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CATTLEMEN'S NEWS



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ON THE BLOCK

The market has been a little bit tough the last few weeks.

Prices were rockin' and rollin' right around Thanksgiving, and then the weather turned south all over the place. Feedlots got full after a lot of cattle were placed in about a week's time. We've seen a lot of mud in Nebraska, and the market just got tough. Prices fell \$10, maybe more in some places, in a matter of one or two days. The market has been especially tough on the unweaned and unvaccinated cattle. It seems so many of our market issues all year have been weather related.

Folks with some extra feed and grass might find some opportunity in the take-home, replacement quality cows. We've got several of those selling in our regular cow and bull auction on Dec. 19 as several folks are short on forage this



winter. As we look at that side of the market, though, it's really no different than the feeder cattle. Prices, again, are weather related. The replacement cow market is "okay," but it's a struggle except on the very front end of them.

We're also seeing a ton of slaughter cows being traded, sending that market on its tail end. I don't expect the stock cow market to improve much until we can start to see some available forage supplies.

I'm glad to get 2018 under my belt. It's been a tough one for the Moore family.

From all of us at Joplin Regional Stockyards and Prime Time Livestock Video, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Good luck and God bless.

Jackie



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

About the Cover

As we close the book on another year, all of us at Joplin Regional Stockyards wish you a blessed Christmas and a very happy New Year. —Cover photo by Jillian Campbell.

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Cause and Effect

Take all factors into account in herd management

Story by Justin Sexten



We sometimes associate cause and effect without knowing the real link. In academics, the buzz phrase is, “Correlation does not equal causation.” A quick search provides a humorous example. Did you know ice cream sales and shark attacks are highly correlated? While true in a broad sense, the actual reason for similar seasonal trends is that

hot weather brings greater ice cream consumption as well as more swimming along beaches where sharks lurk.

Examples in the beef production model are many: vaccines’ ability to prevent pink eye, growth attributed to a change in feed ingredients, treatment success with the most recent antibiotic. Then there’s the supposed link be-

tween weaning success and the moon’s position relative to constellations of stars. While I have never seen any data on the relationship between lunar or zodiac signs and calf-weaning success, I wonder if another factor comes into play. Those who follow the signs must plan ahead, so this advance planning could be the actual basis for weaning success rather than relative

positions in the heavens. Planning ahead can still get us in trouble, however, if we ignore data and hold onto assumptions of cause and effect.

As many cows across the country enter their third trimester and weather turns colder, calving season comes to mind along with birth weights and, especially with heifers, concerns about calving difficulty. Two correlations are often referenced for calf birth weight: weather and nutrition. Data from Nebraska and Oklahoma suggest birth weight increases in cold weather and decreases in the heat. That’s likely caused by changing blood flow to conserve heat in the winter and dissipate it in the summer, but it’s a factor we can’t control. That said, those who manage fall-calving herds should keep in mind that the seasonal data suggest their calves are 4 to 5 pounds lighter at birth than spring-born from similar genetics. Calving ease is less important in sire selection for the fall herds.

You can control late-gestation nutrition, and some say putting limits on that can moderate birth weight. While true, many potentially negative effects exist including increased calving difficulty due to weak cows, poor colostrum quality, later puberty in replacements, lower quality grade in finished cattle and increased post-partum interval. It may lower rebreeding rates in cows when the attempt to solve a problem not only fails in the near term but keeps on failing because cows lack adequate body condition scores at calving. Clearly the associated effects suggest correct sire selection as the more appropriate method to address dystocia.

Another relationship commonly discussed comes up in a recent article from the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center. Warren Snelling and coworkers looked at the correlations or relationships of cow weight and productivity. Their paper examined the productivity of cows over time and how the industry trend for increased yearling growth affects reproductive success and retention



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CAUSE AND EFFECT FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

in the herd. It agreed with past studies, showing a negative relationship between increased cow weight and weaning production traits. The new wrinkle was Snelling's suggestion that culling unproductive 2- and 3-year-old females could overcome this negative relationship.

Here's where discussion among ranchers can lead to different outcomes, depending on their ranch environments. One decides to stop selecting for more growth, citing genetic progress as the cause for larger mature cow size, which in turn has caused declines in weaning performance and longevity in the herd. Another decides to keep selecting for increased growth and finds minimal reduction

in weaning performance. Unknown is how the rest of the environment—to include management—affects these relationships. Perhaps on one ranch, the 2- and 3-year-olds are given another chance after failing to rebreed while the other indirectly selects for fertility (and females that fit the program) by culling based on reproductive success regardless of age.

When you stop to think about cause and effect in any aspect of herd management, keep in mind the many variables influencing cow herd productivity. When evaluating alternative practices, remember to consider all aspects of your environment. After all, your management decisions are part of the environment. When comparing notes with neighbors, veterinarians, nutritionists and seedstock suppliers, ask questions specific to your management in combination with the environment to ensure you are not causing undesired effects or blocking the way for desired ones.

—Source: Justin Sexten is supply development director with Certified Angus Beef.

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HEALTH WATCH

Nutrition Provides the Foundation

Nutrition focus during pregnancy means future rewards

Story by David Rethorst for Cattlemen's News

I am usually not one to reuse entire columns, but as I think about the drought areas we dealt with this past summer, I can't help but wonder about the impact that early summer short forage and water supplies has had on cattle health and reproduction.

We have recently seen higher numbers of open heifers that,



to date, we cannot explain. So, what is the status of the fetuses in the heifers that were pregnant? As we move into winter and get closer to calving, we need to think about preparing the bred females and their in-utero calves for inclement weather and then the adaptation that occurs when the calf is born. Thus, the column below is one I wrote two years ago, but it is very applicable today.

As I have dealt with the reproductive and health issues I have seen in cow herds over my 38 years of beef cattle practice, I have asked myself why does one herd have problems year after year, while a neighboring herd with seemingly similar cattle and health protocols have very few problems. As I delved into this question, I usually found differences in the way animal husbandry practices were managed in the herds. Sometimes, lack of timely, parasite control created problems, and at other times buying used bulls created biosecurity issues that resulted in reproductive problems, but invariably the majority of the problems have been related to nutrition.

As an example, let's look at two herds. Herd 1 did an excellent job of supplementing protein on corn stalks after the grain was cleaned up, as well as providing mineral with a good trace mineral package year-round. The cows were provided plenty of forage pre- and post-calving, as well as supplemental feed to meet protein and energy requirements.

The cows were usually in a 5.5 to 6 body condition score. Very few neonatal calves were treated for scours or respiratory disease in this herd. At weaning, usually less than 1 percent of the calves were treated for respiratory disease. Death loss from weaning to slaughter was also less than 1 percent. Pregnancy rates were usually in the 95 to 97 percent range.

Herd 2, on the other hand, did not supplement protein when the corn was cleaned up on the stalk fields, nor did they provide mineral while the cows were on corn stalks. The cows went into calving in a condition score of 4.5 to 5. This ranch tried to play catch up nutritionally by feeding a complete ration beginning about three weeks prior to calving.

Each year they treated 15 to 20 percent of the neonatal calves for scours and/or respiratory disease. They treated 5 to 7 percent of their calves for respiratory disease at weaning. Pregnancy rates in this herd were typically in the 92 to 93 percent range with the cows in a 5 to 5.5 body condition score. This ranch spent a great deal of time and money treating the neonatal calves. Additionally, they spent a considerable amount of money trying to figure out what bug they had in the herd so they could vaccinate for it.

These two herds provide a good example of the difference that gestational nutrition, or fetal programming, makes in the lifetime health and performance of calves. The management in herd 2 was

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TRENDING NOW

MCA Launches New Leadership Program

Applications accepted for Missouri Cattlemen's Leadership College

The Missouri Cattlemen's Association (MCA) recently announced the launch of their Missouri Cattlemen's Leadership College (MCLC). This yearlong program will be used to help cultivate the next generation of leadership for Missouri's beef industry.

"We must invest in the future," said MCA Manager of Membership Maria Washburn. "We know that the average age of a farmer and rancher in this state is nearing 60-years-old and less than five percent are under 35 years of age. These statistics make clear the immediate need to engage and empower the next generation. That's why the current leaders of MCA have developed this new program within the association."

For selected participants, the year will be filled with touring beef operations, policy advocacy, media training and more. These opportunities will allow the young producers to have in-depth knowledge of the beef industry and a better understanding of state and federal issues that directly and indirectly impact the industry.

MCLC is open to all MCA members. The class will be composed of nine students. Those interested in applying should seek a nomination from their county affiliate. Members between the ages of 25 and 40 are encouraged to apply, but age will not be a deciding factor.

Selection interviews will be held, and the class will be announced on Friday, Jan. 4, at the Missouri Cattle Industry

Convention and Trade Show. Interested individuals should contact Maria Washburn at maria@mocattle.com or visit www.mocattle.com for more information and for an application. Applications are due by Dec. 17.

—Source: Missouri Cattlemen's Association Prime Cuts.

NUTRITION PROVIDES THE FOUNDATION FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

convinced that nutrition during pregnancy did not impact calf health as long as the cows were in moderate flesh. They had respectable production numbers that could have been better if they had taken the money they spent on diagnostics over the years and put it towards supplemental protein and trace mineral.

This comparison of two herds also provides a real life scenario that reinforces the fetal programming work that has been done by the University of Wyoming, the University of Nebraska, New Mexico State

University and Oregon State University.

If your herd is one of those that follows the recommended health protocols but still has more health and performance issues than you think it should, I encourage you to take a critical look at your animal husbandry practices, especially your nutrition program. You could have a relatively easy fix to your problems. Nutrition matters.

—Source: Dr. David Rethorst is a veterinary practitioner and consultant, BeefSolutions, Wamego, Kansas.

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By the Numbers

Steer slaughter picks up despite lower year-to-date levels

Story by Donald Stotts

Steer slaughter continues to run below year-ago levels so far in 2018, despite the fact that the quarterly feedlot inventories have shown more steers on feed in 2018 compared to last year.

“For the year to date, steer slaughter is about 1 percent below last year,” said Derrell Peel, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension livestock marketing special-

ist. “However, steer slaughter has picked up in the last four weeks and has averaged close to year-ago levels.”

Steer slaughter has averaged 51.6 percent of total cattle slaughter so far this year, down from 52.9 percent of total cattle slaughter in 2017. As heifer and cow slaughter returns to normal levels, steer slaughter will move closer to the long-term average of 50.6 percent of total slaughter.

U.S. Department of Agriculture data show steer carcass weights have averaged about 4 pounds more than year-earlier levels so far in 2018.

“Weekly steer carcass weights may have peaked seasonally a bit early the first week of October at 903 pounds,” Peel said. “Steer carcass weights averaged 895 pounds in the most recent weekly data but could still jump to a higher seasonal peak in November.”

Heifer slaughter so far this year is averaging about 7 percent above year-ago levels, with smaller year-over-year increases in recent weeks pulling the year-to-date total down to a smaller increase. In the most recent four-week period prior

to this writing, heifer slaughter has averaged 1.5 percent over year-earlier levels. Heifer slaughter thus far in 2018 has averaged 27.8 percent of total cattle slaughter, up from 27.2 percent in 2017.

“As heifer retention continues to slow, heifer slaughter will approach the long-term average of just under 30 percent of total cattle slaughter,” Peel said. “Heifer carcass weights have averaged heavier by about 8 pounds, compared to this time last year. Like steers, heifer carcass weights may have peaked seasonally at 835 pounds the first week of October.”

Heifer carcass weights continue to increase relative to steers. The latest 12-month moving average for heifer carcass weight as a percent of steer carcass weight was a record 92.7 percent.

Total cow slaughter is up 7.3 percent year to date with beef cow slaughter up 10.5 percent year over year as beef cow culling returns to long-term average levels.

“Dairy cow slaughter has moved higher as months of poor dairy economics have pushed the dairy sector to reduce cow numbers somewhat,” Peel said. “Dairy cow slaughter is currently up 4.3 percent year over year for 2018. Cow slaughter is averaging 18.9 percent of total cattle slaughter so far in 2018, compared to a long-term average of 17.7 percent of total slaughter.”

Additionally, cow carcass weights are heavier by a year-over-year average of nearly 5 pounds, with more dairy cows adding to cow carcass weights.

Total cattle slaughter is up 2.7 percent year-over-year thus far in 2018. Increased cattle slaughter, combined with an average increase of 2.3 pounds in cattle carcass weights, has contributed to a year-to-date increase in beef production of 2.7 percent year over year. Total 2018 beef production is projected to be 27 billion pounds, a new record for U.S. total beef production.

Most industry analysts expect U.S. beef production to expand to another record level of 27.5 billion pounds in 2019.

—Source: Oklahoma State University Extension.

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Are cows colorblind? Yep, I Googled it. You wanna know what the all-knowing internet said? Yes, they are partially blind to certain colors. Apparently bovine see in muted colors and cannot differentiate between red and green.

But really, who cares? More importantly, WHY was I Googling such an irrelevant question?

I honestly wanted to know if my cows can tell when my husband leaves the house. If they can SEE his truck pull out of the drive and know that he left for work. It sure seems like they watch for it. Like an ornery toddler that disobeys when his parents are gone. My cows do VERY bad things when he is away.

It's been this way for years. Thankfully, I'm now much better equipped to handle these little emergencies. If you have cows, you know there's always something new, something challenging.

For example, a few months ago we were calving out a set of heifers that were bred before we purchased. We were crossing our fingers and our toes that they would all spit out tiny little babies, but unfortunately that didn't happen. And of course we had one momma have some major trouble when the hubs

was very much tied up at work. I have ZERO experience in assisting in animal births, so I was scared you-know-what-less!

Our land joins with the land of a couple that constantly comes to our rescue. Really, they are more like family than neighbors. And this particular day, they saved my bacon. Or my beef.

Tom and Mary and my oldest son really did the majority of the work. I was there. The situation was one of the most intense I've ever experienced. Thankfully, with all of us pulling, we were able to get the monster out. Miraculously, momma and baby "Andre the Giant" lived. My husband made it home literally right after the birth.

Last Monday was similarly dramatic. As I went to our back porch to get something out of the fridge, I noticed something very wrong. Cows were EVERYWHERE.

Our house is nestled into our land. We have pastures on three sides and a road on one side. We have our herd scattered across several different places. Right now, the group at our house is relatively small.

I'm not lying when I tell you, a hundred cows were running around in these tiny little pastures around our house. Not grazing. RUNNING!

Panic set in. Of course, the husband was gone and unable to help.

Neighbor Tom to the rescue ...Again! He led the charge to sort our neighbor's 100-plus head herd from our tiny little group (plus babies) in the yucky mud.

Dogs had chased his cows through a fence. He said everything he owned save one little baby was on our place.

Talk about a crazy afternoon! Really it couldn't have gone any better. Especially since we have ladies that had just calved and others that were about to pop. I was terrified that those little beef babies were gonna get trampled. But all's well that ends well.

Some things never change.

I dug out the following gem of a story from an article I wrote back in 2009.


One Saturday as I was folding laundry, I noticed we had a cow out on the road. Of course, the husband was at work and the kids were home with me. So what to do? This time, I took matters into my own hands.

I put the kids in a secure area (their beds) and headed out the door. I ran to the barn and found an empty feed sack. As I walked to the cow cautiously, I told myself, "Don't say 'Here, cow!'" But the first thing that came out as I rattled the empty bag was just that.

She looked at me and continued with what she was doing. I was no threat, obviously. Since I got her attention, I believed I was on the right track. So I said it again and shook the bag like

crazy. Then the old gal took notice and started toward me.

Ahhhhh! Panic-stricken because that lady was hungry and this lady had only an empty bag of feed, I took off running to the barn. She started to run, too, thinking she was gonna miss out on a tasty snack. By chance my brain told me, "Open the gate!" So, I did. And in she ran. AL-LE-LU-IA!

Yep, some things never change! Colorblind or not, my cows sure keep things interesting! 

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Demand Beefs-Up to Support the Cattle Market

Inventory may have peaked; with 2019 prices steady

Story by Lisa Henderson for *Cattlemen's News*

America's farm economy is struggling, yet beef producers represent one sector outperforming expectations. And, economists say, the performance of cattle markets is influencing the U.S. cattle inventory and producer's intentions to expand or liquidate their herds.

According to USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS), net farm income in 2018 is expected to fall to \$59.5 billion, a 12-year low. If realized, this would be the lowest net farm income since 2006 and would represent a decline of 6.7 percent from USDA's 2017 projection.

Net farm income is a comprehensive indicator of U.S. farm profitability — for all crops and livestock. The ERS net farm income projection reflects the struggles grain farmers have experienced this year, but also finds support from cattle markets that have surprised many. In fact, ranchers have seen modest profits this year.

"Cattle markets performed remarkably well (in 2018), all things considered," says Oklahoma State University Extension Livestock Economist Derrell Peel. "We've seen increasing beef production and increases in pork and poultry production, but beef demand has performed really well."

In fact, strong beef demand — supported by a strong U.S. economy, low unemployment and robust beef exports — has held both cow-calf and feedyard profitability higher than expected for this point in the cattle cycle.

"Cow-calf producers are making a little money against their cash costs," says John Nalivka, president of Sterling Marketing, Vale, Oregon. "That's not typically what we experience at this point in the cycle, but markets have been better than expected due to strong beef demand."



After the historic drought in the early years of this decade pushed beef cow numbers to 60-year lows, expansion of the beef cow herd has been in place. On Jan. 1, 2018, USDA estimated beef cow numbers at 31.7 million head, which is nearly 9 percent higher than the 29.0 million reported on Jan. 1, 2014.

During that same period of time, beef production has increased 10 percent, and the 2018 estimate will be about 2.8 percent higher than last year, Peel said.

"We have a bigger calf crop this year based on the cow herd growing last year, and we're going to have a slightly bigger calf crop in 2019," he says. "We'll continue with a pretty full pipeline of feeder cattle through 2019 and into

2020. Because of the supplies already put into place, it will take most of 2020 to get them all through the system, and we'll see ample supplies of cattle for the feedlots for the next couple of years."

Because the cow herd inventory is a key factor in economist's calculations to project beef supplies, USDA reporting of weekly cow slaughter is watched closely.

"U.S. beef cow slaughter will end 2018 about 10 percent higher than last year," Nalivka says. "That's on top of cow slaughter that was 8 percent higher in 2017. That's why I contend that expansion

of the beef cow herd has not just slowed — it has stopped."

Peel says his analysis shows a similar result.

"My research suggests the cowherd number will be steady to slightly higher — maybe a half percent higher," Peel said. "That's consistent with what we've seen in the cow slaughter numbers in 2018. 2019 could be the peak in numbers, though we could see fractional growth again next year."

Historically, this point in the cattle cycle is when liquidation begins as cow-calf margins are squeezed by low prices. That hasn't happened this time, which is why economists believe cow-calf producers are encouraged to maintain present cow numbers.

"For prices, I think the inventory numbers suggest prices flat to maybe a little stronger," Peel says. "That presumes we will see a continuation in beef demand, and that we won't have a significant, unexpected event that disrupts demand. I don't think profit prospects are outstanding, but I think there is some potential there. Producers will need to manage their costs."

The cost side of the equation is where Nalivka sees improvement.

"Grain prices are lower, and oil has been slumping lately," Nalivka says. "I've revised my price forecasts to include a lower oil price, which means lower fuel prices next year for ranchers. Those lower input costs will help maintain a level of profitability."

Nalivka's price projections for 2019 suggest prices for calves and feeder cattle will be flat to modestly higher. And he expects feedlot margins will be positive for most of the year.

"Demand will be the key," he says. "We have good domestic beef demand, and good

export demand, too. We are in solid shape with Japan, South Korea and Mexico. I think we'll continue to grow our exports, and that will support prices in 2019."

Beef exports are called robust this year, on pace to be 9 percent higher in volume, and 18 percent higher in value. U.S. beef exports are projected to total more than \$8 billion in 2018, the first time ever surpassing that total. Nalivka says the trend should continue next year.

"I'm projecting beef exports to be another 3 percent higher next year," he said. "That's a key support for calf and feeder cattle prices that I think will be steady to slightly stronger next year."



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Why is She Open?

Troubleshooting poor pregnancy rates

Story by Sandy Johnson

From time to time, you hear through the grapevine that someone's herd had an unusually high number of open cows at fall pregnancy check time. That is when you wipe your brow and say, "Glad that didn't happen to my herd!"

In some cases, the poor reproductive response is isolated to a particular pasture, bull or age/management group. The origin

of the problem could be easier to find. If not, the search for an answer will take longer and will be helped by accurate and complete records, and sometimes diagnostic testing.

Troubleshooting

Information on the timing that cows did get pregnant during the breeding season can be helpful. This requires that pregnancy diagnosis occur ear-

ly enough that pregnancies can be reasonably staged. Veterinarians will determine when pregnancies are beyond a point that age can be determined accurately. Generally, it's best if the longest pregnancy is under 100-120 days of age. If 60 percent or more of the cows are pregnant during the first three weeks of the breeding season, it is a reasonable assumption that a majority of cows were cycling at the start of the breeding season and that bulls were fertile at this point.

If detail on timing of pregnancy is not available, written records of cowherd body condition at the start of calving and breeding can inform the possible roll of nutrition on cyclicity. If open


cows have low body condition at pregnancy check, review the nutrition program, weaning time and genetic potential for milk production and the cow's compatibility with the environment. Bull body condition and information on bull breeding soundness exams would indicate if the bull(s) were considered potentially satisfactory breeders at the start of the season. Was the bull-to-cow ratio appropriate for the age of bull(s) and pasture conditions and what if any breeding activity was observed?

Unfortunately, bull fertility is not a static trait. Think back through the breeding season. Consider the incidence of footrot, pinkeye or evidence of neighbor's bull(s)/cow(s) in the pasture. A bull could be temporarily infertile due to illness or injury and fine by the time the open cows are identified. Nevertheless, retesting bulls may be justified and screening for problems such as Trichomoniasis can occur at the same time.

A review of routine vaccinations, actual products and timing of administration to both males and females will likely be part of your veterinarian review. If any cattle were purchased, biosecurity practices and disease testing prior to introducing them to the main herd should be considered. Similar information from neighbors with fenceline contact may need to be explored as well.

While a number of infections can cause pregnancy loss, a few are much more likely to cause losses relatively early in gestation that would be noted at a routine pregnancy check around weaning time. Those would include Trichomoniasis, Campylobacteriosis, Neosporosis and Leptospirosis. Your veterinarian will know about the incidence of these problems in area herds and can tap into resources of the K-State Veterinary Diagnostic lab or similar as these possibilities are evaluated.

Various stressors such as a nutritional change, predators or extreme heat can cause early embryonic loss or reduced conception rates. Because animals are adaptable and vary in their



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WHY IS SHE OPEN?
FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

tolerance to stress, it may be very difficult to assign one of these stressors as a cause of embryonic loss with complete certainty. While it may seem to the owner that everything is the same year to year, small annual changes, such as increasing mature cow size, may show no negative impact until some other stressor comes into play to push the system past a tipping point.

Less than adequate nutrition is the most common cause of reduced pregnancy rates in cowherds. Good records document-

ing cow body condition at key times (especially pre-calving), vaccination and semen testing records will help narrow the focus when attempting to find the reason for a low pregnancy rate. It may take reviewing the list of possibilities many times before an answer becomes apparent. Producers that identify a poor reproductive response in the fall have more options, with potentially better economic outcomes, than those that wait until calving to see what happens.

—Source: Kansas State University Beef Tips. Sandy Johnson is a Kansas State University extension beef specialist.

MANAGEMENT MATTERS

Wheat Pasture Watch-outs

Feed minerals to reduce the risk of grass tetany next spring

Story by Glenn Selk

Much of Oklahoma and the Southern Plains will have wheat pasture to use as winter feed for stocker cattle, replacement heifers, and in some cases, adult cows. For this reason at and after calving time next January, February and March, grass tetany could occur in a few situations.

Grass tetany, caused by magnesium deficiency does not seem to be a major problem in Oklahoma although occasional cases are reported. It typically occurs in beef cows during early lactation and is more prevalent in older cows. The reason older cows are thought to be vulnerable is because they are less able to mobilize magnesium reserves from the bones than younger cows are.

Grass tetany most frequently occurs when cattle are grazing lush immature grasses or small grains pastures and tends to be more prevalent during periods of cloudy weather. Symptoms include incoordination, salivation, excitability (aggressive behavior towards humans) and, in final stages, tetany, convulsions and death.

Factors other than simply the magnesium content of the forage can increase the probability of grass tetany. High levels of potassium in forages can decrease absorption of magne-

sium and most lush, immature forages are high in potassium. High levels of nitrogen fertilization have also been shown to increase the incidence of tetany although feeding protein supplements has not.

Other factors such as the presence of certain organic acids in tetany-causing forages have been linked with tetany. It is likely that a combination of factors, all related to characteristics of lush forage are involved.

When conditions for occurrence of tetany are suspected, cows should be provided mineral mixes containing 12 to 15 percent magnesium and be consumed at 3 to 4 ounces per day. It is best for the supplements to be started a couple of months ahead of the period of tetany danger so that proper intake can be established.

Because tetany can occur when calcium is low, calcium supplementation should also be included. Symptoms of tetany from deficiencies of both minerals are indistinguishable without blood tests, and the treatment consists of intravenous injections of calcium and magnesium gluconate, which supplies both minerals.

—Source: Glenn Selk is an emeritus animal scientist with Oklahoma State University Extension.

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MANAGEMENT MATTERS

Tax Law Provision Offsets Sales Tax

Missouri Tax Code might benefit agricultural producers

Missouri farmers, did you know that our state's tax law allows you to trade in your grain or livestock at a dealership when purchasing a motor vehicle, trailer, or all-terrain vehicle to omit sales tax?

Under "Title X Taxation and Revenue" Chapter 144, Section 144.025 of the Missouri Tax code states:

"Any purchaser of a motor vehicle or trailer used for agricultur-

al use by the purchaser shall be allowed to use as an allowance to offset the sales and use tax liability towards the purchase of the motor vehicle or trailer any grain or livestock produced or raised by the purchaser. The director of revenue may prescribe forms for compliance with this subsection."

In other words, one requirement is that the motor vehicle, trailer, or all-terrain vehicle must be purchased for agricultural use, which is defined by



the Missouri Department of Revenue as "used in cultivating or raising agricultural products." The grain or livestock must also be produced or raised, which means the "transferor of the agricultural product either culti-

vated the grain or has cared for the livestock." In the process, a farmer would report the sale of the products just like they sold them, then capitalize the vehicle and depreciate it.

The form of compliance, Form 4606: Bill of Transfer (Department of Revenue) also notes:

If the product is being stored at a grain elevator or stockyard, a separate receipt issued by the grain company or stockyard must be attached to the bill of transfer. The receipt must show that the dealership has legal title to such farm product. A statement or invoice from a grain company or stockyard in the name of "cash sale" is not acceptable.

A check made payable directly to the dealership by the grain company or stockyard is not acceptable without the receipt from the grain company or stockyard showing the product was transferred to the dealership.

If you are considering taking advantage of this provision, it is important to make sure that:

- 1 Your local dealership agrees to accommodate this transaction.
- 2 You consult your tax advisor to ensure this tax provision is beneficial to you.
- 3 You complete the necessary Department of Revenue requirements when preparing and filing Form 4606: Bill of Transfer.

This article serves to inform and should not be substituted as tax advice.

For more information, visit the Department of Missouri Revenue online at dor.mo.gov or call 573-526-3669.

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Missouri Department of Revenue

Form 4606

Bill of Transfer

(Farm Products Only)

I, _____,

(Transferor's Name)

transfer to _____

(Dealership's Name)

the farm product(s) listed below as a trade-in towards the purchase of a motor vehicle, trailer, or all-terrain vehicle purchased for agricultural use."

Agricultural Product Information

Agricultural use - Used in cultivating or raising agricultural products.

Produced or raised - means the transferor of the agricultural product either cultivated the grain or has cared for the livestock.

Product (Type Of Grain, Livestock, Etc.)	Quantity (Pounds, Number, Etc.)	Trade-In Value

The farm product (Please select and complete one of the following):

☐ Was physically delivered to the Dealership on ____ / ____ / ____ by _____

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☐ Farm product location: _____

Note: If the product is being stored at a grain elevator or stockyard, a separate receipt issued by the grain company or stockyard must be attached to this bill of transfer. The receipt must show that the dealership has legal title to such farm product. A statement or invoice from a grain company or stockyard in the name of "cash sale" is not acceptable. A check made payable directly to the dealership by the grain company or stockyard is not acceptable without the receipt from the grain company or stockyard showing the product was transferred to the dealership.

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Newly acquired motor vehicle, trailer, or all-terrain vehicle information

Year	Make	Identification Number

Required Signatures

I certify under penalty of perjury that I have produced or raised the farm product(s) referenced above and traded it to the dealership indicated. I further certify that the newly acquired vehicle referenced above will be used for agricultural purposes.

Signature of Transferor	Printed Name of Transferor

I certify under penalty of perjury that I have accepted legal ownership of the farm product(s) listed above as a trade-in for the above listed vehicle for the value shown.

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MANAGEMENT MATTERS

Test, Study, Sort

Three steps to surviving the next four months

Beef cattle producers in southwest Missouri have about four months to manage their forage supply to accommodate their beef cattle's nutrient needs according to Eldon Cole, field specialist in livestock with University of Missouri Extension.

The forage supply may be stockpiled fescue, hay of questionable nutrient content, emergency silage or haylage.

Step 1: Test Forages

"The first step is to collect samples and test the forage especially if it has never been fed before," said Cole.

According to Cole, corn silage is an excellent feed as a rule, but for most cattlemen in this area, it is a new adventure.

The "book value" for corn silage is 30 percent dry matter; 65 to 70 percent total

digestible nutrients (TDN) and 7 to 8 percent crude protein. TDN and protein are on a dry matter basis.

"Usually, plain fescue hay is the staple of the winter feed supply," said Cole.

Fescue hay, properly harvested and stored makes decent hay with around 10 percent protein and 53 to 57 percent TDN. However, if mature and headed out when cut, those values can drop to 7 and into the '40s. If stored outside and possibly under trees, its feed value plummets.

"Twenty dollars spent on a forage test is a bargain as you calculate what supplements

you need," said Cole.

Step 2: Study Nutrient Needs

The second step is to study nutrient needs of the different classes of cattle that will be feed in the next 120 days.

"The primary nutrients are energy and protein. Dry, mature pregnant beef cows that will not be calving until February or March can get by on relatively poor hay if they're a body condition score 5 or 6 or even higher," said Cole.

The recommended ration for this class is 8 percent protein and 52 percent TDN.

These same cows nursing young calves have a requirement of 10 percent protein and 58 percent TDN. Younger cows and heifers nursing calves might require a ration of 11 percent protein and 65 percent TDN.

"If BCS should fall into the 4 range in which multiple pairs of ribs are evident, along with the spine they need a ration that results in a gaining condition to move the animal up by 80 or 100 lbs. to attain a 5 BCS. This is unlikely to occur unless a major improvement is made in both the quality and quantity of the ration," said Cole.

Bulls also need nutritional help if their BCS falls below a 5.

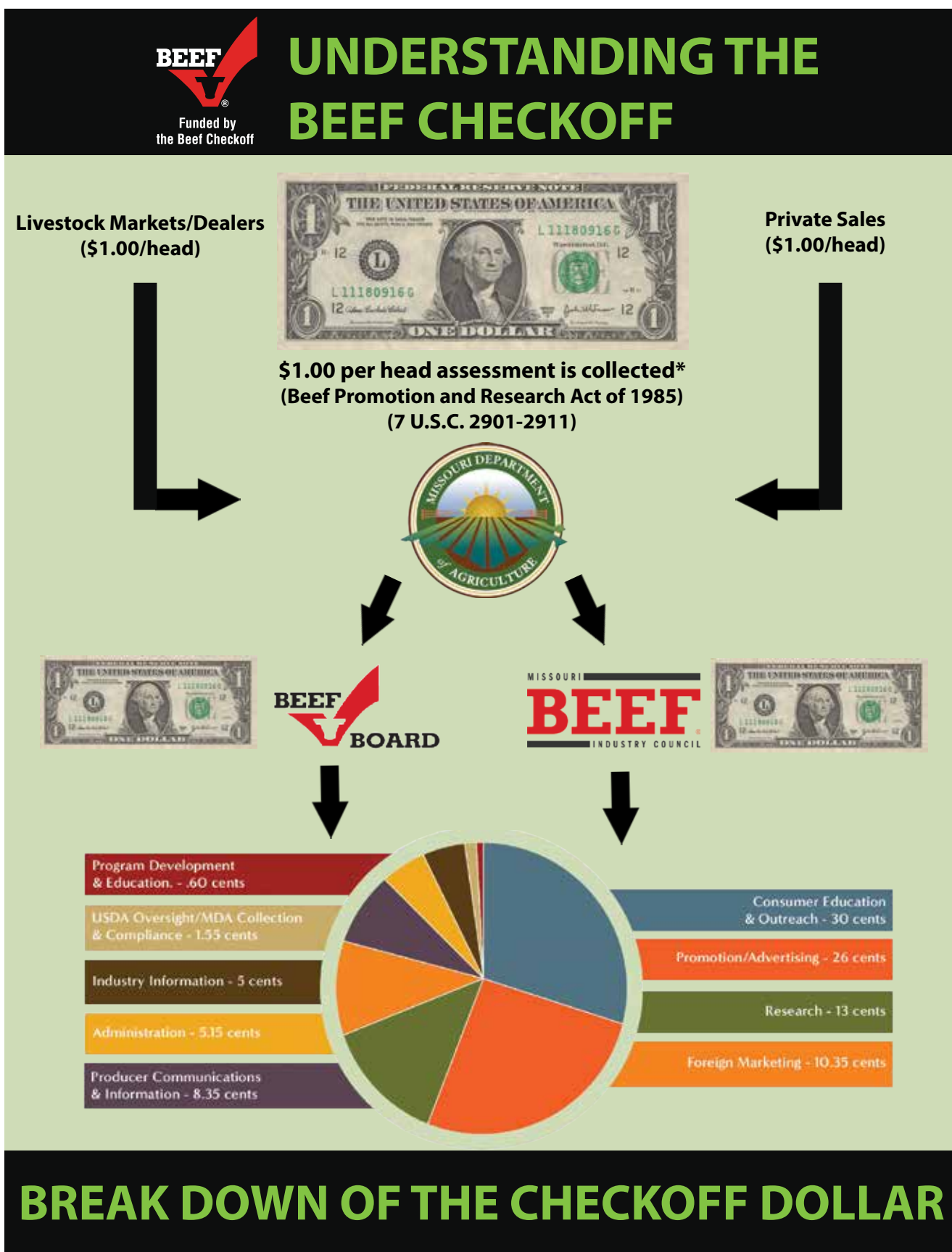
"In most cases, bulls benefit from complete removal from the cow herd for a while if you have better-conditioned bulls to replace them," said Cole.

Step 3: Sort the Cowherd

Sorting the cow herd into pastures based on their nutrient needs is advised as a third step.

"It is a challenge to do but running dry cows in the same pasture as cows nursing newborns along with some virgin replacement females just doesn't work," said Cole.

Cattle producers often feed more hay than the cows require. Cattle will eat until they are full then lay and mess on the remains.



Fescue hay is a typical staple in the winter feed supply for many area cattlemen. However, remember to test forages for winter feeding. Feed value tends to plummet if hay is stored outside, especially if it's under trees. — Photo by Jillian Curtis.



TEST, STUDY, SORT • FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

“When forage supplies are short, limit intake by unrolling or only letting the cattle have access to the hay or haylage for part of the day. When intake is being limited, make sure there is room for all animals at the table,” said Cole.

Supplementing forages with a concentrate feed may be the logical thing to do this winter. Cattle do need forage for proper rumination.

From an energy density standpoint, corn or some of the by-product feeds have twice the TDN levels per pound as hay that is in the 40's on TDN percentage. Cole recommends comparing the cost of protein and/or TDN pound-for-pound on feeds of interest.

“If you are shopping for hay, consider alfalfa. It does not have to be dairy-quality, supreme grade, which could be out of your price range,” said Cole.

Alfalfa that tests 18 percent protein and 60 percent TDN can be limited in daily feed at 5 to 7 pounds. It might also be fed every other day at 10 or 12 pounds.

“There's something about alfalfa that works with a wide range of grass hays. It's also attractive to fall-born calves as a creep supplement,” said Cole.

In addition to protein and energy, low-quality forages might need a boost in vitamin A and minerals including salt.

“An economical way to cover vitamin A is by using an injectable product if you have the opportunity. Mineral supplements should be available at all times in a weather-protected feeder,” said Cole.

Another tip is to include an approved ionophore in concentrate supplements.

“Let's hope for a mild next 120 days as all of the requirements given in this article won't be sufficient if the winter is wet and below normal temperatures,” said Cole.

—Source: University of Missouri Extension release.

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Remember the Minerals

Wintering cows after a drought calls for balanced supplement program

Story by Lisa Henderson for *Cattlemen's News*

Your cow's health and nutrition is a building block for turning a profit with your herd, which is why extra attention must be given to those cows following a drought.

Following a drought, cow body condition is the single most important indicator of your herd's nutritional status, says Dan Dhuyvetter, ruminant nutritionist with Mid-continent Livestock Supplements (MLS).

"Cattle producers know their cowherds and should determine cow nutritional status early on," Dhuyvetter says. "Depending upon the severity of drought, its impact on forage availability and quality, you may need to alter your typical feeding/supplementation objectives to more of a 'catch-up' feeding program rather than one of maintenance with supplements."

That advice is echoed by Twig Marston, field beef nutritionist with Hubbard Feeds, part of the Alltech Feed division.

"Producers should maintain a balanced mineral program during and following a drought," Marston says. "Requirements will change with stage of production, so, adjusting mineral supplementation for lactation/gestation, changes in plant growth and/or maturity, and additives will make mineral supplementation most effective. Examples would be adjusting trace mineral levels for lactation, adding magnesium when plant growth would lend itself to tetany, and the inclusion of fly and disease control that would be timed with season."

Dhuyvetter says beef cows are very forgiving beasts in managing their weight and still providing a live calf every year.

"If cows slip too far in their body weight, however, producers can unfortunately expect more open cows and calves born later in the calving season next year," he says. "We may even see calf immune defenses compromised and health, such as scours or

respiratory issues, increase more than normal."

Such issues can be devastating for operations depending upon saleable calf weight for optimal income.

"Fewer pounds, less gross dollars, it's basic cow-calf math for commercial producers," Dhuyvetter says. "The typical target for most herds is a condition score of 5 for mature cows and 6 for younger females on the 1 to 9 industry scale. These guidelines can help maintain cattle performance and economic returns for typical cow herds."

It's not too late, however, to help maintain or increase body condition if your cows need it.

"It will be a bit more of a challenge the closer cows are to calving as the growing fetus will also require added nutrition," Dhuyvetter says. "Trust me, based on cow nutrient requirements, you will want to make up ground now, rather than wait until closer to, or after calving. Mineral and vitamin supplementation should always be offered regardless of drought or normal conditions."

While being required in much smaller quantities, these vitamin and mineral nutrients are important for calf health

and cow reproduction and are negatively impacted by droughty, low-quality forages. If cows are not in as good of shape as normal this time of year, it can be a challenge to increase condition depending on when cows are scheduled to start calving. The sooner, the better, for evaluating and then proactively addressing your cow herd's nutrition program.

"Consistent availability and intake is important throughout the winter months," Marston says. "Allowing cattle constant access to mineral supplementation ensures that requirements and reservoirs are met and maintained. Mineral metabolism is slower in nature than say protein and energy metabolism, therefore, producers should avoid management decisions that would compromise the mineral status of their herds."

Dhuyvetter says as producers evaluate cow body condition following a drought, it is a good time to separate cattle into two groups: **1)** those that might need to increase body weight like young cows and heifers or some of the more elderly cows, compared to **2)** some of the easier-keeping mature cows that are in good condition for getting through the winter.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22



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¹USDA. 2011. Cattle and Calves Nonpredator Death Loss in the United States, 2010. USDA-APHIS-VS.

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MINERALS FROM PAGE 20

“This will allow producers to focus feed supplies and more expensive inputs to those that are in need of extra nutrition and not potentially overfeeding or wasted expense on those going into the winter in good body condition,” Dhuyvetter says. “Set aside higher quality forages or larger quantities of commodity feeds from grains or grain by-products to help increase energy supplies for these more at-risk females. Work with your feed supplier to help you build a ration for those situations where something more than supplementing forages

is required. If drought conditions have not impacted cows dramatically, a well-fortified protein supplement to help with improved forage utilization can successfully get cows through the winter and carry them up to green grass next spring.”

Mineral supplementation is an important part of a complete nutritional plan, says Marston.

“Supplementation has been shown to optimize herd reproduction, increase colostrum quality and increase pounds of calf per cow unit,” he says. “Paying attention to daily consumption assures the herd is consuming the proper

amount. Observing animal behavior assures all cattle in the herd are consuming the mineral supplement.”

Dhuyvetter urges producers to follow through with a nutrition plan all the way to green grass next spring. A cow’s nutrient requirements increase dramatically once they have calved, begin cycling and eventually rebreed, he says.

“Both additional protein and energy requirements are needed to maintain the nutrient draw from milk production, all the while cows rapidly prepare for a new pregnancy,” Dhuyvetter says. “Cows will either get nutrients from the diet, or they often will balance out any di-

etary deficiencies by mobilizing their own body stores.”

He adds that this is why many producers try to time calving when green grass becomes available, relying on a much higher quality diet to meet increased nutrient requirements.

“If you are still on stored forages and green grass is not available, you will want to accommodate for this change,” Dhuyvetter says. “Dormant or stockpiled forages without substantial higher quality supplemental feed may limit cows from successfully maintaining a yearly calving interval.”

ON THE CALENDAR

Hands-On Spring Calving Clinic Set

Two sessions offered Jan. 22
in Springfield, Missouri

University of Missouri Extension, in conjunction with Missouri State College of Agriculture, is hosting a “Spring Calving Clinic” inside Pinegar Arena at the Darr Center, 2401 S Kansas Expressway, Springfield, Missouri.

Due to the expected high level of interest in this program, two identical sessions are being offered on Jan. 22: one from 9 a.m. to noon and a second from 2 to 5 p.m.

University of Missouri Livestock Specialists Reagan Bluel, Eldon Cole, Heather Conrow and Andy McCorkill; along with Missouri State Animal Science professor, Jason Salchow, will lead demonstrations on assisting difficult births, tubing and after-care of the newborn calf and mother.

The fee for the program is \$30 per person. Pre-registration is required by Jan. 15. Space is limited, so register early to ensure a seat.

Register by calling the Greene County MU Extension Center at 417-881-8909 or online at <http://extension.missouri.edu/greene>.

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*Duckett et al. 2013. Antibiotic implants and meat quality. Journal of Animal Science. 92: 3-9.

ON THE CALENDAR

Missouri Cattle Convention Set for Jan. 4-6 in Columbia

Fake meat, media training, access to capital among featured discussions

The 51st Annual Missouri Cattle Industry Convention and Trade Show is set for Jan. 4-6 in Columbia, Mo. The annual event is once again featuring a “Cattlemen’s College” made possible by Zoetis. According to Missouri Cattlemen’s Association President-Elect Bobby Simpson, the intent is to bring attendees the latest information on industry topics.

More than a dozen speakers will cover a variety of topics, including pasture management; capturing the most value out of calves; access to capital; media training; Farm Bill; fake meat; and more. Eric Bailey, University of Missouri Extension beef nutrition specialist, will be one of the many speakers. He focus on planning ahead for a drought.

“We will discuss ways to win the battle with drought,” said Bailey. “Being prepared for a drought is critical. Understanding your options and feed alternatives available is a must. Cattlemen are innovative, but a drought can lead to panic. Planning ahead can

help mitigate the impacts that can often be devastating.”

With a drought, comes stress. Simpson said managing stress in often a topic you don’t hear enough about. Jami Dellifield, Ohio State University Extension, will focus on coping with tough times, which goes along with this year’s convention theme of “Cattlemen Strong.” Concern about stress for farmers and ranchers has been increasing since a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention determined agriculture has the highest rate of suicide.

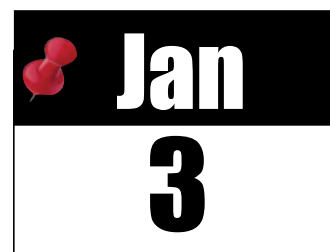
“Farming and ranching is a stressful, high-risk business,” said Dellifield. “So much is out of our control,” said Dellifield. “Don’t let stress get the best of you.”

“Cattlemen’s College” will be held on Sat., Jan. 5, 2019, during the annual convention. Learn more and register to attend on the association’s website, www.mocattle.com.

—Source: Missouri Cattlemen’s Association Prime Cuts.

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Maintain for Gain

Body condition score at calving is key to young cow success

Story by Glenn Selk

As winter blows in, producers are faced with the challenge of maintaining body condition on replacement heifers through the calving season and into next spring.

Body condition score at calving is essential for success.

Body condition (or amount of fatness) is evaluated by a scoring system that ranges from 1 (severely emaciated) to 9 (very obese).

Research data sets have shown conclusively that young cows that calve in thin body condition but regain weight and condition going into the breeding season do not rebreed at the same rate as those that calve in good condition and maintain that condition into

the breeding season. The following table from Missouri researchers illustrates the number of days between calving

	Body Condition Score Change in 90 Days After Calving						
Condition score at calving	-1	-.5	0	+.5	+1.0	+1.5	+2.0
BCS = 3	189 d	173 d	160 d	150 d	143 d	139 d	139 d
BCS = 4	161 d	145 d	131 d	121 d	115 d	111 d	111 d
BCS = 5	133 d	116 d	103 d	93 d	86 d	83 d	82 d
BCS = 5.5	118 d	102 d	89 d	79 d	72 d	69 d	66 d

ing to the return to heat cycles depending on body condition at calving and body condition change after calving.

Predicted number of days (d) from calving to first heat as affected by body condition score at calving and body condition

score change after calving in 2-year-old beef cows. (Body condition score scale: 1 = emaciated; 9 = obese).

Notice that none of the averages for cows that calved in thin body condition were recycling in time to maintain a 12-month calving interval. Cows must be rebred by 85 days after calving to calve again at the same time next year. This data clearly points


maintain or lose only a slight amount of condition.

Bottom line: Young cows must be in good body condition (BCS = 5.5 or better) at calving time to return to estrus cycles soon enough after calving to maintain a 365-day calving interval.


Results like these are not isolated to Missouri. Oklahoma scientists used 81 Hereford and Angus x Hereford heifers to study the effects of body condition score at calving and post-calving nutrition on rebreeding rates at 90 and 120 days post-calving. Heifers were divided into two groups in November and allowed to lose body condition or maintain body condition until calving in February and March. Each of those groups was then re-divided to either gain weight and body condition post-calving or to maintain body condition post-calving.

Figure 1 (on next page) illustrates the change in body condition and weight of heifers

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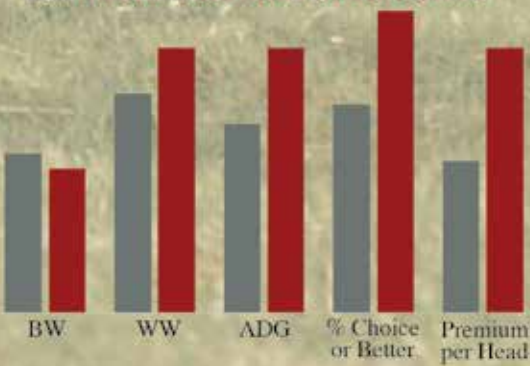
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Comparison of Beefmaster Sired Calves and Beefmaster Plus Sired Calves



Source: Compilation of kill data collected by Vaughn Family Farms

MAINTAIN FOR GAIN
FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

ers that calved in a body condition score greater than 5 or those that calved in a body condition score less than or equal to 4.9. The same pattern illustrated in the other experiments occurred with these heifers.

Thin heifers that were given ample opportunity to regain weight and body condition after calving actually weighed

more and had greater body condition by eight weeks than heifers that had good body condition at calving and maintained their condition into and through the breeding season.

However, the rebreeding performance (on the right side of the legend of the graph) was significantly lower for those that were thin (67%) at parturition compared to heifers that were in adequate body condition at calving and maintained condition through the

breeding season (91%). Again post-calving increases in energy and therefore weight and body condition gave a modest improvement in rebreeding performance, but the increased expense was not adequately rewarded.

The groups that were fed to “maintain” post-calving condition and weight received 4 pounds of cottonseed meal supplement (41 percent Crude Protein) per day. The cows in the “gain” groups were full-fed a complete growing ration (12 percent CP). Both groups had free choice access to grass hay. The improvement in reproductive performance (67 percent pregnant versus 36 percent pregnant) of the thin 2-year-old heifers may not

be enough to offset the large investment in post-calving feed costs. Pre-calving feed inputs required to assure the heifers were in adequate body condition at calving would be substantially less than the costs per head that was spent on the thin heifers after calving.

Other data sets have shown conclusively that cows that calve in thin body condition but regain weight and condition going into the breeding season do not rebreed at the same rate as those that calve in good condition and maintain that condition into the breeding season. Make certain that the supplement program is adequate for your young cows to be in good body condition this spring.

—Source: Glenn Selk is an Oklahoma State University Extension emeritus animal scientist.

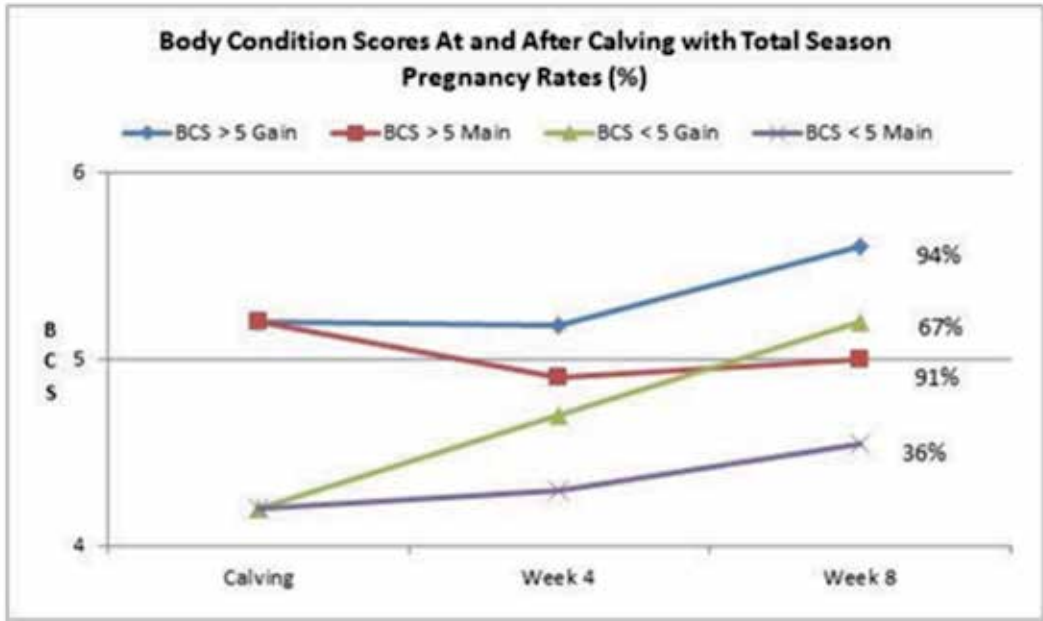


Figure 1. Post-calving body condition change of heifers with body condition >5 or <5 at calving and fed to gain or maintain weight. 120 day pregnancy rates (%) are indicated on the right side of the graph lines.

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Tackling Tax Law Reform

What do new tax laws mean for farmers, ranchers?

Story by Rebecca Mettler for Cattlemen's News

When Congress passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act in December 2017, sweeping change to tax law was enacted. Most notable was lower tax rates for taxpayers. Virtually every business and individual will be affected as we close out 2018 and move into the years ahead.

So, what does this mean for Americans and especially those of us in agriculture? In the coming months, we will all get a sense of how the tax reform will impact us.

“The major changes specific to agriculture and beef cattle have to do with depreciation and like kind exchanges, but it’s the biggest change to the tax code in over 30 years with lowered rates,” explains Kevin Newbold, a certified public accountant with Newbold & Newbold, PC, Aurora, Missouri.

A major overhaul to tax law takes time to implement. Newbold reports that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has spent all year drafting the regulations that will go along with the tax changes. The IRS has been slowly feeding out regulations throughout the year, which gives tax professionals a sense of how the tax law will be interpreted.

“For most small businesses, the thought process is that the change will be positive, but until we begin preparing tax returns, we can see if everything turns out to be like anticipated.”

If history repeats itself, which is likely, some of the provisions outlined in the tax act could have unintended consequences that will need to be revised as time goes on. This happened when in the ‘80s when the last major tax reform event took place.

“I would expect them to make small changes to it. When you look at the legislation that Congress passes, the IRS has to interpret it, and write the regula-

tions. There may be some things that the IRS has not interpreted as Congress intended.”

Again, the biggest change was the lowering of tax rates. In

deduction of up to 20 percent of their qualified business income.

Historically, pass-through businesses were taxed like individuals on a graduated tax rate scale, but the new tax reform added the qualified business income deduction to place pass-through businesses on a more level playing field with C corporations.

“They lowered the cooperative rates to 21 percent, but they had to recognize that most small businesses were not C corpora-

used property if placed in service by Dec. 31, 2018.

As in other years, and depending on their income situation, farmers and ranchers could elect to accelerate a purchase toward the end of the year that they intended to purchase in the following year.

“Everyone is going to spend a lot of time calculating their qualified business income deduction,” Newbold says. “That’s going to be the biggest change on



2017 the highest rate in which income was taxed was 39.60 percent. 2018 tax rates dropped the highest tax bracket down to 37 percent. The new tax rates are to expire in 2025 unless Congress extends them.

Newbold believes the biggest change besides the lower tax rate is the change to itemized deductions and the new Qualified Business Income Deduction.

“What will have the biggest impact is a doubling of the standard deduction, the elimination of personal exemptions, and an increase in the child tax credit. But, by doubling the standard deduction and increasing the child credit, that took care of a lot of people getting hurt by the loss of personal exemptions,” he says.

Farmers and ranchers, and other small businesses, which are considered pass-through businesses, could be entitled to a

tions; most small businesses are some sort of pass-through entity or sole proprietor,” Newbold says. “The change was to give them a similar tax break to C corporations.”

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act also liberalized business property expensing. The expensing limit is \$1 million with a cap at \$2.5 million.

A good scenario for farmers and ranchers would include the purchase of a new tractor. If a tractor was purchased for \$150,000, the full \$150,000 could be written off.

“Again, it’s a little more generous than in the past,” Newbold said.

Farmers have always had Section 179 to write property off, but it used to exclude used property. Now, farmers and ranchers can get 100 percent first-year bonus depreciation on new or

how returns get prepared and the change is a fairly complicated calculation.”

The take-home message of the new tax law is that an overhaul such as this is bound to establish sweeping change. It might even take a year or two for everyone to really begin to see the impact of such changes, Newbold says.

“The mood is good,” he adds. “Everyone realized it is a major change. It did lower tax rates, and that is always a positive thing in the tax payer’s mind.”

Newbold also suggests that farmers and ranchers use the IRS’s Farmer’s Tax Guide for 2018 tax returns, which can be found by searching for IRS publication 225 on any internet search engine.

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Market's Crystal Ball

What can you expect in the new year?

Story and photo by Macey Hurst for *Cattlemen's News*

Natural disasters, disease outbreak and foreign trade have overtaken headlines the past several months. With measures beyond producer control occurring within and to the agriculture industry, it can often be difficult to prepare for what might be next. Dr. Scott Brown, University of Missouri livestock economist expects 2019 to be a year of flat to slightly declining prices for most commodities.

Although a number of variables could raise the prices, Brown foresees commodity supplies to remain high, causing sideways price movements and the potential short-term rise and fall caused by media and news cycles.

For livestock producers, Brown said it has been beneficial to have lower feed costs because of the lower livestock prices. However, it can

be limiting. "Unfortunately, it has been tough to offer alternative enterprises in this period of time when nearly all agricultural commodity prices are lower," he says. "We have seen all agricultural prices synchronized extremely well today. At lower price levels, that puts operations in tougher financial situations than they have seen in several years."

Brown attributes market fluctuations to a number of key factors, but primarily to trade. "Elimination of tariffs on pork and soybeans could provide a substantial lift to those markets," he explains. "China remains critical to this outcome, and it is not clear that progress will occur that quickly. African Swine Fever could also play a huge role in pork markets in 2019 if the spread continues and substantial losses in the Chinese hog herd unfold. Important in 2019 will be

ratification of the new USMCA by all three countries."

Brown said in addition to weather, these are the most important issues to watch: corn versus soybean plantings and the new Farm Bill.

Brown also pointed out the importance of producers staying abreast of domestic economy trends. He said low unemployment rates and higher wages strengthen the demand for agricultural products, particularly meat, but that any 'slowdown' in the U.S. economy will pressure prices and their stability.

While it is difficult to prepare for such a rapidly changing economic environment, Brown said producers should still take precautions. One option is the use of futures markets to minimize and/or eliminate risk when used appropriately. However, the most effective approach is simpler. "The best and often most difficult advice to take is cutting costs to be as efficient as you can be," Brown said. "It is often the best strategy to take during these lower price periods. Producers should remain flexible in their marketing and be ready to take advantage of higher prices when they are available."

2 Quick Finance Tips



1 Summarize herd records for the year and compare to the previous year to determine the production direction of the herd. Valuable summaries include changes in 205-day adjusted weaning weights, monthly calving distributions, culling percentages, calf crop percentages, cow age and body condition and calving internal changes.

2 Plan next year's budget and production plans.

— Source: University of Arkansas Animal Science.



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The Power of the Internet

Is social media right for your operation?

Story by Erin Luchsinger Hull

Log on to social media and you'll see the good, the bad and the ugly. This is especially true when it comes to anything and everything regarding agriculture. Sadly, the negative posts seem to spread like wildfire, and the positive ones don't even gain a foothold. This is where we need to step in.

Recently, Bernie Sanders made a post defending American dairy farmers. It was a lovely post. Or so I (and Bernie) thought. I spent far too many minutes of my life (okay, maybe even hours) reading the comments. I couldn't find one — not one — comment that stood behind the American farmer or rancher. I'm talking thousands of comments blasting how the American farmer and rancher needs to enter the 21st Century and get a new job.

I was dumbfounded. And sad. But most of all, I was angry. Here we have thousands upon thousands of people criticizing our industry, when I would bet my life savings (I am a cattlemaster so that savings isn't very large) that 95 percent of the people commenting have never once stepped foot on a ranch or farm.

This is a perfect example of how impactful social media can be. But, this goes both ways. We as an agriculture community have equal access to social media. Yet we don't use the powers in the same way—but we can.

I have a very active Facebook page for my operation. In the beginning I saw it as an opportunity to sell more beef since my operation direct markets beef. I soon found that I had people following along that had no interest in buying beef. They wanted to hear what the self-proclaimed "Farm Nerd" had to say today. So my Facebook page took a turn quickly.

I now have a free outlet to edu-



cate those that are also watching the animal rights activist videos that tug at their heartstrings. They watch a video from an animal rights group about how poorly agriculture animals are treated. Then they turn to me. In the blink of an eye, they have to think. Who should they believe? The professional video that clearly has several thousand dollars of funding behind it, or a video of me in a pasture of cows, explaining why and how I do things.

Most of the videos I take and posts I make are simply about what I'm doing in the pastures that day. Why do I have different types of pasture? How are cows moved throughout those pastures? Why are calves being weaned? Boring everyday things we all do and don't give a second thought.

But, and this is a big but, we have to be smart about it. I look at my surroundings. I live in upstate New York, and we have two seasons, grazing and snow. Sometimes we're blessed with three seasons: grazing, mud and snow. I don't take videos in mud. I just don't. I hate mud. I understand it's inevitable, but the general public sees mud, and all of a sudden your words mean nothing. All they see is mud, and mud is bad. Mud must mean we don't love our animals or care for them properly. The single most important thing about posting to social media is to look through a non-agricultural eye.

We must present our best

side. This doesn't mean we hide the bad. I thought this for a long time. My posts were all about the positive, and it was assumed the ranching/farming life was all unicorns and rainbows. It's not. We know it's not. Then I held my breath and made a post about a dead calf I had to skin out to utilize the cape for the mother cow to accept a new calf.

The comments started, and I was astounded. Thousands of people chimed in about what I was doing showed I was compassionate. Here I was, posting pictures of a Holstein calf with a fresh Red Angus pelt tied onto it, and people were literally crying because I cared so much. I live in dairy land where Holstein bull calves are a dime a dozen. That experience was eye-opening and led me in a whole new direction with my social media education.

I learned we don't need to highlight just the good. But we can't dwell on the negative. You must be positive no

matter the situation. Explain yourself. Explain what's going on. Explain that you're no different than any other cattle operation in America. Show that even in bad times, we have faith and hope and will continue doing what we love to do because we do care.

I was prepared to delete the post and start defending the American farmer and rancher. But the American population surprised me in an amazingly positive way. They want to know what we do! They truly do! And it's our job to show them.

So take a leap of faith. Open a social media account for your farm, and start giving the general population the education they not only need, but the education they truly seek.

—Source: Erin Luchsinger Hull owns and operates Lucky 13 Beef in Tully, New York. She is a board member of the New York Beef Council and the 2017 Beef Promoter of the Year for New York state. Follow her online at www.facebook.com/lucky13beef.

ON THE CALENDAR

Southwest Missouri Forage Conference Set for Feb. 26

Event moves to new location in Springfield, Missouri

The Southwest Missouri Spring Forage Conference is moving to a new location in 2019. The 35th annual event will be held Tues., Feb. 26, 2019, at the Oasis Hotel and Convention Center, 2546 N. Glenstone Ave., in Springfield, Missouri.

This year's keynote speaker will be Pat Keyser from the University of Tennessee. Keyser is a professor and director of UT's Center for Native Grasslands Management. He will address native warm season grasses.

The conference will also feature several breakout sessions throughout the day. Tentative topics include: strategies for managing farm and ranch depreciation; intercropping summer annuals; retained ownership; pasture health; mitigation of fescue endophyte; proper stocking rates; fertilizing for crop removal rates; toxic plants;

preparing for drought; economics of renovation; and forage sustainability with soil types.

A large trade show will also be held in conjunction with the conference. Agricultural businesses and organizations will have exhibits and representatives available to discuss their products and services. If interested in becoming an exhibitor or sponsor, contact Nathan Witt at 417-451-1007 ext.3.

Conference registration begins at 8 a.m., with sessions running from 8:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. A banquet luncheon is included with the registration. The cost is \$35 per person in advance or \$45 at the door. To pre-register (by Feb. 14) or to get more information, contact the Laclede County USDA Office at 417-532-6305, ext.101. Participants can find more information about the conference and register online at www.springforage-conference.com.

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JAN. 3, 2019

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CONTRACTS AND VIDEOS DUE DEC. 27

FEB. 21, 2019 "THE SPRING FLING" WHEAT PASTURE

AT AN OUTSIDE VENUE
CONTRACTS AND VIDEOS DUE FEB. 14

MARCH 14, 2019

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BUSINESS BYTES

Datamars Announces Tru-Test Group Acquisition Completion

Broader integrated animal management portfolio will offer expanded product choices

Datamars, a leader in delivering intelligent tracking, identification and animal management solutions, announces the completion of its acquisition of a major portion of the Tru-Test Group business after receiving

New Zealand's Overseas Investment Office clearance. The acquisition includes the Tru-Test Retail Solutions division and Milk Meters product line along with the Tru-Test, Speedrite, Stafix and Patriot brands and associated brand assets.

Tru-Test Group is a global leader in agri-technology products offering tools for advanced livestock management, including electric fencing, weighing and identification systems, and portable milk metering solutions.

The Tru-Test Group acquisition, along with Datamars' recent acquisition of Simcro, a world-renowned innovator in animal health delivery systems, is a key step toward fulfilling the company's vision for the livestock market — to deliver integrated, smart animal management tools that promote animal health enhance overall livestock business management and ultimately improve precision protein production for its customers.

"Combining our livestock identification expertise and broad product portfolio with Tru-Test Group's advanced livestock management products is a powerful union that will deliver intuitive and seamlessly integrated animal intelligence tools to the market," said Data-

mares Global CEO, Dr. Klaus Ackersstaff.

"Livestock producers and dairy-men are recognizing value in data-driven decision-making, and they are looking for new ways to gather key metrics for tracking livestock health and productivity to better manage their operations.

The combination of Datamars and Tru-Test Group will better serve to deliver on these customer needs," said John Loughlin, Chairman of Tru-Test Group.

Datamars' leadership in the industry is the result of its passion for understanding technology and how it can best be utilized to benefit its customers. The strategic acquisitions of Tru-Test Group and Simcro will enable the combined group to offer products and services connecting animal management with individual animal data in day-to-day producer operations.

—Source: Release from Datamars.

Springfield Trailer Expands

Springfield Trailer, Inc.

Story by Kelsey Harmon

Most livestock producers rely on solid transportation equipment to move their livestock. Finding a quality trailer dealership is important and can help save you time and money.

Springfield Trailer, Inc. is located at 2929 E. Blaine in Springfield, Missouri, and is a full-service dealership that offers parts, sales and service for all types of trailers including livestock, grain and machinery.

Founded in 1990, Springfield Trailer, Inc. is a local family-owned company with 28 years of experience in the trailer industry. Current owner, Ryan Monday, says he is passionate about providing the best

possible customer service in the region, and that extends to taking care of the customer beyond the initial trailer purchase.

This complete package, along with knowledgeable and professional employees separates them from other trailer businesses. The dealership specializes in repairs including wreck rebuilding, general maintenance, alignments and custom builds.

"Our business has expanded," Monday said. "We are now carrying a variety of trailers such as bumper hitch, goose-necks and semi-trailers."

Trailer types include stock trailers, deckover, cargo, dump, utility, flatbed, drop

deck, Dry Van and Reefer. Store hours are Monday

through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



For more information on Springfield Trailer, Inc., you can reach them at 417-864-8511, toll free at 800-884-2856 or via email at info@springfieldtrailer.com. Business locations: Sales Office – 6321 E. Farm Road 104 Strafford, MO 65757. Parts and Service – 2929 E. Blaine, Springfield, MO 65803.

You can also check out the website, www.springfieldtrailer.com, and connect with them on Facebook.



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EVENT ROUNDUP

USDA Invests in Rural Health

CareRural Residents in 34 States will Benefit

Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Anne Hazlett recently announced that USDA is investing \$501 million in 60 projects to help improve health care infrastructure and services in rural communities nationwide.

“Creating strong and healthy communities is foundational to increasing prosperity in rural America,” Hazlett said. “Under the leadership of Secretary Sonny Perdue, USDA is committed to partnering with rural leaders to improve quality of life and economic development through modern and accessible health care.”

Hazlett made the announcement as part of USDA’s commemoration of National Rural Health Day, which is held annually on the third Thursday of November to focus on the

specific health care issues facing rural communities. The department is investing in 60 projects through the Community Facilities direct loan program. These investments will expand access to health care for approximately 2 million people in 34 states. Iowa, Illinois, Florida, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Texas are among the states to benefit.

Hazlett’s funding announcement complements the finalization of a partnership between USDA and the National Rural Health Association (NRHA) to identify issues causing financial strain on rural hospitals, which are an important part of the rural health care system. NRHA and the Department will work together to identify management and financial indicators that impact rural hospital operations.

This technical assistance will help rural hospitals continue to operate and provide critical health care services to serve rural communities.

In April 2017, President Donald J. Trump established the Inter-agency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity to identify legislative, regulatory and policy changes that could promote agriculture and prosperity in rural communities. In January 2018, Secretary Perdue presented the Task Force’s findings to President Trump. These findings included 31 recommendations to align the federal government with state, local and tribal governments to take advantage of opportu-

nities that exist in rural America. Increasing investments in rural infrastructure is a key recommendation of the task force.

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities and create jobs in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov.

—Source: USDA release.



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EVENT ROUNDUP

December

20-31 JRS Closed for Christmas Holiday

January

- 1 Open to Receive Cattle
Joplin Regional Stockyards, Carthage, Missouri
FMI: 417-548-2333
- 2 Regular Cow and Bull Auction
Joplin Regional Stockyards, Carthage, Missouri
FMI: 417-548-2333
- 3 Value-Added Feeder Cattle Sale
Joplin Regional Stockyards, Carthage, Missouri
FMI: 417-548-2333
- 3 Prime Time Livestock Video Sale
Following Value-Added Feeder Cattle Sale
Joplin Regional Stockyards, Carthage, Missouri
FM: 417-548-2333
- 3 Lawrence County Soils and Crops Conference
MU Southwest Center, Mount Vernon, Missouri
FMI: 417-466-3102
- 9 Barton County Soils and Crops Conference
Lamar, Missouri
FMI: 417-682-3579
- 17 Dade County Soils and Crops Conference
Lockwood, Missouri
FMI: 417-637-2112
- 22 9 a.m.-Noon or 2-5 p.m. Spring Calving Clinic
Pinegar Arena, MSU Darr Center, Springfield, Missouri
FMI: 417-881-8909
- 26 Southwest Missouri Spring Forage Conference
Ramada Oasis Convention Center, Springfield, Missouri
FMI: 417-831-5246, ext. 3

ON THE CALENDAR

Soils,Crops Conference Set

Pre-register by Dec. 31 for Mt. Vernon, Missouri meeting

If you're wondering how to get the most out of your hay production, you'll want to plan to attend the annual Lawrence County Soils and Crops Conference next month.

University of Missouri Extension Agronomy Specialist Tim Schnakenberg will team up with MU Extension Ag Business Specialist Jim Spencer to help producers maximize their hay production. The conference, slated for 6 to 8:45 p.m Jan. 3 at the Southwest Research Center in Mt.Vernon, Missouri, will also feature Dr.Eric Bailey's presentation on feed corn silage

and corn stalks. Bailey is MU state beef cattle nutrition specialist.

Other presentations include an updates on the MU Southwest Research Center and the Lawrence County Commission.

Ribeye steak sandwiches will be grilled by the Southwest Missouri Cattlemen's Association. A \$5 pre-registration fee is needed by Dec. 31, and can be mailed to: University of Missouri Extension, P.O. Box 388, Mt. Vernon, MO, 65712. For additional information, call 417-466-3102. 🐄

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Get the complete Joplin Regional Stockyards Feeder Cattle Market Summary online at www.joplinstockyards.com.

JRS Sale Day Market Phone: (417) 548-2012
Mondays (Rick Huffman) | Wednesdays (Don Kleiboeker)
Market Information Provided By Tony Hancock
Mo. Department of Agriculture Market News Service
Market News Hotline (573) 522-9244
Sale Day Market Reporter (417) 548-2012

Market Recap | Value-Added Feeder Cattle Auction Dec. 6, 2018 • Receipts 5,597

Regular feeder cattle sale comparable sales steady. Demand moderate, supply heavy. Calves are weaned forty five days or more, vaccinated and heifers are guaranteed open. Weigh up average to full and flesh condition medium to mostly medium plus, few thin. Cattle Buyers have fewer orders as large numbers of cattle have move through livestock markets since the Thanksgiving holiday. Lack of pen space, mud and weather has curtailed the demand for feeder cattle. Feeder cattle supply included 58 percent Steers, and 42 percent Heifers. Feeder cattle supply over 600 lbs was 55 percent.

FEEDER CATTLE

Steers (Per Cwt / Actual Wt) Medium and Large 1 300-350 lbs 198.00; 350-400 lbs 192.50-193.00; 450-500 lbs 165.00-177.00; 500-550 lbs 154.00-172.00; 550-600 lbs 146.00-156.00; 600-650 lbs 142.00-154.50; 650-700 lbs 138.00-149.00, **Fleshy** 140.00; 700-750 lbs 135.00-150.00; 750-800 lbs 135.00-146.00; 800-850 lbs 138.00-142.50, **Fleshy** 136.50; 850-900 lbs 135.00-139.50. **Medium and Large 1-2** 300-350 lbs **Thin Fleshed** 184.00; 350-400 lbs 182.00, **Thin Fleshed** 195.00; 400-450 lbs 160.00-172.00; 450-500 lbs 161.00-172.00, **Thin Fleshed** 167.00-167.50; 500-550 lbs 146.00-161.00, **Thin Fleshed** 160.00; 550-600 lbs 136.00-152.00; 600-650 lbs 135.00-147.00; 650-700 lbs 134.00-147.00; 700-750 lbs 135.50-140.00; 750-800 lbs 133.00-147.25; 850-900 lbs 135.00. **Large 1** 750-800 lbs 137.00.

Heifers (Per Cwt / Actual Wt) Medium and Large 1 300-350 lbs 153.00; 400-450 lbs 142.00-150.00; 450-500 lbs 145.00-151.00; 500-550 lbs 132.00-147.00, **Fleshy** 131.00; 550-600 lbs 129.00-138.00, **Fleshy** 127.00; 600-650 lbs 127.50-144.50; 650-700 lbs 125.50-142.50, **Fleshy** 125.50; 700-750 lbs 130.00-144.00, **Fleshy** 126.00-126.50; 750-800 lbs 132.00-138.00; 800-850 lbs 127.00-133.50. **Medium and Large 1-2** 200-250 lbs **Thin Fleshed** 157.50; 300-350 lbs **Thin Fleshed** 151.00; 350-400 lbs 143.00, **Thin Fleshed** 148.00; 400-450 lbs 137.00-146.00, **Thin Fleshed** 152.00; 450-500 lbs 128.00-144.00, **Thin Fleshed** 139.00-149.00; 500-550 lbs 127.00-149.00, **Thin Fleshed** 130.00; 550-600 lbs 125.00-133.00, **Thin Fleshed** 134.00; 600-650 lbs 124.00-133.75, **Thin Fleshed** 134.00; 650-700 lbs 124.00-135.00; 700-750 lbs 130.00-142.50; 750-800 lbs 128.00-138.00. **Large 1** 650-700 lbs 125.50. **Medium 1-2** 550-600 lbs 125.00.

Please Note: The above USDA LPGMN price report is reflective of the majority of classes and grades of livestock offered for sale. There may be instances where some sales do not fit within reporting guidelines and therefore will not be included in the report. Prices are reported on an FOB basis, unless otherwise noted. —Source: USDA-MO Dept of Ag Market News Service.



Video Cattle Auction Dec. 6, 2018 Receipts 2,593

Demand moderate for this Prime Time Video Auction at the Joplin Regional Stockyards. The Video Sale was held following Joplin's Special Value Added feeder cattle sale. The cattle offered are in Missouri, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas. An eight cent slide or eighty cent right slide and a two percent pencil shrink will apply. Two loads being weighed on the ground will use a three percent pencil shrink. Deliveries are current through May, 2019. Current deliveries are cattle that will deliver up to 14 days from the last sale day of the video. The supply included 50 percent steers, 50 percent heifers, with 100 percent over 600 lbs.

Southcentral States: Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Kansas and Missouri.

Feeder Steers Medium and Large 1

Head	Wt Range	Avg Wt	Price Range	Avg Price	Delivery
61	825	825	144.50	144.50	Current
190	800-825	808	143.25-146.50	144.33	Dec-Jan
62	785	785	141.25	141.25	Jan
37	775	775	141.00	141.00	Mar
60	850	850	136.50	136.50	Mar
60	850	850	135.50	135.50	May

Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1-2

Head	Wt Range	Avg Wt	Price Range	Avg Price	Delivery
260	750	750	137.00	137.00	Current
63	825	825	137.50	137.50	Current
60	850	850	140.00	140.00	Current
68	725	725	137.00	137.00	Dec-Jan
129	800	800	143.00	143.00	Dec-Jan
176	850	850	135.75	135.75	Feb
60	850	850	135.00	135.00	Mar

Feeder Heifers: Medium and Large 1

Head	Wt Range	Avg Wt	Price Range	Avg Price	Delivery
134	750	750	135.25	135.25	Jan
267	750	750	132.00-134.00	133.00	Feb
30	725	725	126.00	126.00	Mar
201	750	750	132.75	132.75	Ma
63	800	800	127.50	127.50	Mar
201	750	750	132.50	132.50	Apr
201	750	750	133.00	133.00	May

Feeder Heifers: Medium and Large 1-2

Head	Wt Range	Avg Wt	Price Range	Avg Price	Delivery
70	730	730	130.50	130.50	Jan
140	675	675	130.00	130.00	Feb

—Source: MO Dept of Ag/USDA Market News Service, Rick Huffman, Market Reporter, 573-751-5618. 24 Hour Market Report 1-573-522-9244. www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/JC_LS770.txt



Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year

MARKET WATCH

Market Recap | Show-Me-Select Heifer Sale

Nov. 16, 2018 • Receipts 311

Sponsored by Missouri Show-Me-Select Replacement Heifers, Inc., Division of Animal Sciences, Southwest Missouri Beef Cattle Improvement Association in cooperation with University Extension, MU College of Veterinary Medicine, Missouri Cattlemen's Association and the Missouri Department of Agriculture.

All heifers in the sale had met minimum standards for reproductive soundness, pelvic size, body condition and weight. A strict immunization program had been followed including Brucellosis calf-hood vaccination and tested negative for PI BVD. Heifers were bred to bulls meeting strict calving ease or birth weight EPDs. Many were synchronized and artificially bred. A few were Tier Two and some were genomic tested. Projected calving dates were given with all heifers expected to calve from mid-January to April 30 and preg checked within 30 days of the sale.

The offering was screened for blemishes, muscle, frame, body condition score, and disposition by a screening committee, consisting of official graders from the Missouri Dept of Agriculture and USDA, then sorted into lots according to calving dates and similar body types.

There were 63 percent of the heifers artificially bred, and 37 percent were naturally bred. The heifers were in the 2nd and 3rd stage of pregnancy. Fifty percent of the heifers were black or black whiteface and fifty percent were Red Angus and crosses.

There was a standing room only crowd in attendance. Sale average for the 311 head from 16 consignors was 1586.00 which was 281.00 per head less than the November 2017 sale. The AI bred heifers averaged 115.00 more per head than the natural bred heifers. The top selling lots brought 2100.00 per head.

Replacement Bred Heifers: **Large 1** 2nd and 3rd stage 1134-1245 lbs 1700.00-2000.00 per head. **Large 1-2** 2nd and 3rd stage 1108-1220 lbs 1500.00-1700.00 per head. **Medium and Large 1** 2nd and 3rd stage 1001-1111 lbs most 1650.00-1850.00, couple lots 2000.00-2100.00 per head. **Medium and Large 1-2** 2nd and 3rd stage 938-1095 lbs 1250.00-1550.00 per head. **Medium 1** 2nd and 3rd stage 911-995 lbs 1500.00-1750.00 per head. **Medium 1-2** 2nd and 3rd stage 840-985 lbs 1150.00-1250.00 per head.

—Source: Missouri Dept of Ag-USDA Market News Service, Joplin, MO. Don Kleiboeker Market Reporter, 573-751-4339. 24 hour recorded report, 1-573-522-9244 www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/JC_LS161.txt.

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M-F 9:55-10:05 a.m.
(during break before AgriTalk)
M/W/F Noon Hour
(during Farming in the Four States)
T/Th Noon Hour (after news block)



Monday 11:30 a.m.
Wednesday 11:30 a.m.



Monday 12:40 p.m.
Wednesday 12:40 p.m.

Monday 12:15 p.m.
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Monday 11:45 a.m.
Wednesday 11:45 a.m.



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