doing, write me a letter, put a stamp on it and drop it in the mail slot.

For now, thanks for reading and your continued support for our efforts!

DIRECTORY OF ADVERTISERS

F&T Livestock Market	page 2
Wheeler Auctions (WSC)	page 3
The Bank of Missouri	page 5
Larry Clementz Real Estate	page 5
Hopewell Farms	page 5
Bowling Green Vet Clinic	page 7
Girod & Sons Construction	page 7
Beefland	page 8
Farmer's Livestock Sales	page 8
Legacy Land and Livestock	page 8
Headings Custom Grazing	page 8
Scotland Co. Livestock Auction	page 9
Callaway Livestock Center	page 10
Hatton Vermeer Sales	page 10
Ridgway Seed & Soil	page 10
Meyer Implement	page 11
Andras Red Angus Female Sale	page 11
Eastern Mo. Cowboy Church	page 11
Missouri Beef Industry Council	page 12
Zuroweste Welding	page 12
AgriLand Realty Advisors	page 12
Audrain Building Supplies	page 13
Miller Brothers Lumber	page 13
Meyer Cattle Co.	page 14
Railroad Millworks	page 15
J&L Farm	page 15
Angell-Thomas Charolais	page 15
Meyers Truck Service	page 16
Circle 5 Beef	page 16
Angell Livestock	page 17
EMCC market report	page 18
Sheep & Goat market report	page 19
Angell-Thomas Charolais	page 20
Angell's Western Wear	page 20
Albert's Shoe Repair	page 20
Cary Livestock	page 20
Pat Costello Painting	page 20
National Polled Herefords	page 20
Mark Robertson	page 20
Savannah's Farm Fresh	page 20
Shannon Farms	page 20
SHek Boutique	page 20
Cattleman's Advocate ad rates	page 21
Central Mo. Feed & Supply	page 22
Purina	page 14
Angell's	page 23
Eastern Mo. Commission. Co.	page 24

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FARM & FOOD FILE

A fond farewell for Farm & Food File

By ALAN GUEBERT
For The Cattleman's Advocate

Journalism has many traditions. One of the oldest is adding "-30-" after the last paragraph of a just-completed story to alert the editor of "the end." Old-timers say it was adopted from the Western Union's shorthand for "End of message."

Whatever its origin, -30- is a fitting send-off to my 33 years of writing the Farm and Food File. After this column reaches its inky end, I will be out of the business of meeting deadlines for the first time in 45 years of full-time journalism and, if you toss in my cow-milking career, almost 60 years.

Journalism's deadlines are a weak comparison to the relentless clock and demanding daily presence of dairying. But both endeavors—if done right—offer unique challenges to deliver a Grade A product that betters people's lives and I am proud to have done both.

Here's another odd combination from my career: Across its many decades, I worked either for my father (for 50 cents an hour) or myself as a free-lance writer for 50 years. Here-and-there I spent a dozen or so years as a student, a staff editor for Successful Farming magazine, and a contributing editor for Farm Journal.

It was during one of my drifting student periods that journalism discovered me. As an ag econ student ticketed for a career in banking and farm management, I added an ag journalism class to have at least one hour a day not centered on bushels, price, and profit.

Six weeks later I had a notion that something might be waiting for me other than a milking par-

While I am retiring the column, I am not retiring from journalism. Other publications have asked me to write for them (no promises) and I have established a beachhead on Substack (substack.com/@alanguibert) that will remain free through year's end.

lor or banker's desk. Six months later, I was certain. Eighteen months later, I was a staff editor for an ag publication in Iowa. It happened that fast.

So did 45 years – and hundreds of magazine stories, more than 1,775 newspaper columns, and 1.5 million words – of writing. None of it, however, would have happened without three key ingredients.

Foremost is the lovely Catherine and my family. Without them, there would be no column – or me.

Next are the newspaper editors and publishers who subscribed to the column over the decades. Everyday they do something we often take for granted: they gather, edit, and present what they believe is the best, most truthful news and entertainment to inform and enlighten readers to make informed decisions for themselves and neighbors.

It's not magic. It's hard work that requires smarts, money, and guts. Without that combination—as too many communities now know – newspapers can't exist.

The final element is you. We journalists often see our prose as poetry or ourselves as important. The simple truth is that nothing is as important or impactful than you. We may write the first draft of history, but you change history with ideas, opinions, and votes.

So, thank you. Thank you for reading the column over these many years. Thank you for allowing me to bring my views on ag policy and politics to the best, most well-informed audience around, farmers and ranchers.

And thank you for welcoming Uncle Honey, Howard the dairyman, his never-fast brothers Jackie and Orle, and my family into yours. There's more untold stories about all which leads me to a final note.

While I am retiring the column, I am not retiring from journalism. Other publications have asked me to write for them (no promises) and I have established a beachhead on Substack (substack.com/@alanguibert) that will remain free through year's end. Also, I will keep my email account at agcomm@farmand-foodfile.com for correspondence and I look forward to staying in touch.

Until then, though, I plan to take – as Jackie might say – a "right smart" amount of time to rest, read, travel, and see if life without deadlines actually exists. Any bets?

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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

Value-added beef demand underlies JBS' salvaging of Souderton plant

JBS is so convinced that consumer demand exists for more value-added products including ground beef that the company reconsidered its decision to close the Souderton, Pa., plant, JBS USA CEO Wesley Batista Filho said this week.

The plant is due to halt beef slaughter on Aug. 24. JBS announced Monday that it would keep the site for conversion to a further-processing facility.

"We actually had announced the plant closure of Souderton, but now we have reversed and decided to run that as a value-added facility — just shows the size of the demand that we have actually for value-added items," Batista Filho said Tuesday in an earnings call.

He cited durable beef demand despite at or near-record consumer prices with growing evidence of "the inelasticity of protein demand when it comes to demand for beef," particularly less-than-expected substitution to cheaper proteins like chicken and especially pork.

"We still think that demand is very strong, what we have seen, and we can tell this by every-

thing we look, on protein trends in general," Batista Filho said. "There is plenty of data in the market about that, and we can see that when we talk to our customers and what we see in the marketplace."

JBS has announced plans to spend more than \$30 million over the coming decade to "modernize and enhance" Souderton for value-added and case-ready production, while preserving about 400 jobs.

In Monday's JBS earnings report for the second quarter through June, the company said that it had merged its Fed Beef, Regional Beef and Case Ready units into a single structure, Beef USA, for operational efficiency. Halting slaughter in Souderton appeared to be part of that initiative.

Batista Filho, who is set to assume JBS Global CEO duties in January, said the company was "very confident" in its ability to sell more ground beef and other value-added products. "As we see the marketplace right now, we think the protein demands will continue to be strong," he said.

— Meatingplace.com

Got an idea that would make a good story for The Cattleman's Advocate?
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cattlemans@virtualimages.us

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

Pretty interesting month when it comes to the cattle business. I've been talking about the hot cattle market for months. At this time, the only thing that's been really hot recently were the cattle in the Western Feedyards. Daytime heat is not the biggest problem. What actually terminates big Fat Cattle in the feedyard is when it does not cool down at night and the animals just have no ability to reset their internal thermometers.

One of our Feedyard yards in Nebraska told me that August 1st the heat index was 106 during the day with no breeze, and at 10:30 PM, heat index was still 105 degrees. The next day since the cattle had no chance to cool off, even with every pen being watered, they started dying. Eventually, over the next two days, that yard lost 60. Accurate figures are hard to come by because nobody wants to publicize how many dead cattle they've had.

Just for the sake of conversation, seven of those 60 were mine. All were out of one pen; a

set of steers and banded bulls that I had turned out for a long time, but they had only been out there in the yard for 20 days. Absolutely no good situation, but not nearly the loss on the front end of feeding compared to a 1,500 pound ready to harvest steer on the back end of feeding.

This killer heat wave stretched from the Dakotas through Nebraska in Kansas and down into the Texas Panhandle, killing cattle across all those states. Kansas and Nebraska took the brunt with an estimated 100,000 of big cattle lost.

The other thing that was lost about that time was our valuable fed cattle market. Since then, the feeder and calf markets have declined proportionately, losing many hundreds of dollars per head in value.

As most of you know, something else we have lost locally is the Tyson packing plant at Joslin, Illinois. Hearing this, I was surprised because they just recently completed an extensive renovation of the plant's cooler space. That would've potentially cost millions of dollars.

We've suspicioned for at least



six months that due to our shortage of domestic cattle, the packing industry was looking for ways to right size kill capacity and reduce the red ink flowing out of every beef plant in the country. The Joslin plant had the capacity to kill 3,000 head per day and employed 2,500 people. They are also shuttering a facility in Pasco, Washington, but that west coast facility is going to be sold.

A few bright spots. The first is

it looks like the new American Foods packing plant near Warrenton, Missouri, which has been gearing up and training up predominantly using kill cows, will now be moving into also harvesting fed cattle. I've spoken to, and know of several Missouri and Illinois producers that buy a lot of local cattle that are initiating the change from marketing fed cattle through Tyson to American Foods.

This will be supportive for our local feeder cattle market having a viable option close.

Secondly, the Tyson plant that will remain open in Amarillo, Texas has initially announced the addition of second shift. This will also be supportive of all our local cattle markets.

Also, some good news I found very interesting that I cannot substantiate, so let's call it speculation or gossip. I've been told by a good source that the Mexican border opening will have much less effect than what we thought because during the 19-month closure, the Mexican drug cartels have discovered cattle feeding and beef processing. They have apparently enthusiastically built infrastructure, including feed yards, roads and packing facilities.

I'm sure with their captive supply, this business makes them profitable with the side benefit of a dirty-money laundry. Ironically, my source tells me that by year end, the open border may see more American cattle move south than Mexican cattle moving north. Supportive to our cow calf markets and producers.

More irony is the fact that Canadian Feedyards apparently have an abundance of cheap feed, so many of the best high-volume buyers in the northern states are Canadians. The current

cy exchange rate has always been an issue, but that is mitigated by Canadian tax policy. Apparently just like we can write off in one year a tractor or bred heifers as a capital expenditure, Canadian cattleman are allowed to write off feeder cattle purchases. Wouldn't that be a game changer if we could do that? Very supportive for American cattlemen.

Looking forward, we need to watch grain prices, especially corn, with my commodity guy telling me for months that USDA numbers, especially global ending stocks, are way too optimistic, and corn (and wheat) will potentially be a lot higher by harvest. That would pour salt into the wounded cattle feeders. USDA Cattle on Feed is coming Friday after Advocate's printing. I hope that is a hill to stand on. Remember a month ago the cow inventory numbers? July 2025 -- 28.7 million cows and then July 2026 -- 28.5 million cows.... That's 200,000 less. We've lost our leverage, but we haven't overnight produced 200,000 new cows.

Bottom line is the cow calf man is in good position and may be good for years -- assuming no black swans or unforeseeable events.

You cowboys that are interested in maintaining or increasing your inventory, the next High Noon cow sale at F&T Livestock Market is on September 1st.

Only thing better than a cow sale is a cow sale with a sponsored free meal. This month's sponsor is Laura Fidler of Legacy Land and Livestock. Come to the sale before lunch and see if Laura is serving beef or fried chicken.

See you at the auction!

New case of screwworm at Mexican border clouds reopening

Mexican officials confirmed a new case of New World screwworm along the border, just days before US ports are to begin a phased reopening to Mexican livestock, according to multiple media reports.

The case, according to reports, was discovered in a canine in Juárez, which lies directly across the border from El Paso, Texas, near livestock ports in New Mexico.

Under USDA's phased

reopening plan, livestock imports from Mexico will resume Aug. 24 at the Douglas, Ariz., port. The agency would then assess conditions there before reopening ports in Santa Teresa and Columbus, N.M.

USDA has said the reopening process could be halted if officials find that the risk in the Mexican states of Sonora or Chihuahua, home to Juárez, is increased.

— Meatingplace.com

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It's The Pitts...

Weaponizing Diarrhea

By LEE PITTS
For The Cattleman's Advocate

Here's some food for thought:

- This past July Taylor Farms de Mexico was linked to the iceberg lettuce believed to be responsible for one of the largest cyclosporiasis outbreaks in American history with at least 15,000 confirmed cases! After Taco Bell had announced that they were voluntarily removing all iceberg lettuce sourced from central Mexico, Taylor Farms soon followed with a recall of their own.
- Although it may sound like a mom and pop operation, Taylor Farms is the largest global producer of salads and fresh foods, with production facilities across the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and Western Europe and they have a long history of food recalls. In 2012 and 2013, Taylor Farms recalled products six times including a recall of organic baby spinach that caused e coli outbreaks in 39 states. Previously they had recalled romaine lettuce, broccoli, salad kits and packets of salad dressing for listeria contamination and hundreds of cases of cyclosporiasis were linked to their salad mix served at Olive Garden and Red Lobster.
- At a press conference on July 21, health officials in North Carolina, announced a surge in illnesses caused by the parasite cyclospora that sickened 561 people, nearly double the number of cases it recorded in all of 2025. The cause was eventually determined to be tainted parsley and cilantro that probably came from the same area of Mexico that the tainted lettuce came from.
- After Jalapeño peppers were linked to a large, multi-state out-

I wonder, did it ever dawn on Friedman, the globalists or the Gay Ayatollah that diarrhea could cause more harm than a suicide bomber or a car bomb.

break of salmonella, Taylor Fresh Farms recalled multiple salsas, dips and guacamole. Some specific products included Diced Jalapenos, Rice and Bean Burrito, Spicy Roast Beef Sandwich, Spicy Pimento Cheese Dip, Pico de Gallo Salsa, Spicy Guacamole, Fiesta Style Salad Shrimp, Salsa Fresca, Pineapple Mango Salsa, etc. which were sold at retailers across 26 states and included Trader Joes, Kroger, Target, Wal Mart, Whole Foods and many others. Federal investigators later said that the Mexico based supplier Coast Citrus Distributors may have been responsible for the peppers. Chipotle was among the first to pull the Jalapeño peppers from their menu and several other restaurants soon followed. But the damage had been done as at least 345 people across 27 states fell ill in the salmonella outbreak, according to the FDA. Every year, salmonella averages 1.35 million illnesses and 420 deaths in the U.S.

- A shipment of nearly 30,000 pounds of beef from Argentina was recalled after the USDA found that it had bypassed a required import reinspection. The USDA categorized the recall as Class I, indicating a "high or medium risk". The shipment of 29,628 pounds of raw beef was not presented to USDA inspectors for a mandatory reinspection before it was sent to distributors and retail outlets in Florida and Texas. The American rancher became the fall guy by default because Congress won't make country of origin labeling mandatory for beef so the American consumer has no way of differentiating Argentinian

beef from American beef.

Did you notice a recurring theme to all of the above cases? That's right... they all involved foreign food.

Thomas Friedman didn't take the possibility of international food poisoning into effect when he extolled globalism in his 2005 best selling book, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*. The book got its name because Friedman said the world was now a level playing field where production of everything would automatically go to the least-cost producer. Although the book won the Financial Times and Goldman Sachs Business Book of the Year Award in 2005, Friedman's theory has now turned into a nightmare where America sacrificed its manufacturing industry and farmed out the production to foreign producers of 60 percent of fresh fruit, 35 percent of fresh vegetables and 10 to 15% of our beef.

Instead of being called the World is Flat, Friedman should have called his book *The World is Stupid*. How did Americans ever fall for this idea that benefited BIG BUSINESS, but hurt not only Taco Bell and Chipotle, but American farmers too because now my wife (and millions of others) won't eat their beloved Jalapeños or dine at their favorite Mexican restaurant until this dark cloud has passed. And she hasn't touched a salad in months.

I wonder, did it ever dawn on Friedman, the globalists or the Gay Ayatollah that diarrhea could cause more harm than a suicide bomber or a car bomb.

— www.LeePittsbooks.com

Agri Star announces plans for fire-damaged plant

Agri Star Meat & Poultry plans to rebuild its Postville, Iowa, processing facility after a fire this week destroyed an estimated 75% of the plant, according to the company's social media.

Postville Fire Chief Jeff Bohr told local news the fire started accidentally in the plant's laundry room and spread rapidly through the facility. The blaze burned for more than three days as 21 fire departments responded, using an estimated 3.5 million gallons of water to contain the fire and save part of the building.

Bohr estimated the plant suffered about a 75% loss, including structural damage, not counting destroyed products and packaging materials.

As Allamakee County's largest employer, Agri Star is critical to the local economy, Bohr said.

The fire was still smoldering Friday, reports said, as firefighters worked to prevent collapsed sec-

tions of the building and products inside from reigniting. Rainfall helped crews keep the fire from spreading further, and Bohr said portions of the facility remain salvageable.

In a statement posted on Facebook Agri Star said it is working with local, state and federal agencies to develop a plan to rebuild the facility and restore operations. "We are actively working alongside local, state,

and federal agencies to thoughtfully develop a plan for rebuilding our facility and restoring operations," the company said. "We are equally committed to bringing our products back to our customers as quickly as we can."

The company also pledged to remain "a strong, viable member of this community," preserving jobs and supporting local families and businesses.

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\$2,400 decision: Should you keep more heifers this fall?

For many cattle producers, a single decision this fall could shape the future of their operation: whether to sell valuable heifers for immediate income or retain them to help rebuild the herd.

The U.S. beef cow herd is at its lowest level in nearly 75 years, and cattle prices at record highs. The opportunity to expand has never been greater, but neither has the financial risk of getting it wrong, said Eric Bailey, University of Missouri Extension state beef nutrition specialist.

To help producers make informed decisions, MU Extension will host Retain With Intention: Building a Better Missouri Cow Herd Sept. 2-3 at the MU Southwest Research, Extension and Education Center near Mount Vernon.

A quality heifer calf may bring about \$2,400 at auction, so keeping her means turning down immediate income. The challenge is selecting females that will remain productive long enough to earn back their development costs and contribute to the operation's bottom line. With so much at stake, making the right replacement heifer decisions is more important than ever.

"The opportunity to expand is real, but so is the risk," he said. "With cattle prices where they are today, mistakes in replacement heifer selection can be extremely costly. Producers need a system for making those decisions intentionally rather than relying on tradition or intuition."

The two-day program will help producers evaluate replacement heifers using a whole-system approach that combines economics, genetics, nutrition and reproductive management.

In addition to classroom instruction, attendees will participate in live-heifer evaluation, sorting and ranking exercises, reproductive assessment demonstrations and a workshop to develop their own herd-retention criteria.

The program is led by MU Extension specialists Jamie Courter, Eric Bailey, Jordan Thomas and Wesley Tucker.

Registration is \$200 and limited to 45 participants. Find details and registration at <https://pears.io/events/mu/8083>.

Final Tyson Foods employees exit Nebraska processing plant

The last remaining employees at Tyson Foods' shuttered Lexington, Neb., plant, officially left the building — the site of a once thriving beef processing operation — last week.

Announced in November 2025, the closing occurred in January 2026, leaving upwards of 3,000 local residents without work. That number amounts to 30% of the town's population, according to KOLN 10 in Lincoln, Neb. Tyson initially kept on 294 employees to assist with the closing, before whittling that down to a skeleton crew of 127, per KOLN.

The shuttering of the plant is a reflection of the heavy weather the beef industry is currently experiencing with the U.S. cattle herd size at historic lows.

As Meatingplace reported, an analysis by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln estimated the annual statewide economic impact of the closure at \$3.28 bil-

lion. The plant, which opened in 1990 in a converted tractor factory, had the capacity to slaughter up to 5,000 head of cattle per day, or roughly 4.8% of total daily U.S. beef slaughter, according to the university.

The city of Lexington negotiated with Tyson to acquire some of the company's remaining assets, such as local farmland, its wastewater facility and access to the rail spur that connects to the Union Pacific Railway. "I'm encouraged to hear the City of Lexington will acquire and manage Tyson-owned assets to boost economic and job opportunities in the area. I've been pushing Tyson for this move in the wake of their very sudden plant closure, which was devastating for the community. I look forward to seeing this plan move forward and working with the city to build a strong future," U.S. Sen. Deb Fischer (R-Neb.) said in May.

— Meatingplace.com

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USDA cuts beef, pork production outlook as poultry output rises

USDA lowered its 2026 forecasts for beef and pork production while raising expectations for broiler and turkey output, according to the agency's latest World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report.

The agency lowered its overall U.S. red meat and poultry production forecast for 2026, with reductions in red meat production more than offsetting higher poultry production.

USDA cut its beef production outlook because of a slower expected pace of steer and heifer

slaughter through the end of the year. The agency also reduced its cow slaughter forecast for the remainder of 2026.

The forecast incorporates USDA's previously announced resumption of live cattle imports from Mexico beginning Aug. 24 through the Douglas, Ariz., Port of Entry. The projections assume other ports will remain closed until USDA provides an official timeline for reopening them.

USDA also lowered its 2027 beef production forecast, citing a slower pace of cattle marketings that is expected to reduce steer

and heifer slaughter despite increased placements during the first half of the year.

Pork production was revised lower for 2026 based on production data from the first half of the year and expectations for a slower slaughter rate and slightly lighter carcass weights during the third quarter. The 2027 pork production forecast was unchanged.

The agency also reduced its pork export forecast for the second half of 2026, citing weaker-than-expected demand in several key export markets. However, USDA slightly raised its pork export projection for 2027.

Beef exports were unchanged for the remainder of 2026 but lowered slightly for 2027. Beef imports were raised for the remainder of this year as strong U.S. beef demand and available supplies from Oceania are expected to support additional shipments.

On the poultry side, USDA raised its 2026 broiler production forecast based on recent slaughter data and increased its

turkey production outlook based on slaughter and hatchery data. Broiler and turkey production forecasts for 2027 were unchanged.

USDA lowered its cattle price forecasts for the third and fourth quarters of 2026 and through the end of 2027, citing weaker-than-expected demand for fed cattle. Hog price forecasts were raised

for the remainder of 2026 based on recent price data but left unchanged for 2027.

Broiler price projections were lowered for the third and fourth quarters following weaker-than-expected prices through July, while turkey price forecasts were raised for the remainder of the year.

— Meatingplace.com

JBS names new global CEO, Tomazoni to become board vice chairman

JBS named Wesley Batista Filho its next global CEO as part of a planned leadership transition at the world's largest meat company.

Batista Filho will take over in January 2027, succeeding Gilberto Tomazoni, who has served as global CEO since December 2018. Tomazoni will oversee the transition during the next five months before becoming vice chairman of the JBS board and a senior adviser.

Robert Howden (left), senior advisor to Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, and JBS USA CEO Wesley Batista Filho at the groundbreaking for a project at JBS's beef plant in Cactus, Texas.

Batista Filho has served as CEO of JBS USA since 2023, overseeing the company's largest global platform by revenue. JBS USA employs about 70,000 people and operates more than 60 beef, pork, poultry, prepared foods and other food production facilities across 31 states.

Batista Filho began his JBS career in 2011 as a trainee at the company's Greeley, Colo., beef plant. He later led beef operations in Uruguay and Paraguay, served as president of JBS Canada and led JBS USA Fed Beef.

He returned to Brazil in 2017 as CEO of JBS Brazil and became CEO of Seara, JBS' Brazilian poultry, pork and value-added foods business, in 2020. He was named global president of operations in 2022 before returning to the U.S. the following year.

"Wesley has a track record of success at JBS and knows our business deeply," Tomazoni said. "He started at the ground level of operations, going on to lead JBS Brazil and Seara to excellent results."

Tomazoni joined JBS in 2013 after previously holding executive positions at Sadia and Bunge Alimentos. During his tenure as global CEO, JBS revenue increased 73%, from \$49.7 billion to \$86.2 billion, according to the company. JBS also expanded into additional protein categories and value-added products and completed its listing on the New York Stock Exchange.

Tomazoni will continue as

chairman of Pilgrim's Pride Corp. and will also become chairman of the J&F Institute.

Batista Filho has headed JBS USA during a period of deep losses in the company's beef segment amid tight cattle supplies, with the company's Souderton, Pa., beef plant is due to close in late August. In a recent, wide-ranging interview, he told the Wall Street Journal that his favorite beef dish is oxtail, a traditional stew in Brazilian cuisine.

JBS carried out a Wall Street IPO last year, becoming dual listed in the U.S. and Brazil, a milestone for capital access that the company had pursued for years, and became listed on the Russell 2000 in June with hopes to qualify for inclusion in S&P indices in the foreseeable future. JBS was to release quarterly results later Monday, with an earnings call on Tuesday morning.

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Seminar will be held on September 1, following the morning weigh cow sale approximately at 10:30 a.m.

Laura and Legacy will sponsor a complimentary meal following the seminar with the High Noon Cow Sale starting at ... Noon.

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Learn more by joining us on Tuesday, Sept. 1 for the brief informational seminar!



Livestock News & Notes.....

Cattle herd reverses 8 years of declines in mid-year count

For the first time in nearly a decade the news was not all bad for the United States' cattle herd. According to the mid-year cattle report from USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the inventory of all cattle and calves in the U.S. totaled 94.2 million on July 1, a 200,000 increase over the 94 million from a year.

That's the first time total cattle inventory has not fallen year-over-year since 2018.

Other notable details from the NASS report included:

- At 38.1 million, the inventory of cows/heifers that calves was unchanged; beef cows were down 1% to 28.5 million, and milk cows were up 2% to 9.65 million.
- Heifers 500 pounds and over were up 1% to 14.7 million, while beef replacement heifers were up 3% to 3.8 million.
- Cattle/calves on feed for slaughter totaled 13.2 million, up 2% from last year, with feedlots of 1,000+ head accounting for 86.1% of total inventory.

USDA announces phased reopening of Southern cattle ports

The USDA announced it will begin a phased reopening of southern livestock ports next month, starting with the Douglas, Ariz., port of entry on Aug. 24, following what the agency said was progress by Mexico in controlling the spread of New World screwworm.

USDA said the reopening is contingent on Mexico continuing to meet milestones outlined in a joint action plan aimed at containing the pest. The department also will begin operational preparations to reopen the Santa Teresa and Columbus, N.M., ports, although no dates have been announced for those facilities.

All cattle entering through the reopened ports will undergo a full USDA inspection to ensure they show no signs of New World screwworm infestation.

Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins said the closure of southern ports over the past year was necessary to protect the U.S. livestock industry while federal, state and industry partners worked to contain the pest in Mexico.

USDA said Sonora and Chihuahua remain the lowest-risk Mexican states because of their established animal health inspection programs and their distance from southern Mexico, where most New World screwworm cases have been detected. The closest active case to the Douglas port was reported about 325 miles away on July 22.

The department said it will evaluate the success of the Douglas reopening before deciding whether to reopen additional ports to cattle, bison and horse imports. USDA added that the timeline remains flexible and could be delayed or paused if

post-opening audits or other information indicate an increased risk of New World screwworm in Sonora or Chihuahua.

Expert urges caution on GLP-1 fervor

PALM HARBOR, Fla. — Excitement around GLP-1 weight loss drugs, whose users need nutrient dense proteins like chicken, was a dominant theme here at the Chicken Marketing Summit.

But at least one market expert urged caution when considering marketing around the trend.

Maeve Webster, president of food industry consultancy Menu Matters, contradicted data presented earlier in the day Tuesday that 27% of American households have had a member who used GLP-1s, noting that other authoritative research puts current use at 11% of the US population.

Webster emphasized that the challenge for GLP-1 traction is a high drop-out rate, with 75% to 80% of users stopping use of the drug within the first year and 85% after the first year.

She cited as an example that Noom, a weight loss app that initially included GLP-1s in its system, is now advising customers on how to manage their diets after they stop using GLP-1s.

"I'm not saying GLP-1s are not an opportunity, but like any

diet options, there are plenty [of] people [who], the minute they see GLP-1s [marketed on food labels], [are] going to say, 'That's not for me,' Webster said.

She encouraged industry to solve for the associated problems, by calling out protein content and adjust portion sizes, but don't market it as GLP-1 friendly.

"Until current use starts closing in on 20%, I'm going to remain skeptical," she said.

Following Webster's presentation, industry consultant Lynn Dornblaser of Mintel said her company projects that GLP-1 use will top out at 14% by 2030.

DOJ indicts processor for illegally discharging 'flesh, blood and feces' into creek

According to a release from the Department of Justice, César P. Borges-Arroyo, Neftalí Borges-Gómez, Erison Delgado-Santos, and Héctor Fulgencio-Cabrera of Ganaderos Borges Inc. (GBI) are alleged to have discharged wastewater from their Naguabo, Puerto Rico, facility into U.S. waters without a Clean Water Act permit.

"We allege that this meat processing plant and at least four of its employees conspired to pump animal flesh, blood, and feces into a creek that flows to the ocean and

a public beach," said Principal Deputy Attorney General Adam Gustafson of the Justice Department's Energy and Natural Resources Division (ENRD).

The violations are alleged to have occurred between August 2018 and September 2025, during which time GBI president Borges-Arroyo and GBI operator Borges-Gómez are alleged to have directed employees to discharge liquid waste from GBI's waste retention lagoon towards an adjacent creek.

"They did this by using a submersible pump placed in the waste retention lagoon and connected to a hose, attempting to avoid millions of dollars in annual waste removal costs," the DOJ statement alleges.

The defendants will appear before the U.S. District Court for the District of Puerto Rico, and if convicted, they face a maximum penalty of five years in prison and \$250,000 in fines for each charge. GBI faces a maximum penalty of \$500,000 in fines per charge.

USDA offers \$500M boost for independent beef processors

USDA will open applications Aug. 10 for a \$500 million program aimed at expanding independent and regional beef processing capacity and supporting

U.S. cattle producers.

The Strengthening Processing for U.S. Ranchers, or SPUR, program will provide payments to eligible beef processing establishments. USDA will begin emailing partially completed applications to qualifying processors Aug. 10 using data from the Food Safety and Inspection Service.

The Farm Service Agency will administer the program nationally under the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act.

Eligible processors include federally inspected establishments and facilities participating in the Talmadge-Aiken Cooperative Inspection Program or Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program. Establishments must be operating when they apply.

University- and state-owned entities are not eligible, nor are the four largest U.S. beef processing companies.

Processors must also have a Unique Entity ID through SAM.gov. Applications are due Sept. 11.

USDA announced the SPUR initiative as part of its efforts to strengthen competition and increase processing options for U.S. ranchers.

Many of the preceding items were taken from Meatingplace.com



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Dairy Sale
Tuesday, Sept. 8 @ 10:30 a.m.

Special Cattle Sale
Tuesday, Sept. 15 @ 12:30 a.m.

Regular Cattle Sale
Tuesday, Sept 22 @ 12:30 a.m.

Hay & Cow Sale
Tuesday, Sept. 29 @ 12:30 a.m.
Hay Sale @ 11:30.

Strong El Niño: Good for U.S. cattle; worry for Brazil, Australia

Current global forecasts indicate a strong El Niño may be developing, which is generally good news for North American cattle producers, but a mixed bag for South American and Australian producers, according to a new analysis by Rabobank Agri Economy Research.

In El Niño conditions, the southern United States and the northern part of Mexico — both crucial beef cow-calf areas — usually see cooler and wetter weather, which could spur the long-awaited U.S. herd rebuild, the report states.

Meanwhile, the Pacific Northwest, Great Plains, Canadian Prairies and British Columbia, are likely to see warmer and drier conditions.

The National Weather Service this month reported surface and subsurface temperature and water current observations in the Pacific that “reflected a strengthening El Niño,” with its models showing an 81% chance of “a very strong El Niño” during the fourth quarter of 2026, potentially

as strong as any recorded since 1950. The agency voiced “very high confidence that El Niño will continue through early 2027,” setting that likelihood at 97%.

While a strong El Niño is generally beneficial to North American producers, Rabobank cautions that potential drier conditions in the northern latitudes could “stall the early stages of heifer retention and herd rebuilding that recently began among Canadian cattle producers.”

As for South America, the report says beef-producing ranches in southern Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay usually “benefit from stronger precipitation and improved grazing opportunities,” while noting that “excessive rainfall can create localized flooding and management challenges.”

However, Brazil’s major cattle producing areas in the country’s northern and central regions are closer to the equator, where El Niño often leads to drought.

“Those conditions could dampen recent optimism surrounding heifer retention and

herd expansion,” per the report.

Nevertheless, the analysis also notes that 48% of Brazil’s cattle herd is located in the country’s “Center-West and Southeast regions,” which are not overly affected by El Niño.

Rabobank, a Dutch multinational banking and financial services concern, points to Q2 2026 data from the Western Brazilian state of Mato Grosso that show “a double-digit year-on-year decline in female slaughter.”

“In practical terms, producers who have not culled cows by now are already focused on improving body condition scores ahead of the breeding season, which typically takes place between September and October,” the analysts said of South American cat-

tle producers.

A protracted drought in regions of South America is arguably “the greatest threat to the cattle sector,” which could lead to “[f]orced liquidation of grazing cattle [that] could overwhelm feedlot and processing capacity, accelerating price declines across regional cattle markets.”

In Australia, El Niño could usher in drier conditions to the eastern and central regions during the spring and summer. According to the report,

Australian cattle inventory has been at more than 31 million head — “near a cyclical peak” — since 2024, and processors are near full capacity.

“Capacity limitations are the main cattle sector risk,” the analysis reads. “If dryness intensifies into drought and accelerates herd liquidation, slaughter-ready supplies could outpace processor demand, deepening price discounts across cattle classes, especially store and replacement stock.”

— Meatingplace.com

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HINES from page 3

Texas Legislature, and backed by the American Veterinary Association, viewed me as a threat."

"On paper, I was the perfect guy to make an example of. But guess what? Appearances can sure as hell be deceiving."

Indeed. An old man with a big limp living on a disability pension. The old man can't fight long. Surely.

"That's when Institute for Justice took up my case and changed the entire game," Hines explains. "Texas never dreamed that Institute for Justice would step in. I was willing to fight for as long as it took to get a decision to help other veterinarians long after I'm gone."

Hines sued the Texas Board, claiming a First Amendment right to give veterinary advice online. A massive free speech case spilled into court.

Call Off the Dogs?

Hines sat on a bouncing seesaw. His fight would require 11 up-and-down judicial rulings to reach an end.

In 2015, the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against Hines. His speech, according to the 5th Circuit, was regulated by occupational licensure. Translated: It was not protected by First Amendment.

However, in 2018, a U.S. Supreme Court (NIFLA v. Becerra) decision put wind in Hines' sails again by ruling that occupational speech was protected. Additionally, a year prior, in 2017, Texas passed a law enabling medical doctors to practice telemedicine on humans without in-person exams.

Once again, Hines went back into the legal grinder. This time, the 5th Circuit acknowledged Hines had engaged in protected speech and sent him to trial court. The trial court gave Hines a green light: His actions were safeguarded by the First Amendment.

During the deposition process, the state's position unraveled, explains IJ attorney Jeff Rowes. A colleague of Rowes', IJ attorney Andrew Ward, discovered that one of the state's experts—Lori Teller, president of the American Veterinary Medical Association and a professor at Texas A&M Veterinary School, had given veterinary advice via the airwaves.

"She had a call-in show," Rowes says. "She gave veterinarian advice on the show and it seemed to be the height of

hypocrisy. When we were asking her questions under oath about her opinions as an expert, we showed her the transcripts of her own show, but we didn't tell her it was her."

"I don't remember the exact words of the exchange, but we asked, 'Is this person violating the law by giving advice without having first examined the animal in person?' She responded, 'Yes. Absolutely. This person is violating the law.'"

"At some point, I then asked her, 'What if I told you that this is you and these are your words?'"

"It was clear," Rowes adds. "The state's position was absurd."

Yet, Ron lost in the trial court again and went back to the federal court of appeals for a third time. The third trip, however, was the proverbial charm. He won a landmark victory. "It is," Rowes describes, "one of the best free speech decisions in the country."

Didn't matter. Texas was not about to call off the dogs. Texas dragged Hines, a 10-year outlaw in the state's eyes for answering phone calls and emails about sick animals, to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Digital Age

To no avail. The U.S. Supreme Court declined the case on April 20, 2026, leaving Hines' final First Amendment victory in place.

Hines' 13 years of litigation, spearheaded by Institute for Justice, mark a seismic free speech decision essential for the internet age. "Thanks to Ron, who never wavered, this is a landmark decision in favor of people who share advice and wisdom one-on-one," Rowes concludes. "And this case is also significant for two other reasons: One, our precedent ensures people have First Amendment rights across state and international borders. Two, there are lots of people who, when they retire, like Ron, still have a tremendous amount of knowledge to share. Our precedent ensures that any senior can continue to participate fully



CRYING SHAME: "There's so many animals and owners out there that need help, and it's a crying shame what the big vet organizations and

Texas Legislature tried to do, but they didn't get away with it," Ron Hines says. (Photo courtesy of IJ)

in the life of this country."

As for Hines, he remains active in helping animals, maintaining a sanctuary for injured birds at his home, and performing wildlife rehab for USFWS at no charge.

"We were actually at a place where doctors could provide

telemedicine online for people, but vets were banned from giving advice to pet owners, and they'd be prosecuted if they refused to stop," Hines concludes.

"That tells me that some vet boards should have an ostrich, head in the sand, as their official mascot. They deny that we live in

a digital age and they're afraid of free speech. This whole affair was never complicated: All I wanted to do, with Institute for Justice, was help people and animals, and get a court decision that might help other veterinarians in the future. I believe we did."

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Depopulation follows insanity

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

To be honest, this was a very hard piece to start writing because the information is endless and it should not be.

A friend of mine shared with me that a company, based in Texas, now plans to capture CO2 at an ethanol plant in Texas, compress it and place it on a train to Wyoming for injection. Just when I thought I heard all I could about modern-day insanity, I heard that.

I was in Laramie County Wyoming last weekend, near Carpenter, where they are currently injecting CO2 from Nebraska ethanol plants (via the Trailblazer pipeline) 1.5 miles into the earth.

Right off the bat, the energy cost of doing this does not warrant what is being done. For an ethanol plant to capture, cool and compress CO2 requires 50% of the energy equivalent of that being produced. What do you think the energy cost is of transporting compressed CO2 for 1,000 miles via train and then spending another 150% of the energy equivalent to force it down into the earth? ONLY the US Federal Government would look at this concept and consider it to be sound. It literally requires twice as much energy to compress, transport and bury CO2 than the ethanol manufacturing process actually produces.

Why are the Feds paying companies \$85/ton to bury plant food?

It must be so that we can achieve Net Carbon Zero by 2050. Never mind that CO2 is the most essential element for plant growth. Never mind the fact that the human body is 17% carbon and we release an average of 2.7 lbs of CO2 into the atmosphere daily. Net Carbon Zero equals death to all plants and animals, including humans.

Here is a fact that most folks don't seem to know. Carbon Dioxide (CO2) has 17 commercial uses. The most common use is refrigeration. However, data indicates that 900 CO2 transcritical



It literally requires twice as much energy to compress, transport and bury CO2 than the ethanol manufacturing process actually produces.

cal booster systems are currently installed in the U.S., part of a global total of approximately 46,500 systems.

If you are like me, you are wondering "what the heck is a transcritical booster system?" and here is where it gets interesting:

CO2 transcritical booster systems are 100% natural refrigerant solutions that use carbon dioxide (R-744) to provide both medium-temperature (MT) and low-temperature (LT) refrigeration in a single, centralized rack, eliminating the need for synthetic HFC refrigerants. These systems operate by compressing CO2 in two stages: LT compressors discharge into the suction of MT compressors, which then boost the refrigerant to pressures exceeding its critical point (above 1055 psig or 74 bar) before sending it to a gas cooler for heat rejection.

Yale University reported:

Upper atmosphere cooling: Higher up in the stratosphere, (CO2) actually radiates heat out to space very efficiently, causing that layer of the atmosphere to cool down even as the surface warms.

They want us to believe that, at 430 ppm, CO2 in the earth's atmosphere allows the heat to go to earth from the sun but when the rays are "reflected" back to the atmosphere, the CO2 traps 50% of the heat which results in global warming. Let's remember that commercial greenhouses artificially pipe in CO2 at a minimum of 800 ppm for enhanced

plant growth so why are we worried about it?

A scientist from Norway recently zeroed in on the benefits of CO2 as a cooling agent. NTH Professor Emeritus Gustav Lorentzen has reported:

The first refrigeration system using CO2 actually dates back to 1879. The system was popular in military and shipping due to its non-toxicity and inflammable properties. But technical issues and heavy promotion of CFCs by the chemical industry saw CO2 disappear from the market by the 1940s.

I take a bit of issue with "non-toxicity" because we do use it at a concentration of 7% to kill pigs, turkeys and chickens in our newest packing plants. However, corporate politics again seemed to play a role in the demonization of CO2 as a cooling agent. As I stated at the top of the conversation, I have only skimmed the surface on this information, but someone is going to have to explain to me why there is such a global push to bury the most important element of plant growth on earth. At this moment, the only answer I can see is depopulation.

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.

Fire breaks out in Kosher processing plant in Iowa

One of the largest Kosher processing plants in the nation sustained major damage in a fire earlier this month.

The blaze broke out at the Agri Star processing plant in Postville, Iowa, early Aug. 4, leading to a response by multiple fire departments as well as warnings about air quality. Residents were also asked to curb water usage as so much was expended fighting the fire. The office of the Sheriff of Allamakee County said that there were no injuries. The cause of the fire has as yet to be determined.

Agri Star is one the largest Kosher processing plants in the country, producing tens-of-millions of pounds of beef and poultry annually. When asked if the fire would disrupt production for coming Jewish High Holidays, an Agri Star spokesperson told the Jerusalem News Syndicate,

"We're in the process of getting things going. ... We're doing the best we can."

According to Anash.org, the company, currently owned by Hershey Friedman, was founded as Agriprocessors three decades ago by the Rubashkin family, becoming the largest Kosher meat processor in the U.S. It is one of the largest employers in Northeast Iowa.

"It is a very heavy fire, and people are extremely worried about what will happen with the plant going forward," Shliach Rabbi Aron Schimmel told Anash.org in an interview.

"Many people in the area rely on the facility for their parnassah [Hebrew term for "livelihood"], and there is a lot of concern among workers and their families about what this means for their livelihoods."

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BARNs OF PIKE COUNTY

McElroy's barn survived two fires and had several additions

By CAROLYN ALLEN
Special to The Advocate

The remains of this big old barn sit down the hill from the large two-story house in the Calumet neighborhood of south-eastern Pike County. The farm was in the McElroy family from at least 1867 – starting with Robert McElroy who was a captain in the Union army during the Civil War. He died in 1879, and the farm eventually passed to son James and then to James's daughter Virginia.

Interestingly, the names McElroy and McIlroy appear to be somewhat interchangeable in early records and newspaper accounts. According to People Places and Pikers, Daniel McIlroy and wife Jane Wisely McIlroy came to Pike County from Ireland via Kentucky. They bought around 116 acres a couple miles east of Bowling Green near Stevens Springs in 1833. Daniel's name was spelled McElroy on the land document. The tombstone in Bowling Green City Cemetery, however, reads Daniel McIlroy. Daniel died in 1836, and Jane (along with help from the older children) raised Thomas, Mary, Margaret, Elizabeth, Robert and John. John's 1916 obituary spelled his name with an "E" and said that he was the brother of the late Robert McElroy and the late Thomas F. McIlroy (notice the different spellings).

I would chalk all this up to poor spelling except that the story in the area was that the name change actually occurred due to split loyalties among the brothers during the Civil War. Unfortunately, with Missouri being a border state, there were more than a few families with split loyalties.

Happily, however, later generations put the controversy behind them and got along well – although they maintained the different spellings. There are still McIlroy branches and McElroy branches of the family. James (Jim) and brothers Hayden and Rufus spelled "McElroy" with an "E" as did their father Robert.

Robert McElroy married Dazarene Eidson in 1865. He must have bought the farm where this barn sits shortly before or after that because newspapers reported that James W. was born in a log cabin on the farm in 1867 and spent his whole



life there. Robert died in 1879 when James and his brothers were still fairly young. Their mother remarried in 1881, but hung onto the land, and when James married Jennie Palmer in 1889, the newlyweds lived on and operated the farm.

James was listed as the owner in the 1899 plat book.

James was a stockman as well as a farmer, and old newspapers reported him winning shows with his mule teams and individual mules as well as selling cattle and hogs. He would have needed a good barn, and this one certainly would have qualified.

However, he may have come close to losing it in 1906. The Pike County News in June of that year reported that lightning had struck James McElroy's barn twice within a few minutes setting it on fire, but the flames were extinguished before they did much damage.

That may have been this barn, because the house was built around 1908, and I've always heard that farmers build their barns before their houses!

In an interview about the farm published in the 16 Nov. 1950 Bowling Green Times, James McElroy said that he owned around 200 acres – 160 of which were cultivated. The main crops were corn, wheat, oats and hay. By the time of the interview in 1950, James had pretty much retired from farming, and neighbor Bob Conrad farmed the land on a crop-share basis.

Mr. McElroy kept active with livestock, however, and at the time of the interview he still had around 18 hogs and 60 baby pigs to care for during the winter.

Once red, the barn still retains some of its former color on the protected sides. It was built on a rock foundation with some of the bump-outs resting on rock piers. Inside it is a bit of a maze with additions in several directions.

As with many barns, I'm guessing the additions were built to accommodate growing machinery. The storage/machinery bays are definitely large enough to hold wagons or tractors, and they open at both ends so you would've been able to drive through. There was also a covered addition in back large enough for a wagon or two.

The barn has many doors and several main aisles. One aisle has built-in feed troughs and



MCELROY'S BARN: The James McElroy barn in southeastern Pike County once housed prize-winning mules, as well as cattle and hogs. The barn survived two lightning strikes in 1906, as the flames were extinguished before the fires caused much damage. (Photos by Carolyn Allen)

another separates the barn from what appears to have been a corn crib. There is a large loft but no signs of a hay trolley or track.

While the barn still has some tall horse or mule stalls, most of the stalls have been turned into pens with shorter sides. That was probably done to accommodate the hogs and baby pigs James McElroy mentioned in the interview.

Since the McElroy family sold the farm, the barn has not

been used much except possibly for storage. These pictures are several years old, and it has deteriorated even more since then. Its siding, however, is currently getting new life as it is being removed and repurposed in different ways. The missing siding, overgrown trees, hole in the roof, and slight tilt give the barn a very sad look today.

In its day, however, I believe James McElroy's barn was a good one!

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Here are tips for grazing standing corn this summer, fall and winter

By AARON BERGER
University of Nebraska Extension

Pasture and hay are in short supply in much of Nebraska due to drought conditions, while the price of corn is currently below the cost of production. These circumstances are prompting producers to consider the opportunity of grazing standing corn with the cow herd as a feed option for the rest of the summer, fall and winter.

Grazing drought-stressed corn fields in summer

In some regions, drought-stressed corn may be released by crop insurance and would provide an option for grazing. A Nebraska Extension article titled “Forage Options for Drought-stressed Non-irrigated Vegetative Corn and Nitrate Concerns” provides information on utilizing dryland, drought-stressed corn as a harvested feed or grazing resource. When considering grazing drought-stressed corn, first check herbicide labels for any grazing restrictions.

Nitrates could be a potential concern. Cattle should not be turned out hungry. When grazing starts, cattle should self-adapt by eating any developing ears and the tops of plants first. Then they will be more acclimated to eating the higher-nitrate areas lower in the plant.

Make sure plenty of clean, fresh water is available to help reduce nitrate risk. Protein is higher when grazing corn in a vegetative stage than as it matures. Depending upon the state of maturity of the corn, as well as the stage of production for cattle grazing, protein supplementation may be needed to meet cattle nutrient requirements.

Grazing green, growing corn in good conditions

For many, the thought of grazing good, green, standing corn that is tasseling and forming ears is hard to imagine. However, corn is a warm-season, annual grass. Fields at this stage of maturity can provide a large supply of high-energy, quality forage.

For cow-calf producers who have access, strip-grazing standing corn can provide an alternative to feeding cows in drylot if pasture is short. It can be a competitively priced feed option when compared to buying hay or other feedstuffs and including the cost of equipment and labor needed for feeding.

When grazing standing corn that is progressing to maturity, strip-grazing will help efficiently utilize the crop and reduce the risk of acidosis as corn ears continue to form and grain is made. Usually, cattle are given two to three days of feed at a time with a target of 60%-80% grazing efficiency. Cattle will typically consume 2.5%-3% of their body weight on a dry-matter basis a day of this quality forage.

When grazing cow-calf pairs, don’t forget to count the calf in calculating the amount of feed that will be needed. Supplemental protein may be required depending on the maturity of the corn and nutrient needs of the cattle

grazing.

Logistically, rows of corn will need to be laid down using an ATV or other equipment to build the temporary electric fence and keep cows from knocking standing corn down into an electric fence and shorting it out.

Always have a second and even a third grazing area ready with fence built ahead of where the cattle are currently. This helps limit cattle getting into the whole field if an escape happens.

Another option for strip-grazing standing corn is virtual fence technology. Research at the University of Nebraska has shown this to be an effective tool for strip-grazing annual forages, with containment rates exceeding 98%.

Does it work economically?

When considering the economics of grazing green standing

corn, there are several questions that need to be asked.

What is the cost of the next alternative feed option of comparable quality into the belly of the cow-calf pair or dry cow if grazing in the late summer, fall or winter?

What are the benefits of reduced expenses by harvesting the crop with cattle vs. combining and hauling the grain? For example, the “2026 Nebraska Agricultural Custom Rates” report states harvesting irrigated corn is \$0.32 per bushel (bu.) and hauling is \$0.15 per bu. for a total of \$0.47 per bu., or \$94 per acre for harvesting costs if the crop yields 200 bu. per acre.

What is the value of grazing and recycling nutrients being consumed from grain and stover back on the field as fertilizer (manure and urine) at today’s prices? Around 0.70 pound (lb.)

of nitrogen, 0.31 lb. of phosphate, 0.27 lb. of potassium and 0.6 lb. of sulfur are in 1 bu. (56 lb.) of corn grain.

What is the value of being able to plant additional forage for grazing later in the fall and next spring if standing corn is utilized this summer, providing the option to plant another crop?

What is the availability of water access for cattle, convenience and cost of delivery?

Here is some quick math for grazing an irrigated corn crop in late summer/early fall with cow-calf pairs. A 200-bu. corn crop at \$4.75 per bu. and corn residue grazing at \$30 per acre generates a gross value of \$985 per acre.

Gross value per acre of grain harvest and grazing residue \$985

Reduced harvest expense of not combining and hauling corn (\$94)

Estimated value of corn grain

nutrients retained [30% of nitrogen (N), 80% of phosphorus (P) and potassium (K)] (\$125)

Value of grazing per acre needed to equal the value of crop after credits \$766

A corn crop is rapidly accumulating dry matter as it moves from the tassel stage when approximately 35% of total dry matter is present to full maturity, black layer, corn. Total plant dry matter is accumulating rapidly from tasseling to black layer and then begins to decrease as the corn plant dies.

As an estimate of dry-matter yield, based on historic silage yields with 200-bu. corn, we will assume that there is approximately 25 ton of forage per acre at 65% moisture when the crop is at

See **GRAZING CORN**,
page 18

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Cargill workers approve deal, clearing way for Fort Morgan restart

More than 1,700 workers at Cargill's Fort Morgan, Colo., beef plant are set to return to work after Teamsters Local 455 members overwhelmingly ratified a new five-year labor agreement, ending a three-month dispute that has kept the facility idle.

Cargill and the union said the plant will undergo a phased restart, with workers returning on different schedules as the company prepares to resume cattle processing.

Cargill said employees will undergo training and other return-to-work activities while teams prepare equipment and production areas following the extended shutdown. The company is also coordinating with cattle

suppliers ahead of the restart.

"Initial harvesting will begin once employee training, cattle availability and operational readiness are confirmed, with broader operations following as the restart progresses," Cargill said.

The Teamsters said the return-to-work process is expected to take about 30 days.

"While this contract is not perfect, it is a legally binding agreement that provides security for the more than 1,700 men and women who keep Cargill running," Teamsters Local 455 said.

The agreement brings an end to a dispute that escalated May 20, when Cargill locked out more than 1,700 workers after union

members rejected the company's previous contract offer. The contract covering workers at the facility had expired Feb. 22.

The two sides negotiated for months over wages, benefits and other contract provisions. In June, Local 455 filed unfair labor practice charges against Cargill over the lockout. Cargill maintained that the lockout was necessary amid uncertainty surrounding a potential work stoppage and said it remained willing to negotiate.

Cargill and union leaders appeared to make a breakthrough July 28, when they reached a recommended settlement following in-person negotiations. Union members rejected that agreement

in early August, however, sending the two sides back to negotiations.

Cargill said it welcomed the latest ratification and would work with the union on the restart.

"We recognize that the past several months have been difficult for employees, their families and the broader Fort Morgan community," the company said. "We look forward to welcoming employees back and moving for-

ward together."

The restart will return a major U.S. beef processing facility to operation at a time when the industry has been reducing slaughter capacity amid historically tight cattle supplies. Cargill said it will continue using its broader supply chain network to support cattle suppliers and customers while the Fort Morgan facility gradually resumes production.

— Meatingplace.com

Tight beef supplies weighing on U.S. exports

U.S. beef exports for the first half of the year were down 9% compared to the pace in 2025 amid tight domestic supplies, though strong global prices for bovine meat limited the decline in export value to just 4%, according to USDA data compiled by the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF).

Half-year beef exports were 545,649 metric tons (mt), worth \$4.74 billion. The decline compared to January-June 2025 was nearly 57,000 metric tons, with export revenues down \$182.6 million. The new data for June, issued Wednesday was actually better than the pace set through May, with export volumes for the month down less than 6% and value up nearly 3%, compared to June 2025.

U.S. beef has been almost entirely locked out of China since March 2025. Despite Beijing's renewal of U.S. facility registrations in late May, June saw no renewal of Chinese imports.

Numerous beef plant suspensions by the Chinese customs authority, along with "uncertainty" arising from Beijing's enforcement of residue testing, remain impediments, according to USMEF. The system of trade volume "safeguards" established by China for beef this year — similar to U.S. tariff-rate quotas — are likely to sharply curtail demand for Australian and Brazilian beef in the second half of the year, creating opportunities for U.S. exporters if trade barriers can be overcome. "While we never want to see exports down year-over-year, global demand for U.S. beef continues to be very resilient," said USMEF President Dan Halstrom said recently.

Excluding China, U.S. beef exports are down just 1%, with value up 6%. Volumes to the largest destinations for U.S. beef were down in the first half: Japan 8%, South Korea 10%, Mexico 1% and Canada 14%.

Hong Kong, which operates as

a separate customs entity from mainland China, jumped into the top five destinations with 83% volume growth so far this year to 37,680 mt through June. Beef volume to Taiwan rose 11% in the first half of 2026.

"The economic situation throughout Asia remains challenging, with lost purchasing power in U.S. dollar terms, yet customers continue to purchase a wide range of U.S. beef cuts, at record prices. This gives us an optimistic outlook for the second half," Halstrom said.

Exports to the Middle East dipped 15% during January-June, as the region labored under logistics and financial disruptions arising from the war with Iran.

Among smaller markets, first-half volumes rose to the Caribbean and Central and South America. In Southeast Asia, large gains to Vietnam and Indonesia outweighed a fall in exports to the Philippines.

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Livestock News & Notes.....

MU Hundley-Whaley field day to showcase crop research, management strategies

ALBANY, Mo. – The Hundley-Whaley Extension and Education Center invites producers, agribusiness professionals and community members to attend its annual field day Thursday, Sept. 3, for updates on crop research and management strategies for northwestern Missouri farms.

The free event will feature University of Missouri researchers and specialists discussing timely topics affecting corn and soybean production, including disease management, field drainage challenges, biological crop stimulants and planting date considerations.

MU Extension specialists and faculty members will present research findings and recommendations. Speakers and topics include:

Mandy Bish – “Managing the Margin: Disease Updates and Fungicide Decisions”

Kelly Nelson – “Blind Inlets in Terraced Fields”

Gurbir Singh – “Biological Stimulants in Corn: Hype or Reality?”

Andre Reis – “Optimizing Soybean Yield Across Planting Dates in the Northwest Region”

“Field days are a cornerstone of the University of Missouri’s land-grant mission, providing an opportunity for producers to see research in action and interact directly with specialists addressing the challenges facing agriculture today,” said Shawn Deering, director of the MU Hundley-Whaley Extension and Education Center. “By taking research out of the classroom and into the field, we can better serve our communities and provide producers with tools and knowledge they can apply on their operations.”

The event begins with breakfast at 7:30 a.m., followed by introductions at 8:30 a.m. Field tours run 9-11 a.m. Admission is free.

MU Hundley-Whaley Center is in Gentry County at 1109 S. Birch St., Albany. For more information, visit <https://muext.us/HundleyWhaley>.

Agri Star hopeful for ‘limited’ reopening after devastating fire

Agri Star Meat and Poultry is preparing for a potential limited resumption of processing operations after a devastating fire.

“Since the fire at our plant, tremendous effort has gone into cleaning, repairing and preparing our facility for the next chapter,” the company posted to its

Facebook page. “Thanks to the determination and dedication of many, we are optimistic that we will resume limited production this coming week (contingent upon the successful completion of required inspections).”

The blaze, which originated in a laundry accident and burned for three days earlier this month, destroyed an estimated 75% of the plant. Agri Star employs more than 600 workers, and is one of the U.S.’ top processors of kosher meats; rabbis commented that the lost capacity could affect the supply of kosher meats for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur holidays.

Regarding the plant’s limited reopening, Agri Star stated it is “thrilled to begin welcoming some of our team members,” and it has “begun the call back/text process.”

The processor continued, “Although we still have a great deal of work ahead of us — and rebuilding will take time — bringing members of our team back through the doors and beginning production again represents an important and hopeful milestone. The road ahead will require continued patience, flexibility, and hard work, but we are incredibly grateful and proud to be taking this step forward.”

Cargill CEO: Future of food depends on stronger supply chains

Cargill said the food and agriculture industry’s biggest challenge is shifting from producing more food to moving it more efficiently through increasingly complex global supply chains, as the company outlined its long-term strategy in its latest annual report.

In a letter accompanying the report, Board Chair and CEO Brian Sikes said slowing population growth, aging consumers, shifting dietary preferences, geopolitical tensions, artificial intelligence (AI) and climate disruption are reshaping the global food system, requiring companies to focus on “smarter movement, stronger connections and deeper trust” rather than simply increasing production.

Cargill said it has spent the past two years restructuring its operations, consolidating five enterprises into three and reducing its business groups from 23 to 14 while investing in digital technologies, AI capabilities and acquisitions, including Mig-Plus and Teys, to improve efficiency and better serve customers.

The company reported fiscal 2026 revenue of \$164 billion, which it said reflected year-over-year growth.

AI remains a major focus of the company’s strategy. Cargill said it has integrated AI tools across its operations for more than a decade to improve supply chain management, product development, grain forecasting and research. It also said an AI-powered hypothesis engine is helping researchers reduce work

that once took months to just hours.

The company also highlighted consumer trends it expects to influence future food demand, including increased use of GLP-1 weight-loss medications. Cargill said about 15% of U.S. adults have used a GLP-1 drug, result-

ing in an estimated 1% to 2% reduction in overall calorie consumption while increasing demand for protein-forward and health-oriented foods.

Looking ahead, Cargill said it plans to continue investing in technology, farmer support, customer partnerships and workforce development while

strengthening global food supply chains. The company said it provided \$95 million in philanthropic contributions and employees logged nearly 51,000 volunteer hours during fiscal 2026.

Many of the preceding items were taken from Meatingplace.com

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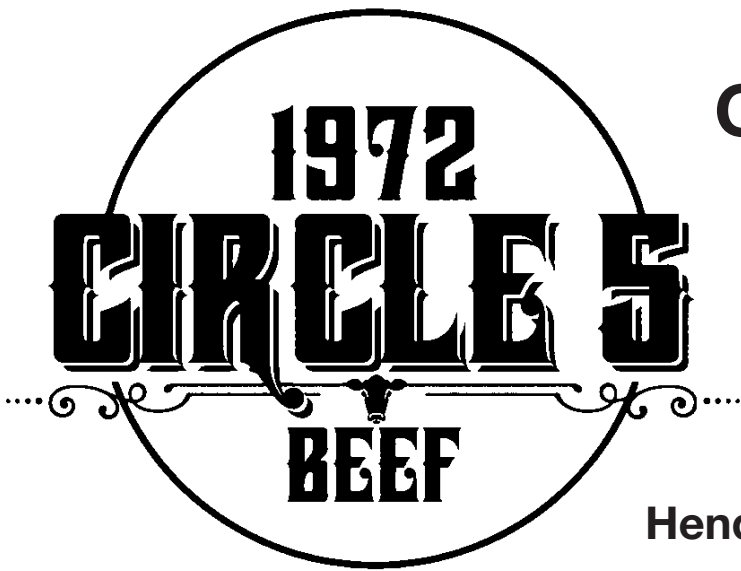
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Amid an August blizzard of data, the China summit is still on

By STEVE DITTMER
Executive Vice President
Agribusiness Freedom Foundation



Like boxers trading little jabs in the first couple rounds of a 15-round bout, China and the Trump Administration have been trading restrictions and tariff feints getting ready for the Trump-Xi summit in Washington the end of September.

But so far, the summit is on track according to the Administration. Going beyond most packing plants regaining certification to some substantial orders for beef and variety meats would be a welcome outcome from the September meeting, especially for cuts and variety meats not selling for top dollar in America.

The Economy and Useful Data

It’s easy to say the overall economy is doing well and the stock market is also, but there are data points that back up general opinions. And the economy’s health is critical to keep beef moving to support prices.

Here are some figures that explain what’s going on behind the headlines.

July’s CPI was +0.1% over June’s number, compared to -.4 in June. The year/year number was +3.4 percent. That annual number has been affected significantly during the late winter, and so far, by the Iran war and subsequent energy price increases. Remember that there is no supply problem in the U.S., as we are producing records amounts of oil and natural gas and exporting lots of LNG. But oil is priced on the global market and the restrictions on tankers moving through the Straits of Hormuz have oil and our fuel prices constantly moving.

Chris Phelan is the new chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors. You may recall that President Trump appointed Stephan Miran to the Federal

Reserve board earlier this year. Pierre Yared has filled in an acting chair in the meantime. Phelan is an economics professor at the University of Minnesota, an advisor to the Minneapolis Federal Reserve and a University of Chicago grad. He does have to be confirmed by the Senate.

Phelan discussed economic data with Larry Kudlow on Fox Business. The Core CPI (excluding food and energy) came in at 0.2% July/June; 2.4 percent yr./yr.; the three-month trend: 0.5%, 1.6 yr./yr. All figures were low enough to inspire some confidence that the Fed will leave interest rates alone at the September FOMC meeting.

Phelan mentioned that while prices were both above and below average, several important ones were below the averages: beef, auto insurance and prescription drugs. Trump has ended the practice of the U.S. subsidizing drug prices for rest of world, Phelan pointed out.

Brietbart’s John Carney’s summary: Durable goods manufacturing was up a big 7.2 percent in the second quarter. Durable goods jobs in July increased +18,000, while for the three months they were up +44,000 and YTD +72,000 (Breitbart Business Digest).

Real hourly wages grew very little, +0.05% July/June, but were up over the last three-months at an annualized 2.3%

The Producer Price Index (PPI) serves somewhat as a harbinger of what’s to come for prices, as it includes sales to businesses but also includes consumer sales and foreign purchasers. July’s PPI: 0.0% July/June; +4.7% year/year. The three-month PPI, in at +1.3 % (annualized), CPI at 0.5% (annualized).

July PPI food prices fell 0.9%, the biggest drop this year.

Grocery prices dropped 0.1% in July but restaurant and food consumed outside the home rose 0.3 %

We’ve mentioned that prices are so high, mostly from inflation during Biden’s term: Peak: 9.1% yr./yr. Cumulative CPI growth +21.4 percent for 4-year term.

The July jobs report, while down 23,000 on the headlines number, disguised the shift of jobs to more private sector jobs (+30,000) and cuts in government jobs (-53,000).

Since the beginning of Trump’s current term, there have been 877,000 new private sector jobs and cuts to government jobs (-327,000), (Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent).

Why was the GDP for the second quarter so low? It was explained in the way it’s figured. The equation for Gross Domestic Product: GCP= C (public consumption) + I (business investment, plant and equipment) + G (government spending) + (Exports- Imports).

The second quarter included huge import numbers because of companies loading up for summer AI data center construction, chips and chip manufacturing equipment.

That’s a lot of data but it illustrates that the media narrative that everything is terrible is not backed up by the data. Almost all of the figures came in better than pundits predicted. Inflation does seem to be grudgingly retreating and the likelihood that interest rates will stay where they are is better.

Data are better than consumer confidence surveys to base business decisions on. But political attitudes don’t always take data into account.

Prices overall at the grocery, restaurant bills and prices at the pump carry lots of weight at the ballot box.

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

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Digging Deeper....

By JUSTIN ANGELL

I’m beginning to believe the greatest threat to the American people and the American way of life is not an enemy either foreign or domestic. I believe the screen time that disseminates disinformation, encourages discontent and generally perpetuates ignorance all boils down to “the algorithms”.

Keeping this in mind, I wanted to talk about and explain the cracks developing in both the American and global economies that I believe may soon affect us all. Unfortunately, as I tried to research, I was bombarded by reams of economic information that supported what I was researching that basically shoved me into an echo chamber. The algorithms sent me information and opinions, then sent me more information to substantiate and corroborate.

Saving time, I’m not going into the detail of what I have sourced, instead I’m going right to the summary.

The world’s financial system with the dollar as the base currency is starting to show cracks and weaknesses resulting from the rampant governments worldwide overspending for decades. The 40 trillion dollars of debt admitted by the United States government doesn’t include unfunded pensions and all future obligations, including social security, military and government pensions etc.

Do you have a pension? Is it funded? Do you have a 401k? Is it invested into the insanely overpriced data center and hyper scalers? If you read this and don’t know where your retirement investments and savings are, you probably need to find out.

Bond markets in the USA and globally are having to absorb fewer buyers, especially for American treasuries.

For decades, the Japanese savers have provided a source of zero interest money (known as the yen carry trade) to stock market investors, sovereign wealth funds, growth companies, etc... But, that gravy train is coming to an end, and with it I am afraid eventually so will the historically cheap interest rates we have enjoyed for decades.

Do you have fixed interest

rates?

All this is terrible timing for the treasury and the FED, who is faced with rolling over and refinancing trillions of dollars worth of government debt accumulated over several decades. The bond market is the key, as the bond market goes, so will the rest of the economy.

According to my algorithm’s information, over the next few years, interest will be pushed higher as private companies compete for financing with over-extended governments. In an effort to pay obligations, governments will print increasingly more money, diluting the value of our currencies even more. Inflation is nearly inevitable.

Solid unprintable assets like land, precious metals (maybe Bitcoin, maybe commodities like oil and cattle) should all hold value. We see these investments and everyday expenses today and say “everything is so high”, but what we’re actually seeing in real time is the slow erosion of the value of the money.

Maybe bred cows are actually cheap?

I don’t ever want to be the Debbie downer, Kelly killjoy or the fun sponge, but I also believe we as individuals have time to

influence the trajectory of our family’s futures. Many of you, especially young people reading this may be tempted to scoff because you’ve never seen a bad day or a bad year or bad decade. The term “recency bias” is the tendency to overemphasize the importance or recent experiences among other things.

In this case, we basically believe that since it’s never been bad. it’s never going to be bad.

Again, I don’t want to be an alarmist, but I also don’t want to be the guy that knew something ,but didn’t say anything. Take this for what it’s worth — my conscience is now clear.

The good news is even though inevitably there will be some type of financial reset, we should all make it through to the other side.

Today, even though the cattle market is lower, it’s still historically very high. The cow calf man is in the driver seat and should be safe for years, especially if depreciating assets are paid for. Always remember.... we live in the best place in the world at the best time in history.

If this has been thought-provoking, but too superficial, give me a call: If you have complaints, give Jon a call.

Here’s to your success!

Biological control: Natural enemies can help manage pests

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Biological control – using living organisms to help manage insect pests and weeds – can be an effective part of an integrated pest management (IPM) strategy, says University of Missouri Extension horticulturist Tamra Reall. Many gardeners are already familiar with common biological controls, whether that means encouraging natural predators in the garden, applying beneficial bacteria to manage certain insect pests or using specialized organisms to suppress difficult-to-control weeds.

“Biological control is not about eliminating every pest,” says Reall. “The goal is to reduce pest populations to levels that plants can tolerate while protecting beneficial organisms and the environment.”

Like any management strategy, biological controls work best when matched to right pest and used under the right conditions. Some organisms are highly specific, targeting only a single weed or pest species without harming non-target wildlife. Some require precise temperature, moisture or timing to provide effective control. Understanding the biology of both the pest and its natural enemy is critical to success, Reall says.

“Biological control is one tool among many,” she says. Often, a combination of management practices produces better long-term results than relying on any single approach.

Prevention remains the first line of defense. Selecting healthy plants, practicing good garden sanitation and monitoring landscapes regularly can intercept many problems before they escalate. Reall encourages gardeners to start with accurate identification. “Choosing the right approach begins with understanding the problem. Once you know what you’re dealing with, you can choose the right tool, use it at the right time and provide the conditions that allow it to succeed.”

For help identifying pests, weeds, or plant damage in your garden, contact your local MU Extension center or visit the MU Extension Plant Diagnostic Clinic.

GRAZING CORN from page 14

the optimum silage harvest window for forage/grain available. This would be equal to 8.75 tons per acre on a dry-matter basis. If 60% of the standing corn crop at peak production, on a dry-matter basis, is consumed by the cow-calf pairs during the grazing period, this equals 5.25 tons consumed per acre. At a cost of \$766 per acre divided by 5.25 tons of dry corn forage and grain, this equals \$145 per ton on a dry-matter basis into the belly of the cow-calf pair. On a hay equivalent, if this was valued as a “hay” at 15% moisture, it would have a value of \$125 per ton.

Is harvesting 5.25 tons of dry matter per acre with strip-grazing standing corn a realistic target? It will depend on the stage at which grazing is initiated and how efficiently grazing occurs. The cost of fencing, any needed protein and energy supplement, as well as management and care would

need to be added to the feed cost of \$145 per ton on a dry-matter basis to get a total cost per day.

Grazing standing corn in the fall and winter

When corn matures and is going to be grazed standing, limit daily feed access to efficiently utilize the grain and reduce the risk of overeating and acidosis. The amount of area to be allocated daily will be based on estimated corn yield. The amount of corn targeted to be consumed determines the amount of area being allocated.

Assuming dry, pregnant cows are being grazed and the corn yield is 200 bu. per acre with 85% utilization, 100 cows would require 0.15 acres per day to meet a target of 13 lb. of grain being consumed per day. Additional forage may need to be supplied, as the husks, leaves and stalk provided with the corn

being consumed may not be adequate to meet fiber needed for rumen health. One way this can be accomplished is by combining the field and leaving strategic strips of standing corn that could be utilized with remaining crop residue.

Daily providing the ionophore Rumensin® with 1 lb. of a supplement that contains needed vitamins and minerals, and additional required protein will help to balance the cow’s diet, improve efficiency and help

ensure nutrient requirements are met.

The grazing of standing corn is rarely utilized in Nebraska as a whole. However, with a shortage of forage for grazing and hay, current market conditions for fertilizer and corn, along with the advent of virtual fence technology, circumstances have come together to make it an option worth considering this year to feed the cow herd.

– Reprinted from Angus Beef Bulletin

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Eastern Missouri Commission Company, Bowling Green
Market Report for Friday, August 14, 2026
Receipts: 1,132 Week ago: 348 Year ago: 428

Compared to last week's light test with little comparison, calves under 600 pounds sold with a lower undertone and feeder steers and heifers over 600 lbs sold with a sharply lower undertone. Feeder cattle markets have had a rough week with sharply lower futures, lower fed cattle market and with Tyson plant in Joslin, IL closing has markets feeling uncertain and volatile. Slaughter cow and bull trade would be mixed with the lean cows trading mostly steady leaving the breaker and boner cows trading \$5.00-\$8.00 lower and bulls trading mostly steady with light test Supply included: 89% Feeder Cattle (38% Steers, 61% Heifers, 1% Bulls); 11% Slaughter Cattle (93% Cows, 7% Bulls). Feeder cattle supply over 600 lbs was 87%.

Market Reports

Sponsored by Prairie Queen Transportation, LLC

Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1 – Few 400-500 lbs 459.50-467.50; 550-600 lbs 432.00-447.00; 600-700 lbs 348.00-390.00; 700-800 lbs 334.00-354.00, lot unweaned 766 lbs 329.00; lot 878 lbs 315.00; few 902 lbs 299.00-303.00.

Medium and Large 1-2 – 550-600 lbs 382.00-404.00; 600-700 lbs 347.00-362.50; pot load fleshy 793 lbs 320.00, lot 766 lbs 322.00; lot 962 lbs fleshy 286.00.

Feeder Heifers: Medium and Large 1 – 500-550 lbs 377.00-382.00; 600-700 lbs 346.00-357.00, lot unweaned 624 lbs 340.00; lot 733 lbs 332.00.

Large 1 – 90 hd 1064 lbs 265.00.

Medium and Large 1-2 – 450-500 lbs 407.00-410.00; lot fleshy 631 lbs 332.00, 650-700 lbs 329.00-332.50; lot fleshy 745 lbs 308.50; 750-770 lbs fleshy 313.50-319.00; 800-840 lbs fleshy 309.50-311.00.

Feeder Bulls: Medium and Large 1-2 – Scarce.

Slaughter Cows: Breakers (70-80% lean) High dressing, 167.00-173.00; and low dressing, 161.00-171.00. Boners (80-85% lean) High dressing, 165.00-168.00; and low dressing, 158.00-163.00. Lean (85-90% lean) Average dressing, 152.00-157.00; high dressing, 169.00-170.00; and low dressing, 133.00-150.00. Shelly/Thin 110.00-125.00.

Slaughter Bulls: Yield Grade 1-2 – 1400-2500 lbs, 210.00-223.00.

Slaughter Steers and Heifers: Scarce

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

Congratulations on strong Senate Ag Committee MCOOL vote

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

Congratulations and thank you to everyone who called their US senators urging them to support a yes vote for mandatory country of origin labeling or MCOOL for beef in the 2026 farm bill. You won the vote on Thursday, August 6 in the Senate Agriculture Committee and you won big. Now this was a historical bipartisan vote. There are 23 senators who serve on the agriculture committee. 12 are Republicans and 11 are Democrats.

The vote on Senate Majority Leader John Thune's amendment to include MCOLO in the farm bill included yes votes from half the Republicans and from all of the Democrats making this a truly bipartisan effort. Now, it's important that you know who supported this widely popular amendment to include MCOOL in the farm bill with their 17-6 vote.

On the Republican side, the

Now, our job, meaning the work we must all do to permanently win MCOOL for beef, is to maintain a steady drum beat of support for keeping MCOOL in the farm bill.

six yes votes were from Senator John Thune from South Dakota, the amendment sponsor, and Senators John Hovind from North Dakota, Joanie Erns from Iowa, Cindy Hyde Smith from Mississippi, Chuck Grassley from Iowa, and Deb Fischer from Nebraska. And on the Democrat side, the 11 yes votes were from ranking member Amy Klobuchar from Minnesota, and from senators Corey Booker from New Jersey, Adam Schiff from California, Michael Bennett from Colorado, Dick Durban from Illinois, Ben Ray Luhan from New Mexico, Raphael Warnok from Georgia, Peter Welch from Vermont, John Fetterman from Pennsylvania, Alyssa Slotkin from Michigan, and Tina Smith from Minnesota. Now, those were our 17 champi-

ons.

But the six US senators who voted against us on MCOOL were Republican senators John Boseman from Arkansas. He's chairman of the Senate a committee, Roger Marshall from Kansas, Jerry Moran from Kansas, Jim Justice from West Virginia, Tommy Tuberville from Alabama, and Mitch McConnell from Kentucky.

And though this was an incredibly important vote won by a large margin, the vote was for an amendment to include MCOOL in the farm bill, but the farm bill itself did not pass the committee. It failed along party lines due to a split on how the farm bill should address SNAP provisions. This means that when the Senate gets back from their August recess, passing the

farm bill in the Senate a committee will be on their agenda. Now, the grapevine indicates it could be taken up in middle of September. So, this is a case of it's not over till it's over. And here's what we should expect as we go forward.

First, the opponents of MCOOL have likely been rocked back on their heels after the vote. They didn't expect to lose, and they certainly didn't expect to lose by such a wide margin. They'll likely regroup and begin doubling down to convince Congress that the world will come to an end if MCOOL remains in the farm bill. They'll likely flaunt their advocacy paper that claims MCOOL is too burdensome and will cost too much. Even though Congress knows and we know that when we had MCOOL for beef from 2013 through 2015, the costs were not excessive and the beef supply chain continued functioning as it should. And they'll likely claim that the World Trade Organization or WTO

won't allow the US to inform consumers as to the origins of their beef and will resurrect a ruling from over a decade ago to scare Congress.

But the WTO has been significantly reformed over the past decade by three US presidents, and it's unlikely to overreach today as it did over a decade ago. And they'll likely claim that consumers don't care where their beef is produced or by whom, despite the numerous surveys and polls that show consumers overwhelmingly want to know the origins of their beef.

Now, our job, meaning the work we must all do to permanently win MCOOL for beef, is to maintain a steady drum beat of support for keeping MCOOL in the farm bill. We can each tell our US senators from now through September about the fact that MCOOL for beef won a bipartisan and overwhelming vote to be included in the farm bill by members of the US Senate Ag committee.

And we can tell those senators who voted for it that we appreciate their willingness to support US consumers and cattle producers. And we can tell every other senator of our strong desire to have them vote in favor of MCOOL when it is brought back to the full floor of the Senate hopefully this Fall. Again, congratulations and thank you for your continued support.

Remember, you can reach your two US senators by calling the capital switchboard at 202-224-3121 and asking for them by name.

– Meatingplace.com

Tyson fireside chat leaves investors with ‘favorable outlook’

According to a summary from BMO's Andrew Strelzik and Benjamin Mayhew, the chat included current CEO Donnie King, incoming CEO Jeff Schomburger, CFO Curt Calaway, and new COO Wes Morris, all of whom engaged on a number of topics.

"The discussion underscored our favorable outlook for [Tyson]," the analysts concluded.

Consistent with recent Meatingplace coverage on the topic, prepared foods — and Tyson's moves within the space — were one of BMO's key points. "[Tyson] reiterated its expectation for FY27 prepared foods volume and profit growth," the analysts wrote.

"Distribution gains are a key opportunity with [Tyson] under-spaced vs. share/performance."

BMO analysts added that Schomburger will, in their opinion, "add significant value" in the segment's growth through "accelerated innovation/renovation, brand building, value-add channel expansion." Scheduled to take the helm in October, he had a long career with Procter & Gamble in the consumer packaged goods industry before joining the Tyson board a decade ago.

The resumption of cattle imports from Mexico was also discussed. In BMO's summary, analysts stated that Tyson was "not getting ahead of itself on profit implications" from the

trade, but BMO nonetheless sees the resumption as part of a "multi-year beef improvement runway on horizon."

Specifically, Tyson executives said the Arizona and New Mexico border reopening will provide a six-month window to build supply, with the Texas reopening providing a separate six-month window.

"Six months [is] typical from import to slaughter based on history," BMO noted. "Benefits

of capacity rationalization and other internal improvements should be more visible as utilization rates improve."

BMO concluded that genetics and strong value-added growth will aid Tyson's chicken segment, and on the financial management side, share buybacks will "likely also become a bigger part of the equation" in generating cash returns to shareholders.

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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, August 13, 2026 Receipts: 625 Last month: 675

Montgomery County Livestock held their monthly Sheep and Goat Sale Thursday, evening August 13 with a moderate offering of mostly lambs weighing 55-80 lbs with Slaughter lambs and feeder lambs selling with a sharply higher undertone than last month. Kid goats 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)

Feeder Lambs: Small and Medium 1 – Lot 40 lbs 400.00; Small and Medium 1-2 30-50 lbs 345.00-380.00.

Slaughter Lambs: Choice-Prime 1-3 – 55-80 lbs 320.00-345.00; 80-135 lbs 260.00-280.00.

Slaughter Ewes: Utility and Good 1-2 – Few 100-125 lbs at

145.00; pkg 95 lbs 85.00.

Replacement Ewes: Scarce

GOATS: (prices per hundred weight)

Feeder Kids: Selection 1-2 – 35-45 lbs 335.00-385.00

Market Kids: Slaughter: Selection 1 – 50-80 lbs 345.00-380.00; lot 103 lbs 230.00; Selection 1-2 60-70 lbs 352.00-360.00.

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

Skye Anderson named president of McDonald's USA, overseeing 1,400 restaurants

McDonald's Corporation has named Skye Anderson, a longtime company hand, to be President of McDonald's USA, a role in which she will keep watch over roughly 14,000 restaurants in the company's largest market.

Anderson succeeds Joe Erlinger, who is leaving

McDonald's after more than two decades. Anderson, who has been with the company for 26 years, has held many positions across the McDonald's system, both in the United States and abroad.

She worked in the company's financial ranks in Australia as well as in field and zone positions in

the United States. She took part in the creation of the company's Global Business Services and most recently served as Chief Operating Officer for U.S. operations.

"Over a four-year tenure as head of the U.S. West Zone, she helped support strategic initiatives

that modernized a base of more than 5,700 restaurants, drove comparable sales growth of more than 30%, and increased average restaurant unit cash flow by \$100,000," the company said in a statement. In her new role, Anderson will also assist with the implementation of McDonald's > NEXT, the company's plan to make McDonald's the first choice

for customers.

Erlinger will remain at McDonald's through early 2027, working side-by-side with Anderson for a smooth transition.

McDonald's has over 45,000 locations in more than 100 countries, 95% of which are owned and operated by independent local business owners.

- Meatingplace.com

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Standardbred Bay stud weanling, ready to go in July, \$900. Donnie S. Hostetler, 1331 Topsy Road, Randolph, Mississippi 38864.

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Laugh Tracks in the Dust.....

Misinterpretation

By MILO YIELD
Special to The Advocate

I went into a local feed store recently and the owner and his son were in the midst of a heated argument. The part of the conversation that I first heard wuz the daddy telling his son, "Well at least you're finally on your own two feet."

The kid stomped from the premises and I tried to interject a tidbit of levity to the tense situation after the boy left the office.

I smiled and said, "Kid finally settled down and got out on his own, huh?"

"No stranger," the owner said sharply, "The kid just had his car repossessed."

Column readers from all over our Fly-Over Nation have taken notice of the sayings that pop up at our Old Geezer Gathering and Gossip Group.

So, recently a reader from down at Vinita, OK, emailed me with a gossipy tidbit that his similar group had come up with.

He said, "Milo, I overheard two locals talking about the state of the economy. One of 'em said that he'd heard that the dollar was under continuing pressure."

The other one laughed kind-of acidly and said "Yeh, it's under pressure from all the folks hanging onto it for dear life."

I had to agree with him.

Midwest Meat Company to expand facility

Midwest Meat Company, based in Minden, Neb., has announced an expansion and upgrade of its production facilities along with new process for retail purchases.

A USDA/FDA-certified meat processor, Midwest offers co-packing services, private labeling, and "human-grade" pet food manufacturing.

The company's improvements include a substantial building expansion, a new and larger capacity freezer facility, as well as a new high-tech packaging line and larger state-of-the-art smokehouse equipment.

As for Midwest's retail operations, starting August 22, the retail storefront will no longer offer in-store shopping. Instead customers may purchase a variety of curated meat bundles through the company's online store.

"These investments represent our commitment to meeting the growing needs of our customers while continuing to provide the quality products and dependable service Midwest Meat Company is known for," Midwest's Harold Colby said. "As demand continues to grow across our business segments, these improvements allow us to better serve retail customers, commercial partners and private-label clients alike."

The Colby family founded Midwest Meat Company in 2013

- Meatingplace.com

.....

Another reader from Colorado emailed me a cryptic evaluation of my column. He said I wuz a gossipier.

Folks, I'm not a gossipier. I just repeat what I hear and embellish the story to make it more humorous, hopefully.

.....

Another guy Ponca City, Oklahoma, gave me a definition of inflation. He said that inflation is like cutting a dollar bill in half without damaging the paper.

Another guy from Hebron, Neb. wanted to talk about politics. He said that what this country needs is more leaders who know what this country needs.

That's pretty profound.

.....

There is one kind of continuous competition that goes on every day across rural America. It never ends and it's been going

on forever. That competition is to always one-up the last rural story told by telling one even better.

I recently heard a fantastic rural story that I think might stand number one for awhile.

Here's the story. A group of workers at a county gravel plant, some of them past-farmers, were having lunch together and the conversation turned to who among them was most skillful in handling dynamite.

Several guys made lame attempts to show they were most skillful, but then the foreman of the crew put an end to the conversation with this story.

He said, "Boys, I'm so skillful using dynamite that, if you give me an eighth of a stick, I can cure a constipated bull and castrate him and dehorn him at the same time and and that bull won't even get bloodshot eyes."

Case closed.

.....

The best kind of cake is a sponge cake. That's when the cook sponges all the ingredients from the next door neighbor.

It's always interesting to watch folks carry off what they bought at an auction.

Two guys were carrying their new possessions away when one said to the other, "Too many people in the world today are ready to carry the stool when the piano needs to be moved."

The other guy replied, "I don't know what you're talking about."

The second guy wuz carrying

a box full of paper stuff.

The first guy wuz carrying an anvil.

.....

This column is kind of disjointed. That's becuz I've been ailing this week from some kind of summer flu bug. Guess I'll recover someday.

.....

It seems that most folks these days have a pretty dismal outlook about politics.

That's true. But then I got to thinking that folks never injure their eyesight by looking at the bright side of life.

Have a good 'un.

.....

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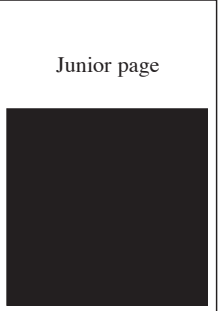
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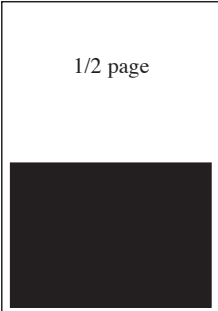
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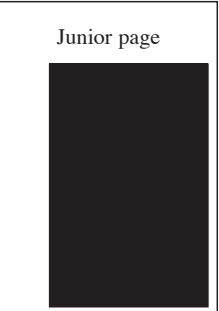
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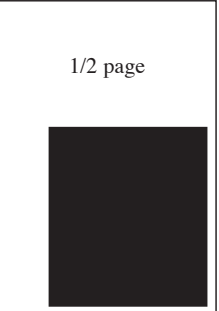
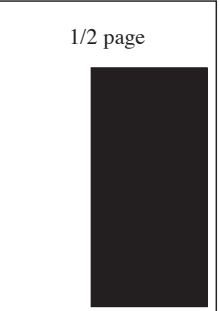
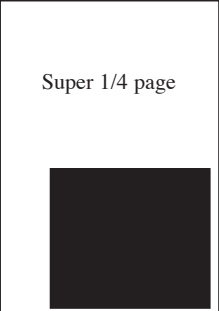
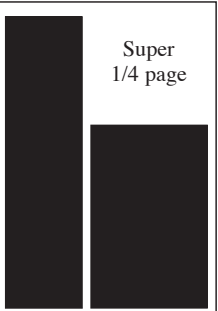
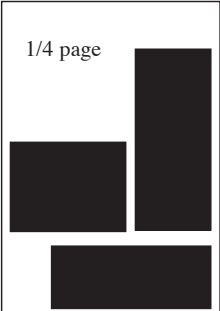
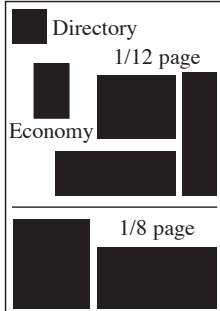
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RURAL LIFESTYLE

Madison, Missouri has gone pink and locals wouldn’t have it any other way

By LINDA WHELAN GEIST
University of Missouri Extension

MADISON, Mo. – Each spring and summer, Monroe County gardener Lorie Cullom transforms her property into a sea of vibrant pink blooms thanks to hundreds of Proven Winners® Supertunia Vista Bubblegum petunias.

"I fell in love with them," Cullom says. "They are so vibrant, easy to grow and bloom from spring until frost. Once I planted them, I was hooked."

What began five years ago with just a few petunias has blossomed into an attraction that catches the eye of travelers on U.S. Route 24 between Moberly and Paris. The flowers performed so well that Cullom added more each season.

To minimize weeding, she and her husband, Billy, started by planting the petunias in repurposed plastic icing containers from a local convenience store. As their flower display grew, they eventually switched to using gutters, giving them more room to let the petunias spill and grow.

Today, the Culloms grow hundreds of Bubblegum petunias, investing \$3 to \$4 per plant when purchased locally. "It's worth every penny," Cullom says. "They not only bring so much joy to me, but to everyone who drives by."

The flowers create a striking display that includes a 1951 Ford truck converted into a planter and old gas pump. A ladder mounted in the truck bed adds height and visual interest, while a playhouse built in 2007 and a pergola by Lorie's stepfather, Pat Whelan of Madison, reflect the entire family's love of flowers.

Although their easy-care nature is certainly a bonus, it's the vibrant color of Bubblegum petunias that truly captured Cullom's heart. Their bright pink blooms are an instant attention-grabber, catching the eye of just about everyone who drives by.

The flowers thrive during Missouri's summer heat, although they do need regular watering. Some are irrigated with drip lines, while others are watered by hand. Every Sunday morning, Cullom fertilizes and lightly trims the plants to keep them looking their best. "Honestly, it's consistency with watering and fertilizing!" she says.

Married for 25 years, the Collums enjoy watching visitors stop to admire the display, take photos and ask questions. "Billy and I enjoy making our home a place that people enjoy driving by," Cullom says.

Lorie has worked at Agnew Funeral Home in Paris, Missouri, for the past 26 years. She is a mortuary school graduate and has spent those years working in the funeral profession and caring for families in her community. Cullom sees firsthand the meaningful role flowers can play throughout life's celebrations and sorrows.

"I love that flowers have a way of making people smile, whether they're celebrating something special, remembering a loved one or simply driving down the road," she says.

The flowers are just one expression of the joy the Culloms share with their family, including their son, Zachary; daughters Billie and Savannah; and three grandchildren.

"Family is the center of everything we do," Cullom says.

New petunia varieties gain favor

New varieties are continually making waves throughout the petunia world, says University of Missouri Extension horticulturist David Trinklein. Petunias are a favorite for gardeners, whether it be the Supertunia Vista Bubblegum petunias chosen by the Collums or other colorful varieties.

The 'Supertunia®' series (e.g. Supertunia® Vista® Bubblegum) was probably the first of the vegetatively



SEA OF PINK: From U.S. Route 24 at Madison, the home of Billy and Lorie Collum attracts curious flower lovers who often stop to take photos of the Collum home's sea of pink. (Photo by Linda Geist)

propagated petunias to hit the market and is part of the Proven Winners® collection of plants. They are vigorous in growth habit and show improved heat tolerance and an abundance of blooms.

"It must be noted, however, vegetatively propagated petunias usually are heavier feeders than common, and seed-propagated types and must be fertilized accordingly," says Trinklein.

The 'Surfinia®' series of petunia is another Proven Winners® introduction which some consider to be an improvement over the Supertunias in growth habit and ease of culture. Other companies have followed suit and, today, names like 'Cascadia™', 'Sanguna™' and 'Suncatcher™' are commonplace in the bedding plant world. Most are either trademarked or plant patented by their developers.

Additionally, the outstanding seed-propagated 'Wave®' series of petunia provides spectacular garden performance which makes them great choices for beds where a brilliant ground cover is desired. Unlike "regular" petunias, they flower freely all summer without the need to be trimmed. 'Tidal Wave®', 'Easy Wavy®', and 'Shock Wave®' are relatively new additions to the series. Each has its own unique growth habit, but all display superb garden performance.

In the garden, petunias prefer full sun and perform well in a wide range of soil types. Best growth probably occurs in a well-drained, porous soil of medium fertility. A pH of between 6.0 and 6.5 along with high levels of phosphorous and potassium is ideal.

Soil porosity is important to facilitate the development of a vigorous root system and to help prevent root rots. To test for porosity, dig a hole in your flower bed about 10 to 12 inches deep and fill it with water. The next day, fill the hole again and time to see how long it takes for the water to drain. If the water drains within 8 to 10 hours, the porosity of your soil should be adequate for good growth. If the soil takes longer to drain, the incorporation of organic matter is recommended to help establish greater porosity.

Before planting petunias, apply maintenance levels of fertilizer to the bed. About two pounds per 100 square feet of a complete fertilizer such as 5-10-5 should be applied to the area to be planted. Make sure the fertilizer is well-incorporated into the soil before planting. An additional top-dressing during the summer of nitrogen in the form of ammonium nitrate at the rate of about one pound per hundred square feet is good. Water lightly after applying if rain is not forecast. This procedure might have to be repeated for the more vigorous and heavy-feeding vegetatively propagated petunias. "Plant vigor is a good barometer to measure fertilizer need," says Trinklein.



FLOWER OF CHOICE: Lorie Collum says Proven Winners® Supertunia Vista Bubblegum petunias are her flower of choice to decorate her yard because of their vibrant color and easy care. (Photo courtesy of Lori Collum)

Once established, petunias need little care during the growing season. Deadheading is not essential but does help to increase the attractive nature of the plants as well as to give increased flower production in certain cultivars.

If plants become excessively "leggy" and stop blooming, cut them back to a few inches from their base. Apply a top-dressing of fertilizer at the rates given above. Petunias are relatively pest free with root rot diseases and Botrytis being the major troublesome diseases. Both are more problematic during wet weather or from over-watering.

Petunias' versatility, vibrant blooms and heat tolerance make them favorites for amateur and seasoned Missouri gardeners, says Trinklein.

University of Missouri Extension offers numerous articles about petunias and care tips on at <https://extension.missouri.edu/>.

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If life gives you meatloaf, switch it up and make loaf-balls

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

Jon's Critique: When the cook said she was freelancing; making a recipe of her own creation, I was a small bit skeptical. From past experiences freelancing recipes can go both ways.

I very much liked this one and would enjoy eating it again. In fact, if you count a second and third helping, I did eat it again, and again! It seems that the cook employed a bit of trickery in presenting this one.

From reading the recipe and the cook's comment, I assume if you wanted to make this into some kind of meatloaf if you are into meatloaves. I like the cook's idea of meatballs... or loaf-balls if you prefer.

Loaf-balls in Mushroom Gravy

By Charlotte Angell

Jon hates meatloaf, so I changed it up and made loaf-balls. It worked; he ate it without balking first.
I hope you like them as much as we did.

Ingredients
Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and lightly oil a medium baking dish.
Ingredients:
1/2 onion, diced fine
1/2 red bell pepper, diced fine
1/2 stalk celery, diced fine
1 pound ground meat
1 packet Lipton Beefy Onion Soup Mix
1 can Campbell's Condensed Mushroom Soup
Olive oil for sauteing

Chop vegetables. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a medium skillet and add vegetables. Saute until the onions are translucent and the peppers and celery are soft. Off heat to cool about 5 minutes.
Place ground meat in a large mixing bowl, add half the onion soup mix and the cooled vegetables. Mix until combined and form into small meat balls. Heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in the pan the vegetables were in, then add the meatballs browning on all sides.
Meanwhile, pour the mushroom soup in a mixing bowl and add half a soup can of milk, rinsing out any leftover soup, then add and stir soup and milk together.
Once mixed, add the other half of the Lipton soup mix, stir to combine. Pour this into the prepared baking dish. Once the meatballs are browned, add to the baking



dish with the soup mixture. Bake in the preheated oven for 30 to 45 minutes.
Serve over rice, riced cauliflower or riced broccoli. Jon prefers riced broccoli.

Missouri's sticky summer heat can create corn sweat and make areas even more humid

COLUMBIA, Mo. – High temperatures and high humidity coinciding with one of corn's most critical growth stages results in a condition many refer to as "corn sweat."
Corn sweat is a colloquial term for transpiration, the natural process of corn plants pulling water through their roots and releasing vapor, mostly through the stomata of their leaves, into the atmosphere, says Zachary Leasor, University of Missouri Extension state climatologist. This process helps cool the plant as moisture is released into the surrounding air. Combined with evaporation of water from the ground, the total process of evapotranspiration can make already-humid air even more humid in areas with widespread crop production.
Leasor says research has found that crop transpiration can increase surface-level humidity and influence local weather. In large agricultural areas, this additional moisture may play a role in complex atmospheric processes such as thunderstorm

development.
Temperatures and humidity ramped up in July, with many locations across Missouri recording their first 100-plus degree temperatures of 2026. Heat index values have regularly exceeded 110 F and resulted in many heat advisories and warnings across the state, says Leasor. Most of Missouri experienced a wetter than average growing season before the most recent heat wave, providing ample soil moisture and available water for plants to transpire this season.
Corn sweat generally happens in late July to early August when crops have reached full canopy development and are at critical growth stages, says MU Extension soybean agronomy specialist Andre Reis. "At this time, crops and other vegetation are maximizing their water use primarily to cope with the heat and cool their foliage," Reis says.
Leasor says research has found that crop

transpiration can increase surface-level humidity and may play a role in complex atmospheric processes such as thunderstorm development.
"However, it remains difficult to accurately quantify how much of the humidity may be due to an additional contribution of the crop transpiration, and how far this humidity can move across a region or vertically in the atmosphere before being mixed

with atmospheric moisture from other sources," he says.
Corn ranks second only to soybean in Missouri agricultural commodities, with the state ranking in the nation's Top 10 corn-producing states, according to the Missouri Department of Agriculture.
Follow real-time weather conditions in your area through the Missouri Mesonet weather station network at

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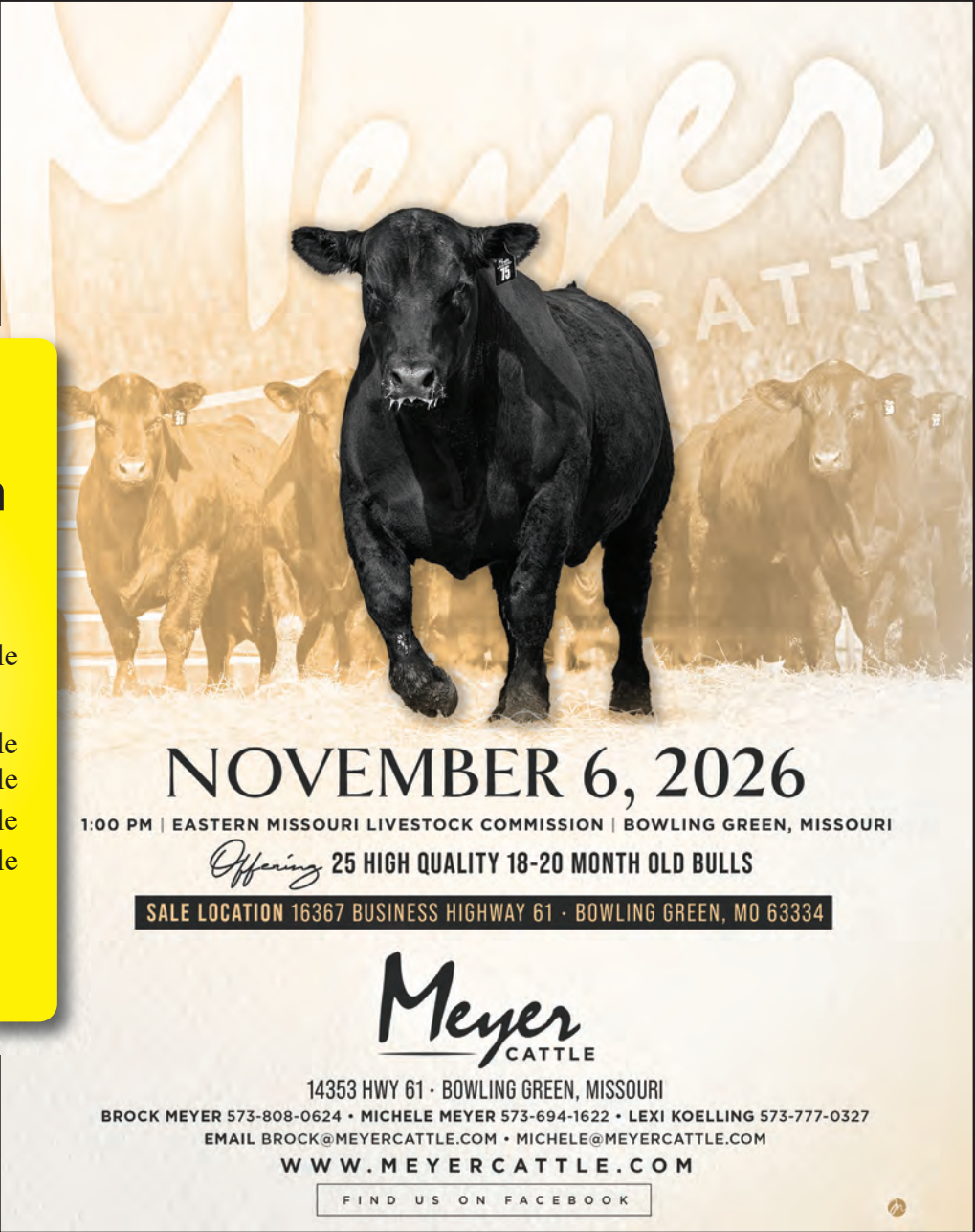
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