Cow Country Reporter

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CATTLE PRODUCERS OF LOUISIANA

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News from your CEO

THANK YOU to our members who sent their annual dues in during May, it was a blessing! You are reading the June issue of Cow Country and if you have not paid your dues, your July newsletter may not get to you. My Dad would say, fast pay makes fast friends. Enough harassment!

June is usually the month when demand picks up for our lightweight calves under 600 lbs. to go to grass. The feed lots are marketing calf-feds purchased in the fall so the fed market is under pressure and most of the yearlings have been sold. The times they are a changing. New growth additives have allowed feeders to feed cattle longer and increase market weight. Unseasonable weather has reduced beef demand. Packers are moving oh so rapidly towards a no cash market to a grid/formula market based on "THEIR" figures. For the week ending May 31, 2013, 110,600 head were purchased in the TX, OK, NM area based on 9500 head sold in the cash market (85%). The markets are getting thinner and thinner and they will continue until we get to a value based market. What can we do in a cow/calf state? If you have less than 50-100 mama cows, market them through your local auction market. If you are in a "program", genetic, health, value added make sure you consult your market manager to assist you in your marketing. If you have more than 100 mama cows you have other options, but make sure you let the buyer know what you have. The more information you have the better your chances of adding value. In Louisiana we need to be working towards the utilization of forages and identifying a commodity (calf crop) that will sell at a premium.

CPL is working with organizations that support competition in the market place and taking corn out of the fuel supply. Sign up a new member!

Dave Foster, CEO

Make-A-Wish connects girl with dream cattle ranch adventure

Brett Wessler, Staff Writer,Drovers CattleNetwork

The Make-A-Wish Foundation has granted more than 200,000 wishes in the U.S. since 1980 and while most take kids to Disney World or meet a famous celebrity, one Missouri girl wanted an experience with a little more work involved.

Haley Fulmer, 10, from southeast Missouri, decided to pass on a luxurious trip in favor of a cattle drive in Montana where her family will join the crew in moving 400 cow-calf pairs to summer pastures.

The Billings Gazette reports Fulmer will trail cattle at the Kombol family ranch located 25 miles northwest of Roundup, Mont. The trip allows her to spend more time riding horses, a hobby she developed when she started taking riding lessons near her family's farm.

Haley and her family arrived

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GAO reports on state meat-inspection program

John Maday, Managing Editor, Drovers CattleNetwork

In 2011, the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) issued new regulations for the Cooperative Interstate Shipment program (CIS), which was authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill. The program clears the way for small meat plants that have 25 or fewer employees and use inspectors employed by state agencies rather than the USDA to ship meat out of state.

As of January 31, 2013, three states, Ohio, North Dakota, and Wisconsin, and eight establishments in two of those states had been selected to participate in the program.

This week the Government Accounting Office (GAO) reported results of a mandated audit to determine the effectiveness of USDA's implementation of the program. The audit found USDA's Implementation of the CIS addresses most key Farm Bill requirements, but additional action is needed.

The auditors found the FSIS technical assistance division has not coordinated with other USDA agencies to provide outreach, education, and training to establishments as required by the 2008 Farm Bill. Also, FSIS gave funds to four states to assess what they would need to do to meet the program requirements and to serve models for other states. The audit found though, that FSIS did not collect information from those four states to share with other states.

The report also notes a wide discrepancy in the frequency of FSIS oversight visits to plants in the CIS program versus other state-inspected plants. FSIS officials said the agency intends these visits to CIS program plants to be conducted at least once every three months and to submit quarterly food-safety compliance reports on each establishment. In contrast, under the existing inspection programs in which states conduct inspections for interstate shipment, FSIS inspects establishments and issues a compliance report about once every four years.

Also, the federal program specifies that state inspections that convey federal marks be identical to federal inspections, including legal authorities, inspector training, computer systems and laboratory protocols. The audit report notes however, that 2013 cooperative agreements with states specify a lesser standard inconsistent with those requirements.

The GAO offered recommendations to address these issues and USDA agreed with the recommendations.

Monday Market Sentiment: Trade steady, beef remains high

Brett Wessler, Staff Writer, Cattle Trader Center

Lower corn values provide some good news for feeders in addition to beef prices recovering Friday's losses on Monday. Traders are watching the cash market as beef demand typically cools in the time between Memorial Day weekend and the Fourth of July. Our panel of industry experts predict the downward trend in cash trade to continue this week, forecasting a 33-cent decrease from the previous week to $124.29 per cwt.

The Monday Market Sentiment is a forecast of the upcoming weekly cash trade (5-Area weighted average price) prices reported by the USDA. This week's prices were down again, marking the fourth consecutive week of losses. Last week the USDA announced that cash trade for the week ending May 31st was 124.62, a 3 cent decrease from the previous week. Losses have added up over the previous month as cash trade has fallen $4.38 per cwt over four weeks.

Packers continue to see good margins, exceeding $89 per head according to the Sterling Profit Tracker. Packers are expected to continue bidding as wholesale beef prices remain at historic highs. Although wholesale beef moved lower Friday as demand typically decreases after the holiday weekend, prices moved higher on Monday to keep packers interested.

Trade may resume this week after a quiet week as packers look to restock supplies. Feeders are seeing negative margins, but lower corn values provides some positive news for the weeks and month ahead.

in Montana on Wednesday and are scheduled to lead the cattle to summer pastures in the foothills of the Little Snowy Mountains beginning June 2.

During the trip, the family will participate in ranch activities ranging from fencing to moving bulls.

The cattle drive ends Tuesday.

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Don't forget to pay your dues this month!

Your membership dues are crucial to further advancing our mission.

Check out www.lacattle.org to renew.

Top 7 reasons pasture weed control programs don't work

Eddie Funderburg, Senior Consultant, Noble Foundation

This month, I want to identify and briefly discuss the top seven reasons I see that pasture weed control programs don't work as well as they should.

A popular comedian has a top 10 list for his act, but since I'm only about 70 percent as funny as he is, I only have a top seven list.

Number 7. Spraying too early (You hit 'em where they ain't.)

Many times, ranchers spray for weeds at a specific date on the calendar – May 1, for example.

This works most of the time. However, what happens if the weather is not exactly average that year? If it's colder than average that spring, the weeds may not have emerged when you spray.

You can miss them altogether by spraying too early, i.e., when the weeds are not there yet. The solution to this one is obvious – scout the fields and spray the weeds at the proper time based on stage of growth of the weed.

Number 6. Misidentification of the weed (What was that sucker, anyway?)

All weeds are not created equal in their willingness to die from our herbicide program. Try as you might, you're not going to kill a grass or sedge with 2, 4-D unless you set the container on top of it and leave it. Among broadleaf weeds, some tougher weeds to control are more susceptible to different products.

Scout your fields and learn to identify the weeds. If you don't know what one is, ask someone who knows. After you've properly identified the weed, look at herbicide labels and find one that controls it.

Number 5. Bad environmental conditions (It's never too dry to spray...)

On about all weeds I can think of, control declines precipitously when they are in drought stress. The plants are merely trying to survive – they are not actively growing and taking up the herbicide in droughty conditions. While it may never be too dry to spray, it can be too dry to get good results.

In addition to soil moisture, pay attention to wind speed and direction to control off-target drift. Life is much simpler when you kill weeds on your property and avoid killing the neighbor's garden.

Number 4. Sprayed at the wrong growth stage (I got to it when I could.)

Most weeds are best controlled when they are young and actively growing. When they get larger, it takes more herbicide to kill them, and control is much more erratic.

Horsenettle and blackberries are an exception. Control of both of these is best when they are in full bloom or have fruit on them. Spraying them too early results in a top kill, but regrowth usually occurs. Read the label carefully to determine timings for specific weeds.

Number 3. Used the wrong product (What's the cheapest thing you've got?)

Often, the cheapest herbicide will do as well as anything else. This is true when the weeds fall into the easy-to-control category and conditions are ideal for control. For difficult-to-control weeds (Sericea lespedeza and horsenettle, for example), more expensive chemicals are usually needed.

Going the cheap route can be good if you do an excellent job of observing the cautions listed previously in this article, but may not work if conditions are less than ideal.

Number 2. Didn't calibrate sprayer (I think a tankful covers somewhere between 10 and 50 acres.)

I don't think it's an exaggeration to say the majority of ranchers don't calibrate their sprayers. This is a practice that should be done every season.

Calculating the volume you spray is critical to knowing how much product to put into the tank. When you calibrate, also inspect nozzles, screens, lines, pump, etc., to make sure everything is OK.

If you don't know how to calibrate a sprayer, the Noble Foundation soil and crops discipline has instructions for calibrating both boom and boomless sprayers. This is free to residents of Oklahoma and Texas and is available for a small fee to residents of other states.

Number 1. Didn't read the label (There's a lot of really small type on that thing.)

Reading the label covers all the other points mentioned. The label contains safety considerations, product use, container disposal and any other information about the product you need to know.

Failure to follow labeled directions cannot only lead to poor weed control, it is also a violation of federal law. Following the directions on the herbicide label is about the closest thing to getting a guarantee on weed control I can come up with.

There are many ways to conduct a weed control program that will work. Unfortunately, there are even more ways that will not work. The best chance for success lies in minimizing the incorrect ways. ***FG***

Packer margins hefty, feeding margins ugly

Greg Henderson, Editor, Associate Publisher, Drovers CattleNetwork

Profit margins for beef packers eased lower last week, and losses for cattle feeders were slightly less, but it's clear that packers hold the market leverage at this point.

Cattle feeding margins improved $5.80 per head for the week, leaving losses at an average $109 per head, according to the Sterling Beef Profit Tracker. Beef packers saw their margins decline $7 per head, with average profits now exceeding $89 per head. The Sterling Beef Profit Quotient improved 15.7 points for the week and the industry profitability index is now negative 305.1, according to estimates developed by Sterling Marketing Inc., Vale, Ore.

Pork producer margins improved $6.24 per head, with margins now a positive $4.65 per hog marketed, according to the Sterling Pork Profit Tracker. Negotiated cash hog prices gained $2.22 per hundredweight last week to $93.79. Pork packer margins declined $3.51 per head for the week, resulting in losses of $6.56 per head.

A year ago cattle feeders sold cash cattle at $120.92 per hundredweight, resulting in losses of $74.02 per head. Last year cash hogs fetched $85.14 per hundredweight, resulting in losses of $9.26 per head.

The Sterling Beef and Pork Profit Trackers are calculated using actual weekly prices for both cattle and hogs, feed costs, beef and pork cutout prices, drop credits and other factors that influence profit margins.

The **Sterling Beef Profit Tracker** for the week ending June 1:

Average feedyard margins: -$108.82 per head.

Average packer margins: $89.43 per head.

Sterling Profit Quotient: -305.1.

The **Sterling Pork Profit Tracker** for the week ending May 31:

Average farrow-to-finish margins: $4.65 per head.

Average pork packer margins: -$6.56 per head.

The Sterling Beef and Pork Profit Trackers are produced by Sterling Marketing Inc. and John Nalivka, president, Vale, Ore., and are published weekly by D*rovers/CattleNetwork, and PorkNetwork*.

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