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News

JUNE 2021



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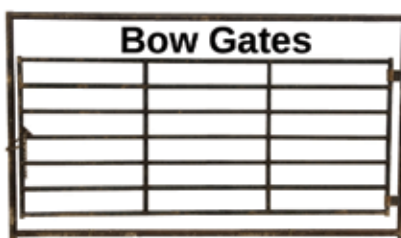
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ON THE BLOCK

with Jackie Moore

We've been hearing a lot of talk around the country about severe dry conditions in the West and even some parts of the corn belt up North, but we certainly have had ample amounts of rain here. I've never seen the grass grow any better than it is now. Warm weather is finally here and Spring has sprung! It looks like we are going to have plenty of feed, and that's a good thing. The way these corn prices are and all these other commodity feeds we are trying to buy to scrape through doesn't make it any easier in these difficult markets that do not seem to materialize and get any better.

As we look at the box beef prices up there in the \$3.20 range, and we are only getting \$1.19 for these fat cattle, it's the same old story as I talk about every month. Those packers have got to be making \$800-1,000 a head and I don't know how we are going to force them to give any more. There is simply too much monopoly within the industry, not enough packers and not enough people who want to work so consequently it keeps a lot of pressure on the fat cattle end of this market. The feeder cattle and the calf market, believe it or not, stays pretty good for the way the fat trade is when it's going to cost \$1.30 to feed one. There is a lot of optimism still out there. I'm surprised there is enough money left for people to buy them, but apparently there is and the market remains pretty good.

The slaughter cow and bull market may be coming under a little pressure because there are a lot of cows moving in the west. If you look at the area from the Kansas-Colorado line clear to the Pacific ocean, it's extremely dry. This means those ranchers are having to get rid of their cows, and it just continues to be a drought in those areas. So as the drought worsens, the slaughter cow market might get worse. If you have some you want to get rid of, you might consider selling them sooner than later.

We have the Value-Added Sale coming up on June 24 which is always good. There are always a lot of people who want to buy a weaned calf that time of year because they will get fat out there sometime past December. If you look at those futures, they are in the upper 20's to the low 30's which makes some optimism in the market. I feel pretty confident that will be a good sale. We have a cow sale on Wednesday, June 2nd, with a complete herd sale of 300 fall calving young cows that will be as good as you can buy so keep that in mind too.

We must continue navigating these waters the best that we can, and hope eventually these cattle markets start to trend upwards like all of the other commodity markets are!

Good luck and God Bless,

Jackie



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OUR MISSION

Cattlemen's News, published by Joplin Regional Stockyards, was established in 1998. With 12,000 customers and 450,000 plus cattle sold per year, this publication is an excellent advertising avenue for reaching customers from across the region. The publication puts today's producers in touch with the tools and information needed to be more efficient and profitable for tomorrow. Circulation 12,000.

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DATA DRIVEN DECISIONS

Grazing Tech

By Justin Sexten for Cattlemen's News

With summer in full swing the chores turn to checking cattle, fences, water and grass. Optimistically as you read this your pastures are lush and rain is plentiful. Optimal pasture conditions tend to reduce the need for fence checking. Abundant forage reduces the primary reason most cattle have to wander.

Historically the technology used to manage and monitor pastures was a keen eye on the pasture to see that adequate grass was available, coupled with cattle monitoring to know when it is time to move. In my case, there have been a number of instances where my evaluation of supply and demand was at least a day off and the cattle moved themselves.

This month we highlight a couple of articles that evaluate pasture tech to understand grazing behavior and optimal forage use. In her 2017 agriculture article Jaime Manning and her co-workers at The University of Sydney reported how cattle behavior changes relative to forage availability.

Forage availability was measured before turning cattle out into a paddock and common cattle behaviors: grazing, walking, standing, resting, and ruminating, were tracked during the 15 day grazing period. This longer grazing period in a fixed pasture is similar to a continuous pasture management approach where cattle graze existing and regrowth forage.

As one might expect, forage availability declined. Across the paddock the average forage on offer dropped from 1,962 to 446 lbs per acre. While forage was not limiting on average, the distribution of grazing pressure was not uniform. Longer grazing periods allow cattle selective grazing near water, shade and other resting areas resulting in over-grazed areas.

The variable forage cover contributed to the observed behavior changes. Cattle increased grazing time from 31% to 69% of the day. In the middle of the experiment cow collar data showed the distance covered while grazing and walking each day also increased, from about 2.5 miles to 3.1 miles. The work associated with foraging is clearly linked to the amount of forage offered

This experiment was too short to measure performance differences but increased walking, reduced forage availability and greater grazing activity are not likely to increase gain. This data supports the managed grazing systems model

where small paddocks and short grazing periods provide more uniform grazing pressure and limit the need for cattle to change behavior to support pasture intake.

Small paddocks or pasture sizes are relative to demand, matching forage supply and demand to a 3 to 5 day grazing period is a compromise fence, labor and grazing efficiency. The demand side of the equation is reasonably simple if you have accurate weights. The technology to estimate forage supply is more of a variable.

Adrien Michez and coworkers' recent article in Remote Sensing highlighted inexpensive technology to monitor pasture growth and supply. This Belgium-based research group used commonly available drones to monitor pasture growth.

Drones offer the opportunity to sample large pasture areas quickly under a variety of weather conditions without damaging forage. The drones were outfitted with cameras and sensors to collect data for evaluation by prediction models. While the final package was far from an off-the-shelf product, the test drones were able to generate results comparable to more common research methods.

The experimental drones were more accurate at predicting forage availability than forage quality. These results are consistent with producer expectations as most suggest they run out of quantity before quality becomes limiting.

The technology to assess and monitor forage will continue to advance. The idea of precision grazing seems extreme to most. The number of pasture acres for rent, lease or purchase continues to decline, suggesting the need for improved pasture use will only increase. Acres that are available today are often cost prohibitive to the average beef enterprise.

Simple solutions are available to enhance productivity for most continuously grazed pasture acres. Current temporary fencing options offer the opportunity to nearly double pasture productively using simple pasture divisions. While this technology may not be as exciting as drones, sensors and GPS collars, the off-the-shelf options available today offer increased carrying capacity without additional land investments. 🐄

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

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TRENDING NOW

Technology Tools for Expansion

From the University of Missouri Extension

What comes to mind when you hear the word technology? I imagine you think of something new or different that you've never tried before. It could be an idea or a product. In most cases we think of technology in a positive way.

Unfortunately, the acceptance rate for technology is not always embraced. In the animal agriculture world, poultry and swine producers are credited with quicker acceptance of innovative technology. As a rule, beef cow acceptance of technology is slower.

What are examples of beef-related technology that may help improve production on a cow-calf or stocker enterprise? One of the first items that needs attention is performance records. Many cattle operations should be doing more individual weighing of calves especially at weaning. When you think of cattle performance you automatically think of what do they weigh or how much did they gain? In order to have that data you'll need a scale to help monitor their gain. Along with a good scale, investing in a computer program that helps with math calculations and overall farm records is a must.

You might consider a better method of individual animal identification. Ear tags are now electronic and you might invest in those. If you are a cow-calf operation you may choose to adopt freeze branding on the cows.

The scale and working chute industry have done a great job in updating their equipment, so check around for some of the new items that makes cattle working more pleasurable. As operations expand, having good working facilities makes data collection easier and less stressful. Some cattlemen even admit they are getting a little older and slower, so technology is very much appreciated.

An excellent tool for forage production that involves technology is the Management intensive Grazing programs (MiG). This primarily helps produce and use the forage more efficiently. Attendance at a three-day grazing school is required if you take advantage of cost share dollars that might be available.




During the school you'll learn about forage varieties, power fencing, pasture fertility, animal water needs, weed and brush management and how to extend the grazing season. Technology, since the 70's and 80's has been working on how to cope with endophyte-infected, Kentucky 31 fescue. Technology brought us novel fescue varieties, which can provide improved animal performance both from a gain per day basis as well as a reproduction standpoint. Converting from Ky-31 to a novel is a slow process but will allow you to get more performance from the novels. I stress that novel fescue will benefit the next generation who will be grazing or haying the land. It is a long-term investment, that should be around for years.

If an operation will be running a seedstock or purebred herd, take advantage of crossbreeding, heat synchronization and artificial insemination to speed up herd improvement. Use genomic data to improve the progress via breeding stock selection. Keep in mind that saving and developing your own replacement females may be slower than seeking out heifers to buy. The Show-Me-Select Heifer development program will help in that regard. Many cattlemen still do not take advantage of the almost immediate way to stimulate genetic improvement from a cow-calf herd. Here's a sample of other practices, which may not always be the highest tech practice, but they can generate more income to help in herd expansion.

- Castrate bull calves no later than two to three months of age.
- Dehorn by the above time if homozygous polled bulls are not used.
- Use growth promotant-implants on steers and heifers that will not be kept for replacements.

- Use an ionophore in your stocker supplement.
- Use internal and external pest control measures based on veterinarian recommendations.
- Work with your market and a veterinarian to use appropriate protocols for preconditioning.
- Become Beef Quality Assurance certified.

Every day, farmers are faced with new technology; they must decide whether to adopt or take a "wait and see" attitude. It's your call because not every situation may be for you. Keep in mind the real early adopters may be the ones who benefit the most. 

Eldon Cole is the livestock field specialist for the University of Missouri Extension.

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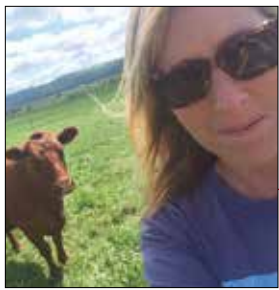
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The Grass Is Not Always Greener

By Erin Hull for Cattleman's News

My father is an amazing mechanic. If anything breaks, he can fix it. If we need a new implement, he can make it. He has fabricated many things for our farm over the years. If there's new technology out there (picture a double roll bar hay rake from 40 years ago), he refuses to pay the price tag and simply fabricates something very similar. Recently, my mother wanted a mower to mow along the fence line. She saw one that was spring loaded and would swing out and around the fence posts. A few weeks later he had fabricated a very similar design that worked in the exact same fashion as the one my mother was requesting. He used "a little of this and a little of that" to bring it all to fruition. We farm with "pre-computer" tractors for a very specific reason... if they break, he can fix them. We have a fleet of green tractors that are all 30 plus years old and they all run perfectly.

A few years ago I was mowing hay in a field that is directly across the road from our neighboring dairy farm. In perfect conditions with no breaks downs, I can get that particular field mowed in approximately twelve hours. Twelve hours of going around and around and around. Side note: twelve hours is approximately one audio book. I generally relate how long something takes by how much of a book I can listen to. So this particular field is "one book long". After that field is mowed, it takes several more hours to rake and several

more hours to bale. It is not that the field is exceptionally large; it is that our equipment is not exceptionally wide. Our disbine mows a 10.5 foot swath. So even in a field that is only 45 acres, it takes some time to get the job done. I consider this field "a two or three book field."

While I was mowing this field, the neighbor pulled into the field directly across the road from me. They mowed their field of similar acreage in approximately forty-five minutes. They left that field and moved on to the next field. Forty-five more minutes and they had yet another field done. They continued this pattern until all of their first cutting hay was cut and lying in pretty swaths. They were mowing at sixteen miles per hour with a batwing mower that covered three times the width I could cover (not to mention, 3 times the speed also). I felt a pang of jealousy hit me. They just mowed all of their acreage before I opened my packed lunch.

Later in the day as I was tiring of said field and STILL going around and around in circles, the neighbors pulled into their fields once again. They led with a merger, dumping three windrows into one, returning to combining three more windrows on top of it... six windrows quickly became one. Before they were around the field once, a chopper was eating all the merged windrows and filling dump truck after dump truck, not slowing for even a second. Now I was incredibly jealous. I would not have this field baled for another 3 days, and before I made even so much as a single bale, I'd have several more hours invested.

When the day was done, I had mowed one field. In that same amount of time the neighbors had not only mowed all of their first cutting hay, they had also chopped it and had it packed tightly in their bunk silos. I truly felt defeated. They had new equipment. They had technology. They had it all. As I got off the tractor that night my father asked me how it went (meaning more specifically if I had hit any woodchuck holes or broken down at all). I sighed and told him it did not go very well at all. In the time it took me to mow that one measly field, neighbor John and his vast crew had ALL of their first cutting done. My father softly chuckled the way he does. He pointed to our 30 plus year old fleet of tractors, our double roll bar rakes, our old green kicker baler and our new (to us) disbine and round baler. He said "You see all that equipment... every piece of that equipment is paid for. In full." He then pointed down our long driveway to the neighbors and said "You see all that equipment... do you have any idea what the price tag on all that fancy and shiny equipment is? Do you know how many people they have running that equipment?" It then sunk in. Technology is amazing, but not if you cannot justify it. Our neighbors can justify new equipment that comes at a very steep cost. We cannot.

Ever since that day, I have viewed "bigger and better" equipment in a different light. Sometimes getting the job done efficiently is not worth the price tag. And while I absolutely love technology in my day to day life, when it comes to "making hay when the sun shines," I guess old green equipment with zero technology will do just fine, except I do draw the line at no air conditioning. And if my father cannot fix that, a call WILL be made. 🐄

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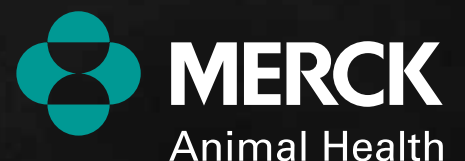
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TRENDING NOW

Dealing with Digital Technology

Technologies that bring value to businesses and individuals

By B. Lynn Gordon for Cattleman's News

When my dad was a young man raising cattle, he trudged through the snow all hours of the night to check on the cows about to calve. Today, my sister sits at her kitchen table sipping on her morning coffee, watching a television screen projecting a transmission from a video camera placed in the calving barn. With a few additional remote tools, she has the ability to zoom in the camera to get an even better view of different cows in the large calving area, only venturing out in the cold and snow if the need arises.

Has technology changed? You bet it has. Is it going to slow down? The odds are that will not happen.

This winter, I was intrigued by the number of Facebook posts from my circle of cattle friends seeking information on the best video camera systems to place in calving barns. Digital technology has found its way into agriculture and the cattle business as it has most other businesses. The internet, mobile technologies and devices, data analytics, and apps, are changing agriculture and food production systems.

The definition of “technology” is, “the application of scientific knowledge in a particular area.” In the beef industry, technology includes advances such as artificial insemination, embryo transfer, the calculation of EPDs, and genetic markers, to name a few. “Digital technology” is an umbrella term for computer-based products and solutions. Beef industry examples of digital technology are online or internet sales, utilization of websites to promote your business or inform others, and smartphones with apps that can calculate costs of gain or store your calving records plus EID tags, which allow for tracking and disease control through the food supply chain.

These new technologies bring tremendous value for businesses and individuals in agriculture, but technology does not come without a cost. For example, in the beef industry, the average price of in vitro fertilizations (IVF) embryo transfer to gather multiple eggs from a superior animal is about \$350 per embryo. However, this results in more calves born in a short time span from the superior genetics.

Limitations of adopting technology

Census data indicates the average age of an American farmer is 57. Many of these farmers had little to no exposure to computers or other digital technology platforms when they entered the industry. Yet in their lines of business, a computer is nearly essential for them to track financial and production records. The complexity of farming and raising beef cattle means daily computer use with more and more tasks shifting to smartphone applications.

New knowledge, tools, and abilities are needed to use advanced and ever-changing technologies. It takes time to learn this new skill set in a profession where extra time is a rare commodity. Consistent training or upskilling is needed, which garners even more time. The finishing line for learning about new technologies and becoming proficient in them is constantly moving.

The challenge of continuous learning

Across the agricultural industry, people must challenge themselves to continuous learning. Those in decision-making po-



sitions need strong leadership skills to inspire and empower others to evaluate and adopt new technology. All individuals need to be open to gaining the knowledge and skills to achieve in the digital age.

Tony Robbins, an entrepreneur, best-selling author, and one of the nation's leading voices on life and business for more than 40 years, shared his thoughts on how one can prepare for the future and changes we must embrace. “To be prepared for the future, invest the time and effort now into anticipating changes in your business, your industry, and the wider culture,” Robbins says.

He shares these points with his readers and audience:

- **Don't write off your competition.** You can't prepare for the future if you don't know what is coming.
- **Watch for trends.** Technology changes don't just come out of nowhere – and they are inevitable.
- **Embrace computerization.** Strive to adopt technologies that allow you to find new efficiencies – because your competitors probably already have.
- **Foster creativity.** Learning how to think creatively will help you establish a culture of strategic innovation. Creativity can aid in problem-solving, set your business apart and kick-start you ahead of the competition.
- **Be agile and open to collaboration.** The ability to quickly respond to change will allow you to be flexible and open to change. Collaboration opens the door to facilitate long-term success.

Robbins emphasizes skills such as communication and leadership are essential but tangible skills will also help you prepare for the future. These skills include:

- **Digital marketing.** Drastic change arrived with Google and social media. Effective business owners today must take advantage of marketing opportunities through social media, email, and search engine optimizations.
- **Cutting-edge software.** The basic software programs of Microsoft Word and Excel are just the foundation of the skill set to understand. Expand your horizons to learn new software programs applicable to your business goals.
- **Data analysis.** As the saying goes, “We can't manage what we can't measure.” With business comes data and numbers. Learn as much as you can about the data needed to measure your inputs, outcomes, profits, break-evens. 🦅

B. Lynn Gordon, Ph.D., LEADER Consulting, LLC, Sioux Falls, SD is an agricultural freelance writer and leadership consultant with an extensive background in the livestock



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MANAGEMENT MATTERS

Sweet Corn and Steer Calves: Part II

Evaluating the genetics of your cowherd

By Jordan Thomas for Cattlemen's News

In my last article in Cattlemen's News, I compared the calving date of a calf to the planting date of sweet corn. The argument was that calves born late in the calving season are a lot like sweet corn that is planted late and harvested before it is ready. Having a long calving season is a lot like having corn patches planted with staggered planting dates, then going in and harvesting all of the patches at once. Those late-planted corn patches—the calves that were born later in the calving season—are going to be pretty disappointing at harvest. At the risk of beating a dead horse, let's take that analogy a step farther and talk about genetics.

There are all sorts of exceptional sweet corn varieties out there. When it comes to the sweetness of the corn, we know there are sugary (su), sugar-enhanced (se), and supersweet/shrunken (sh2) genetics we can work with. There are short-eared and long-eared varieties. There are yellow kernel, white kernel, and bicolor varieties. We can pick varieties that have a short number of days-to-maturity, or a long number of days-to-maturity. And there are all sorts of other traits to keep in mind, like husk coverage, susceptibility to pest damage, and whether it just has that intangible "corn flavor." Suffice it say, genetics matter!

We can screw a lot up with planting dates and harvest dates, sure. But at the end of the day, if we plant a sweet corn variety with marginal genetics, we will harvest—at best—a marginal crop. The genetics we use in our operations set an upper bound for the quality of what we can produce. But our management and the environment limits what kind of crop we actually achieve with those genetics. I imagine it is obvious how this line of thinking applies to cattle as well. What kind of calf crop have you been harvesting?

To capture the full value of the cattle genetics we use, we really need to have the management system in place that allows us to capitalize on those genetics. I push the idea that we should identify management strategies before we look for products

and services to increase revenue. The management opportunities allow us to generate returns with little additional investment—and, frankly, even with reduced levels of investment in many cases. Products and services might generate returns, but they will require some cost to get there. Costs can be difficult to cash-flow.

Are the genetics of your cow herd really the limiting factor for the profitability of your cow-calf operation? A recommendation I sometimes hear is to "buy the best bull that you can afford." It sounds nice, I suppose. But "best" and "afford" are very vague terms from a business perspective. To be more precise, we need to invest in genetics that generate an acceptable return-on-investment potential for the level of investment that we can cash-flow. I see a lot of profitable management opportunities and infrastructure opportunities with great return-on-investment potential that commercial producers overlook. To generate a return from investing in your herd's genetics, you need to have management in place to capitalize on those genetics. The converse is just as true: to capitalize on good management, the cattle's genetics have to be able to support the desired level of performance under that management.

Human beings have a nasty habit of intentionally separating ourselves into tribes or groups that are focused on one thing. We want to focus on one aspect of production as though it is the secret to success. I hear things like "It all comes down to genetics." On the opposite end of the spectrum, I hear things like "It all comes down to the grazing management." These days, it's becoming more common to hear things like "It all comes down to soil health." The fact of the matter is that it all comes down to all of it. This business is not about addition and subtraction; it's about multiplication. If you multiply anything by zero, you get zero.

If you have not already, I would invite you to follow my "Mizzou Repro" YouTube channel (youtube.com/mizzourepro) or

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Facebook page (facebook.com/mizzourepro). On the topic of genetic selection opportunities for beef cattle, there are three videos that I would encourage you to give a watch: Using EPDs for Selection, Understanding the Accuracy Value of an EPD, and Economic Selection Indexes. I would encourage you to watch each of them in that order, and give some special consideration

to the thought process behind using Economic Selection Indexes that make sense based on how you manage and market cattle. We do not have to choose between us-

ing these kinds of genetic technologies and having solid, profitable management systems. In the coming years, it is going to take both.

Particularly when selecting sires, the genetic merit of animals is not something we can responsibly ignore—just like we wouldn't ignore what kind of sweet corn we're planting. We also can't expect to make much with good genetics that are mismanaged. Corn and calves both have ears, sure, but there are more similarities than that. It takes genetics and management, or we won't have much success with either crop. 🌽

Jordan Thomas, a Ph.D., is the state cow-calf Extension specialist with the University of Missouri. Contact him at 573-882-1804 or thomasjor@missouri.edu.

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TRENDING NOW

Incorporating Technology into Your Farming Operation

By Jessica Allan for Cattleman's News

We may be in the heart of cow/calf country, but that doesn't mean that is the only agricultural industry in this area. Southwest Missouri and its surrounding areas also has a robust field crop industry. These are not separate industries, either. The cattle market and the crop market are dependent on each other for supply and demand and are integral parts of the other.

In the past few decades, the crop industry has seen technology usage soar and become more sophisticated with each new generation of equipment. We checked in with Jared Osborne, general manager of Top Notch Farms of Carthage, MO, and Reed Kirby, family farmer in Liberal, MO, to see how technology has shaped their way of farming today.

Top Notch Farms is a three generation family farm that works approximately several thousand acres in Southwest Missouri, growing corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa hay, as well as running a 400 head cow/calf operation. Kirby Farms is a fifth generation family operation in Liberal, MO where they utilize many of the same technologies. Efficiency is key to success, regardless of size, and today's technologies help all farms to achieve it.

Osborne states that their most used technology is their precision agriculture technology. Kirby agreed stating that GPS and auto steering equipment (tractors, fertilizer applications, balers,

etc.) allow them to be precise with every pass through a field. Other technologies include variable rate seeding and fertilizing, drones, and computer programs to help sort and create information to run the precision equipment. Climate Fieldview is one such program, available on both phone and tablet, that Kirby said allows them to not only track their planting, spraying and harvest data but also to create field prescriptions. Other apps include yield and moisture monitors built into the harvest equipment, irrigation apps that provide 24/7 monitoring, and real time market apps that allow for on the spot decisions in marketing cattle and grain. Osborne said that these technologies allow them to know exactly what is going on in their fields. Without correct information, he said, you are walking blind and may not be able to make the correct decision for that particular field or animal.

Kirby's favorite implemented technologies are the GPS and irrigation apps. GPS allows for perfect planting paths with less effort and being able to monitor irrigators from his phone 24/7 saves him from going to the middle of the field to stop, start, and/or alter water flow, or just check on the irrigator status. Osborne agreed, stating that an auto track tractor allows the driver to concentrate on their job, not driving, allowing for straighter rows. This, he said, translates to operators that are less tired at the end of the day, with more efficient, less wasteful harvesting.

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While both operations are always looking for new technology, and trying to stay up to date, Osborne does warn that sometimes the benefit might not outweigh the cost of having the latest and greatest. For instance, he is considering an exact emerge planting system, which would allow the planter to be extremely precise on the spacing of each plant, thereby increasing the speed of planting. The cost doesn't seem to warrant the gains at this time though. If you are constantly changing to implement new technology, your efficiency suffers, which in turn affects your bottom line, said Osborne. Find the technology that fits you and your operation, he said, not the other way around. If you are discerning, said Osborne, new technology can lower your bottom line. For Kirby, that meant implementing field prescriptions, which allow him to put the exact needed rate of fertilizer and seed on various parts of the same field, even when parts of that field are irrigated and others are not.

It all boils down to efficiency. Kirby stated that the use of precision farming allows them to make better use of their time and inputs as they implement new technology in their operation. For Top Notch, Osborne said that all the data that they now have access to through their use of technology allows them to make better production decisions based on that data. All of this leads to better efficiency in the operations and a better bottom line.

When asked what changes they see in future agricultural technology, Osborne said he could see more automated systems, but a lot remains to be proven in that area. Kirby said he sees current technology getting more precise and efficient, and becoming even more useful to farm operators. But, the technology that has both excited is drones. Currently, per Osborne, the current laws do not allow drones to have a payload greater than 50 pounds, which is not much in the agricultural world. Should the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) start allowing larger drones to be flown in U.S. airspace, he sees drones as a tool to start conducting aerial spraying operations. That will require a change in laws, however, before research can be correctly conducted, but if the FAA grants those waivers, he says a whole new way of spraying could be in our future.

Regardless of how you stand on technology and how it affects the agricultural industry, it is exciting to see how far we've

come in the last few decades and where we are headed next! 🇺🇸

Jessica Allan is a commercial and agricultural relationship manager and lender with Guaranty Bank in Carthage and Neosho, MO. She and her husband live in Jasper County and maintain a cattle herd with her parents in Newton County.



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MANAGEMENT MATTERS

Four Ways to Increase Beef Cattle Profits Without Increasing Costs

By Eric Bailey for Cattlemen's News

The cow-calf business model is an asset-rich and cash-poor business. Lack of cash flow from cow-calf production is a big factor in keeping younger generations from coming back to the farm. It takes a lot of assets to get the business off the ground and the business has to be subsidized by off-farm income in the early years. Paying for land and cows is unrealistic with today's prices. What if there was a different way of looking at the business? To borrow a phrase from the influen-

tial Ranching for Profit, "What if we spent more time working on the business than in the business?" Over the next few issues, I am going to lay out ideas to increase the profit potential of cow-calf production without increasing costs.

Cow depreciation is the silent killer of cow-calf business models. In a nutshell, depreciation is the loss in value of a cow between purchase and sale. For example, you pay \$1,800 for a

fancy bred heifer and she is culled as a non-pregnant two-year-old. At sale, the open young cow is worth \$800. She has depreciated by \$1,000 in 10 months and only produced one calf. After factoring in annual cow costs (pasture, feed, etc.) that cow did not generate a profit. Here's the chicken or the egg question. Did you lose money on that heifer because she only produced only one calf or because you paid too much for her?

Many say that it takes five to six calves for a cow to become profitable in the beef industry today. How many cows make it to that milestone though? Let's start with 100 bred heifers. There are a couple of rough calf pulls or early calf deaths and only 98 calves successfully. At preg check, 85% of the heifers are pregnant. Your herd is 84, bred two-year-old cows. Next year, 92% of the now three-year-old cows calve. The herd is now 78 bred three-year-old cows. Continue a 92% calving rate for the next three years and you will end up with 62 bred six-year-old cows. I did not factor in any calf mortality or any cow death loss. Do the profitable 62 cows make enough to cover the losses incurred by the unprofitable 38 bred heifers from six years ago?

One of my guiding principles in the cattle business is that growing cattle appreciate and mature cattle depreciate. I would rather put high-quality pasture forage through an animal that gains in value than use it to support the maintenance energy requirements of a mature cow. Now, one could argue that the cow is producing a growing calf, but you are paying for 12 months of feed for a mature cow to get 8 months of growth off of the calf raised. Think of it this way. If the cow consumes 12,000 lb of forage per year (~33 lb of feed per day) and weans a 550 lb calf, that is a feed conversion ratio of 22 lb of feed per lb of calf gain! That's three times more feed per lb of gain than in a stocker cattle model.

As I see it, there are two logical paths to reduce cow depreciation today. One

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is to buy cows that are already depreciated. This model works for some folks and makes a lot of sense because we can make rapid genetic progress in the calves by mating to high-quality bulls. My biggest mental hurdle to this idea is the thought of buying someone else's problems and the variation in the quality of females purchased year over year.

The other path to reduce cow depreciation is a low-input heifer development system. This system requires a significant mindset shift. Historically cattle producers have invested resources to maximize the chances of their pre-selected heifers getting pregnant. What if we kept most of the heifer crop and let our management system select breeding females? Another way of framing this discussion is around target weight. Historically, we have advocated that producers develop heifers to 65% of mature cow weight at breeding. Reaching that threshold requires additional feed inputs beyond pasture forage. I like a system where we invest little in developing the heifers, finding out who breeds despite our management, then investing feed resources in the bred heifers. The target weight that matters is having the heifers weigh 85 to 90% of mature weight at calving, which lessens the risk of calving problems. Any heifer that does not breed in this system, is marketed as a feeder heifer. Any weight gained between weaning and breeding is additional revenue for the farm.

There are structural changes that need to occur for this to be successful. You may have to reduce the number of mature cows on the farm to have enough forage to run your heifer development program in a stocker model. You have to move past selecting replacement females at weaning. You also have to look past conception rates that have historically been deemed unacceptable (50-60%). Remember, there's profit in the open females, even if you invest \$50 per head in breeding charges, so long as they gain weight from weaning to breeding.

Reducing cow depreciation is just one of the ways to increase profit without increasing costs. I am passionate about advocating for growing cattle enterprises on Missouri farms because of the potential revenue generated. A low input heifer development system is the best of both worlds, the cow-calf and stocker systems. The best part of growing cattle systems is that the cattle are easily marketed when times of drought come. Plus,

you have less emotional investment in them and are less likely to feed them through a drought. I always say, "The best cattlemen do not make the most money in the good years. They lose the least money in the bad years." 🤠

Eric Bailey, PhD, is the State Beef Extension Specialist and Assistant Professor of Animal Science at the University of Missouri.



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Here's Why You Need a Drought Plan

Writing a drought plan is easy. And hard. Regardless, it's a real good idea.

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For many ranchers, it seems there are three overriding factors in management planning—You're either in a drought, just coming out of a drought or getting ready for the next one.

That's why you need a drought plan, says Trevor Greenfield, founder and co-owner of Rio Nutrition. Because you can't manage what you don't prepare for.

A survey of Northern Plains ranchers who endured a 2016 flash drought found of the 250 respondents, 59% had an "If-Then" drought plan, according to an article in the journal *Rangeland and Ecological Management*.

"Ranchers with drought plans were more likely than others to destock through some means due to drought conditions in 2016, controlling for operational factors, drought severity and any type of drought early warning information," wrote Tonya Haigh, rural sociologist with the National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC) in Lincoln, Neb.

If you're part of the 59%, congratulations. You can use these seven steps, courtesy of NDMC, as a benchmark to stress-test your plan.

If you don't have a drought plan, consider putting one together, Greenfield suggests. These seven steps will help you get through this drought. More importantly, they'll help you prepare for the next one.

Step 1: Draft your Team

Begin your drought planning journey by forming a group of advisors and mentors. Involve family members, your banker and folks with knowledge of range management, business and marketing.

Step 2: Nail Down a Ranch Vision and Strategic Objectives

This may sound like corporate mumbo-jumbo, but it's good to have an idea of where the business is headed. That's the vision. Strategic objectives are how you're going to get there.

A valuable exercise in this process is a SWOT—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats. Thinking through this process helps in your strategic planning as well as in drought planning and preparedness.

Step 3: Take Inventory

This is where the old saw that you can't manage what you don't measure kicks in, Greenfield says. An inventory of resources helps you and your drought team know what you have to work with, according to NDMC.

"An inventory may include average precipitation and extremes; forage and range resources such as ecological site information, range condition and production, and other feed sources; herd resources such as AUs throughout the year and feed needs; water capacity to support the grazing system; financial strengths and weaknesses; and human resources such as family members' interests and abilities as well as hired labor resources and capacity," NDMC says.

Step 4: Identify Critical Dates and Target Conditions

These become the bones of your drought plan. Look at the mid-points of rapid growth windows for the dominant cool season and warm season grasses in your pastures.

These are your critical dates for implementing different phases of your drought management plan. Work with Extension, NRCS

and your team to identify the earliest possible indicators of forage deficits.

"Many semiarid rangelands are composed of mixtures of cool and warm-season species. Consequently, it is often helpful to select two or more critical dates when most species of each growth-season category have headed to evaluate the contribution of each component to total herbage production," according to NDMC.

Step 5: Monitor Your Resources

This is where horse hooves, ATV tires and boots hit the ground. Using your critical dates as hard stops, scout your pastures so you know what's happening on the ground. If you can, maintain precipitation and grazing records for each pasture each year, Greenfield suggests.

Here's an idea of what you're looking for, according to NDMC:

"Monitor precipitation and forage availability on critical dates or more frequently. Monitor residual forage after moving animals out of pasture, and keep livestock grazing records throughout the season as animals are moved.

"Monitor livestock gain and body condition at critical intervals in production cycle, and monitor livestock markets as needed to meet ranch objectives. Range condition, including scouting for indicator species and assessing hydrologic condition of rangeland, should be monitored annually, along with water resources and financial health."

Step 6: Develop Strategies to Prepare, Respond and Recover from Drought

In addition to helping you deal with drought, a drought plan includes strategies for what to do before and after a drought. Every operation is different, so thinking through the feasibility, impact and cost:benefit ratio of each potential management option will help identify the strategies that work best for your operation.

"As you think through management options that you might take before, during, and after drought, you may want to consider whether it moves you toward your goals, whether it is feasible in light of your ranch inventory, whether others have found it to be make a real difference, and whether the benefits outweigh the costs of the actions," NDMC advises.

Step 7: Implement and Evaluate

When you're in the middle of a drought, it's often hard to step back and take a critical look at how well your plan worked. There will be time for that later.

If drought is pending or has already sunk its claws into your pastures, implement the plan. And don't second guess it, Greenfield stresses.

When the precipitation returns, then take some time to evaluate how well your plan worked. Are you satisfied with how you managed through the drought using your plan? Would you make any changes?

If you are doing ongoing monitoring of your finances, range, and livestock, you will have a much easier time answering these questions, as you will be able to see trends appearing, according to NDMC.





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Continued from previous page

Sample Drought Plan

Every operation is different, with differing soil types, plants, precipitation amounts and management objectives. Indeed, each pasture can be different for these factors. This sample drought plan, courtesy of the National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC), therefore should be used as a template to help you create your own plan that is representative of your operation.

The key factor to remember in building a plan is that all the options need to be carefully evaluated based on the cost of implementation—and more importantly, perhaps, the cost of not implementing, according to NDMC.

For example, if you cull in the spring according to the plan, you may get a better price for your cattle than you would have later in the year and you will have conserved more pasture or range.

The following plan is based on a ranch in South-Central Kansas with average annual precipitation of 21 inches.

April 1

- End of the winter dormant season and beginning of the growing season for warm-season grasses.
- Less than 4 inches of moisture during the winter dormant season (killing frost on Nov. 1 until April 1) no prescribed burns should be conducted.
- Plan to increase the length of rest periods earlier than usual.

June 15

- About half the forage is produced by June 15
- 75% of annual average rainfall is received between Nov. 1 and June 15.
- If rainfall is less than 80% of the 75%, the stock-

ing rate should be decreased 30% by weight.

- If rainfall is less than 60% of the 75%, stocking rate should be reduced 40-50% by weight.
- The three weeks following June 15 is very critical. By July 15, destocking should be completed.
- Rest periods should be as long as possible by June 1 if any indicator of drought is present.
- Graze periods should be as long as possible to allow the other pastures to rest as long as possible.

August 15

- About 90% of the annual forage has been produced. Warm season grasses are preparing for next year's growing season. Rest between now and frost will benefit next year's grass production.
- Length of grazing season is based on rainfall in July and August.
- If rainfall is less than 70% of the average 5 inches during July and August, cull again.

November 1

- End of growing season and beginning of winter drought season.
- Less than 80% of the 21-inch annual average precipitation would indicate the beginning of a drought for the next growing season unless the winter is exceptionally wet.

This information is available in downloadable form on the Riomax® website. Go to <https://riomax.net/?s=Drought> for information.

Riomax® started in a one-car garage and today works with countless ranchers all across the United States and Canada. Their mission? To bring profitability back into agriculture. Learn more about their nutritional products for cattle, horses, sheep, and soil at www.riomax.net/products



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TRENDING NOW

Know Youth Labor Laws Before Hiring Your Summer Staff

For Immediate Release from the University of Missouri Extension

COLUMBIA, Mo. – As the school year ends, you can expect young people to start applying for summer jobs. For agricultural employers, these young workers can provide extra capacity at a time when farms and agribusinesses often have more work than they have employees to get that work done.

“Labor is tight as the economy picks up steam post-pandemic. Fast food and manufacturers are begging for older teenagers,” says Joe Horner, University of Missouri Extension agricultural economist and a co-author of MU Extension’s Missouri Farm Labor Guide. “As farmers hire young workers, keep in mind the need to keep them safe, provide extra guidance and obey labor rules.”

Hiring a young person as a summer employee may have benefits that outlast a single summer, Horner says.

“By hiring young workers, farmers can help train the next generation in agriculture and create a labor pipeline that can support their business in the future,” he says.

Consider these guidelines before hiring young people to work for your farm or agribusiness this summer:

Delegate appropriate tasks. Employees age 16 and older may do any type of farm work, according to the Fair Labor Standards Act. However, restrictions apply to workers younger than 16. For example, younger workers may not do hazardous jobs unless permitted by an exemption. Hazardous jobs include operating a tractor with more than 20 PTO horsepower, hay mower, hay baler or forklift and working in a yard, pen or stall that has a cow and newborn calf with its umbilical cord still intact. Always prioritize creating a safe work environment.

Schedule youths to work at acceptable times. In Missouri, 14- and 15-year-olds employed during the summer — June 1 to Labor Day — may work only between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. when school is out of session.



Comply with working hours rules. If school isn’t in session, 14- and 15-year-olds may work up to eight hours per day and six days per week to a maximum of 40 hours in a week.

Secure a work certificate as needed. Hiring a 14- or 15-year-old requires a work certificate. The young person should request the certificate from an issuing officer, such as the student’s school superintendent or principal. As part of the request, employers must submit a statement of intention to employ that includes a position description and information about the young person’s work schedule. The work certificate must be complete before the work start date. Keep work certificates and youth employee names, addresses, ages and daily work schedules on file for at least two years.

Pay at least the minimum wage. Missouri’s 2021 minimum wage is \$10.30 per hour. Some exemptions apply. For example, the Fair Labor Standards Act exempts agricultural employers who record 500 or fewer “man days” during a given calendar quarter within the past calendar year. Agricultural work conducted by an employee for at least one hour in a day counts as a “man day.”

In situations where children work for their parents, Missouri’s child labor laws vary. To be exempt from the state’s child labor laws, a parent or legal guardian must own the business where the child works and have direct control of the child during work.

Find more information about hiring youths and managing a labor force in the Missouri Farm Labor Guide, available for download at extension.missouri.edu/m199. 

A large advertisement for Joplin Regional Stockyards. The top section has the headline 'WE SET THE MARKET' in large, bold, black letters. To the right of the headline is a paragraph: 'For 43 years, Joplin Regional Stockyards has set the weekly market for feeder cattle sales in the four-state area. Give us a call for on-farm visits, appraisals or trucking arrangements. Local field representatives are also available to meet your cattle marketing needs.' Below the headline and text are three logos: 'Prime Time livestock video' with a bull head, 'JOPLIN REGIONAL STOCKYARDS' with a bull head, and 'JOPLIN REGIONAL STOCKYARDS CATTLEMEN'S News' with a bull head. The main image shows a large, modern stockyard building with a sign that says 'JOPLIN STOCKYARDS' and a large semi-truck with a trailer parked in front of it. At the bottom, there is a large red phone number '417.548.BEEF' and the website 'WWW.JOPLINSTOCKYARDS.COM' with a Facebook icon.



Thanks to farmers and ranchers who work hard 365 days a year to bring us delicious beef. For more recipes and tips, visit beefitswhatsfordinner.com.

Enjoy beef all season long with these easy recipes that are ready in 30 minutes or less. 🍴

SALAD SHAKERS

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound Ground Beef (95% lean)
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 package (10 to 12 ounces) iceberg or romaine salad mix (lettuce, red cabbage, carrots)
- 1 cup diced tomato
- 1/2 cup canned black beans, rinsed, drained
- 1/2 cup frozen corn, defrosted, drained
- 1/2 cup shredded reduced-fat Cheddar cheese, (optional)
- 1/2 cup prepared reduced-fat or fat-free ranch dressing
- 1/4 to 1/3 cup Crunchy Tortilla Strips (recipe follows) or crushed baked tortilla chips (optional)



COOKING:

1. Brown Ground Beef with garlic in large nonstick skillet over medium heat 8 to 10 minutes, breaking beef up into 1/2-inch crumbles. Pour off drippings, if necessary. Stir in water, chili powder and cumin; cook and stir 1 minute to blend flavors. Cool slightly.

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. Place salad mix, beef, tomato, beans, corn and cheese, if desired, in large bowl with lid. Top with dressing; close lid securely or cover bowl tightly with plastic wrap. Shake gently to combine. Top with tortilla strips, if desired.

Crunchy Tortilla Strips: Cut 2 corn tortillas in half, then crosswise into 1/4-inch-wide strips. Place strips in single layer on baking sheet. Spray tortilla strips lightly with nonstick cooking spray. Bake 4 to 8 minutes at 400°F or until crisp.

Cook's Tip: You can substitute your favorite dressing for ranch dressing.

Mo Beef Mo Kids Mo Fit

Beef: King of Summer Grilling

By Mo Fit (MoBKF) Program

Did you know? One serving of lean beef provides half of your daily protein and ten essential nutrients to fuel you and your family. Beef can play a role in maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle.

HOISION BBQ KABOBS WITH PINEAPPLE SALSA

INGREDIENTS:

- 1-1/4 pounds beef Top Sirloin Steak Boneless, cut 1 inch thick
- 1/3 cup ketchup
- 2 tablespoons hoisin sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- Salt (optional)

PINEAPPLE SALSA:

- 1 cup diced fresh pineapple
- 1/2 cup diced red bell pepper
- 1/2 cup diced hothouse cucumber
- 2 teaspoons rice vinegar (optional)



COOKING:

1. Combine Pineapple Salsa ingredients in small bowl. Set aside.

2. Combine ketchup and hoisin sauce in another small bowl; set aside. Cut beef Top Sirloin Steak into 1-inch pieces. Thread beef pieces evenly onto four 10 to 12-inch metal skewers. Season kabobs evenly with pepper.

3. Place kabobs on rack in broiler pan so surface of beef is 3 to 4 inches from heat. Brush beef generously with some of reserved sauce mixture. Broil 7 to 9 minutes for medium rare (145°F) to medium (160°F) doneness, turning once and brushing with remaining sauce mixture. Season beef with salt, if desired. Serve kabobs topped with Pineapple Salsa.

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*Figures based on IRI, Refrigerated/Frozen Meat Substitutes, 52 weeks ending 6/16/18; IRI/Freshbook, Total US MUO ending 5/18/18; Categorized by VMMeat System.

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TRENDING NOW

How Do We Drive Consumers to Consume More Beef Through Technology?

By Gregory Bloom for Cattlemen's News

Answer: Connect to consumers through culinary creativity using social media.

Julia Child was ahead of her time, for sure. Growing up, the only cooking show I remember watching or even knowing about was Julia's. I loved the way she'd demonstrate practical things like showing how to tie a chicken or cook a goose. I loved that she used lots of butter and cream. She had a great sense of humor and laughed at her mistakes on camera, like when she burned the food or got her spatula caught in the electric mixer. My favorite episodes were those where she brandished a meat cleaver and demonstrated how to make ox-

tail soup and ossobuco. Which of her dishes or episodes were most memorable for you?

I think Julia would have loved today's social media. She'd likely have had her own Tasty type of brief cooking demos for us all to watch on YouTube, Snapchat or Facebook. Today there are countless culinary shows. My kids love every episode of Chopped, whereas I prefer Diners, Drive-ins and Dives. Those Tasty videos posted on Facebook often stop the quick scrolls down my iPhone screen, especially those showing meat. What are your favorite cooking shows?

Use technology and consumers love for short culinary videos to promote beef

The plethora of culinary demonstrations available today have created an almost insatiable appetite among consumers for creative culinary know-how. If you want to expand the sales of your beef, or simply promote and defend beef, find a chef in the family and do it via culinary education.

Teaching the nutritional benefits of beef or demonstrating the beef carcass cutout as stand-alone topics is boring. So what; beef has essential vitamins, protein, amino acids, minerals that satiates your stomach. That pedantic information alone is not especially interesting to consumers with ultra-short attention spans. But if you show people how to make a pinwheel out of a flank steak, in a simple way they can do at home, impressing their friends and family with a dish that wows the guests, while at the same time informing about the nutritional benefits of meat... that's the ticket. That's the kind of supply that meets curiosity's demand.

For years, I've done beef cutout and yield demonstrations in front of groups, and I've discovered that food service sales people, chefs and retail meat merchandisers care far less about where the cut comes from off the carcass and far more about how to cook it. It's especially important with the beef cutout to understand the optimal cooking methods for specific cuts. A brisket or short rib is best cooked in quite different ways than ribeye steaks or outside skirts. Demonstrate this with short videos.

Every family has an aspiring chef!

I've found that almost every family has an in-house chef or aspiring chef! Find a member of your family that is good in front of a camera with a culinary interest and start making short, less than three-minute videos. Start with simple videos about "how to cook the perfect steak at home", "how to cook the perfect prime rib roast for the holidays", or "which beef cuts are best for the crock pot?" Later, do more advanced topics such as "using your new pellet smoker to smoke a brisket" or "sous vide cooking tips for beginners using beef".

These videos need to be short and interesting. If they are longer than three minutes, people won't finish watching them. The person doing the demonstration should be personable, lively and fun to watch.

While demonstrating how to cook the beef cut you are featuring, include comments about the awesome nutritional benefits of beef and talk about how you raise cattle on your ranch in a sustainable, humane way. Defend beef by commenting about the true environmental impact that beef has on the environ-

Continued on next page



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BILLINGS - 36 Ac., Metzler Rd., great location, good ground, nice setting \$199,485

ELKLAND - Nubbin Lane, 81.73 Ac., year round live water, secluded, bottom ground, mature timber \$212,500

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PIERCE CITY - 80 Ac., FR 2000, 4 bedroom 3 bath home, good ground, corrals, 4 ponds \$585,000

FAIR GROVE - 145 Ac. Hwy AA near Elkland cattle pasture w/hwy frontage, live waterers & multi ponds, great building opportunity, Marshfield school district \$652,500

GROVESPRING - 280 Ac., Robertson Rd., Great grass farm w/good cross fencing & several ponds & good waterers, mostly open, corrals, good road frontage \$658,000

REED'S SPRING - 145 Ac. Dogwood Tree Rd. off Hwy 160 rolling nice clear Ozark pasture land w/beautiful scenic views & outstanding building site, over 1/2 mile road frontage w/ easy access points \$696,000

CRANE - 220 Ac., Farm Road 240, mostly open, good fence, great grass farm \$770,000

SCOTT CITY - 110 Ac. Hwy 97 & Law 2110, 5 BR home, 48x46 heated shop, 20x12 horse barn, additional shop, outdoor arena, sheds, paddock, new fence, a must see .. \$780,000

BILLINGS - 120 Ac. Hwy 174, Great location, farm house, large barn, corrals, huge spring, creek running through \$780,000

REPUBLIC - 160 Ac. Hwy TT & PP, open & tillable, 88 ft. by 100 ft. barn with concrete floor, several eq, corrals, 3 BR home, great road frontage \$880,000

SENECA - 282 Ac., Bethel Rd., nice level open ground, pasture, good fence & cross fence, pond, great location \$1,057,500

AVA - CR PP 524, 270 Acres, great cattle farm on Beaver Creek, nice 2 BR, 2 1/2 BA home, huge 102x80 ft. barn w/office and shop, pipe corral, creek bottom \$1,250,000

POTTERSVILLE - 504 Ac. CR 7040. Great grass farm, 9 ponds, 2 big pipe corrals, working barn, open, new fence w/pipe corners \$1,257,480

AURORA - Hwy K, 313 Ac., livestock farm, large 5 BR, 2 1/2 BA home, 2 large iron hay barns, 2nd home \$1,692,500

LEBANON - 514 Ac. Just off Hwy 64, great grass farm, over 200 acres of bottom ground, home, equipment/hay building, fence & cross fence, NICE \$1,904,400

FALCON - 753 Ac. Hwy 32 Delta Rd., outstanding purebred cattle ranch w/rustic 10 BR lodge, pool & dining hall, beautifully decorated & outfitted, bordering Mark Twain forest, lakes, pond, creek, excellent improvements w/great hunting & recreation, ideal for corporate retreat or personal use with three additional homes \$3,750,000

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Continued from previous page

ment. Talk about beefs' unique up-cycling story. Sprinkle in the positive message of beef production throughout your video.

Have some fun with it, and if you make a mistake on camera, don't edit it out, or if your dog runs across the room while your shooting, go with it and show that you're a real family with pets that don't always behave so well.

I do the culinary videos for my meat distribution company. My daughter takes the video with her iPhone, edits the video and uploads the videos to our YouTube or Vimeo channels. Use your kids or grand-kids to do all the technical work.

You don't need any expensive equipment to shoot or edit videos. If your kids have an iPhone, it has iMovie editing software already installed. You will need to buy an inexpensive external microphone to plug into your phone if there are sound quality issues where you are shooting the videos. A corded external microphone can be found for less than twenty bucks online. I use a wireless lavalier mic that cost less than \$80. That's all you need to make great videos.

Even if you aren't selling beef directly to consumers, you should be making and promoting beef culinary videos. All of us have a circle of influence that numbers into the hundreds or thousands through social media. Push out these videos using all forms of social media. We all need to work together to defend and promote our industry. The Beef Checkoff can't do all the work that's necessary, and besides, you are a much better spokesperson for the beef industry to the people that know you, because, well, they know you!

May the adventurous culinary spirit and contagious enthusiasm of Julia Child catch on in the beef industry. Use current and new technology and social media platforms to tell your story.

As Julia would say, standing over a beautifully prepared roast baron of beef, "bon appétit!" 🍴

Gregory Bloom is the owner of U.S. Protein, an international distributor of premium meats. Contact him at greg@usprotein.com.

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Saturday, June 19th, 10:45 am to 11:00 pm: Scheduled Bands and Jam Sessions

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June 2, 2021

4:30 PM following regular cow sale

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40 - 4-year-old, black & black-white face cows, bred to Charolais, Angus and Hereford bulls.

48 - 3-year-old, black & black-white face cows, bred to Angus or Hereford bulls.

49 - black & black-white face cows, coming 2-year-olds, bred to calving-ease bulls.

50 - black & black-white face cows, 6 to short & solid, bred to Charolais or Angus.

99 black & black-white face cows, 6 to short & solid, bred to Charolais bulls. These have been given Long Range wormer, fly control and Cattlemaster VL5, administered on May 12, 2021.

All the above will start calving middle of September for 70 days.

38 - 5 to short and solid years old, black & black-white face.

41 - 5-year-old to short & solid, red-white face & Charolais.

These are bred to Angus Bulls and these have not been pregged or given shots yet. Some may be open. They will be pregged at JRS. Start calving middle of September for 70 days. FMI call Jackie Moore 417-825-0948.

Complete Dispersal - Rick Maxon

120 Brangus cows, 3-year-olds to SS years old with 75 calves by side, most bred back to Brangus bulls. Brangus bulls will selling. FMI call Jackie Moore 417-825-0948.

40 black pairs, 3 to 6 years old, calves are 250 to 400 pounds, cows and calves are on a current health program. FMI call Rick Chaffin 417-849-1230.

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INDUSTRY NEWS

News from the Arkansas Cattlemen's Association

By Cody Burkham for Cattlemen's News

Last month, I started my article talking about a “return to normal” from the COVID-19 pandemic, but I guess the weather didn’t get the message. I do not know about your operation, but in central Arkansas, spring, so far, has been cool and wet. While this seems to have benefited the fescue and rye grass growth, it has certainly made it somewhat more challenging to keep equipment and trucks from becoming mired in the mud. My hat is off to the cattle producers that made it for years without four-wheel drive tractors.

American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow once said, “Great is the art of beginning, but greater is the art of ending.” I would have to say those are my sentiments exactly as the state legislature has now officially recessed the 93rd General Assembly. While the work that was done during the 2021 regular session was important, and cattle producers benefited from a number of good pieces of legislation, most everyone involved with matters at the Arkansas State Capitol agreed that it was time for the legislature to head home. However, the leadership and staff of the Arkansas Cattlemen’s Association (ACA) were there representing Arkansas cattle producers’ interest until the very end. In fact, one piece of legislation, which was specifically introduced to benefit cattle and dairy producers in Arkansas, HB1920, received final passage only hours before the House and Senate recessed.

HB1920, introduced by Representative DeAnn Vaught and Senator Gary Stubblefield, establishes a process by which all rules and regulations, with one exception, must be reviewed by the Arkansas Senate and House Agricultural Committees. Additionally, this bill provides Arkansas producers the opportunity



to voice their opinions, concerns, or support for each rule or regulation concerning our industry. Should an agency decide that it has a rule or regulations currently on the books that is outdated or no longer relevant, they may choose to repeal that rule, with permission from the agricultural committees. Ensuring Arkansas cattle producers have a friendly regulatory environment to operate under will always be a top priority for the ACA. In addition to thanking Representative Vaught and Senator Stubblefield, we would like to send a word of thanks to Attorney General Leslie Rutledge and her staff for initially proposing and drafting HB1920.

Overall, during the 108-day session, the House and Senate introduced 1,675 bills, not including any resolutions. Of the bills passed by the legislature, 887 were signed into law by Governor Asa Hutchinson, as of the date of writing this article. This number will increase slightly as the last few remaining bills approved will either be signed, or vetoed, by the Governor. Moreover, during the session, the state legislature voted

to send three constitutional amendments to Arkansas voters for their consideration during the next election.

These amendments include:
1.) A constitutional amendment to reform certain measures presented to voters, to be known as the “Constitutional Amendment and Ballot Initiative Reform Amendment”

2.) A constitutional amendment to allow the General Assembly to convene in extraordinary session upon the issuance of a joint written proclamation of the speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro tempore of the Senate or upon the submission of a written proclamation containing the signatures of at least 2/3 of the members of the House of Representatives and at least 2/3 of the members of the Senate to the speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro tempore of the Senate requesting that the General Assembly convene in extraordinary session

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Continued from previous page

3.) A constitutional amendment to create the "Arkansas Religious Freedom Amendment"

To learn more about these proposed constitutional amendments, I encourage you to visit the University of Arkansas's Public Policy Center website: uaex.edu/business-communities/voter-education/state-ballot-issues.aspx.

Remember, we only have a couple of months left in our membership drive. Our membership drive has been going well this year, and with many of our county associations returning to their regular monthly meetings, we believe we will finish out the membership drive strong.

If your county is meeting, please be sure to let us know. We would welcome the opportunity to attend and visit with members in their home counties. As I have said many times, our organization and voice are only as strong as our members. Thank you for your membership. If the ACA staff or I can do anything for you or your operation please do not hesitate to let us know. 🤠

Cody Burkham is the Executive Vice President of the Arkansas Cattlemen's Association.

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Pasture and Cattle Management Strategies for a Successful Summer Grazing Season

For Immediate Release from the University of Missouri Extension

Stockton, Mo.- “Proper management of cool season pastures and incorporation of summer annuals is key to a successful summer cattle grazing season,” says Patrick Davis MU Extension Regional Livestock Field Specialist.

Efficient year-round cattle grazing is important for optimum cattle operation profitability. Davis will discuss forage and cattle management strategies that can lead to a successful summer grazing season.

“Strive to keep cool season pastures vegetative,” says Davis.

During the grazing season, cool season grass heights should range between 4 to 8 inches. During the summer months, cool season forages will sometimes exceed this range or seed heads will start to develop. Forage in this growth stage is low quality and will not provide optimum cattle grazing intake and performance. Davis urges cattle producers to clip or mow pastures that are too tall or if seed heads are emerging to reset the pastures which allows for high quality cool season forage regrowth.

“Rest period is also important for proper forage growth during the grazing season,” says Davis.

Rest period allows forages to grow to optimum height prior to the next grazing period and gives plants the opportunity to replenish energy reserves. These two factors help ensure high forage intake and plant persistence. Davis urges cattle producers to develop a rotational grazing system in order to better manage the rest period.

“Also, cattle producers may need longer rest periods in the summer months compared to the spring months for proper pasture regrowth,” says Davis.

“Seed summer annuals now to strengthen the summer grazing rotation,” says Davis.



Crabgrass, pearl millet, and sudangrass are summer annuals that can be seeded now and grazed in the summer months to fill in the cool season grass slump. Davis urges cattle producers to checkout MU Extension Guide Sheet G4661 as well as visit with your local MU Extension agronomy field specialist to discuss proper seeding and establishment of these summer annuals.

“Begin grazing crabgrass at 8 to 10 inches and don’t graze lower than 3 inches,” says Davis. Crabgrass can typically be grazed approximately 30 to 45 days after planting.

“Begin grazing sudangrass at a height of greater than 24 inches to prevent prussic acid poisoning in cattle,” says Davis.

Since pearl millet does not cause prussic acid poisoning in cattle, begin grazing it at a height range between 18 to 30 inches. Do not graze either of these forages below 10 inches. Both of these forages can typically be grazed 45 to 60 days after planting.

“Nitrate toxicity can be an issue with sudangrass and pearl millet during summer drought,” says Davis.

Contact your local MU Extension livestock regional field specialist for cattle and forage management strategies to reduce potential nitrate toxicity issues.

For more info or questions on how to manage your forage program for a successful summer cattle grazing season contact your local MU Extension Agronomy and Livestock Field Specialists. 🐄

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TRENDING NOW

Surviving Rising Input Costs

By Wesley Tucker for Cattlemen's News

Bought any supplies lately? Maybe a few 2x4's? How about a sack of feed? Wow!!! What's in that sack?!! Input costs are rising rapidly while cattle prices are not. 2021 was supposed to be our year as cattlemen. Market experts had said once we made it through the first half of 2021 cattle prices would improve and we might actually be able to make a little money. But no one saw the current situation coming. Input costs are squeezing cattle producers from every direction. What is a cattleman (or cattle woman) to do?

It's times like this we have to remind ourselves to focus on what we have within our power to control and get back to the basics. So, what really drives profitability for a cattle operation? If you've ever been in one of my beef presentations you've likely seen me reference the 2001 Iowa State Beef Extension Report. They analyzed production and cost variables from cow/calf producers in the Midwest to determine what was significantly different between producers who were making money and those who weren't. Production variables included things like weaning weights and calf price, cull cow weights and price, weaning percentage and calving distribution. Cost variables included feed costs, depreciation, operating costs, interest expense, hired labor and even made them account for family labor contributed to the operation.

So what truly separated profitable and unprofitable producers? 52% of the variation in profitability was how well producers controlled feed costs. Calf price was only 3.2% of the difference. That is not to say that the price we receive isn't important, but how much can we really influence it? The market goes up and down beyond our control. We can add value to our calves by preconditioning them and by working with our marketing representative to get the highest price possible, but at the end of the day the market is out of our control.

Weaning weight was only 2.4% of the difference. Once again weaning weights are important, but does increasing them guarantee greater profits? Of course not because those extra pounds are rarely free. Some producers with bigger calves lost just as much money as those with smaller ones.

But when feed costs were calculated including everything spent to feed a cow for the year including a land charge (rent), fertilizer, spray, fence, hay, grain, and mineral a wide range among producers became evident. When you think about it this should not be surprising. Feeding cost is the biggest expense producers have, so it makes sense that it's the one with the biggest range. But it's more than that. Some producers simply do a better job of managing those expenses and keeping their costs low. Those are the producers who still remain profitable even during difficult times.

So how does a producer reduce feed costs? Maintaining a cow through the year can be broken down into two main categories: summer and winter. Summer grazing costs are driven by the price of land, fertilizer prices, and forage management expenses. But the most critical factor is forage utilization. Why do so many producers spend thousands of dollars to grow more forage, when a large portion of it is never actually consumed by the animal? Cows pick out what they want to eat while the rest of the forage gets more mature and undesirable. If you had to choose between spending \$50/acre on fertilizer to grow an additional 2000 pounds of forage, or invest 20 minutes a day in moving a poly-wire to boost your pasture utilization from 45% to 65%, which would you choose? Why spend money to grow more if a large portion of what we grow never goes through the belly of a cow? Forage management and utilization drives summer feed costs.

In Missouri the cost of maintaining a cow for 90 days of winter is 62% of the total feed costs. Yes, you heard me correctly, we actually spend more to feed a cow for three months than we do the other nine. The simplest way to reduce feed costs is keeping that critter harvesting her own forage, rather than hauling it to her. Every day we can extend our grazing season is another day closer to profitability.

Rising input costs are threatening our operations and our livelihood. Now is the time to focus on what we can control – how well we manage our forage. That's what separates profitable from unprofitable producers. 🐮

Wesley Tucker is a University of Missouri Extension Ag Business Specialist & Cow/Calf Producer from Dallas County.



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INDUSTRY NEWS

Broadband Breakthroughs

By Chris Chinn, Director of the Missouri Department of Agriculture

The old saying goes, “Every cloud has a silver lining.” In agriculture, there always seems to be a new challenge just around the corner, so it’s natural for farmers to focus on those signs of hope.

The silver lining of COVID-19 has been, in my opinion, the momentum towards connecting our homes, rural and urban, to high speed internet. Broadband seems to be something we can all agree on, no matter where we live.

Broadband connectivity is essential for Missouri farmers and rural communities. It’s how farmers are able to adopt the latest technology standards on their farms, how school children can complete homework and how rural families are able to work from home during a global pandemic. It’s also important for rural businesses that rely on the internet to make their operations run – like video auctions for cattle.

If you live in a rural area, you know that good internet, or internet at all, may be hard to come by. There is a large digital divide between urban and rural areas. However, the most recent FCC Broadband Deployment report shows significant progress with that gap being cut in half since 2016. On top of that, more than three-quarters of those in newly served areas live in rural communities, bringing the percentage of rural Americans with at least 25 mbps to nearly 83%.

There have been several recent developments – some Missouri led – helping to expand rural broadband.

Last fall, Governor Parson announced that 26 broadband projects would receive up to \$3.8 million through the state’s Emergency Broadband Investment Program. This program seeks to reimburse providers who expand their services to unserved or underserved areas in the state.

In December, the FCC announced that 17 broadband entities in Missouri would receive \$346 million in subsidies over ten years to deploy high speed internet to 199,211 locations in



Missouri. These providers will offer services for more Missourians who currently find themselves in a digital desert.

In January, the USDA ReConnect Program awarded six Missouri broadband providers with \$103 million to expand their rural broadband services. These recipients will provide services for Missouri community facilities, healthcare facilities, farms, businesses and hundreds of more Missouri households.


COVID-19 has also highlighted that even though efforts are being made to expand rural broadband services, some Americans are unable to afford purchasing internet packages. Rural internet tends to be more expensive than internet plans in urban areas. The expenses of building broadband networks and smaller pools of customers drive up the price of rural internet. The FCC recognized the difficulty that some rural Americans were having paying for internet and announced the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program for those meeting certain income eligibility criteria determined by the FCC. This program provides up to a \$50 a month discount for households struggling to pay for internet during the pandemic. More information can be found at [GetEmergencyBroadband.org](https://www.getemergencybroadband.org).

The momentum to connect every American to internet has picked up in the last year, but for many of us, rural broadband has been a focus issue for years. I’m proud to continue my efforts to bring better rural broadband to Missouri. Beginning last year, I started my role as a member on the FCC’s Precision Ag Taskforce that works to bring accessible high speed internet to rural Missouri.

I’m also proud to continue working with Missouri’s Broadband Leadership team. We are focused on getting internet to all parts of the state. Helping Missouri farmers be able to connect with the world and use technology to improve and maintain their farming operations is something that I am honored to do. When people ask themselves what will stay and what will go after the pandemic ends, I hope one focus that stays is the focus on broadband for rural communities. Reliable internet is a must for all communities. Rural communities can no longer be left out of this digital boom. I’m proud of the work that has been done and I am excited to see continued investments and work to connect every last mile of Missouri. 🤠

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Heifer Nutrition After AI Breeding

For Immediate Release from the University of Missouri Extension, Gene Schmitz - Field Specialist in Livestock

SEDALIA, Mo. – I recently ran across some information we received at our livestock specialist update a few years ago from Dr. George Perry from South Dakota State University. He discussed beef heifer nutrition at breeding time, and the impact of dietary changes on pregnancy rate and early embryonic development. Some of the information from his presentation is highlighted below.

Heifers are particularly sensitive to large changes in diet composition at or near breeding time. These effects are most noticeable with AI bred heifers. Much of the work Dr. Perry presented focused on drylot vs. pasture systems for developing heifers pre-breeding, and studying the impact of dietary change on animal behavior, animal gain, and AI pregnancy rates.

If heifers are developed in a drylot and then turned out to pasture, several behavioral and performance issues emerge. One study indicated that heifers developed in a drylot took 70% more steps on the first day they were turned out to pasture than heifers developed on pasture (17,000 steps vs. 10,000 steps). Additional research was shown that indicated drylot developed heifers can lose as much as 3.0 pounds per day the first week they are turned out to pasture. This increase in energy expenditure and reduced intake can have impacts on AI pregnancy rates in heifers.

This response was seen in a study which looked at turning drylot developed heifers out to pasture immediately after AI breeding and providing them with either 5 pounds of dried distillers grains or no supplement. Weight gain and AI pregnancy rate was checked 42 days after AI. The supplemented heifers had gained 32 pounds in 42 days and had a 76% preg-



nancy rate to AI. The unsupplemented heifers lost 5 pounds in 42 days and had a 61% pregnancy rate to AI. Some of these impacts affect natural service breeding systems also. Dr. Perry cited a study reported in 1999. This study concluded that a decrease in feed intake from 120% of maintenance to 40% of maintenance resulted in a loss of over 50 pounds during a two-week period, and 60% of heifers stopped ovulating within 13 to 15 days of diet change. While this may sound extreme, the studies mentioned above show that dry matter intake and heifer growth rate can dramatically decrease if drylot or supplemented heifers are abruptly shifted to pasture only diets.

The main take home message is to avoid abrupt diet changes immediately after AI or before turning out bulls for natural service breeding. If heifers are shifted from drylot development to pasture, be sure to supplement additional energy to overcome some of these negative effects. Bottom line is that as heifers transition from hay-based rations to grazing, ease that shift through continued supplementation to avoid drastic reductions in energy intake to improve AI or early breeding success.

If you have additional questions on heifer development, contact me at schmitze@missouri.edu or call the Pettis County Extension Center at (660) 827-0591. 🤠





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MARKET WATCH

Market Recap: Feeder Cattle Auction May 17, 2021 | Receipts 5,234

****CLOSE**** Compared to last week, feeder steers traded steady to 3.00 higher. Feeder heifers traded steady to 2.00 higher. Supply moderate with good demand. Supply included: 100% Feeder Cattle (51% Steers, 45% Heifers, 4% Bulls). Feeder cattle supply over 600 lbs was 46%.

Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1 300-400 lbs 185.00-190.00; 400-500 lbs 175.00-181.00; 500-600 lbs 164.00-177.00; 600-700 lbs 149.00-159.00; 700-800 lbs 135.00-145.00; 800-900 lbs 123.00-132.00; 900-1000 lbs 119.00-122.50. **Medium and Large 1-2** 300-400 lbs 175.00-180.00; 400-500 lbs 162.00-173.00; 500-600 lbs 150.00-167.00; 600-700 lbs 138.00-148.00; 700-800 lbs 125.00-134.00; 800-900 lbs 122.00; pkg 992 lbs 87.00.

Feeder Heifers: Medium and Large 1 300-400 lbs 145.00-157.50; 400-500 lbs 145.00-155.00; 500-600 lbs 134.00-149.00; 600-700 lbs 132.00-141.00; 800-850 lbs 119.50-123.00; 900-950 lbs 122.50-155.50. **Medium and Large 1-2** 300-400 lbs 141.00-148.00; 400-500 lbs 136.00-144.00; 500-600 lbs 127.00-135.00; 600-700 lbs 124.00-131.50; 700-800 lbs 120.00-125.25; 800-900 lbs 113.00-119.00; 950-1000 lbs 92.50-102.00.

Feeder Bulls: Medium and Large 1-2 lot 351 lbs 172.50; pkg 454 lbs 172.00; 500-600 lbs 144.00-150.00; 600-650 lbs 130.00-132.00.

Source: USDA-MO Dept of Ag Market News Service
Keith Hyde, Market Reporter, (573) 751-5618
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Thank you, dairy farmers.

June is dairy month, a time to honor this long-held tradition in MFA's trade territory and recognize the contributions of our hardworking dairy farmers.



Dairy farmers, stop by your MFA Agri Services Center or local affiliate and ask about MFA feeds with Shield Technology. Shield uses unique ingredients to boost rumen function and animal health. The results will speak for themselves.

**See what MFA Shield
Technology can do for your herd.**

Contact your MFA Agri Services or affiliate location for more information, or call (573) 874-5111.



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