Cow Country Reporter

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News from your CEO

This statement, "we have had a wet four months in 2015" may have been an understatement, especially after April gave us enough rain to make plenty of May flowers. Sunshine, coupled with some gentle breezes is what may make some hay for the coming winter. We are in that time of year where discounts are being seen for unweaned, balling, fleshy calves and demand for heavy yearlings (over 700 lbs.) is moderate at best. However, supply of available cattle is still a major player in the market place, as the article "What's Normal" from The Beef in our newsletter articulates. So, cow/calf producers and backgrounders keep in contact with your marketing agents to keep you from leaving "money on the table". We are still in a positive position when it comes to price for our calves and demand for replacement females continues to get better. Louisiana forages are still our "ace in the hole". We need to learn more about forages and soil health in order to reduce our input costs.

I ask you to continue having information meetings to address some of these issues. Call our market hot line weekly to get posted on current cattle prices. Enjoy the sunshine and keep those calves and yearlings gaining weight.

Dave Foster, CEO

Call to Action

CPL is now a certified organization to nominate members to the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion And Research Board, also known as Cattlemen's Beef Board. The CBB oversees the collection of the $1 per head assessment on all cattle sold in the U.S. If you are interested in the nomination, please call today for the nomination packet.

May Cattle Market Roundup

By: Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist

It's nearly May and the April showers continue in the southern plains bringing May forage. For the first time in a long time parts of western Oklahoma are experiencing flash flooding. Not only are we enjoying more rain than in many months, but the cumulative effect of continued rains, heavy in some locations, will provide better soil moisture penetration and surface water replenishment than the same moisture total in sporadic rains.

The April Cattle on Feed report pegs March feedlot placements fractionally above year ago levels, higher than expected. Placement consisted of a large increase in placements over 800 pounds with reduced placements for all weights under 800 pounds. March marketings were 98 percent of year earlier totals with one extra business day this year. The April 1 on-feed total was equal to the same time last year. Feedlot placements were up in Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska but down in Colorado, Oklahoma and Texas. Nebraska had the largest state cattle on feed total for April 1; exceeding Texas for the third month in a row. Nebraska briefly exceeded the Texas total last year on May 1 for the first time in the current cattle on feed data series back to 1992.

One third of the way through 2015, total cattle slaughter for the year to date is down 7.5 percent and beef production is down 5.3 percent. Total steer and heifer slaughter so far this year is down 7.3 percent, with heifer slaughter leading the decrease, down 8.2 percent. Total cow slaughter for the year to date is down 7.2 percent, with dairy cow slaughter up 2.1 percent and beef cow slaughter down

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May Cattle Market Roundup

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17.5 percent.

Reduced heifer and beef cow slaughter indicate that herd expansion is continuing and perhaps accelerating in 2015. The April 1 inventory of heifers on feed was the lowest quarterly heifer on feed total since October, 1996; near the end of the last complete cyclical expansion in the U.S. beef cattle industry. Improving moisture conditions in Texas and Oklahoma increase the likelihood that herd expansion plans in those areas will continue. On January 1, 2015, the combined beef replacement heifer inventories in Texas and Oklahoma accounted for 58 percent of the year over year national increase in beef replacements, which was up 4 percent.

What's Normal?

By: Cassie Fish, CassandraFish.com; Source: The Beef

Livestock analysts and traders spend a lot of energy forecasting where the market is going. This is done primarily by looking at history and seasonality. What happens though when history is being rewritten while it is being lived, as has been the case in the cattle and beef market in 2014 and 2015? Rather than adapt a fresh, forward-looking view instead the desire that "things will return to normal" seems to win out in many cases, with normal being defined as what what's been experienced in the past. And maybe humans are wired that way because it gives a sense of certainty.

In 2014 records were broken often. Record high prices for every primal and trimming category, cattle -fed, feeder, slaughter cows, breeding stock—you name it. All because of two factors- historically small cattle supplies and beef demand that turned out to be much more inelastic than any analyst, beef producer, packer or end user ever dreamed.

Throughout this bull market, lots of folks have called these new price levels "unsustainable". But sustain them we have. Choice boxed beef cutout values have traded within a few dollars of the all-time high for a month and have spent lots of time during the last 16 months above $250. Beef 90s have traded in a tight range for 3 months between $290 and $300, in spite of imports up 34% YTD. The loin primal has been setting an all-time record high for most of April 2015 and the rib has rallied as well.

So why isn't the cutout making new all-time highs easily with beef production so high? The same huge beef imports keeping a lid on beef 90s are having the same impact on the round primal and to a lesser degree the chuck primal, so both are displaying typical seasonal weakness. For today at least, there is just enough grinding material to satisfy users. Domestic cow slaughter will decline from now through July, and that decline will provide underlying support for the ends of the carcass, especially the round. If imports from Australia slow as well, then that immediately transfers to support for domestic 90s and certain cuts from the round. It was the hunt for grinding materials that contributed greatly to the blistering rally in June and July 2014.

Loin and rib prices are undeniably and impressively high, but even as kill levels increase in the coming months, production is still small by modern standards. It will be up to the consumer to decide whether to pick up that ribeye or strip steak in the coming weeks when the "rite of spring" known as outdoor grilling becomes full blown. Or will the consumer pass on beef for an alternate and cheaper protein? 2014 was full of surprises, perhaps 2015 has a few left.

Feral Hogs Present Disease Risk for Livestock and People

By: Joshua Gaskamp, The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation

Feral hogs can carry numerous diseases of importance to commercial livestock producers and human health. As the nation's feral hog population increases, so does the rate of exposure to infected hogs and potential for disease transmission. Pathogens of most concern to livestock producers include brucellosis and pseudorabies virus. These pathogens can bring devastating impacts (e.g., decreased production, animal deaths, quarantine) if infections reach commercial livestock operations resulting in economic burdens to producers. Private and governmental agencies are continually collecting samples from feral hogs to monitor for various pathogens.

Pseudorabies (PRV)

PRV is a herpesvirus, sometimes referred to as Aujeszky's disease or mad itch.PRV infects the nervous system of livestock, as well as many species of wildlife. In most species, infection rapidly leads to death with mortality rates approaching 100 percent. Only pigs are able to survive an acute infection and are the natural reservoir for the virus. Humans cannot contract PRV.

Brucellosis

Brucellosis, also known as Bang's disease or undulant fever is usually caused by the bacterium Brucella suis in hogs and Brucella abortus in cattle. However, feral hogs are capable of contracting and transmitting both pathogens. Brucellosis is primarily a reproductive tract disease that causes abortions, infertility, inflammation of testicles, reduced milk production and lameness. Infected hogs are long-term carriers and can infect wildlife, livestock and humans.

Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS)

The PRRS virus causes late-term reproductive failure and post-weaning respiratory disease in hogs. Transmission occurs through pig-to-pig contact, and some strains can aerosolize over short distances. The virus often is found in saliva, nasal secretions, urine, feces and semen. Indirect transmission can occur through external parasites. No evidence

Consumers don't care that farmers are "feeding the world"

By: Center for Food Integrity

"We're feeding the world" is a mantra often used by those involved in farming and food to build support for modern food production systems. However, the latest research from The Center for Food Integrity (CFI) shows that most consumers don't seem to care.

"The global population is forecast to reach nine billion by 2050. Feeding the nine billion will require technology and innovation that will help farmers raise more animals for food and grow more crops on the land already in production," said Charlie Arnot, CEO of CFI. "But the 'feeding the world' message won't generate public support for today's agriculture technology."

In fact the latest research from The Center for Food Integrity, "Cracking the Code on Food Issues: Insights from Moms, Millennials and Foodies," shows that only 25 percent of consumers believe, "The U.S. has a responsibility to provide food for the rest of the world."

"It's time to change the conversation," said Arnot. What consumers care about most, according to the survey, is having access to healthy, affordable food. For the last two years, that's been a top concern.

"U.S. consumers are much more interested in access to healthy, affordable food than in feeding the world," Arnot said. "Farmers are more likely to build support for today's farming by talking about how what they do on the farm helps keep healthy food affordable."

For example, share with them how modern farming innovations like genetically modified seed and indoor animal handling systems allow farmers to produce safe food using fewer resources, with the added benefit of holding down costs, he said.

"Building trusting relationships with consumers is about making what you're doing relevant to them and helping them understand that you share their values when it comes to important issues like animal care, the environment and providing healthy, affordable food " he said.

"Our peer-reviewed and published trust model tells us that communicating with shared values is three-to-five times more important to building consumer trust than simply providing information."

"Helping consumers understand that you value what's important to them goes a long way toward building trust," said Arnot.

A summary of the CFI research, "Cracking the Code on Food Issues: Insights from Moms, Millennials and Foodies," can be downloaded atwww.foodintegrity.org. Contact CFI at learnmore@foodintegrity.org.

Feral hogs present disease risk for livestock and people

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exists that humans can contractPRRS.

Tularemia

Tularemia, also known as rabbit fever, is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium Francisella tularensis. In most susceptible mammals, the clinical signs include fever, lethargy, loss of appetite, signs of sepsis and possibly death. Rodents, rabbits, white-tailed deer and feral hogs are capable of contracting and transmitting tularemia. Humans are most often infected by tick bite or through handling an infected animal.

Q Fever

Q fever is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium Coxiella burnetii. This organism may be found in hogs, cattle, sheep, goats and other domestic mammals. An infection results from contact with the milk, urine, feces, vaginal mucus or semen of infected animals. The disease can be tickborne. Humans are vulnerable to Q fever and may exhibit flu-like symptoms if infected.

Plague

Yersinia pestis is an anaerobic bacterium that is typically found in rodents. Humans and other mammals that get plague usually have been bitten by a flea carrying the bacterium or by handling an infected animal. Plague killed millions of people in Europe during the Middle Ages. Modern antibiotics are effective in treating plague, but without treatment, the disease can cause serious illness or death.

Population monitoring and research in south-central Oklahoma conducted by the Noble Foundation demonstrated the following feral hog exposure rates to these diseases: pseudorabies – 22 percent, brucellosis – 0.7 percent, PRRS – 0.3 percent, tularemia – 20 percent, Q fever – 3.4 percent, plague – 1.4 percent. The rates reflect the percentages of 283 animals tested with antibodies to these diseases detected in their blood.

Although most of these exposure rates are relatively low, it is important to exercise caution when handling feral hogs. Hunters that bag a few hogs a year may never encounter an infected animal in their lifetime, while trappers may catch enough animals to encounter one per month. Hunters and trappers should always wear gloves when handling feral hogs and cover any open cuts, scrapes or other wounds. Feral hogs can be excellent table fare, but when cooking wild pork for dinner, be sure to raise internal meat temperature to 165 F.

Some of the aforementioned diseases are of little concern to human health but are of a great concern to the health of livestock and wildlife. Prohibiting relocation of infected feral hogs to new areas is important for controlling the spread of livestock diseases. Additionally, the practice of providing small water points or supplemental feed for wildlife or livestock may increase the risk of transmission by concentrating other animals and feral hogs at these sites.

Bulb Yield and Quality of Forage Turnips

By: Kenny Simon, Dirk Phillips, John Jennings, Robert Rhein and Shane Gadberry, University of Arkansas Extension

Brassicas are an attractive choice of fall and early winter grazing for livestock. Brassicas are fast-growing, high in nutritive value and thus complement the existing forage base by closing gaps in forage production. Based on observations from on-farm demonstrations, forage turnip managed for stockpiling produced a substantial amount of bulbs in addition to the leaf yield. With proper grazing management, livestock graze the bulbs, therefore adding grazing days. However, limited information is available for bulb drymatter production and quality in the southeastern U.S.

A replicated research trial was conducted at the University of Arkansas Watershed Research and Education Center (WREC) in Fayetteville to compare total bulb dry matter production and quality of two forage turnip cultivars. The two forage turnips compared in the trial were Appin and Barkant. Appin is a product of Ampac Seed Company. Barkant is a product of Barenbrug Seed Company.

Brassicas were no-till planted on a well-firmed, disked seedbed on August 26, 2013. Prior to planting on August 26, 2013, forage growth at the experiment site was suppressed with glyphosate, and the area was disked twice then cultipacked. The seeding rates were 5 lb/acre. Preformulated NPK fertilizer and boron were applied to each plot using soil test reports and recommendations for brassica production.

The forage turnips were harveste dafter 4 months (December 3) of growth.The forage turnips produced a high proportion of bulb yield in addition to leaf yield. Bulb production was limited until the plants reached 16 to 18 inches. However, as the plant continued growing, a significant amount of bulb yield was produced (Figure 1). Both varieties produced similar bulb DMlb/acre Appin (2,882) and Barkant (2,884). Bulb yield was 47 percent and 42 percent of the total yield for Appin and Barkant, respectively. Appin produced a small, round bulb (<5”) firmly anchored in the soil. Barkant produced a moderate, oval shaped bulb (4-8”),with 50 percent of the bulb above the soil surface.

Percent CP and TDN were similar for Appin (10.9 and 78.3) and Barkant (10.0 and 80) (Figure 2). With their high digestibility and low fiber content, turnip bulbs could actually be considered as “concentrates” rather than “forage” innutritional planning for livestock.

Forage turnip bulbs have the potential for providing a high-yielding and high-quality cost-effective source of energy to livestock in late fall or early winter. Yields indicate they could be a good source of grazing even after a hard freeze (25° F) inhibits plant growth.

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