

# Cattlemán

THE MIDWEST

September 13, 2012 Volume 18 No. 8 GRASSLAND FARMING TODAY



**Charolais**  
Page 16



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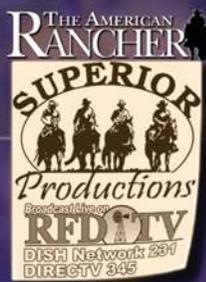
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# CATTLEMAN THE MIDWEST

September 13, 2012 Volume 18 No. 8

GRASSLAND FARMING TODAY

## NET FARM INCOME TO REACH RECORD HIGHS

By John Maday

High crop prices and crop insurance payouts will drive U.S. net farm income to over \$122 billion for 2012, according to a new report from USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS). Income from livestock also will post a year-to-year increase, tempered by dramatically higher input costs.



The report, updated on August 28, projects higher receipts for cattle and calves through 2012, based on higher prices for all classes of cattle. The authors note, however, that beef and veal exports are expected to decline during 2012, largely due to strengthening of the U.S. dollar rela-

*continued on page 10*

## MISSOURI BEEF TOUR SURVEY TELLS SERIOUS STORY

The 2012 Missouri Beef Tour drew a crowd of nearly 300 cattle producers from Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma and Arkansas to Lawrence County.

Tour hosts were Shiloh Land and Cattle Co., Jackie Moore Ranch, Dustin and Scynthia Schnake and Clif and Alice Harrington. In addition, attendees viewed beef and forage research projects at the University of Missouri's Southwest Research Center just south of Mt. Vernon.

"During the tour guests were asked to complete a survey regarding their plans to cope with the drought," said Eldon Cole, a livestock specialist with MU Extension. "We learned a lot from the 85 surveys that were filled out and returned."

The first question asked producers how far into the winter their current forage supply would take them. The majority (34.1 percent) felt they could make it until March 1. April 1 received a 25.6 percent vote and 17.1 percent felt they could only make it until January 1. Exactly 17 percent said they would run out of forage by December 1.

The second question asked, "Will you have more, less or the same number of beef cows next April as you have now?" Forty-nine per-

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## RMA ALTERS COVER CROP RULES

USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) has announced that farmers will be allowed to plant cover crops for haying or grazing without affecting crop insurance on that ground.

Policy holders may be required to stop haying or grazing in the spring and will be required to terminate the cover crop. RMA will release more information about this policy in November. Planting a cover crop may help ease the forage shortage for cattle producers this fall.

Forty-six agricultural organizations have joined forces to push Congress to pass a new farm bill before the end of September. The coalition, called Farm Bill Now, is made up of groups representing

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## NCBA URGES EPA TO NOT LOWER THE DUST STANDARD

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) clearly spelled out its opposition to any attempt by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to lower the coarse particulate matter (PM) National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) in its official comments submitted to the agency last week.

PM, which includes both urban and rural dust, is regulated under the Clean Air Act. Cattle ranches in arid states can have a difficult time meeting the PM standard due to windblown dust and dust kicked up by cattle movements. Because of arid climates and natural phenomenon, it is difficult for some cattle operations to ensure compliance with the current standard despite the use of best management practices.

"The fact is there is only so much that farmers and ranchers can do to mitigate dust on their operations. Mother Nature controls the rest," said Ashley McDonald, NCBA deputy environmental counsel. "Our members implement dust control measures, ranging from soil conservation to fugitive dust control plans using best available control measures, which they implement every day of every year while supplying America with the food that it needs."

If EPA chooses to lower the dust standard in the final rule, cattle producers may be faced with increased regulation and other negative con-

*continued on page 10*

## MU INTRODUCES QUALITY BEEF BY THE NUMBERS

By Brenda Black

Nearly 250 beef industry representatives attended the Quality Beef By The Numbers (QB) program rollout at the Hilton Garden Inn, Columbia, MO, on August 30. Key players-- including University of Missouri chancellors, president, and researchers, along with breed association, feed yard, packing plant and AI company representatives--

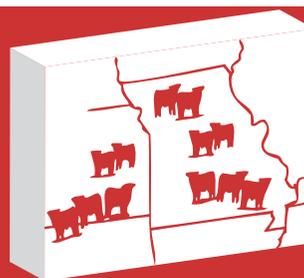


introduced a long-anticipated game plan. QB comes on the heels of the highly successful Show-Me Select Replacement Heifer Program, which has increased profits for Missouri beef producers to the tune of \$60 million since 1997, with 100,000 enrolled heifers. As SMS continues to grow, QB system developers are optimistic this subsequent tactic will equal or surpass its predecessor's success.

The newly launched MU initiative intends "to improve the profitability of beef cow-calf operations by facilitating the adoption of applied reproductive and genetic technologies that will add value to beef cattle produced and marketed in the U.S." It adds to its mission statement the goal to "contribute to improvements in beef quality to satisfy increasing domestic and global demand for high-quality beef." A multi-faceted partnership is working together on this project in hopes for another touch down for Missouri Beef producers from start to finish.

Director of Missouri Department of Agriculture Jon Hagler cheers the Quality Beef By The Numbers endeavor as a critical and profitable move.

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# From Our Outfit



What's on your list of things to do? Do you have one? Even if you haven't taken the time to write it down... chances are you have a 'list'. My wife says she has a 'list' – I tell her that it's not officially a real 'list' unless she writes it down. Then... when she does write it down, I'm sorry I mentioned it. I have a friend whose wife puts his lists on the refrigerator where he will surely find it... on a note pad with the clever heading: "Hop to it!"

Lists change. Some things get done; some things become less important; sometimes you just run out of time and the opportunity to get something done is gone... so it falls off the list. Sometimes it falls off until next year, sometimes it falls off forever.

Fall lists are usually long. There

are things to fix, things to paint, and with every job there are things to 'find'. There are things to clean, things to plant, things to harvest, things to sell and we all know there are things to buy. It's not uncommon to have several 'shopping lists'. There is a list for the hardware, one for the feed store, another for the lumber yard and still another for the vet supply. There's a list of people to call – when is the vet coming? Has that fuel tank been filled yet? We need a load of gravel. Can you haul calves Monday? What's the market doing? Put me on your list for some dirt work. Are you cutting hair today? Are the kids coming this weekend?

And if that isn't enough, there are important items on our daily list, a weekly list and what we do each month. Add to those the things we saw yesterday that needed to be done last week. There is mineral to put out, weeds to cut, and that gate is almost off its hinges. Remember... that cow needs doctored, that heifer needs checked, and have we 'wormed' that dog yet?

Those who are known to organize... have learned to departmentalize. There are lists of things to 'winterize', synchronize, fertilize, immunize, cauterize, but hopefully none to euthanize... but it can happen in the real world. When it comes to making

a list, what one really must do is... get serious and prioritize.

When it comes to making a good list, timing is everything. The list made on a Monday can be very different than one you come up with on Friday afternoon. The one made on someone's wedding day won't even resemble the one made on their 40th anniversary – Lists change. I suspect if you could sit down with someone who has lived a long life, perhaps someone who has said 'goodbye' to a lifelong friend or partner recently, and talk for a while... the making of lists might take on a whole new tone. I remember on 9/11... how ev-

erything just stopped. How, in an instant, what were priorities for everyone all changed – lists just disappeared – and when they re-appeared – they were all different.

Fall is here. Make those lists... but as you do make sure you get all the right stuff on them. Get things done, but remember, some things can wait until next week, even next year... and some things can't. Some 'opportunities' will fall off of that list forever... so make your list and ... 'Hop to it'!

KwC



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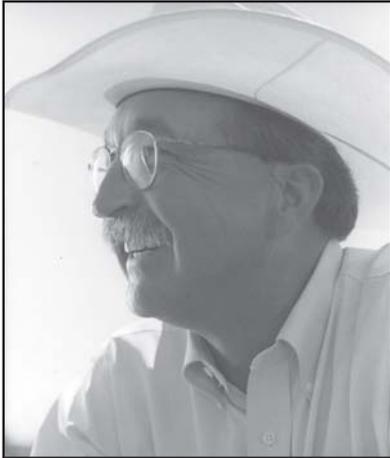
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Twice, during the past year, I have wished for a tool that is no longer available to the average consumer. Last winter, when my farm was infiltrated by a pair of obnoxious beavers that had dammed the creek and created flooded fields, and again this summer when a large corner post broke off and the hole needed to be re-dug in drought-hardened soil, I found myself longing for a mere quarter of a stick of dynamite.

Growing up on an Ozarks farm back in the 1950's and 60's, my father could walk into almost any hardware

store and purchase however much dynamite he wished—and he did quite often. There were no forms to fill out, licenses to pay for, or background checks to perform. You simply told the owner how much you needed and he'd go in the back room and wrap up (carefully) however many sticks you requested and ring up the sale. As long as I could remember, there

was always dynamite stored in the fruit cellar, right inside the door on the top shelf to the left.

I remember watching, with a kid's amazement, as Dad reclaimed a productive creek-bottom farm by logging out the huge oak trees and blowing the stumps out of the ground with dynamite. According to my father, hiring a bulldozer was too ex-

pensive and, "was a waste of both good lumber...and dirt."

My father even used dynamite to 'blow out' the side of a steep hill and make a fairly level building site for the home in which I was raised. Granted, we had to use the wheelbarrow to move hundreds of loads of rock and dirt, but the dynamite had reduced boulders and hard

*continued on page 26*



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A Cutting-Edge Publication

### Editor/Advertising

Keith Carmichael  
417-644-2993 Fax 417-644-7748  
mwc@centurytel.net

### Advertising in KS or OK

Brenda Black  
660-696-2333

### Design/Layout

Emily Elmore  
Single Wing Creative  
Off. 816-807-8899  
Fax. 866-611-0490

### Printing Dates

<b>Spring 2013</b>	<b>Fall 2012</b>
Feb. 7 Red Angus	Aug. 9 Gelbvieh
Feb. 28 Hereford	Aug. 23 Simmental
Mar. 14 Salers	Sept. 13 Charolais
Apr. 4 Brahman Infl.	Oct. 4 Angus
Apr. 25 Limousin	Oct. 25 Shorthorn

Subscription rate is \$15.00 Per Yr.

\$25.00 For Two Years  
Send address changes to:

The Midwest Cattleman  
3760 NE 1000 Rd.  
Lowry City, MO 64763

**Cover: Courtesy of  
The Charolais Journal**

## DROUGHT AND COW SLAUGHTER

By Ron Plain, Extension Economist, UMC



which is a big part of why corn has been above \$8 per bushel lately. Cattlemen have been hit doubly hard by the drought. High corn prices have reduced what feedlots can pay for feeder cattle at the same time the drought has stopped pasture growth. The price of a 775-pound steer typically averages \$10/cwt higher in August than in March. This year, prices were \$16/cwt lower in August than March.

One might expect the worst drought in over 20 years to cause major herd liquidation, but that may not be the case. The 2011 drought had a big impact on beef cow slaughter. This year's drought not so much, at least not yet. For farmers and ranchers in the south central U.S., this summer was not as bad as last. The 2011 drought was concentrated in the southern plains with Texas and Oklahoma hit especially hard. Those two states have 23% of the nation's beef cows so they are important.

Last year, every week from mid July through early October saw beef cow slaughter that was up at least 10% compared to a year earlier. In total, beef cow slaughter was up 20% for those 13 weeks. This summer,

beef cow slaughter has been below the year-earlier level. Through late August 2012 beef cow slaughter was down 11% compared to the same period in 2011.

Why the difference? Location matters. Texas and Oklahoma are states that typically have mild winters, so hay production is not a big factor. When pastures in the southern plains dried up in 2011, cows went to town. There was very little else available to feed them.

This summer's drought was more widespread and farther north. Pastures turned brown but many northern producers had the option of feeding the hay they had baled for the coming winter. Corn is also a major crop in the Midwest, and this year a lot more than normal has been chopped for silage. Between hay and silage, many producers have been able to keep cows on the farm through the summer and until weaning.

Most analysts expect a jump in beef cow slaughter this fall once spring calves are weaned. Many producers have little alternative to selling cows. They have already fed their winter hay supply.

It is unlikely this year's drought will have the impact on the cow herd of the less severe 2011 drought. The drought pushed up feed costs and

brought down cattle prices more than the 2011 drought did. Even so, feeder cattle prices are high enough to encourage herd expansion.

In those few regions of the country that were spared from the drought, cattlemen are likely to save back more heifers than normal and cull fewer old cows. The economics of the cow-calf business is good if you have grass. The futures market is predicting that feeder cattle prices will be record high in 2013 for the fourth consecutive year. That is a strong signal to expand herd size.

Although beef cow slaughter has been running below last year, dairy cow slaughter is up 5% compared to the first eight months of 2011. Milk prices are well below cost of production and that relationship is not expected to change any time soon. The combination of lower beef cow slaughter and higher dairy cow slaughter means total cow slaughter is down 3.7% compared to 2011. That is not a big enough decline to allow for an increase in the nation's cow herd. The odds are good the 2013 calf crop will be smaller than this year's production.



It was a miserably hot and dry summer for much of the Midwest. A greater portion of the country experienced drought this summer than any year since the 1950s. USDA's weekly pasture condition report says 59% of U.S. pastures were in poor or very poor condition at the start of September. For Missouri pastures, the number was a staggering 99% poor or very poor. Kansas pastures were rated 89% poor or very poor at the start of September.

Media attention has been focused on the corn crop, which is certainly bad. The per acre corn yield is expected to be the lowest since 1995

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## MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR FEED AND NUTRITION DOLLARS

By Stephen B. Blezinger,  
PhD, PAS

### Part 1

Most of the experts are telling us that we may see unprecedented feed and grain costs this coming fall and winter as a result of the very dry weather conditions in the Midwest where a huge amount of our grains normally originate. With grains, proteins and by-products already at record levels, the typical cattle producer is facing significantly higher production expenses and resultant lower profit margins.

So once again we are faced with the task of evaluating strategies that can help us through a challenging period. Over the last few years we have had to deal with sig-

nificant drought and much lower forage production in various areas around the country. Aside from the drought in the Midwest which has

had a major effect on crop production, just last summer we saw a dev-



astating drought in Texas and surrounding areas that reduced forage production to little or nothing. While some of these drought conditions still persist, at least to some degree in this area, for the most part forage conditions are dramatically different. The point, however, is that this was a situation that af-

*continued on page 19*

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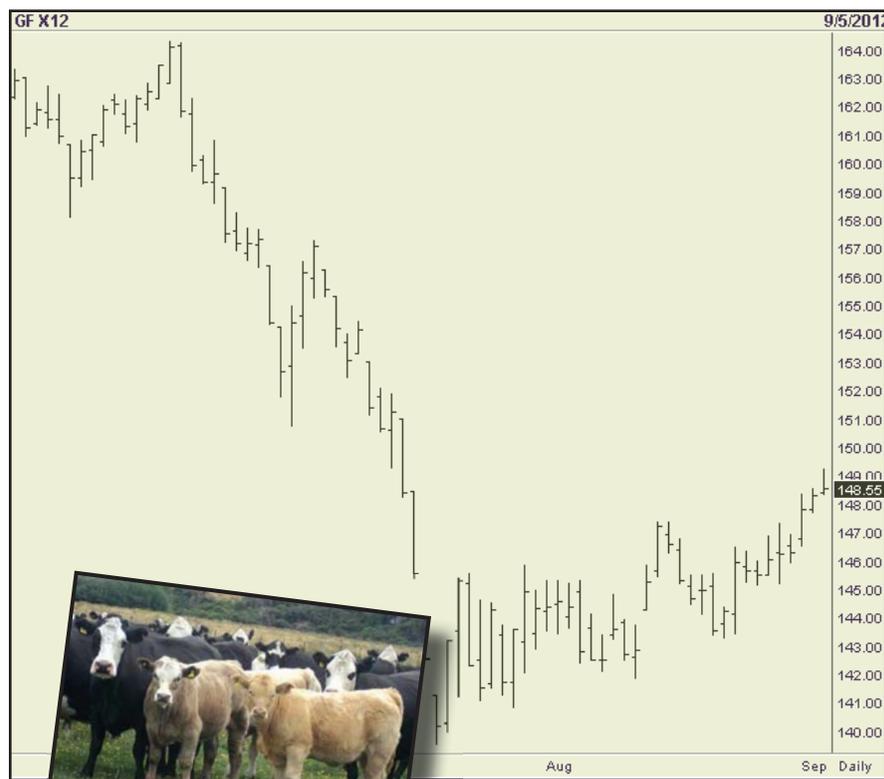
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## Live Cattle:

The news out of Japan is good news. Maybe our exports will pick up now. The way I read it probably will be in the December to February time frame when we actually start to see results. Waiting on this ruling by the Japanese Health Ministry has reminded me of the old proverb “All is good to those who wait”. Well, we waited.....and now it’s good.

I’m still bullish this fat cattle market long term. The short term has really been ho-hum. ‘Just can’t seem to get anything going here. It’s been a really quiet cattle market with no real sense of direction. An interesting note here is that since the first of April this year, the December fat cattle contract has gone up and either touched or barely penetrated the \$129.00 area a total of 8 times. What is it about that price level that we can’t get through? Is it some kind of mental barrier that we just can’t penetrate? Wish I had the answer. For right now, I’m pretty well content to sit on the sidelines and wait for this market to give me a more bullish signal. My money says that we’ll quickly march up to the \$132.50 area if we can ever get through the \$129.00 barrier.

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## What Does this Report Mean to Me?

**Q: Given the current drought situation, what should I be doing with my cattle herd in regard to marketing?**

**A:** I had a good friend who spent his entire life in Western Oklahoma. He’s gone now...I miss him. He farmed and “ranched” out there in the red dry dirt. He told me one time, “Man, every decision you make during a drought will be a bad one, so don’t make too many”.

**Q: Is now the time to be hedging my feeder cattle for this fall or winter?**

**A:** No. Like the cat, be patient. I see this market making one more attempt to test the lows.....don’t know just when it will do this, but there’s a good probability it will. I’d like to see this market go lower in the short term and then I’d fully expect it to get real interesting real quick. If you have to market your feeders in the meantime, buy back call options to make up for any upside you missed. Don’t just think about it, do it.

# LONGEVITY OF FEMALES IMPROVES BOTTOM LINE

By Dr. George Perry,  
South Dakota State



Research has indicated it takes the net revenue from approximately six calves to cover the development and production costs of each replacement heifer. In addition, any cow that misses a single calving is not likely to recover the lost revenue of that missed calf. Therefore, longevity of a beef female is very important to the sustainability and profitability of any beef operation.

Considering the importance of longevity, an important question is as follows: Why are females culled from a beef herd? Accord-

ing to the 2008 NAHMS survey the greatest percentage of cows culled from the herd were for pregnancy status (33.0 percent); other reasons for culling included age or bad teeth (32.1 percent), economic reasons (14.6 percent), other reproductive problems (3.9 percent), producing poor calves (3.6 percent), temperament (3.6 percent), injury (2.9 percent), udder problems (2.7 percent),

bad eyes (1.8 percent), and other problems (1.8 percent).

“Furthermore, 15.6 percent of animals culled were less than five years of age and 31.8 percent were five to nine years of age. These females that are culled from a herd prior to producing six calves increase the developmental cost of other heifers and do not contribute to the profitability and sustainability of the farm.

To achieve maximum lifetime productivity, heifers need to calve by 24 months of age, and heifers

that lose a pregnancy or conceive late in the breeding season are likely to not have enough time to rebreed during a defined breeding season. In addition, heifers that calve early with their first calf have a longer post-partum interval and are more likely to breed back as two year olds and continue to calve early in the calving season. This is important to overall profitability since age of calf at weaning is the single largest factor affecting weaning weight.

*continued on page 24*

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## NCBA URGES

*continued from page 3*

sequences. "A more stringent PM standard will lead to employment impacts and economic dislocation. Current operations have a difficult time meeting the current PM standard and further tightening the standard would have disastrous effects on America's rural economies," the comments state, adding that a tougher standard would, "disproportionately affect those very areas where rural, coarse PM predominates and would result in economic dislocation with documented health impacts."

McDonald made it clear that if the PM NAAQS is further reduced, it will be virtually impossible for current agricultural facilities, includ-

ing feedlot operations, to demonstrate compliance despite the lack of evidence showing any negative health effects from rural dust at normal levels.

"Over the past 30 plus years, many experienced medical and public health experts in respiratory diseases, epidemiology, toxicology and clinical treatment have noted that coarse PM has never been demonstrated to have adverse health effects at ambient levels," said McDonald. "The PM standard should be based on sound science. EPA has not presented such evidence; therefore the standard should not be lowered."

EPA intends to publish a final PM standard by Dec. 14.

NCBA



## MISSOURI BEEF TOUR

*continued from page 3*

cent indicated they would have fewer cows. Their average percent reduction in cows was 17.4 percent. The range went from 5 percent to 50 percent less. Only 5 replies (6.1 percent) felt they would increase their cow numbers this winter. Thirty-eight farmers said they would remain the same in beef cow inventory in the next 8 months.

The last question asked, "What management practice will you employ to extend your forage supply?" There were a wide va-

riety of practices suggested. The two top vote-getters were to save forage by various practices and plant emergency pasture species. Saving forage edged out the planting plans by a 25 percent to 24.4 percent vote.

The forage saving ideas included: strip grazing, rotating pastures, limit feeding of hay, buying improved hay rings and restricting time to graze pastures. Planting emergency grazing crops saw wheat, ryegrass, cereal rye and turnips as crops being planted soon.

*continued on page 23*

## NET FARM INCOME

*continued from page 3*

tive to international currencies.

Input prices, as producers know, have risen dramatically. The prices-paid index for Production Items, Interest, Taxes, and Wage rates (PITW), a measure of total expenses, has risen 82 percent since 2002 according to the report. During the same period, the Producer Price Index for Finished Goods rose 40 percent. Through July of this year, PITW prices-paid index had risen by 5.4 percent.

Other key points in the report include:

Drought will reduce corn and soybean supplies to their lowest level in nine years, and resulting high prices will drive crop receipts up for calendar year 2012.

Farm equity is expected to increase to an all-time high of almost \$2.3 trillion.

Dairy supplies exceed demand, leading to depressed dairy prices for 2012.

The major crop-related expenses are predicted to rise \$5 billion, or nine percent, much less than in 2011. The index for fertilizer prices will rise just 3.5 percent this year, compared with 30 percent in 2011. The index for fuel prices will rise just 2.5 percent this year, after increasing by 223 percent between 2003 and 2011.

Median total farm household income increased by 5.4 percent in 2011, to \$57,067, and is expected to increase another 1.2 percent in 2012, to \$57,762. Households that operate commercial farms, deriving most of their income from farming, saw a 7.9 percent increase in income from farming in 2011, to a median income of \$84,697.

Government direct payments to producers are expected to total \$11.1 billion in 2012, a 6.3-percent increase over the 2011 program payments.

CattleNetwork.com



## MU INTRODUCES

*continued from page 3*

"This is a giant step forward for Missouri Ag...The commitment that we have in this state of raising the highest quality livestock and utilizing the best environmental and humane practices remains at an all-time high...With this program, we've come together for one cause -- to advance Ag in this state and nation and continue to provide the safest, most affordable food supply in the world...Today is the time where we take that giant step and once again prove, that here in Missouri, that this is the place where Ag does business...This is one powerful movement and we are proud to be part of this."

Piece by piece, the plan unfolded. Program development history, funding, consumer demand, genetics, technology, marketing, guidelines, fees, and finishing contracts were explained throughout the day. At its core, Quality Beef By The Numbers has three key objectives:

1. Support the adoption of reproductive and genetic technologies that will add value to beef cattle produced and marketed in the U.S.

2. Provide access to marketing grids that reward producers of high-quality cattle.

3. Provide beef producers with access to a comprehensive data base that will support improvements in management and marketing of cattle from conception to harvest.

Mike Kasten, QB Program Director, who'll be coordinating efforts with Irsik and Doll Feed Services Inc., Pratt Feeders, LLC; the University of Missouri; Certified Angus Beef Program; Accelerated Genetics; Genex Cooperative, Inc; and Select Sires MidAmerica, summarizes how far we've come in beef reproductive technology to make this possible.

"We got serious in our own operation 38 years ago," he begins. "Using ampules to artificially inseminate our cattle. And back then, the best thing we had for stimulating cows was a Gomer bull. I would never have thought about the technology we have today. The fact that we can make an appointment on what time and what day and know that we're going to be

successful. And putting the genomic aspects into EPDs so that producers can take that information and go home with it. What a set of tools to produce a high quality finished product!"

Some of these tools are now available thanks to grants from an Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) that focused on improving sustainability through improving feed efficiency of animals. In 2010, AFRI funded three awards in the amount of \$5 million each to Dr. Jerry Taylor, Curator's Professor in Animal Science, University of Missouri, and co-workers.

With such resources, Taylor has answered tough questions like "Is there any way that we can produce accurate marbling EPDs on young animals?" His answer is a resounding, "Yes! It's called genomic DNA of animals. You can do it at birth by pulling a few hairs out of the tail head of a calf."

Placing such futuristic tools into the hands of producers today equips them with the ability to predict and use that information to make breeding decisions, says Taylor.

Better breeding decisions mean better cattle coming out of Missouri and more money for the one who orchestrates it all -- the cow/calf man. "There's a lot of premium available for high quality cattle," says Scott Brown, MU's Research Assistant Professor, Agricultural and Applied Economics. But he cautions producers that much of that is lost when calves are sold at weaning. Brown sees the day when Missouri beef cattlemen get a bigger piece of the pie and gain much needed knowledge for breeding decisions ahead.

"Once you lose any kind of ownership," he explains, "you lose the ability to track that animal. Maybe this is a chance to take advantage of quality cattle that grade prime and can bring a lot of added value to producers. It's the overall management that is important to that recipe."

In order for this program to capitalize on added value, it will take the expert genomic technology that is now user friendly and more attainable, as well as the valuable carcass feedback



secured by working hand-in-hand with feed yard managers. It's also going to take the dedication of producers. Participating farms and ranches will pay \$300 each calendar year for membership in the program. They must be BQA certified and follow a specific health and nutrition protocol outlined at [www.quality-beef.com](http://www.quality-beef.com). But in the end, says Larry Corah, Vice President, Certified Angus Beef®, the investment gets you more bang for your beef buck.

"Part of the membership is access to the grid and marketing concepts to access these premiums," he says, as one of the team members of QB. "And we all know, marketing is the name of the game."

As cow/calf producers see the benefits for retaining ownership and securing critical data on calves identified all the way to finish, Brown believes they'll get on board. "This is a work in progress, and we don't know how potentially big this will get in front of us," he says. "We're trying to define some opportunities for producers to take advantage of what value added can mean for them. It's a full start-to-finish value program."

Kasten is excited to approach the challenge of aiding beef cattlemen in providing high-quality beef for an ever-growing population in spite of a declining supply, through the tools available with Quality Beef By The Numbers. "I'm thankful to have the privilege to do this job," he says. "I know we are usually putting out fires in this business. This is a long-range thing and there is nothing fast about the cattle business, but it's faster than it used to be with this kind of program. Consider being a part of this by asking: 'Where are you going to be five or ten years from now and where are you going to position yourself?'"



# FEED INVENTORY PLANNING



Drought conditions have many producers thinking about what to feed now and well into the future. Not only is there concern about the price, but also availability. With availability comes the question of how much should be purchased now and what will be available later?

With the persistent dry conditions, many states across the country are struggling with the same problems and helping producers to be as prepared as possible is important. In South Dakota some of the ethanol plants have reduced operations or closed due to the high price and questionable availability of corn. As a result there will be a substantially reduced supply of distillers grains (wet, modified, or dry) available to livestock producers. Livestock producers are looking for solutions and feed alternatives that can be utilized. There are some options available; however finding them at a reasonable price, determining the nutrient value and how they can be incorporated into the diet can put producers into uncharted territory. For instance, there has been more silage put up across the state of South Dakota this year than years past, but the quality is not that of "normal" silage. Much of the corn did not pollinate, therefore there is little to no grain on the cobs, reducing the energy density of the ensiled feed. Many people who have never chopped silage before are doing so this year, so some silage may have been chopped too wet or too dry, and getting the pile packed correctly is a critical component to proper fermentation. All of these factors can lead to a silage product that is questionable in quality and warrants a lab test to determine how it will fit into the diet. The other major concern with the failed corn crop is the level of nitrate it contains. Ensiling the corn can decrease the nitrates by 20-50%, however this is dependent on whether or not the

silage fermented properly. In order to determine the nitrate level before feeding the silage, use a probe to collect a sample from within the pile and send it to a lab for analysis. Not only is nitrate a concern with drought-stressed corn silage, but also oats, barley, millet, sudan, sorghum, weeds (kochia, pigweed, lambsquarter, Russian thistle, etc), and drought stressed soy-

beans, among others.

In order to prepare and plan for the feed inventory needed throughout the fall and winter, the key is to have a nutrient analysis conducted on the feeds. If a choice needs to be made between similar feeds or supplements, use the nutrient analysis and the cost to determine the most economical option for the operation. Calculate this

on a cost per pound of nutrient basis. Other considerations in the decision deal with handling, equipment and delivery. Don't select a feed that will require capital purchases to handle or deliver, especially when it may only be fed for a very short period of time.

South Dakota State University



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# DROUGHT IMPACTS ON THE BEEF COW HERD COULD ACCELERATE THIS FALL

It is difficult to estimate just how much impact the drought this year has had on the cow herd. Beef cow slaughter for the year to date is down nearly 11 percent from last year, a smaller decline than previously expected. While this indicates some additional herd liquidation, just how much more beef cow slaughter would have declined without a drought is uncertain. Perhaps even more uncertain is what is happening with replacement heifers. The inventory of beef replacement heifers was up slightly at the beginning of the year but the drought could be forcing producers to divert more heifers into feeder cattle markets rather than entering the herd as breeding animals. The number of heifers on feed on July 1 was up slightly from last year. The combination of cow slaughter and heifer placement into the herd will determine the year over year changes in the beef cow herd inventory.

Whatever level of liquidation has already occurred leaves the important question of whether producers have made enough adjustments relative to forage conditions and winter hay supplies. There are some anecdotal indications that minimal adjustments in cattle numbers have been made in some areas leaving those operations especially vulnerable to winter weather conditions. Pasture and range conditions remain very bad in many regions, though most areas have shown slight improvement recently. Percent of pastures and ranges rated

as poor to very poor are 59 percent for the entire country with higher percentages for the Great Plains (77 percent); Corn Belt (69 percent); and Southern Plains (66 percent) along with the Western region at 54 percent. These are slightly offset by significant improvement in pasture conditions in the Southeast and Northeast.

Poor summer grazing conditions this year are accompanied by severely reduced hay production. The August USDA Crop Production report included estimates of 2012 alfalfa and other hay production for the U.S. and for most states. Alfalfa hay production is estimated to decrease by 21.5 percent and other hay production is projected to decrease by 13.3 percent compared to the 2006-2010 average. These combine for an estimated 2012 all hay production for the U.S. that is 17.3 percent smaller than the 2006-2010 average and would be the smallest total U.S. hay production since 1976. This estimate includes 21 states with all hay production down by more than 10 percent and includes 13 states with reductions in excess of 20 percent. Current year hay production plus May 1 hay stocks represent the total supply of hay available going into the winter. Total U.S. May 1 hay stocks were 5.9 percent above the 2006-2010 average but this masks the fact that hay stocks were down more than 10 percent in 14 states, including several states impacted by drought in 2011 or 2012 or both years.

Oklahoma State University



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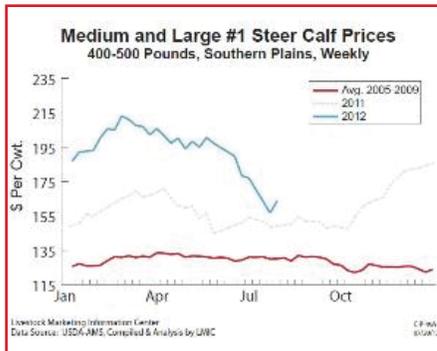
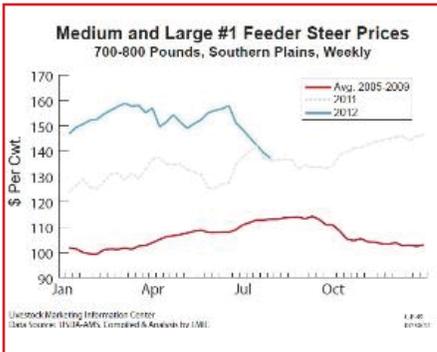
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# DROUGHT CHALLENGES BRING OPPORTUNITIES

By Steve Swigert

In September 2012 with drought conditions covering much of the nation, there are many challenges for cattle producers in the United States. Grain and feed prices have skyrocketed, hay is in short supply, pasture conditions are predominantly poor to very poor, and cattle prices have dropped significantly in the last 60 days.

While prices for 500-to-700-pound calves have dropped in the last 60 days from historic highs, it is important to remember that today's price is still higher than the prices for most of 2011 and the five-year average of 2006 to 2011.



There is an opportunity for cattle producers. Some ranches have received rain, many were understocked from last year's drought, and several produced some hay this spring. Since most producers are grass-based and the cost of gains in the feed yards is ranging from \$115 per hundredweight to \$125 per hundredweight, the market is creating a situation where cattle weight gain on grass is very valuable.

The prices for calves weaned and sold in the next 60 days will likely continue to be under pressure with the lack of forage and high feed prices. However, if those 500-pound calves can be bought near today's price in the low to mid \$140 per hundredweight range and marketed at near the \$140 feeder cattle market, then the value of that additional

gain will be close to \$140 per hundredweight.

If a stocker operator can add that gain with grass (e.g., small grains pasture), then the margins could be significant for that operation. Even if the calves are fed on-farm instead of grazed, there are margins for the producer if the cost of the feed doesn't go any higher than today and gains of

the cattle are good. For the cow-calf producer, margins are still there to wean, precondition and retain calves for a longer period. This allows the cow-calf producer to avoid the \$8 to \$12 hundredweight discount of selling a freshly weaned calf, while enabling him to take advantage of the margin created by the additional gain of the calves. This will also allow for these calves to be sold outside of the time frame when many calves are coming to market from

operations that are not able or willing to precondition the calf crop.

Each producer should analyze his or her individual ranch situation when making a marketing or purchasing decision this fall. Analyze an opportunity before selling weaned calves for the cow-calf producer or buying weaned calves for the stocker producer because there will be opportunities in this market.

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# MANAGING PASTURES

By Bruce Anderson,  
University of Nebraska

Today let's play a little game of 'what if'. As in 'what if it rains'? What if your pastures and hay meadows green up and grow. Should you graze? Will you succumb to the temptation?

As tempting as it may be to give your animals some nice green grass, resist that temptation. If you do graze, it might do more harm to your grass than if it did not rain at all.

How can that be? To understand this risk, we need to review what

happens when a dormant plant starts to grow. When a dormant plant starts to green up and grow, like in the spring following winter or after a rain during a drought, the plant mobilizes nutrients from its root system to energize the initial growth. This process actually weakens the root system and the plant temporarily. As the plant grows and produces more leaves, those leaves eventually harvest enough sunlight energy to replace the nutrients used during the green up process.

However, if some of the leaves are removed by grazing before they replace the nutrients used during green up, the plant will try to mobilize even more root nutrients to restart the process. At this time of year though (going into fall), the plant actually needs to increase root nutrients for winter survival. If grazing prevents that from happening, plants will go into winter in a very weakened condition. Some

*continued on page 24*



## The pasture is depleted and cattle are hungry, now what?

By Stu Ellis

Corn Belt farmers with pasture and forage crops will do well to develop a renovation and rejuvenation strategy following the damage caused by the drought. With cattle prices expected to rebound sharply in the next two to three years, the opportunity to rebuild herds and develop forage supplies will be high on many checklists for

the fall and winter.

The drought destroyed forage supplies for many head of livestock and subsequently many were marketed earlier than the normal schedule. Some producers have exited the business, but others who are hanging on despite record high prices for hay, will quickly want to restore pasture and forage resources.

*continued on page 25*

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# OKLAHOMA RAIN RAISES WHEAT PASTURE PROSPECTS



By Derrell S. Peel,  
Oklahoma State University

Much of Oklahoma has received some rain recently, with a broad swath of the state receiving significant rain. Recent rain totals vary from less than one inch up to about three inches. Moisture combined with cooler temperatures (and cooler soil temperatures) has wheat producers thinking about planting wheat for grazing. While conditions are developing favorably at this time, additional timely moisture will be needed to make wheat pasture a reality. Nevertheless, some wheat planting could begin in the next couple of weeks.

Market conditions for winter

grazing appear to be favorable as well, though producers may need to consider stocker enterprises that are somewhat different than the traditional stocker system. Historically, there is a strong preference for very lightweight stockers in Oklahoma, with many stocker calves purchased in the 375-500 pound range. With typical winter gains,

this often results in feeders marketed in late February or early March at weights ranging from 675 to 750 pounds. This system worked well in the past and, in fact was often the most economical stocker alternative. Cattle markets have changed dramatically and may make this system much less attractive if not infeasible this year.

The 2012 drought reduced feeder prices this summer with impacts expected to continue until next summer due to high

grain prices. Lightweight calf and stocker prices dropped sharply through July but have bounced back strongly in the past two weeks. Four-weight steer prices in Oklahoma have increased about \$15/cwt. since the end of July. Heavy feeder prices dropped less than calves but have recovered only about \$4/cwt. in the past month.

The result is a feeder price pattern that has again developed the increasingly familiar bent

*continued on page 26*



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# ASCHERMANN CHAROLAIS IN THE GAME TO WIN

By Brenda Black

Peggy Aschermann, by her husband Larry's admission, is an All Star at softball. She's a national champion and in the Softball Hall of Fame, she's traveled near and far as a player and coach. Ironically her athletic career parallels Larry's sport and business of raising Charolais cattle in Southwest Missouri. Larry is devoted to the Charolais team, he's played the beef game since he was 13 and he's racked up championship titles. One look at his long and varied history, coupled with his current success, indicates he's still swinging for the fence.

"Our goals are simple: To produce Charolais based seed stock that are easy calving, fast growing, highly maternal and produce a premium grade carcass" Aschermann says. "Because top quality and yield grade is important in every seed stock program, we have used almost exclusively pedigrees with proven carcass results."

Aschermann abbreviates his ranch name to ACE, but the "E" can stand for much. "Enterprises, extraordinary, eccentric – all kinds of things," says Aschermann. Though the "E" is variable, many things at ACE never change. "We've got EPDs and performance and carcass data and all the wonderful things of the world, but it really boils down to a handful of

basic, simple things," he explains. "Eye appeal and disposition. It's not fun to run from an ugly cow!"

Another thing matters, Aschermann claims. "I'm a couple months from the average age of the commercial cattleman according to an NCBA survey. And I'm 65. There's so many things that I will not do today that even ten years ago I did do. You gotta raise

convenient cattle, whatever breed you have. So two highly important traits are disposition along with calving ease. If you've got to look at them, they just as well be pretty."

His philosophy is based on a lifetime of insider knowledge in the beef business. Larry Aschermann has traversed the industry working for multiple breed associations, as an importer of cattle from France and as a manager of the cattle production for Monsanto. He's a past president of the Missouri Livestock Marketing Association, he served on the Governor's Advisory Council for Agriculture and was on the very first Cattleman's Beef Board when the Checkoff was brand spanking new.

"All I've ever done was some form of cattle business," he says.

Aschermann attests that through all of these ventures he

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was never one to beat around the bush. "I lack a little diplomacy, but I always tell the truth and I always have everybody's best interest in mind."

At times being too far out in front of your customer base, he says, "can cause you to end up with a bloody nose."

Aschermann explains: "In the first year at the Diamond Stockyard, we had preconditioned feeder calf sales and published a newspaper. It literally took 25 years before value added sales actually caught hold because, instead of thinking of the advantages, some thought they would get a discount for not adhering to the program. I didn't understand that way of thinking."

Today, customers readily follow the lead of the one-time owner of the Four State Stockyard, who's now a full-time Charolais and Composite breeder. They have good reason. The National Charolais Grand Champion Cow/Calf pair in four of the past five years boasts ACE genetics. And herd sires tally up a slew of winning accolades.

"We have proven that performance and carcass cattle can look good too," Aschermann says. "Just

because we are from the Ozarks does not mean we can't produce some of the best Charolais in America. Showing cattle on a local and national level, and winning, is a way to verify that we have better cattle than most."

Though the roots run white, Aschermann knows the advantages of grafting in a little more color. "I started with Black Angus because of the extensive data base so I could select traits of sires. I wanted calving ease, marbling and yearling growth. Then I switched to Red Angus. The reds and blondes and butterscotch and all those shades-- dark red to white -- they're very popular in the commercial business.

"I had a stockyard for 15 years and those were the top selling feeder cattle, even above blacks and baldies. There's just some people who won't use a Charolais bull, but they will use the Red Angus cross, which allows me to have two product lines from the same factory."

The other reason Aschermann puts the will of the customer first, "I have to make a living doing it. I don't have oil wells or trust funds or a rich heritage. I was born into a very loveable, but broke farm family."

With eyes wide open, Aschermann approaches the purebred and commercial business determined to pursue the best in a breed without getting tunnel vision. "One of my pet peeves is reading about breeders who all say their breed is the best," Aschermann says. "But Charolais cattle do have advantages. White reflects the heat. I have black, red and white standing side by side. The black will be covered with flies, the red will have some and the Charolais hardly any. I challenge my customers to turn white bulls in with their cattle in the

summer time. The white bull will be out breeding while the black bull stands in the shade. Sure, if God were to say there's only one breed, I'd have to go with Angus. They do a lot of good. But God didn't say that. And Charolais have heat tolerance, growth and lean meat yield."

While Aschermann is still using some of the same Charolais genetics he's used for 15 years, he incorporated Angus to develop a composite CH+ herd with some of his younger females in 2000. At the time, Aschermann was flushing

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# GENETIC EVALUATION EVOLVES WITH GENOMIC DATA

**Robert Williams, Ph.D.**

Seedstock producers look to use genetic variation to make directional changes in their herds for economically important traits. When selection decisions are made there are expectations of a response to those selections. The importation of beef genetics, establishment of research, education and extension programs, the beef cattle performance revolution and the printing of the first sire summaries have all had a profound impact on the U.S. beef population increasing value and production.

While current beef cow inventories have returned to levels of the 1950s, beef production has more than doubled over the same period of time.

While much of the improvements in productivity can be traced to improvements in nutrition, management and improved health it has been the last 30 to 40 years that our increased focus on performance programs has been responsible for significant gains as well.

With the introduction of the Expected Progeny Differences (EPD) in the early 1980s accuracy of selection was greatly increased, not only for seedstock producers but for commercial beef production as well. No longer did we have to rely simply on what we could see along with the influences of the environment in our selection, we now had a tool that allowed us to more accurately separate environment from genetics to make more informed decisions within and across herds.

Genetic evaluations have played a significant role in much of the improvement with the first sire summary published in 1971 and closely followed by every major beef breed in the United States. Genetic trend tables published by the Meat Ani-

mal Research Center, Clay Center, Nebraska, have shown as much as 60 pounds or more increase in the genetics for yearling weight alone since the early 1970s. Additionally, over this same period of time the combination of genetics, management, nutrition and health has seen average dressed carcass weights for steers increase by 150 pounds.

Since 1980 we have continued to make improvements in genetic selection tools that have increased the accuracy of selection. As technology and research continue to advance we will continue to see improvements regarding accuracy of selection.

We have benefited greatly from the research and development from USDA ARS and land grant universities among others. However, development of new technology often takes a building-block approach where new discoveries are based on earlier discoveries and increased knowledge. We are a witness to this today as genomic technology continues to improve and the optimism that it will play a larger role in the genetic characterization of our cattle. The question whether to use genomic information has been replaced by how to use it efficiently and effectively.

The cornerstone for our success in regards to genetic selection has been the collection of quality phenotypic data, which has allowed producers to capitalize on research/technology transfer programs for genetic improvement. This will continue to be important or research into genomic markers may have little if any impact. The old adage "genetic evaluations are only as good as our data" will continue to be true and will be important information as the expansion of genomic data will require large volumes of phenotypic data and will be required to update existing marker effects.

As has been mentioned, the greatest benefit regarding genomics when included in future evaluations will be the increased accuracy on young non-parent animals when compared to conventional or current evaluations. Accuracy of genomic enhanced EPD however will be reliant on the accuracy of performance databases. The more accurate the performance database the greater the opportunity to im-



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## MAKE THE MOST

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affected a region of the country. The effects to the US grain supply at this point will affect everyone's costs to some degree.

So beef cattle producers have some decisions to make. The high grain costs will affect all feeds and supplements, dry, liquids, tubs – all feeds and supplements. So making good, educated supplementation decisions will be important. Let's discuss a number of these situations.

### Your Forage Base

This has been hammered on here over and over but knowing the nutrient content of your forage base is essential. You cannot feed or supplement your herd using your own hay or silage if you do not know what the nutrient content is. So you have to forage test. Some key issues concerning forage testing:

### Hay sampling:

- Identify hay "lots." This is a key first step to proper hay sampling, and one frequently ignored. A hay lot should be identified which is a single cutting, a single field and variety, and generally be less than 200 tons. Combinations of different lots of hay cannot be represented adequately by a forage sampling method; different lots should be sampled separately. Don't mix cuttings, fields, or hay types.

- Timing is important. It is important to sample the hay either as close to feeding, or as close to point of sale as possible. Dry matter measurements are especially subject to changes after harvest and during storage, but other measurements may also change. Hay immediately after harvest normally goes through a process of further moisture lost known as a "sweat." During this period, hay may heat up due to the activities of microorganisms, driving residu-

al moisture from the hay or, depending on microbiological activity, can actually contribute to moisture. In general, however, moisture content is likely to be reduced in the days and weeks after harvest. If the hay has been baled at excess moisture, further biological activity may result in molding, or even (under very high moisture conditions) spontaneous combustion of

hay. However, after hay has equilibrated to the range of 90 percent DM (10 percent moisture, depending upon humidity), it is typically quite stable. Since the moisture content between samples can vary, comparison needs to be made on a dry matter basis.

- Use a good hay probe. There are multiple versions on the market. Just pick one

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**ASCHERMANN**

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# GENETIC

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prove and sustain accuracy through genomic enhanced EPD.

Regardless of including genomics into genetic evaluations we can nevertheless improve accuracy today through existing programs. Increases in artificial insemination (A.I.) to widely used high accuracy sires between herds and contemporary groups both within and across years improves connectedness. An increase in the use of A.I. can result in increased accuracy.

More timely and complete reporting of data to be included in genetic evaluations will result in increased accuracy of selection. Getting calves included in a genetic evaluation as soon as possible increases the accuracy of selection before calves have been sold and/or exposed or before selection and/or breeding decisions have been made.

Report more yearling weights and associated yearling measurements, such as ultrasound data. While many calves are sold from the herd shortly after weaning there remains a significant number of yearling weights that could be reported and thereby increasing the accuracy of weaning and associated traits. When yearling weights are

collected there are opportunities to collect measurements of scrotal circumference and ultrasound measurements for ribeye area, rib fat thickness, rump fat and IMF scores which are used in the calculation of carcass EPD.

And finally, accurate and complete reproductive and breeding information through whole herd reporting programs will not only help breeders identify the most productive cows in their breeding herds it will also help lead to the identification of genomic markers in the future for important reproductive traits; again increasing accuracy of selection.

### Including genomic data into genetic evaluations

Until recently the cost of genomic technology was prohibitive in many cases even for most research programs. To put this into perspective, in 2001 the cost of a whole genome sequence came at a cost of \$100 million. This same whole genome sequence in 2011 was at a cost of less than \$10,000 and perhaps closer to \$3,000 today.

But we don't need a whole genome sequence in most cases. Although because of its lower cost we will see broader use in research leading to additional and more pow-

erful discoveries. 50K genotypes and smaller though are proving to be effective for use to develop genetic selection tools and they come at a much more manageable cost of \$100 or less.

Last spring the American-International Charolais Association Breed Improvement Committee and Board of Directors took a progressive approach to building a database of 50K Genotypes. This will allow AICA to begin the process of enhancing our genetic evaluations as technology and genetic models continue to evolve to improve accuracy of selection, especially in younger animals.

This will help place the beef industry in a better position over time to respond to increased demand for beef products.

### A discussion on accuracy

Research at the University of Georgia has shown that EPD can be as much as 9 times more accurate than a with-in herd ratio or weight. Increasing accuracy of selection will result in corresponding improvement in genetic trend.

An EPD is a prediction of how future progeny of an animal are expected to perform in a particular trait relative to other animals in the analysis. The key word is "difference". The EPD itself does not imply "good" or "bad" performance. But rather, the EPD gives a prediction of the average difference to expect in the performance of an animal's progeny to other animals in the same analysis.

Expected Progeny Differences

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## MAKE THE MOST

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that suits you the best. The main thing is to keep the cutting head sharp to make the probing process as easy as possible. Go to [www.foragetesting.org](http://www.foragetesting.org) for a good list of hay probes. There are two basic types, drill and push. I personally use a push probe which allows me to sample a lot of bales in a short period of time.

- Mark each sample with the field and cutting or by lot number. No matter what, document each sample.

- Accurate sampling depends on reducing variability. This means sampling multiple bales. Sampling at least 10 bales per lot is necessary to reduce the variability in nutrients between bales. Sample bales from a wide area around the field, not all from one location. This is time consuming but can ultimately help you save significant dollars.

Remember, the point is to account for all the nutrients that you can from your forages that you either raised or already purchased for hopefully a lower cost.

- Submit each sample in a quart sized plastic bag (Ziplock or similar). Squeeze as much of the air out as you can. At the very least your forage test needs to include: Dry Matter/Moisture; Crude Protein; Crude Fat; Acid Detergent Fiber; (ADF); Neutral Detergent Fiber (NDF); Calcium, Ca; Phosphorus, P; Magnesium, Mg; Potassium, K; Sulfur, S; Copper, Cu; Iron, Fe; Manganese, M and Zinc, Zn.

Other minerals as well as vitamins can be assayed from forage samples but this can get fairly expensive. The nutrients listed can give you a solid foundation to start from. Once you have these numbers you can begin evaluating supplements.

## Comparing Supplements

There are worlds of supplements out there for the cattle producer to use. These can include range cubes, range meals, self limited-supplements, tubs (cooked or chemical), liquids fed in closed top troughs (lick tanks) or open top troughs, basic commodities and so on. Some thoughts: One of the most basic considerations that should be made – which many producers do not – is what labor is required in providing these supplements to the cattle herd. Generally, products which do not require as much labor are more expensive, although that's not always the case. Secondly, there are supplement forms that are less expensive to buy but the producer has more initial expense to get set up and ultimately to feed.

For instance, liquid feeds are commonly delivered by the local dealer either at your request or on a “keep full” basis, which means he is responsible for monitoring the level of the tanks and keeping feed in these tanks. Subsequently, use of liquid feeds does not require a lot of labor. Similarly, limit-fed products (not salt limited) are commonly fed in large self-feeders. These supplements are delivered by the dealer in an auger truck so once again, not a lot of labor on the producer's part. I have actually spoken with producers who purchase these types of supplements in a bagged

form and will fill the feeders themselves. While this allows for some intake control it does defeat some of the labor savings purpose. Let's go through some of the supplement types to evaluate some of the considerations for each, aside from the actual cost:

## Conclusions

Making the most of your feed and nutrition dollars is not a simple task and to be done correctly requires a lot of study and analysis. You can see from this part of our discussion that many considerations have to be made and accounted for, not the least of which is labor and logistics.

In the next part of this series we will apply the economics. We'll discuss how to analyze and compare as many of these issues as we can. Given the volatile nature of the feed and grain market the best we can do is develop a good accurate understanding of how to make necessary comparisons.

*Dr. Steve Blezinger is a management and nutritional consultant with an office in Sulphur Springs, TX. He can be reached at [sblez@verizon.net](mailto:sblez@verizon.net) or at (903) 352-3475.*

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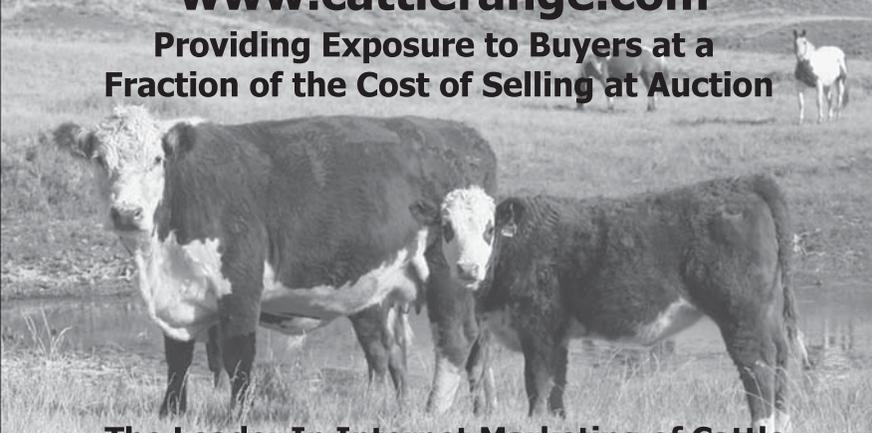
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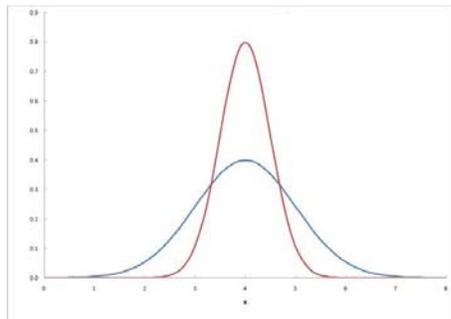
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are accompanied with an Accuracy (ACC) value. Accuracy values give an indication of how close our estimates are to an animal's true genetic value. Accuracy values are extremely useful to breeders in determining the reliability of an EPD. Accuracy values can be represented by a bell curve (see Figure 1) and can range in value from 0.0 to 1.0, depending on the amount of information that is known about an animal for any one of the reported traits. As the amount of information included in the analysis of a trait for an individual animal increases, the accuracy value for that trait increases accordingly. Large ACC values indicate greater accuracy and more certainty that the EPD will show little change as additional progeny information is ob-

tained, as represented by the narrower bell curve.

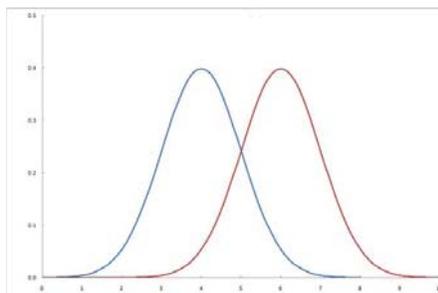
The point to remember is that the expected change of an EPD with a high ACC is correspondingly less than those of an EPD with a lower ACC value.

One mistake that many producers make is to assume that low accuracy have little reliability as compared to actual performance data. We must remember that an EPD utilizes all available information; therefore, a low accuracy EPD incorporates the available performance and pedigree information. Recent research has shown that an EPD is the most accurate tool available to make genetic progress for a given trait. Even for non-parents, an EPD can be as much as 9 times more accurate than a with-in herd ratio or weight.

The accuracy of a given EPD can help determine the amount of risk a breeder is willing to take in his breeding decisions. Let us compare the bulls in figure 1 again. Which bull is more desirable for your breeding program? The bull with the higher accuracy value is more predictable, but the amount of genetic change that can be made is correspondingly limited as well. Both bulls have the same EPD (rep-

resented by the mean of the bell curve), but the true genetic value for the bull with the lower accuracy value is beyond that of the bull with the higher accuracy value. Therefore the bull with the lower accuracy value could possibly increase the amount of genetic progress made, but he is also more of a risk because his true genetic value falls within a wider range.

In the previous example we discussed two bulls with the same EPD but different levels of accuracy. But what if we have two bulls with different EPD but the same level of accuracy as represented in figure 2. Again we must recognize that the animal's true genetic merit is within the range of the bell curve and as accuracy value increases we more accurately identify the true genetic merit of an individual or population of animals.



If each bell curve in Figure 2 represents two different bulls, imagine if you will that these two bulls had the exact same EPD and accuracy as yearling bulls which would have been represented by the exact same bell curve. As information was reported to the breed association the EPD for the two bulls began to separate with corresponding increases in accuracy, represented now by the two different bell curves we see in Figure 2.

We continue however to see some overlap between the two bell curves. This tells us that with more progeny information reported there is still some chance the two bulls have the same EPD for the trait or might actually re-rank. However, with increased accuracy the probability of this happening is correspondingly lower.

Exciting advancements have been made in the utilization of genomics in the last few years as we continue to build research populations and increase our knowledge of genomics through continued research. Along with performance data, the use of genomics promises to improve our understanding of an animal's genetic merit.



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Selling open cows and those that are less productive came in as the third most popular practice with 14 percent close behind at 11.6 percent was to wean and sell calves early. Just over 9 percent offered supplement feeding of by-products like dried distillers grains or commercial products.

Down the line, and mentioned only by 1 to 3 farmers included: feed silage, corn stalks, ammoniate low quality hay, cut trees, fertilize fescue pastures and buy or rent more pasture.

The annual Missouri Beef Tour is coordinated by University of Missouri Extension Commercial Agriculture with the following sponsors: Missouri Beef Industry Council, Missouri Soybeans, FCS Financial, Missouri Cattlemen's Association, Missouri Conservation Commission and Missouri Corn Growers.

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crops, livestock, state and local governments, energy and bio-based product groups cooperatives and financial groups.

The coalition contends that the farm bill is really a food bill, a conservation bill, a research bill, an energy bill and a trade bill. The farm bill affects all Americans and the agriculture industry provides 23 million American jobs. The Farm Bill Now coalition launched an interactive web portal at [www.farmbillnow.com](http://www.farmbillnow.com). Visitors to the site can connect to their members of Congress to show their support for a new five-year farm bill.

The future of the new farm bill is far from clear but most observers think it is unlikely that Congress will pass the new legislation before the 2008 bill expires at the end of September. Instead, Congress would probably pass a short-term extension of the current law. Several members of Congress say they oppose an extension, but with the

House only in session for 8 days during September it may be the only available option.

Without some action by Congress the livestock sector will continue to suffer. The resulting cuts in cattle, dairy and hog sectors will have implications that extend for years beyond the end of the drought.

Farmers who normally sell at least half of their crops in the year following harvest may be able to push taxes for crop insurance payouts into 2013, even if you receive the check before the end of the year. You can't split the insurance payments into two parts but you may be able to count it as revenue in either 2012 or 2013. This is allowed under section 451(d) of the tax code. If you don't actually get the insurance money until 2013, it will be income for next year.

Consult your tax professional if delaying the income into 2013 makes sense for your operation. Biofuel industry representatives

are fighting back against the requests for EPA to waive or reduce the RFS ethanol mandate. Leaders of groups representing the advanced biofuel industry say the requested waivers could have a chilling effect on the investment in the next generation of biofuels.

They claim a change in policy for a given year can affect production for many years into the future. Representatives of the grain-based ethanol industry are also taking action to try to head off a waiver. Leaders of ethanol industry groups have sent letters to the Obama Administration and to the governors requesting the waivers trying to "clarify a debate that has been riddled with distorted truths and misinformation". They say waiving the RFS would lead to higher gas prices, more reliance on foreign oil and stifle investment in new advanced biofuels technologies.

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In a recent collaborative study between SDSU and the USDA Meat Animal Research Center (MARC), longevity data was collected on 2,195 heifers from producers in South Dakota, and longevity and weaning weight data was collected on 16,549 heifers at the USDA-MARC. Data was limited to heifers that conceived during their first breeding season. Heifers that calved with their first calf during the first 21-day period of the calving season had increased longevity compared to heifers that calved in the second 21-day period, or later.

Average longevity for South Dakota heifers that calved in the first or later period was 5.1 and 3.9 years, respectively. Average longevity for USDA-MARC heifers that calved in the first, second, and later period was 8.2, 7.6, and 7.2 years, respectively. Calving period also influenced weaning weight of the subsequent calves born from these heifers.

In addition, calving period influenced total pounds weaned

and average weaning weight, with heifers that calved during the first period having increased weaning weights, total pounds weaned, and average weaning weight compared to heifers calving later, and heifers calving during the second period had increased weaning weight, total pounds weaned, and average weaning weight compared to heifers calving later.

Therefore, heifers that calved early in the calving season with their first calf had increased longevity and pounds weaned compared to heifers that calved later in the calving season.

So, when we think about increasing longevity in our beef cattle, we need to begin with management decisions that impact our replacement heifers. If we get them developed correctly and get them to calve early in the season they will continue to be productive for several years.



**MANAGING PASTURES**

*continued from page 14*

may die. And those that survive to next spring will grow very slowly until they have recovered from the multiple stresses of drought and untimely grazing.

So do yourself and your pastures a favor. Decide right now that no matter what happens this fall, you will not graze green growth again until next year. Pasture survival may depend on it.

Note from Mark Sulc of Ohio State: It may be safe to top graze tall fescue pastures late in the fall IF they have been actively growing for at least 5 weeks after re-

lease from drought stress. If at least 5 to 6 weeks of active growth has occurred, the plants will probably have accumulated sufficient energy reserves for winter survival and spring regrowth. But if the pasture is weak and continues in drought stress well into the fall, following Dr. Anderson's advice will improve persistence and pasture vigor next year. It's tough, but take the long view on this one, or you may have a worse situation next year.

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As University of Missouri agronomist Pat Miller says, "A farmers most economic forage harvesters are livestock, because they don't need diesel fuel, and they drive themselves." With that bit of Show-Me advice, Miller says your plans to rebuild forage in 2013 will start with a soil test now. That means 20-30 cores of six-inch depth in a pasture, and then blended together. For a plan on how to do that, she offers a strategy.

**Seeding**

When there is sufficient moisture, Missouri's Miller says pastures may need to be overseeded with grasses or legumes, but can also be frost-seeded to allow the freezing and thawing of the soil to work seed into a good contact with the soil. She also warns about the use of herbicides used to clean up weeds, and their impact on newly germinated seed.

If you need quick grazing, winter annuals, such as ryegrass, wheat, or cereal rye may be options, but before spending money on seed, check the USDA plant hardiness map to see what varieties are suited for

your zone. Arkansas forage specialist John Jennings says, "A cheap variety becomes very expensive if it does die in the cold or if it's stunted by cold weather and produces little forage. In a year like this, it can pay to plant known varieties to ensure forage production."

**Options:**

1. Ryegrass can be planted as early as late August with good soil moisture. Early planted ryegrass can provide grazing in late fall. Late planted ryegrass – November – will not provide significant grazing until late winter – March – except in warm winters like 2011-12.

2. Wheat is another option. While most varieties are selected for grain production, a growing number of livestock producers plant wheat for grazing, he said. Variety selection for forage is important because some popular wheat varieties for grain production produce very little fall forage growth. Earlier maturing varieties tend to produce more leaf growth for grazing in fall.

3. Rye, a rapid-growth option, provides more fall grazing and earlier spring grazing than wheat. Come March, rye will take off, so producers need to be ready to handle the

fast growth by grazing, using as hay or as baleage.

4. Baleage is forage that ferments in bale form when sealed by plastic wrap. Baleage can be harvested earlier than hay since it only has to be dried to 50 percent moisture before wrapping and storing.

**Grazing strategy**

Cattle prefer the fresh growth and will go to that area without cleaning up grass that is quite good, but a little tougher. Rotational grazing with small paddocks will allow adequate regeneration, good manure distribution, and stretch forage supplies.

Another strategy is to allow livestock to graze forage as much as possible because baling it can cost an additional \$30-\$35 per ton. This is also considered to be stockpiling pasture, which forage specialist John Jennings says is similar to managing for a last cutting of hay.

That allows cattle to graze into the fall and winter, with the help of some fertilizer. He says if the pasture begins to green up in the fall, then apply the fertilizer, which can yield 2,000 to 3,000 pounds of dry matter per acre. Jennings says, "The recommended fertilizer rate for fescue is 50-60 pounds per acre of nitrogen to match that yield potential. Producers should add phosphorus and potash fertilizer according to soil test."

**Low quality forage**

If low quality forage must be used, Beef Specialist Justin Waggoner at Kansas State suggests the application of anhydrous ammonia to improve digestibility and intake. Stack the bales, cover with black plastic and apply the ammonia, then let it cure for a couple weeks. Waggoner said weeds in the forage can produce toxins.

**Toxicity concerns**

With the lack of traditional forage, some alternatives may be explored, but some of those may come with

toxicity concerns, such as high nitrate levels. Kansas State's Waggoner said such forages should be tested to ensure the health of your livestock. "Nitrate content up to 3,000 ppm is considered safe, while 3,000 to 6,000 ppm only moderately safe and should not constitute more than half of the ration for stressed animals. If the content is 6,000 to 9,000 ppm, the forage could be toxic and should not be the sole source of feed."

Before soybeans became an oilseed crop they were used for forage and with great success. Some farmers this summer baled soybeans that were failing in reproductive efforts as a means of feeding livestock.

University of Missouri toxicologist Tim Evans said before that is done, ensure that you know what herbicides were used on the soybeans, because many of them can be toxic to livestock. One of those is Cobra which can cause liver disease, and is labeled for not being appropriate for soybeans that will be fed to livestock. While some feeding can eventually occur, there is a grazing restriction time for many. Observe the required withdrawal times to protect your livestock.

**Summary:**

Livestock producers may be suffering the worst from the drought because of loss of pasture that can only be replaced with time and good management, not a crop insurance indemnity check. But development of a good strategy to check fertility needs, seed varieties that will quickly produce grazing forage and then management of grazing areas to maximize forage will be a key to success. Producers may also consider alternatives, but need to conduct the proper research and quality checks to ensure the livestock are not hurt by experimental strategies.

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*continued from page 5*

clay into material that was moveable.

Through the years, I've watched my dad use dynamite to create post holes where one would think a post could never be set, unplug drainage ditches that had become clogged with timber and debris, straighten the flow of creeks so they didn't erode away the productive bottom land, and even eliminate garden varmints by imploding their prospective dens.

Back in the day, dynamite was a very useful item for the Crownover farmstead. It was a readily available and relatively cheap product used to make life easier. Today, one needs a federal permit to own the stuff and it is available only from specialized suppliers who require a ream of paperwork to accompany every transaction. And, even if you go through all the training, jump through all the hoops,

and pay all the licensing fees, I would suspect there might be a swarm of black SUV's and quite possibly a helicopter in the vicinity the first time you enlarged that first post hole.

So, I'll just continue to clean out beaver dams and post holes the old-fashioned way through hand labor and sweat. But the memories of the good old days linger every time I see a tree stump I'd love to blow out of the ground because I've run over it at least twelve times with the farm truck...or I've hit the exposed surface of what I suspect is a half-ton, mostly buried, boulder every time I've mowed that field for hay.

Yessiree, if I could get my hands on a few sticks of dynamite, I could take care of stumps and rocks so quickly, I'd be tempted to take up fishing again...just like I did when I was a kid.



## ASCHERMANN

*continued from page 16*

15-20 cows and trying to raise 100 or more embryos a year. "I started using easy calving Angus bulls on the Charolais heifers."

When cattlemen call ACE to visit about buying seedstock, most have one thing in common, says Aschermann. "They have tried other breeds and lost pounds and net dollars. Our cattle offer two solutions. The first is increased hybrid vigor. Mother nature has given us a wonderful tool called hybrid vigor and anybody not utilizing it has too much money. Why would you throw away a 20 to 25 percent advantage in production if there's no good reason?"

The second solution, suggests Aschermann, is their breeding plan that "eliminates genetic extremes which lets you optimize growth without creating calving issues. Our bulls are known for their good dispositions, sound feet and legs, easy calving, and fast growing calves."

It takes years to develop high quality bulls and females and Aschermann's plans for this year's fall sale were long in the making before drought hit the Midwest. Years of experience and a self-proclaimed habit of "making lemonade out of lemons" are keeping this hard hitter from forfeiting the game.

"You have to have a plan five or ten years out," he explains. "When we starting building the inventory for a major female sale, all the stars were aligned for the commercial cattle market to be as high as it's ever been. Then the drought came. I'm going to have to sell anyhow. I can't keep them all. But I've been blessed over the years from people liking my females and I've sold pot load lots because customers wanted my genetics."

Customers will get their chance, come rain or shine, on Oct. 27, to do it again.

Just like his loveable athletic wife, who has endured both knee and shoulder replacement and survived cancer, Aschermann plans to stay in the game even when it gets challenging. "My wife says I'll die in the pasture with a set of cows and calves," he says. "I don't go to town and drink coffee and I really don't care about going any place. I don't look back on anything with regrets. I never stop believing in agriculture. I just like going to the farm and raising good cattle."



## OKLAHOMA

*continued from page 15*

shape reflecting sharp price decreases from calves to middle weight feeders then small price decreases from middle weights to heavy feeders. This past week, Oklahoma steer prices indicated a \$39/cwt. price decrease from 425 pounds to 625 pounds but only a \$3.50/cwt. price decrease from 625 pounds to 825 pounds. This feeder price pattern is consistent with the small feeder inventories that keep calf prices high combined with high grain prices that force a high value of gain and encourage more weight on feeders prior to feedlot placement.

If the current price patterns persist, the traditional four-weight steer has a very low value of gain for the first two hundred pounds of gain that is only partially overcome if the animal is grown to heavy feeder weight. By contrast, a heavier beginning weight of 575 to 625 pounds has a value of gain well over a dollar a pound from the beginning of stocker production. With typical winter gains, these animals will be marketed from 800 to 850

pounds in the spring.

The prospect of winter grazing will likely increase demand for lightweight stockers with prices remaining strong or going higher. At the same time, high feedlot cost of gain and the likelihood of continued cattle feeding losses means that upward price potential for middle and heavy weight feeders is limited. It is possible that feedlot cost of gain could get high enough to cause feeder prices to invert with the lowest prices likely for middleweight feeders (roughly 600 pounds) and higher prices for lightweight and heavyweight feeders. The current cattle market conditions open up more stocker production possibilities in terms of a wider range of beginning weights and heavier ending weights. It is important for stocker producers to explore an expanded array of stocker production possibilities in light of these very dynamic market conditions.

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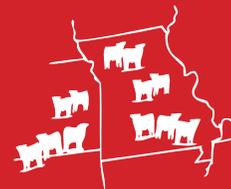
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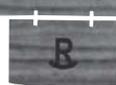
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# COMING SALES



- Sept 21 Galaxy Beef LLC Angus, Graham, MO
- Sept 21-22 Quest for Excellence XIII Fleckvieh Simmental Sale, Russellville, AR
- Sept 22 Sanders Ranch Head of the Class Simmental Sale, Louisburg, KS
- Sept 22 Kirkes Black Angus Ranch, Talihina, OK
- Sept 23 Grindstone Creek Farms "Genetics by Design" Sale, Sturgeon, MO
- Sept 23 Focused on the Fundamentals Limousin Female Sale, Nevada, MO
- Sept 24 Gardiner Angus Ranch 8th Annual Bull Sale, Ashland, KS
- Sept 28 Jeffries Red Angus Bull & Female Sale, Checotah, OK
- Sept 29 Hinkle's Prime Cut Angus, Nevada, MO
- Sept 30 \* Focused on the Fundamentals Limousin & Lim-Flex Sale, Nevada, MO 417-684-0881
- Sept 30 Ozark Hills Angus, Jefferson City, MO
- Sept 30 Red Legends & Black Diamonds, Marietta, OK
- Oct 1 Express Ranches Bull Sale, Yukon, OK
- Oct 5 \* Halfmann Red Angus Bull Sale, Miles, TX 325-468-5391
- Oct 6 JAC's Ranch Sale, Bentonville, AR
- Oct 6 Grindstone Creek by Genetic Design, Sturgeon, MO
- Oct 6 \* Hartland Farms Ozark Pride Gelbvieh Prod. Sale, Stella, MO 334-695-1371
- Oct 6 \* Journagan Genetically Yours, Springfield, MO 417-838-1482
- Oct 10 \* RA Brown 38th Annual Bull & Female Sale, Throckmorton, TX 940-849-0611
- Oct 13 Wallace Cattle Co & Guests, Stotts City, MO
- Oct 13 \* Judd Ranch 22nd Annual Cow Power Sale, Pomona, KS 785-566-8371
- Oct 13 Blackjack Angus, Seminole, OK
- Oct 13 Buford Ranches Bull Sale, Welch, OK
- Oct 14 Finley Bros. Cattle Co, Wyandotte, OK
- Oct 20 \* Circle A Angus Ranch Bull Sale, Iberia, MO 1-800-CIRCLE-A
- Oct 20 Heart of the Ozarks Angus Assoc. Sale, West Plains, MO
- Oct 20 \* Meadow Lane Farms, Mayview, MO 660-237-4988
- Oct 20 Power on the Plains Fischer Cattle Co, Great Bend, KS
- Oct 20 Seedstock Plus Fall Bull & Female Sale, Joplin, MO
- Oct 21 McCurry Bros. Angus, Burrton, KS
- Oct 21 \* Weiker Angus Ranch, Fayette, MO 660-248-3765
- Oct 21 Z7 Bar Ranch, Pawhuska, OK
- Oct 27 \* Aschermann Charolais Goin'Green Fall Bull Sale, Carthage, MO 417-793-2855
- Oct 27 \* East Central MO Angus Assoc. Sale, Cuba, MO 417-860-1624
- Oct 27 Mead Angus Farm Fall Production Sale, Versailles, MO
- Oct 27 Gerloff Bull Fest, Bland, MO
- Oct 27 \* Flying H Genetics Roughage Ready Fall Bull Sale, Lowry City, MO 417-309-0062
- Oct 27 \* HAGA Gelbvieh Female Sale, Springfield, MO 641-473-2489
- Oct 27 Justamere Ranch Complete Dispersal, Springfield, MO
- Oct 27 OK Red Angus Red Dirt Roundup, Canton, OK
- Oct 31 Fink Beef Genetics Annual Bull Sale, Randolph, KS
- Nov 2 \* American Royal Simmental Sale, Kansas City, MO 816-392-8771
- Nov 2-3 Genetrust @ Chimney Rock Bull & Female Sale, Concord, AR
- Nov 3 Four State Shorthorn Sale, Diamond, MO
- Nov 3 \* Braunvieh Herd Builder Sale, Marshall, MO 573-228-2517
- Nov 3 Irvine Ranch Annual Production Sale, Manhattan, KS
- Nov 3 \* Professional Beef Genetics, Montrose, MO 1-888-PBG-BULL
- Nov 3 The Fall Gatherin' A Bar Ranch, Carthage, MO
- Nov 4 \* Baker Angus Farm, Butler, MO 660-679-4403
- Nov 10 Missouri Charolais Breeders Fall Female & Bull Sale, Bois D'Arc, MO
- Nov 10 Moser Ranch 21st Bull Sale, Wheaton, KS
- Nov 10 Ratcliff Ranch, Vinita, OK
- Nov 11 Arkansas Angus Sale, Fort Smith, AR
- Nov 15 Terry Little Retirement Dispersion, Monticello, MO
- Nov 16 Southwest MO Show-Me-Select Heifer Sale, Joplin, MO
- Nov 17 Dalebanks Angus Bull Sale, Eureka, KS
- Nov 17 Hudspeth Farms & Guests The Gathering Sale, Harrison, AR
- Nov 17 Missouri State Simmental Sale, Springfield, MO
- Nov 17 NE Arkansas Angus Assoc. Sale, Charlotte, AR
- Nov 17 \* Sydenstricker Genetics, Mexico, MO 573-581-1225
- Nov 24 13th Annual KGA Pick of the Herd Sale, Salina, KS
- Nov 24 Butch Meier Angus, Jackson, MO
- Nov 24 \* West Central Show-Me-Select Heifer Sale, Kingsville, MO 816-258-3421
- Dec 1 \* Southeast MO Show-Me-Select Heifer Sale, Fruitland, MO 573-243-3581
- Dec 1 Wright Charolais 2nd Annual Female Sale, Chillicothe, MO
- Dec 7 Missouri Angus Advantage +Plus, Marshall, MO
- Dec 8 Ridder Farms 2nd Annual The Showgirls Sale, Hermann, MO

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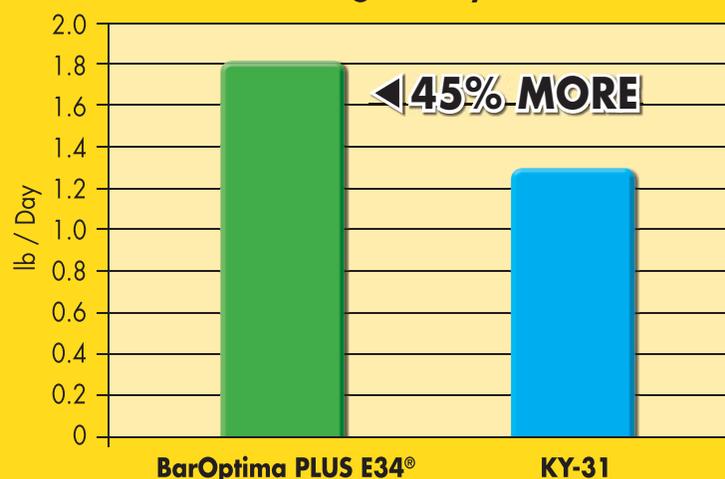
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# Objective

Spring 2012 EPDs										
	Birth Weight	Weaning Weight	Yearling Weight	Total Milk	Maternal	Scrotal Circ.	REA	IMF %	Rib Fat	Rump Fat
EPD	-1.4	+15	+30	+3	+10	-0.2	+0.25	<b>+0.2</b>	+0.08	+0.03
Acc	.95	.93	.90	.59	-	.71	.68	.69	.65	.66
Breed Avg. EPDs for 2010 Born Calves <a href="#">Click for Percentiles</a>										
EPD	0.3	9	13	2	6	0.2	0.04	0.0	0.00	0.01

Statistics: Number of Herds: 19, Progeny Analysed: 285, Number of Dtrs: 39



**ADD Pounds**  
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**Disease Resistance**  
**Heat Tolerance**  
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# Mojo

Spring 2012 EPDs										
	Birth Weight	Weaning Weight	Yearling Weight	Total Milk	Maternal	Scrotal Circ.	REA	IMF %	Rib Fat	Rump Fat
EPD	<b>-3.0</b>	-5	-6	+4	+2	-0.2	<b>+0.37</b>	-0.1	-0.05	<b>-0.21</b>
Acc	.90	.87	.85	.51	-	.73	.70	.71	.69	.72
Breed Avg. EPDs for 2010 Born Calves <a href="#">Click for Percentiles</a>										
EPD	0.3	9	13	2	6	0.2	0.04	0.0	0.00	0.01

Statistics: Number of Herds: 27, Progeny Analysed: 147, Number of Dtrs: 26

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