



THE MIDWEST **Cattlemán**

October 24, 2024 Volume 30 No. 10 GRASSLAND FARMING TODAY



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Page 16

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Cattlemans THE MIDWEST

October 24, 2024 Volume 30 No. 10 GRASSLAND FARMING TODAY

K-STATE JOINS PILOT PROGRAM ADDRESSING VETERINARIAN SHORTAGE

Kansas State University is joining a new pilot program established by the Farm Journal Foundation to support veterinary students in their career development and address the national shortage of rural food-systems veterinarians. The university is one of nine schools participating in the Veterinary Workforce Solutions Program.

According to data from USDA, more than 900 counties across the country are facing shortages of veterinarians, especially those who treat livestock. Only 3% to



4% of new veterinary school graduates pursue livestock or other food animal practice areas, a stark decline from 40 years ago when about 40% specialized in this area.

The Veterinary Workforce

continued on page 10

FEDERAL JUDGE REFUSES TO BLOCK FLORIDA'S CULTIVATED MEAT LAW

A federal judge recently rejected a request by a California-based company for a preliminary injunction against a new law banning the sale and manufacturing of "cultivated" meat in Florida.

Chief U.S. District Judge Mark Walker issued a 21-page decision denying the preliminary injunction motion. UPSIDE Foods, Inc., filed a lawsuit in August challenging the constitutionality of the law, which was approved this year by Gov. Ron DeSantis and the Legislature.

The law makes it a second-degree misdemeanor to sell or manufacture cultivat-



ed meat, often known as lab-grown meat. The manufacturing process includes taking a small number of cultured cells from animals and growing them in controlled settings to make food.

UPSIDE Foods, which is represented by the Institute for Justice legal organization,

continued on page 15

NBC POLL: 75% OF RURAL AMERICANS SUPPORT TRUMP

Harris leads with Black voters (84%-11%), younger voters ages 18 to 34 (57%-37%), and white voters with college degrees (55%-41%).

Women support Harris by a 14-point margin (55%-41%) and men back Trump by 16-points (56%-40%).

Independents support Harris (44%), Trump (40%). Both candidates are unpopular. Harris' rating stands at 43% positive, 49% negative (-6) since September, with the erosion coming mainly from independents and young voters. Trump's rating stands at 43% positive, 51% negative score (-8) in this same poll. That positive rating is Trump's highest in the NBC News poll since he

left office. Harris could be helped by the intensity of viewpoints about abortion.

The pollsters asked, "Is there one issue you feel so strongly about that you will vote for or against a candidate solely on that issue?"

The answers: Abortion (22%), immigration/border security (19%), protecting democracy or constitutional rights (18%) and cost of living (16%).

The NBC News poll was conducted Oct. 4-8 of 1,000 registered voters, 898 of whom were reached by cell phone, and it has an overall margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

Other polls have shown that in the battleground states, Harris is ahead in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan, while Trump is ahead in Georgia, North Carolina, Arizona, and Nevada.

The Hagstrom Report



MCDONALD'S ALLEGES BEEF-PRICE FIXING McDonald's Lawsuit Alleges Cargill, Tyson, JBS Others Fixed Beef Prices

By Todd Neeley, DTN



McDonald's alleges Cargill, JBS, Tyson Foods and other companies conspired to fix beef prices by limiting supplies starting in January 2015, in a new lawsuit filed in a federal court in New York.

McDonald's complaint said the companies implemented

a conspiracy by "coordinating, manipulating, or agreeing to pay less than competitive prices" for the main or primary input in producing beef, namely, slaughter-ready cattle.

The lawsuit alleges it was done for the purpose of "fixing, increasing, stabilizing or maintaining above competitive levels" on their margins and the price of beef sold to McDonald's.

"Defendants and their co-conspirators implement-

continued on page 12



Coming Sales-30
Market Report-8
Agribusiness Directory-28

New Hands on the Reins

Let me introduce you to Austin and Laura Black!

Beginning with the very next issue of The Midwest Cattleman, there will be new hands on the reins! We've grown to really appreciate this amazing couple and their entire family – the name Black has been associated with this publication for more years than some of us want to admit.

Austin and Laura represent a new generation and, as you might expect, they come with a whole new set of ideas, talents and energy. I know you will continue to enjoy reading MWC as they take the reins or working with them to reach new customers if that is your goal. They are committed to excellence... It's in their blood!

On the facing page you can see that, beginning with the next issue...

The Midwest Cattleman has a NEW ADDRESS AND CONTACT INFO, as well as something else exciting – New Publication Dates for 2025.

I wish to thank every single reader and advertiser for your support over the last 30 years and one more thing that is long overdue...

A 'Special Thank You' to my wife, partner and best friend in the world - Glenna. "You have Always Done Most of the Work, while I received Most of the Credit."

Meet Austin & Laura Black!
KwC



Hello!

We are Austin and Laura Black and we're excited for the opportunity to continue The Midwest Cattleman as your #1 source of industry news and education. We live just outside of Butler, Mo (1 hour south of Kansas City), along with our three daughters, Hailey (almost 6), Reagan (4) and Lainey (15 months). Our hobbies include hunting, team roping, gardening (which leads to LOTS of canning) and working on the farm.

Laura and I each come from a strong agriculture background. I grew up very active in 4-H and am a 3rd generation cattle producer, with roots in both commercial and seedstock production. Laura served in FFA and worked alongside her father on their diversified farming operation of row crops and beef cattle. Together, we've been fortunate to work with my parents to establish our own herd and formed Legacy Livestock Company in 2017.

Our Experience

Professionally, I have worked for Genex Cooperative, MFA Incorporated and

CornerPost Marketing, serving in a variety of roles since graduating from College of the Ozarks in 2011. In 2012, I also launched Backroad Productions LLC, a marketing and communications agency that has served seedstock producers and Ag businesses throughout the Midwest. Through this company and my role as Photojournalist with MFA Incorporated, I have contributed dozens of articles to several state, regional and national agriculture publications, including The Midwest Cattleman.

And because I have many passions in life, I became a personal finance coach in 2020 with Freedom Financial Coaching, where I help couples overcome their fear and frustration with financial management so they can take complete control of their money.

Laura graduated from the University of Missouri in 2012 and has worked for Syngenta Crop Protection as a Retail Sales Representative and District Operations Specialist for nearly 12 years. As we enter our next chapter of life with The Midwest

continued on page 10

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By Julie Walker, SDSU Extension Beef Specialist

Typically, replacement heifers are bred to calve earlier than mature cows. By conducting early pregnancy diagnosis, producers can make management decisions that impact herd viability and expected financial outcomes. Through early pregnancy diagnosis, producers can use seasonal price differences to their advantage. Beef females are often pregnancy diagnosed in late fall (October or November) and marketed at that time or shortly afterward at seasonally low prices.

Early Pregnancy Testing

Pregnancy diagnosis can occur as early as 30 days after breeding (or after conception). Producers have several options to pregnancy diagnosis replacements: palpation, ultrasound, or a blood test. There are trade-offs with each method, but knowing will expedite how opens are managed.

When pregnancy can be detected via palpation depends on the experience of the technician. Normally the early end of detection is effective 30 to 50 days after breeding. Ultrasound technicians can normally find the fetus at 30 days. Blood testing via Pregnancy-Associated Glycoproteins (PAG) can be done chute

side or by sending in blood samples. Depending on the blood test selected, results can be determined at the chute side or mailed in for analysis.

One disadvantage of early pregnancy diagnosis is the risk of pregnancy loss. This is associated with the stress of handling the animals. Research has shown a pregnan-



cy loss of 1.0 to 3.5% when palpation or ultrasound are used for pregnancy diagnosis

continued on page 14

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Fall Cattle Market Update for Midwest

By Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension

Drought conditions continue to advance in Oklahoma, following the La Niña forecast that meteorologists have been suggesting for about a year. The latest Seasonal Drought Outlook, issued by the Climate Prediction Center, suggests that drought will persist and expand in the central and southern plains for the remainder of the year. Forage production is mostly done for this growing season (with the exception of winter wheat) so dry conditions are not an immediate threat to forage pasture and range. Oklahoma hay supplies are quite large for the winter. However, water supplies may become a significant concern in the coming months. Many ponds are already low and typically do not recharge much in the fall and winter.

Winter wheat planting is running behind schedule due to the dry conditions. At



the end of September, wheat planting in Oklahoma was 22 percent, compared to a 32 percent average for the previous five years. Some wheat has been “dusted in” to dry soil to await moisture. Some wheat is up but stands are small and not growing much

due to the lack of moisture. Opportunities for wheat grazing are slipping away quickly.

The fall run of feeder cattle has started in Oklahoma. While the total auction volume of feeder cattle is down 9.2 percent year over year

thus far in 2024, the auction volume of feeder cattle has been larger by 12.9 percent year over year since Labor Day. In early October, the auction volume included calves as well as big feeder cattle from summer grazing programs. It is possible that drought conditions and deteriorating pastures is resulting in earlier-than-planned marketings of calves and feeder cattle.

Feeder cattle prices continue to climb back from the August stock market and futures market corrections. Oklahoma auction prices for calves and feeder cattle have increased recently (Figure 1). For the calves, this is a counter-seasonal move as calves typically move lower through October into November. However, limited cattle numbers may continue to push feeder prices higher despite the lack

continued on page 11



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THE FULL PICTURE OF COW EFFICIENCY

HOW BALANCING PRODUCTION COST CONTROL AND EFFICIENCY CAN CHANGE YOUR OPERATION

By Lauren Gatz, Beef Improvement Federation intern

“Improving production or output is important, but in most publications, controlling costs trumps increasing output.” said Dave Lalman, Oklahoma State University. In commercial cow-calf operations, cow cost accounts for about 60 to 65% of the variation in profitability whereas increasing production (number of calves and calf weaning weight) accounts for about 35 to 40% of the variation in profitability. Lalman was a featured speaker during the 2024 Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Symposium June 11 in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Lalman’s presentation emphasized that efficiency in cow-calf operations goes beyond just boosting production; it’s about maximizing the return on every dollar invested and ensuring that resources are used as effectively as possible.

Economical forage production combined with efficient and timely forage harvest (grazing) generally represents the lowest hanging fruit to improve whole-ranch profitability and efficiency. “Building a better cow might be viewed as getting better at something beef cat-

tle do well already,” he explained. “Harvesting sunlight, carbon dioxide, and water to produce a delicious, nutritious human food source.”

continued on page 15



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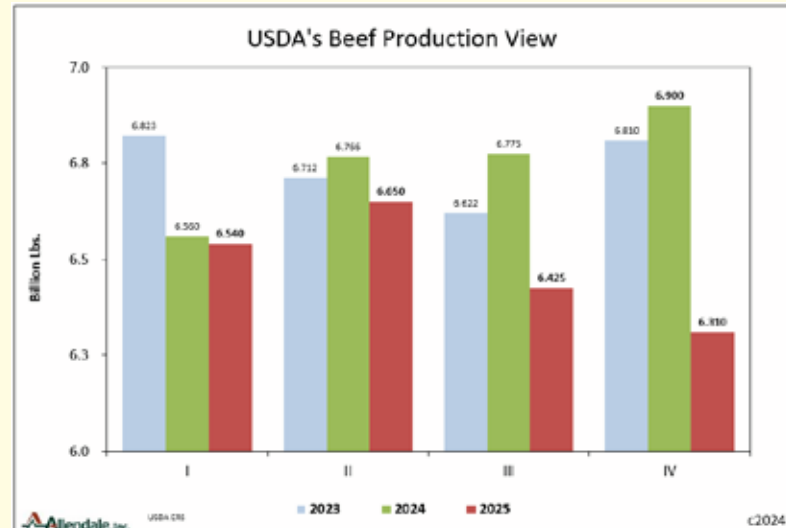
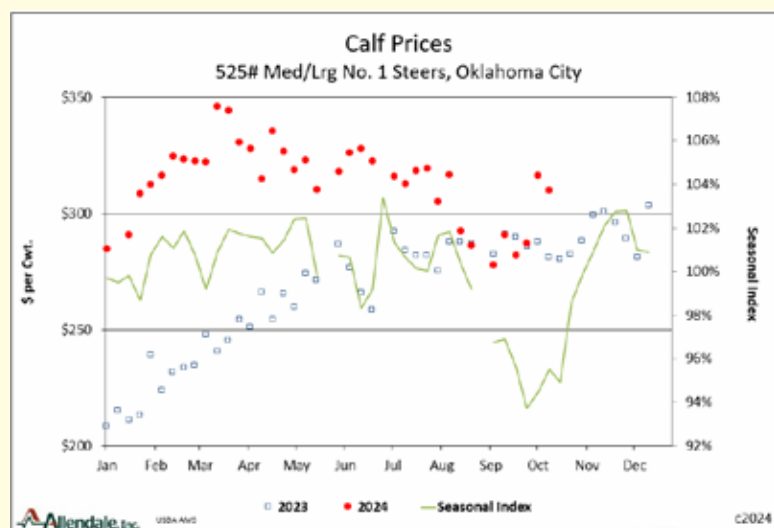
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Live Cattle:

Including our estimate of the coming Cattle on Feed report covering September, the prior nine months of feedlot placements will have run -2.1% year/year. This group of inflows determines fed cattle supply from Q4 through much of Q2. When keeping cow cull numbers a little trim you're looking at offered slaughter perhaps -3% to -5% in the quarters ahead. If we assume weights remain at current +2.5% year/year numbers, we agree with USDA's current view of light -1% to -2% beef production. We also agree the next real change in supply will come mid-next year.

Concern over future US beef demand has been reined in. Current beef production levels, +2% year/year, are managing to result in cash cattle and wholesale beef prices +2% to +3%. As it stands the most recent employment, inflation and retail sales numbers imply stability at this time. Futures currently imply recent \$187 trade in the South will ease to \$185/\$186 and remain there through spring, +2%.

Rich Nelson
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What Does this Report Mean to Me?

Q: What remains for feed pricing?

A: US supply arguments are over until January. Demand, which at least for corn is positive, suggests pricing below \$4.00 futures may remain limited. Separate from any concerns over futures pricing, even in heavy supply years, basis typically advances 14 cents from here into February. On the futures side, separate from any trade war concerns with China headed into the election we suggest \$4.40 futures is fair value. Feed buyers should have all needs through December locked up via both basis and calls. As with prior suggestions, feeder procurement through March should be locked in via purchased futures.

Q: What is the update with contraction/expansion?

A: The cattle cycle is stuck in neutral after our recent light contraction. We don't see any big change in heifer retention from this fall weaning. The widening dryness since August has likely dashed hopes for now. In addition, the next phase of beef supply tightening won't really start until mid-year ahead. Next fall is our likely guess.

Trading commodity futures involves substantial risk of loss and may not be suitable for all investors. The recommendations express opinions of the author. The information they contain is obtained from sources believed reliable, but is in no way guaranteed. The author may have positions in the markets mentioned including at times positions contrary to the advice quoted herein. Opinions, market data, and recommendations are subject to change at any time.

By Jason Hartschuh, Extension Field Specialist, Ohio State University Extension

This year is presenting many challenges when it comes to forage toxicity and ensuring that we have safe feed for our livestock. Drought conditions have led to an active discussion on forage toxicity and the potential for frost in the future presents an additional concern. These environmental conditions increase the risk of prussic acid poisoning, nitrate poisoning, and increased bloat in multiple methods of feeding forages. Recent rainfall in some areas has finally allowed for rapid forage growth but unfortunately in some species, this rapid growth poses a risk to your livestock during future frost events.

What is prussic acid toxicity?

Prussic acid toxicity is the accumulation of prussic acid (i.e. hydrogen cyanide) in forage plant tissue. Prussic acid is the product of a reaction between two naturally occurring plant molecules, cyanogenic glycosides and degrading enzymes. Plant cell walls usually sepa-

rate the two, but a frost event freezes the water in a plant cell, rupturing the cell wall and allowing the formation of prussic acid.

What variables contribute to prussic acid toxicity?

Forage Species

The forage species that are the main concern when it comes to prussic acid toxicity are our warm-season grasses and the most common and their toxicity potential are:

- Grain sorghum: very high to high toxic potential
- Indiangrass: high toxic potential
- Sorghum-sudangrass hybrids and forage sorghums: high to intermediate toxic potential
- Sudangrass hybrids and varieties: intermediate toxic potential
- Piper sudangrass: low toxic potential
- Pearl millet and foxtail millet: low toxic potential, but be cautious of nitrate poisoning this year

Prussic acid toxicity is also found in plants such as johnsongrass, shattercane, and wild cherry, that are not planted as forage but may accidentally be consumed by livestock. It is good practice to identify these plants around your pasture to manage, be sure to always pick up and discard fallen limbs after a storm to prevent accidental consumption.

Fertility

There is a higher chance of prussic acid toxicity in forages that have had a high rate of nitrogen fertilization or manure history and in soils that have high nitrogen to low phosphorus imbalance. Be sure to make fertilization decisions based on regular soil tests.

Plant maturity

The concentrations of prussic acid are higher in young and rapidly growing stands of forages because they contain more



cyanogenic glucosides. With rainfall events after a severe drought causing rapid growth, many plants have a lot of new plant growth of concern. After a non-killing frost, forages can produce this new growth from the base of the stand.

Prussic acid poisoning symptoms

Symptoms of prussic acid poisoning can manifest quickly. The prussic acid can quickly enter the bloodstream and inhibit the livestock's ability to utilize oxygen. Symptoms can include drooling, labored breathing, staggering, and convulsions. If you observe any of these symptoms, contact your local veterinarian.

continued on page 12



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NEW HANDS*continued from page 4*

Cattleman, she is looking forward to embracing her most valuable roles as mother and homeschool teacher!

We are very grateful to Keith and Glenna for trusting us to carry on the brand they created for 30 years. And we are excited to continue their mission as we enter a new era of communications within the beef industry.

Our Vision

We believe with the changing of hands comes the opportunity for two things: the continued commitment to providing an outlet and resource you can trust, and an open door to new ideas that will elevate the value of what

we provide to you as readers and advertisers.

So... what does that look like for The Midwest Cattleman?

First and foremost, we are committed to providing a valuable resource that cattlemen can trust to receive industry news, market information, and educational content that helps them make better decisions on their operation. Whether you own 2 cows or 2,000 cows, our goal is to ensure you learn something every time you read an issue.

To accomplish this, we will be bringing exclusive news, feature stories and industry perspective columns written

by our team and industry experts you know and trust.

Along with this commitment, we plan to bring key changes that will further enhance your experience with **The Midwest Cattleman**.

The publishing schedule will remain at 10 issues a year but be adjusted to year-round printing with your next issue arriving in early January. Additional print dates can be found on page 5. We also plan to elevate the online and social media presence of The Midwest Cattleman and encourage you to watch for new channels to launch in the next year.

Finally, if you're not already, we want to encourage

you to subscribe to The Midwest Cattleman. By doing so, not only will you have the convenience of receiving every single issue in your mailbox, but you will be able to access additional content and benefits reserved for subscribers.

As we approach the end of the year and look to 2025, we are positive about the future of the beef industry, the Black family and The Midwest Cattleman and we can't wait to have you along for the ride!

God Bless,

Austin & Laura Black

K-STATE*continued from page 3*

Solutions Program, backed by support from the Zoetis Foundation, is designed to support veterinary students across several areas, including tackling student debt and financial planning, developing business management skills, and learning how to engage with rural communities. Participants also will get advice from the Farm Journal Foundation's veterinary ambassadors, a group of experienced veterinarians and educators who serve as mentors. Brad White, DVM, K-State professor and director of the Beef Cattle Institute, currently serves as an ambassador.

"A robust supply of food-systems veterinarians is critical to rural agricultural production," said White. "The Veterinary Workforce Solutions Program is bringing together expertise from a variety of areas to address current challenges and identify opportunities to promote rural veterinary services. I think this program will be beneficial to current and future rural veterinary practitioners."

To date, the pilot program has reached 450 students and early career professionals.

KLA**INNOVATIVE PROGRAM AIMS TO ADDRESS VET SHORTAGE**

ISU early acceptance initiative recruits future production animal veterinarians.

Addressing the veterinarian shortage in rural areas of Iowa and the United States is the goal of an innovative new program at Iowa State University (ISU) that aims to recruit and mentor future animal medicine students.

The joint program between the College of Veterinary Medicine and Department of Animal Science in ISU's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, entitled the Production Animal – Veterinary Early Acceptance Program (PA-VEAP), has been established with the goal of educating more students who wish to practice production animal medicine.

Hopes are that interested students will discover their calling in veterinary medicine and consider practicing in underserved areas of Iowa and throughout the United States.

"Currently there is a shortage of veterinarians across the profession," said Dan Grooms, the Dr. Stephen G. Juelsgaard Dean of Veterinary Medicine at ISU. "It's bigger than just rural veterinary medicine, however. Here in rural areas of Iowa where agriculture is extremely important to the economy and community, we're looking for solutions where we can continue to provide health care,

especially to the livestock industry, which depends on care for the health of their animals.

"With the PA-VEAP program, we are helping to address the critical need for veterinarians to support Iowa's \$32 million animal agriculture industry."

Justin Brown, assistant professor of veterinary diagnostic and production animal medicine and director of the program, said the number of students considering production animal veterinary medicine nationwide continues to decline. Finding a solution is imperative, he said.

"The American Veterinary Medical Association reports that less than 4% of veterinarians practice predominantly in food production animal medicine, and those numbers have been trending down since 2013," Brown said. "Iowa State University is one of the top institutions for production animal veterinary medicine and



ISU intern Hannah Hipkiss pairs a newborn calf with its mother after performing a successful C-section. Photo / Conrad Schmidt

animal science programs.

"This PA-VEAP will help to recruit individuals to ISU and the profession and address the critical need for production animal veterinarians to support Iowa's agriculture industry."

Interested students

PA-VEAP is an undergraduate program for students majoring in animal science or dairy science at ISU. Students must also be pursuing completion of an undergraduate certificate in beef cattle, dairy cattle, poultry or swine production management.

"This program provides students with a demonstrated interest in production animal medicine a community of

continued on page 11

INNOVATIVE
continued from page 10

support and mentorship while gaining hands-on training and industry experience through the animal science curriculum,” said Jodi Sterle, associate chair of teaching and undergraduate teaching coordinator in the ISU animal science department.

“By participating in this program, students can gain valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges facing production animal veterinarians and prepare themselves for the rigorous veterinary curriculum, as well as a successful career.”

The early acceptance program reserves the student a space in the College of Veterinary Medicine once they’ve completed the pre-vet requirements. The student becomes a part of a group that will be provided with mentoring, hands-on learning, academic assistance and value-added experiences.

“Our goal is to identify students early in their time here

at ISU who may be interested in rural vet medicine, and then pave a road toward success for these students as a food animal veterinarian or rural practitioner,” Grooms said. “The earlier we can intervene, the more success we will see.

“Hopefully by doing this, we’re creating more veterinarians interested in rural practice.”

High school students considering agriculture studies at ISU also are being recruited and informed of the new program should they show interest in veterinary medicine.

“If you’re interested in veterinary medicine, and you’re interested in rural or food animal veterinary practice, we have a program here at ISU that you should take a look at,” Grooms said.

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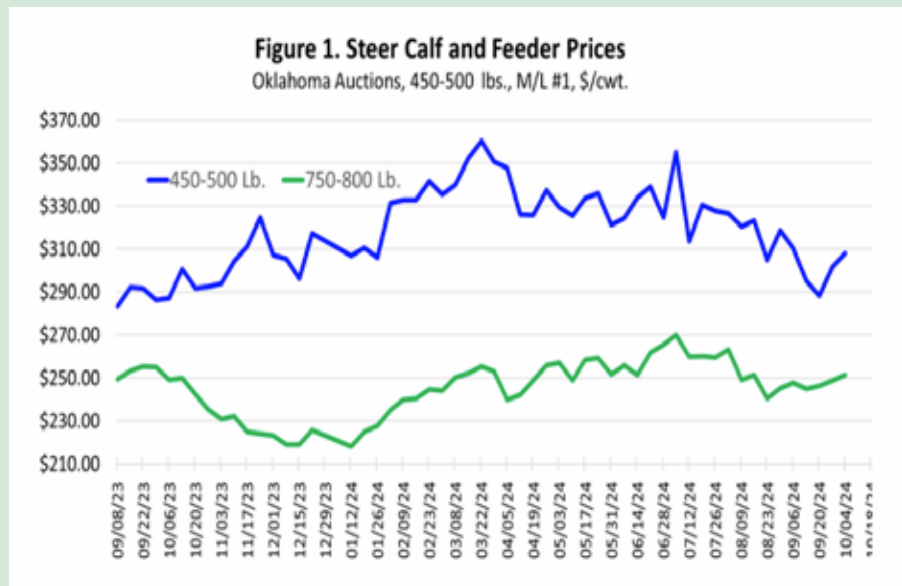


FALL CATTLE MARKET
continued from page 6

of stocker demand this fall.

Cull cow prices remain above year ago levels but did drop in September. Cull cow prices typically decrease to a seasonal low in October/November. However, boning cow prices increased counter-seasonally in the first week of October. The volume of cull

cows in Oklahoma auctions in 2024 is down 32.5 percent year over year, consistent with the 16.4 percent year to date decrease in beef cow slaughter thus far this year. The reduced inventory of cows likely means that seasonal cull cow price pressure this fall will be less than usual.



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How can we reduce potential prussic acid poisoning?**Grazing**

To reduce prussic acid poisoning in a grazing system, take steps to reduce the grazing of frost-damaged and the new growth of the forage species described above. Common precautions include:

- Remove livestock from pasture on nights when frost is forecasted, prussic acid can form quickly and with a light frost.

- After a killing frost, do not graze until the forage is dry, usually 5-7 days.

- After a non-killing frost, do not graze for two weeks, if the non-killing frost results in new growth do not graze until 10 to 14 days after there is a killing frost. The time after a killing frost will allow the forage to field cure and dissipate the prussic acid.

- If the forage has a high potential for prussic acid poisoning, do not graze new growth.

- To reduce selective grazing of forages with new growth utilize heavy stocking rates and rotational grazing.

Green chop

Green-chopping forages will not significantly reduce the level of prussic acid in forages. Green-chopping has the benefit of making it less likely that livestock can selectively consume frost-damaged tissue, but if the forage is frost-damaged it can still be toxic, so feed with caution.

Silage and Hay

Making hay or silage out of forage with prussic acid concerns can be safe with a few precautions. Forage can be mowed for dry hay any time after a frost due to a decrease in prussic acid content throughout the drying process. If the hay is not properly cured and dried prior to baling, it should be tested before feeding. For silage, it is best to wait 5-7 days after a frost to chop and to wait to feed that silage 8 weeks after ensiling. The ensiling process allows a significant amount of the prussic acid to escape as a gas during the fermentation process. Be cautious of this gas though if you are storing forage in a silo and need to enter it for any reason.

Be sure to make sure fresh air is blown into the silo for your safety.

Other Forage Concerns**Nitrate Accumulation**

Prussic acid poisoning is not the only concern for feeding forages after frost. Frost can slow the growth of many actively growing plants, not allowing the conversion of the nitrates absorbed into proteins, leading to a toxic accumulation of nitrates in the plant tissue. This same risk is present in drought conditions where drought in the stressor that limits nitrate conversion. It is important to note that making hay does not reduce nitrate concentration, so if you have hay made during the drought or after a frost send a sample to be tested and dilute it with supplemental feed to ensure animal safety. Nitrate toxicity can present symptoms similar to prussic acid poisoning in lethal cases and symptoms like weight loss and reduced production in chronic cases.

Bloat

Frost damage can also affect the grazing of our forage legumes like alfalfa and clovers. To reduce instances of bloat, allow primarily legume pasture to dry for a few days after a killing frost. Other medication methods include; supplementing a fiber source like dry hay or grazing cornstalks post-harvest, making sure livestock are not excessively hungry going to fresh pasture by feeding them other forage before turning out on pasture each morning, and utilizing a bloat protectant.

Testing Forages for Toxicity

If there is a forage where prussic acid or nitrates are a concern, sending a sample to a lab is the best way to confirm if a forage is safe to feed.

It is very important to call the lab if you plan to send a sample to get guidelines on how to collect, handle, and ship the sample to ensure that the test performed is standardized and accurate. This is particularly important for samples with prussic acid since it is a gas and if handled incorrectly can be lost from the sample, resulting in a sample that appears safe to feed when it is not.

**MCDONALDS***continued from page 3*

ed their conspiracy through one or more anticompetitive means," McDonald's said in its Oct. 4, 2024, lawsuit filed in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York.

"Defendants and their co-conspirators implemented their conspiracy by collusively reducing the slaughter-ready cattle and beef supply, which over time artificially elevated the price of beef that they sold to plaintiff and others."

The food companies already face similar lawsuits from U.S. consumers and cattle producers as part of an ongoing antitrust case playing out in Minnesota.

"More specifically, defendants began to coordinate on the prices they would pay for fed cattle," the lawsuit said.

"They also coordinated on their respective cattle slaughter volumes. Industry data shows operating defendants' transition from competition to collusion by managing the price of fed cattle and the industry slaughter volumes."

The lawsuit includes a graphic showing slaughter volumes of four of the companies "moving in tandem" starting in 2015 and continuing through 2019.

In addition, the lawsuit shows average annual slaughter volumes of independent packers rising to about 4.5 million head annually from 2015 to 2019, compared to about 3.1 million head annually from 2007 to 2014.

This occurred, the lawsuit said, all while four companies named in the complaint saw those annual average slaughter volumes fall compared to the 2007 to 2014 timeframe.

"As a consequence of operating defendants' reduced supply, the beef market experienced a change of price behavior," McDonald's said in its lawsuit.

"Before 2015, prices of cattle and beef predictably

moved in tandem. That correlation was the result of a natural economic relationship in a competitive market because beef is simply processed cattle. But, beginning in approximately 2015, this fundamental economic relationship between cattle and beef prices changed. The degree of correlation of cattle and beef prices diverged (to operating defendants' benefit) without any credible, non-collusive explanation."

McDonald's said it has evidence that Tyson, JBS USA/Swift/Packerland, CMS and National Beef conducted daily meetings from 2015 to 2019 "typically from their head offices."

Those meetings, the lawsuit said, were attended by representatives of the companies' cattle procurement, plant operations, scheduling and risk management personnel.

"The attendees of these meetings will discuss, among other matters, the number of cattle their fed cattle business will procure, the terms on which they would be bought, plant scheduling (including slaughter volume) across each of their slaughter facilities and beef sales strategy," the lawsuit said.

"Because the cost of beef production is predominately made up of the cost of fed cattle, defendants' profitability is driven by the 'meat margin,' which is the spread between the price that packers pay for fed cattle and the price they charge for beef. The meat margin is sensitive to changes in industry aggregate slaughter levels, and Tyson Fresh, Swift/Packerland, CMS and National Beef can (and have through collusions) increased it."

Tyson, JBS, Cargill and National Beef did not respond to DTN's request for comment.

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at 40 to 75 days of gestation. This is less of a concern with a blood test.

Management Opportunities for Open Replacement Heifers

When identified, there are general alternatives for managing heifers:

1. Market non-pregnant heifers immediately (for example, in August or September versus October or November). Heifers can be placed in a feedlot and fed an energy-dense diet to allow increased weight gain and to be marketed when they reach the appropriate level of finish.

2. Keep non-pregnant heifers on pasture until typical sale time as an open.

3. Re-expose non-pregnant heifers to a bull with the intent they will conceive and be sold into herds with later calving dates.

Marketing Non-Pregnant Heifers Early

Non-pregnant heifers would be viewed similar to yearlings on grass by potential buyers. Depending on the producer's resources, these

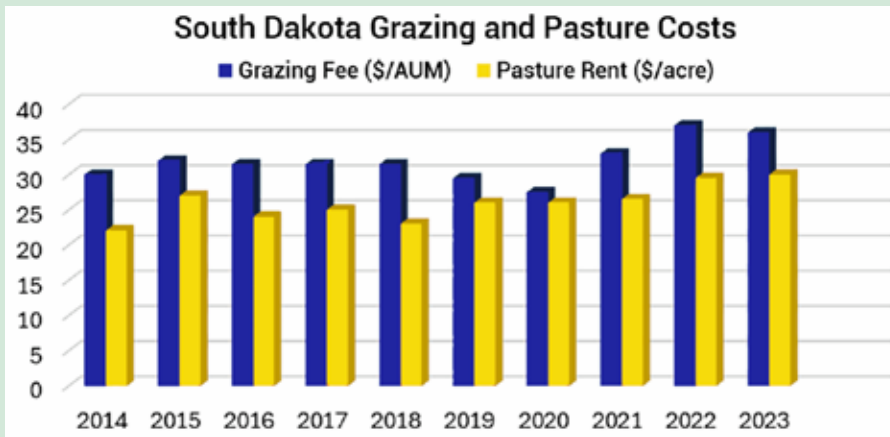


Figure 2. South Dakota grazing and pasture costs. (Source: USDA-NASS)

heifers can be sold or placed in a feedlot.

August prices for yearlings are seasonally higher than October and November prices.

Placing yearling heifers onto an energy-dense ration will allow them to reach harvest weight at an earlier point in time and potentially at a seasonally high price (Figure 1). This may benefit the producer financially.

Marketing conventionally

The return from holding known non-pregnant heifers depends on forage availability. The opportunity cost for grazing a non-pregnant heifer (typically weighing 900 to 1,000 pounds) would average \$35 per month in South Dako-

ta (Figure 2). Typically, forage quality declines in August and September, so growth rates would be less than during early summer. With abundant forage supplies, holding these heifers may make financial sense, as the additional income from the sale of a heavier heifer would likely exceed the additional pasture cost. With 2024 feeder cattle futures prices and assuming 1.0 to 1.5 pounds per-day gain on these heifers, holding non-pregnant heifers on grass would be profitable.

However, when forage supplies are limited, this decision is more complex. Ensuring that the herd has enough forage should be the first priority. Implementing the principle of "take half and leave half," consistent with a moderate intensity grazing system, al-

lows forage species to survive and thrive. The financial numbers may look the same as abundant/adequate forage; however, assuring the long-run health of the pasture is critical for future success.

Rebreeding heifers

There are several aspects to consider before starting a rebreeding program. Reproductive considerations of why these animals did not conceive should be considered. If unsound, it could be sold as a feeder. At this point in the cattle cycle, viable females are in demand. The open heifer may have value if sold as such. It could be bred soon and targeted to those looking to calve in early summer or fall. An open could also be maintained, incurring feeding costs, and then be bred next year. Feed costs and availability, the availability of other replacements, and trade-offs with grown versus purchased genetics would be additional considerations.

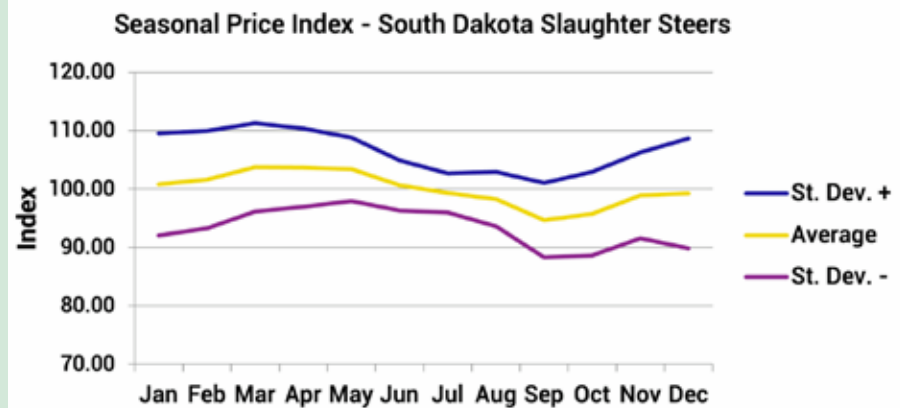


Figure 1. Seasonal price index for South Dakota slaughter steers.



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The industry has applied aggressive selection pressure to increase post-weaning growth and carcass weight. This selection pressure has led to an increase in mature cow weight. “In fact, over a 30-year career, assuming a ranch manager used herd sires representing only industry average growth and carcass weight, the operation’s cows would weigh about 230 pounds more today. That increase in mature cow body weight relates to about a 13% reduction in stocking capacity to apply the same grazing pressure on a given land base,” he said.

Today, several breed associations produce and publish mature cow weight expected progeny differences (EPDs). This selection tool can be used to control mature cow size and indirectly, stocking capacity on the ranch.

Lalman provided data indicating a moderate, positive phenotypic correlation between forage diet intake and a concentrate-based diet intake over several experiments. Surprisingly, in these same studies, there was no relationship between forage diet weight gain and concentrate diet weight gain. He summarized these studies by suggesting that feed intake EPDs provided by breed associations may work reasonably well to control feed intake in the cow herd. Secondly, he suggested that weight gain based on high-quality concentrate diets may not reflect the ability of cattle to thrive in a forage environment, especially a low-quality forage environment.

Lalman shared data from 353 proven Angus sires (above 0.5 accuracy for feed intake and mature cow weight EPD). From this data he demonstrated that there are numerous proven Angus sires that are expected to produce females with above average mature cow weight but below average feed intake. He also pointed out a few sires with below breed average mature cow weight

and above breed average feed intake. “Mature cow weight is a good place to start to control feed intake in the cow herd, but mature weight is an indicator trait. It is a proxy used to produce an estimate of feed intake and it isn’t always an accurate estimate of an animal’s genetic capacity. Similarly, we have demonstrated that the feed intake EPD should work reasonably well for a cow consuming forage. Perhaps we should be using these two traits in combination to identify cows that have modest appetite but are highly productive”.

Lalman also shared data generated over the past few years in their research program at Oklahoma State University related to the influence of milk yield on feed intake. In general, their group has found that beef cows’ forage intake is more sensitive to milk yield than previously thought and previously published by the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s Nutrient Requirements of Beef Cattle. “Our data suggests that each one-pound increase in milk yield is associated with about 0.4 pounds increase in feed intake. The previously published coefficient was half that at 0.2,” he said.

Lalman’s presentation provided a comprehensive overview of cow efficiency, emphasizing that building better cows isn’t just about boosting production — it’s about creating a balanced, cost-effective, and sustainable operation. By focusing on cost control, thoughtful genetic selection, and efficient feed use, cattle producers can improve the overall efficiency of their operations, ultimately leading to greater profitability and long-term success.



To watch the full presentation, visit <https://youtu.be/ZXWJaqpLVx0?si=2Ktp28yvkv0nhqar>. For more information about this year’s Symposium and the Beef Improvement Federation, including additional presentations and award winners, visit BIFSymposium.com.

FEDERAL JUDGE

continued from page 3

makes chicken products. The lawsuit contends, in part, that a federal poultry-products law preempts Florida from imposing the ban.

Walker wrote that the company argues that the “ban imposes an inconsistent ‘ingredient requirement’ by prohibiting the sale or distribution of food products that contain cultivated chicken meat as an ingredient.” But he wrote the company could not identify a law or regulation “that creates a federal ‘ingredient requirement’ with respect to ‘cultivated meat.’”

The denial of the preliminary injunction does not end the lawsuit. In supporting the ban, state officials have pointed to questions about the safety of cultivated meat. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture last year approved UPSIDE to manufacture and sell its products.




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AMERICAN SHORTHORN ASSOCIATION'S COW PRODUCTIVITY INDEX

The American Shorthorn Association released a new selection index this summer to provide Shorthorn breeders and their commercial customers additional tools in their pursuit of Shorthorn genetic improvement. The Cow Productivity Index (CPI) is designed to identify genetics that excel at the traits expected of useful, productive females in the commercial sector.

Let's start with the breeding objective that defines CPI and, thus, the traits that get included in the model. This index mirrors the production scenario in which Shorthorn genetics are going to be most often utilized in the commercial sector: to produce replacement heifers within the herd and steers that are a payday for their producer as feeder calves. As seedstock producers, we have been told over and over that the commercial cattleman wants cattle that don't cause them problems. Either that mantra is truly so important that it must be repeated, or we aren't doing a very good job of it, so they must keep telling us. The goal of CPI is to help identify those genetics that we might classify as less apt to cause problems: those that calve on their own, raise a good calf to the weaning pen, keep doing it year after year without getting bigger cows than a rancher might want.

With that in mind, the traits that fit this index according to the economic model are described below:

Calving Ease Direct (CED)- It's no secret that



the first key to having a profitable calf is getting it into this world safe and alive. The CED EPD is a prioritized part of CPI for that reason. We don't want calving issues, and neither do our customers.

Weaning Weight (WW)- The end marketing point utilized in the building of CPI is selling calves by the pound as weaned feeders. Obviously, that makes weaning growth genetics a significant component of CPI.

Yearling Weight (YW)- The YW EPD is included in CPI as the indicator trait of mature cow size and is weighted negatively in the index. While a genetic tool for cow weight is in the works at IGS (our genetic evaluation service provider), it is not available for use in our evaluations yet. Genetic studies have shown the correlation between yearling weight and mature weight to range from 75 to 85%.

Milk- Cows need to be able to produce enough milk

to raise a healthy calf. While our hardest EPD to track, MILK is an important EPD in maternal selection. Too little MILK can leave you disappointed in your cows' production. We also know that too much MILK can be an issue if you do not have the environmental resources to support heavier milking cows. The MILK EPD is included in a positive weighting in CPI.

Calving Ease Maternal (CEM)- If the goal is producing daughters that can go

to work as productive cows, then they need to be able to have their first calf with no troubles. With that in mind, CEM is a part of CPI, albeit the least emphasized of the incorporated traits.

Stayability (STAY)- Longevity is a key to profitability for a cow. The longer she produces, the better chance she becomes a moneymaker for you. STAY is our genetic measure of the likelihood of staying in production longer, meaning a higher STAY EPD is predicting a higher chance of hanging around the herd. The STAY EPD is a significant component to CPI's formulation.

There's a lot to unpack any time that a new selection tool is introduced, and CPI is no different. Educating yourself on the available tools will always be important. Knowledge is power, and with knowledge of the tools that best suit your operation, your power to breed and improve Shorthorn cattle increases.




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Two Years of Fall Drought Impacting Marketing Strategies

By James Mitchell, Livestock Marketing Specialist, University of Arkansas

Over the past two years, drought conditions have worsened rapidly each September, coinciding with the start of fall marketings for calves and cull cows. Typically, large volumes of these cattle come to market in October and November, following a well-established seasonal pattern. This influx of cattle puts downward pressure on prices, with October histori-

cally seeing the lowest cattle prices of the year. However, drought pressure has likely caused producers to adjust their marketing strategies. A closer look at state-level auction receipts can provide insight into how these changes are playing out.

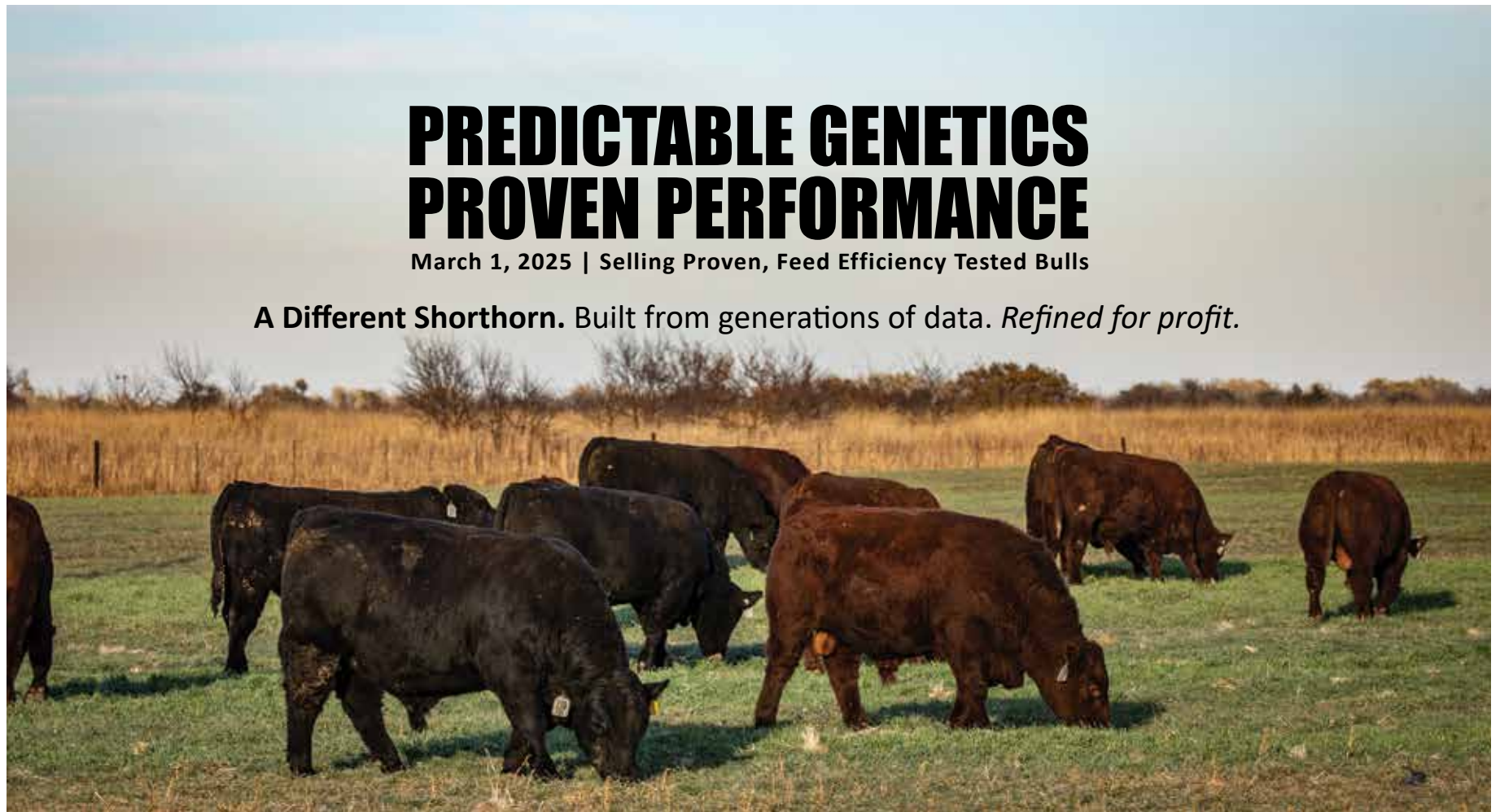
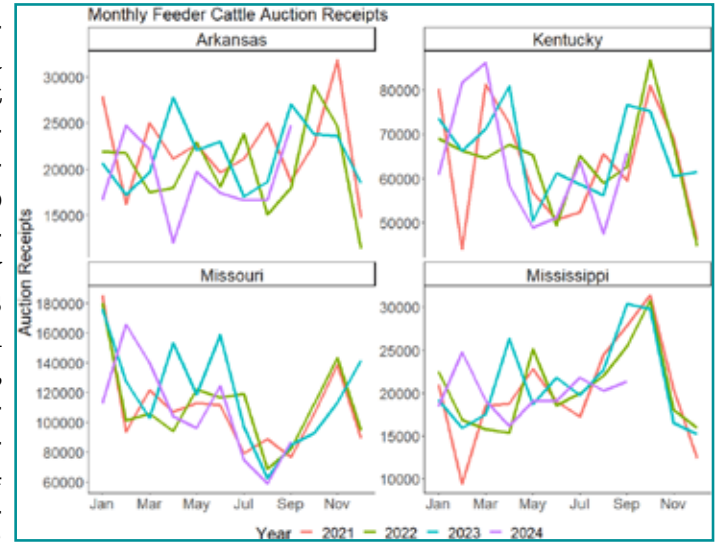
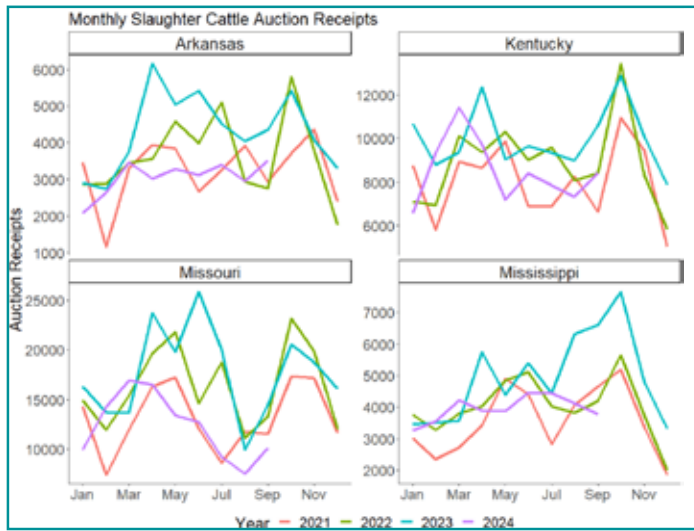
The first graph in this article (below) shows monthly feeder cattle auction receipts for Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri, and Mississippi. In 2021 (red line) and 2022 (green line), the seasonal peak in receipts occurred, as expected, in October and November. However, in 2023 and 2024, receipts in-

creased earlier, with a significant rise in September, likely due to drought-induced early marketings of calves. In Arkansas, for example, September 2024 auction receipts are 8 percent lower than in September 2023 but 38 percent higher than in September 2022. Missouri's receipts are up 2 percent year over year for September, and a similar pattern is seen in Kentucky. The second graph (above) displays monthly slaughter cattle (cull cows) auction receipts. In each of the four states, there is a clear seasonal peak in October. How-

ever, receipts are noticeably lower this year compared to 2021 through 2023. This serves as a stark reminder of how heavily the beef cow herd was culled last year, with auction receipts significantly higher throughout all of 2023.

Part of the downward pressure on prices is due to the normal seasonal pattern.

continued on page 20



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K-State beef cattle nutritionist Phillip Lancaster shares considerations for purchasing off-the-farm forage

By Jacob Klautt, K-State Research and Extension

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, approximately 20% of Kansas presently faces drought conditions, while 40% remains abnormally dry.

Many issues arise from this lack of rainfall that affects livestock producers. Kansas State University beef cattle nutritionist Phillip Lancaster said ranchers who grow their own hay encounter forage fields that yield less than normal, which leaves them needing to buy more.

“Producers are now purchasing hay from different parts of the state and country to make sure they have enough feed resources for the upcoming winter,” he said.

“People who need hay for livestock with higher nutrient requirements have started looking elsewhere to find higher quality forage than they were able to put up themselves this year.”

With remote transactions and contactless payments becoming more common, Lancaster said producers must “get eyes” on the forage before they purchase it to ensure its quality.

“There are several different aspects we can evaluate by visiting the farm and looking at hay in person,” he said. “One of the biggest things is its leaf-to-stem ratio. The highest quality hay will have more leaves with fewer stems and seed heads.”

Additionally, Lancaster

urges buyers to ask sellers for a forage test to guarantee its nutritional value.

“It will tell you things like a hay’s protein percentage and fiber amount,” he said. “A forage test will also provide a relative feed value. This figure can be compared to a standard number that allows a producer to see where that hay ranks and what is considered good quality.”

He added: “You want to ask the person taking the samples for the analysis ‘What cutting did this come from?’, ‘Where in the haystack did this hay originate from?’ and ‘Was it taken using a bale core?’, so you have a good representative sample of the hay that is there.”

Beyond verification, producers should evaluate a forage’s price relative to its quality using a cost per unit of nutrient value.

“Figure out what the key nutrient you’re going to need out of the hay you’re buying and determine its cost per unit (usually measured in dollars per pound),” Lancaster said.

“In beef cows, the main nutrient of concern is energy, so look at the cost per unit of total digestible nutrients (TDN), which estimates a forage’s digestibility.”

Buyers must also establish how hay was stored prior to a transaction, according to Lancaster.

“Particularly, (buyers



K-State beef cattle nutritionist Phillip Lancaster says forage buyers may require sellers to provide a mycotoxin analysis if concerned about mold

should think about) how it was stored since the forage sample was taken for analysis because additional moisture after that will affect the quality that you are going to actually get compared to the quality when that sample was acquired,” he said.

“Ask the seller ‘Was it covered?’ and ‘Was it raised off the ground?’ to figure out how much moisture a given bale was potentially absorbing in storage.”

Moreover, producers should consider buying hay on a tonnage basis instead of per bale.

“Livestock eat pounds; they do not eat volume. Having a total weight in tons gives a producer the ability to better calculate how much is needed and if enough is being purchased,” Lancaster said. “When bales are not wrapped to the same density, their sizes and weights can vary greatly.”



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By Maggie Malson

As we near the end of fall, cooler temperatures are on the horizon and winter will be upon us soon.

Cows are generally hardy animals that can tolerate cold temperatures very well, especially when acclimated and properly cared for. They can endure a lot, but it does change them metabolically, we just can't see it, says Chris Cassady, Ph.D., BioZyme Director of Beef Technical Sales.

Lower critical temperature (LCT) is influenced by both environmental and animal factors. These factors include a combination of wind chill, humidity, hair coat, and body condition score.

Typically, a lower critical temperature (LCT) is around 18 degrees Fahrenheit with a full winter coat, Cassady says.

"So will they survive, yes. But will it potentially cause metabolic changes and stressors, also yes. While they can survive harsh colds, what we can't see internally is what we need to focus on," he adds.

Beef cattle can typically endure temperatures as low as -20° Fahrenheit, and even colder, especially when they have good nutrition, are in good health and have adequate shelter or windbreaks.

Providing adequate cattle shelter and nutrition during the coldest months of the year is essential for herd health and well-being. Cattle are fairly cold tolerant; however, the combination of wind chill and moisture can lead to cold stress, which leads to lowered performance and decreased immune response.

Cassady offers six guidelines to producers to consider when preparing cattle for winter.

1) Provide Windbreaks

Windbreaks can be both natural and man-made. Plant rows of trees or shrubs to reduce the wind chill. A hilly area can also serve as a natural wind barrier.

If trees are not an option, construct windbreaks from materials like wood, metal or fabric. These structures

should be placed to block prevailing winds.

2) Design Shelter for Comfort

Build open-sided barns or three-sided sheds to provide shelter from wind, snow and rain. The open side should face away from the wind, typically southward. Each cow needs about 40-50 square feet of space. Ensure the shelter area is big enough to comfortably house your herd.

Good airflow is crucial to prevent respiratory diseases and mold growth in the shelter. Ensure proper ventilation to avoid condensation and moisture build-up. Additionally, we suggest installing vents or leaving space at the top of the shelter walls to promote air circulation.

3) Protection from Mud

Provide deep bedding with materials like straw, corn stalks or wood shavings to insulate against cold ground. Regularly replenish bedding to keep it dry and warm.

It is also vital to provide proper drainage around the shelter and windbreak, which prevents mud. Mud can cause hoof problems and stress cattle. Gravel pads or dry-lot pens can help keep the ground dry.

4) Water and Feed Access

Water and feed are even more essential to your cattle during the cold months. Make sure cattle have access to both, especially when they are confined during storms or extreme cold.

Use heated or insulated water troughs to prevent freezing. Ensure a consistent supply of clean water.

Plan to increase rations and ensure there is a sufficient supply of forage. Ensure feed is easy to access without cattle needing to travel far. Keep feed close to or within the shelter.

5) Be Prepared for Severe Weather

We obviously don't have to remind cattle producers to check the weather. If you



have prepared a winter cattle shelter properly, you should be prepared for heavy snow, freezing rain and extreme cold.

We do recommend having an emergency plan in place for blizzards, such as moving cattle to barns or bringing in extra feed supplies. Finally, keep cattle calm and avoid overcrowding in confined

spaces, as stress can lead to health issues.

"In addition to providing a quality, well-ventilated bedded down winter cattle shelter, your herd also needs high-quality nutrition during times of cold stress," Cassady says.

continued on page 24

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SEASONALITY IN FEEDER CATTLE PRICES

By Hannah Baker, M.S., State Specialized Extension – Beef and Forage Economics, University of Florida

The fall months are when a majority of producers across the country are selling spring-born calves or yearlings from last fall. Due to the increase in supply of calves, prices typically decline during these months. A way to show this seasonality trend is to look at the seasonal price index. The average annual price index shows the relationship between each month's average price and the annual average price. When the price index is above 100%, that means prices in that month, on average, are higher than the annual average, (spring). When the price index is below 100%, that means average prices in that month are lower than the annual average, (fall).

The maximum and minimum indices are used to

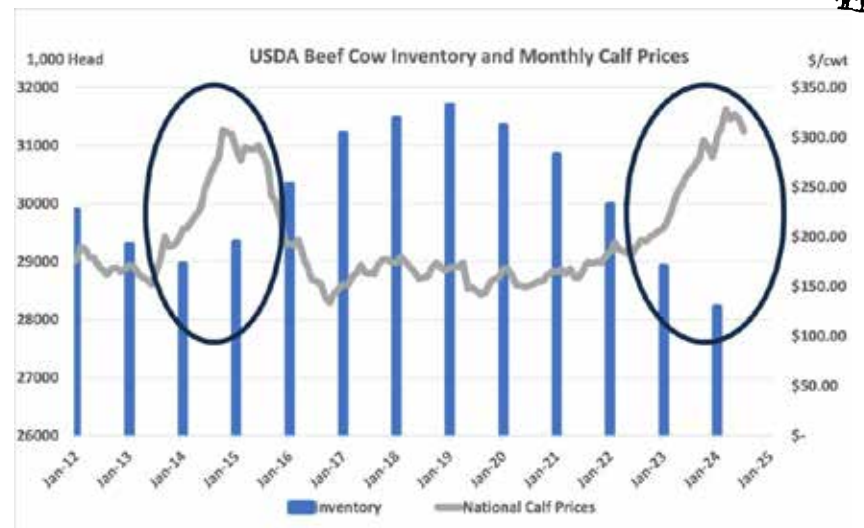
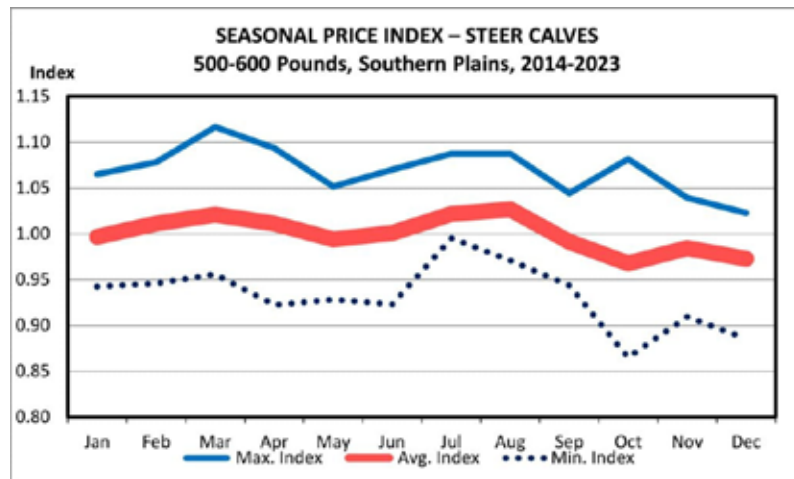
show the approximate range of prices during that month. For example, during 2014-2023, average October prices in the Southern Plains were 96 percent of the annual average, but there was variability where prices ranged between 86% and 108% of the annual average for October.

The graph below includes 2023 when prices did not follow the seasonality trend of declining in the fall, but rather increased. For instance, average prices for 500-550-pound feeder cattle in Florida increased by 18 percent from March to October. On average from 2018-2022, prices during this same period declined by about 9 percent. Prices continued rising into 2024, but then began falling as we ap-

proached the summer and fall months, following the typical seasonality trend.

In terms of where we are in the cattle cycle today compared to in 2015, the price trends look similar as if we have already seen peak prices and are headed for lower prices. However, the difference to notice between 2024 and 2015 is inventory levels and the rate of expansion. In 2015, expansion had already started when prices were at the levels we are seeing today. There was no incentive for prices to climb

back up after the typical dip in the fall. In the current market, we have not started seeing signs of stabilization, much less expansion, and have already hit record prices that we saw back in 2015. This indicates that while we are experiencing some seasonality this year, it is not expected that we are headed for a continuous low level of cattle prices.



TWO YEARS

continued from page 17

However, drought conditions have impacted the fall cattle market for the past two years, causing this seasonal price pressure to occur ear-

lier than usual. With fewer cattle available this year, the market will continue to reflect tighter supplies for the remainder of the year and into 2025.

James Mitchell is an assis-

stant professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness at the University of Arkansas and an extension livestock economist with the University of Arkansas System Division of

Agriculture. James has B.S. and M.S. degrees from Oklahoma State University and a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Kansas State University.



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Rebuild your cow herd with proper heifer development

“Proper heifer development is key to a successful cattle herd and profitable operation,” says Patrick Davis, University of Missouri Extension livestock field specialist. As herds rebuild from drought or old cow turnover due to favorable prices, heifer development is taking place to build the next cow herd. Also, as cattle producers look to buy replacement heifers, this can be a way to add value to your cattle operation.

Davis provides some management strategies to consider in heifer development to produce a female that will be successful to you and your customer’s operation.

“Nutritional management is important to heifer development,” says Davis. Manage heifers to 55% to 65% of their mature body weight prior to the breeding season. This range depends on animal type and environment. Body condition score (BCS), which evaluates animal condition or fat cover on a 1 to 9 scale, is linked to heifer energy status and reproductive performance. Manage heifer BCS at a 5 to 6 prior to the breeding season to achieve optimum pregnancy rates.

“The prebreeding exam is important to heifer development,” says Davis. This exam is done by a veterinarian through rectal palpation 30-60 days before the breeding season to help determine if the heifers are reproductively sound to become pregnant during the breeding season. The prebreeding exam includes measuring the pelvic area (PA) and evaluating the reproductive tract (RT), which is scored on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being infantile and 4 and 5 being mature enough to become pregnant. For optimum heifer pregnancy rates, heifers should have an RTS of 3 or greater. PA (pelvic width x height) measurement determines if the heifer’s pelvis is large enough to pass a calf with ease. Based on Missouri Show Me Select

(SMS) Replacement Heifer Program requirements, heifers need to measure a PA of at least 150 cm² at prebreeding. Heifers with smaller PA can be remeasured at pregnancy check within 90 days of the start of the breeding season but must measure 180 cm² at this time. If heifers fail both measurements, they should be culled. Davis suggests utilizing this protocol along with breeding heifers to a calving ease sire to reduce calving difficulty issues.

“Use genomic testing to retain heifers with optimum genetics for you and your customer’s operation,” says Davis. Furthermore, if you are planning to sell these replacement heifers, this information helps in marketing and may lead to premiums. Davis suggests using the proper test based on the heifer breed and desired information.

Davis suggests using artificial insemination (AI) to breed replacement heifers because of the many benefits to you and your customer’s operation:

- AI-bred heifers typically sell at a higher value compared to natural service (NS) bred heifers. This is probably due to confidence in genetic quality of the calf and calving date.

- AI-bred heifers will calve earlier in the calving season which means calves should be older and heavier at weaning than their NS counterparts.

- AI-born calves have better genetic quality than NS calves. When selecting AI bulls, it is important to use sires that are high accuracy for the traits that are important to you and your customer’s operation. This increases the likelihood that AI-sired calves will perform better than NS-sired calves in these operations.

“Use an estrus synchronization protocol and have a good plan in place if you plan to utilize AI,” says Davis.

“Heifer breeding season



should be relatively short,” he says. Use a 60 day or less breeding season and cull any open heifers following the breeding season. This promotes retaining highly fertile heifers since they are more likely to conceive and become pregnant in the short breeding window. This also increases heifer likelihood of rebreeding and being retained in the herd after their first calf is weaned. Calves of these heifers will be born earlier in the calving season, which increases their chances of being older and heavier

at weaning.

“Pregnancy check and cull open heifers at approximately 90 days after the beginning of the breeding season,” says Davis. This allows for fetal sexing the calf and a more accurate calving date to be determined for you and your customer’s operation. The quicker these open heifers are identified and sold, the more valuable they are to the feed yard. Also, operation profitability is improved by not wasting feed resources on

continued on page 25

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Simple Synchronization of Cows: One Injection, One Time through the Chute, and Bull Breed

By Bethany Johnston and Aaron Berger, Nebraska Extension Beef Educators

Have you wanted to have more calves born earlier in your calving season, but did not want to deal with the increase in labor, cost and facilities to utilize estrus synchronization and artificial insemination? The protocol shown (Figure 1.) can increase the number of cows coming into estrus early in the breeding season, with one time through the chute, one injection, and breeding using only natural service.

This protocol calls for bulls to be turned out with the cows on Day 0. On Day 5, cows are given a shot of prostaglandin (PGF2α) which synchronizes a majority of the cows to be in heat/estrus from Day 6 through Day 10. The injection of prostaglandin causes any cows with a corpus luteum present on one of their ovaries to regress, ceasing progesterone production. This then triggers the cows to come into heat/estrus.

If the cow conceives during Day 1 to 5, she will not abort when given the prostaglan-

din injection on Day 5 because the developing corpus luteum at the site of ovulation on the ovary has not yet reached maturity and will not respond to prostaglandin.

Research conducted at the Fort Keogh Research Center near Miles City, Montana utilized this protocol over a three-year period, achieving pregnancy rates over 85% in a 32-day breeding season. Research from the University of Nebraska showed 75% of cows calved in the first 21 days of the calving season utilizing this estrus synchronization protocol as compared to only 63% of cows from non-synchronized natural service breeding.

Utilizing natural service with this method of estrus synchronization will require adequate bull power. A bull to cow ratio of 1:15 with yearling bulls or 1:25 with mature bulls should be sufficient. Because early breeding and the synchronized estrus is occurring over a 10-day pe-

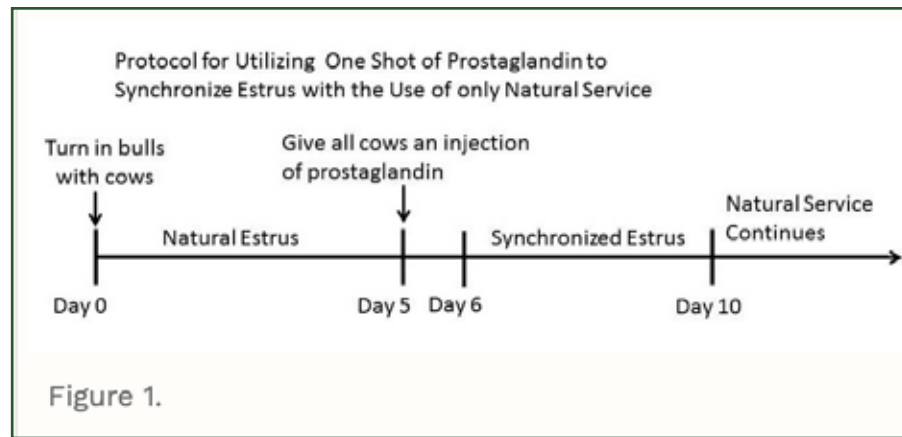


riod, fertile and active bulls with adequate libido should be able to handle the number of cows that will be coming into heat. Breeding bulls should undergo a breeding soundness exam prior to the breeding season.

Producers considering the use of this synchronization tool should remember that a number of factors affect pregnancy rate including cow body condition score, plane of nutrition, cattle health, and bull fertility.

Estrus synchronization can shorten the calving season. The article "Use of Natural Service Sires with Synchronized Estrus" highlights other advantages of estrus synchronization and natural service.

Note: A relatively new prostaglandin product, which is in a high-concentration formula, allows for a 2-mL dose to be injected subcutaneously (under the skin). Other prostaglandin products have an intramuscular injection (IM) label requirement, which requires a longer needle for deep muscle penetration. IM injections have a greater risk to develop lesions in the muscle that affects meat quality. The 2018 Nebraska Beef Report article "Comparison of Two Alternate Prostaglandin Products in Yearling Beef Heifers" showed beef heifers performed similarly to either the IM injection of prostaglandin or the subcutaneous injection of high-concentration prostaglandin.



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The 3 Ps of Herd Expansion: Profit, Pasture and Patience

Dr. Kenny Burdine, Extension Professor, Livestock Marketing, University of Kentucky

As I write this article in October 2024, beef cow inventory is at a 62-year low. Tight supplies have driven cattle markets and calf prices have increased by roughly \$1 per lb. over the last two years. With limited heifer retention and beef cow slaughter on track to exceed 10% of beef cow inventory for the year, it appears very likely that beef cow numbers will be even lower going into 2025. At some point, we will expand this cowherd but there appears to be little evidence that producers have an appetite for that currently. In order for the cow herd to grow, we need to have the 3 Ps of herd expansion at the cow-calf level: profit, pasture and patience.

The first P is probably the most obvious – profit. There will be no interest in cowherd expansion if money is not being made at the cow-calf level. While profit has largely been there recently, it is important to remember that these strong calf price

levels are relatively new. We actually went from November 2015 to February 2023 (7 years and 4 months) with the state average price of a 550 lb medium / large frame #1-2 steer in Kentucky being under \$2 per lb. Coming out of that challenging 7-year period, I think a lot of cow-calf operators have been cautious and guarded. Just as importantly, a lot of costs are substantially higher now than they were ten years ago, so comparing current calf prices to historical calf prices can be misleading. Still, I think current returns at the cow-calf level are sufficient to see heifer retention if the other two Ps fall into place.

The second P is pasture, and I am using pasture broadly to describe forage / feed availability. While profit may be the first driver of expansion, no level of profit can make it rain and limited pasture and hay supplies can nix any interest in expansion in a hurry. As a recent example, drought was so



widespread in the US during 2022 that expansion would have been highly unlikely, regardless of calf price levels. Both hay supplies and pasture and range conditions have improved since 2022, but a lot of areas have been dry this year, including my

home state of Kentucky. Regardless, there is no doubt that both profit and pasture / hay are needed in order to see a significant interest in expansion.

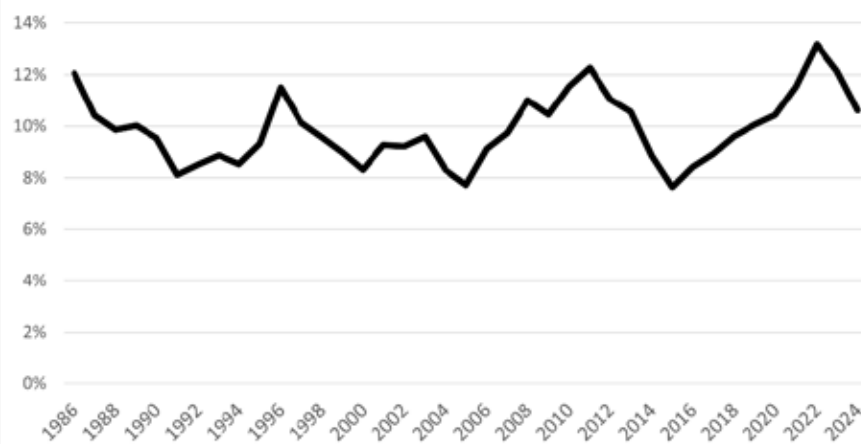
The final P is patience, and I actually think this may be the one that is most

continued on page 24


Figure 1: Heifers as a Percent of Total on Feed Inventory, by Quarter (January 2010 to July 2024, USDA-NASS)



Figure 2: Beef Cow Slaughter as a % of Jan 1 Beef Cow Inventory (1986-2024, 2024 slaughter estimated, USDA-NASS)



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lacking in the cattle industry right now. When a farmer decides to expand the size of their cowherd, they are trading income from the sale of heifers today for a stream of income from additional calf sales in the future. Weaned heifers are valuable in 2024 and passing up that income in the short run is difficult. Developing heifers is also costly and is an expense that is incurred well before additional calves can be sold. These same factors were largely present when our last expansion began in 2015, but interest rates were considerably lower than they are today. Higher interest rates increase cost of production and also increase the preference for income today, rather than in the future. Put another way, patience is at a premium in higher interest rate environments like the present.

At some point, the three Ps will line up and we will expand this cowherd. When that will happen is a difficult question to answer, but it is safe to say there are no signs of heifer retention right now.

Limited heifer retention, combined with cow slaughter levels, suggest that another decrease in beef cow inventory is almost certain when the January 2025 estimates are released. So, supply fundamentals are encouraging and should continue to support calf prices next year. Many are also expecting some reductions in interest rates over the next several months, which may factor into this decision at the producer level.

If weather cooperates, I do think increased heifer retention could be seen in 2025, but it is important to remember that this would just be the first step towards expansion. And the initial impact of heifer retention is actually a tightening of calf markets as those heifers are held back. There are always risk factors out there, but I remain optimistic about the next couple of years largely because cattle supplies are tight and likely to get tighter. We are not seeing signs up expansion yet, so all we can do is watch for the 3 Ps!



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AMENDED USDA CATTLE TRACEABILITY RULE GOES INTO EFFECT IN NOVEMBER

The 2024 USDA traceability rule requiring electronic identification (EID) for certain classes of cattle to be moved across state lines goes into effect November 5. The rule applies to sexually intact cattle 18 months of age or older, all female dairy cattle, male dairy cattle born after March 11, 2013, and all rodeo or exhibition cattle. This rule amends a 2013 rule that required only visual ID tags for these same classes of cattle to move interstate. Currently, the only EID technology approved by USDA is an 840 tag. These tags are only encoded with a 15-digit animal identification number. They do not record or transmit owner-specific information, nor do the tags collect constant location data while cattle graze on the ranch. Producers can purchase 840 tags directly from any tag distributor or contact their veterinarian, as those accredited in Kansas may be able to obtain free 840 tags and applicators

from the Kansas Department of Agriculture. More information on securing tags can be found on the Kansas Department of Agriculture website under Animal Disease Traceability. Cattle that fall under the 2024 rule, but already are tagged with a metal tag or a plastic, non-RFID official identification tag prior to November 5 will be grandfathered in. That tag will be considered acceptable for interstate movement for the duration of the life of that animal. Additionally, the 2024 rule does not apply to cattle of any age moving interstate to go directly to processing. More information on the 2024 cattle traceability rule can be found at www.kla.org/resources. A document for producers containing frequently asked questions, along with links to additional information, can be found under the Animal Disease Traceability section.

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HOW TO PROVIDE *continued from page 19*

6) Provide Good Nutrition

During cold weather, cattle require more energy to maintain body temperature. A higher energy diet, particularly one with increased roughage, helps cattle produce heat through digestion. Undernourished cattle are more prone to cold stress due to reduced fat reserves and lower metabolic heat production.

"Basically, once the animal falls below her LCT, she's going to start putting energy toward thermoregulating herself. Obvious implications that if she's in survival mode instead of production mode, we lose opportunity revenue," Cassady says.

He suggests two ways producers can combat this: supplement with energy dense grain products or increase their intake of hay.

However, two problems with this exist, he says. First, they haven't been adapted to grain, so there will be a potential drop in rumen pH, which is where Amaferm, a prebiotic research-proven to increase digestibility, can help.

Secondly, if the forage quality isn't high enough, the cows can't get enough hay consumed to meet this energetic demand because they are full. Amaferm helps break that down and increase VFA production. By increasing digestibility, your cattle are automatically increasing their body temperature internally, Cassady says.

Providing proper winter cattle shelter and quality nutrition for the herd ensures their health, safety and productivity during cold months.

Drovers



CATTLE PRICES CREEPING HIGHER

Supplies likely keeping a lid on the cutout value making the slow increase in fed cattle prices a little more impressive.

By David P. Anderson, Livestock Marketing Specialist, Texas AgriLife and Texas A&M

Fed cattle prices have been climbing, slowly, following the market correction that began in late July-early August. After falling from a high of \$197.09/cwt. to \$181.18/cwt., the 5-market weekly average has climbed back to \$186.89/cwt. over the last four weeks. Prices were in the \$188.00/cwt. range later during the week ending October 4th.

Normally, fed cattle prices increase, seasonally, in the fall. A 10-year seasonal fed cattle price index would suggest that prices increase about five percentage points from September to November. Of course, last year was an exception to that when prices declined during the fall. It's not unusual for fed cattle prices to hit their high for the year in the fall, but that would require a faster pace of increase than seen, so far.

Prices continue to creep higher in the face of larger beef production and a cutout value that has been at or below last year's level. Fed steer and heifer slaughter is 1.2% higher than last year over the last 9 weeks. Fed steer weights continue to increase and are at record highs. Federally inspected dressed weights hit 948 pounds for the week ending October 4th and are not likely at their fall peak yet. Heifer dressed weights

are not quite at record highs, about two pounds away from a record. The combination of more fed cattle going to market and record high weights means that beef production has exceeded that of a year ago for the last 9 consecutive weeks. The increase in fed beef production continues to offset the decline in beef and dairy cow beef production.

Adding to the beef production equation is the percent of beef grading Choice. Almost 73% of beef graded during the first week of October graded Choice. That is a 2.5 percentage point increase over a year ago. For the last 9 weeks a larger percentage of beef graded was Choice compared to a year ago. A combination of increased fed steer and heifer slaughter, larger dressed weights, and more grading Choice means that total supplies of Choice beef are greater than a year ago. More beef is grading Prime than last year also, contributing to greater supplies of Prime beef than last year. Supplies are likely keeping a lid on the cutout value making the slow increase in fed cattle prices a little more impressive.

The markets

It's dry in many parts of Texas with more areas showing up on the drought

	Week of 10/11/24 \$/cwt	Week of 10/4/24 \$/cwt	Week of 10/13/23 \$/cwt
5-Area Fed Steer			
All grades, live wt.	\$187.21	\$186.89	\$184.30
All grades, dr. wt.	\$295.92	\$296.00	\$291.83
Boxed Beef			
Choice, 600-900 lbs.	\$308.42	\$300.09	\$301.35
Choice-SEL. Spread	\$19.22	\$15.16	\$25.46
700-800 lb. Fdr Str			
Montana 3-market	\$269.18	\$246.00	\$265.83
Nebraska 7-market	\$271.15	\$270.44	\$265.93
Oklahoma 8-mkt.	\$255.88	\$253.31	\$251.93
500-600 lb. Fdr Str			
Montana 3-market	\$323.75	\$291.00	\$279.00
Nebraska 7-market	\$312.95	\$312.95	\$300.09
Oklahoma 8-mkt.	\$282.99	\$278.24	\$281.55
Feed Grains			
Corn, Omaha, \$/bu	\$3.95	\$4.06	\$4.88
DDGS, NE, \$/ton	\$162.83	\$161.67	\$202.86

Data Source: USDA-AMS Market News as compiled by LMIC

monitor. Dry conditions are likely impacting calf prices with many markets reporting little change to lower prices compared to the prior week. Drought conditions are

also likely impacting wheat pasture development and winter grazing prospects.



REBUILD

continued from page 21

open heifers.

“Work with your veterinarian to develop a proper vaccination and parasite control program to help heifers develop to their full potential,” says Davis. MU Extension Guide ‘Herd Health Programs and Reproductive Efficiency of Beef Cattle’ provides a vaccination and parasite control framework to help guide your herd's health program.

“These strategies mentioned above have helped the SMS Replacement Heifer

Program be successful and provide a reliable source of replacement heifers for over 25 years,” says Davis. Furthermore, it helps Missouri cattle operations add value through the sale of bred replacement heifers.

For more information on heifer development, the SMS Replacement Heifer Program, how to enroll heifers in the program and program sales, contact your local MU Extension livestock field specialist.



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Stocking Rates, Genetic Choices, and Their Impacts on Our Forage in Pastures

By Dirk D. Dempsey, former Extension Educator, Agriculture and Natural Resources

The amount of dry matter our forage stand can produce for us is a crucial component of building a successful plan for grazing cattle. Understanding which grazing systems are in place within the operation will allow for better optimization of the potential dry matter that cattle consume. Those systems are often called continuous, simple rotational, and intensive grazing. Each system has unique pros and cons, so it is crucial to consider this moving forward. Within these systems, it is a common goal to create a sustainable and long-term pasture that creates optimal forage for cattle but allows for plant regrowth and recovery time to be available once again. When stocking density is typically discussed, we commonly refer to it as under-stocking, where forage is wasted, and in the long term, the pasture will become unproductive with more weeds and woody plants taking form where good grazing plants once were. Overstocking can also reduce desirable plants and less than desirable average daily gain, an important production factor.

Genetic impacts through expected progeny difference (EPD) selection can impact our forage production and grazing management strategies, which depend on the breed lineage you choose. Let's look at various breed metrics of expected progeny differences in EPDs.

Dry Matter Intake (DMI) reflects the average dry matter consumed per head in pounds. It should be recognized that a lower or lesser value is considered to be more valuable. However, it does not always represent an animal who would be more efficient in a pasture setting. Animals with a higher DMI EPD will likely consume more dry matter per day.

Another EPD to consider regarding feed efficiency would be residual average daily gain (RADG). It is important to note that RADG reflects post-weaning daily gain when comparing calves from different sires given the same amount of feed opportunity. Many breeds currently do not recognize or have an EPD for this trait.

Lastly, the chance for the cow-calf operator to generate additional pounds on pasture will consider the Weaning



University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Weight (WW) and Yearling Weight (YW) for growth potential as those producers are selling pounds at the stockyards.

Supplementation throughout tumultuous weather, as we have faced throughout this current weather pattern, is vital to continued success no matter what grazing plan, stocking densities, or genetic selections we have already chosen. To keep the cattle healthy and in optimal condition during the dry weather, it is vital to keep the nutritional considerations available to the grazing animals.

Some necessary supplementations to consider include minerals such as phosphorus and vitamins A and D. Ideally, these are included in the trace mineralized salt and mineral offerings that are placed relatively close to watering sources but not right beside them or in the shade, as this could lead

to overconsumption of those offerings. The lack of vitamins A and D can be seen in the future, and supplementing those vitamins can be made with additional management choices.

One of the most critical components to developing successful forage stands, optimal grazing environments, and critical genetic choices includes taking advisement from your county Ohio State University agriculture and natural resources extension educator. These educators are connected to the latest research-based information from on-farm research, demonstrations throughout the state and good information gleaned from other land-grant institutions.

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| Nov 1-2 * GenePlus Brangus Sale at Chimney Rock Cattle Co, Concord, AR
877-436-3877 | Nov 15 Oklahoma Select Commercial Female Sale, Vinita, OK |
| Nov 2 Henke Angus Farms Sale, Salisbury, MO | Nov 15 SW MO Show-Me Select Heifer Sale, Carthage, MO |
| Nov 2 * Cason's Maternally Inspired Female Sale, Russell, IA 641-814-3332 | Nov 16 NE Arkansas Angus Assoc Sale, Charlotte, AR |
| Nov 2 Irvine Ranch Annual Production Sale, Manhattan, KS | Nov 16 Pitts Angus Farms, Hermitage, MO |
| Nov 2 Menzie Cattle Co Production Sale, Springfield, MO | Nov 17 Frank/Hazelrigg Angus Sale, Fulton, MO |
| Nov 2 Missouri Simmental Association Fall Harvest Sale, Springfield, MO | Nov 18 * Green Springs Bull Test Sale, Nevada, MO 417-448-7416 |
| Nov 2 Moriondo Farms & MM Cattle Co Fall Production Sale, Mt. Vernon, MO | Nov 19 B&D Angus Fall Bull Sale, Claflin, KS |
| Nov 2 Red Tie Event Sale, Hale, MO | Nov 21 Benoit Angus Ranch Female Sale, Esbon, KS |
| Nov 2 * Seedstock Plus RED REWARD Fall Sale, Osceola, MO 877-486-1160 | Nov 23 Dalebanks Angus Bull Sale, Eureka, KS |
| Nov 2 * The Andras Kind Red Angus Female Sale, Manchester, IL 217-473-2355 | Nov 23 * Sydenstricker Genetics Sale, Mexico, MO 573-581-1225 |
| Nov 2 Ward Bros. Sale, Plattsburg, MO | Nov 23 * West Central Show-Me Select Heifer Sale, Kingsville, MO 816-380-8460 |
| Nov 2 * Worthington Angus Bull & Comm Female Sale, Dadeville, MO
417-844-2601 | Nov 30 Galaxy Beef Female Sale, Macon, MO |
| Nov 2 Wright Charolais Annual Fall Sale, Kearney, MO | Dec 5 Sydenstricker Influence Commercial Heifer Sale, Kingdom City, MO |
| Nov 3 * Missouri Hereford Opportunity Sale, Sedalia, MO 417-372-1459 | Dec 6 * SE MO Show-Me Select Heifer Sale, Fruitland, MO 573-225-2628 |
| Nov 9 * Four State Shorthorn Association Sale, Diamond, MO 816-465-0777 | Dec 7 * 8th Fall Highland Cattle Sale, Springfield, MO heartlandhighlandcattle@gmail.com |
| Nov 9 Gibbs Farms 19th Annual Bull & Female Sale, Ranburne, AL | Dec 7 Arkansas Angus Assoc Sale, Ozark, AR |
| Nov 9 Valley Oaks Fall Female Sale, Warsaw, MO | Dec 13 * Show-Me Select Heifer Sale, Farmington, MO 573-756-4539 |
| Nov 14 Valley View Angus Female Sale, Nelson, MO | Dec 13 Show-Me Select Heifer Sale, Kirksville, MO |
| | Dec 14 Show-Me Select Heifer Sale, Palmyra, MO |
| | Dec 14 Wheeler Angus Production Sale, Paris, MO |

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***Sale Dates as published earlier this season. Sales are subject to change or cancellation. Confirm directly with Breeder or Sale Management.*



Standard Equipment

- Receiver hitch and louvered sun visor
- Dual lift cylinders
- Tie down rails w/stake pockets
- Removable side boards
- Synchronized squeeze arms
- Lights in the headache rack
- Louvered sun visor
- 30,000 lb recessed 5th wheel ball
- Spinners
- Toolbox optional
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Lot 345 —SydGen Fanny 4045

DOB 1/6/24 Reg. 21007728

This stylish daughter of ALPHA weaned at 698 off a two-year-old and has excellent growth, carcass and foot EPDs!



LOT 232—SydGen Evergreen 8093

DOB 1/14/18 Reg. 19114522

A proven producer with 4 birth ratios at 95 and 4 weaning ratios at 109. This outstanding female sells with a 54-pound, September 7 bull calf at side by SydGen Gavel 0546.



Lot 146—SydGen Loyalty 3618

DOB: 9/20/23 Reg. 20958556

BW 80 lbs. WW 873 lbs. YW 1534 lbs. ADG 4.13 lbs.

A stylish cows-only power bull by our first crop of LOYALTY calves was the #3 adj YW of all the fall bulls and had a 16.9 adj RE.



LOT 81D—SydGen Volunteer GA 3760

DOB 9/15/23 Reg. 20960079

BW 95 lbs.; WW 836 lbs.; YW 1,494lbs; ADG 4.11 lbs.

This stout 6.4-frame VOLUNTEER son posted the #2 adj IMF and #2 RE scans of all the fall bulls. He boasts 19 EPDs and indexes in the top 15% of the breed.



Lot 321—SydGen Royal Lass 3047

DOB 1/2/23 Reg. 20715388

A beautiful GAVEL bred heifer carrying a SMOKEY heifer calf due 1/10/25 is the kind to build a herd around!!



LOT 64—SydGen Merit 4067

DOB 1/9/24 Reg. 20993048

BW 65 lbs.; WW 667 lbs.; Frame 5.4

An outstanding prospect that excels in Scrotal, Heifer Preg, Milk & Marbling—keep the daughters and sell the steers on the grid!

Selling:

111 Fall Yearling Bulls

(Semen tested ready to work)

71 January Bull Calves

(Wintering Program available)

3 Embryo Lots

55 Fall Calving Pairs

25 Spring Bred Cows

47 Spring Bred Heifers

83 Fall Yearling Heifers

52 Spring Heifer Calves

Annually one of the most attended and talked about events in Missouri, the SydGen Production Sale is a source for many of the Angus breed's top potential AI sires, as well as the new generation of herd bulls for many of the Midwest's top commercial herds.

All performance information is included in the sale book or on update sheets available on our website and on sale day.

Highlights include:

- ◆ Our largest offering of progeny by De-Su Volunteer B122 and URF Alpha G138, two young sires that excel for foot structure, growth and carcass merit.
- ◆ Our first sampling of calves by Worthington Loyalty, Huwa Notice and SydGen Validate 2275!
- ◆ Although still a "virtual dispersion" of our 7-year-old cows, we will sell a lot of 3 to 6-year-olds.
- ◆ 100% of the cattle three years of age and younger are genomic tested and parentage verified. Most of the older cows are as well.
- ◆ Of the 434 head selling (not counting commercials and fall baby calves), the average \$Combination Value is \$296, with 199 ranking above \$300.
- ◆ The 111 fall yearling bulls offered average 1,325 adj. YW, 37.7 cm SC, 5.7 frame, 3.80% IMF, 15.7 adj. RE and rib fat cover of .35.
- ◆ The 179 total bulls offered average EPDs are 8 CED, 136 YW, 14.5 HP, .43 Claw, 1.07 MARB, +71 \$M, +185 \$B and +311 \$C.
- ◆ Progeny ratios printed in the sale book, and 10-12 page update sheet on sale day with current weights and frame scores on all calves and fall yearlings, as well as ultrasound data.
- ◆ Also, selling progeny of Connealy Cool 39L, H P C A Early Bird 65, SydGen Black Pearl 2006, SydGen Blueprint 7169, SydGen Bonus 8084, SydGen Brickyard, SydGen Buffett 8615, SydGen Enhance, SydGen Eternity 0046, SydGen Exceed 3223, SydGen FATE 2800, SydGen II Lombardi 9045 (Vince), SydGen KCF Gavel 8361, SydGen Ozark, SydGen Resolve 7132, SydGen Smokey 2001, SydGen Stealth 8556, SydGen Wake Up Call 9446, SydGen Westside 9395, Basin Jameson, Car Don Annuity, Connealy Clarity, Connealy Commerce, Connealy Craftsman, RSA True Balance 1311, and Square B True North 8052 will be highlights of this sale offering.

Complete catalog available online; mailed with November Angus Journal; or on request from the Farm Office

Check out our website for complete weights, calving, and other updates as they become available

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27th Annual SydGen Influence Commercial Heifer Sale

December 5, 2024

6:00 p.m.—Callaway Livestock Center, Kingdom City, MO

Selling 70 head of top commercial bred heifers and two-year-old pairs from Mershon Cattle LLC. All heifers have met a stringent set of qualifications, and all will be sired by, or bred to SydGen Herd Sires.

