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News
JANUARY 2020



Looking ahead
to a new year

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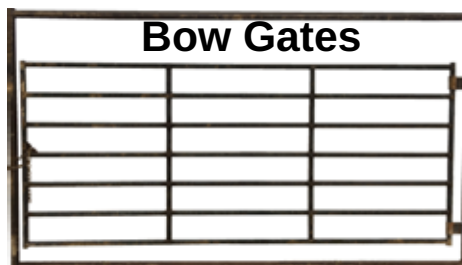
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ON THE BLOCK

with Jackie Moore

2020...what a number...the start of a New Year! I'm looking forward to this year. The market is trending higher just as we talked like it might! We traded the fat cattle this last week for \$2 or \$3 higher at 1.24-1.26 and things are definitely going in our favor.

To add to that, we have got good weather and that is very much a blessing. As we started 2020, we had our first Value-Added Sale on January 2 with 8,500 cattle and the market was steady to five higher, 10 higher on some of those lighter cattle. I think that's going to be the trend as we go into spring. We will see these yearling cattle hold steady and that is about all they can probably do.

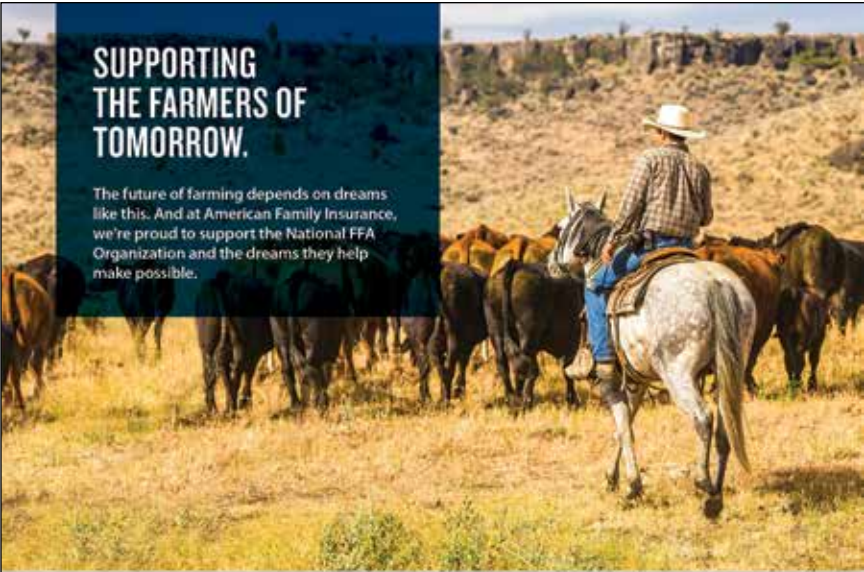
With the fat cattle market trending higher, I think we will see these lighter cattle going to the wheat that is finally starting to grow in this "spring-like" weather in parts of the country. That

causes us cowboys to get spring fever. We feel like spring is here even though it is not when we turn over into another year. We are anxious for those pretty days, and everyone gets active buying cattle in this market. All of that should cause the market to trend higher as we get closer to spring. This is due to so many lighter cattle being sold, locked up, on feed and the availability is not going to be very good. I feel like the market will continue to trend higher.

As we go through spring and summer, the fat cattle market is going to lose a little ground, but in general, everybody is pretty optimistic that 2020 is going to be a great year!

God Bless & Good Luck!

Jackie



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*Cover photo by Cattlemen's News staff.

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DATA DRIVEN DECISIONS

Improving on Average

Setting goals for 2020

By Justin Sexten for Cattlemen's News

As we reflect on 2019 and set goals for 2020, average performance is a common metric used across operations including average weaning weight, daily gain or cost of production. You name it; we all look to improve our averages.

Perhaps less involved in goal setting, but certainly discussed with friends and neighbors, are the outliers that demonstrate our ability to manage for excellence. A rare conversation will focus on a similar average with the improvement

being solely due to enhanced uniformity with fewer outliers on either end. A question to consider, which is more financially advantageous in your program if the average is the same, uniformity from top to bottom or bottom-end discounts offset by premiums from top-end excellence?

The technology used in this month's article demonstrates an opportunity to address variation in a way that actively manages cattle without requiring operator labor or cattle



handling. At a time of year when labor and the daylight available to implement management are at a premium this experiment provides a look at how technology might be used to provide a hands-off feeding and sorting solution.

Jose Imaz and co-workers at the University of Sydney published their work in *Animals*, highlighting a technological approach to measuring performance and behavioral variation in grazing calves as forage availability declined.

The experiment used an automated scale and computerized feeder set up around a central watering location, so each time cattle came to water they were weighed and sorted by the technology into either supplemented or un-supplemented

groups. The supplement was a free-choice molasses lick block with an ionophore.

Before we get into the results of this experiment, consider the opportunity to use technology to sort cattle in the pasture without gathering the whole group. Rather than scheduling a crew to gather and sort, simply set the technology to sort up a load and schedule the truck. Less operator labor, lower cattle shrink and reduced stress for both the operator and the stock.

The research group categorized forage availability in a simple manner, either high or low. High was the first two days of pasture access while low was the last two-days cattle spent grazing a particular paddock. Not surprisingly as forage availability declined during the grazing period, those calves in the supplement group increased molasses block intake.

More specifically as forage availability was reduced, the average daily intake of the molasses block increased from 0.12 lb/hd to 0.25 lb/hd. This increased supplement intake was a product of nearly twice as many feeder visits and a 25 percent increase in time cattle spent at the feeder during the visit (4.9 minutes compared to 6.2 minutes).

As expected, supplemented calves performed better than those not supplemented. I suspect few are surprised that supplementation increases cattle performance. The news is not in the average performance but the performance variation the technology captured.

The research group used a C-Lock Smartfeed system to gather behavior details around consumption and feeding frequency. Rather than simply dividing the feed offered by the number of cattle in the pasture, each animal was evaluated using technology, weighing the molasses block during feeding and documenting cattle feeding behavior.

The molasses block intake on any one day ranged from zero to 1.55 lbs / head. Of those calves assigned to the supplement group feeder attendance ranged from zero to 77.8% of animals visiting on any given day. The technology offers insight to the researchers to further evaluate the performance differences since actual individual supplement intake was known.

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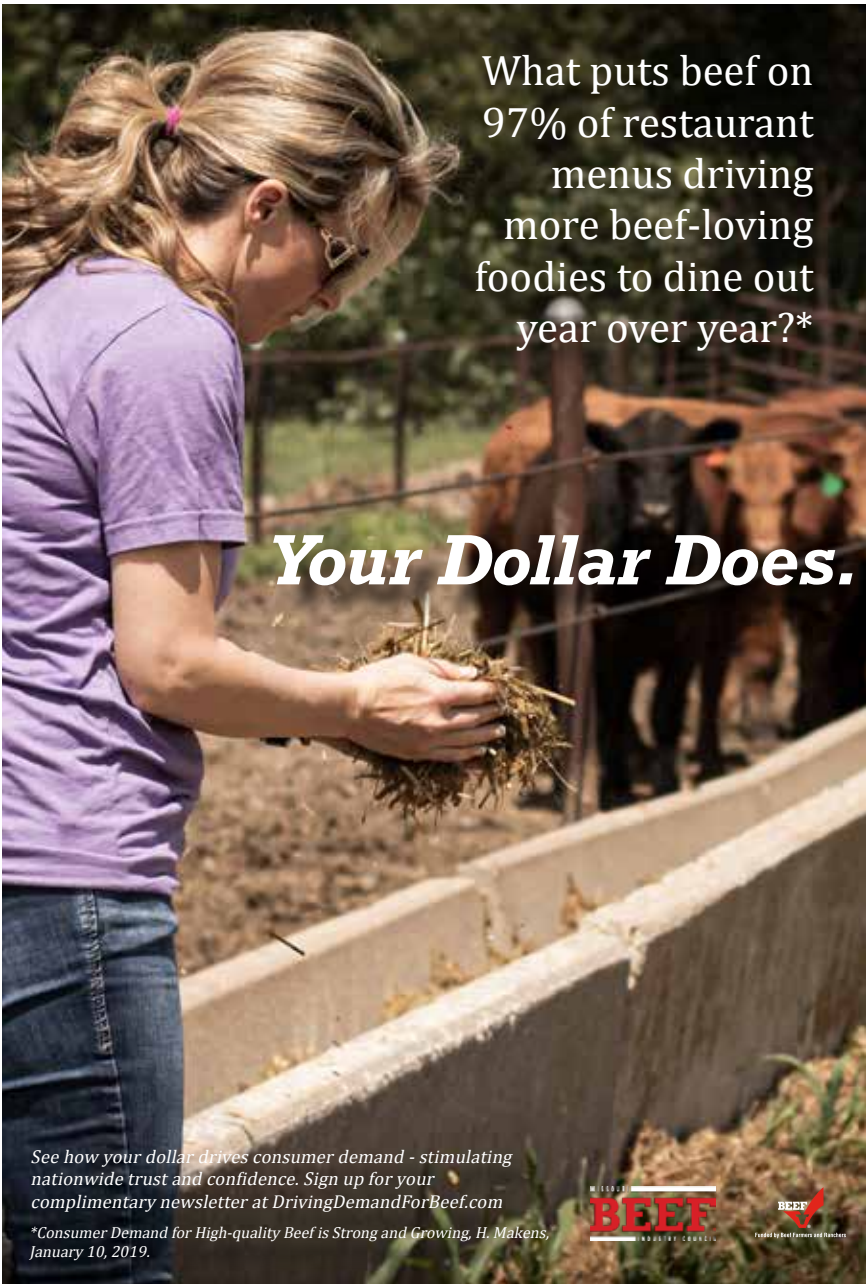
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If we assume all supplemented cattle are consuming the average amount of feed offered, we miss the prospect of precision animal management. Previously we were output focused on the individual and assumed average feed inputs. If an animal under or over performed the group we might attribute this to a number of factors such as genetics, health, metabolic efficiency or some combination.

This example shows how real-time average daily gain might be coupled with observations of feeding behavior and incorporated into a strategic supplementation model. Individual feeding in a group or pen is a key challenge to precision livestock management. This work shows hints of ways to manage a pen of individuals.

With continued technology advances, someday our goal for the coming year may not focus on improving average but simply seeing how little variation we can achieve. The day may be coming where we set a target marketing weight for the cattle with our desired cost of gain and the technology notifies us when to fill the feeder. 🐄

Justin Sexten is the Vice President of Strategy - Performance Livestock Analytics



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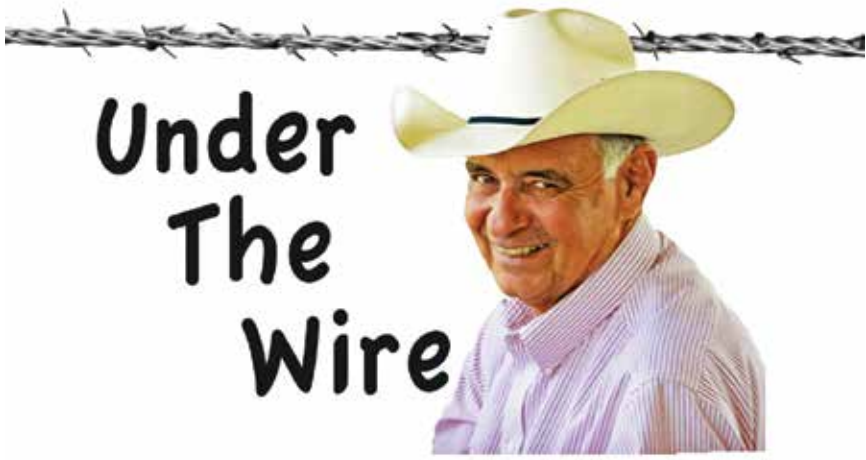
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FEBRUARY? COME ON!

By Gary Hodgson for Cattlemen's News

As near as I can tell, my forefathers raised cattle in Hawaii, Florida, or some other very warm climate. That is the only possible explanation I can come up with for a problem I now have.

As many of you know, the cow business tends to become a family legacy. Grandpa did it, then passed them on to father, who continued to raise them, son followed in their footsteps, and so on.

In some cases, such as ours, the cowherd passed through many generations, thus, my problem.

Sue and I 'inherited' if you will, a great cow herd capable of raising big healthy calves year after year while subsisting on pretty tough range conditions. Our cows calve in February. They have done this generation after generation.

"Just leave us alone," they seem to say, "we will do our job of keeping you from having to go

to town and get a real job!" We work hard to allow them to do just that.

You may ask, "So what do you have to complain about?"

Here is where my suspected warm weather ancestors come into play. Our cows calve in February, a very balmy month in Honolulu or Miami Beach. Problem is, we live in Eastern Colorado where 20 below zero is common in February. How in the heck did they get on that schedule? It wasn't my idea.

Now, cattlemen will say, "All you have to do is turn the bulls out a couple of months later to solve the problem."

It's not that simple. Cows' systems get on a schedule, just like we humans can. Calve in February, calves big enough to brand in April, go to green grass in May and wean before snow falls in late October; they have their system for decades. I have always seen my place in all this as, "Don't screw up what everyone before has been successful with." I know the entire group is watching me

from up above making sure the latest caretakers of the cows do it right. We try hard, but come on, February? Seriously? Family records go back to the Hodgson's journey from Southeast Kansas in the 1880s, even documentation of the first of our lineage coming over on a boat from England. HOWEVER, no where can I find evidence of the warm weather Hodgsons who began calving this herd in the month of February.

Providing I, too, make the Pearly Gates, the first thing I am going to do is look those gentlemen up and ask, "What in the world were you thinking? February? Come on!"

Gary and Sue Hodgson ranch near Brush, Colorado. While Gary is writing his "Under The Wire" column, Sue works on her award-winning photography and oil paintings. Together they team up to produce Livestock News Network, available Monday through Friday in Colorado and nine surrounding states plus the internet version, www.livestock-today.com. They can be reached at (970) 842-2902 or office@hodgson-media.com.

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CATTLE: Over 2 years 1 mL per 200 lbs. bodyweight

CAUTION:

Slight local reaction may occur for about 30 seconds after injection. A slight swelling may be observed at injection site for a few days after administration. Use standard aseptic procedures during administration of injections to reduce the risk of injection site abscesses or lesions.

SUPPLEMENTATION PROGRAM			
BULLS	3 times per year		
BEEF COWS	4 weeks before breeding 4 weeks before calving		
DAIRY COWS	4 weeks before calving 4 weeks before insemination at dry-off		
CALVES	at birth at 3 months and/or weaning		
HEIFERS	every 3 months - especially 4 weeks before breeding		

(program gives planned dates that can be varied to suit management programs)

DOSAGE TABLE			
ANIMAL WEIGHT (lbs)	CALVES UP TO 1 YEAR 1 mL/100 lb BW	CATTLE 1 - 2 YEARS 1 mL/150 lb BW	CATTLE > 2 YEARS 1 mL/200 lb BW
50	0.5 mL	-	-
100	1 mL	-	-
150	1.5 mL	-	-
200	2 mL	-	-
300	3 mL	-	-
400	4 mL	-	-
500	5 mL	-	-
600	6 mL	-	-
700	7 mL	-	-
800	-	5.3 mL	-
900	-	6 mL	-
1000	-	6.6 mL	5 mL
1100	-	-	5.5 mL
1200	-	-	6 mL
1300	-	-	6.5 mL
1400	-	-	7 mL

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MARB 0.60 · REA 1.03 · API 165 · TI 85

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MARB -0.09 · REA 1.34 · API 130 · TI 77

Broken Bow



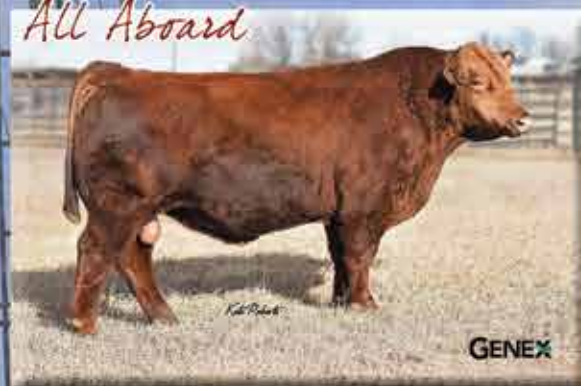
KM Broken Bow 002
CE 17.0 · BW -3.8 · WW 75 · YW 115
MARB 0.87 · REA 0.58 · API 147 · TI 84

Big Timber



Koch Big Timber 685D
CE 17.7 · BW -4.0 · WW 70 · YW 100
MARB 0.40 · REA 0.60 · API 171 · TI 87

All Aboard



WS All Aboard B80
CE 15.2 · BW -0.4 · WW 100 · YW 149
MARB 0.33 · REA 1.22 · API 162 · TI 99
EPDs as of 12/3/19



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5 Tips to Help Ensure Cow Longevity

Developing and maintaining a herd with the key profit driver

By Rebecca Mettler for Cattlemen's News

Cow longevity is a key profit driver in cow-calf operations. At the end of the day, it doesn't matter if a producer has purchased the perfect bull for their operation if the cows remain open because of poor cowherd fertility. Instead, developing and maintaining a herd with enhanced longevity should be a top item on producers' minds when setting goals for the new year.

While proper nutrition and sound vaccination protocols for reproductive diseases are essential pieces of the puzzle, producers should also focus on making genetic improvements to fertility and other longevity related factors.

Too often when producers looking at genetic predictions, e.g., expected progeny differences (EPDs) and indexes, they look at growth and carcass traits. But as an industry, we often don't think about traits to improve our long-term employees—our cows, according to Jared Decker, University of Missouri beef geneticist. Fortunately, there are now genetic predictions to improve the performance of mature cows, as outlined in several of Decker's top five tips for longevity.

1. Stayability/Sustained Cow Fertility
First, there is now an EPD for cow longevity called Stayability (STAY) or Sustained Cow Fertility (SCF), depending on the breed association. Stayability is an EPD from International Genetic Solutions (IGS) multibreed evaluation, which has several partner

breed associations, including American Simmental Association (ASA), Red Angus Association of America (RAAA), American Gelbvieh Association, and others. The EPD measures the probability that a bull's daughters will be productive past 6 years of age. Another example is the American Hereford Association's (AHA) Sustained Cow Fertility EPD, which measures the probability a bull's daughters will be productive past 12 years of age. These EPDs help identify cows that have the fertility and structure to stay in the herd for a long period of time.

"This is probably the most important trait when selecting cows with staying power. Unfortunately, it is likely one of the most overlooked traits when producers are looking for their next bull," Decker said.

Decker believes this is an overlooked trait because it's easy for producers to get focused on items that affect revenue instead of focusing on things that improve profit.

"Costs have gotten high (around \$900 per cow) so finding cows that stay in the herd longer reduce the costs of needing replacements," Decker said.

2. Mature Weight
Mature weight is important, because of the simple fact that larger cows eat more feed. Mature Weight EPDs predict genetic differences mature cow size.

"Managing for mature weight is so important for producers because cows that are moderate in size are better able to maintain their condition and get bred."

According to Decker, utilizing a terminal crossbreeding program balances the need for maintaining a moderately sized cowherd while focusing on growth traits for terminal progeny. For a smaller producer, it would require purchasing moderately sized crossbred replacement females with very strong maternal traits.

"The cows then fit the feed recourses and the added growth can come from a terminal sire," Decker explained.

3. Indexes
A selection index combines several traits into a single value to allow genetic improvement based on economic return to the operation. Indexes provide a more simplified approach to genetic selection when compared to looking at individual EPD traits because indexes are expressed in dollars and again, combine many traits into one.

The American Angus Association (AAA) updated their indexes in 2019, so it's a good idea for producers to review the index components. The new Maternal Weaned Calf Value (\$M) takes into account foot angle and claw set, which measure the soundness of an animal. Cows with better feet cause fewer problems and should stay in the herd longer. This index also accounts for differences in mature weight, docility, and calving ease mater-

nal. This index does a better job accounting for traits of mature cows when selecting bulls and females compared to previous Angus indexes, according to Decker.

General purpose indexes, such as Baldy Maternal Index (BMI) published by AHA, Herd Builder (HB), published by RAAA and All Purpose Index (API), published by ASA, also account for mature cow traits, such as stayability, when making important selection decisions.

4. Crossbreeding
When selecting for cows that stay in the herd longer, don't forget the value of a planned crossbreeding system. Planned crossbreeding, in which producers purchase or breed crossbreed females, produces cows with improved maternal ability. In a planned crossbreeding program, two or three breeds are used year after year to produce a consistent calf crop.

"Crossbreed cows are more fertile compared to the average of their purebred parents, are 24% more productive in their lifetime, and most of this comes from the improved fertility," Decker said.

5. Milk
Just like the trend that mature sizes have gotten too large, in many situations, the genetic potential for maternal growth, also known as Milk, is too high in some herds. If producers are having problems with cows becoming poorer conditioned and failing to rebreed, the milk potential of the herd may be too high, according to Decker.

Decker pointed out that AAA has an optimal milk online module that is a good resource for commercial producers who purchase Angus bulls. The module can help producers find the optimal level of milk for a cowherd to balance calf performance and cowherd efficiency.

Bottom Line
Cowherd longevity is one of the most economically important traits on a cow-calf operation. It's also a hard trait to zero in on because of all of the factors that attribute to longevity, or lack thereof. However, with the tips above, producers can positively affect cowherd longevity through genetic selection and management practices. 🐮





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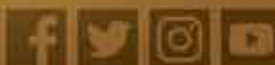
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Micronutrients Can Have Macro Impacts

Maintaining healthy immune systems with adequate levels

By Heather Smith Thomas for Cattlemen's News

Adequate levels of copper, zinc, manganese and selenium are crucial for a healthy immune system. The trace mineral status in a pregnant dam is reflected in her calf. Poor or deficient trace mineral status of the cow or heifer may increase the risk of disease, lead to birth of weak calves or in the case of severe deficiency, result in abortion. Cattle that are low in trace minerals don't have a strong immune system, so not only are they vulnerable to disease, but cannot mount a good immune response when vaccinated.

Dr. Stephanie Hansen, Associate Professor and Beef Feedlot Nutrition Chair at Iowa State University was part of the research team that looked at the manganese deficiency in calves in the Midwest. She earlier did her masters work at North Carolina State University on effects of manganese deficiency and reproduction in beef heifers.

"Those heifers were still able to get bred, and have normal pregnancies, but when they calved, many of their calves exhibited classical signs of manganese deficiency," said Hansen.

"It looked like someone punched those calves in the nose; it was shorter than normal. The nose is made of cartilage, and manganese is crucial to cartilage formation. Those calves had underdeveloped nasal passages so their noses were not as long as in a normal calf, and this made it look like their lower jaw was too long. Actually the lower jaw was normal; the nose was too small."

The manganese-deficient calves were also shorter in height because manganese is important in bone formation.

"Gestation is a critical time for manganese to be adequate because the fetus is growing so rapidly," Hansen explained.

Bone development and cartilage formation requires adequate levels of manganese."

Some of the calves that were born in her study were like disproportionate dwarfs.

"We had some 50-pound calves born from 1400-pound cows, which was very unusual," she explained. "Then last spring I got multiple phone calls from

veterinarians and other folks in Iowa and surrounding states saying they had calves that looked manganese deficient. We found extensive incidence of manganese deficiency largely in cattle that had been fed corn silage almost exclusively over the winter. The corn silage was contaminated with soil, and the iron in the soil becomes very available during silage fermentation. Iron competes with manganese for absorption in the body."

Producers need to look at the whole picture and assess all parts of the diet. If some ingredients bring with them molybdenum, sulfur or high levels of iron, producers need to be aware that this could skew the mineral balance by tying up important trace minerals, reducing the amounts absorbed by the animal.

"This is why we developed Multimin®90 (an injectable trace mineral product) because it is the one technology that by-passes the gut completely," says Dr. Lourens Havenga, Chief

Executive Officer of Multimin USA, Inc. "The injectable product is administered by giving a certain amount of milliliters per body weight and age and is good insurance that each animal gets what it needs."

There was a study done by Christopher Branum at Texas A&M showing that baby calves from beef cows with normal mineral levels, have reduced those mineral levels in the liver by about 75% by the time they reach 56 days of age.

"This happens for two reasons," Havenga says. "That calf is growing rapidly and uses a lot of those minerals for building tissue. The second reason is that cow's milk produced is very low in trace minerals."

Havenga suggests this is the reason producers are sometimes disappointed with calf vaccination protocols.

"When we vaccinate a calf, that animal also uses more trace minerals in the effort to mount an immune response," he explains. "Now we have two things that are happening at the same time—a vaccine response that is inadequate, and won't produce much protection, and we've also sucked a lot of minerals out of that calf to get that poor response—and then we end up with a calf that's very susceptible to disease."

Furthermore, Havenga points out that milk alone from the cow will not provide adequate trace minerals for the calves, meaning supplementation is needed. Mineral put out for cows may be sampled by their calves.

"The problem is calves are just nibbling and may not consume enough minerals, especially in that first 90 days," says Havenga.

At weaning time, the same principle will apply when calves are stressed and not eating their oral trace mineral supply.

At this time, Havenga suggests using an injectable product during vaccination.

"Then you know that each calf received trace minerals—at the right time," Havenga concludes.



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If you only knew how many times I have been told this. If only I had a dollar for each time. If only somebody from somewhere offered *me* a boat-load of money to be on a reality show. Wouldn't that be something? Then maybe...worth it, all of the crazy, all of the emergencies and all of everything, but money is not everything. But money is not everything. One thing I have learned through my short 37 years on earth is that family is everything. Even when it feels like it's not, even when it is hard and even when it is expensive.

Having children has not been easy for me. I grew up with one sibling, and he was almost 11 years younger than me. My parents owned a small newspaper where they spent their time, energy and money. My childhood was *much* different from the life I live today. I have had to adjust to the noise of a big household. I have had to accept the fact that I need alone time to thrive in my world. And that's *ok*. I know now that because of my childhood I never really learned to truly share. Ouch. My children are much less selfish than me just due to the amount of people they co-exist with.

With each passing year I am learning so much more about myself as a person simply because I am a mom. Sure, we are learning how to parent as we go like everybody else, but I think the most surprising thing about parenthood is that you realize and are able to see first-hand all the good and bad about yourself. I gave birth to four little mirrors. With each little baby came more chaos. With each little blessing came more love. With each little baby gave me more chances to grow as a person.

Yep! This is my reality. Whether it's on TV or not we have had some wild times that taught me some major lessons.

DON'T PANIC — One time our calm and perfect house cat, Patrick, attacked us. One thing you need to realize is that there really is no way to put into words how bad the "attack" was. No matter my word choice this

event seems silly on paper, but it was anything but silly. I reacted in the exact opposite of how a grown adult should act. Lesson learned. When your feline is on such a rampage that everybody is on furniture to escape and even whacking him with a broom won't subdue the situation, just leave the house. Even though the injuries sustained to your child *through* his jeans

from your claw-less cat landed us in the doctor's office, there's no reason to panic. Next time, remember that your screaming and panic escalated the situation. It didn't help.

WRITE IT DOWN — Whether it's a grocery list, a date to remember or something funny the kids said, write it down. You think you'll remember, but you won't.

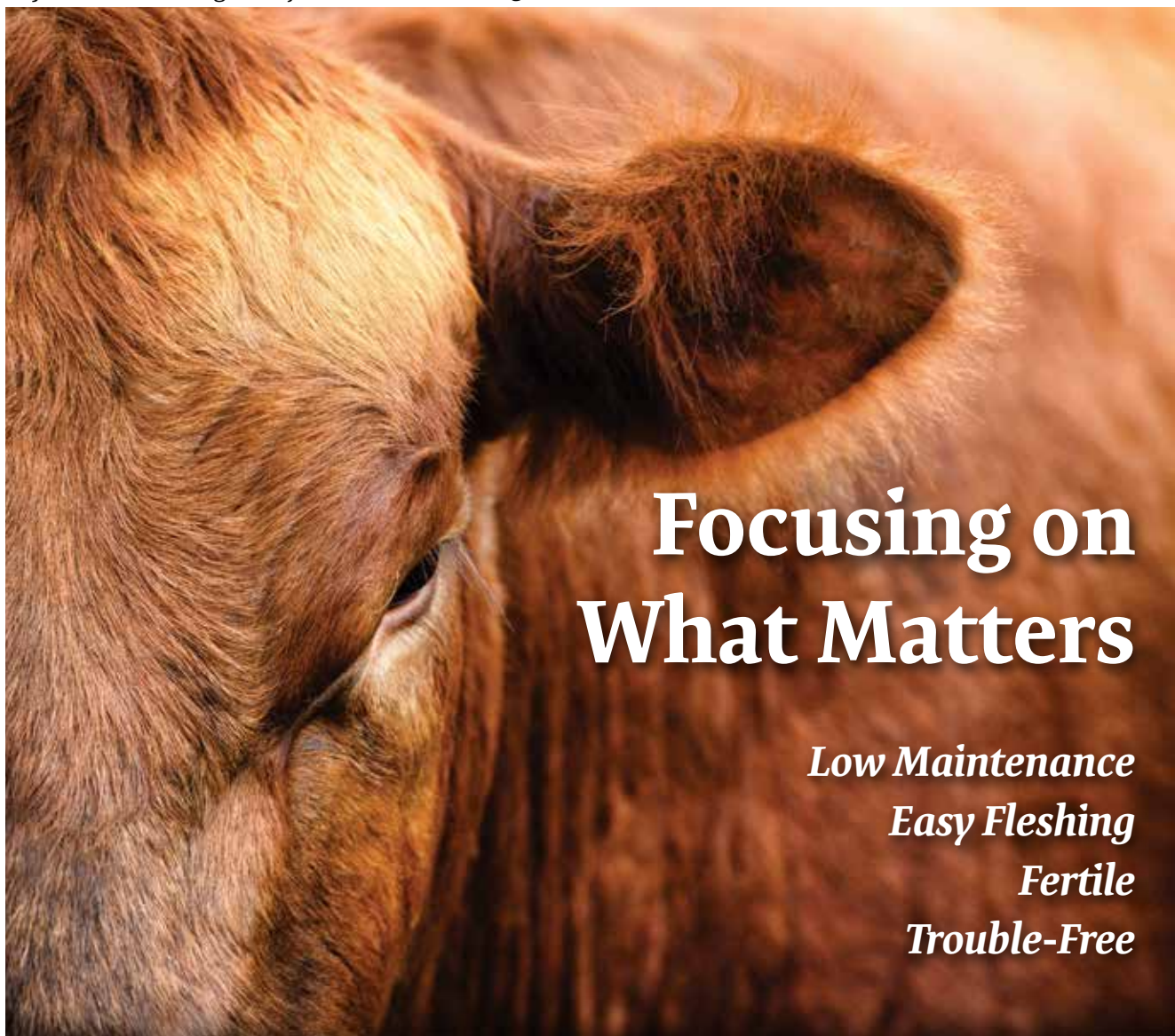
KEEP ZIP-LOCS HANDY — Not just any zipper bag will work. It has to be the one with the slider at the top. Trust me on this. When your kiddo gets sick on the go or you have to put some other nastiness in a bag, trust me, you do *not* want the regular squeeze-shut baggies.

FOOD FIRST — When life gets crazy, think dinner first. At the end of the day your house and world might be in shambles, but

if dinner is in the Crock Pot, it's that much easier. Guaranteed.

SPEND TIME — Ugh. Time. We don't get it back. It runs away from us. No refunds or rewinds. Then as we get older and it all slows down, we will realize the importance. Play the board games. Talk, and talk, and talk. Laugh. Really be there. Soak it up excessively. I am really working on this.

The amount of lessons I've learned are far too numerous to put into one story. But it's good to try. It's good to see in black-and-white that this non-paid reality show that is my life has been the best thing to ever happen to me. I am truly blessed. My prayer is that you can find the blessings and lessons in your own reality. Happy New Year! 🤠



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Challenges During the Winter Months

Advice to increase health and productivity in your herd

By Macy R. Hurst for Cattlemen's News

Across the Midwest, farmers and ranchers are experiencing a wide range of temperatures and precipitation, most unlikely for the winter months, however, chilling temperatures and potential snowfall are likely pending. One thing every beef cattle producer has in common is the responsibility to protect livestock in every condition. Jim White, Ph.D. and ruminant nutritionist for MFA Inc., describes the challenges during the winter months and offers advice to increase health and productivity while lowering cost.

"Cold weather increases the amount of energy required to maintain cattle," White said.

Although this is to be expected, understanding the issue can make the prevention and solution easier.

"Cattle in an environment where they are not needing to use energy to cool themselves, nor to warm themselves, are in a 'thermo-neutral' state; they perform best in the thermo-neutral zone," said White. "When the effective ambient temperature, an index

of the heating or cooling power of the environment, is outside of the thermo-neutral zone, cattle performance is depressed."

In the thermo-neutral zone, dry animals with a winter coat do not expend extra energy until the temperature is below 19 degrees Fahrenheit. However, with a wet hide or summer coat, animals will need the energy to stay warm if the temperature drops below just 59 degrees.

Conditions factored into the effective ambient temperature, otherwise known as wind chill index, include wind, humidity, solar radiation and real air temperature. According to

White, if the effective ambient temperature is below the lower critical temperature, or the lowest point in the thermo-neutral zone, extra energy is required for maintenance.

White said that animals with proper shelter from the wind will obviously not be affected by it, meaning they are enduring only the real air temperature. However, animals in the element can experience a drastically colder feeling climate.

Mud can also increase energy requirements. It complicates movement, slows feed intake and reduces insulation capability. Animals with muddy conditions, summer coats, wet hides or wind exposure are expected to need extra nutrients.

"A few days of cold weather will not affect performance, but continued days will add up," said White. "If the additional feed is not provided, the cow will use body condition, which is why it is not uncommon to be surprised at how, all of a sudden, cows are looking thinner than desired after a significant storm."

Knowing feed value can also be an asset. For recommendations on sampling labs, talk to a feed, forage or grain dealer or staff at a local University of Missouri Extension office.

White emphasizes knowing feed value is necessary to ensure the cattle are not only being maintained but also stay in good flesh, calve easily and breed back.

"Knowing the feed value can potentially save substantial expense because you did not overfeed them and a lot of trouble because you fed them enough," White said.

Simply put, cattle with shelter from the elements and proper accommodating nutrients will be best suited for both harsh winter weather and the productive seasons ahead. 🐄

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The Gift of Good Labor

Photography by KJM Photography

The Beef Industry faces changes in the business and work force

Written by Melissa Shipman.

It's the time of year for giving gifts, but what's highest on some beef industry professionals' wish lists can't be wrapped and set under the tree for Christmas morning. All year long, Missouri agricultural businesses are faced with challenges in sourcing qualified candidates to fill job openings, especially as agricultural industry positions often require specific skills. There are young people interested in agriculture, but unlike the elves in Santa's workshop, there don't seem to be enough to go around.

"In general, there are more jobs available, particularly on the production side, than we have students who are interested in and experienced for those jobs," said Bill Lamberson, Director of the Division of Animal Sciences at the University of Missouri (MU).



Joe Horner, agricultural economist, University of Missouri Extension.

According to Joe Horner, agricultural economist, University of Missouri Extension, Missouri has about 3 million people in the workforce and Missouri's September 2019 unemployment rate was 3.1 percent.

That indicates there are about 90,000 people looking for work in Missouri," Horner says. "Farmers ask, 'Where are they?'"

Away in a suburb

Unfortunately, agricultural employers are often competing for the same pool of workers as construction trades, transportation drivers and manufacturing industries. That pool doesn't look the same as it did in the past. More and more families live in cities and towns, rather than on family farms.

"There are more jobs available, particularly on the production side, than we have students who are interested in and experienced for those jobs."
– Bill Lamberson

Horner said the enrollment in agricultural related education programs has also changed. For one thing, there are more females entering the industry and more students with no farming or ranching experience.

"There are more people entering agricultural fields who have urban or suburban backgrounds rather than growing up on a full-time farming operation," Horner said.

Dave Donica, yard manager, Joplin Regional Stockyards, Inc., said he gets a lot of applicants, but many of them don't know the difference between a cow and a bull, and aren't able to do the work because they've never done it before.

"We want our guys to be able to count cattle and load trucks correctly," Donica said, "When every cow is worth \$900, you can't miss too many before it costs the company a huge amount of money."



Dave Donica, yard manager, Joplin Regional Stockyards, Inc., shared his challenges in finding experienced workers.

"If these companies can provide internship opportunities, not only do those students get valuable experience working with animals on the job, but it will give them easier access to reliable young people looking for a career in agriculture." – Bill Lamberson

Finding workers with firsthand experience is also a struggle for producers, who say it's hard to teach someone how to work with cattle if they've never done it before.

Students in the animal science program at University of Missouri have opportunities to work directly with animals in their classes, but much of the extended opportunities come through internships.

"We make every effort at the University of Missouri Division of Animal Sciences to have students participate in 'experiential' learning, or learning by doing," said Eric Bailey, assistant professor of Animal Sciences at MU and beef extension specialist. "They have ample opportunity to be exposed to basic husbandry and management of many livestock species."

Lamberson believes it would help if more employers participated in internship programs.

"If these companies can provide internship opportunities, not only do those students get valuable experience working with animals on the job, but it will give them easier access to reliable young people looking for a career in Agriculture," Lamberson said.

Internships might not always be possible. At Joplin Regional Stockyards, working with students would be a considerable challenge.

"The gates weigh 500 pounds each, and each of the 10,000-15,000 cattle we run through here are 400-900 lbs, too," Donica said. "Then we have some pretty expensive equipment. We've had people tear up a \$1,500 chain without much thought, and that adds up really quickly."

All I Want for Christmas... are Good Workers

Mary Hesemann of Main Street Feeds, Inc., in Monett, Missouri, said she does a little bit of everything, including help find and hire new employees. They've tried

Skilled labor is required for many jobs in the beef industry but hard to come by. Employees need experience and a passion for the work to find success.



Sorting cattle effectively is an important aspect of work at Joplin Regional Stockyards and can prove costly when mistakes occur.

several different ways of finding the right candidates for open positions, although they've never asked Santa for them.

"Things really run smoother when everyone is here doing their job." – Mary Hesemann

"We've done newspaper ads, Facebook posts, and recently have had some luck using Indeed.com," Hesemann said.

Their biggest struggle has been finding and keeping reliable drivers.



Mary Hesemann of Main Street Feeds, Inc., in Monett, Missouri, faces challenges hiring quality staff.

Hesemann hasn't had as much trouble with part-time help because they work with the local FFA groups and high school agriculture department.

"We have had kids start their sophomore year of high school and work all the way up through college years and beyond, so we've had really good luck with most of those kids," she said.

She understands, however, that there is a lot of competition for kids to choose such a demanding job.

"Most of them work in our warehouse where it's dirty and hot, or cold, depending on the time of year, and they can go to

Casey's and make \$12 an hour working a lot less hard and be a lot more comfortable," she said. "Many employers are frustrated when trying to bring in workers who didn't."

Carol of the [Alarm] Bells

Many employers are frustrated when trying to bring in workers who didn't grow up on a farm because they don't understand the long hours and hard work necessary for success.

"I send out a message with the schedule telling the guys we're starting at 4:30 a.m., and I'll get a message back saying they don't normally get up until 7 a.m.," Donica said. "They just aren't prepared for the work,"

Hesemann has seen similar struggles, with new employees not showing up to work.



The University of Missouri Animal Sciences program provides opportunities for students to have real contact with animals during their studies, but many programs do not. This experience is crucial to a career in the beef industry. Photo courtesy of University of Missouri College of Agriculture & Natural Resources

“It seems like every day, someone is gone for something, and we have a business to run, so that makes it hard sometimes,” she said. “Things really run smoother when everyone is here doing their job.”

They have around 35 employees, but sometimes struggle with feeling like not everyone is truly “bought in” to the mission.

“We do have to maintain standards and a lackluster attitude is stressful on the rest of us,” Hesemann said. “This place won’t run on three people trying to do everything, no matter how hard we work, so just explaining that, and helping everyone see the value in what they are doing is hard sometimes.”

Lamberson has also heard that employers have trouble getting workers to show up and work hard but believes the students that go through their program at MU will be successful.

“These kids go to class, they do their work,” he said. I believe the greatest percentage of them are going to be good employees. If employers can tap into that group of potential employees, they will likely be better off.

Hiring dedicated and educated graduates whether from MU or another institution does, however, require a higher wage.

Have Yourself a [Very] Little Salary

Farmers often aren’t able to compete with the wages offered by other employers, and unless employees have a true love for what they do, they are likely to be pulled away to other better-paying careers.

“Very few students are willing to do low-skill labor for minimum wage after earning a bachelor’s degree. Unfortunately, the margins in most ag enterprises are so tight

that it is difficult to pay a wage that would be attractive to these students,” Bailey said.

Horner concurs.

“Ag graduates are no different than other graduates,” Horner said. “They would prefer to work close to home doing what they studied to do. Opportunities with good pay, benefits, and health insurance become important as people age and have families to support. Often, agricultural employers have not been able to compete, especially on the benefits side.”

In addition, many employees would rather own their own farm than work for someone else, but unless they have family connections, the capital investment makes that nearly impossible.

“Agriculture is a great life, but not a very good living,” Bailey said. “I could make more money and live my dreams doing something other than raising cattle for someone else.”

Lamberson said the largest growing age group of farmers is relatively young, but most are starting smaller, specialized farms. He has, however, seen success at Grassland Dairy in southern Missouri because they offer employees a buy-in option over a 10-year period.

“If there were innovative ways of doing that in the beef industry, I think we’d see success there as well, bringing in a student and letting them buy into the herd as part of their salary,” Lamberson said. “It provides value to the employee and the employer, and helps get younger people into agriculture.”

Walking in a [Farming] Wonderland

Hesemann said the majority of people outside the industry don’t understand how hard the work really is.



Eric Bailey, assistant professor of Animal Sciences at MU and beef extension specialist says internships are a great way to build a great employee.

"They see the big house and the nice tractor and don't realize he or she [the farmer] has been going to bed at 11p.m. and getting up at 5 a.m. everyday for years to get to that place," she said.

Donica agrees.

"If we had someone come in who really wanted to work 60 hours a week, he'd make a pretty good living, but most people don't want to work that hard," he said. "It's also hard to teach the significance to someone outside the industry."

Hesemann explains the hours behind the scenes are those that really count in production agriculture.

"Our customers will sometimes call us and say they are running out of feed, or forgot to get something, and we'll go take it to them because we know the implications if we don't," he said. "It's not about clocking out at the end of the day, it's about making sure farmers have what they need so their animals can thrive and their farms don't suffer. That's hard to teach if you haven't ever worked on a farm."

Horner agrees conveying the significance of the hard work to new employees is key.

"Big Bales, ATVs, front-end loaders, stock dogs, cattle guards and cube boxes on pickups are just a few investments that make older farmers more productive than they were a

generation ago," Horner said. That kind of change will continue, but no amount of automation can completely replace the 24/7/365 responsibility in all kinds of weather that is necessary on a livestock farm. Grit is still needed."

"Our customers will call us and say they are running out of feed, or forgot to get something, and we will go take it to them because we know the implications if we don't. It's not about clocking out at the end of the day, it's about making sure farmers have what they need so their animals can thrive and their farms don't suffer." – Mary Hesemann

Those workers are out there, even if they seem harder to find than a flying reindeer.

"We go through a lot of guys that don't work out to find one good one," Donica said.

The work is hard, but he's grateful for the gift of the last 40 years spent working hard for something he believes in.

"What I'll miss the most, when I'm not working here anymore, is the people and the relationships you build," he said.

In the end, it's about the present, not the presents. It's the everyday blessing of doing something you love with people you respect. When you find the right person, for the right job, with the right passion, it's as magical as gifts under the tree on Christmas morning. 🤠



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Facebook, Don't Fail Me Now

Stepping out and speaking up for what is right

By Erin Hull for Cattlemen's News



I knew the text was coming. I've been woken out of a sound sleep several times in the past few weeks thinking about it... what will I write about this month? My mind would race, go blank and back to sleep I would go.

You see, this time of year is very weird for me. I take a month hiatus from my real job (being a carpenter) to focus on my Christmas tree business. My family started selling Christmas trees in 1967, and we have not missed a year yet. It's a stressful time of year and one that I truly eat, sleep and breath nothing but evergreens. This means most of my daily duties get pushed to the wayside, and I focus on those lovely green trees. All during this tree season I have worried about one text, and that text came today. I glance down at my phone to see a text message from my editor that reads, "Hope life is good. I need your article ASAP." There it is in black and white. I need to write my article, but I've been struggling to find a topic due to those blasted Christmas trees.

I thought I had an idea when I got a picture text early this morning of my fence down and the cows eyeing their escape. Fixing fence in single digits while swearing to yourself isn't much fun to write about. All day I wandered through my little forest of Christmas trees brainstorming, only to come up blank each and every time.

Thankfully, when I got home, I signed

onto Facebook and was hit by a freight train. There was a post from an "animal sanctuary" touting the reasons they leave the net wrap and twine on their round bales. After watching their video for less than two minutes I decided I needed to read all the comments. *This is never a good idea.* Ever. My head is still spinning. While I wanted to laugh at most of the comments, I can't. Why? Because they are not funny. They proved a point. We have even more education to dole on than realized.

I know that I am a broken record. I know you are probably tired of me "preaching to the choir." This choir must get louder though, and *fast*. Let me give you the gist of the video and the comments (as I will not reference it because I do not want them to get any more traction than they already have, but feel free to message me if you would like to comment on the post... I'd love if we were able to flood the comments with *real* education and stand as a united front).

The video was the owner of a farm sanctuary touting that he is smarter than everyone else because he does not remove the net wrap from his round bales. He has horned cattle and this makes them waste less feed he claims. If this were not bad enough, the comments are what got my blood boiling. This "farm sanctuary" has such a solid following of animal rights activists and vegans that *every single*

comment was positive and thanking him for the education he is providing to them.

Ummmm... say what?

In my area, leaving twine or net wrap on a bale is a great way to kill your cattle, slowly. I would venture to guess that a slow death is probably painful, also. That probably would not set well with this crowd, yet here he is "educating the non-farming community" with information that is completely inaccurate, dangerous and downright wrong, and people are eating it up. When a rancher or farmer comments, they get no support. I know I need to stop reading the comments because it is just making my blood boil, but Holy Hannah are we in trouble if we *all* do not start speaking up.

We need our voice to be louder. We need to start speaking up when we never have before. We need to step out of our comfort zone and make waves. The days of being able to ranch and bury our heads in the mud are long gone. We now live in a day and age where the fools outnumber the educated (and by "educated" I don't mean book smart or book educated). We need to start running for school board. We need to start attending town board meetings. We need to start doling out the education we all have. We need to start explaining why the animal rights activists and farm sanctuaries are wrong. We need to start explaining to the general public *why* we do what we do. This is not your grand pappy's ranch environment anymore, and why must we *all* do it? To survive.

Please speak up. Please shout. For you... For me... For us all. 🤠



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NEWS RELEASE

SW MO Spring Forage Conference

The 36th annual Southwest Missouri Spring Forage Conference will be held Tuesday, February 25, 2020 at the Oasis Hotel and Convention Center, 2546 N. Glenstone Ave., in Springfield, Missouri. **Pre-register early, no day-of registration due to limited seating.**

This year's keynote speaker will be Dr. Temple Grandin. Dr. Grandin is a professor of animal science at Colorado State University, animal behavior consultant to the livestock industry and spokesperson for autism. She has been a pioneer in improving the handling and welfare of farm animals. Dr. Grandin is one of the world's leaders in the design of livestock handling facilities. She has designed livestock facilities throughout the United States and in Canada, Europe, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand and other countries. During the noon luncheon she will speak on improving cattle stockmanship.

The conference will also feature several breakout sessions. Topics include improving pasture with grazing management; establishment and management of native grasses; management of orchardgrass and other cool season grasses; incorporation of crabgrass into fescue pasture systems; forage nitrate management; bermudagrass pasture management; sunn hemp; PaddockTrac, managing spring through fall forage growth with cattle numbers; grazing system design considerations; and understanding your forage analysis report.

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, extension 3.

Conference check-in 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 \$45 per person if registered by February 14th, 2020. After February 14th, the cost is \$55 (if space is available). No walk-in registration allowed. Participants can find more information about the conference and register online at www.springforageconference.com. Contact the Laclede County SWCD office at 417-532-6305, extension 101 for additional questions. 🐮



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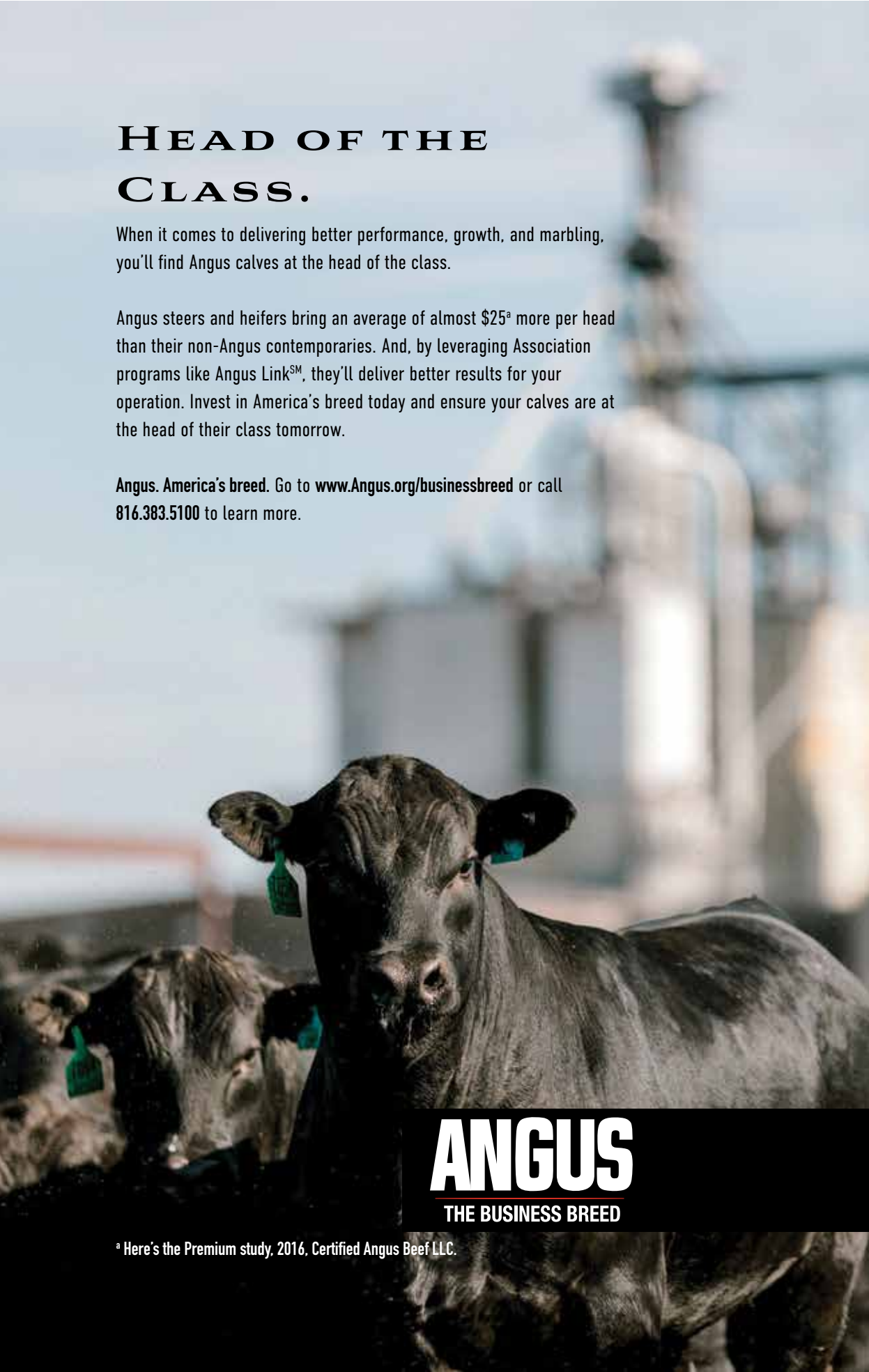
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^a Here's the Premium study, 2016, Certified Angus Beef LLC.

The Cow Size Debate: Are We Missing the Point?

Making decisions for your cowherd size

By Jordan Thomas for Cattlemen's News

Have you ever taken one of those personality tests? I don't buy into them, but I remember getting a chuckle out of the results of one I did. It said something along the lines of "Debater: You are willing to argue all night for a point you don't even believe in." I have to admit that is kind of spot-on. As long as we can walk away as friends, I love a good fight. So, in that spirit, today's topic is one that inspires a lot of debate in the cow-calf industry: cow size.

Cow Size Has Changed Over Time

From a historical standpoint, size of mature cows has swung back and forth from one extreme to the other several times. The late Dr. Harlan Richie did an excellent job assembling many historical pictures and even drawings on the topic; if you have not already seen that work, search for "Harlan Richie and mature cow size" online. Some of you may remember the "Baby Beef" trend that was just coming to an end in the 1950s-1960s. This was followed by a rapid swing toward large frame, heavy weight cattle in the 1970s-1980s, inspiring interest in large breeds from continental Europe (Chianina, etc). Suffice it to say, we are capable of changing cow size through selection and breeding decisions, and history would suggest it really doesn't take us very many generations to make big changes.

Are Cows Too Big?

So, let's jump right in to the hot button topic. Should we start reducing cow size through selection? Are today's cows too big? Those who argue

for smaller cows often argue that we should consider pounds of calf weaned per acre rather than pounds of calf weaned per cow. Let's say, for example, your acreage has a carrying capacity of 45,000 pounds, and you have a choice between 1,000-pound or 1,500-pound cows. The oversimplified math says you can run either 30 cows that each weigh 1,500 pounds or 45 cows that weigh 1,000 pounds each. Those that advocate for smaller cow size say it is a no-brainer, even if those 45 smaller cows wean lighter calves, you will still wean off more total calves.

Do you buy it? It's not a bad argument, however, I think it slightly misses the point. Now, I don't say this to disparage anyone who prefers smaller cows or operates under this mentality. I actually tend to agree with your ultimate conclusion, but I will get to that later. First, let's clear this up. Sure, it is not about pounds of calf weaned per cow, but it is also not about pounds of calf weaned per acre either.

A slightly different variation is to look at pounds of calf weaned per pound of exposed female or per standard animal unit. I would argue that is the wrong thing to look at too. Why? Well, those metrics are really production metrics not economic metrics. We are taking a unit of a product (weaning weights) and standardizing that to a single unit of production (either individual cows or acres of land). Pounds of calf weaned per cow exposed, pounds of calf weaned per acre,

pounds of calf weaned per pound of breeding female... those are all helpful metrics to evaluate animal or land performance, but none of those metrics tell you anything about profitability. No dollar values are involved!

There is no price assigned to the pounds of calf weaned, and there is no cost assigned to the cows or acreage. Doesn't that seem like important information? Aren't we supposed to be running a business?

What Should the Metric Be?

Without a price, weaning weights alone don't tell you much. We are interested in total value weaned. I don't care how many pounds of calf are sold if the price per pound those calves receive is terrible. Conversely, I also don't care how good the price per pound is if the total quantity of pounds weaned is terribly low. We need both pieces of information together, and we have to actually arrive at a total dollar value of product sold.

I also don't care about the number of cows, the pounds of mature cow exposed, or the number of acres used in production. I care about the cost of production. Cow numbers, cow weight, and acreage in production only indirectly hint at those costs.

Sure, smaller cows eat less than larger cows on average. But just looking at total pounds of mature cow exposed doesn't take into account any costs that are incurred on a per cow basis.

Likewise, does standardizing to acres of production really make sense? What if you can rent very poor, low carrying capacity ground at an extremely low cost? I know producers that have some no-rent leases because the land owners recognize the value in seeing the land maintained or even improved over time. Admittedly, there are still some other costs of those leases, and you can still run more total cows on any resource if they are smaller cows. But you get the point. Is standardizing weaning weights to acres of production really that helpful if land access isn't fixed or carrying capacity of the land is changing over time? Doesn't it really just come down to what those inputs actually cost?

If you want to get an actual economic measurement, you need economics units: a dollar amount for product sold and a dollar amount for costs of production. Subtract the direct costs from the product sold, and you have gross margin. That is where things get fun—or difficult, depending on your outlook. Can you do that for individu-



al animals? Look at how much margin each individual cow is generating in comparison to her direct costs of production. That is essentially the return on investment for each individual animal. Can you rank every cow in your herd on that basis? It's hard to get to the individual animal level for these kind of cost calculations, I realize. But I challenge you to try, using the weight of each cow to estimate her feed costs. That is really where mature cow size comes into play.

I hinted at this earlier. Mature cow size probably does need to be moderated across the industry on average. Here's why. The best data that I am familiar with indicates that, although larger cows do produce more total revenue, the increased total cost of production is also higher. Although 2011 is almost a decade ago now, one paper I am familiar with from Drs. Damona Doye and David Lalman looked at the economic effect of each additional 100 pounds of mature cow weight. At that time, each additional 100 pounds in cow size was associated with \$6-35 in added calf income depending on the market but resulted in an additional \$42 in cost of production due to increased feed and land required ("Moderate versus Big Cows: Do Big Cows Carry Their Weight on the Ranch?" in Proceedings of the Southern Agricultural Economics

Association). More recently, a 2018 paper by Courtney Bir and colleagues modeled net present value of cows as a function of their cow size. This was very complete, well thought-out modeling, and they reported higher value for 950 compared to 1350-pound cows ("Optimal Beef Cow Weights in the U.S. Southern Plains" in the Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics). On average, it looks like there are economic advantages to smaller mature cow size.

The research suggests smaller cow size is advantageous on average. But just remember, "on average" is a phrase that can get you in a lot of trouble. On average, men may be

physically stronger than women... but I know a few women I wouldn't dare say that to! Averages hide a lot of variation. There are large cows that are extremely profitable, and there are small cows that are losing propositions. I make the point about doing the math because simply culling all your larger cows would be a mistake. I guarantee there are some productive big cows in your herd you should not cull just because of their larger size, and there are some unprofitable small cows that need to go. 🤠

Jordan Thomas is the Assistant Professor - State Extension Specialist in Beef Reproduction at the University of Missouri.



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In 2019, over 20,000 students across Missouri were part of the Mo Beef Mo Kids Mo Fit (MoBKF) program—providing additional high-quality protein packed beef offerings at the lunch



COOKING:

1. Heat large nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot. Add Ground Beef, bell pepper and onion; cook 8 to 10 minutes, breaking beef up into 3/4-inch crumbles and stirring occasionally.

Cook's Tip: Cooking times are for fresh or thoroughly thawed Ground Beef. Ground Beef should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F. Color is not a reliable indicator of Ground Beef doneness.

2. Stir in vegetable juice, brown sugar and Worcestershire sauce; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, 7 to 9 minutes or until most of the liquid has evaporated and thickens slightly, stirring occasionally.

3. Evenly place beef mixture on bottom half of each bun; close sandwiches.

This recipe is an excellent source of Dietary Fiber, Protein, Iron, Potassium, Niacin, Vitamin B6, Vitamin B12, Zinc, and Selenium; and a good source of Choline. *Source: www.mobeefkids.com*



table. We are on a mission to celebrate beef and protein, in every season and life to ensure young people are considering this protein intake each day— saying no to meatless Mondays each week.

MoBKF engages cattle farmers, school and community leaders to work together in offering more beef, more often. 🤠

BEEF SWEET & SLOPPY JOES

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound Ground Beef (96% lean)
- 1 cup chopped yellow, green or red bell pepper
- 3/4 cup finely chopped onion
- 1 can or bottle (12 ounces) 100% vegetable juice
- 2 tablespoon lightly packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 4 whole wheat hamburger buns, split

In addition to doubling beef in the lunchroom, this program partnership offers educational resources to participating schools, including:

Beef in the Classroom, a reimbursement educational program for junior and senior high school instructors.

Pasture to Plate Series, a three-week beef elementary education series.

Agriculture Education through Ag Education on the Move™ (AEOTM), a 10-week interactive third grade agriculture education program.

Contact info@mobeefkids.com to learn more, or visit www.mobeefkids.com.

All educational components offer curriculum that meet state standards.

Mo Beef Mo Kids Mo Fit (MBMKF) program connects schools and their food service professionals to cattle farmers and ranchers to “beef” up school lunches.

Our goal is more beef, more often, while implementing food and nutrition education in the classroom. This powerful partnership highlights the important message and journey of food and nutrition, while adding important protein to a student’s diet. WIN-WIN!

For more information about the program or to participate, please contact **Brandelyn** at info@mobeefkids.com.



SCHOOL LUNCH MENU COMPARISON

The Mo Beef Mo Kids Mo Fit (MoBKF) program connects schools and their food service professionals to cattle farmers and ranchers to “beef” up school lunches. See how introducing our program in your school can improve school lunches for students, one meal at a time.



LUNCH MENU BEFORE MOBKF PROGRAM

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
ENTREES	Roast Beef Melt	Spaghetti and Meatballs with Italian Bread	Chicken Patty	Jumbo Cheese Ravioli with Italian Bread	Super Nachos
	Philly Cheesesteak Pizza	BBQ Chicken Pizza	Tony’s Pizza	Bacon Chicken Ranch Pizza	Tony’s Pizza
	Turkey Club Sub	Corn Dog	Cheeseburger	Ham and Cheese Sub	Chicken Patty on Bun
	Cheeseburger	Chicken Nuggets with Italian Bread	Spicy Chicken Sandwich	Popcorn Chicken with Italian Bread	Spicy Chicken Sandwich
ENTREE SALAD	Salad Bar with Cornbread	Salad Bar with Italian Bread	Salad Bar with Hot Roll	Salad Bar with Italian Bread	Salad Bar with Italian Bread
SPECIALTY BAR	BBQ Bar	Chicken Salad Sandwich	Bacon Turkey Avocado Club	Crispy Chicken Wrap	Chicken PO’ Boy
		Greek Wrap	Fried Chicken Salad Sandwich	Thai Chili Noodle Salad	Buffalo Chicken Wrap
	BBQ Bar Condiments	Turkey Chef Salad with Italian Bread	Greek Salad with Focaccia Bread	Roast Beef on Garlic Bread	Cottage Cheese with Fruit and Muffin



LUNCH MENU AFTER MOBKF PROGRAM

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
ENTREES	Smothered Burrito	BBQ Rib on Bun	Roast Beef Melt	Lasagna Rollup with Italian Bread	Philly Cheesesteak Pizza
		Meatball Sub			
	Crunchy Gordita	French Fries with Ketchup	Bacon Pickle Grilled Cheese	Hamburger Mac and Cheese with Italian Bread	BBQ Bacon Cheeseburger Nachos
ENTREE SALAD	Taco Salad	Cobb Salad	Mandarin Orange Chicken Salad	Strawberry Chicken Salad	Chicken Bacon Ranch Salad
	Cornbread	Blueberry Muffin		Italian Bread	Pineapple Muffin
SPECIALTY BAR	Burger Bar	BBQ Bar	Breakfast Bar	Pizza/Calzone Bar	Nacho/Taco Bar
	Baked Chips		Tater Tots with Ketchup		Spanish Rice

This menu is a sample menu provided by Opaa!, a food service contractor who partners with MoBKF program to beef up school lunches. Schools work with their food service directors to create menus and ways to incorporate additional beef into the menu. For beef menu inspirations in the school lunch program, visit www.mobeefkids.com.

MoBKF is supported through the beef checkoff and by more than 50,000 Missouri farmers and ranchers!

Tips to Prevent Calf Scours

Making important decisions for calf health

By Lisa Henderson for Cattlemen's News

Veterinarians say calf scours cause more financial losses for ranchers than any other herd health problem. Scouring calves rapidly lose body fluids and fatality is common, but even when calves survive, their performance is inhibited. Depending on the severity of the case and the cause of the scours, a calf may survive untreated for as little as one day or as long as two weeks.

While the problem is referred to as calf scours, veterinarians say it is not a single disease, but rather a clinical sign associated with several diseases characterized by diarrhea. Kansas State University Beef Extension Veterinarian A.J. Tarpoff says the risk and occurrence of calf scours can change year-to-year based on many different factors.

Causes

Ideally, the scours can be initiated by infectious agents such as viruses, bacteria, and even protozoan parasites, Tarpoff says. "Most of the pathogens of concern are shed at low levels through the feces by healthy members of the resident cowherd. Most of the disease and death loss related to scours occurs within the first month of age."

E. coli bacteria is often the culprit within the first five days of life, Tarpoff admits. Rota virus, Corona virus, and cryptosporidium (protozoa) are commonly identified in cases between one week and three weeks of age. Mixed infection with more than one pathogen is also common. Salmonella and Clostridial infections can also occur with minimal clinical signs before acute death.

"The most common clinical signs of calf scours are watery stool, lethargy, and dehydration," Tarpoff said. "Calves will also become lethargic with a decreased desire to nurse, depressed attitude and a reluctance to stand. A calf is approximately 70% water at birth, and the scouring calf loses body fluids and rapidly dehydrates."

Prevention

Veterinarians emphasize prevention is critical to combat calf scours. Tarpoff says producers should focus on four key areas: biosecurity, supporting proper immune function, environmental management and hygiene.

Biosecurity: "It is imperative to not inadvertently introduce disease into an operation," Tarpoff said. "If a new calf or cow from outside the herd is introduced during or around calving season (30 days before/30 days after), ensure that those individuals are quarantined and separated from the rest of the herd. This often happens when we graft a sale barn calf onto a cow that lost its calf or purchase a milk cow to nurse an orphan."

Sick animals (especially scouring calves) can shed enormous amounts of pathogens into the environment. Isolating these animals and eliminating any mingling of infirmed animals and newborns will greatly reduce the exposure risk to newborn calves.

Immune Function: "Calfhood immune protection all starts with the first critical meal known as colostrum," Tarpoff said. "Ensuring adequate intake and suckling behavior of the



freshly born calf is important. Intake within the first few hours of life will increase the efficiency of colostrum antibody transfer into the calf, but colostrum quality all stems back to care of the cow. Previous research has shown proper nutritional supplementation to maintain Body Condition Score (BCS) will help increase both colostrum quality and quantity in the dam. Vaccination status of the dam can also play a critical role in calf health. Boosting immune function will transfer a higher level of antibodies to those pathogens into the colostrum.

Environment: "The solution to pollution is dilution," Tarpoff says. "Reducing the environmental contamination of pathogens that newborn calves are exposed to is a great way to reduce the risk of scours. These pathogens build up in the environment where cattle are housed for extended periods of time."

If a single calving area is utilized on the operation, strict management may be necessary to mitigate risk. Cows and newborn calves should be turned out into a 'clean' pasture as soon as possible after birth. Ideally, the pasture of choice should be filled with cows with calves that are roughly the same age.

Tarpoff also recommends barn and chute areas for intervention during hard calving situations, warning these must be kept clean.

"These areas also become contaminated through calving season," Tarpoff said. "Removing and replacing soiled bedding can reduce the pathogen load. After assisting births, cleaning teat ends of the cow will reduce the exposure of environmental pathogens during the calf's first contaminated during calving season suckling opportunity."

Hygiene: "Many scour pathogens can cause illness in people," Tarpoff said. "This is known as zoonosis. Personal hygiene is critical to ensure ranchers don't succumb to the same diarrhea causing bugs as their calves. Washing hands, wearing gloves, and disinfecting equipment can all reduce the chance of sickness."

"Hygiene is also critically important to avoid accidental infection of newborn calves through handling and management procedures," he said. "Esophageal tube feeders, nursing bottles, gloves, boots, and coveralls can all carry dangerous pathogens from a sick calf to a newborn calf. Use separate tube feeders and equipment for sick calves, and be sure to wash them thoroughly between animals. Work flow is another important concept to consider. Handle sick or infirmed calves after any healthy calves or newborns. This will ensure there it not cross contamination from clothing." 🐮

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Southwest Missouri Cattlemen Honored for Production

By David Burton for Cattlemen's News

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. — The Southwest Missouri Beef Cattle Improvement Association honored two operations at their annual meeting in Springfield, Nov. 20.

Annually, since 1976, the association recognizes an outstanding seedstock and commercial producer each year. This year's recipients were Dale Kunkel, Neosho, as seedstock and 5C Ranch, El Dorado Springs, as commercial awardees.

Kunkel runs a purebred Red Angus herd. Since 2007, the farm has steadily been making genetic progress. Kunkel uses the Missouri Show-Me-Select program for heifers and the Missouri Steer Feedout to evaluate post-weaning growth and carcass merit. He also utilizes genomic (DNA) testing to develop more accurate expected progeny difference (EPD) values.

Established in 2012, 5C Ranch is owned by Dr. Rick Casey and his son Scott Casey. The original farm dates to 1984. They run 300 commercial, black and black baldy cows. Approximately three-fourths of the herd base was purchased through the Show-Me-Select beef heifer program. They utilize Top Dollar Angus and MFA Health Track to market calves. DNA genomic data helps them determine replacement heifer selection.

The Southwest Missouri beef Cattle Improvement Association works with University of Missouri Extension on such programs as the all-breed performance tested bull sale, Missouri Steer Feedout and the Show-Me-Select Heifer program.

For details on those programs, contact the University of Missouri Extension field specialist in livestock in your area. 🐮

Source: David Burton, Civic Communications Specialist

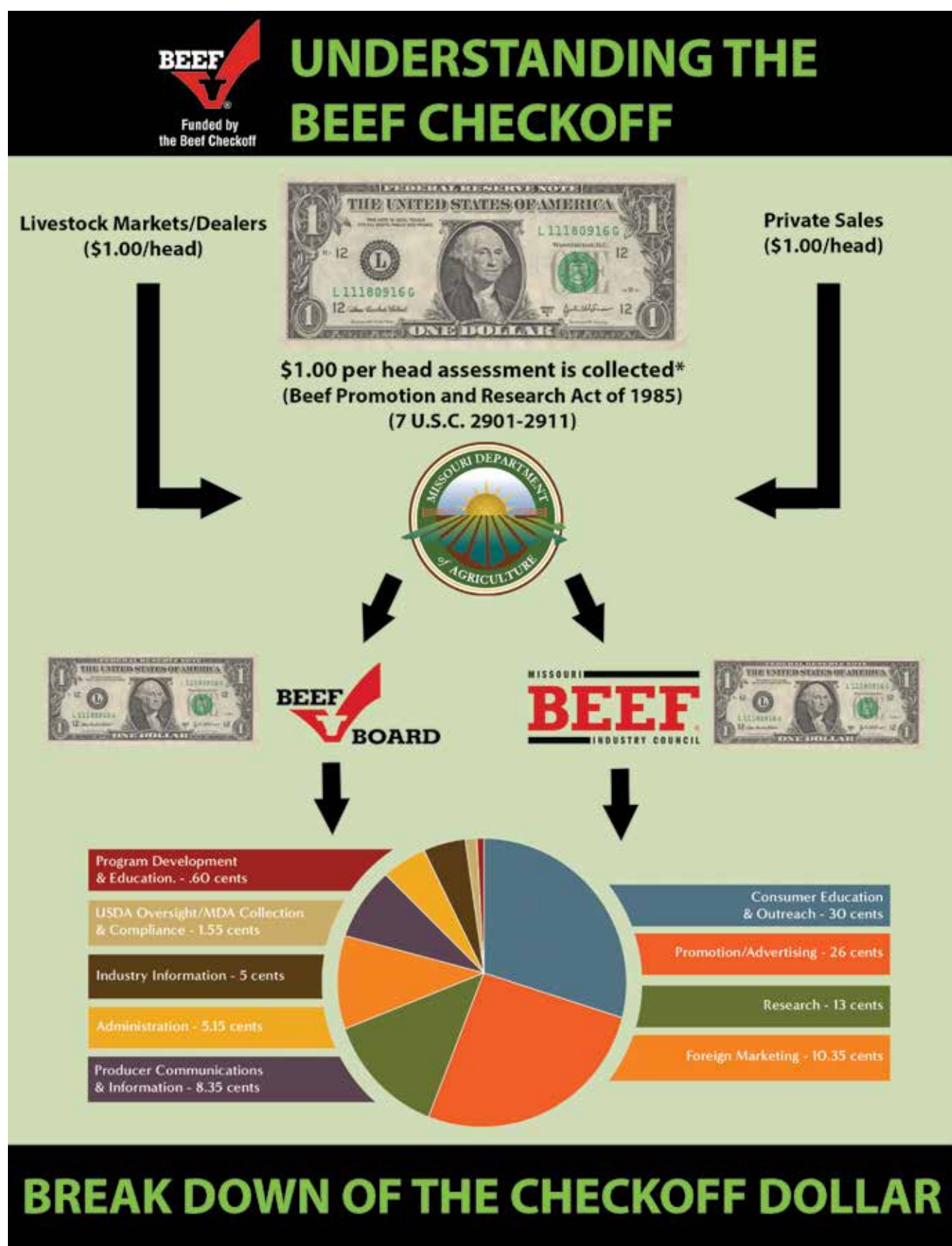
Applications Now Available for 2020 Agribusiness Academy

The Missouri Department of Agriculture is offering 30 high school students representing 4-H clubs and FFA chapters, as well as farm families, throughout Missouri the opportunity to explore careers in agriculture through the 2020 Missouri Agribusiness Academy (MAbA). MAbA is a competitive program for sophomores interested in pursuing agriculture-related college degrees and careers.

The students selected will have a year-long opportunity to learn about the unique opportunities for careers in the Kansas City area, volunteer at the Missouri State Fair and learn more about the agriculture industry in Jefferson City. The 2020 schedule will be finalized in the spring and include visits with industry and agribusiness leaders, as well as tours of their facilities.

The first leg of the 2020 MAbA will be held June 1-5, and marks the program's 33rd year. Students interested in participating must submit an application by Feb. 1, 2020.

For applications and guidelines, as well as more information on the Missouri Department of Agriculture and its programs, visit the Department online at Agriculture.Mo.Gov. 🐮





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NCBA Seeks Clarity and Consistency in Beef Origin Labeling Practices

NCBA Staff Directed to Work With USDA to Verify Beef Origin Labeling Claims

WASHINGTON (Dec. 3, 2019) — The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), the nation's oldest and largest national organization representing American cattle producers, today reaffirmed its policy supporting voluntary country-of-origin labeling (COOL). Because the association takes the concerns of its members and stakeholders seriously, its Executive Committee has unanimously approved efforts to work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety Inspection Service (USDA FSIS)

to address the Agency's long-standing policy on geographic origin statements.

Specifically, NCBA is seeking solutions to the labeling requirements and verification procedures in place for beef products labeled as "Product of the U.S.A.," "Made in the U.S.A.," or similar origin claims, which will resolve the concerns of beef producers, work at the speed of commerce, meet America's trade obligations and prevent confusion among consumers.

For several months, NCBA has been studying origin claims in use on some beef product labels. During the NCBA Summer Business Meeting in July, NCBA leaders formed a producer-led working group to examine the extent of these concerns and the federal regulations governing such practices. Although the working group has not determined whether such practices are occurring on a widespread basis, concerns remain that consumer expectations relative to beef product labels bearing origin claims may not

be consistent with FSIS's current policy.

"NCBA recognizes that product labels are a defining feature of the shopping experience for consumers. While the majority of beef products currently advertised, marketed, or labeled as 'Product of the U.S.A.' are likely compliant with current FSIS regulations, the potential for consumer confusion exists," said NCBA CEO Colin Woodall. "The core mission of FSIS is to ensure all meat and poultry products are safe, wholesome, not adulterated, and properly marked, labeled, and packaged. While FSIS has policy regarding origin labels, ultimately origin claims are marketing claims and should be regulated as such."

NCBA said it and its state affiliates are committed to working together with USDA to bring forward a meaningful solution to ensure that any voluntary country-of-origin claims are verified by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) prior to the approval of labels by USDA-FSIS. NCBA believes that beef labels with voluntary country-of-origin labeling marketing claims should be verified through existing USDA framework that is market-based and respects international trade commitments. It is critically important that any changes not trigger retaliatory tariffs from Mexico or Canada that have already been approved by the WTO.

NCBA believes that other recent efforts to address these concerns by Congress or other industry groups — while well-intentioned — miss the mark and don't go far enough to address the situation.

"We look forward to working with USDA and other stakeholders — something NCBA is uniquely positioned to do — to ensure that accurate and voluntary origin labels are in place to benefit beef producers and consumers," Woodall said.

Source:
<https://www.ncba.org/newsreleases>



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Terry Hinton, MS - "I like my Calf Catcher very well. It saves lives and doctor bills. Planning to purchase a second calf catcher yet this year."

John Zimmerman, KS - "I really like my Calf Catcher. It paid for itself the first time out when we needed to catch a calf with pneumonia. I recommend it to anyone with a cow-calf operation."

MARKET WATCH

Market Recap: Value-Added Feeder Cattle Auction January 2, 2020 | Receipts 8416

No recent Value-Added Sale for a price comparison. The last Value-Added Sale was a month ago. Demand good, supply heavy. Good weather for the first sale of the new year and trade was active on all weights of cattle. Calves are weaned forty five days or more, on a vaccination program, and heifers are guaranteed open. Supply included: 100% Feeder Cattle (60% Steers, 40% Heifers). Feeder cattle supply over 600 lbs was 53%.

Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1 350-400 lbs 192.00-210.00; 400-500 lbs 167.00-192.00; 500-600 lbs 151.00-174.50; 600-700 lbs 142.00-165.00; 700-800 lbs 140.00-160.00; 800-900 lbs 140.00-150.50; pkg 923 lbs 138.00. **Medium and Large 1-2** pkg 353 lbs 170.00; 450-500 lbs 153.00-167.00; 500-600 lbs 142.00-159.00; 600-700 lbs 138.00-147.00; 700-800 lbs 138.00-145.00; 800-900 lbs 135.00-141.00.

Feeder Heifers: Medium and Large 1 300-400 lbs 148.00-155.00; 400-500 lbs 141.00-155.00; 500-600 lbs 136.00-154.00; 600-700 lbs 134.00-142.00; 700-800 lbs 134.00-144.00; 800-850 lbs 132.50-133.75. **Medium and Large 1-2** 350-400 lbs 135.00-143.00; 400-500 lbs 134.00-149.00; 500-600 lbs 132.00-141.00; 600-700 lbs 127.00-137.75; 700-800 lbs 133.00-136.00.

Source: USDA-MO Dept of Ag Market News Service. Rick Huffman, Market Reporter, (573) 751-5618. 24 Hour Market Report 1-573-522-9244.

MARKET WATCH

Market Recap: Feeder Cattle Auction January 6, 2020 | Receipts 13,074

Compared to the last sale of 2019 two weeks ago, steer calves under 550 lbs 3.00 to 5.00 higher, heifer calves under 550 lbs 3.00 to 7.00 higher, steer and heifer calves over 550 lbs and yearlings steady. Demand good, supply heavy. Supply included: 100% Feeder Cattle (57% Steers, 40% Heifers, 3% Bulls). Feeder cattle supply over 600 lbs was 53%.

Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1 300-400 lbs 190.00-215.00; 400-500 lbs 167.00-200.00; 500-600 lbs 151.00-174.00; 600-700 lbs 140.00-156.25; 700-800 lbs 138.50-152.75; 800-900 lbs 140.00-151.00; 900-1000 lbs 130.00-142.50. **Medium and Large 1-2** 300-400 lbs 165.00-185.00; 400-500 lbs 157.00-180.00; 500-600 lbs 143.00-167.00; 600-700 lbs 136.00-150.00; 700-800 lbs 134.00-143.00; 800-900 lbs 137.00-140.50.

Feeder Heifers: Medium and Large 1 300-400 lbs 143.00-162.00; 400-500 lbs 140.00-163.00; 500-600 lbs 132.00-161.00; 600-700 lbs 128.00-141.00; 700-800 lbs 127.00-139.50; 800-850 lbs 130.50-134.50; 900-1000 lbs 105.00-123.00. **Medium and Large 1-2** 300-400 lbs 132.00-147.00; 400-500 lbs 130.00-146.00; 500-600 lbs 124.00-140.00; 600-700 lbs 120.00-143.00; 700-800 lbs 117.00-128.00; 800-850 lbs 100.00-126.00.

Source: USDA-MO Dept of Ag Market News Service. Rick Huffman, Market Reporter, (573) 751-5618. 24 Hour Market Report 1-573-522-9244.

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